



WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

E-Bulletin April 2010

*“Never doubt
that a small
group of
thoughtful,
committed
citizens can
change the
world. Indeed, it
is the only thing
that ever has.”*

~ Margaret Mead

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Greetings

Hello and welcome to the second edition of the WCI e-bulletin! So much has happened in the months since our last issue and we are excited to share the developments that have taken place. As of May 2010, we will be distributing the e-bulletin on a monthly basis and we again invite you to submit articles to be published. These can include, but are not limited to, announcements, updates, events, new projects, projects in progress, meetings, and opportunities for collaboration or partnership. The WCI e-bulletin is broadcast to over 1500 researchers, service providers, members of community and mainstream organizations, and policy and program officials in all three levels of government. It is an excellent vehicle for building public awareness. Please submit anything you think would be of interest by the first of each month. We look forward to reading your submissions.

Thank you

Additional Funding – Citizenship and Immigration Canada

We would like to thank Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region for providing us with a generous contribution agreement to carry out six exciting projects, the details of which can be found later in this issue. In addition to this agreement, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Integration Branch commissioned three further reports:

1. Characteristics of a Welcoming Community.
2. Analysis of the LIP Agreements.
3. a) Influence on Immigrant Integration.
b) Publication on Immigration to Major Cities in Ontario.

These are also discussed in more detail below.

Funded by / Financé par :



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada

Canada

Announcements and Updates

Website

An email was recently sent out to our mailing list announcing the launch of our new website, which is still in its beginning stages and will constantly be improving. Please visit welcomingcommunities.ca or lescommunautessaccueillantes.ca to take a look around. We would love to receive your feedback and suggestions for how the site could be made more useful to you; please email wci@uwo.ca to let us know what you think.

Changes in Leadership and Representation

Since our last issue, a few additional changes have been implemented. We welcome Elisabeth White, Manager, Employment & Strategic Initiatives of the Department of Community Services, City of London, and Co-Chair of the London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership Council, who has agreed to serve on the WCI Executive Committee. Gale

Cassidy, (Western), has been hired in the position of Project Coordinator for the Citizenship and Immigration, Ontario Region research projects. Kevin Pottie will fill the position of co-domain leader of "Health and Healthcare", replacing Heather Kilty. Linda Manning and Mitch Rothstein will now co-lead the "Workplace Integration" domain. We have also merged the two domains formerly known as "Business and Economic Development" and "Newcomer Attraction and Entry" and have created "Newcomer Attraction, Retention, and Business Development." This new domain will be led by Vic Satzewich and John Nadeau. Jenna Hennebry will no longer be leading a domain, but will stay on as a university co-representative at Wilfrid Laurier along with Margaret Walton-Roberts. As for other university representatives, Davina Bhandar will be our key contact at Trent in Peterborough, Anas Karzai will be our representative in Barrie through Laurentian University's Georgian College,

and Walid Chahal has been filling in for Chris Southcott while he has been on sabbatical from Lakehead University in Thunder Bay this past year.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to those beginning their new positions! A complete list of domain leaders and their university affiliations can be found on the website.

Kick-off meeting

In November of 2009, WCI held a kick-off meeting. Attendees included university representatives, community representatives, domain leaders, special guests from the federal government, and local representatives from the Kingston area. The meeting was held over two days, and there were several presentations and question sessions. One of the most important reasons for holding the kick-off meeting was to foster a sense of community and collaboration among members of the WCI. Too often, we find ourselves working in our specific areas of investigation and forgetting the importance of

maintaining real contact with others involved in similar pursuits, as well as those with different frames of reference. This lack of connection narrows our perspective. This meeting reminded us that we are all part of a team. It also offered an opportunity to showcase initial work, to get a sense of the progress of the WCI, as well as to provide a comfortable forum for asking questions and exchanging ideas. These objectives were certainly achieved as new connections were forged and existing ones were strengthened. We still have a long way to go, but we should all take a moment to congratulate ourselves on how far we have already come!

The Executive Committee would like to thank everyone who was able to join in the information sharing and community-building. The session notes and PowerPoint slides from the meeting are available on our new website. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Tasha Williamson at wci@uwo.ca.

Milestone Report

As a testament to what we have already accomplished in our first year, we recently submitted a Milestone Report to SSHRC for our CURA grant. While preparing the report, it became apparent that we have met and exceeded many of our goals. As evidence of project expansion, we were able to list several new collaborators and partners, including many university students who have been involved in various aspects of the ongoing projects. We have also made

substantial progress in firming up our governance structure, developing written descriptions of the various roles and responsibilities of consortium members, introducing new protocols and guidelines, and putting into place procedures to assist both community and university members in contributing to the WCI's research agenda. A description of our governance machinery, including the structure, mandate, and roles of the governing council, executive committee, community council, university council, and secretariat can be found on our website.

Update on the First Baseline Study

We are pleased to report that considerable progress has been made on the first of the baseline studies, "City Inventories and Audits of Local Resources and Services." At the kick-off meeting in Kingston, project co-leader Caroline Andrew outlined the ideas and strategies of the study, which was broken down into a list of eight sectors and a matrix of eighteen types of services the WCI plans to examine, as well as a guide to collecting the information. She stressed that researchers and data collectors in each municipality would be responsible for deciding which particular methods would work best for them, but that the model was one that could easily be adapted to fit each cities' needs. At this time, two inventories have been completed: the WCI in London collaborated with the London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership Council to produce and administer questionnaires to

several agencies in the area. They compiled, analyzed, and presented a report on the data at a Community Action Planning Day hosted by the London & Middlesex LIP Council. In Sudbury the completed project was broken down into three components; French-language services, English-language and bilingual services, and services to the Aboriginal population. The WCI has linked with their Local Immigration Partnership or its equivalent to collaborate on the project in four additional areas, including Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Ottawa and Durham Region (formerly Oshawa). In Kingston the LIP has completed a basic inventory with the WCI having almost completed theirs as well, while in Thunder Bay the process is also underway. The remaining sites are in the initial stages of planning but most work is expected to be completed by the end of the summer.

Update on Local Engagement

The Milestone Report mentioned above has revealed considerable diversity in the forms that local engagement has taken in the fourteen WCI sites. Some of this diversity reflects the different maturity levels of the WCI across Ontario as well as tight local deadlines that have had a restraining effect on ambitions; potentially more interesting, though, is that the diversity would also appear to reflect different approaches to organization and engagement. This became apparent at the Kingston meeting where researchers

and community representatives were able to share their initial ideas and experiences. Of particular interest to the WCI are the successful mergers that have taken place between several of the participating universities and the LIPs. These partnerships tend to be goal oriented. By way of contrast, a certain number of universities have opted for more laissez-faire approaches to local engagement, espousing principles rather than tasks. The WCI will be looking at how these relationships evolve from the perspective of developing trust, producing expertise and building coalitions with a view to fine tuning the university-community partnership model which the project espouses.

**Welcoming Communities:
Promoting Inclusive
Ontario Cities
Funded by Citizenship
and Immigration Canada,
Ontario Region**

In late February, we were informed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region that our proposal for a set of studies on "Welcoming Communities: Promoting Inclusive Ontario Cities" had been approved, providing funding of over \$500,000 over 14 months. These six projects are now underway:

**Opinion Leader Interviews:
Views on Cultural Diversity
and Immigration**

Led by Livianna Tossutti (Brock) and Victoria Esses (Western)
Confidential interviews will be conducted with opinion

leaders in the 14 Census Metropolitan Areas in Ontario outside of Toronto about immigration and cultural diversity in their communities. Through interviews of opinion leaders, the project will be able to assess the "warmth of the welcome" that currently exists in communities as well as potential targets and strategies for change. This will assist in assessing policy directions and helping to shape anti-racism and welcoming community program interventions.

**Antiracism and
Antidiscrimination
Observatory**

Led by Victoria Esses (Western) and Livianna Tossutti (Brock)
The project will develop an antiracism and antidiscrimination observatory that will be a repository for (a) tools to assess racism and discrimination, with a focus on smaller communities; (b) research on antiracism and antidiscrimination, particularly as it pertains to smaller communities; and (c) tools for combating racism and discrimination in the workplace, in organizations, in schools, and in communities. The overall goal will be to equip policymakers and local organizations with a set of diagnostics for assessing levels of racism and discrimination, and practical tools that can be used to promote harmony and inclusion. This information will be hosted on the Welcoming Communities Initiative website.

**Policing Newcomers: Policy,
Training and Practice**

Led by Vic Satzewich (McMaster) and William Shaffir (McMaster)
This research project will examine:
1. How police services in 2nd and 3rd tier cities in Ontario understand the challenges and opportunities that newcomers pose for policing in their respective communities,
2. The extent to which newcomer issues, including perceptions and experiences of racism, have been incorporated into the policies and mission statements of police service organizations, and into training that police services provide to their staff.
3. Possible discrepancies between the policies and training that are in place to deal with newcomers and the degree to which police and diversity officers within police forces believe the policies and training to be effective.

**WCI Action-Research on Local
Immigration Partnership
Councils (LIPs)**

Led by Neil Bradford (Western) and Caroline Andrew (Ottawa)
WCI researchers will partner with LIP members in analyzing models for local collaboration and province-wide coordination, capturing key lessons as the individual LIPs evolve, and facilitating the cross-fertilization of ideas. WCI researchers will also explore strategies that position the LIPs over the longer term as key mechanisms in local communities for ensuring successful settlement and integration of all newcomers in Ontario.

(Please read the article "WCI Action Research on Local Immigration Partnership Councils" for more information on this project)

Perceptions of Discrimination in Health Services Experienced by Immigrant Minorities in Ontario

Led by Bruce Newbold (McMaster) and Ginette Lafreniere (Wilfrid Laurier) This project will employ several techniques to examine perceptions of racism and discrimination in access and use of health care in second and third tier Ontario cities, as well as more broadly:

1. A scan of Canadian literature, including academic publications, policy papers, and various sources of 'grey' literature.
2. The use of Statistics Canada's Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC).
3. The use of an existing qualitative study of health care providers that work with immigrants in Hamilton.
4. A set of questions to gauge perceptions of racism and discrimination in the health care environment will be administered to health care providers and immigrants in three Ontario cities through focus groups or interviews.

Barriers to Health Service Utilization by Immigrant Families Raising a Disabled Child

Led by Gillian King (Bloorview Research Institute and Western) This project will provide important information for service organizations and policy makers regarding health service barriers

experienced by immigrant families raising a disabled child. The research will also inform the development of policies and best practices. The project will assess (a) the perceptions of service providers and immigrant group leaders regarding barriers in service delivery for immigrant families, and (b) the perceptions of immigrant parents regarding unmet needs, their expectations regarding service delivery, and the extent to which services are culturally sensitive and family-centred.

Phase 1: Focus groups. The first phase will assess service provider and immigrant group leaders' perceptions of barriers to service for immigrants from South and East Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.

Phase 2: Surveys of unmet needs and service experiences. The objective of this phase is to survey immigrant families with children with cerebral palsy or spina bifida (the two most common forms of childhood physical disability).

Analyses will determine commonalities and differences in the experiences of immigrant families and, along with the qualitative Phase 1 data, will shed light on attitudinal barriers and inadequate practices and policies. Comparisons will also be made with previous studies of non-immigrants.

An Analysis of the Local Immigration Partnership Agreements (LIPs)

As part of an early study of the Local Immigration Partnerships Neil Bradford (Huron College, University of Western Ontario), Caroline Andrew (University of Ottawa) and Amy Ratcliffe (University of Western Ontario) completed an initial analysis of the Local Immigration Partnership agreements across Ontario. The agreements are between local groups such as municipalities or community organizations and Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region. The mandate of the LIPs is to improve and enhance immigrant settlement and integration through the formation of broadly-based partnership councils that bring together a wide variety of players including the settlement sector, municipal government, business representatives and mainstream service delivery agencies for community planning and action. Drawing on public consultations and community dialogue, the partnership councils are supposed to formulate strategic plans for the successful integration of immigrants reflecting the specific challenges and opportunities in their locality.

When the study was launched, there were 14 neighbourhoods within the City of Toronto and 18 communities across Ontario outside Toronto that had LIP agreements. Consistent with the principle of bottom-up planning, the LIP applications were left relatively open in regards to who might come forward, recognizing that

local leadership in immigration varies across places. Indeed, one striking finding from the review of agreements is the different structures and processes between the LIPs within Toronto and those in the rest of the province. For example, the pattern in Toronto is for the LIPs to have a community organization or local service provider as the lead agency, whereas outside Toronto the municipal government or a regional or municipal entity has typically taken the lead. However, these are only general patterns and a strength of the LIP program is its flexibility in adapting to local community needs and capacities. The review also found interesting similarities and differences in the planning priorities and integration objectives across the LIPs as well as identifying a number of "good practices." These centered on partnership formation, on the importance of broad-based community leadership, on working with and through existing networks, and on providing the necessary time for community-driven strategic planning processes to establish trust and forge new relationships.

This initial review of the agreements will provide a baseline for further study of the LIPs as they transition from strategy development to action. The study will continue to monitor developments in the program and key learnings will be featured in forthcoming editions of the Newsletter.

WCI Action Research on Local Immigration Partnership Councils

Recognizing the importance of grounding the research in the perspectives and knowledge of community actors, the WCI is hosting a "Dialogue and Learning" workshop that will convene the LIP coordinators and lead agency representatives from all across Ontario. The gathering will be held in London on Friday, April 30 and Saturday, May 1. Interest in the workshop has exceeded expectations and some 80 persons are expected to attend. Discussion will focus on a number of themes that are central to the LIPs: how local leadership structures and the composition of partnership councils shape strategic planning and other processes; the synergies that are likely to result as strategic plans are transformed into local actions; and the research partnerships that have been formed between the LIPs and the local WCI committees.

The LIPs constitute a promising Canadian example of multi-level governance that engages community-based networks in the public policy process. Integral to this vision is the sharing of knowledge and experience among community practitioners, policy-makers, and academics. In this spirit, the dialogue and learning that will take place in London will allow all participants to appreciate the different structures, activities, and methods of consultation evolving across the LIPs. Moving forward, the project's action research will be well-positioned to focus on the

specific opportunities and challenges that arise when governments and communities work together for effective immigrant settlement and integration. The LIPs are an interesting "social innovation" and the WCI's action research agenda, beginning with the Dialogue and Learning event on April 30-May 1, is designed to capture key lessons and to develop a sound understanding of best practices.

Funding for WCI's LIP research has been provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region. The research is being carried-out by Neil Bradford (Huron, Western) and Caroline Andrew (U of Ottawa), with assistance from Marisa Casagrande (McMaster) and Amy Ratcliffe (Western).

Characteristics of a Welcoming Community

A report has just been completed for Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Integration Branch on the characteristics of a welcoming community. The report was co-authored by Victoria Esses, Leah Hamilton, Caroline Bennett-AbuAyyash, and Meyer Burstein. On the basis of the literature currently available, the report provides a rank order list of the crucial characteristics of a welcoming community. These are discussed in terms of their key outcome indicators, key processes that are needed to produce and sustain these outcomes, and examples of best practices. It is clear from this review that

there is still much work to do in this area. The report concludes by detailing an evidence-based agenda for the future. This agenda would need to include research to more clearly identify the main characteristics of a welcoming community along with best practices to sustain the welcome, including community-based research.

Research Summaries on Factors Affecting the Integration of Immigrants in Canada

The WCI has recently been commissioned to prepare a set of brief research summaries on factors affecting the integration of immigrants in Canada. Over the last month, eight affiliated students prepared such summaries, scouring the literature for everything available on the topics to which they had been assigned. Thanks to the following students for their work:

- April Carrière, University of Ottawa
- Secil Erdogan, University of Western Ontario
- Georgios Fthenos, University of Western Ontario
- Stelian Medianu, University of Western Ontario
- Andrew Roberts, Brock University
- Claire Schiller, McMaster University
- Hila Taraky, McMaster University
- Erin Tolley, Queens University

Roundtables at the Annual Metropolis Conference

What is a Welcoming Community?

At the recent Metropolis Conference in Montreal, the WCI organized a roundtable on *What is a Welcoming Community?* The purpose was to discuss definitions of a welcoming community, current research attempting to assess the extent of welcome in communities, community programming in support of a welcoming community, and reactions to these efforts. Over 40 people participated in the roundtable that was kicked off by a panel that included Victoria Esses (Western), Bob Annis (Brandon), Carl Nicholson (Catholic Immigration Centre), Livianna Tossutti (Brock), Erin Tolley (Queens), Caroline Bennett-AbuAyyash (Western), Leah Hamilton (Western), Ben Pollard (Government of BC), and April Carrière (Ottawa). There was an active discussion and a great deal of information exchanged, reflecting the degree of interest that this topic is currently attracting. Thanks to Meredith Henley (formerly of CIC, Integration Branch) for helping to organize the session.

Refugee-specific challenges and experiences in understanding Canadian immigration

Julianna Butler of the University of Western Ontario organized and led a roundtable on *Refugee-specific challenges and experiences in understanding Canadian immigration*. The goal was to draw attention to refugee issues, with diverse

insights from inter-disciplinary academic researchers and NGO representatives. Topics ranged from the situation of specific groups, such as Karen refugees in London, to broader findings illustrating the processes that 'dehumanize' refugees in public perceptions and attitudes.

Participants included: Dr. Alan Simmons (Professor of Sociology and visiting professor at Western); Dr. Meredith Fraser, anti-hate and anti-bias program coordinator for the London Urban Services Organization (LUSO); Melissa Stachel, (PhD student in Anthropology at Western); Stelian Medianu, (MSc student in Psychology at Western); Secil Erdogan, (PhD student in Sociology at Western); and Julianna Butler, (PhD student in Anthropology at Western). All of the participants are connected through the Migration and Ethnic Relations program at Western. The student and NGO participants expressed appreciation for the travel support provided by the Welcoming Communities Initiative which helped make this roundtable possible.

Thank you

We would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for their continued financial support.

