

## Working Committee # 2: Employment, Education & Training - Minutes

**Date:** October 25th, 2011

**Time:** 10am to 12pm

**Attendees:** Angela Jacewicz (Seneca College), Alice Ai (Chinese Professionals Association of Canada - CPAC), Hanna Cabaj (TCDSB), Barbara Binns (TDSB), Kitt Hunter-Wolff (VPI Inc.), Helenna Hung (Access Employment), Karen Evans (TDSB), Mahalakshmi S. (Resident), Mani Mahadeva (NWS LIP), Rezwan Karim (NWS LIP), Shaista Ahmaddi (ACSA Student)

- **Welcoming and Objective of the meeting**
  - To further discuss the barriers facing newcomers seeking employment and to engage with employers as a way to gather information about the different employment sectors
  
- **Share highlights from employers' interview( for details please see attached the summary report of the interviews)**
  - Interviewed potential employers to determine how the LIP can better serve them and prepare newcomers for employment
  - Difficult to contact and set up an interview with employers - Two interviews conducted to date:
    - TransCare Community Support Services and The Scarborough Hospital
    - Private sector employers were found less or not interested to participate in this kind of interview ,possibly due to the following reasons:
      - Time constraints
      - Sensitivity of questions asked
  - The participants suggested the following to overcome barriers and get feedback from employers from different sectors:
    - Middle level managers who are involved in the hiring process may be easier to access compared to senior HR managers
    - Revise the survey form to keep organizational information confidential
    - Feedback from diversified employers, e specially from the financial sector would be very useful as it is one of the growing sectors
  
- **Discussion**
  - Employers are looking for potential employees to have at least the minimum level of job competencies. For example, when TCDSB hires language instructors, the hiring team is looking for familiarity with Canadian standards, language bench marks, and curriculum. Getting feedback from employers as to why they did not hire potential job candidates will be beneficial to employment agencies to help job seekers improve their skills.
  - There are courses available to learn the Canadian standards.
  - Job seekers should do their own research before an interview

- Newcomers need to know why they did not get hired and address their areas of concern (in terms of workplace skills). If employment agencies have collective concerns, they could develop a guide for newcomer job seekers that address these common areas.
  - Employers expect their employees to spend their own time and money to improve their English language skills
  - Sending an instructor to a workplace will be challenging considering the number of instructors employed at ESL/ LINC centres. Employers can encourage their staff to join one of the evening or weekend classes near their residence.
  - Sometimes employers expect quick results (significant improvement within a short period of time), but for language training it should be at least a one year intensive program.
  - An approach where both employer and employees are willing to share their paid hours would bring better results for workplace language courses
  - There is a need for visual presentation of the service locations and guidance to travel to the location from their home. Small maps printed on brochures or flyers are not sufficient. ESL and LINC locations should be mapped along with TTC routes which can be displayed in reception areas
  - Provide volunteers with more opportunities in the health care profession
    - However, some work places have challenges with volunteers, in terms of supervision, lack of attendance and professionalism. Organizations can adopt policy to have formal contract with volunteers to clarify roles and responsibilities
    - Some ESL/ LINC students skip classes to volunteer, when this should take place outside their class hours
- **Presentation on Seneca College - Occupation Specific Language Training (OSLT) program**
    - Seneca offers OSLT courses for the following :
    - Accounting – Financial services, Health Science, Engineering, Architect, Human Services (Child Services, ECE)), Business Entrepreneurship – Sales & Marketing
    - Requirements-
      - Students must have education and experience in the field
      - Must be at an intermediate level in language skills
      - Training/ education in the field already (ex. Education in accounting)
    - OSLT provides language training, dialogue practice with clients, presentation skills, communication with co-workers and employer, voice message skills, e-mail writing, interview skills, networking skills, expectation of the job position and cultural expectations in the Canadian work place
    - Students who have finished OSLT will have completed 180 hours, 4 months
    - Classes are conducted on Monday 6-9 and all day Saturday (also 20 hours of online work is required). *Tell Me More* software is used for online learning
    - Upon completion students receive a certificate.
    - Mentorship programs where different professionals come in as mentors to provide their knowledge about the work environment
    - Employment Ontario conducts a presentation to provide individuals with further information
    - Within the GTA, Humber, Seneca and George Brown College provide OSLT programs
    - There are variations among colleges in terms of the OSLT courses they offer
    - An assessment done by the YMCA will be accepted as a CBL benchmark
    - If individuals do not meet the requirements they are referred to LINC / ESL language courses
    - OSLT programs put a focus on work place language usage and are not credit courses or bridging programs

- Green Careers - An Engineers program that provides credit but the program is not free
  - LINC Home Studies provided by Center for Education and Training is tailored to those who cannot leave their home (Ex: mother with new born)
  - Informal follow up is often conducted where some individuals who have form a relationship with their teachers will contact them to talk about their success and are asked to fill out an evaluation at the end of the program
  - There is no workplace placement attached to this program
  - It was suggested that LIP member organizations could consider providing placement opportunities for internationally trained professionals who have completed such language training courses
- **Presentation on TDSB - SLT program**
    - Specialized Language Training(SLT) programs
    - SLT programs – Success in Business (ongoing program)
    - Learners improve their skills interviewing, language, and computers
    - 12 week in class training program
    - Conducts a pre and post assessment
    - Provides opportunities to practice skills, e-mail, learn Canadian business practices and work culture, writing letters and reports, presentation and telephone communication skills
    - Highbrook is the main school but the program is conducted at Gooderham Learning Centre, Monday – Friday, 9am – 2pm
    - This programs is open to all
    - Another SLT program is Home Health Care /Senior Activation program offered at Overland Learning Centre
    - Recently proposed TDSB program - Specialized Language Training for Settlement Workers
    - TDSB will share the information once the proposal is approved
    - This course will be conducted at the workplace
    - Participants will go through a formal assessment
    - Curriculum could be formulated to fit the needs of employees and the agency

### **Discussion**

- Is there any partnership with the programs?
    - 5 agency have agreed to participate, a meeting will occur to determine the agencies needs
    - Described as a Pre bridging program
    - 30 hour module for each section focusing on certain skills
    - Goals of the program
  - How can we improve the language immediately in the work place?
  - How can we improve the skills of the learner in the workplace, give them confidence to move up?
    - **Visit [www.ESLtoronto.ca](http://www.ESLtoronto.ca) for further information**
- **Discussion on other activities for the third quarter**
    - Education round table**
      - November education round table will be organized
      - Main objective:
        - Identify how the employment services can better connect individuals to the education system
        - Identify areas where educational institutes can work together with the employment service agencies

- Determine opportunities for placement
- Trios College having a similar round table in November at VPI inc. In order to avoid duplication of efforts, the LIP will follow up to find out the objective of that round table

#### **Connect with TRIEC to get support for employment readiness**

- Scarborough LIP's formed a coalition in July and they are currently in touch with TRIEC to expand mentorship program in northwest Scarborough

#### **Support ongoing job fairs and community fairs**

- Providing the right information to newcomers
- Encourage communication among partners
- Employers want smaller job fairs within the agency rather than the large job fairs
- Small job fairs organized in collaboration with employment agencies is much more useful for both employers and clients of that employment agency

#### **Work closely with job developer's network**

- All four LIP's in Scarborough have formed a coalition in July and currently working together to address common challenges. Engaging employment sectors is one to the areas all four LIP projects currently working on. As connecting with employers is a challenge, now the LIPs plan to work closely with job developers network as alternate approach.

- **Chinese Professional Association of Canada (CPAC)**

- Offers a bridging program for accounting and finance
- 3 components – which address the different needs of the individuals career
- Employment services - job readiness, referrals
- CGA (Certified General Accountant) partners with CPAC to deliver this bridging program
- For the first year CPAC will cover a portion of the tuition \$400
- Also provides workplace culture and training
- 80 hours in class at U of T (CPAC covers full cost)
- Determine any cultural gaps and a discussion with instructors to identify areas of improvements in relation to Canadian workplace standards

#### **Discussion**

- The program is not limited to Chinese professionals, it is open to all backgrounds as long as they have an educational background in accounting
- Registration – there is no deadline, it is ongoing
- Open to permanent residents or citizens of Canada

- **Any Other Business**

- Members suggested providing space for specialised language training providers to present their programs in an upcoming PC meeting
- Mid-term evaluation is occurring and members were requested to complete the evaluation if they have not completed as yet.

- **Wrap up**

**Next WC#2 meetings will take place January 24<sup>th</sup> 2012 and February 21<sup>st</sup> 2012, both from 10am to 12pm with locations TBA**