

TORONTO SOUTH LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

NOTES – COUNCIL MEETING

*Thursday, September 6, 2018, 10am to noon
CultureLink,
2340 Dundas St. West, Suite 301, Toronto*

Agenda:

1. **Welcome, Introductions**
2. **Emerging Issues**
 - Toronto refugee claimant influx
 - Succession and diversity planning
3. **MCI Capacity Building Project Update**
4. **CMAS: Supporting the care and settlement of young immigrant children**
5. **CFP 2019: Themes, Priorities, and Strategies**
6. **AOB**

IN ATTENDANCE	
ORGANIZATION	REPRESENTATIVE
ACCES Employment	Aimee Holmes
St. Stephen's Community House	Bill Sinclair
Toronto Public Health	Michele Ashem
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture	Mulugeta Abai
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture	Teresa Dremetsikas
Culturelink	Lisa Randall
Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada	Fatima Saher
Toronto South LIP – Newcomer Council	Richard Villavicencio
City of Toronto, TESS	Anzalene Latiff-Rayman
Toronto District School Board	Sevgul Topkara-Saru
Parkdale Community Information Centre	Cassandra Wong
Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services	Tim Maxwell
Neighbourhood Legal Services	Jenny Stone
University Settlement	Behnaz Azad

Polycultural Community Services	Evgenia Gladkikh
CMAS	Heather Savazzi
City of Toronto (Parks and Rec)	Jessica Reeve
CET	Marjorie Girdharry
Afghan Women's Organization	Sogol Zand
Vietnamese Association of Toronto	Mark (Manh) Nguyen
Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services	Nassima Akter
CARE Centre for Internationally Trained Nurses	Ruth Lee
YMCA	Sarita Bhatta
Family Services of Toronto	Sophia Ali
Parkdale Intercultural Association	Tsering Thonsur
Working Women Community Centre	Vanda Henriques
Vietnamese Association	Henry Thai
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

Refugee Claimants in Toronto

Paulina Wyrzykowski provided an update about the situation of refugee claimants in Toronto. In the summer, claimants were housed in two college dorms because there was insufficient space elsewhere. There were approximately 800 families staying there. However, they needed to be relocated before students returned to college in

September. The families were moved on August 9th. They were relocated to areas outside of our catchment. In York region and Peel, the local LIPs are involved. Claimants are mostly in temporary hotels, and permanent housing still needs to be found. COSTI is providing settlement support in the hotels.

Council members stressed that amount of claimants coming to Toronto is not an “influx”. This is not a migration crisis, but rather, a housing crisis. Furthermore, many of the claimants arriving from the United States already hit language benchmarks so there are not many programs in the community that can address their needs.

See Paulina's presentation for more info.

Succession Planning and Diversity

Paulina explained that LIP is an organization made up of:

- The council
- The executive (a subset of the council which deals with HR issues, funding, etc.)
- Working groups.

TSLIP is interested in succession planning to achieve greater levels of diversity in the leadership of the LIP going forward.

There is a small working group working on succession planning and diversity. At the TSLIP Council Meeting in December, we will discuss what diversity means to us and how it can be measured. We will also discuss how to make our LIP at large (including the working group, the council and the executive) more reflective of the populations we're serving. This includes discussing succession planning, or in other words, who future leaders will be and how to ensure diversity among leadership.

A question was raised about if other LIPs are also doing diversity and succession planning.

3.0 MCI Capacity Building Project Update

Nadine Nasir provided the Council with an overview of the Capacity Building project and introduced Council to the upcoming project website.

4.0 Presentation: Heather Savazzi, Childminding Monitoring, Advisory & Support (CMAS)

The role of CMAS is to monitor and provide support to unlicensed service providing organizations that provide care for newcomer children. CMAS develops standards of care for these organizations.

CMAS monitors unlicensed centres that provide care for newcomer children for IRCC. IRCC receives a report every year about compliance with standards of care. However, CMAS doesn't just monitor centres; one of the most important roles is to support

centres through on-site support (in which consultants visit centres), or through remote consultations (for example, over Skype). There are some special needs consultants that also provide support.

CMAS also develops resources and training materials, including online tutorials. Research and resource development is ongoing. Since CMAS has been doing this work for 20 years, a lot of resources have been developed. Over 3,000 people visit the CMAS website every month from both within and outside of the settlement sector. Resources are very user-friendly and provide real life strategies. During workshops, stories are shared about successes in different parts of the country.

CMAS is working on their capacity and ability to respond to refugee families accessing services. When many Syrian refugees were coming to Canada, CMAS developed a Caring for Syrian Refugee Children Program Guide which included strategies for welcoming young children and their families. As part of this process, CMAS travelled across Canada to learn strategies and tap into expertise. Staff at centres caring for newcomer children were already doing a lot of little things that didn't even realize they were doing to make children feel welcomed. There's a guide about responding to trauma among refugee children called *The Resilience Guide – Strategies for Responding to Trauma in Refugee Children*.

The more experts CMAS talked to, and the more research done, they found that it's the little things we already do when working with kids that we need to do more of for families that have experienced trauma. If we can become a bit more trauma-informed and a lot more intentional in our programming, we have a tremendous capacity to tap into resilience and support. One aspect of this is to see the family as a whole. The recommendations are not new shocking things that need to be done, but rather little things that have powerful impact on the settlement of young children and their families. Some of the recommendations for supporting children's settlement are as follows:

- Provide safe and predictable spaces
- Build relationships and support secure attachment
- Help children and parents understand and manage big feelings and challenging behaviours
- Promote resilience and recovery
- Celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity.

CMAS's website is **cmascanada.ca**. It's updated every couple of weeks and has several multilingual resources for parents, including:

- Getting ready for school
- Dental hygiene
- Behaviour management

- Importance of routines
- What to do if my child has nightmares
- Fire safety
- Swimming

CMAS is open to suggestions for new resources that would be useful. Currently they have the following types of resources available:

- Guides and tip sheets
- Webinars and tutorials, including facilitator guides and suggested discussion questions (designed for quick lunch and learns)
- Online courses
- Workshops

There have been slightly less in person workshops now because they are trying to reach far and wide. However, they find that subjects like building resilience and responding to trauma are much better suited for in person workshops, as participants have the ability to talk through challenges and share experiences.

Anyone can request a training for their team on the website. There's also a monthly newsletter, which people can sign up for by going to the top right corner of the website. The newsletter is sent out every month and includes new subject matter and resources on the website. Feel free to reach out to CMAS, as they would love to hear from you about how they can support you in your work.

It was suggested that the TSLIP newsletter should include a link to CMAS's monthly newsletter. It was also suggested to CMAS that they conduct a workshop on how to become licensed, in order to reduce the childcare deserts in our communities. Bill offered to be a guest speaker, as he can speak about the many advantages of being licensed. Bill said that this would likely be beneficial to many centres, as some are very close to being able to be licensed.

5.0 Next Call for Proposals (CFP)

LIP got a bit of a head start on the CFP process because Paulina was part of the National Settlement Council + meeting in June. We got a heads up about what to expect. Paulina was given the impression that IRCC is looking into a "whole of society" approach. In other words, IRCC wants to focus not just on newcomer needs, but also on how to engage different and new stakeholders. This is a much broader approach than past.

See Paulina's presentation for more details.

The CFP is likely to come out in spring of 2019, but we are having the conversation now in order to be prepared. Often, we speak about how important partnerships are, but by

the time the CFP comes out we are crunched for time and partnering seems too complicated and time consuming. We are hoping to start having preliminary conversations now about how to work together on proposals. Although we are starting now to look into possible partnerships, realistically this is a longer process. We want to start today, not to finish today. Not all ideas will pan out. Hopefully 2-3 will turn into actual proposals.

IRCC will likely be structuring proposals around the following core principles:

- Client-centred
 - Especially vulnerable groups. Includes: mental health, women, refugees, youth, LGBTQ2s, Francophones.
- Outcomes driven
 - Programming that is driven by evidence, ensuring the best outcomes, both short and long term, for the client.
 - Reporting: what are you trying to capture, how, why and when.
 - Relevant and meaningful data collection.
 - How to measure integration?
 - Getting from outputs to outcomes. Much easier to count classes provided than overall effectiveness.
- Responsive to needs
 - Acknowledgement that settlement is not just about the newcomer. Is the community open and tolerant, or xenophobic?
 - Addressing systemic barriers including discrimination.
 - Interest in finding ways of reaching out to employers.
- Effective use of resources
 - Innovative approaches and pilot testing.
 - Economies of scale – pushing partnerships and collaborations and scale up what is already working.
 - Harnessing volunteerism.
 - Consortia and other partnerships – focusing on this today.

Paulina asked the Council to gather in groups to discuss the following:

- **What needs are we seeing in our communities? What are the service gaps?**
Be as specific as possible about service gaps. These should be specific to our catchment area. They should also be realistic, as they have to be things that we can actually address.

Responses:

- Insufficient recognition of credential and licensing, and access to opportunities to improve credentials.
- Gap in access to information around housing and access to housing. I.e. where to go? What housing is available?
- Affordable housing and housing care for newcomers.
- Cultural understanding – gap understanding other cultures amongst cultures. Don't know about community engagement opportunities if want to volunteer and be part of wider community.
- Need for civic, community and cross-cultural engagement in context of rising xenophobia and racism.
- Lack of opportunities for newcomers and established Canadians to come together (civic engagement).
- Social isolation – related to poverty, not having family, high-rise vertical living in Toronto south.
- LGBTQ services – Too much reliance on just *The 519* to have to do everything related to LGBTQ services. Need broader network of service providers.
- Health care for people who can't afford private insurance.
- Day care services, to enable women to go to work and school.
- Socialization for seniors. Need more services for seniors (both men and women) in the community.
- Lack of access to services we offer (such as language classes), because we offer these services from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.
- Inability to access City services because registration process is complex and competitive.
- Funding for services for refugee claimants is essential. We should push for this and ensure this issue is always on the table, similar to what we did with mental health.
- Parking lot: settlement services for citizens (senior citizens, newcomers who have become citizens). Unlikely from IRCC, but perhaps another funder.

Council members were asked to gather in groups to discuss one of the following themes, which were chosen from the list above:

- **Community Engagement**
- **Employment**
- **Health and Mental Health**
- **Accessibility of Services**

Participants were asked to identify **what kind of program/project might be helpful to fill this gap?** Participants were asked to consider possible partnerships with people at their table. The summary of the group discussions are below:

- **Health and Mental Health**

- Often, we try to force newcomers to swallow the western style of counselling. This will not work, at least in the early stages. We need to develop a program to incorporate the way newcomers want to receive mental health support and then slowly integrate the western style of counselling. For example, the people who provide mental health support in a community may be faith or community leaders, not medical professionals. It is important to replicate this. We could invite newcomers together (perhaps into language or gender-specific groups) and allow them to network amongst themselves. This will help break some social isolation and they can support each other. Based on CCVT's experience, this social network is very important, as people are agents of their own recovery. It is important to follow their needs and slowly incorporate western styles of mental health supports. This helps us to reach people while also breaking the stigma related to mental health at the same time.
- Council members interested in working on the above-mentioned project:
 - Nasima
 - Soghol
 - Mulugeta

- **Community Engagement**

- The language that is used in community development will determine the kind of engagement that we will get.
- We need to work with unlikely partners, such as organizations that don't do settlement work, but are very interested in welcoming newcomers. For example, restaurants that could designate one day a month for newcomers to use their kitchen.
- Council members interested in working on the above-mentioned project:
 - Lisa
 - Sarita
 - Wanda
 - Teresa
 - Bill
 - Tim
 - Behnaz

- **Accessibility of Services**

- The future of accessibility is technology. As a sector, we are behind on technology. There are interesting lessons in online pre-arrival services.
- Communities are using social media and other technology channels to communicate with each other and people in other countries.
- Accessibility with hearing and vision – technology is changing the landscape and can be helpful.
- Since everything is online now, it's important for technology to be accessible to newcomers.
- Council members interested in working on the above-mentioned project:
 - Behnaz
 - Cassandra
 - Amy (Access Alliance)
 - Bill
 - Michele
 - Richard

- **Employment**

- Lack of Canadian experience is still an issue. Employer education must be done. We need more resources to effectively engage employers.
- It would be helpful to have job placements that give people Canadian experience.
- Bridging programs focusing on sectors are becoming too generic. Hearing from clients that specialization is needed. We also need programming to address flexibility and merging sectors. Bridging programs are not responsive to client needs.
- Bill Sinclair suggested that this work should be done through CASIP and possibly TRIAC. **Paulina will follow up with TRIAC and CASIP to see if they are doing something for the upcoming CFP and if we should be working together.**
- Interested:
 - Richard

6.0 AOB