

London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership

Employment Sub-council

Thursday, February 25, 2010 (10-12)

Location: Pathways 1295 Highbury Ave. N

Present: Ahad Emami, (PhD student), Ana Maria Escovar (Fanshawe College), Aileen Watt (Community Living London), Ammar Dakhil (Sales Person), Anne Langille (WIL Employment Connections), Sammy Farhane, Carolyn Ford, Debbie Vickery (Community Living London), Eleanor Weedmark (Pathways Skill Development), Jennifer Hollis (London Middlesex Immigrant Employment Council), Lisa Pace (South London Neighborhood Resource Centre), Ramona Lucan (interested immigrant citizen), Saira Cekic (TVDSB), Sergio Chuy (Pathways Development Centre), Shakil Popatyi (Hutton House), Gord Fansher (Hutton House), Stacey Noronha (Youth Opportunities Unlimited), Wraychel Horne (YOU), Zuzanna Johnson (interested citizen), Mina Ghavidel (interested immigrant citizen).

Regrets: Frances Shamley, Debra Mountenay, Nancy McQuillan, Nathan Ross, Omar Ouda, Robert Collins, Sally Bennett and Abdul Salam Barry.

The group was asked if information can be shared with members. There was an agreement that Huda sends the list of participants to the group.

Facilitator: Ana Maria Escovar

Summary:

Welcome & Introductions:

Ana Maria welcomed the committee members and thanked everyone for their interest. Roundtable introductions followed. 9 agencies were represented in addition to 7 interested citizens from the community at large. After a short ice-breaker on the importance of employment to any individual anywhere, Ana Maria introduced the members to the agenda.

Terms of Reference

Ana Maria requested the group to review the Terms of Reference with the focus on the Roles and Responsibilities of the sub-council. Anne Langille described the role of the Advisory Committee. She highlighted the commitment required by members of the sub-council and due to the tight timelines, continuous participation of members is needed to ensure that the strategy is prepared within the time frame given to the committee.

Role of Project Staff

Huda introduced herself and advised that her role is to provide the administrative support for the sub-council, Chair and Co-Chair in terms of taking notes, distributing them, sending agendas and receiving

communication from members. It was also indicated that Huda's role will involve clarifying or responding to some questions, as needed.

Follow up from Community Action Planning Day

Ana Maria and Huda briefed the members on the Action Planning Day. The six sub-councils were established on February 2 Action Planning Day and the eight immigrant representatives of the Central Council were introduced. The composition of the Central Council was highlighted as well as the collaboration with UWO the outcome of which was the Draft Community Capacity and Needs Report as well as the mapping of resources which were presented by Dr. Victoria Esses.

Review of Gaps and Priority Setting Results

Ana Maria requested the group to review the identified gaps in the Summary Report. The group was given ten minutes to review the gaps and the priority setting results. It was noted that the services are available to help immigrants in getting job but there is a big gap in communication among the service providers. It was interesting to note on February 2 Action Planning Day that there is not enough collaboration among service providers in the employment sector. The job is the ultimate outcome for the immigrant but the service provider cannot guarantee this to happen. Many members indicated that they needed more time to review the gaps in the summary report.

Action: Huda will enter the gaps in the template and send along with the minutes to the group.

It was cautioned that the committee needs to process the information and understand the issues before embarking on their work. The group was requested to review the summary report as well as the draft Report provided to them on February 2 to familiarize themselves with the process. It was suggested that there is no shortage of research in the field and members may share recent research in the field although in most cases research does not always reflect the local context. Therefore members are requested to share their research which reflects the local context and to build upon what is available, coordinate and identify what is missing.

It was indicated that the gaps have already being identified in this sector and now is the opportunity to act and perhaps follow other cities, like Toronto. It was also noted that the problem is not much so as with lack of services but it is the deeper issue of accessibility and awareness of what exists. Communication gap exists among services providers so before looking outward to the clients the need is to look inside and review the communication among services. It was also noted that the settlement agencies do not necessarily provide integration services to the immigrants. This is one of the major gaps. It was also noted that asking for the Canadian experience is discriminatory and is the biggest gap in finding jobs. A member responded with a suggestion that employers need to take into account the global experience rather than the Canadian as the latter may not reflect the skills that the individual brings along.

Action: Committee to review the gap of communication, integration and the issue of the Canadian experience

It was also noted that this sub-council is part of a bigger Council which composes of other five sub-councils so the need is to have a holistic approach. Many agencies sent representatives in each sub-council for this reason. The communications among the six sub-councils becomes critical in the holistic approach.

Discussions went around the certification process and the time it consumes. Other issues brought up during the discussions, were the childcare issues immigrants face with the exorbitant fees attached to it, the need to offer ESL classes during the night to help those who work during the day to learn English and the issue that immigrants take time to find resources as there is no one Welcome Centre that has all the necessary information for the immigrant. There was agreement that the holistic approach needs to be taken into consideration as some of these issues may pertain to Education or Inclusion, therefore it becomes highly beneficial to work together, network and improve communication among services. Immigrants need to change their strategy to be able to find jobs.

Process of Selecting the Chair and Co-chair

Maria Anderson, ACFO; Sammy Farhane (a Francophone Arab immigrant), Mercedes Garcia (LUSO), Anne Langille (WIL) and Omar Ouda, (Professor at UWO) have indicated their interest in chairing this sub-council.

Anne Langille and Sammy Farhane attended the meeting. The others were not present. Anne Langille was unanimously selected as the Chair and Sammy Farhane as the Co-chair.

Meeting Times:

March 23 (5-7); April 6 10-12; April 20 10-12 (were selected by few members)

Few dates and times were selected that did not accommodate many members' schedules. It was decided to check one more time with the group.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 2, 10-12 at Pathways