

# ELIP Health and Community Wellness Working Group

## Summary of Meeting Notes

**Tuesday, Nov. 1 2016, 4-6pm**  
**Chateau Louis Conference Centre**

### **KEY THEMES**

#### *Arts and cultural expression*

- arts and cultural resources, e.g. music programming is often unaffordable and physically inaccessible
- How do we connect newcomers, especially youth, to arts programming?
- More information is needed for newcomers on how to access arts programming, funding for cultural activities, where are the arts and culture resources

#### *Navigating the healthcare system*

- Immigrants don't know where to go to get culturally competent services, especially women's health and prenatal/perinatal care
- Lack of cultural competence of health care practitioners, who may not be aware of health challenges from other places and how to work with these challenges (e.g. female genital mutilation)
- Lack of language skills affect the ability to navigate or access health care services and social support systems
- Navigation of the health care system is very difficult for newcomers - the difference between primary care and emergency room; different doctors or specialists or places for different needs
- Lack of awareness of where to go for help, for support, for information

#### *Social Isolation/lack of community support*

- Psychological health is promoted with feelings of social supports and being able to integrate into the community
- Lack of community support for women newcomers who may not be able to access social support systems without their families and communities near them
- Gender roles different for men and women here than they may be at home, leads to social isolation within the home, and lack of social support from family and community

- Importance of soft skills to learn how to integrate and be a part of the 'mainstream' - need to broker between the mainstream and immigrant communities
- Integration affects all aspects of health and community wellness - integration has to be accessible for people

### *Mental Health and Psychological Stress*

- Links between psychosocial stress and negative physical health outcomes
- Psychological health is important to look at. Refugees with PTSD, skilled workers or TFWs who may not be accessing jobs can have psychological health effects
- Counselling services or mental health services for refugees
- Depression, PTSD, anxiety -- need to balance having a support system with your own cultural group, and having opportunities to engage with those outside of your own cultural group

## **PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS**

### 1. Integration as a key aspect of community health and wellness

- Research on how immigrants connect to other groups (to 'mainstream' groups): through artistic activities, sport, cultural activities, settlement agencies, etc. as a way to promote social integration
- How do newcomers and immigrants access a variety of cultural activities or programming, e.g. art classes, sports, etc.
- What effect does this have on longer-term integration?

### 2. Navigating the health care system, specifically for women

- What resources and supports are available for immigrant women, especially for prenatal and postnatal care
- How do health care professionals lacking cultural competency skills affect the health outcomes of ethnoculturally diverse clients?
- What resources are needed to help newcomers better understand or navigate the healthcare system

### 3. Mental Health Services

- What resources are available for immigrants for dealing with psychological health?
- How can 'mainstream' resources be balanced with the wisdom and health supports of ethnocultural communities?

# ELIP Skills training, Education and Employment Working Group

## Summary of Meeting Notes

Wednesday, Nov. 2 2016, 4-6pm  
Chateau Louis Conference Centre

### KEY THEMES

#### *Language*

- Prohibitive cost of language tests
- Create a means where immigrants can improve language skills, including workplace language, e.g. jargon, colloquial language and 'cultural language' idioms, expression, workplace culture, cultural awareness, and soft skills
- What resources are required (financial, time, personal) to access testing, whether language or proficiency
- language proficiency tests even for those coming from Anglophone countries
- Language testing is not always effective: there are those who score well in tests but are not able to actually apply that to communicate effectively enough for work and those who may not pass the test but are very good communicators

#### *Foreign Qualification Recognition*

- Lack of knowledge of what the government provides as far as resources, tools, supports for hiring immigrants
- We need to know best practices on engaging people before they immigrate. The more work that can be done (documents, references, competencies/assessments) in home country, the better off a newcomer will be after arriving
- Can't focus only on those who have higher education or higher language level - need to also pay attention to the others who do not. How do we make sure that they are connecting with employers that can provide them with opportunities
- Skills outside of formal education, for instance, trades or more teachable skills, taught on-site.... Do not necessarily need the highest language level skills for this. Employers need to have bridges to connect with people. How do we assess newcomers for these more tangible/hands-on skills, not necessarily higher education, and find employers who can bridge them in?

#### *Intercultural Abilities in the Workplace and Working with Employers and Industry*

- Need to inform industry and employers of the challenges/positives of hiring immigrants

- Intercultural capacities - businesses often don't have this and they need to build on it. For example, firing someone because "communication isn't good enough" - the real reason is a cultural issue, employers need more education on working with a diverse workforce.
- How does intercultural training affect workforce turnover? Where do communication breakdowns happen, where can intercultural training support building inclusion?
- Importance of being a part of a 'network' in order to find a job. How do people find networks and gain access to them?
- need training on intercultural communication for those who are hiring, for example storytelling vs. direct answers to interview questions. Intercultural techniques for employers and employees including communication styles that work best in different environments

*There's a Lot We Don't Know!*

- Do we have good data on skill set, education, training, etc. of newcomers? We need baseline information in order to understand who we need to engage, what education is needed, and how to produce programming and outreach solutions
- Data should include the same questions on the employer/industry side: why are employers not hiring newcomers? How do employers provide language support, or interact with employees who are not English speakers?
- Need to ask and understand from the employers' end how they engage in cultural competence, systemic racism, etc. to help explain why immigrants have difficulty in gaining and keeping employment
- What is the process or journey that newcomers take from actually arriving to finding meaningful employment? What are the barriers along that pathway?
- Need stories to tell the journeys of immigrants that have been very successful in finding employment, as well as tell stories of those employers and businesses who have created an inclusive workplace
- Who is this research intended for? Would we rather focus on programming, policies, other?
- Need for meaningful work that is centralized, "research on research" - how do we get all of these different tools together? How do we map the entire process of STEE for immigrants?
- Do we have any information on internal migration, or the reasons why people come specifically to Edmonton? If we know why people move here, it could lead to knowledge about what their needs are

**PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS**

1. Process map
  - outlines and provide a visual for the route that immigrants take
  - Identify barriers and challenges along the way

- Identify barriers from the employer side
2. Scan of existing resources and supports in STEE for newcomers
- help us to define where the gaps are and what the challenges are
  - what is out there in terms of research, how do we bring it together, compile it all, and identify more specifically what the gaps are
  - E.g. should our research and programming focus on a particular class of immigrant? Should we be focusing on employers or immigrants?

## ELIP Community Safety Working Group

### Summary of Meeting Notes

Thursday, Nov. 3 2016, 4-6pm

Chateau Louis Conference Centre

#### **KEY THEMES**

##### *Unemployment or Underemployment*

- a key to community safety is family stability: having parents or family members at home to provide support, mentorship, and caring for youth.
- Lack of job opportunities for immigrants can cause family members to be away from home working irregular schedules, unable to provide support to their families
- Poor employment opportunities can also lead to unreliable income, and in turn to homelessness and/or crime, especially for youth

##### *Engagement of immigrant and first-generation youth*

- Youth need opportunities to use talents and skills, need encouragement from parents to pursue these and prevent them from falling into crime
- Youth need to feel like they are supported by the community, organizations, and the government
- More support at the stage when families are vulnerable (and children are young) means that families will have less breakdown

##### *Lack of knowledge of Canadian culture and norms*

- Cultural activities that bring people together is part of socialization, 'orientation' to the community to prevent cultural shock, address domestic violence, help newcomers learn how the Canadian 'system' works
- Culture shock and unfamiliarity of the Canadian system can lead to isolation or anxiety, and can lead to people acting out

- Language barrier - need to find a way to encourage and engage people to want to learn the language. If someone does not speak the language, they are unaware of rules, laws, etc.
- There is an issue of lack of understanding surrounding the system, culture, and laws regarding domestic relationships; for example, interactions (up to and including violence) that were socially acceptable in the home country, or were dealt with peacefully by family, friends, and neighbours, but in Canada are dealt with by police and the justice system.
- Spousal counselling, blending culture of home with 'Canadian' culture - allow for learning of norms and social culture
- A physical space for people to come together, meet, provide safety to each other among many different ethnocultural communities - create space for many people to interact, engage with each other, protect each other

### **PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS**

1. Youth engagement as a preventative measure for community safety:
  - Research needs to be done on what and how much meaningful programming is there in the community for newcomer or first generation youth
  - What are our systems doing to provide supports for newcomer youth (e.g. federal, provincial, and municipal governments) and how are these supports provided?
  - When youth access supports, how we do know if these projects are successful?
  - Educate ourselves as to what is out there? What programming exists for youth that engages them?
  - What are communities doing to help children/youth when they arrive?
2. More information and education surrounding Canadian cultural norms of family relationships and expectations:
  - How do we best inform and encourage newcomers/immigrants on cultural and social norms within Canada surrounding domestic violence?
  - What resources can we provide that can help immigrants cope with changing family dynamics when adapting/integrating in a new country/culture?

## **ELIP Settlement and Inclusion Working Group**

### **Summary of Meeting Notes**

**Tuesday, Nov. 8 2016, 4-6pm  
Chateau Louis Conference Centre**

## **KEY THEMES**

### *The current settlement model*

- Is the settlement model that we have now actually working for newcomers? What is the effectiveness of the current model? Why do we have so many gaps still?
- Who is accessing services, and who is not? ~30% of immigrants will visit social services - this is not good enough. Why is this happening?
- Focus is on the first few years that there is an influx of a particular group, e.g. Somalis, Bosnians, Syrians... many people will come at once and the service groups are not ready. After the first year that they arrive, they are left on their own and do not/cannot access the services they need
- Or they try to access the services but they are full and are unable to access them at the critical time shortly after arrival

### *Support services*

- Need strong and sustainable support services, i.e. translation and interpretation, child care, transportation
- Affordable childcare - no childcare prevents people, especially women, from accessing services
- Lack of language/literacy skills - we cannot provide appropriate responses to the needs of immigrants if we don't know what exactly they need due to a language barrier, e.g. accessing medical services like immunization
- Maybe people do KNOW about services, but are not accessing them because of the lack or inappropriateness of support services
- More research on the demand of affordable or free childcare versus the supply is needed
- The information that IRCC has on who requires language training is not fully formed - people may not go get assessed for language level, because they wouldn't be able to attend LINC classes anyway due to childcare barriers
- We may not know actually how many people require language training/classes
- Cultural barrier in addition to language barrier - immigrants require orientation to Canadian culture. How do you blend the Canadian culture with your previous culture
- Inefficiency of interpreters and translators in the city - turnover, as well as not having permanent translators in many services like medical centres, courts, and even within the community
- Need to formalize the position of interpreters/translators and provide them with more training opportunities and could also fulfill the role of providing cultural orientation
- When we have and offer programs, we provide childcare, transportation, etc. but yet no one shows up. Why is this the case? Do we know what different settlement agencies offer and why programs do or do not fail?
- Different categories of immigrants may or may not be able to attend particular programs

### *Community involvement and engagement in settlement*

- New model has taken the community out of settlement - communities are not resourced well enough to effectively help settle those coming into the community. For example, an ethnocultural community may be better placed (with resources) to settle newcomers from the same ethnocultural group who are coming in
- Need for network between communities, and space for people to come together, as well as paid positions and sustainable funding
- Services must integrate entire families, not just individuals alone - community engagement can work to provide settlement support to entire family units rather than individuals
- How do we connect the settlement model back to important community access points that newcomers engage with (e.g. faith groups and gathering places, informal community networks, etc.)
- Social isolation as a cultural shift/paradigm shift and how to integrate into the cultural activities or hobbies - how to connect with people who enjoy the same activities, yet very hard to find here which can be socially isolating

### *Diverse groups and problematizing our generalizations*

- When we create programs, need more people who can reach out to the many diverse community members (different languages, cultures, ethnic groups, etc. from within same country)
- Do we understand the diversity that we serve? And how do generalizations disservice our programming? Look at the generalizations as stereotypes, and see it in the context of racism in the city
- We categorize people - is the way we are trying to understand people doing a disservice to the way we work with people?

### *Settlement outcomes*

- Settlement outcomes - are people able to meet their settlement outcomes and what are we using to measure these outcomes?
- Newcomers show up in different categories (immigration streams) - and all have their own individual needs
- We need a settlement outcome survey
- We need to look beyond settlement and look more long term at integration
- Every organization/group has its own definition of 'success' in settlement or integration or inclusion, we need to unify this definition
- What 'success' are we trying to achieve? What does that look like and how do we achieve it

- Consistency and clarity in how we provide supports to immigrants - even definitions, e.g. at what point are you no longer a newcomer? Cannot access services if you're a citizen (even if you still have the same needs as an immigrant who just arrived)?
- Trauma-informed practice - what mental and emotional health needs do immigrants have?

### *Settlement and Transition of Youth*

- Transition of immigrant youth in particular into the school systems when they arrive and how to integrate youth in general, as they have very different integration needs than adults.
- Also need to provide adults with support, understand that they also have expectations to help children with homework, etc. and their role in transition and integration of youth

### **PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS**

1. What is the current settlement model, and how effective is it?
  - Who primarily accesses services, and what percentage of all immigrants does this account for? Why do others not access services?
  - How do we measure its effectiveness and what would a more effective settlement model look like?
2. How do support services enhance or prevent immigrants from effective settlement and integration?
  - Primarily looking at childcare, transportation and language interpretation and translation
  - What is available at different formal and informal settlement agencies and programs for support services? What is lacking?
  - How do we promote the formalization, resourcing, and sustainability of these support services?
3. How do we incorporate the community back into the process of settlement?
  - How do we promote the community's involvement in settlement processes?
  - How do we ensure that family units and communities are engaged in the settlement process, as opposed to addressing individual needs?
  - How is the current settlement model (focused on agencies) different from the models in earlier Edmonton history, that was more dependent upon community involvement?
4. How are we categorizing immigrants, and how does this impact effective settlement?
  - How do we currently categorize people according to country or continent of origin, or immigration category?
  - How do these generalizations affect settlement outcomes of diverse individuals and families?

- How does this contribute to discrimination or racism in Edmonton?

5. How do we define settlement outcomes?

- what are we using to measure these outcomes?
- Do we need to undertake a settlement outcome survey (similar perhaps to **Alberta Settlement Outcome Survey** or **Alberta Integration Survey**)

6. How do we best ensure the successful integration of youth?

- What are the gaps in transitioning newcomer youth into schools?
- How do we provide supports to families to help support and ease transition for youth?

## ELIP Research Working Group

### Summary of Meeting Notes

**Wednesday, Nov. 9 2016, 4-6pm**

**Chateau Louis Conference Centre**

#### Key Discussion Points

##### *Conduct a scan of research in Edmonton and nationally*

- Starting point of finding out what research is being done in the community by agencies or researchers, specific to Edmonton
- Complete a literature/research scope that includes academic research, grey literature, and community research through consulting with partners (agencies, stakeholders, community leaders), both formal and non-formal research
- Will need to scope national and even international research, as there will not be enough data coming just from within Edmonton
- What are other cities or communities doing around the country? We could make an effort to bring our data up to the same level of information
- Once we have a better idea of what is already around, can then determine which of the research priorities from the working groups can be answered easily or quickly with the existing research
- Not just about collecting research, but collective memory or institutional memory of agencies, e.g. through focus groups, various other mediums that different people or groups are gathering knowledge about these topics

##### *Connecting with Partners and Finding Existing Partnerships*

- work with agencies to find out what partnerships exist or have existed with agencies and academics/university researchers, and how the agencies have participated in research in the past

- A starting point could be to define or ground the language, which in turn would set us up for future research, i.e. defining settlement outcomes, how we define newcomer versus refugee versus immigrant, etc.
- Need for process evaluation accompanying research work - need to develop a systematic process for sharing research and work into the future
- Consistent method of collecting knowledge through these various networks and groups -- a question of knowledge management and having the ability for this research to be accessed by many groups, across many sectors
- The buy-in for partners has to point to the long-term results and outcomes of the research, not the research in itself. That ELIP will conduct the research with the end result of creating the strategic action plan that will benefit not only immigrants but also the agencies that serve them
- Also help to build up partnerships and understand how the different stakeholders are complementing each other's work
- Must develop key messages that reiterates that the research will help to build the strategic plan in the future, with a long term goal of building welcoming and inclusive communities, and that the research will be a resource to be used locally
- Need to find ways to deliver the results and information to the community without a long delay, and determine at what points during the process something tangible can be given back to the community

#### *Working Group Priority Themes*

- Concept or idea mapping to determine the themes that are linked, in order to conduct the research according to theme as opposed to the separate working groups
- Should first look at each of the themes in the national context, and see how it is applicable in the Edmonton context, e.g. are research findings (or questions) translatable to this local context and where are the gaps where it is not translatable
- Perhaps use the indexing of the AUMA measuring inclusion tool - use this to determine the themes that we investigate
- The desire is to keep the themes, but to group together various points across working groups and unite them under a particular theme