

London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership

Central Council

Tuesday, September 28, 2010

Present: Kelly McManus, Elisabeth White, Mohamed Al-Adeimi, Trevor Hinds, Henri Boyi, Anne Langille, Jean-Pierre Cantin, Lauren Touchant, Debbie Turnbull, Nancy Wanigatunga, Jean-Claude Kilubi, Huda Hussein and Nina Hamou.

Regrets: Jo-Ann Hutchison, Asma Ahmed, Salah Badawi, German Gutierrez, Dev Sainani, Vicki Esses.

Welcome and Introductions

Elisabeth welcomed Nancy Wanigatunga, Regional Program Advisor from Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Her role is oversight to all LIPs in Toronto and outside Toronto.

Co-Chair Remarks

Elisabeth thanked the members of the Council for their attendance at the Community and Protection Services Committee (CPSC) meeting. The Strategic Plan was presented by Elisabeth, Kelly, Salah and Lauren. Co-Chairs were invited by CPSC to present to the new City Council early in January 2011. The Plan will also be presented by Sally Bennett to the County Council.

The Plan was unanimously endorsed by CPSC and will go to City Council on Monday, October 4 for endorsement. When the City Council endorses the plan, it will assist in keeping the issue of immigration on local planning initiatives.

Key things from the CPSC meeting:

- Invitation to present to London Police Services Board on October 15.
- Questions around connection to Immigration Portal.
- Comments related to importance of immigration to economic, cultural and social future.
- Concern that midsized communities are not getting fair share of funding.
- How are we getting the message out and how will we get it to the “unconverted”?
- How has the LIP considered retaining graduates/creating job opportunities in London?

In response to some of the questions raised, Ross Fair, General Manager, Community Services, City of London, pointed out that the mark of a good community planning process is when your questions are answered in the document itself. He also indicated that Employment Sub-council is looking into the question raised on retention and job opportunities.

Elisabeth reported that she had received a call from a group doing a Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) evaluation. They would like to meet with staff and review records sometime in October. They also would like to do a focus group with immigrants involved in the LIP. Elisabeth suggested that the Central Council Immigrant Representatives to be involved.

On September 17, there was a meeting in Ottawa initiated by Welcoming Communities Initiative (WCI). Various LIPs including Hamilton, Ottawa, North Bay and London were involved.

Elisabeth has been invited to sit on the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Immigration Committee.

Elisabeth reported that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) is doing an event for all Immigration Portals in London next week.

No additions or recommendations were communicated to staff regarding the Media Protocol.

ACTION: Another note regarding input to media protocol will be sent out. George and German will be invited to discuss ethno-cultural media.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes for August 17, 2010 were approved.

Sub-council Chair Reports

Chairs were asked to report back on the next steps of their respective Sub-councils.

Health and Wellbeing Sub-council- Debbie Turnbull, Chair

Debbie met with the Political and War Trauma Committee to share information about the LIP and discuss possible roles once we get into implementation of strategies.

Possible directions for the Health and Wellbeing Sub-council include:

- Free and accessible neighborhood services
- Provide culturally sensitive information specific to health and mental health
- Screening and assessment tools

The Sub-council will meet again on October 12, 2010.

Justice & Protection Services Sub-council- Trevor Hinds, Chair

In the first year of implementation, the Sub-council will focus on the following strategies:

- Adopt or create lesson plans to be used in ESL and LINC classes which discuss issues related to the Criminal Justice System
- Improve awareness of legal rights and responsibilities in Canada through ongoing outreach to immigrants and applying culturally sound approaches
- Continue to explore successes of partnership models such as the relationship between Changing Ways and the Muslim Resource Centre, where discretion related to cultural implications is considered.

Tasks have been assigned. One member is exploring funding opportunities for outreach.

Education Sub-council- Jean-Pierre Cantin, Chair

Collaboration with the Employment Sub-council was stressed. Six sub-committees were formed to work on the following strategies:

1. Work on exploring alternative programs such as the Family English as a Second Language programs currently in place in Ottawa.
2. Look into planning coordination among service providers at Language Instruction for New Canadians levels to streamline existing spots.
3. Map out Literacy services, English as a Second Language services and English as a Second Language literacy services, opportunities across the city.
4. Address the issue of providing multilingual information on the responsibility of both the parents and the school around the necessity of parents interacting with schools by attending school events/meetings and by joining the school council/parent organization.
5. Develop a position paper to the Ontario College of Teachers and Ministry of Education recommending that 'Teaching in Multilingual Classrooms' be designated a mandatory requirement for certification in Ontario.
6. Address the strategy of "Promote cross-cultural peer mentoring: SWIS / parents/ teachers/ through the School Council and events".

The Sub-council has decided to work on projects that do not require immediate funding for the time being.

Education and Employment are working together to bridge strategies.

Settlement Sub-council- Mohamed Al-Adeimi, Chair

Strategies the Sub-council has decided to focus on within first year of implementation are:

- Develop a common information package, across the city and county, with all information related to services in a culturally and linguistically relevant way which includes brochures in different languages that explain settlement agencies and all the services they provide (such as the Settlement Workers in Schools, the Library Settlement Partnership etc.).
- Enhance and strengthen communication among service providers.

A sub-committee has been struck to look at collecting and developing an information package. At the next meeting Sub-council will look at how service providers could come together.

The issue of providing information to points of entries was addressed. Jean-Claude provided the contact for someone at Pearson Airport who can display settlement information.

Currently the Sub-council is only looking at creating information packages in English. Information will be concise, overarching and specific to the City of London.

Inclusion & Civic Engagement Sub-council - Nina Hamou on behalf of German Gutierrez, Chair

The group has agreed to focus on two strategies for the first year of implementation:

- Promote neighbourhood based activities and events that will provide opportunities for immigrants to engage and participate in their new community.
- Create a multilayered community based Communication Strategy.

The Sub-council recognizes that both priorities are interconnected. We will begin tackling the first priority by gathering existing resources and leveraging existing information sharing tools in order to promote events in the community. The Sub-council will meet in October to split up into task based committees.

Employment Sub-council- Huda Hussein on behalf of Anne Langille

Three sub-committees were struck to work on the following strategies:

- A common assessment (CA) process that will respect the needs of the client (building on the existing common assessment process of the Employment Service Council of London and Middlesex).
- Appropriate information and timely referral will be undertaken in accordance with the Privacy Act.
- Employer Connection –bridging systems– a sub-committee from both the Employment and Education Sub-council will work on labor demands and designing educational programs.

Each group has 3-4 volunteers and will be meeting in the month of October. Reports to be submitted to the Employment Sub-council and these in turn will be submitted to the Central Council.

Central Council Priorities

Following discussion, a few key themes arose across the Sub-council next steps:

- Communication strategy/ bridging systems
- Access to Information
- Neighborhoods

Kelly brought the groups attention to the priorities identified by the Council at the last meeting, they are:

1. Supports and Services for Immigrants
2. Communication.

A Communication Strategy is needed to bridge common themes and key priorities. It should include:

- what we want the average Londoner to know about immigrants and immigrations (benefits). Should show: why immigration matters, dispel myths about immigration and what individuals can do.
- a coordinating piece– groups or individuals should be able to opt out of information to receive and not receive;
- service providers and immigrants;
- combination of advocacy and information;
- how to move forward maximizing our efforts;
- specific and general actions.

Example: How can LIPs collectively work towards common advocacy pieces?

Elisabeth indicated that WCI is holding a WCI-LIP gathering late in October. This discussion can help inform the agenda of what we need going forward as a system of LIPs.

The Co-Chairs encouraged Sub-council Chairs to think about the connections between Sub-councils and how to better bridge systems.

ACTION: Project staff will come back with a Draft Communication Strategy for the Council to weigh in on.

Next Steps and Wrap Up

ACTION: Elisabeth and Kelly will bring forward the connecting themes including the connection to the Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy (SNS).

A sub-committee was established to work on the Communication Strategy:

- Jean-Pierre Cantin
- Lauren Touchant
- Dev Sainani

ACTION: Staff will share the Communication Plan used for distribution of Strategic Plan.

Anne asked about the role or affiliation with LMIEC. It was reiterated that LMLIP will build upon what exists in our community.

Next meeting:

Given that a number of members cannot make it on Tuesday evenings, we will look into other times. However, our next meeting is currently scheduled for October 26, 2010.