

Underserved Newcomers Working Group
Meeting Minutes
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
194 Jarvis Street, 2nd Floor
June 19, 2013. 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Agenda

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|-----------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Welcome and Introduction | 20 min |
| 2. Recap of Last Year's Successes | 5 min |
| 3. Review of TSLIP Implementation Phase | 10 min |
| 4. Review of Working Group Priorities | 5 min |
| 5. Frontline Staff Training | 30 min |
| • Overview of Frontline Network | |
| • Frontline Staff Needs Assessments | |
| • Identified Priority Topics | |
| 6. Activity | 30 min |
| • Specific Training Needs | |
| • Group Discussion | |
| 7. Inclusion Checklist | 15 min |
| • 'Inclusion Checklist' | |
| 8. Action Items/ Next Steps | 5 min |
| • Next Meeting: Summer/Fall | |

Attendance

Present:

Anita Fortuno
Hanna Caplan
Hongmei Cai
Lesla Bogle
Rosa Ribeiro
Sargam Rana
Sidonia Couto

Access Alliance Multicultural Community Services
YMCA – Newcomer Youth Leadership Development
Dixon Hall
Parkdale Community Information Centre
Parkdale Community Health Centre
Sherbourne Health Centre
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture

Regrets:

Bill Sinclair
Grant Lehmann
Nisha Nagarathnam

St. Stephen's Community House
The 519 Church Street Community Centre
Toronto Newcomer Office

Staff: Kera Vijayasingham, Nicole Watson

1. Welcome and Introductions

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves along with the agency that they represent. Members were also given the opportunity to mention underserved populations their agencies deal with. Marginalized newcomer populations mentioned included: newcomer women & families, unaccompanied youth, neighbourhood specific cultural groups and emerging communities, LGBTQ newcomers, seniors with mental health and addictions issues and newcomer men.

2. Recap of Last Year's Successes

Members were informed that during the transition phase the Toronto South LIP hosted both a Newcomer Youth and a Newcomer Seniors working group. This year, to accommodate the needs of additional "underserved" newcomer populations the groups have amalgamated into the Underserved Newcomers working group. Nevertheless both working groups from the previous fiscal year had important accomplishments to be shared:

- The Newcomer Youth working group planned and executed an Unaccompanied Youth Forum for newcomer youth in March 2013. Service providers who provide services to unaccompanied youth were invited to network and provide resources to youth in the community. Newcomer youth in attendance were treated to a night of speakers, door prizes and dinner while also gaining valuable information on the services available to them in their community. Over 100 individuals participated in the evening's festivities including representatives from 21 agencies. The event was filmed and photographed; video is available on the TSLIP YouTube account. A compiled list of resources from the forum is also available on the TSLIP website.
- The Newcomer Seniors working group also planned and executed an Information & Service Coordination Forum in February 2013. The forum attracted over 50 participants over the afternoon and spawned an "Our Canada Includes Grandparents" petition that was circulate among the LIP membership. Compiled resources from the event can be found on the TSLIP website.

Moving forward, the Underserved Newcomer working group will continue to build on the accomplishments of these two working groups.

3. Implementation Phase

Members were given a brief overview of the TSLIP's current phase being Year 1 of the Rolling Action Plan. Last year was mainly a transition year as TSLIP members adjusted to the new quadrant structure and developed the new TSLIP wide settlement strategy/action plan. Members were told that the final report is now available on the TSLIP website, and will be sent out via a follow-up e-mail.

The TSLIP settlement strategy is divided into 8 sections, each outlining a key focus area (i.e. partnerships & service delivery cooperation; information outreach and planning; key support services and welcoming communities, etc.). This year the focus will be on implementation of the settlement strategy and action plan; largely through the work of the working groups and also the PSCC & LIP Council. Members were shown the outline of the current LIP structure (located on page 22 of the report).

It was also mentioned that there would be some changes this year particularly LIP funding, and as such there will be no money for space rental, refreshments and other add-ons. This means that the TSLIP will be relying on members (more than ever) to provide space in kind for events, meetings and activities. Members were also informed that the stipend money previously provided to LIP Council members from small grassroots agencies is no longer available. Also, the TSLIP will be unable to offer honorarium to our Newcomer Advisory Committee members, and as such, that group has been temporarily put on hold. Members were informed however that the Executive Committee and Project team will focus a lot of attention on sustainability and alternative sources of funding to support initiatives. Members were then asked to let TSLIP staff if they had any suggestions with regards to alternative sources of funding

4. Review of Working Group Priorities

Members were informed of the Main focuses for the year for this working group:

(1) Supporting all LIP Committees and Working Groups in considering and incorporating the needs of the most marginalized newcomers in all LIP activities; (2) Work with the Partnership & Service Coordination Committee's Frontline Staff Network and other Working Groups to leverage existing expertise to support LIP agencies to better serve the most marginalized newcomers

5. Frontline Staff Training

Overview of Frontline Network & Needs Assessment

TSLIP staff gave an overview of the Frontline Staff Network, which was formed last fiscal year through the Partnership & Service Coordination Committee, and seeks to coordinate information sessions and trainings for frontline staff to equip them with the tools they need to better serve newcomers. At their inaugural meeting the Frontline Staff Network took part in a needs assessment regarding areas of interest for trainings and information sessions. The results of this needs assessment were then presented to the January TSLIP Workshop Attendees for priority ranking where the top five priority topics were identified.

Identified Priority Topics

At the January Workshop Day TSLIP members choose the following "Top 5" priority topics:

1. LGBTQ Newcomers
2. Newcomer Seniors
3. Newcomers Facing Employment Issues
4. Newcomers with (Dis)abilities
5. Newcomers Facing Housing Issues
6. Newcomer Youth
7. Newcomers Impacted by Violence

Specific Training Needs

Working group members discussed that organizing a combination of trainings and information sessions that would provide tools for serving clients and showcase best practices. The group felt it would be feasible to organize 3-5 sessions throughout the year, drawing on the expertise of LIP members and associates.

6. Activity

Members then moved on to a brainstorming session/activity to further narrow down training topics. Members worked in groups of two to develop specific gaps in information and resources under each

of the established areas. All members had a chance to contribute to each of the 5 categories and then discussed the recommendations as a large group. Recommendations emerging from the activity and discussion are outlined below.

LGBTQ Newcomers

For LGBTQ Newcomers, members suggested the following items for consideration:

- Best practices to allow clients to self-identify safely
- Distinguishing unique needs of LGBTQ newcomers vs. non-newcomer LGBTQ community
- Cultural competency for service providers on religious practices, understanding consequences of being part of LGBTQ community in various countries
- Resources and services that are LGBTQ friendly

Newcomer Seniors

For Newcomer Seniors, members suggested the following training areas:

- Early signs and prevention of dementia/ Alzheimer's
- Resources for informal language training adapted for seniors
- Advocacy to funder for flexibility to provide language training
- Housing facilities for seniors
- Understanding of cultural practices of newcomer seniors
- Assisting seniors who are "caught in the middle" e.g. in 50s but unable to find work
- Assessing mental health and addictions in seniors population and educating senior clients on mental health and addictions

Newcomers Facing Employment Issues

For Newcomers Facing Employment Issues, members suggested the following options:

- Create directory (community hubs) of employment specific resources for newcomers
- Assisting newcomers translate their own past employment experiences into the Canadian market
- Awareness on bridging programs for newcomers
- Connection with employers that can provide job training

Newcomers with (Dis)abilities

For Newcomers with (Dis)abilities, members suggested the following topic areas:

- Create access within organizations to service newcomers with disabilities
- How to assess newcomers with disabilities without stigmatizing
- Training on policies and programs such as ODSP and how to access them
- Employment programs for people differently abled
- How to adapt programs/ services for specific needs in practices/ daily implementation ways

Newcomers Facing Housing Issues

For Newcomers Facing Housing Issues, members suggested the following focuses:

- Housing options for specific populations (e.g. single people with mental health issues, supportive housing, seniors)
- Training on housing laws, tenant rights/ responsibilities, housing conditions
- Training on how to access specific housing programs for newcomers

Newcomer Youth

For Newcomer Youth, members suggested the following items for consideration:

- Cultural competency, better understanding of different cultures – Canadian youth vs. newcomer youth
- Understanding of common newcomer youth issues/ needs (e.g. in schools, neighbourhood), social isolation, settlement process, expectations from family to extend support in attaining basic needs which causes mental health/ emotional issues associated with pressure
- Better understanding of Canadian education system
- Awareness of newcomer youth resources in different communities for knowledge of other agencies and for referral purposes
- Assisting youth navigate the Canadian system and various decisions they have to make as newcomers
- Assisting youth manage intergenerational conflicts
- Create youth friendly spaces in agencies where youth feel safe and comfortable to access services
- Sharing resources on extra-curricular activities and information on accessibility

Newcomers Impacted by Violence

For Newcomers Impacted by Violence, members suggested the following topics:

- Knowledge of Canadian legal system (implications on immigration status)
- Better understanding of violent situations in different parts of the world to better understanding client's background
- Training on how to create awareness of what domestic violence is for newcomers where this violence may be acceptable in other parts of the world
- Training on how to educate newcomers of the various types of abuse
- Training on how trauma history impacts clients' abilities to engage, trust, etc. and how to build a relationship and intervene in this type of situation
- Training on process of when police should be called vs. when community services are more appropriate in addition to the consequences of both

Discussion

The working group decided based on discussions around needs of frontline staff, that it would be ideal to organize a combination of trainings to provide tools for serving clients, and information sessions that showcase best practices in the sector. Members agreed both would be useful in improving service delivery for marginalized newcomer populations amongst their respective agencies.

After discussions around the feasibility of organizing trainings/ information sessions, the following were identified by the group as the trainings/ information sessions the working group is interested in planning:

Trainings:

1. Newcomers Impacted by Violence:
2. LGBTQ Newcomers
3. Newcomers with Dis(abilities)

Information Sessions:

1. Newcomer Youth
2. Newcomer Seniors

***Update:** After discussions with the Executive Committee, it was decided that it may not be feasible to organize 5 separate events. As a result, the working group will focus on the trainings and explore the option of adding the information session pieces to the trainings.

7. Inclusion Checklist

The group briefly discussed creating an “Inclusion Checklist” that could be used by all TSLIP working groups and committees to ensure that the needs of marginalized populations are taken into consideration during the planning and execution of LIP events. The development of this list will be a key element of discussion at the next Underserved Newcomers working group meeting in August or September.

8. Action Items/Next Steps

Action		Who
Approval	Seek approval from Executive Committee regarding trainings + information sessions	TSLIP Staff
Contact	Follow-up with agencies identified for specialized trainings + inquire participation in information sessions	Rosa Robeiro, PCHC Sidonia Couto, CCVT TSLIP Staff
Information Request	Contact available agencies/ organizations to potentially attend next working group meeting and discuss existing trainings around critical areas identified by working group members	TSLIP Staff
Space Requests	Contact member agencies that may have space available to host workshop sessions	TSLIP Staff
Funding	Notify LIP staff of any potential grants/funding to host underserved newcomer related trainings	ALL Members
Information Sessions	Establish organizations to showcase for each information session	ALL Members
Contact	Follow-up with agencies to inquire interest in participating in showcase of best practices	TSLIP Staff