

TORONTO SOUTH LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

NOTES – COUNCIL MEETING

*Thursday, February 28th, 2019 10am to noon
Woodgreen Community Services,
815 Danforth Ave, 1st Floor Boardroom*

Agenda:

1. Welcome, Introductions
2. Emerging Issues
 - IRCC CFP
 - Toronto Quadrant LIP Newcomer Narratives Initiative
 - TSLIP TORs
3. The Stories of Us: Presentation by Department of Imaginary Affairs
 - Overview of a new project focusing on newcomer stories
4. Systemic Issues Environmental Scan
 - What are the pressing issues facing newcomer communities in Toronto South that require a systemic policy or research intervention?
5. Civic Engagement Curriculum Presentation
6. AOB

IN ATTENDANCE	
ORGANIZATION	REPRESENTATIVE
ACCES Employment	Aimee Holmes
Department of Imaginary Affairs	Blair Francey
Department of Imaginary Affairs	Jennifer Chan
Find Help Services	Dave Montague
Toronto Newcomer Office	Ruth Antiwaa
Afghan Women’s Organization	Adeena Niazi
Vietnamese Association of Toronto	Jenny Zeng
COSTI	Trudy Small
St. Stephens Community House	Dmitry Elyashevich
Woodgreen Community Services	Diane Dyson

FCJ Refugee Centre	Francisco Rico
CAMH	Norma Hannant
Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Sport	Shannon Todd
Family Services Toronto	Sophia Ali
George Brown College	Pamela Glaser French
CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses	Ruth Lee
Cecil Community Centre	Katherine Gatt (filling in for Danny Anckle)
Toronto Community & Culture Centre	Una Cheung
Inner City health Associates	Alena Ravestein
Together Project	Andrew Lusztyk
LIP PROJECT TEAM	
Social Planning Toronto	Angelica de Jesus-Bretschneider
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture	Giovanni Rico
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture	Mariam Azimi
St. Stephen's Community House	Paulina Wyrzykowski
St. Stephen's Community House	Nadine Nasir

Facilitation: Paulina Wyrzykowski, TSLIP Project Director

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

2.0 Emerging Issues

- IRCC Call for Proposals
 - 2 rounds of calls
 - Funding for up to 5 years for direct service providers
 - Due April 12, 2019
 - Another call for indirect services to come out in March
 - Application for funding will be evaluated according to core principles (client centred, outcomes driven, responsive to need, effective use of resources)
 - Collaboration is emphasized
 - Application will be viewed favourability if aligned with LIP strategic plans
 - Can apply for Base Services, Customized Services, or both

- Mental health and well being a key issue
 - Held 3 teleconference calls with TSLIP Council Members interested in pursuing collaborations on this CFP.
 - Pursuing 3 potential projects
 - Together Project, Andrew Luszyk, bringing refugees and volunteers together
 - CCVT, Mulugeta Abai, itinerant group-based mental health support initiative
 - TCET will get back to us about partnership about e-referral process
 - Francisco Rico interested in developing a program around youth
 - WoodGreen creating youth hubs
- *Toronto Quadrant LIP Newcomer Narratives Initiative*
 - Discussions around how newcomers/immigrants are portrayed
 - Concerns around increasing xenophobia
 - Many organizations promoting campaigns around this, e.g. UW, CCR, and OCASI
- Toronto LIPs want to augment these campaigns and LIP projects that help promote voices of newcomers/immigrants; e.g. Newcomer Narratives Initiative
 - Toronto LIPs also want to reach out to the ethnic media
 - Will review these ideas with Council again once we have a better idea of what we are doing

3.0 The Stories of Us: Presentation by Department of Imaginary Affairs

- Started in 2015 with East Side Story Project, 144 stories from east-side of Toronto about how communities are changing
- Evolved into Storybook Project, moving the project across Canada
- Future Happens Here: facilitation tool/game to converse around public policy and change
- Stories of Us: 3-years of funding from IRCC
 - Connected with two ESL teachers
 - What if there was a newcomer library written in English, written by newcomers? What might that look like?
 - Completed so far:
 - 11 workshops, 201 participants, 38 countries represented (since Sept. 2018)
 - Year 1: Toronto-wide, Year 2: Ontario-wide, Year 3: Canada-wide

- IRCC outputs: goal is 50 stories in the first year, evolving with how stories are collected and how they are written/presented
- All workshops have been hosted by contacting an organization that already works with newcomers
 - Transitioning into train-the-trainer
- Started a conversation with the Toronto Public Library; getting an ISBN for a book is difficult
 - Thinking about where else you can pick up books outside of the library; e.g. laundromat, grocery store, bank, LINC classes
- Started with stories from adults, now working with youth, would like to work with children in the future
- minister@dia.space

4.0 Systemic Issues Environmental Scan

- Participants divided into three groups and asked to discuss:

1) What are the 5 most pressing needs/challenges for newcomers in your community: please be as specific as possible?

2) What initiatives are underway to meet those needs/challenges?

3) Which of the needs listed above require a systemic intervention (eg. policy or legislative change, or further research)?

4) Which do you think the LIP has most ability to affect and how?

5) Would you be willing to actively work on this issue with the LIP?

Table 1 (Facilitated by Nadine)

1.

- Housing
 - Emergency housing – more spaces
 - Hotels – only claimants
 - Housing workers
 - Greater support for newcomers.
 - Letter of support, how OW works, make the call, arrange the appointment, etc.
 - Housing workers don't know specific needs of newcomers.
 - Affordable housing - subsidized
 - Costs are too high, if applying for subsidized housing, it takes 10 years.
- Do they have legal aid/lawyers/info on options?
 - Who is coaching them?

- Health
 - Non-status access to health
 - Claimants do not have access to OHIP (only IFHP which has its limitations).
- Mental Health
 - Challenges increased lately in every area
 - Care is not preventative – isolation, culture shock, poverty, out of community, etc. (provincial).
- Poverty
 - Precarious employment – want to move towards dignified employment.
- Language
 - Long lists (waiting lists for LINC)
 - Lists because of childcare and funding for space (there's a ratio, # of square feet per child), and transportation. 20% of learners are eligible for transportation.
 - IRCC 20% of funding can be put into support services (translation, transportation, childcare is part of this).
 - Claimants not eligible and non-status
 - No child care, transportation
 - PRs – transportation but can't be provided to all
- Culture shock
- Employment
 - Can't present yourself the same way a mainstream Canadian would
 - Speak with an accent – discrimination
 - Sensitization with employers – regarding talents
 - George Brown
 - Trains teachers to teach ESL – program dormant. If they could get funding to revive the program to train teachers to pick up this slack, that would be a great collaboration.
 - Trains people to teach ESL, but not running because the teachers were having a hard time finding jobs.
 - Focus on women would be powerful. StatsCan – report about differences between men and women (emp). Access and opportunity. Language, family, childcare, etc.
- Knowing existing resources – affects ability to self-advocate
 - Social isolation – connection to community
- Isolation – no access to many things and go back home. No networks, connections, training on how to dress.

- No job – don't feel valuable and strong. Increase mental illness and mental health struggles – depression
- 2 – volunteers – Together Project
- Family reunification
 - Access to legal aid
 - Understanding how the system works
 - Mixed signals – what type of legal aid services newcomers have access to
 - Providing an understanding of how that system works
- Forms
 - No help from IRCC funded organizations
 - Legal aid doesn't cover costs of helping with forms
- Follow case throughout
- Welcome Centre for claimants/newcomers – to fix or refer
- Together Project
 - Mothers stay home – volunteers
 - Helping navigate services and challenges
 - Augment support to volunteers

Ran out of time to cover questions 2,3, and 5.

4.

- Language issue
 - Different schedules of English classes – limit employment because they are from 9 to 3. Nothing offered after 3pm. Open at least 1 or 2 classes in the city for anybody that wants to improve their English (regardless of status).
- Mental Health
 - Prevention – what are the factors affecting the MH of newcomers? Gap created between the families – parents and kids, peer pressure, isolation, cult shock
 - Gather experiences of organizations
 - IFH – not a strong mental health component – access to different ways to deal with mental health.
 - Stigma
 - Orientation
 - Link to integration
 - Develop more centres like Crossroads – but this is all (and access alliance).

Table 2 (Facilitated by Angelica)

1.

- Connecting to health care services.

- Not a clear definition of a person's status, services are based on different definitions of status inconsistently applied; do not address people's need for immediate care.
 - Systemically vague response to non-status.
- Refugees are isolated.
 - Difficult to link to mental health and health care services; some people fear being connected to services because of what happened to them in their country.
 - Services in the direct community may not be the best fit for the person, and they may have to be referred to a service that is far away but some community health centres have catchment areas.
- Language proficiency, newcomers rely on service providers for interpretation.
 - Service providers want newcomers to understand that service providers are like facilitators and not direct translators.
 - Sometimes newcomers go to LINC classes, but they do not learn how to properly communicate on their own, especially with accessing services, like hospitals and banks.
 - Technologies and funding are needed to improve these services

2.

- Department of Imaginary Affairs: Writing a series of books around how to ride the TTC, to help newcomers understand how to navigate around the city
- Mental health initiatives: Sistering, Gerstein Centre, and Centre of Mindfulness: WRAP group, peer-led group, how do you cope with triggers? Non-medical language that is used. How do you deal with flashbacks? 8 sessions. Participants are asked to go to level 2 WRAP to facilitate their own training, and then they can bring it into their own community; Gerstein Centre has funding now to pay the women to participate (Focused on Spanish-speaking women)
 - Trying to expand: can we do a WRAP group for men?
 - Consultations from people who have done the groups (e.g. Arabic speaking women are developing a youth-based groups, and they do the outreach)
 - Currently just being done at the Gerstein Centre
 - IRCC funding, Wellness Recovery Action Plan
 - Partnership with CAMH
- Language proficiency: using online tools, like Twitter, to connect with each other; seniors can use what they have learned in the LINC class to practice with students

3.

- Definition of status: more research needed and policy change.
- Mandatory interpretation services, especially around health care – this is a human rights issue.

4.

- LIPs have a good platform with IRCC and can work together to get more funding to focus on service accessibility issues and improving logistical ways to access the services.
 - Changing the definition of ‘status’ through policy change may not be the strength of the LIPs.

5.

- Group members are interested in continued participation through Council and possibly Working Groups (Alena, Jenny, Blair, Jen, Shannon, Norma).

Table 3 (Facilitated by Giovanni)

1.

- Poverty: Newcomers are poorer, and this is related to employment, due to the gaps in the system for supports.
 - Rent cost
 - Transportation cost
 - Food cost
 - Tenant rights
- Lack of recognition of credentials.
- Newcomer youth are accessing emergency services as a first contact for support for mental health. What advocacy can we use to get more into this issue and help with the barriers? Best practices to be shared with emergency departments. Need data on what is causing these circumstances.
- Rate of people coming off OW and staying off is not good; e.g. Syrians after month 13. The way it is set up, it is hard for them to get off and stay off as there are more incentives to stay.
- A lot of the newcomers through the refugee claimant process are ‘high English’ and the work permits are being processed faster; but the job opportunities are not ideal as employers don’t like their precarious status.
- Increased housing costs are becoming a barrier, as no matter how much money one brings in, the rent is depleting such a high percentage of it

2.

- (Poverty) TESS are trying to change their service delivery model, more services being brought in to help at the TESS centre (e.g. bringing legal aid, housing and employment as well as settlement services). This is helping with transportation costs for the client as they will only have to go on one day and will have access to several services.
- (Housing) City of Toronto is trying to place workers where newcomers are and do an inventory of community services that own or rent to get a sense of extra space that may be available to support agencies. Red Door example.
- (Accreditation) CARE Centre has been working with the accreditation to help with nurses. (College of nurses are involved with meetings twice a year). Systemic Issues

and Social Change accreditation project. Pre-arrival services can help with letting people know what the landscape is like. Maybe being mandatory a more centralized delivery.

3.

- Pre-arrival services specific for youth (video conferencing and other initiatives to help reach youth).
- Accreditation should be something that needs to be done through policy change.
- More innovative programs for youth that are coordinated to help with the youths' personal situation (e.g. childcare for younger siblings or congruent programing).

4.

- Did not get to it, needed more time.
- Need to touch base with the City of Toronto Poverty Reduction Office to advocate and pull resources together.

5.

- Did not get to it, needed more time.
- Most are willing to join depending on the actions that are being worked on.

5.0 Civic Engagement Curriculum Presentation

- *Being an Active Community Leader*
 - Social Inclusion Working Group
 - 1.5 years of research, surveying newcomers and talking to different agencies about needs of newcomers for integration and becoming a community leader.
 - 8-session curriculum to encourage leadership skills and create a blueprint for a community project.
 - 1) Intro to being an active community leader
 - Privilege walk
 - Create a safe space agreement
 - 2) Group dynamics
 - Leadership styles
 - 3) Working within a group
 - Working within group dynamics
 - 4) Working together for community change
 - Another exercise on creating a safe space and creating the change they want
 - 5) Government 101
 - What the Canadian government is like
 - 6) Introduction to advocacy
 - Inspiring their group to work
 - Where is their voice the loudest?

- Framing the message
- 7) Preparing the community project
 - Pitching the project to their peers
 - Developing the message
- 8) Group presentations and evaluation
 - Presenting the project ideas
 - Celebration
 - Evaluation
- Launch event in January 2019 - showcasing the material; curriculum is on the TSLIP website, on the resource page.
- Limited funding available to offset costs for participation; funding available only for promotions.
 - No big costs for people using the curriculum; only printing and getting tools like construction paper, post-its, etc.
 - TSLIP is looking at slippage to print additional copies for Council members.

6.0 AOB

- TSLIP weekly update has restarted.
- MCI training workshops are now completed; project is coming to an end in March.