

# **London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership Inclusion and Civic Engagement Sub-Council Thursday April 8, 2010**

Present: Rose Aquino, Brenda Qureshi, Michael Goodmurphy, Bernard Koeing, Robin Armistead, Bellot Dieufert Bellot, Estela Quintero-Weldon, Saleh Alathamena, Monica Abdelkader, Nassisse Soloman, Jason Hastings, Oscar Enriquez, Suzanne Huot, David Cottrill, Janice Walter, Valy Marochko, German Gutierrez and Nina Hamou.

Regrets: Andrea Hallam, Dharshi Lacey and Lourdes Assis.

## SUMMARY

### **Welcome and Introductions**

German thanked and welcomed the Sub-council for their attendance.

### **Updates**

Nina shared the invitation to the Wednesday, May 26 Community Strategy meeting during which, the draft strategic plan will be presented. Individuals are reminded to RSVP.

The report by the Welcoming Communities Initiative (WCI) was circulated via email. It included chapters directly relating inclusion and civic engagement. The group decided that it would refer to the recommendations made in the document to avoid duplication.

Due to time conflict the group was asked to move the next meeting up to 12:40 p.m.

**ACTION: The group agreed to meet at 12:40 p.m. - 2:40 p.m.**

### **Minutes**

Meeting minutes from Monday, April 8, 2010 were reviewed and approved. Michael and David will be added to the list of those present.

### **Priorities**

German announced that there are only two meeting left before we submit our strategy to the Central Council. The group will identify strategies for the following priorities:

1. Limited knowledge of host community in engaging immigrants
2. Barriers to engagement at various levels of society
3. Lack of Shared Space
4. Lack of Engagement of Youth
5. Barriers to Accessing Services

The group was asked to divide into smaller sub-groups to tackle strategies for each of the identified priorities. The groups were instructed to work with what was existing in the template and to use strategic, action oriented language.

The groups presented the following strategies:

**Identified strategies include:**

**1. Enhance knowledge amongst host community in engaging immigrants**

- Enhance the coordination of information and the promotion of engagement opportunities
  - Create a multilayered community based Communication Strategy by approaching both mainstream and ethnic media to include the voice of newcomers; and establishing a community-led media literacy program to educate both newcomers and London community about media.
  - Foster collaboration between settlement services, service providers and community agencies in order to engage more businesses and corporations and create more opportunities for engagement. (ex. Co-op placements, sponsoring events, welcome packages and info)
  - Enhance the capacity of local level media sources (ex. Digital, audio, print & visual newspapers, magazines, TV, radio) by capitalizing on existing resources to better reflect the diversity of the city.
  - Enhance, promote and build on programs that help immigrants develop networks with other immigrants in the communities (WCI)
  - Enhance, promote and build on programs that encourage local community members and newcomers to reach out and connect with one another.
- Promote a welcoming, caring and inclusive community
  - Proliferate cultural diversity training to counter stereotyping, racism and apathy by eliminating barriers to access (cost), use of media, Creating incentives to organizations and businesses who participate.
  - Establish a process that encourages communities to challenge negative media coverage of immigrants (WCI) by promoting the use of action alerts which notify the community and service providers to write to media outlets which label groups unfairly.

**2. Enhance and promote skills based engagement at various levels of society, while recognizing that this process may not be linear**

- Provide immigrants with **information** related to engagement opportunities
  - Create culturally informative programming in local public media (i.e. radio, t.v) which highlights engagement opportunities and provides information in various languages.
- Encourage newcomers to **participate** in civic and social engagement opportunities
  - Promote community festivals and neighbourhood events geared at engaging immigrants in their new community.
- Encourage and promote **volunteerism** amongst immigrants by eliminating barriers to informal volunteering at neighbourhood level and formal volunteering at decision making, board of directors and planning levels
  - Increase outreach to immigrants to encourage volunteering by explaining what volunteering is in the Canadian context and the benefits it holds to oneself and the community.
  - Encourage a process whereby informal immigrant volunteers can take on decision-making and leadership positions.
  - Remove barriers to participation in decision making and volunteering.
- Encourage and promote **political involvement** of new Canadian Citizens through a process that begins at the information level before Canadian Citizenship is obtained.
  - Create an environment of trust in through the use of awareness campaigns to dispel views of those whose pre-migratory experiences have created a fear and distrust in governments.

- Encourage groups to follow current affairs by providing education on the voting system, on candidates and removing barriers to voting such as transportation.

### 3. Lack of Shared Space

Due to the large amount of existing research on issues regarding shared space, the group will adopt strategies already identified by the community to avoid duplication.

### 4. Lack of Engagement of Youth

- Collaborate with schools to involve parents and bridge understanding of youth culture (**Region of Peel Recommendations**) by inviting parent-teacher councils to partner with SWIS workers to make an effort to invite/include immigrant parents to engage with schools. Provide access to transportation, interpretation, and childcare as needed.
- Establish and promote mentorship opportunities by identifying role models, creating culturally sensitive networking opportunities to foster relationships and establish peer mentorship programs in schools supported by appropriate training.

### 5. Barriers to accessing services

- Encourage greater service provider collaboration and communication through better use of existing community resources such as the Immigration Portal
- Increase use of existing infrastructure and space to promote information in culturally accessible ways such as tourist centers, bus stops, schools and health centers.
- Promote a neighbourhood, life-course approach to delivering services in a way that brings families together and eliminates barriers.
- Encourage natural points of access for services and use informal methods to deliver information and services in order to breakdown stigma. For example, use non threatening activities and consider the role of arts and recreation.
- Consider barriers, such as cost, transportation, language and stigma in the delivery of all services.

### Next steps

Due to limited amount of time, the group has created a sub-group that will work to compile research for the rationale.

**ACTION: Bernie, Estela, Nassisse and Michael volunteered to collect research.**

Next meeting  
Thursday, April 22, 12:40-2:40  
Kinsmen Recreation Centre, room 2a  
Regrets to: [nhamou@uwlondon.on.ca](mailto:nhamou@uwlondon.on.ca)