STRATEGIC PLANNING USING A THEORY OF CHANGE FRAMEWORK

The London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership Strategic Plan Formulation

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Background

• London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership established in 2009
• Have implemented two 3-year strategic plans since that time
• Subcouncils have focused on broad outcomes and engaged in activities to achieve these outcomes
• Many successes but many goals still to be achieved
Background

• What next?
• How do we engage in the most effective strategic planning:

Theory of Change
THE THEORY OF CHANGE

A set of beliefs that guides thinking about how and why a complex change process will unfold...
HOW IT WORKS - AT ITS CORE

- We Start with Our Long-Term Goals
- And then...
- ... Work Backwards
A causal framework of how and why a change process will happen in a particular context

Rather than projecting outcomes from our activities, a theory of change reverses that process by focusing FIRST on WHAT OUTCOME we are seeking (our goal) – then thoroughly considering all preconditions necessary

Interventions and Activities are then based on our outcomes framework (So we know why we are doing them!)
It makes assumptions explicit and identifies rationales for all preconditions and interventions (activities)

It includes built-in indicators so that we can determine whether we are on track over time

A Theory of Change is both a “process” and a “product”
THEORY OF CHANGE: A ROADMAP

- A good theory of change helps us to develop a roadmap
- It identifies:
  - Where we want to go
  - The route we will take to get there
  - Why certain milestones are necessary steps in the path we will travel
- This is the pathway we want to build to get to where we want to be in our community
HOW DO WE DEVELOP THE ROADMAP?

- Start with the long-term goals we want for our community
  - For example
    - English language proficiency
    - Access to health care
    - Equal job prospects – employment rate, positions commensurate with qualifications, salary
  - Then work backward through preconditions for getting to the goals
SOME CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF A THEORY OF CHANGE

- Outcomes and Preconditions, modelled in a causal pathway
- Interventions (activities) leading to the relevant Outcome(s)
- Assumptions
- Rationales
- Indicators
OUTCOMES

- **Ultimate Outcome**: Newcomers are successful in their new lives

- **Long-Term Outcome**: Newcomers arrive in a community and obtain jobs, their children graduate from school in the normal time frame and the families are readily able to gain critical academic, social and life skills
PRECONDITIONS

- Specifies what HAS to change if the long-term goal is going to be achieved

- This helps us avoid doing things that are good, but don’t get us where we want to go...
INTERVENTIONS

- Actions or activities designed to achieve particular Outcomes
- Interventions follow Outcomes (not vice versa)
- By identifying interventions as supporting a particular outcome, we focus on what actually has to be done and who is best to do it
- Interventions can be placed on any part of an Outcomes framework map
ASSUMPTIONS

- Assumptions are beliefs about conditions that we think already exist and are critical to the validity of the theory of change we are creating.

- In the process of developing a theory of change, assumptions will emerge and this can be very valuable.

- It is important for us to recognize and keep track of these.

- They must be aired and addressed: Are they correct? Should they be Preconditions?
RATIONALES

Why that Precondition?
- Explaining EVERY step of the way why the short-term outcomes are needed and why they would lead to long-term outcomes

Why that Intervention?
- In a given context, why interventions (activities) done in a certain way are most likely to bring about the outcome
- A developed rationale contributes to the plausibility and feasibility of the theory
Annex 2 – LIPs Theory of Change

Local Immigration Partnerships: Expected results and contribution to settlement outcomes

How?
- Partnership council allows for meaningful engagement of a diversity of members
  - Membership includes a variety of partners from different sectors
  - Partners’ commitment to the LIP’s vision
- Partnership allows for cross-sector collaboration and planning
  - Evidence of collaboration in planning and establishing priorities
- Newcomers’ needs identified
  - Breadth of consultations
  - Depth of consultations
- Community assets and gaps mapped
  - Inclusion of all relevant services and needs in the mapping
- How?
- Partners have the capacity to become more welcoming
  - Evidence of information sharing, training, tools development
- Relevant strategy and action plans developed on the basis of newcomers’ needs and the assets and gaps mapping
  - Content and comprehensiveness of the plans and strategy
  - Prioritize actions as relevant in the community
  - Identify resources to support implementation
- How?
- Services coordinated at the community level
  - Partnerships made possible through the LIP
  - Partners facilitate referrals and “no-wrong-door” approach
  - Newcomers access info sections or needs assessment tools
- Adapted programming and service delivery by non-settlement institutions
  - Influence of the LIP on municipal planning process
  - Evidence of progress in implementing action plans
- How?
- LIPs secured resources from diverse sources
  - Ratio of resources leveraged from sources other than CIC

1-2 years
- Partners (LIP members) are aware of newcomers’ needs and develop strategies to address them.

3-5 years
- Partners are engaged in newcomer settlement and implement strategies to address newcomers’ needs.
- Newcomers engage early in their settlement experience and have access to the services they need.

5+ years
- Newcomers find employment commensurate with their skills and experience (19)
- Newcomers enjoy their rights and act on their responsibilities in Canadian society (20)
- Canadians provide a welcoming community to facilitate the full participation of newcomers (21)
- Newcomers contribute to the economic, social and cultural development needs of Canada (22)
- Sustaining partnerships at the community level
Theory of change focuses on filling in HOW and WHY an activity would lead to the desired goal.

“I think you should be more explicit here in step two.”
• **Logic model** graphically illustrates program components

• **Theory of change is a causal model:**
  – it links outcomes and activities to explain **how** and **why** the desired change is expected to come about
  – it starts with a goal before deciding what program approach is needed
INDICATORS

- Measurable Indicators of Success or EVIDENCE
- What does it look like if the outcome is met?
- Example Outcome: Foreign trained professionals have access to their choice of professions
- Example Indicator: Proportion of foreign trained professionals who obtain their professional certification in their areas of expertise
VALUE OF INDICATORS

- Indicators help us decide on program activities

- Once we know WHO we are targeting and set realistic expectations given our resources about HOW MANY and HOW WELL we can accomplish the goal, then we design program activities geared to meet that indicator at that level
What? Ability to achieve professional certification

For Whom? Foreign trained professionals

How Many? 80% of those that apply get their certification

By When? Within 12 months
HOW WE PLAN TO USE OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

- The basis of an Agreement: buy-in of all partners about what needs to happen and who does it

- Our framework for Implementation: Required interventions/actions

- As a roadmap to our Outcomes: how we get where we want to go

- Our basis for Monitoring and Evaluation

- To demonstrate Collective Impact in a real way