

**Systemic Issues and Social Change Working Group**

**Meeting Minutes, Thursday, March 15, 2018**

CSI Annex, 720 Bathurst Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Room #4

**Agenda**

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Approval of Agenda items
3. Review action items from previous meeting
4. Update from Accreditation/Licensing sub-committee
5. Update from Mental Health Supports sub-committee
6. Housing worker/settlement worker resource
7. Updates
8. Other business
9. Adjournment

**Participants**

Corina Carvallo (Skills for Change);  
Diane Dyson (Woodgreen Community Services);  
Grace McDonald (Hospitality Training Centre);  
Mani Mahadeva (Toronto East Quadrant LIP –  
Agincourt Community Services);  
Nestor Abdon (The People's Church);  
Pam Cardwell (Toronto LIP – JobStart);

Richard Villavicencio (Toronto South LIP  
Newcomer Council)  
Sogol Zand (Afghan Women's Organization);  
Tahir Khan (Toronto North LIP – The  
Neighbourhood Organization);  
Tim Maxwell (Kensington-Bellwoods Community  
Legal Services);

**Regrets**

Gem Lee-Herder (Toronto Western Hospital – UHN)

**Staff (Toronto South LIP)**

Angelica de Jesus-Bretschneider; Sandra Guerra (note taker)

**1. Welcome and introductions**

Angelica welcomed everyone to the meeting and participants introduced themselves.

**2. Approval of Agenda items**

Agenda was approved as presented

**3. Review of Action Items from previous meeting**

All action items were addressed as follows:

- a. Angelica attended the report release of WES' pilot project regarding the accreditation of Syrian Refugees. The report has been posted on the website.
- b. Sandra has posted the subcommittee minutes and the link to the Fairness Commissioner website
- c. Shauna has forwarded contact information for the Fairness Commissioner.
- d. Cyril forwarded the contact information for the mental health training. It was not Toronto Public Health as stated earlier, it is the Mental Health Commission. info@mentalhealthcommission.ca
- e. Sandra drafted a housing worker/settlement worker resource. See Item 6 on the agenda

Outstanding item:

- a. Vivien to send a report regarding personal barriers and stigmas surrounding mental health for newcomers.

#### **4. Update from Accreditation and Licensing subcommittee**

The purpose of this subcommittee is to improve the process of accreditation and licensing for newcomers. The group is working with Sally Fazal from Innoweave to address the issue using a Collective Impact approach.

The group has developed an Impact Statement and will work on a Theory of Change process as the next step.

Currently, they are reaching out to different organizations to conduct an environmental scan to gather information about the barriers clients are facing.

#### **5. Update from Mental Health Supports subcommittee**

The purpose of this subcommittee is to improve services that already exist, ensure that staff have access to receive the mental health supports they need and to encourage the development and availability of culturally appropriate mental health supports. Currently the group is doing some online research to find as many non-medically based mental health programs. The group is also working with Sogol and the Afghan Women's Organization who is holding a Wellness Forum at the end of March to present the experiences of their Mental Health and Peer support for Immigrant women project. The forum will encourage attendees to talk about best practices for mental health supports and discuss how to make these projects sustainable. Angelica is away that week, Sandra will be attending the forum on behalf of the committee and presenting some closing remarks about our work.

#### **6. Housing worker & settlement worker resource**

Sandra presented 2 draft resources developed. One designed for Housing Workers about settlement services and one designed for Settlement Workers about housing. Overall, the resources were well received and the committee thinks they will be a useful tool for the sectors to learn more about each other. The committee gave some feedback on the resources such as:

1. Adding some interesting key facts/information
  - a. # of newcomers
  - b. # of people looking for housing
  - b. frequently asked questions that frontline staff are asked
2. Clarifying the Supportive Housing section (who are the tenants)
3. Have people who work in these sectors review the resource
4. Adding links to the 'Where you can find a housing worker' section
5. Decrease the size of the 'Sources' section
6. Add LIP websites

Members were encouraged to send any edits or suggestions to Sandra by Friday May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The next step will be to hold a networking session to build relationships between the two sectors.

**ACTION:** Sandra will send the documents for review and make final edits  
Sandra will post the resource online and send a notice to the committee

#### **7. Updates**

Tim requested an update on an issue the settlement sector has been addressing with IRCC for a long time. IRCC had released a directive that settlement workers were no longer to give 'advice' about immigration issues to their clients unless they were certified paralegals or lawyers. This was to avoid the risk of a law suit. Organizations responded differently, some agencies took a hard line approach and sent all their clients to legal clinics and others were a bit more flexible. OCASI sent IRCC a detailed list itemizing forms and processes and asked them to indicate which items a settlement worker can and cannot do. As far as we know, there has not been a response.

Is this something Systemic Issues can monitor? Can we get Paulina to connect with the Inter-clinic Immigration Work Group (ICIWG) to find a solution? Corina suggested, perhaps something similar to what was done with Injured Workers where lawyers supervised workers to complete forms for clients?

**ACTION:** Angelica to send an email to Paulina to follow up with letter sent by OCASI and request a meeting with ICIWG (email will include cc's to Tim and Corina)

## **8. Other business**

- Mani announced a new training and certification program for Refugees being offered by Agincourt Community Services. 500 refugees will receive free employment and language training in fields such as: security guard, hairstylist, forklift operator, food handling and home child care. Sandra has included the flyer will be in tomorrow's weekly update.
- Pam announced the Education Fair being held in partnership with COSTI, GEO and WES. The workshops for staff on Accreditation and Licensing are full, there is a waiting list. The Education Fair for clients to open to everyone. Pam will be the liaison between the Accreditation and Licensing subcommittee and the Toronto West LIP Action Group working on the same issues. The Action Group has expressed interest in doing a piece of the research for the subcommittee.
- The People's Church is holding a Norwuz celebration – Paster Nestor distributed flyers.
- Diane mentioned that the City of Toronto is currently undergoing a consultation for their Poverty Reduction strategy – 4 more roundtable topics to come, housing, food, transit and service coordination. The roundtable discussions will be livestreamed so you can follow along if you cannot attend. To go [www.toronto.ca/povertyreduction](http://www.toronto.ca/povertyreduction) for more information.

## **9. Adjournment**

11:15 am