



tha

"Building the Ottawa Mosaic"



SUMMARY REPORT Conference on Issues Regarding Ethno-cultural Minorities in Ottawa

April 25th 2002

LASI (Local Agencies Serving Immigrants) and The Social Planning Council of Ottawa



Mosaic Steering Committee:

Building the Ottawa Mosaic

- 3 *Mohamed Ahmed, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization*
- 4 *Patrick Ballay, Social Planning Council*
- 5 *John Biles, Metropolis Project*
- 6 *Naini Cloutier, Pinecrest Queensway Health and Community Services*
- 7 *Sheila Cranmer-Byng, United Way*
- 8 *Des Doran, The Jamaican(Ottawa) Community Association*
- 9 *Michèle Dumel , Social Planning Council*
- 10 *Mohamoud Hagi-Aden, South-East Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community*
- 11 *Hamid Mousa, Nepean Community Resource Centre*
- 12 *Linda Osmond, Catholic Family Services*
- 13 *Katherine Pestieau, Metropolis Project*
- 14 *Lucya Spencer, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants*
- 15 *Nancy Worsfold, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization*
- 16 *Mark Zarechi, Jewish Family Services*



Building the Ottawa Mosaic

Executive Summary

Conference on Issues Regarding Ethno-cultural Minorities in Ottawa

Opened by two speakers: the Honorable Bob Chiarelli, Mayor of Ottawa, who high-lighted municipal policy aimed at aiding the most disadvantaged immigrants and refugees; and Mr. Haroon Siddiqui, Editor Emeritus of the Toronto Star, who proposed migrants engage in collective action to counter negative perceptions of immigration and to cause policy change within the democratic process, the conference brought together parties interested and active in addressing issues and challenges facing minority communities in Ottawa. Topics addressed were identified by a survey distributed to, and avidly answered by, the interested agencies. The topics addressed were:

- Employment opportunities and barriers**
- Access to municipal services**
- Advocacy**
- Barriers to immigrant and refugee integration**
- Intergenerational conflicts and issues**
- Housing barriers faced by new Canadians**
- Mental health services**
- Inequity and poverty**
- Effects of September 11, 2002**

Each issue was addressed in a workshop, divided into two parts: an information session, and a facilitated discussion. The goal of the discussions was to develop strategies to meet the challenges raised in the information sessions. Workshop strategies were shared with all participants as key recommendations presented at the end of the conference. This report documents the workshops and recommendations.

1. Employment opportunities and barriers

The selection of immigrants is now moving to a human capital model instead of the old occupation based immigrant selection system, this may allow for more flexibility for those wishing to come to Canada. Once a professional immigrant arrives in Canada employment programs with flexible eligibility criteria, close ties to occupations and a strong networking component are key to success. Research needs to be aggregated to document best practices (e.g. The Ottawa Workforce Development Strategy of the Maytree Foundation, www.talentworks.ca) . Aggregation of research is part of addressing immigrants' poor access to information.

It is the recommendation of the Employment Workshop that immigration policy include: pre-emigration communication on working in Canada; earlier intervention on arrival; and, early language assessment and individualized training

2. Access to municipal services

Based on the experience of the Working Group on Women's Access to Municipal Services, this workshop examined service provision in an increasingly diverse Ottawa. The participants found cities hold an increasing percentage of the population, are responsible for more services –including some pertaining to immigration– due to downloading, and are the likeliest place for immigrants to land. Accordingly, municipalities should play a larger role in immigration policy and integrate immigration policy with service provision. Public transportation is a key service, by which other city services should be accessible. Services should include supports, such as child-care and promotion, to make them known and accessible to all. In order for this to occur there needs to be greater coordination / communication among service providers, and with citizens.

It is the recommendation of the Access Workshop that city council engage city staff and the community, including various agencies, citizens, and school boards, to be proactive in developing and implementing strategies, programs and policies that promote inclusiveness.

3. Advocacy

The 1990s saw a double shift in advocacy. First, lobbied groups, such as governments, became less responsive to advocacy and more focused on individuals. Second, individuals –preoccupied with personal concerns– participated less in collective action. Yet advocacy remains important in order to obtain and maintain collectively needed services. Advocacy must be re-legitimized, and financially and politically supported in order to be effective.

It is the recommendation of the Advocacy Workshop that advocacy supports be built through a cross-sectoral forum for coalition building and consultation with emphasis on policy, research and intervention.

4. Barriers to immigrant and refugee integration

Racism, barriers specific to women, and the status of Canadian policy relating to integration were the foci of this workshop. Recent immigrants are faced with three types of racism. First, many Canadians hold a negative view of diversity and immigration, fearing job competition as well as other economic burdens. Second, ethnic hatreds often carry-over from countries of origin. Third, lack of uniformity, or existence, of services constitutes systemic racism. In addition to racism, women are faced by gender-specific image, psychological, and economic barriers which hinder employment and integration.

Countering racism requires ethnic groups to positively publicize diversity, the federal government to do the same, and for immigration policy and service funding to explicitly address diversity. In addition to its multicultural policy, Canada needs to coordinate federal and provincial efforts to develop an accessible cross-cultural policy that creates bridges between groups. Addressing barriers specific to women requires deconstructing negative images and developing programs that allow for equal service provision to women, as well as utilizing the entrepreneurial capacities within landed communities.

The recommendations of the Barriers to Integration Workshop are that: local groups establish a cross-sectoral community group to educate the public and inform the media in order to negate the image of immigrants as “job-thieves”; and that Canada provide a one-stop information source on entry regarding services.

5. Intergenerational conflicts and issues

Freedom, mental health, expectations and values, and institutional and social pressures, were the clusters around which this workshop addressed intergenerational conflicts, as seen from a youth perspective. Canadian culture grants a range of personal choice –in dress, association, employment etc.– that may differ significantly from the home culture. Youth adapt more quickly than their parents. Parents fear cultural loss and attempt to exert control, while youth are faced with intense pressure and expectations –both external and internal– to conform to different cultures. This pressure often creates a feeling of isolation, which can lead to depression. Addressing the causes –familial, community, and institutional pressures to conform– is the best way to counter the perceived isolation and resulting depression.

It is the recommendation of the Intergenerational Workshop that intergenerational stress be addressed through: community group facilitation of parent-youth dialogue; partnering landed families with new arrivals; and institutional service delivery that includes an understanding of, and speaks to, multicultural challenges. These can only be accomplished if funding is provided.

6. Housing barriers faced by new Canadians

Subsidised housing, women in shelters, and systemic barriers to housing faced by new Canadians were the three topics addressed in this workshop. Though a significant proportion of subsidised housing is allocated to recent immigrants, there simply is not enough, as evidenced by waiting periods of up to seven years. Immigrant women often face community pressure to remain in abusive relationships. In the event they do go to a shelter they are not classified as homeless, though they may have nowhere else to go. Systemic, or rule-based, racism poses a significant barrier to acquiring housing. Examples include: income, previous landlord reference, and first / last month rent requirements.

The recommendations of the Housing Workgroup are: centralise shelter vacancy information; increase shelter funding and capacity; provide services in more languages; and find long-term creative housing solutions.

7. Mental health services

Trauma suffered in the native land, adapting to a new environment and language, role change, status loss, and loss of family and social support networks are all causes of mental duress for migrants. Despite need, asking for mental health services is often hard due to cultural taboos against “madness” and leaving abusive relationships, as well as fear of deportation or having children taken away. Receiving adequate treatment is difficult due to the cultural and linguistic gaps between patients and service providers. The “Mental Health and New Canadians” project funded by Health Canada attempted to address these gaps. It sought to encourage new Canadians needing mental health services to obtain them, and to increase community participation in addressing mental health issues, and by doing so to strengthen the communities. While partnering of mainstream service providers with community groups facilitated credibility and service

provision, community needs were beyond the scope of the project and differences in scale and structure between community groups and mainstream service providers made relationships difficult to maintain.

It is the recommendation of the Mental Health Workshop that these challenges be countered by educating mainstream professionals on migrant needs, challenging minority communities to develop their own solutions and mental health services, and by increasing funding from all levels of government.

8. Inequity and poverty

Working from the axioms that inequality causes poverty and that minority groups suffer disproportionately from inequality due to systemic racism, this working group looked at inclusion and participation in policy making as the means to fight poverty. Several positive steps have already been taken: the city's use of cultural interpreters in service provision; the Ottawa School Board's accreditation program for foreign teachers; and the establishment of The Task Force on Poverty –though minority communities are not yet adequately represented on the Task Force. Future projects should include making the city's 18000 member workforce representative of the city's diversity, and advocating for equitable distribution of community program funding. For these, and similar, projects to succeed minority individuals and groups need to make themselves heard.

It is the recommendation of the Inequity and Poverty Workshop that the workshop members develop a diversity plan for the city, and form a cross-sectoral group of conference attendees to advocate for minority issues and demand accountability from policy makers.

9. Effects of September 11, 2002

When people feel threatened they look for another to blame, and will allow their rights to be curtailed in order to feel safe again. The events of September 11th created tension within Ottawa as a whole, as well as towards people of color, and of Islamic and Jewish heritage. Soon afterwards, Canada passed *Bill C-36*, granting the government discriminatory and intrusive powers. Targeting of an identifiable group is less likely when there is understanding.

It is the recommendation of this working group that greater opportunity be fostered in the community at large for bringing people together in dialogue, which will lead to greater understanding and less stereotyping.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION1

KEYNOTE SPEECHES

1.1 The Honourable Bob Chiarelli, Mayor of Ottawa2
1.2 Mr. Haroon Siddiqui, Editor Emeritus of the Toronto Star3

WORKSHOP REPORT

1. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS 7
1.1 The Maytree Foundation7
1.2 The City of Ottawa People Services9
1.3 TalentWorks.....9
1.4 World Skills9
1.5 The Teacher Initiative10
Final Recommendations.....10

2. ACCESS TO MUNICIPAL SERVICES..... 10
2.1 Meeting the challenges of diversity11
2.2 Effects of the downloading of power11
2.3 The Working Group on Women's Access to
Municipal Services in Ottawa11
2.4 Municipal services and civic participation.....11
2.5 Key focus group findings12
2.6 Next steps.....12
Final Recommendation12

3. ACCESS TO MUNICIPAL SERVICES..... 12
3.1 Discussion group results13
3.2 How can we increase the ethnocultural community's ability
to access municipal services?.....13
Final Recommendations.....14

4. ADVOCACY: BUILDING A VISION..... 14
4.1 What is advocacy14
4.2 Why advocate.....14
4.3 What challenges does advocacy face today?.....14
4.4 The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants.....15
Final Recommendation15

5.	BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION	15
5.1	Racism.....	16
5.2	Barriers to integration faced by women	16
5.3	Where are we now?.....	17
	<i>Final Recommendations</i>	18
6.	INTERGENERATIONAL CONFLICTS AND ISSUES	18
6.1	The youth perspective	18
6.2	Coming to terms with freedom	19
6.3	Stress of the immigration process	19
6.4	Expectations and values.....	19
6.5	Institutional and social pressures	20
	<i>Final Recommendation</i>	20
7.	THE HOUSING CRISIS: BARRIERS and CHALLENGES FACED BY NEW CANADIANS	21
7.1	Subsidized housing	21
7.2	New regulations by the Ontario Government	21
7.3	Women in shelters.....	21
7.4	What are the solutions?.....	22
7.5	Barriers and challenges faced by new Canadians	22
	<i>Final recommendation</i>	22
8.	MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	23
8.1	Mental health and immigration.....	23
8.2	Access to mental health services.....	23
8.3	Mental health and new Canadians	24
	<i>Final Recommendations</i>	25
9.	INEQUITY AND POVERTY	25
9.1	Inequality equals poverty?	25
9.2	The gap is broadening: levels of poverty are higher. Why?.....	26
9.3	Addressing poverty	26
	9.3.1 The City of Ottawa Employment and Social Assistance Branch.....	26
	9.3.2 Recreation services	26
	9.3.3 Foreign-trained teachers.....	26
9.4	The People's Hearings.....	26
9.5	The Task Force on Poverty	26
9.6	Gaps and challenges.....	27

9.	INEQUITY AND POVERTY (CONT'd.)	
9.7	Future plans at the municipal level	27
9.7.1	Human Services Plan	27
9.7.2	Funding	27
9.7.3	People services.....	27
9.7.4	The City as an employer	28
	<i>Final Recommendation</i>	28
10.	EFFECTS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001	28
10.1	Initial reaction to September 1128	28
10.2	Public opinion post September 1129	29
10.32	The Jewish community: the resurgence of anti-Semitism	29
	<i>Final Recommendation</i>	30
11.	CONCLUSION	30
11.1	Where do we go from here?	30
12.	OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS	31
12.1	Employment barriers.....	31
12.2	Access to municipal services	31
12.3	Access to municipal services	31
12.4	Advocacy: building a vision	32
12.5	Barriers to integration	32
12.6	Youth - Intergenerational conflict.....	33
12.7	The housing crisis	34
12.8	Mental health services.....	34
12.9	Inequity and poverty.....	34
12.10	Effects of September 11	35
	APPENDICES	36

APPRECIATION

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

The first time I came to Canada I never thought about it much. I assumed everything would be the same as Africa; well, except for the people and the weather. Little did I know that everything was the opposite of what I believed it to be.

According to Citizenship and Immigration, 58.7% of new arrivals to Canada in the year 2000 settled in Ontario. Of these, a sizeable number chose to make their home in Ottawa. Current demographic trends, reflecting in part the levels of immigration, are making Ottawa a very ethnically diverse community. The 1996 census notes that 15% of the city's residents are members of visible minorities and more 20% of residents are immigrants. This cultural richness, beneficial in so many ways, is not without its challenges. The members of these diverse ethnic and cultural groups, among them refugees, immigrants and visible minorities, face numerous obstacles which prevent them from participating fully in Canadian society. To examine these problems, Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI), in co-operation with the Social Planning Council with support from Community Resource Centres, sponsored a conference on Thursday, April 25, 2002, to discuss issues affecting Ottawa's visible ethnic, cultural and religious minorities.

The goals of the conference were to provide a forum for examining the challenges faced by immigrant and minority communities, as well as an opportunity to develop strategies for ensuring that a support system is in place for the ongoing co-operation needed to make the City of Ottawa a model of equality and justice for everyone. The conference's principal objectives were to facilitate the exchange of information, increase planning capability, enhance the community's capacity for mobilizing to answer key questions, and identify individuals who can speak for their

communities on important issues. The conference was aimed primarily at those who are active in these communities and those who provide services to them.

The conference was a huge success. Turnout far surpassed the expected number of participants. Furthermore, the participants engaged themselves with enthusiasm and a desire to make things happen. The message that echoed throughout the day was loud and clear: "The face of our city is changing. Indeed, the face of Canada is changing, and we have to change with it." (*Ottawa Citizen*, April 26, 2002) At the end of the day, each workshop came up with final recommendations to answer to the challenges presented and discussed during the course of each workshop. These recommendations will help in developing strategies for ensuring a support system is in place to make the City of Ottawa a model of equality and justice for everyone.

The following report is a synopsis of the day's events. The report begins with a summary of the keynote speeches made by Mr. Haroon Siddiqui, Editor Emeritus of the Toronto Star, and Bob Chiarelli, the Mayor of Ottawa. A summary of each of the ten workshops then follows. The report summarizes participants' discussions using their own words where possible. In some instances the ideas shared have been regrouped for clear reporting, while respecting the context in which they were offered.

KEYNOTE SPEECHES

Building the Ottawa Mosaic

The Honourable Bob Chiarelli, Mayor of Ottawa

Dealing with a changing society

Though leaders work in a dynamic environment, they tend to see social problems, such as integration, as static. This is not the case. Yes, there are unfortunate constants, but the address of all social ills occurs within a society in transition. If we wish to continue to win the war against inequity, we must remain vigilant and offer clear vision.

Moving Targets

One dynamic element is rapid urbanization. The nature of society is changing, creating additional challenges. Combined with a healthy immigration and refugee policy, we are faced with moving targets and a changing dynamic. The number of immigrants coming to Ottawa annually has increased to 8, 000 per year. Therefore, not only are we faced with existing challenges but also increasing numbers. We need to work collectively with that as a society. We are making significant progress.

Avoiding the Digital Divide

Also, we have a very dynamic and growing economy in our cities, which are becoming city-states. We have to be vigilant to avoid the Silicon Valley situation –that is, to avoid the “digital divide” – all the people at the top enjoying the benefits and a growing number of people not benefiting. Then they have to catch up. We have to put into perspective what is happening in our economy and how it relates to immigrant services and people who are at the bottom of the sector.

The Economic perspective

In 2000, \$1.2 billion in high-tech venture capital was invested here (30% of what was invested in Canada). 2001 was a downturn year for technology and the high-tech venture capital investment in Ottawa dropped to \$950 million. For the first three months of 2002, \$300 million of venture capital was invested here.

When we look at the value of building permits, which is another indicator of economic activity:

- in 2000: \$1.45 billion
- in 2001 (during the downturn): \$1.6 billion
- in 2002: heading for economic growth.

Added to that growth, we have the growth of the federal government. There is a prediction of 400,000 additional square feet of office space and other space needed over the next two years.

What are the obstacles to integration?

In this context we have to ask, “Why do we have more people not participating and having to line up at World Skills job fairs?” People in our community need help getting up to speed to participate in the economy because if more get left behind, we pay even more as it feeds down to the children.

We have the economic dynamic that will move us to 1.2 million people in the next 20 years. That is why the regional government is continuing Partners for Jobs, a program to identify the impediments for advancing in the economy for some people. It includes

In Ottawa we have shown leadership with the Partners for Jobs program. Other cities are coming to find out about it and the Province of Ontario is now looking at it. They should have

taken the lead because it is education and training but, nonetheless, we showed leadership in Ottawa.

The Ottawa Mosaic against the Changing Canvas of Canada

Mr. Haroon Siddiqui, Editor Emeritus of the Toronto Star

The changing canvas of Canada is increasingly “immigrant / non-Christian / non-white”. It is the same kind of demography that spooked the French so badly that they put M. Le Pen at the #2 position in their recent election. While that was not the only issue in the election, M. Le Pen's program included: deporting illegal immigrants; ending legal immigration; setting up a separate health system for French citizens; giving French citizens priority in jobs and housing; and making changes in access to public schools.

Immigration and changing demographics are developing into major issues in many countries –Austria, Italy, Norway, the Netherlands, and elsewhere. The question is, "Is a similar populist backlash in the making in Canada?" Happily, no. Nonetheless, we have to be vigilant because there has been a hardening of attitudes, particularly with Muslims being painted as evil.

The "Great White North" is not white anymore

There were 3.2 million people of visible minorities in 1996 –more than the population of the Maritimes and more than the Prairie Provinces. There are 1 million South Asians, and nearly 1 million Africans. We are getting a large Chinese community here as well. It is estimated there are 4.4 million people of visible minorities today.

It is estimated that Canada has 650,000 Muslims. Muslims are overtaking the Jews – demographically speaking– who number 350,000 nationally. Most of the original Arabs were Christian, but most Arabs who are coming now are Muslims.

In Toronto 54% of the population is foreign born. It is the only city in the western world with that demography. Even New York has only 42%. 51% of Toronto's population are visible minorities. It is the only urban centre in the Western world where visible minorities constitute the majority.

Ottawa is small, yet similar. Ethnic diversification is happening on a smaller scale in Ottawa. We have a vision of Ottawa as a French / English city, but foreign-born people outnumber the French here, even though some speak French. This is not new, but what does it mean?

Canadians and Immigration

Canada has always had an anti-immigrant "whine". We all tend to blame the latest arrivals –and charge that they are ripping off the welfare system and creating crimes. Every previous immigrant group thinks the most recent group is not fit to be part of this community. This goes from the left to the right politically. For example, the recent report "Strangers at the Gate" is talking about "assimilable" people.

What we have to see is the change in the mix. It is no longer Christian and white. 3/4 of the sources of immigration are Asian and visible

minorities. Even "normal" people are saying it is changing too fast. Canadians always say that.

The benefit of immigration

All the studies show a net benefit –immigrants pay more taxes than native-born Canadians, they buy houses at a higher rate than native-born Canadians, and so on. But the negative public image persists.

Immigration and the economic restructuring

Because of the huge economic restructuring of the 1990s, basic things have changed and public policy has not caught up.

Many of the lower end jobs have gone to low wage areas so we do not need the lower wage jobs here. That is a good thing for the Third World in a way, but not good for new arrivals.

There is too much specialization. I would not be hired at the Toronto Star today if I applied. When I came, though, they said, "Come, we do not know what you will do, but we will find something for you."

We do not need to import doctors etc. as much as we need immigration to keep the population numbers. Mid-level entry jobs are not there. People said, "There is too much family class immigration". So they brought all the skilled people from the Arab states (accountants etc.), but there are not jobs for them. Then you get the people flying back and forth between Kuwait and Canada. The government is happy because they buy a house, but it leads to social problems.

There is a huge gap between rich and poor. Did you see the report recently of the Chief of the Bank of Nova Scotia who got paid \$19 million – but then the telephone operator got fired (so that

the Corporation could save money)? We do not have public policies in place to bridge this gap. It is taking the immigrants longer to get a job, to move up, and to gain parity with Canadian-born people. Read Jeffrey Read's study at the University of Toronto with an eye to public policy.

Racialization of poverty

The result is people who came for high-tech did fine until the bubble burst. At the lower end there has been greater racialization of poverty in Canada. Professor Ornstein has studied this and shows, for example, 38% unemployment in the Somali community in Toronto. Would we find that if we had a study like that in Ottawa? There is no money to do these studies.

These things lead to long-term consequences. Previously 75% or 80% integrated seamlessly. Now more and more are on the margins longer, which is bad for everyone. The best social welfare system is a job. Give people a job and everything flows from that.

Issues of immigration and politics

Issues of immigration are of low priority to politicians. While politicians come to dinners etc. and say nice words, it is really immigrant pathology at its worst, because we are easily pleased with a photograph with a politician. But this is empty, because it does not translate into government policy.

“Don’t give politicians your vote unless they deliver. Don’t re-elect them unless they do something!”

Building the Ottawa Mosaic

This is related to the concentration of the media among neo-conservatives.

"You cannot cede the public space to xenophobes and to the anti-immigrant message."

The fundamental restructuring in Canada leads to hardening of attitudes

Relevant to this audience, there is a “demonization” of immigration and refugees in the papers. That in turn feeds public opinion, which is negative to start. Even so-called capital “L” Liberal government decided to “become tough” on immigration. Sergio Marchi was winning brownie points by being tough on immigrants, but he had made his mark earlier as a refugee advocate. The immigration processing fee is a great hardship. Jean Chrétien is going to Africa with an aid package and taking money from African refugees here.

Attitudes since September 11th

Attitudes have hardened even more since September 11th. Since the people were Arabs, immigrants, Muslims, we have racial profiling in Canada and the U.S. There is a kind of “McCarthyism” here –“ferret out terrorism”. There is a broad-brush approach to “root out” Muslims. It is useful to remember that law-abiding Muslims and Arabs have nothing to do with Osama bin Laden. They are no more responsible for what happened than were Japanese Canadians responsible for Pearl

Public opinion does not care and politicians are driven by public opinion

Politicians exist to get re-elected and if they do not get heat from you –the public– they do not need to respond. It has been made worse by a hardening of attitudes on the part of the media.

5

Harbor or German Canadians responsible for the Holocaust.

Bill C-36

C-36 is supposedly about “fighting terrorism,” but it is a sweeping attack on civil liberties. And there was not a peep across Canada. The moral of the story is we have to fight racism. It is part of Canada's history to be racist –we were anti-Catholic, anti-Irish, anti-Semitic... The challenge today is to fight “anti-Islamism”.

The age of self-interest

The legacy of the 1990s is that people have no tolerance for what they consider to be “special interest groups”. It is the age of self-interest and of “How much more money can I make?” We have to talk about the public good and about how we cannot leave people on the margins. The sooner you give people the opportunity to become productive citizens the better for everyone. The common good is that Canada faces huge skill shortages. This is a human resources issue and, since 2000, the only gain in population in Canada will come from immigration. You see the problem in Atlantic Canada and Saskatchewan.

You cannot say “yes” to immigration and “no” to immigrants!

We need to change the public’s perception of immigration. We are given the idea that we

allow immigration to do the immigrants a favour. We do not allow immigration to do them a favour (with the small exception of refugees). That message has to be hammered home.

It is a contract, “You bring the energy, skills etc. and we give you a tremendous country in which to raise your family”.

This message has to be set out every day. Every questionable story in the media has to be challenged. I always say, “Your job is to make my life miserable and the politicians’ lives miserable”. Be on our case all the time. Maybe people cannot write cheques, but they can vote.

The power of democracy

What you lack in resources and money, you make up in numbers. That is the great power of democracy. Democracy belongs to those who actively participate. Civic engagement is very important. We are the great hope. We are neither tradition bound, nor “hype-bound”. We are not burdened with a colonial mindset.

Developing balance between individuals and collectivities

We do things very well in Canada. John Ralston Saul talks of the three original minorities – Aboriginal, French, and English. We have the huge balance between individuals and collectives. Canada has done that very well. The great hole in democracy is not knowing how to deal with collectives, but the English and French have learned how to do so in Canada.

The other great thing is Canada lets every new generation re-define this country. There is no fixed culture so we have a right to re-define it in our own image. In Canada we appreciate our own modesty. You can make it happen.

WORKSHOP REPORT

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS

Panelists:

- ❖ *Ratna, Omidvar, Program Director, Maytree Foundation*
- ❖ *Cheryl Gorman, Executive Director, OCRI, TalentWorks*
- ❖ *Mengistab Tsegaye, Executive Director, World Skills Staffing Services*

Introduction

The objective of this workshop was to explore the issues and barriers with regard to immigrants accessing appropriate employment. It addresses and describes the systemic barriers to accessing employment and gives some examples of local initiatives.

Ratna Omidvar Program Director, Maytree Foundation

1.1 The Maytree Foundation

Maytree Foundation is a private foundation committed to social justice and the reduction of poverty. The foundation focuses a lot of its efforts on policy development and strives to find global solutions, as they are necessary to overcome obstacles.

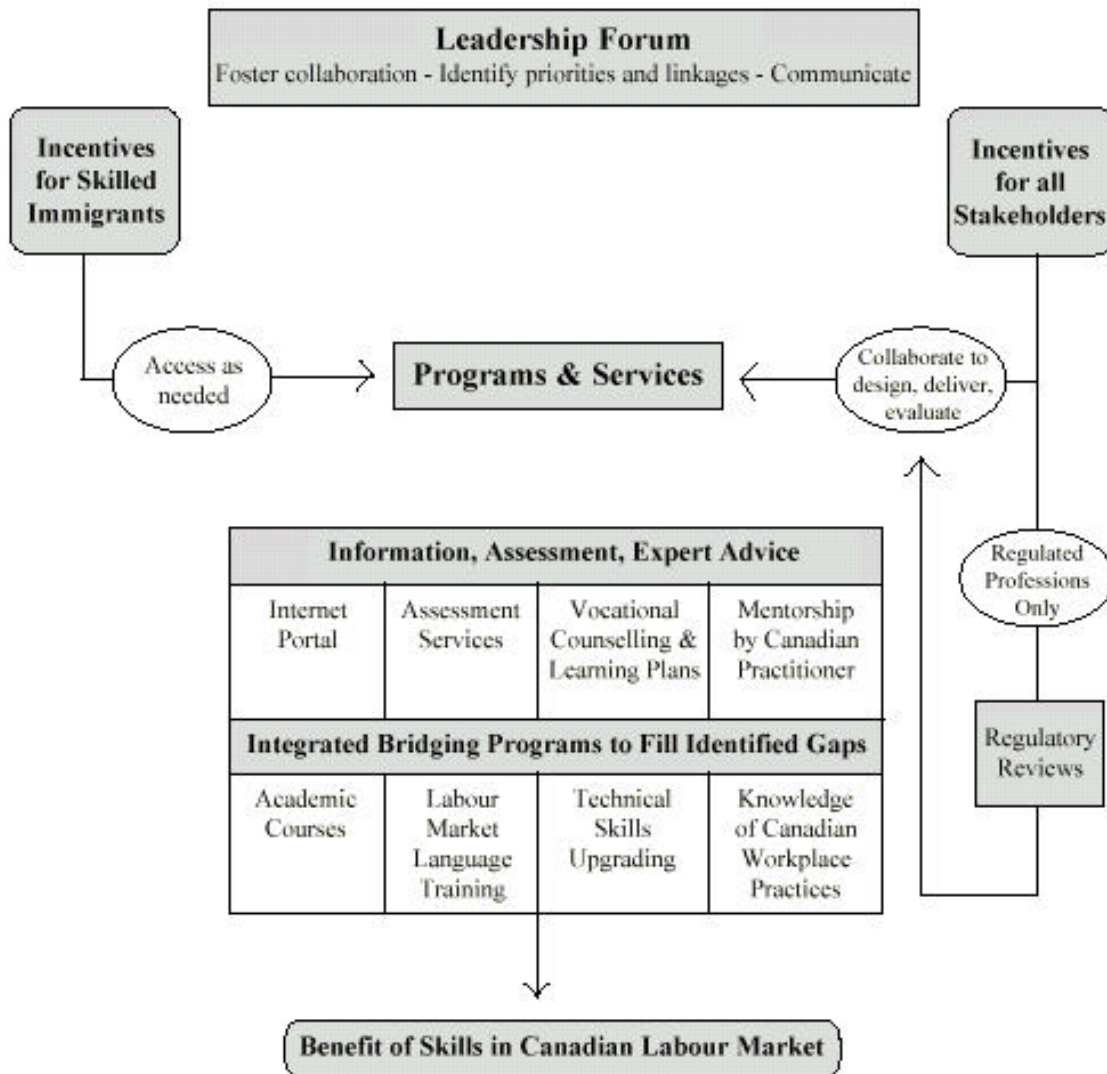
Right there is significant focus is on projects related to specific professions, as they tend to be more effective. However, their life span is shorter, and there is no knowledge or information exchange between professions. We need to find an individualized approach to solutions development. All stakeholders need to work towards a common vision as the most successful initiatives involve all stakeholders.

The Maytree Foundation has proposed a model to facilitate labour market entry for skilled immigrants (Naomi Alboim and The Maytree Foundation, Ottawa: Caledon

Institute of Social Policy, April 2002). The system envisioned by Maytree is one in which Canada values and benefits from the skills, training, education and experience of skilled immigrants by expediting labour market entry in their field of expertise. Following is a chart illustrating the model. A brief explanation of the chart can be found in Appendix B while complete details of the model can be found in the report “*Fulfilling the Promise: Integrating Immigrant Skills into the Canadian Economy*” on the Maytree Foundation website at www.maytree.com.

Proposed model to facilitate labour market entry for skilled immigrants

Systems Approach to Facilitate Labour Market Entry for Highly Skilled Immigrants



Cheryl Gorman
Executive Director, OCRI, TalentWorks

1.2 About the City of Ottawa People Services

The City of Ottawa People Services department is an amalgamation of many city departments, such as social services, housing, employment etc. In regard to employment they are involved in the “Partners for Jobs” initiative. The report and recommendation resulting from that initiative allowed an action plan to be implemented, which led to 1, 300 people finding employment.

1.3 About TalentWorks

TalentWorks is a community response to a unique opportunity to provide a wide range of human resource related initiatives under one umbrella. TalentWorks’ goal is to be the forum where all concerned players meet, to create one table and one voice for workforce initiatives. Currently it is partially comprised of employers from different sectors of employment, as well as the federal and provincial governments. It is designed to benefit employers, job seekers, and the community at large by:

- assisting employers in building the supply of qualified workers in Ottawa;
- assisting the unemployed and underemployed to find meaningful jobs by providing information about job opportunities and training;
- assisting the community at large to help maintain Ottawa's economic growth by securing a competitive edge in the “talent war”.

Management and funding

The OCRI Secretariat manages TalentWorks. The City of Ottawa and Human Resources Development Canada provide funding.

About the Ottawa Workforce Development Strategy

The Ottawa Workforce Development Strategy will be a published report summarising research completed and recommendations made to improve the fit between the skills of workers and the needs of employers. Its goal is to build a pool of skilled talent, which employers need to grow their businesses and, as such, to create opportunities for the unemployed and the underemployed to obtain the skills needed to find jobs and participate fully in the new economy. The strategy will also seek ways to improve how the community works together to tackle workforce challenges, and will recommend new policies to help achieve this.

For more information on the Ottawa Workforce Development Strategy, please visit the TalentWorks website at www.talentworks.ca.

Mengistab Tsegaye
Executive Director, World Skills Staffing Services

1.4 About World Skills

World Skills is an employment program designed specifically to help and assist newcomers in integrating into the Canadian workplace. World Skills’ aim is to provide links between the different levels of government to permit the smooth integration of immigrants into the Canadian workplace. The federal government selects and provides the authorisation for immigrants to come to

Canada. The provincial government is responsible for any professional licensing. Employers are mainly found at the municipal level. Among other things, World Skills identifies, prepares and presents immigrant job candidates to prospective employers. Through one-on-one meetings and job fairs, new Canadians are linked to meaningful job opportunities.

1.5 The Teacher Initiative

The Teacher Initiative is the latest example of a program that is attempting to provide the missing link necessary for the integration of newcomers into the workplace. This

program seeks to supplement the training of foreign-trained teachers and enter them into the profession in Canada. There is currently a partnership program between the school board and Queen's University for which 40 candidates were selected from a database to take part in a one-year certificate program, which will make them eligible to teach in Ontario. When the teaching program is completed, the Ontario College of Teachers will certify foreign-trained teachers. For more information on the foreign-trained teachers initiative, please visit <http://www.ottawa-worldskills.org/teachers/>.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

As a community, organize and mobilize to have a voice; be present and active at the decision making table, and in the consulting process at every level of involvement in employment. There are two priorities:

- to revise the delivery of language training (a primary barrier to employment);
- to look into early intervention initiatives –inform immigrants before arrival of resources, labour market reality etc. and assess newcomers' skills on arrival. Provide a tailored learning and counselling plan.

2. ACCESS TO MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Speaker:

- ❖ *Dr. Fran Klodawsky, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies and Pauline Jewett Institute of Women's Studies, Carleton University*

Introduction

The objective of this workshop is to look at the experience of the Working Group on Women's Access to Municipal Services as an example of how to make diversity a fundamental and integral part of understanding women's experiences with municipal services in the City

of Ottawa. As such, we will look at the methodology used by the Working Group, and its experience with the focus groups and see to what extent this enabled the Working Group to successfully take account of the rapidly increasing ethno-cultural diversity of Ottawa.

2.1 Meeting the challenges of diversity

The vast majority of the Canadian population lives in cities. Immigrants and cultural minorities in general are more likely than other Canadians to live in the city. Therefore, municipalities are becoming more central to meeting the challenges of diversity. According to a TD Bank Financial Group report, what happens in cities in the next 15 years is crucial to Canadian development.

Municipalities need to give appropriate services to their populations. City governments should therefore be important actors in shaping immigration policies. Getting new immigrants involved in the community is also of extreme importance and needs an explicit strategy. It is important to note that the model of political activism does not work for everyone and that we need to be proactive and develop new ways for immigrant voices to be heard.

2.2 Effects of the downloading of power

In addition to the growing diversity of city populations, municipal government is becoming more significant because of provincial downloading. This means that social programs important to promoting inclusiveness are now delivered at the municipal level. Although cities lack the political or financial authority over relevant policies, they do have the opportunity to create new models and can act as conduits to lobby the federal and provincial governments.

The Working Group on Women's Access to Municipal Services in Ottawa

In November 1999 the Working Group on Women's Access to Municipal Services in Ottawa was established by the then Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton as part of the government's endorsement of the International Union of Local Authorities' (IULA) declaration on Women and Local Government.

- **Mandate:** The mandate of this Working Group is to evaluate the current situation and propose improvements in women's access to services and employment. The Working Group consists of representatives from various city departments, from a diversity of women's organisations, and members of faculties at both Ottawa University and Carleton University.
- **Methodology:** The first phase of research conducted for the Working Group began in February 2001. 20 focus group discussions were conducted with various groups of women living in Ottawa. These women were asked to share their experiences in accessing municipal services in Ottawa.

A Community Forum was held in September 2001 to hear the results of the focus groups and to begin work on recommendations for the city. The Working Group built on the Forum in consultation with the community, city staff, and city councillors to formulate recommendations presented to City Council in February 2002.

Detailed information on the study is available at: <http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~candrew/womenhome.html>

2.4 Municipal services and civic participation

Building the Ottawa Mosaic

Municipal services such as good public transit, accessible childcare and employment information and programs to enhance diverse job opportunities were discussed in focus groups. They provide a concrete rationale for encouraging civic participation

12

because they have a direct impact on people's daily lives.

2.5 Key focus group findings

- the need for better communication on the availability of programs and services. This could include media other than print and the opportunity to use existing community organisations to help with distribution of information;
- the central importance of good public transit (importance of respect, timing, safety);
- the need to provide services in appropriate venues (e.g. along the transitway) in suitable combinations;
- the need to provide services with appropriate supports (e.g. child care).

The recommendations based on these findings were presented to City Council and adopted in February 2002.

2.6 Next steps

- The City Manager will be responsible for co-coordinating proper departmental responses to the recommendations.
- In so doing, the City Manager will meet with the Steering Committee in June and October to ensure proper understanding and integration of the recommendations.
- The City Manager will then report to City Council in November 2002.

“This initiative confirmed that, with great staff and some resources, it is possible to involve the participation of groups not traditionally heard.”

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

- Given the increasing importance of municipal government, we recommend that City Council engage City staff and the community, including various agencies, citizens, and school boards, to be proactive in the development and implementation of strategies, programs and policies that promote inclusiveness.

3. ACCESS TO MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Panelist:

- ❖ *Caroline Andrew, Professor of Political Science and Dean of the Social Sciences Faculty, University of Ottawa*

Introduction

The objective of this workshop is to look at the experience of the Working Group on Women's Access to Municipal Services as an example of how to make diversity a fundamental and Building the Ottawa Mosaic

integral part of understanding women's experiences with municipal services in the City of Ottawa. As such, we will look at the methodology used by the Working Group, and its experience with the focus groups and see to

13

what extent this enabled the Working Group to successfully take account of the rapidly increasing ethno-cultural diversity of Ottawa.

With globalization, Canadian cities – like most large western world cities – have grown significantly. New immigrants settle there and municipal governments must meet the challenge of diversity. This is particularly true with social services. Ottawa is going through a period of inequality, and great diversity that is a source of cultural richness, since interculturalism facilitates sharing and exchange.

The Working Group on Women's Access to Municipal Services was created to undertake a study aimed at assessing the current situation and proposing ways of improving women's access to municipal services. It has made recommendations on how to do this.

The goal was to represent women who are doubly marginalized as regards municipal services. Following this, we held a community forum to account to the citizens on our activities. The lessons we were able to draw from this study were enormous, since they have helped us to become aware of the daily experiences of women. This reality is nothing other than the many difficulties women are confronted with every minute of their lives.

3.1 Discussion group results

- Need for information on programs and services – that is, rethinking ways of informing people directly.

- The vital importance of mass transit.
- Provide services at the right place and in the right combinations.
- Sufficient support for services.

Many people complain that most information is given in writing (brochures) and not verbally (e.g. by radio), often prefer other means. Many comments were made on the combination of services provided by OC Transpo and the means made available to its clientele. As an example, consider a young mother riding a bus with her young children who finds herself without assistance, or a woman with three children who, because of a lack of child care services, is at a serious disadvantage in the labor market.

Many situations such as these increase women's difficulties. The problem is compounded by other factors, such as the lack of cultural interpretation of the services offered and other supports. The goal is to combine services, to help women and to make their daily lives easier.

3.2 How can we increase the ethnocultural community's ability to access municipal services?

It always comes down to information. There must be a connection between groups and municipal services. This could involve, for example, helping and supporting new immigrants during integration. We must be

able to provide information to immigrants verbally, rather than in writing. People do not pay much attention to brochures, unlike information provided verbally. Moreover, workshops must be organized for the sole purpose of informing immigrants

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Organize a forum on francophonie in Ottawa where all francophones can come together, whether they are of "pure wool" or ethnocultural origin. The forum should be organized by francophones themselves to pool leaders.
- That the City provide better services in French, inventory these services and ensure that leisure services are not only extensive but available in all areas, for example, from Kanata to Vanier.

ADVOCACY: BUILDING A VISION

Panelists:

- ❖ *Rashmi Luther, Professor, School of Social Work, Carleton University*
- ❖ *Edward Osei Kwadwo, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology and Race Equity Co-ordinator at Carleton University*
- ❖ *Bassel Martin, Policy and Communications Director of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)*

Advocacy movements in the areas of multiculturalism and anti-racism, as well as the issues they have addressed and the strategies they have employed have had a tremendous impact on the ethno-racial/ethno-cultural communities. This workshop will present an overview of factors that have influenced advocacy movements in the areas of multiculturalism and anti-racism, as well as the issues they have addressed and the strategies they have employed.

4.1 What is advocacy?

Advocacy on an individual level happens when one advocates for another individual. It does not deal with the public directly and is much less political. Individual advocacy does not cause alarm. Advocacy only causes some alarm when a significant number of people come together, as happened in the 1960s and 70s.

There is a power switch among people according to what is going on in society. Organizations work on common elements to make a collective issue as advocacy groups now focus their work on individuals.

4.2 Why advocate?

- to have access to programs and keep services;
- to counter the lack of power/finance to move forward.
- to meet the need of legitimizing advocacy.

What challenges does advocacy face today?

Funding is of particular concern as it has an impact on how groups organize. Loss of funding causes groups to lose their power.

responsive to group advocacy. Since the 1990s governments have shifted their focus back to the individual. Concurrently, communities have diversified and show a diminished interest in advocacy. People are caught up in personal challenges, such as finding employment, and do not have time or energy to participate on a collective level.

There is also a need for more research to back up advocacy. There is a lot of research in the USA but very little in Canada.

51.1 The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)

The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants is very active and involved in issues facing immigrants and the need for coalition building. Its areas of actions are extensive and they have been instrumental in several initiatives. For instance, OCASI has engaged the government in discussion in regard to the barriers against HIV positive immigrants entering. As a result, the government no longer unilaterally prevents HIV positive immigrants from entering the country. They OCASI has also been working with the government to regulate the status of non-status immigrants.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

- To organise a cross-sectoral forum for coalition building and consultation with the emphasis on policy, research and intervention.

BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION

Panellists:

- ❖ *Paula Decoito, Executive Director, Social Planning Council of Peel*
- ❖ *Hamdi Mohammed, Co-ordinator, Getting Landed Project*
- ❖ *Carl Nicholson, Executive Director, Catholic Immigration Centre*

“It was harder for my parents. They had a hard time adapting to the Canadian culture because they only knew about our own culture. We fought over everything that they didn’t know about. They didn’t like the clothes I wore or the music I listened to. We always got into arguments.”

Introduction

Newcomers to the Ottawa area often encounter racial and discriminatory barriers, which impede their integration into Canadian society. As a result, these newcomers have difficulty finding adequate jobs and usually find themselves living in poverty. Racism can surface on an individual level and on a systemic level. Both have a direct negative impact on the social integration of newcomers. This workshop highlighted the

the Ottawa area. It also focused on additional barriers encountered by women, which deny them the opportunity to contribute to the society.

3.1 Racism

Racism and discrimination

Mainstream Canadians are generally resisting the influx of diversity. They may see a newcomer as an enemy who is coming to steal their jobs or abuse already restricted social and health care systems. These unfounded ideas lead to the racial and discriminatory barriers encountered by newcomers. Racism has a negative impact in all aspects of life –housing, employment, education, access to social and health services, to name just a few. Racism also has serious psycho-social effects, putting those experiencing it at risk of mental illness, heart attacks and more.

A complex idea

The discourse on racism in Canada should avoid over-simplifications, e.g. white vs. non-white, or immigrant vs. non-immigrant. It should include many facets, for example: racist views some immigrants bring from their home countries, countries characterised by political and military conflict between different ethnic and religious groups. For example, some European groups discriminate against the Romas (gypsies), and there are Chinese and Vietnamese tensions, Indo vs. Caribbean blacks and so on. These conflicts also have a negative impact on the integration of newcomers and cannot be ignored.

Systemic racism

Racism in all its forms can hinder the integration of newcomers. Systemic racism, which is often subtle and unobtrusive, plays an integral role in the social inequalities

faced by newcomers. The mainstream agencies that should serve everyone are unable to give adequate services to a variety of races and cultures. Therefore, ethno-specific agencies have grown to fill the gap. Unfortunately, lack of funding and an often inadequate program and policy framework makes the task quite difficult.

The role of the media

The media also plays an important role in influencing and shaping peoples' opinions. The media tells people what to think. Organisations like the Canadian Ethno-Cultural Council have used the media. *We need to establish an inter-ethnic group that will consistently put positive stories and op-ed pieces into the media. The success of such a group would feed the success of all other groups.*

Conclusion

Addressing racism requires action on different levels. There should be a national campaign against racism led by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. There should also be an intergovernmental program developing the capacity of organisations to be anti-racist at a professional and personal level. The positive impact of an anti-racist society could make us international leaders in this area.

In addition, organisations providing services for immigrants and refugees should be funded for anti-racism work, education and advocacy. Organisations whose mandates focus on racism and equal opportunity should be funded to increase their capacity within an adequate government program and policy framework.

5.2 Barriers to integration faced by women

stigmatised because of their differences, whether language, cultural background, colour, religion, or way of dress. But immigrant women are often also characterised as passive and helpless, as abused by their cultures. Refugee women face even more challenges. They face psychological and mental traumas other immigrants do not face. They also have to deal with systemic barriers that hinder their integration due to their status. For instance, the female refugee who has left her family in a camp cannot reunite her family nor find a job because she is not landed. Immigrant women face barriers to employment and economic inclusion in general due to systemic discrimination. Immigrant women generally do not have time to think about civic participation because day-to-day survival takes all their time and energy.

Conclusion

We need to deconstruct the image of immigrant women as passive and helpless victims abused by their cultures. In order to be served on an equal basis false value judgements need to be cast aside. Women find solace in a social interpersonal world. We need to reconstruct support networks that offer mutual aid and sharing. We also need economic development initiatives empowering communities to do things using entrepreneurial skills that already exist within the community.

5.3 Where are we now?

According to a study done by the Catholic Immigration Centre, people chose to immigrate to Canada because they see it as a place of freedom – freedom to think, meet, practice their religion, with justice, equality etc. A recurring theme is that Canada does

not quite meet these expectations. Even when immigrants felt they had successfully established themselves in Canadian society they still felt like outsiders. A lot of things have changed in regard to diversity in Canada. Prime Ministers Trudeau and Mulroney were both instrumental in making these changes. In 1966 the debate was over diversity in immigration. Now the question is: how many? The Government of Canada actually has a policy of recruiting visible ethnic minorities to represent the population.

Canada has implemented a few policies and programs to promote integration of immigrants and to fight racism, notably a multiculturalism policy and settlement programs. While these are necessary to combat racism, they are not sufficient to prevent it. Multiculturalism promotes solidarity within groups but not among them. Researchers in social capital call this “bonding” as opposed to “bridging”. Without bridging activities, multicultural policies do not directly address race relations. Canadian Heritage does have a minimal amount of funding available for bridging but the application process is long and complex.

Settlement programs help new immigrants acquire knowledge, skills and values to help them integrate into Canadian society. However, anti-racism work during settlement occurs only by accident, and there is no funding for it. There is an ongoing conflict over what level of government is responsible for immigrants and refugees. Ontario does not have an agreement with the federal government on a settlement framework. There must be a co-ordinated

response from all levels of government on
integration through settlement.

The ethno-cultural community has actively addressed barriers to integration by organising and lobbying. The Canadian Ethno-Cultural Council and others

influenced the creation of ethno-cultural legislation. Ethno-cultural institutions and individuals have been challenging the barriers.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- A cross-sectoral community group for the purpose of public education to help turn around the image of immigrants as people who are here to take our jobs. The group should make a concerted, proactive effort to give the media the correct information.
- We need a one-stop information service at the entry level, where new immigrants have access to information on, for example, health, education, settlement, social and support services.

INTERGENERATIONAL CONFLICTS AND ISSUES

Speaker:

- ❖ *Anita Chakravartty, Health Promotion Co-ordinator for Youth, Southeast Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community*

6.1 The youth perspective

"The first time I came to Canada I never thought about it much. I assumed everything would be the same as Africa. Well, except for the people and the weather. Little did I know that everything was the opposite of what I believed it to be.

The biggest problem was trying to let go of my cultural and social norms and adapting to new ones. Blending in was indeed the hardest goal for me to overcome. It seemed like my parents were always suspicious of my friends and what we were up to. They never knew how

lonely and confused I felt at times and how hurt and angry I would get when others

made me feel less than them because of the way I looked. Everyone dressed, talked and acted differently than I did. So in order for me to fit in, I had to assimilate and negotiate with some of my cultural norms or be an outcast.

It took some time for me to get used to the Canadian culture, but it was harder for my parents. They had a hard time adapting to the Canadian culture because they only knew about our own. We fought over everything that they didn't know about. They didn't like the clothes I wore or the music I listened to. We always got into arguments if they saw me wear baggy jeans, a bandanna or even a baseball cap.

*When I didn't listen or agree with them
they took it as disrespect. When I spoke*

English at home like I did in school, I could see the hurt in my parents' eyes and sometimes they would get upset with me. They feared that I would forget about our culture and heritage. I wasn't trying to disrespect my parents or forget my culture. All I was trying to do was to fit in and adapt to the Canadian culture.

Since Canada had become my new country, I was trying to be a Canadian. It was very hard for my parents to understand that I'm not only African but African-Canadian. Eventually, my parents began to understand more about my situation. They tried to adapt to the Canadian culture and still keep their own."

Introduction

We cannot focus on intergenerational conflicts and issues without discussing the external factors that have a negative impact on families. We will look at these issues from a youth perspective, although we realise this cannot possibly cover all the issues. Although there are a lot of factors that can cause conflicts, we will focus on the following: freedom, mental health, expectations, values, and institutional and social pressures.

6.2 Coming to terms with freedom

Coming to terms with freedom is often one of the most difficult issues of acculturation between immigrant youth and adults. Most of us are accustomed to the freedom exercised in Canada, but this issue is a difficult concept for some multicultural families.

Conflict can arise around many matters. Assertiveness, independence, manner of dress, freedom of expression, questioning of authority in class, disagreeing with parents, freedom to quit school, work, relationships

and marriage are all potential areas of conflict, among others.

An immigrant youth welcomes these new choices and freedoms, but they can cause conflicts with family members who are unable, unwilling or slower to adapt. The youth is then perceived as rejecting his or her own original culture and past heritage. Exploring this freedom can also bring a lot of self-identity and self-esteem stress for the youth, who is faces intense peer pressure to conform. The young person feels he or she must face this dilemma alone for fear of being rejected or ostracized by parents, other family members or even the cultural group.

6.3 Stress of the immigration process

The immigration process itself can cause a lot of stress, which can lead to mental health issues. Encounters of prejudice and racism can lead to alienation and isolation for both generations. This is not often not discussed, and is dealt with in isolation, which can then lead to depression. Separation from loved ones, or one's country of origin, can also contribute to depression.

Youth and adults cope and deal with these issues in different ways. They may lash out or cause conflict because the issues are not addressed openly. It is difficult for family members to understand each other.

6.4 Expectations and values

Expectations are powerful tools that can motivate young people in positive or negative ways. They can also influence behaviour. Parents exert a lot of pressure on their children through expectations.

- Youths often mention that conflicts arise around the use of their first language. Parents expect children to speak, read

and write in their first language. The inability to communicate in their first language can be interpreted by family members as rejection, denial or devaluation of their primary culture.

Following traditions, customs and religions are expectations parents place on themselves as well as on their children. Parents believe they are in control of the situation. When control is lost or questioned, as their children adopt Canadian culture, there is conflict.

Facing peer pressure, social and family expectations, young people often feel caught between two different cultures, and that they must choose one over the other. In response, they may rebel and/or feel ambivalent, which then causes conflicts within the families.

6.5 Institutional and Social Pressures

Newcomers often encounter enormous institutional and social pressures to conform to a perceived norm. The education system plays a tremendous role in the youth's adaptation to Canadian society. Many other institutions play an important role as well, such as social services, the legal and health care systems, media, child care centres etc.

The services of these institutions are generally targeted towards the mainstream and are not offered with a multicultural clientele in mind. As a result, newcomers

face an obstacle in understanding what the service is, its purpose and accessibility. Family, friends, co-workers, neighbours and community groups are all sources of social pressures newcomers face to conform or not to conform to Canadian ways.

Families are affected by these new social practices. Because they are not familiar with them, they will often feel at a loss. Conflicts can arise between young people and their parents as they deal with these new customs and norms differently. Youths can feel that their parents are too slow to adapt, while parents may feel that the young people are turning their backs on their culture of origin.

Conclusion

There is a need for opportunities to guide and help parents to understand cultural differences and why children behave a certain way. Community groups and events can facilitate this discussion. Discussion space can help alleviate family tension, youth stress, and improve relationships within the family. Parents need to determine what values they can and want to keep and what values they are willing to compromise. They must nurture and support children while maintaining and upholding their own

traditions and values. Meanwhile, young people need space of their own to meet and talk with other youths going through similar situations.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

- Recommendation and a plea for dialogue in families – assist and guide families coming now (existing families can help this) in a way that is safe and culturally meaningful. Young people and their parents cannot do this if there is no childcare, transportation and opportunities for funding. Lots of people give time, but adequate funding is needed. Youths and parents can come together and learn from each other.

THE HOUSING CRISIS: BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY NEW CANADIANS

Panellists:

- ❖ *Ann Hodge, Member, Violence Against Women Management Committee*
- ❖ *Elizabeth Chin, Community Support Co-ordinator, Ottawa Social Housing*
- ❖ *Houda Dirieh, Intervenante Communautaire, Coop Ami Jeunesse*
- ❖ *M.S. Mwarigha, Program Director, Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation*

Introduction

This workshop explored the issues and barriers facing new Canadians seeking access to housing. With a focus on advocacy and best practices, the workshop examined broad policy and systemic issues related to housing as well as the challenges on the frontline and local level.

7.1 Subsidised housing

The waiting list for subsidized housing as of April 11, 2002 had 13,071 families on it. The waiting period for a subsidized unit can be as long as seven years. Newcomers, those in Canada less than one year, receive priority, reach the top of the only after one year and so no lose priority. Ottawa Housing does house many newcomers. In fact 70% of the population in Ottawa Housing are immigrants.

	Numbers on waiting list	Numbers housed
Seniors	1577	350
Singles	4775	487
Families	6739	699

7.2 New regulation by the Ontario government

Bill 128 proposes several changes for those receiving rent subsidies. Any changes to income or housing status must be reported within ten business days. If changes are not

reported within ten days the applicant will go to the end of the waiting list.

These changes can cause problems for tenants and potential tenants who are not aware of this regulation because they do not read English or French. Many tenants rely on their children to read notices, to report repairs and to advise them of changes in their status.

Ottawa Housing has developed a tool to enable residents to communicate more effectively with landlords a unit map on which residents can circle areas of concern, used to communicate repair concerns to landlords. Ottawa Housing has also developed a new cover page translated into many languages, which advises residents have remaining documents translated.

7.3 Women in shelters

Another area of concern in the housing crisis is the lack of shelters. Many women living in shelters are immigrant women fleeing abusive relationships.

The Violence Against Women Management Committee has done research on the barriers faced by women seeking housing. They realised that women living in shelters for abused women are not classified as homeless and therefore excluded from the statistics, despite being homeless. Therefore,

violence and abuse is not measured as a factor in homelessness.

Immigrant women taking part in the study identified fear of authority, fear of losing their status, and language as barriers to seeking shelters. Other factors included: finances, personal networks that may pressure a woman to stay in an abusive relationship, and fear for their safety.

7.4 What are the solutions?

Obtaining access to shelters needs to be streamlined. A centralized intake and referral service to find space at shelters needs to replace the current requirement to call each one. We need to lobby the government in order to increase social assistance shelter allowance, to increase the number of social housing units and to offer services in several different languages.

7.5 Barriers and challenges faced by new Canadians

The Ontario Human Rights Commission found 25% of the housing complaints filed are based on race, color, and ethnicity. The Centre of Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA) estimates that only

5% of incidents of discrimination are filed as complaints with the Human Rights Commission. Some complaints filed with the Human Rights Commission have been in the system for up to five years.

Discrimination in acquiring housing can be felt at different levels, direct and indirect. Indirect discrimination is systemic in nature. It is because of unfair rules and regulations found in the system that some people are excluded from finding adequate and affordable housing. Tenant selection rules such as income criteria, the need to have references from previous landlords, and the need to have first and last month's rent are systemic barriers many newcomers seeking adequate and affordable housing face.

Direct discrimination is more blatant. It can be the refusal to rent to someone because of skin colour, accent, culture etc.

The impact of discrimination on acquiring housing for newcomers can result in short or long-term homelessness. It also leads to racial segregation in the rental housing market, leading to ghettoization.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

- Develop a multiyear plan at the city level to deal with housing issues covering short-term solutions (i.e. more shelter) and long-term solutions (i.e. creative housing approaches).

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Panellists:

- ❖ *Eva Hudakova, Co-ordinator of Crisis and Counselling Services, Immigrant and Visible Minority Women Against Abuse*
- ❖ *Omar Ugas, Mental Health Case Manager, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization*
- ❖ *Barbara MacKinnon, Executive Director, Pinecrest Queensway Health and Community Services*

Introduction

Obtaining access to mental health services is difficult for many immigrants and ethnic community members in Ottawa. There are several reasons. First, in most cultures there are a many myths and taboos regarding mental health. Second, there is a cultural barrier between service providers and many service recipients. Service design, from delivery to evaluation, effects this cultural barrier. This workshop discussed the challenges of mental health service provision.

Minorities often feel uncomfortable with mental illness and often refuse to see mental health workers for fear of being viewed as “mad”. For example, the connotation of the Arabic word for madness is “evil spirit”. Therefore, many feel that to be labelled “mad” will mean they are thought of as having an evil spirit.

8.1 Mental health and immigration

A number of factors contribute to the difficulties minorities face in regard to mental health. They must deal with many challenges in order to meet their basic needs, such as finding and sustaining employment, providing for their families on a modest income, language barriers, finding housing etc.

The roles of men and women change when they immigrate to Canada. In many countries of origin men are the breadwinners while

women are the house managers. Men who could once provide for their families are now unable to do so. Once here, they cannot find jobs. Even when they do, they are often paid at a level below their dignity. They get jobs ordinary Canadians do not want despite having many qualifications. In some cultures when a man is unable to provide for his family he feels like he is equal in status to his children because he cannot provide for them. This can lead to mental health problems.

Before migration, women are often part of an extensive social network and can rely on extended family support in a variety of matters. Once in Canada their social network becomes almost non-existent. The dreams and hopes they had before migrating to Canada are shattered by harsh reality.

In addition to the daily stresses many immigrants face once in Canada, some must also deal with the severe hardships they faced even before emigrating. Their mental health may not have been stable to begin with. There is no program for those who have been tortured, survived war, or been separated from loved ones, not knowing if they are dead or alive.

8.2 Access to mental health services

There are a number of individual and societal factors affecting immigrants trying

languages. Immigrants who depend on their partners can be misled and misinformed. This can cause serious problems for those living in abusive environments. In other cases, there may be a taboo against seeking mental health services as an abused person. The lack of information, combined with the taboo associated with being abused, exacerbates the situation and makes leaving an abusive situation almost impossible.

There are also a number of societal factors that affect immigrants seeking services. If the client lives in a rural area, it can be extremely difficult to find the necessary services. There is also a tremendous fear of facing problems that should be addressed. Immigrants may also fear being deported, or having their children taken away from them. Service providers need to be aware of and educated about these issues in order to address them accordingly.

8.3 “Mental Health and New Canadians,” a project funded by Health Canada

A project entitled “Mental Health and New Canadians”, funded by Health Canada was put into place in order to promote and encourage new Canadians who need mental health services to obtain them, and to increase community participation in addressing mental health issues and strengthen community groups through the process. It was also hoped the project would help build sustainable partnerships between institutions and community groups.

The rationale

The rationale behind this initiative was that traditional mainstream approaches to mental health were not always effective for diverse communities. A mental health professional's service delivery is not always the cultural

norm for many groups. Mental health services also tend to be reactive and do not always deal with the root causes of mental health problems for newcomers. This initiative conducted a needs assessment for several different communities. They attempted to identify the causes of mental health problems, the ethno-cultural attitudes regarding mental health and illness and culturally appropriate strategies to respond to the issues for each community.

The communities represented in this initiative were the Chinese, Ethiopian and Somali communities. Each community adopted its own Health promotion strategy.

- The Chinese community provided translation of CMHA materials and printed monthly information in local Chinese newspapers.
- The Ethiopian community trained a core group of community members as resource persons in the area of mental health. This core group planned community activities and workshops promoting mental health.
- The Somali community chose popular education as their health promotion strategy and delivered performances at Somali community events, in the school system and to health care organisations.

In addition, this initiative aimed to increase knowledge and access to the system for all groups, to raise staff awareness in institutions about the relationships between culture and mental health, and to address youth and mental health issues.

Conclusion

planning and delivery of services was essential for their success. However, it was found that community needs were beyond the scope of the initiative. Although awareness sessions can increase sensitivity, system changes are required for

sustainability. It was noted that partnership formation between the community and institutional sectors was very difficult to maintain, due to differences in funding, service demands, workload priorities, human resource limitation etc.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Emphasise education, information for mainstream professionals on how to work with new Canadians, and encouraging immigrant communities to challenge each other to come up with ideas for educating their own communities and professionals.
- Challenge funders to look at financial resources to put into immigrant services. Support must come from all three levels of government: federal, provincial and municipal.

INEQUITY AND POVERTY

Panellists:

- ❖ *Cliff Gazee, President, Somerset West Community Health Centre, Co-President Action on Poverty*
- ❖ *Dick Stewart, General Manager, People Services Department, City of Ottawa*
- ❖ *Rosette Wakeham, Volunteer, Task Force on Poverty and The Good Food Box*

Introduction

Now, the fact that the gap between rich and poor in Canada is increasing rapidly is uncontested. Those hardest hit by this widening income gap are minorities, immigrants and women. There are many issues regarding poverty and the situation is getting worse. Parents cannot afford to buy clothes, healthy food, and gifts on holidays etc. Although some people would not necessarily define this as poverty, we have to look at the disparity of norms. We need to define poverty in the context of the society in which we live. It is essential all people have the opportunity to participate in decisions and

policies affecting them. This workshop discussed current challenges and potential opportunities in this struggle. It also looked at local initiatives prompted by the City of Ottawa addressing this pressing issue.

9.1 Inequality equals poverty?

There is a lot of evidence to show that inequality equals poverty. In 1998 the Ottawa Economic Development Corporation published a report entitled “The Hidden Workforce”, which asked, Where is the future work force? They found significant levels of unemployment and underemployment were not recorded. They

found the true unemployment rate to be 23% and underemployment to be 28%. They also found there were pockets where unemployment was even higher – within the visible and ethnic minorities. These groups

Building the Ottawa Mosaic

had the highest level of education and highest level of unemployment. This was a startling realisation by the OEDC and the new Regional Chair at the time, Bob Chiarelli. The Mayor's Task Force on

26

Employment and Partners for Jobs came directly from this finding. These statistics created a political imperative.

9.2 The gap is broadening; levels of poverty are higher. Why?

There are many barriers at the systemic level. The bottom line is we live in a city and a country that practices systemic racism. We do not wear it on our sleeve, but we cannot explain the levels of unemployment and poverty otherwise. We need to tackle this issue publicly and to challenge each other and our public institutions. Racism is an ugly word but it does not need to be. It can serve as the impetus to stop seeking someone to blame and focus instead on the elements behind it and what we can do about them.

9.3 Addressing poverty

9.3.1 The City of Ottawa Employment and Social Assistance Branch

The city is spending and has spent considerable amounts of money on language and culture to ensure accessibility. They have not relied on staff speaking all languages, or people having to bring friends to translate. Instead they have attempted to provide services in an objective, independent and confidential manner by using cultural interpreters. Ottawa is the only municipality doing this. Given the lack of provincial funding, the City will have to fund this through property taxes; the province is not cost sharing.

9.3.2 Recreation services

There is a lot we need to do with regard to equitable access and appropriateness of services. We have 11 different ways of doing this after amalgamation. Accessible recreation and culture are fundamental to quality of life. The City started with funding fee subsidies so money would not be a barrier. We are continuing to look at the process of subsidies so the process itself is not a barrier.

9.3.3 Foreign-trained teachers

The City has also initiated a program with foreign-trained teachers, helping them to use their accreditation in partnership with the Ottawa School Board, World Skills and Partners for Jobs. It has taken three to four years to get 30-40 full-time teachers to receive their credentials. We need new teachers and there are a lot of foreign-born teachers here. This program includes Queens University for now but will continue to grow. The Ontario College of Teachers was initially very protective of their accreditation process but is now more open.

9.4 The People's Hearings

People living in poverty were given the opportunity to come forward and share their experiences and challenges in regard to poverty during the People's Hearings. Five sets of hearings took place city-wide with over 100 people giving testimony. A number of key issues were identified: employment, access to programs, housing, and public participation in policies. The key

recommendation from the hearings was to create a Task Force on Poverty.

9.5 The Task Force on Poverty

Senior management from the city, in collaboration with the people who took part in the hearings, made a number of

Building the Ottawa Mosaic

27

The Task Force on Poverty's work resulted in the following actions:

- Money to help people make the transition when leaving social assistance;
- 16 – 18 facilities to make computers accessible (Millennium Learning Centres and Smart Sites);
- Helped create voice mailboxes for people who could not afford phone lines;
- Helped bring in “Share the Warmth” – a program to help people heat their homes in the winter;
- Transportation – lobbied for an affordable off-peak hours bus pass, were successful in getting a \$5.00 day pass on Sundays for families;
- Were also able to represent issues on Task Force on Employment – Partners for Jobs. Promoted idea of a “micro-loan” for people in poverty to obtain access to small loans for start-up businesses;
- Housing – worked with City to turn already-owned land into affordable housing.

9.6 Gaps and challenges

Although the Task Force was able to make several important recommendations that

recommendations. A key recommendation was to have an on-going Poverty Issues Advisory Committee to continue the work of the Task Force.

have since been implemented, visible minorities and newcomers for the most part were missing from this process.

The Poverty Issues Advisory Committee is an important vehicle for people and groups to come together to bring recommendations to City Council. We need to encourage all parties concerned and players involved with the ethno-cultural communities to form working groups and come forward with recommendations that address issues facing newcomers and visible minorities living in poverty.

9.7 Future plans at the municipal level

9.7.1 Human Services Plan

The City is undertaking a planning process for what Ottawa will look like in the next 20 years. We will see an ageing population while at the same time Ottawa's population will grow to 1.2 million, and the community will be far more diverse. Coming soon there will be extensive consultations on this Human Services Plan. There will be opportunities to challenge the City on how it addresses diversity and the fact that inequality equals poverty. It is a very important process and will only be successful if there are tremendous amounts of participation.

9.7.2 Funding

Community funding is \$17.5 million, out of which a range of services and organisations are funded. Organisations representing visible and ethnic minorities represent less than \$1 million, which is disproportionately low relative to population. We need to look at this, and challenge it.

Building the Ottawa Mosaic
Building the Ottawa Mosaic

9.7.3 People services

The City's mandate is to ensure that essential services are available and accessible. If that means helping to create new organisations or expand existing services, then we will do that.

28

9.7.4 The City as an employer

The city is one of the largest employers, with 18,000 employees (counting part-time and seasonal). The current city workforce does not represent the community. As we grow, we have to challenge ourselves to ask why this is the case. This is the work of Human Resources, the Equity Advisory Committee, City Council and management.

Conclusion

There are countless examples of how citizens can make a difference. Speak out at a council meeting or a committee meeting.

Speak from your heart, from your experiences and speak directly to the people who make a difference. The opportunity is there every two weeks. If you are shy, start by becoming an observer, get to know your councillors, put together a list of questions to ask. This all comes back to "*Inequality = Poverty*". We all need to take responsibility for this equation. The Poverty Issues Advisory Committee is a phenomenal achievement for the city and for the community. These committees represent community involvement and need your support.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

- The group recommended that we create a diversity plan for our city to address the range of issues brought up in this workshop. It was suggested that there be an ongoing cross-sectoral committee created from this conference to push issues and to demand accountability.

EFFECTS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Panellists:

- ❖ *Khadija Hafajee, Chairperson, Christian Muslim Dialogue of Ottawa*
- ❖ *Janet Dench, Executive Director, Canadian Council for Refugees*
- ❖ *Ron Singer, Director of Research and Public Affairs, Canada Jewish Congress*

Introduction

This workshop will deal with the events of September 11, 2001 and how they affected –

and still affect– immigrant and ethnic minorities.

10.1 Initial reaction to September 11th

The initial reaction to September 11th was one of shock and trauma. Many Canadians searched for a meaning to the event. Most importantly, most wanted to know, “Who did this?”. On Friday, September 14th, the City of Ottawa, prompted by the Mayor Building the Ottawa Mosaic

and the Chief of Police, initiated a meeting of faith and community leaders to show solidarity in reaction to the events of September 11th.

Following is an excerpt from an address given by Khadija Hafajee at this meeting:

“In times of crisis, and this is certainly a time of crisis for all of us, it becomes imperative that leadership and authority figures publicly demonstrate unity of purpose and resolve to

29

enable all citizens to go about their normal lives in security and that some not be targets of harassment because of religion or colour. In Ottawa or anywhere in Canada. Muslims and Arabs must not feel the backlash of events that have occurred in the USA. We all as citizens condemn the heinous crime against humanity that occurred on Tuesday, September 11, 2001. That day will forever be etched in the minds of all present and future generations as a seminal event of the much-touted start of the new millennium. We ardently pray that this is not the harbinger of things to come.”
(Khadija Hafajee)

Unfortunately, many immigrants in the City of Ottawa felt a backlash. The Islamic community feared they would be blamed for the events of September 11. People of color kept their children home from schools; the Islamic school closed its doors; immigrants in general were scared.

10.2 Public opinion post September 11th

The media and reaction from the United States played a significant role in forming public opinion post September 11th. The United States portrayed Canada as a terrorist haven and also condemned our refugee selection system. Canada’s political leaders reacted quickly and

perhaps unjustly to these pressures. Bill C-36 was passed in reaction to the events of September 11th. The legislation limits privacy, inhibits dissent, gives too much power to the police and unfairly targets Arabs, Muslim and South Asian people. Sadly, the legislation was met with very little public outcry. People were afraid and felt insecure. Therefore, they allowed restrictions to be placed on their civil liberties.

10.3 The Jewish community: the resurgence of anti-Semitism

The backlash post September 11th was not limited to the Islamic community. The Jewish community in Canada has not felt so much fear since the 1940s, when anti-Semitism was rampant in this country. Many people are afraid to send their children to Jewish schools or are afraid themselves to go to Jewish events at institutions where they could easily be identified as Jews.

Stories were circulating that it was the Jews who actually carried out the September 11th attacks. False rumours were (and still are) spread that 4,000 Jews working in the World Trade Centre did not show up for work on that day because they knew of the events that were to transpire. There is a strong resurgence of anti-Semitism, especially in Europe, but here in

Canada too. There have been over 55 incidents in the past two months and over 200 in the past year. Synagogues have been firebombed or vandalized as well as physical attacks and threats against individuals.

Canada is not like Europe but we should still be on guard. All people, especially religious and political leaders, have a responsibility to condemn –loudly and promptly– all racist acts and hate crimes, whether against Muslims, Jews or any

religious or ethnic group. Unfortunately, very few politicians or religious leaders have spoken out against anti-Semitism. It should be noted, however, that Prime Minister Jean Chrétien recently condemned the recent wave of anti-Semitism in a speech made in Montreal. If leaders do not condemn these acts they are giving hate a green light.

“The world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who do not do anything about it.” (Albert Einstein)

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

- Build more opportunity in the community for bringing people together in dialogue that will lead to greater understanding and less stereotyping.

CONCLUSION

Excellent conference! Excellent speakers! I feel energized and positive after this conference. There is a lot of work ahead of us and I want to be involved and be part of the solution!

The Building the Ottawa Mosaic Conference was a success at many levels. The keynote speakers, the Honourable Bob Chiarelli, Mayor of Ottawa and Mr. Haroon Siddiqui, Editor Emeritus of the *Toronto Star* were both informative and thought-provoking. In the words of one of the participants, “*I appreciated being able to listen to two influential and interesting speakers.*” The keynote speakers were there to motivate people into action and to set the tone for the day. In fact, they managed to do just that!

The workshops offered throughout the day were able not only to raise awareness but also energize participants into following up the Conference with concrete actions. One of the main recommendations was to continue the momentum set by the conference and to establish a structure to support the creation of a network. A number of participants have already engaged themselves to participate in a network to follow up on the issues and concerns discussed during the day and to act upon the recommendations that came out of each workshop.

11.1 Where do we go from here?

The members of the Building the Ottawa Mosaic Conference organising committee have already engaged themselves in providing support and collaboration to establish a permanent structure to work to advocate for the issues that came up at the Conference. A follow-up meeting reuniting all interested parties in participating in a network will be held in the fall. In the meantime, the final report of the conference will be sent to all participants and widely distributed throughout the community. Any person

interested in getting a copy of the report or taking part in the follow up meeting should contact:

Mohamed Ahmed
Ottawa Community Immigrant Services
Organisation
Tel.: (613) 725-0202 ext. 326
OR
Patrick Ballay
Social Planning Council of Ottawa
Tel.: (613) 236-9300 ext. 302.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Employment barriers

- Community advocacy needs to have a place at the table for initiatives to function effectively.
- Restructuring the language program is necessary so that, with intensive training, immigrants are employment ready.
- An assessment process needs to exist in the beginning to identify what skills are required and what vacancies need to be filled.
- An introduction to Canadian life and each particular community needs to be given to immigrants at the point of immigration directing them to all of the available services.

12.2 Access to municipal services

- There is a need to look at the hiring and retention of staff of ethno-cultural groups in Ottawa.
- The issue of bilingualism is a problem. The current public service recruitment process is intimidating for those who do not speak both languages.
- A calendar that recognizes all holidays should be developed.
- Groups with severe financial restraints should be identified. They need better support to be free to participate.

- There is a need for more public awareness of what immigration means, and about the customs and traditions of various immigrant groups.
- There is a need to educate school board trustees and city councillors.
- There is a need to improve communication at all levels. In Ottawa there is no community voice for new immigrants or refugees. Most people who are speaking out are part of organizations and it is part of their jobs.

12.3 Access to municipal services

- Concentrate all francophone populations in Ottawa and have them work together.
- Rethink the cohabitation of all children attending French-language schools, including day care centers.
- Use the schools as a source of information to promote the link between francophone communities and municipal services. The school is the only place where all young people develop connections, socialize and learn.
- Schools could be used to bring students' parents together (unite "pure wool" francophones and other ethnocultural francophones).
- Join together to ensure the survival of Ontario's francophone population by using the language as a means of defence

and, at the same time, an instrument of struggle.

- ® Open up to allophones by creating relevant and flexible services.
- ® Extend services throughout Ottawa, perhaps even setting up French satellite services.
- ® Demand a francophone presence to avoid falling into the trap of being forced to speak English.
- ® Change the culture of leaders so that they automatically offer French services.
- ® Ensure that there is French representation at the library board level.
- ® Municipal libraries are the only ones offering better French services, books, cassettes, videos, etc. These services must be maintained.
- ® We must fight to provide services in municipal libraries 24 hours a day. To achieve this, municipal library budgets must be at least maintained.
- ® Use libraries for advertising and promoting other French services in Ontario (information sessions, workshops, etc.).
- ® Identify francophone organizations by posting signs outside them to advertise their existence.
- ® Establish a community-based network to provide information on other French services.

12.4 Advocacy: building a vision

- ® To organise a cross-sectoral forum for coalition building and consultation with the emphasis on policy, research and intervention.
- ® Specific objectives and quantified activities:
 - Making existing committees of the City more accountable to communities;
 - The Mayor has put himself forward as a champion of immigrant issues so he should be accountable in the future for any work coming out of this conference.

12.5 Barriers to integration

- ® Education
 - about racism and about different cultural groups, their backgrounds and strengths and what we need from them;
 - on accepting ourselves and others as equals;
 - for the media to promote integration;
 - for schools and teachers to promote integration;
 - for potential immigrants about barriers **before** they immigrate to Canada;
 - for new immigrants about the political party process during settlement.
- ® Advocacy
 - A cross-sectoral ethno-cultural council: a forum for advocacy and action; a bridging action at

government, community and business;

- Immigrant groups should try to showcase themselves as part of the

Canadian community. They should include the media and get other Canadians involved.

- Work with the City to ensure the engagement of newcomers in the development of 20/20 human services, part of the City of Ottawa's 20-year plan;
- A body to deal with media issues, including leaders from different ethno-cultural backgrounds.
- Services
 - A Welcome Centre: immigrants get multilingual information as soon as they arrive in Canada with directions to the Welcome Centre where they can get all sorts of information and meet others. Settled immigrants would volunteer to help.
 - Volunteer families from different cultures could be matched with new immigrants to provide support and help build bridges.
- Economic support
 - Affirmative action employment and an advisory committee on this issue to City Council;
 - Support for spontaneous economic activity that can come up in social intercourse; creation of situations in which people come together in social gatherings and learn from each other, learn to stand up for themselves.
- Funding
 - Funding to facilitate cross-cultural discussion and dialogue;
 - Public funders (e.g. City of Ottawa, United Way) tie funds to

promotion of the development of anti-racism policies in organisations.

- Role of government
 - A pilot project on the need for ethno-cultural work in schools;
 - A policy of federal, provincial and municipal governments declaring anti-racism. The country needs leadership.
- Personal
 - Work from the bottom up, drop the "we / they" mentality and cope with our own racist tendencies on a daily basis.
 - "Welcome Immigrants Week" organised primarily through the internet. In that week, everyone does something to welcome an immigrant each day.
 - Get involved in local politics.

12.6 Youth –intergenerational conflict

- Recognized all the good work done by LASI and OCASI and recommended that they be joined by others and that one thread be kept –an ongoing dialogue on intergenerational issues. Have to have a structure for youth participation.
- Pleas for the opportunities available for drop-ins. Many Community Health Centres offer drop-ins and homework clubs and those are important. Hundreds of things happen. These are very limited opportunities normally due to lack of funding. And have drop-

ins for parents so parents can build relationships too. They could thrive if they were given more support from the community.

12.7 The housing crisis

Three areas of focus:

- Short-term solutions for housing i.e. more shelters
 - Develop eviction prevention programs;
 - Increase short-term and emergency shelters.
- Long-term solutions i.e. creative housing approaches
 - Build affordable housing;
 - Housing providers who provide cultural/language interpretation to be fully informed;
 - Lobby to have applicants eligible for supplements while they are housed;
 - Support ownership models.
- NGOs to get together to develop advocacy, co-ordinate with the city toward short-term and long-term solutions.
 - Improved communication, networks and meetings of the ethno-racial community;
 - Advocacy;
 - Leadership to push agenda on political level;
 - Address the Official Plan consultation process in the City of Ottawa.

12.8 Mental health services

- There is a need for culturally appropriate assessment tools in mental

health services to be able to help immigrants and minorities. There is also a lack of minority front-line workers and professionals who speak and understand the minorities' languages.

- Ethnic communities are their own experts in terms of issues that affect them. Therefore, service providers should find out from these communities how they cope with their issues.
- There should be partnerships with mainstream Canadians for intercultural support.
- There should be less use of medication. Service providers tend to overmedicate clients.
- Challenge the federal government. The government is responsible for letting immigrants come, therefore they should also be responsible for helping them integrate.
- Challenge ourselves regarding resources. We need to collaborate with each other more often.
- Consider all the partners from the community and use the resources.

12.9 Inequity and poverty

- Participation at all levels, starting at local level;

- Role modelling;
- Co-op programs in City to help people gain employment experience;
- Need research and hard facts to affect policies;

- Affirmative action at the City;
- With respect to employment, if our goal is that the workers in the City reflect the community then we would

suggest and present to the City activities that support achieving this, and hold them accountable.

- We want visible and ethnic minorities included equitably in the City.
- We have to acknowledge racism and oppression. We will forge ahead with our concentrated efforts to make this change.

- Have governments back their words of support with actions (for equity);
- Building an information sharing network serving immigrants – more community knowledge of what is happening and what services are available;
- Have community leaders come forward when people are attacked and hurt;

12.10 Effects of September 11, 2001

- Building opportunities in the community for people to get together – will lead to less stereotyping;
- Include all team players for diversity training in all professions;
- Open dialogue with people to come to greater understanding and solutions to move forward. Will lead to greater understanding;
- Urge the City of Ottawa to promote the existence of the 17 Advisory Committees. This will potentially lead to more involvement among people in the affected groups;
- In the hiring practices for teachers, include diversity training;
- Form school based equity and diversity committees;

- Annual town-hall between immigrant and non-immigrant communities and invite politicians at all levels;
- Find ways across communities to find solutions and not be silent bystanders;
- Create a central point of coordination, reflective of community diversity;
- Do things to break down the fear of the unknown by building understanding of similarities;
- Create opportunities for things such as civic awards for immigrants;
- Sensitize young people in and out of school to diversity by using partnerships at community events;
- Be pro-active in taking leadership in dealing with crises - focus on education;

- De-mystify why immigrants come to Canada and highlight the known benefits of that.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Methodology

To ensure the Conference's success, the members of the Organizing Committee (which included, among others, representatives of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa (SPCO) and Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI)) developed a questionnaire that was circulated among service providers, community groups, and other interested individuals and organizations to identify the needs of their clientele and what they thought would be important to include in the Conference workshops. The high rate of response to the questionnaire was a clear indication of the great interest generated by this initiative and the pressing need for it.

The survey identified the following themes as concerns of the target communities: issues pertaining to employment and participation in the work force; the need for enhanced political organization and participation; issues involving the integration of new immigrants; access to services; the aftermath of September 11; housing; intergenerational relations; poverty; and health.

The Organizing Committee set up a workshop on each of the themes identified by the survey. To optimize an atmosphere of exchange, each workshop was divided into two parts. The first part was an information session on the topic in question. The second was a discussion on the topic, led by a facilitator to ensure the active participation of all delegates. The goal of the second session was to suggest and develop solutions to the problems raised in the first session. At the end of the day, there was a closing plenary session where each workshop group presented a key recommendation or

recommendations arising from its discussion on the topic. This approach was adopted to facilitate exchanges that would result in solutions to the problems discussed.

Appendix B

1. Information, assessment and expert advice

- **Internet portals:** This is an important first step. Information needs to be accessible and be available in its entirety.
- **Assessment services:** Many different assessment services already exist but there is no communication between them. Uniformity and base-line principles need to be created.
- **Labour market, counselling and learning plans:** These would be the connectors with the assessment services and the labour market. They would be used to inform participants how to achieve the desired outcome, and should be provided within institutes of higher learning.
- **Mentorship by Canadian practitioner:** This needs to be done in a structured way with specific guidelines, training programs and contracts. Mentorship would be offered regardless of ethnicity but it should be gender sensitive.

2. Integrated bridging programs

- **Academic courses:** Undergoing total retraining should not be necessary if

would be offered. A government loan system similar to OSAP that would allow immigrants to borrow funds for academic courses needs to be implemented.

- **Technical skills upgrading:** Provide courses to make sure that technical skills meet market demands.

- **Knowledge of Canadian workplace practices:** The best way for immigrants to get experience and gain knowledge of the way things work within the Canadian

workplace is to be involved in that workplace.

Complete details of the model can be found in the report titled “**Fulfilling the Promise: Integrating Immigrant Skills into the Canadian Economy**” on the Maytree Foundation website at www.maytree.com.

* * * * *

LASI (Local Agencies Serving Immigrants) and the Social Planning Council would like to thank the following for their contributions:

Conference Moderators

- ❖ *Patrick Ballay, Social Planning Council of Ottawa*
- ❖ *Lucya Spencer, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants*
- ❖ *Nancy Worsfold, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization*

Keynote Speakers

- ❖ *Bob Chiarelli, Mayor, City of Ottawa*
- ❖ *Haroon Siddiqui, Editor, Toronto Star*

Panelists:

- ❖ *Khadija Haffajee, Chairperson, Christian-Muslim Dialogue of Ottawa*
- ❖ *Janet Dench, Executive Director, Canadian Council for Refugees*
- ❖ *Ron Singer, Director of Research and Public Affairs, Canadian Jewish Congress*
- ❖ *Mengistab Tsegaye, Executive Director, World Skills Staffing Services*
- ❖ *Cheryl Gorman, Executive Director, OCRI, TalentWorks*
- ❖ *Ratna Omidvar, Program Director, Maytree Foundation*
- ❖ *Dr. Fran Klodawsky, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies and Pauline Jewett Institute of Women's Studies, Carleton University*
- ❖ *Rashmi Luther, Professor, School of Social Work, Carleton University*
- ❖ *Edward Osei-Kwadwo, Assistant Professor of Political Science; and Sociology and Anthropology, and Race Equity Co-ordinator at Carleton University*
- ❖ *Bassel Martin, Policy and Communications Director of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)*
- ❖ *Ann Hodge, Member, Violence Against Women Management Committee*
- ❖ *Elizabeth Chin, Community Support Co-ordinator, Ottawa Social Housing*
- ❖ *Houda Dirieh, Intervenante Communautaire, Coop Ami Jeunesse*
- ❖ *M.S. Mwarigha, Program Director at the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA)*
- ❖ *Cliff Gazee, President, SomersetWest Community Health Centre, Co-President Ottawa Action on Poverty*
- ❖ *Dick Stewart, General Manager, People Services Department, City of Ottawa*
- ❖ *Rosette Wakeham, Volunteer, Task Force on Poverty and The Good Food Box*
- ❖ *Caroline Andrew, Professor Political Science and Dean of Social Science Faculty, University of Ottawa*

- ❖ *Paula Decoito, Executive Director, Social Planning Council of Peel*
- ❖ *Hamdi Mohammed, Co-ordinator, Getting Landed Project*
- ❖ *Carl Nicholson, Executive Director, Catholic Immigration Centre*
- ❖ *Anita Chakravarty, Health Promotion Co-ordinator for Youth, South-East Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community*

Building the Ottawa Mosaic

Panelists (cont'd.):

- ❖ *Omar Ugas, Mental Health Case Manager, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization*
- ❖ *Barabra Mckinnon, Executive Director, Pinecrest Queensway Health and Community Services*
- ❖ *Eva Hudakova, Co-ordinator of Crisis and Counselling Services, Immigrant and Visible Minority Women Against Abuse*

Workshop Facilitators:

- ❖ *David Pepper, Ottawa Police*
- ❖ *Katherine Pestiau, Metropolis Project*
- ❖ *Sonia Brereton, Canadian Heritage*
- ❖ *Naini Cloutier, Pinecrest Queensway Health and Community Services*
- ❖ *Mark Zarecki, Jewish Family Services*
- ❖ *Maryse Birmingham, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization*
- ❖ *Fanny Zegarra, CHEO*
- ❖ *Catherine Dubois, South-East Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community*
- ❖ *Marnie Smith, Canadian Mental Health Association*

Workshop Note Takers:

- ❖ *Tara Carney, Volunteer, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization*
- ❖ *Marilyn Read, Volunteer, Social Planning Council of Ottawa*
- ❖ *Andréa Lordelo, Volunteer, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization*
- ❖ *Hindia Mohamoud, Social Researcher, Social Planning Council of Ottawa*
- ❖ *Carmen Lavoie, Pinecrest Queensway Health and Community Services*
- ❖ *Catherine Jana, South-East Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community*
- ❖ *Ekua Cato, Student, School of Social Work, Carleton University*
- ❖ *Sue Merrill, Pinecrest Queensway Health and Community Services*
- ❖ *Jeanmari Mousenga, Student, School of Social Work, University of Ottawa*
- ❖ *Dianne Urquart, Program Co-ordinator, Social Planning Council of Ottawa*

Funders:

- ❖ *City of Ottawa, People Services*
- ❖ *The Metropolis Project*
- ❖ *Government of Canada*

Building the Ottawa Mosaic

Volunteers:

- ❖ *Carol Clarke, Volunteer Co-ordinator, OCISO*
- ❖ *Aslie Ahmed, OCISO*
- ❖ *Dunni Mesfin, OCISO*
- ❖ *Omayma Faris, Manager of Resource Development, OCISO*
- ❖ *Lyne Riel, SPC*
- ❖ *Snow Wang, OCISO*
- ❖ *Jim Worsfold, OCISO*
- ❖ *Tamara Gilberts, OCISO*
- ❖ *Mariana Szkrabyuk, OCISO*
- ❖ *Christine Jansen, OCISO*

Report Edited by:

- ❖ *Michèle Dumel, Social Planning Council*
- ❖ *Patrick Ballay, Social Planning Council*
- ❖ *Mohamed Ahmed, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization*
- ❖ *Marilyn Read, Social Planning Council*
- ❖ *Michael DiCola, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization*
- ❖ *Matthiew Ducharme, Social Planning Council*

Desktop publishing

- ❖ *Christine Jensen, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization*

* * * * *