

Minutes: Newcomer Services Collaboration Working Group

May 20, 2021 - 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm (Zoom)

Present: Jassi Ranauta (TSLIP - The Neighbourhood Group), Adriana Pena (TSLIP – WoodGreen Community Services), Tracy Cummins (George Brown College), Alla Minasova (YMCA – Newcomer Information Centre), Ophelia Xavier (University Settlement), Amanda Choo (WoodGreen Community Services), Mbalu Lomur (Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture), Cindy Kwan (MotherCraft), Angelica Hernandez (Salvation Army).

Minutes: Jassi Ranauta (TSLIP – The Neighbourhood Group)

I= Information Di=Discussion Dc=Decision A=Action

	Agenda Item
I	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land Acknowledgement• Introduction/Check-In
I	Strategic Planning Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jassi recapped the overview of the strategic planning process shared in the last meeting and what can be expected over the next few months<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ TSLIP has developed a needs assessment for its partners and will share it in the coming days○ TSLIP Council discussion to determine most urgent themes to inform direction of strategic plan, will take place in June (date TBD).○ Focus groups based on these themes to identify specific issues○ Working Group to develop projects based on identified themes and specific issues.

DI Strategic Planning Discussion

Discussion on newcomer and sector needs with prepared guiding questions

1. What are some of the ongoing concerns for the newcomer serving sector?

- Access to services, depending on where people live and access to technology
- Most vulnerable continue to be most impacted due to access to internet, technology; things like printing documents (for example, access to printer, libraries are closed, can't ask a friend/neighbour for help)
- Seniors were most impacted by access to technology issue
- Filling different forms remains an issue as newcomers are not able to visit settlement workers in person
- Some newcomers identify themselves as illiterate and so written/digital communication (i.e., texts or emails) in their own language poses an issue. As a result, teaching these individuals something new, such as using technology to complete forms, access services, takes more time.
- Mental health, strain of the pandemic, financial strife; impact from compounding factors such as newcomers working in essential services, even with vaccine rollout, added stress of work/working from home, supporting children, etc.
- Grief. Loss of loved ones, family separation, particularly those who live alone.
- Newcomer LGBTQIA+ issues, particularly with housing discrimination.

2. What sector needs are you most concerned about heading into a post-pandemic recovery?

- Increased competition in employment; newcomers and non-newcomers will be looking for work during this re-opening period ahead; how can we leverage and reframe how employers look at newcomers' international work experience.
- Immigration related issues: citizenship applications, backlogs
- Increased work for the sector as newcomers will require more information as things change, particularly around employment. For example, how to support newcomers who may want to travel to another region/province to where the work is.
- Sector employee burn out
- Staff re-adjusting back to in person or hybrid model of work
- Food security and ties to income security; what happens to food banks and increased support after pandemic?

- Remote service delivery increased accessibility for newcomers in some instances, particularly with geographic limitations; a wider service area is possible online and returning to in-person services will likely limit that accessibility again.
- Eligibility for changing for programming

3. What is the greatest need in the newcomer communities you serve which cannot be met by your organization at the present time?

- Those requiring in-person language classes/support due to inability to use/access technology for programming
- Getting a hold of seniors/newcomer outreach

4. Are there any newcomer serving sector needs that you feel have been overlooked due to more focused attention on responding to COVID-19 that need to be revisited?

- More programming related to mental health
- Family strain/dynamics
- Supporting international students

Discussion on TSLIP structure with prepared guiding questions

1. Do you have any suggestions on how we could increase engagement within or between the parts of our structure?

2. Do you have any suggestions on how we could increase the effectiveness and/or efficiency of our Working Groups?

- Meeting once a month works well and we should continue that.
- Regular updates on what's happening with the other working groups either by TSLIP staff or by members who might sit on more than one TSLIP WG.
- Minutes have been good to keep up to date when members are unable to attend meetings, having access to minutes from other groups would be good
 - o all minutes from different working groups will be posted regularly on our new website, now live

3. In what areas do you think TSLIP could build increased partnerships?

- Employment agencies in the sector

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental health - Housing, as it continues to be a difficult topic that needs more attention. - Public health (Toronto Public Health) - Organizations that offer financial supports/loans for newcomers (I.e., Windmill) <p>4. Which groups need greater representation on the TSLIP?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased representation from all groups would be good. Revisit to ensure there is appropriate representation
DI	<p>Sector Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health First Aid & Caring for Others – Training for Language Instructors – May 25th <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TSLIP Health and Mental Health Working Group with Canada International Scientific Exchange Program (CISEPO) • Virtual Toronto Newcomer Day 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Call for information fair exhibitors, deadline is end of day Friday April 23, 2021: www.toronto.ca/newcomerday <p>Funding Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Citizenship Contribution Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/online-disinformation/digital-citizen-contribution-program.html
I	<p>Organizational Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing additional shared
I	<p><u>Next Meeting</u></p> <p>☞ Thursday June 17, 2021 1-2pm</p>