

Systemic Issues and Social Change Working Group

Meeting Minutes, Thursday, January 18, 2018

CSI Annex, 720 Bathurst Street, 3rd Floor

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Review of Policy Issue Worksheet results
3. Follow up from Accreditation/Licensing sub-committee
4. Access to mental health support for newcomers
5. Housing worker/settlement worker resource
6. Other business
7. Adjournment

Participants

Cyril Ayeobore (TDSB-Enhanced Language Training); Diane Dyson (Woodgreen Community Services); Dilya Karimova (Toronto North LIP – Working Women CC); Grace McDonald (Hospitality Training Centre); Mani Mahadeva (Toronto East Quadrant LIP – Agincourt Community Services); Muna Gaye (Toronto Newcomer Office); Nestor Abdon (The People's Church); Pam Cardwell (Toronto LIP – JobStart); Ruth Lee (CARE); Shaunna Marie Kerr (WES); Sogol Zand (Afghan Women's Organization); Tim Maxwell (Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services); Vivien Green (North York Community House)

Regrets

Gem Lee-Herder (Toronto Western Hospital – UHN)
Behi Shafiei (Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration)
Glory Ressler (Mothercraft)
Jeanie Son (Yonge Street Mission)
Nicole Sutherland (YWCA-Jump Scarborough)
Sharifa Sharif (University Settlement)
Terry Baker (CultureLink)

Staff (Toronto South LIP)

Angelica de Jesus-Bretschneider; Paulina Wyrzykowski; Sandra Guerra

1. Welcome and introductions

Participants introduced themselves. Angelica will chair the working group going forward.

2. Review of Policy Issue Worksheet results

Sandra reviewed the results of the Policy Issues Worksheet which participants completed at the last meeting. (See summary attached).

A sub-committee of members met to discuss the issue of Access to Accreditation and Licensing for Newcomers. Sandra gave a brief summary of the group's discussion. The aim of this group is to influence a system-wide approach for removing barriers against newcomers regarding accreditation and licensing. Participants agreed that a forum, which can include newcomers who are now citizens, can bring attention to the issue. Participants also agreed that reaching out to the Fairness Commissioner [FC] at an early stage could help facilitate future collaborations with the FC.

The group wants to capture stories from communities (e.g. ethnographic research). Research can push the FC in taking steps forward. We can propose solutions and recommendations. Another goal is push the FC to audit the accreditation and licensing system and take on different cases from the

community. The FC is supposed to audit every three years. However, the last audit was performed in 2010. The FC also does not take on single cases/complaints from the community.

Participants agreed to frame the research and arguments around politics and the economy. For instance, an economic argument could focus on how the city, province, and/or country loses money because of immigrants being barred from entering the labour market (e.g. "brain waste"). We could present supporting evidence for this argument to politicians (also via the forum) to show how brain waste is affecting politicians' constituencies. The group agreed that we must be careful about how we frame our arguments (e.g. We shouldn't promote that having a higher education will make you more valuable as a person).

ACTION: **Shaunna** to keep the group informed about WES' pilot-project regarding the accreditation of Syrians. The pilot project will become a Canada-wide programme in the spring. Findings from the pilot project will be officially released on February 22, 2018.

ACTION: **Sandra** to send notes from the subcommittee meeting + the link to Fairness Commissioner website.

ACTION: **Shaunna** to get in touch with the FC as an introduction for our working group.

NEXT STEPS:

- A meeting is being organized with Innoweave to discuss moving forward with this project using a Collective Impact model
- The subcommittee is welcoming new members, perhaps two more people. Interested participants are encouraged to present themselves.

3. Access to mental health support for newcomers

Participants discussed core funding issues for delivering mental health services. Stigmas and stigmatizing language around mental health issues must also be addressed. TSLIP currently has a Mental Health Working Group [MHWG]. Members of MHWG are interested in working with this subcommittee.

Participants agreed that we could explore the role of faith-based organizations regarding mental health for newcomers. Group considered working through the Faith and Welcoming Communities Forum and partnering with Faith in the City to learn about and replicate best practices of faith-based organizations in supporting mental health for newcomers.

ACTION: **Vivien** to join subcommittee.

ACTION: **Vivien** to send around a report regarding personal barriers and stigmas surrounding mental health for newcomers.

ACTION: **Cyril** to send around information regarding Toronto Public Health and the training they provide regarding mental health.

ACTION: **Sogol** to send link to UK research on Mental Health and Islam

NEXT STEPS:

- Subcommittee to meet and discuss ideas and workplan.
- Subcommittee to connect with the MHWG at TSLIP.

4. Housing worker & settlement worker resource

Sandra updated participants about upcoming resource, a 1-page info sheet regarding housing and settlement sectors. The overall aim of this resource is to improve the referral process between

housing and settlement workers. The completed version of the info sheet will be ready and presented by the next meeting (March 15, 2018). Another idea in the pipeline is to host a networking session for housing workers and settlement workers. At the next meeting, participants will discuss whether to go forward with the networking event.

ACTION: **Sandra** to share draft of 1-page info sheet and the next meeting.

5. Updates

Citizenship and Employment Precarity [CEP] project. Survey has been re-designed and shortened. TSLIP take part in the research project/data analysis during the next 3 years.

Upcoming meetings (10 a.m. at CSI Annex):

- March 15, 2018
- May 10, 2018
- July 12, 2018 (in case we would like to meet in the summer)
- September 13, 2018
- November 8, 2018
- January 10, 2019
- March 14, 2019

6. Other business

- PEPSO book launch at Ryerson University, January 18, 2018.
- Free space at the People's Church is available for organization meetings and events (374 Sheppard Avenue East). Contact Pastor Nestor, if interested.
- Bridges Forum (Scarborough LIP), February 22, 2018.
- Panel discussion at Toronto Public Health, hosted by TSLIP at 277 Victoria Street on January 25, 2018.

7. Adjournment

11:36 a.m.