

LIP  
Stakeholder  
Consultation  
Summary of  
Results

February 29

2016

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## HLIP Stakeholders Consultation

Members of the Halifax Local Immigration Partnership (HLIP) four subcommittees participated in the February 29<sup>th</sup> stakeholders consultation. These subcommittees are: Economic Integration and Growth; Education and Language Learning; Health and Wellness; Social Integration and Growth. From the opening words to the closing remarks, there was a common thread tying together both what the HLIP is about and what the current landscape of immigration looks like in Nova Scotia: it is all a matter of collaboration.

**Collaboration** was the common theme all throughout the day: how can we improve it, what has worked so far, where we want to see it going, which are the results we want to get, etc. There were members of all four HLIP subcommittees, plus members of the Action Team that resulted from the Making a Culturally Competent City event held last Spring.

The consultation was led by Tracey Jones-Grant, Manager of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at HRM and Project Manager of the HLIP, and Roberto Montiel, HLIP Coordinator.

Nova Scotia's Minister of Immigration, The Honourable Lena Metlege Diab, opened the consultation by giving a brief overview of the current landscape of immigration in Nova Scotia and what has been achieved within the past 12 months. She highlighted the role that collaboration plays and has played in these achievements; in Minister Diab's words: "Sharing is great, but collaboration is key". In addition to opening two new streams to immigrate to Nova Scotia in January 2016, the Province's retention number has increased significantly and, based on consultations with settlement agencies, service providers, municipal government and other organizations, there has been a noticeable change in the public attitude towards immigration in Nova Scotia. *Nova Scotians seem to be more ready to receive and welcome newcomers in the Province.* Minister Diab acknowledged the great work that HLIP has been doing and the importance it will have as Halifax welcome more newcomers. She closed her remarks challenging the LIP "to think about results, getting results through partnerships and collaboration ... carry the things you hear and say back to your respective organizations so the conversation can continue and not just be for today".

*Several participants expressed that this was the first time they had the opportunity to hear about the work of other subcommittees*

The updates of each chair of the four subcommittees, as well as of the project manager about the HLIP's Advisory Committee, gave the participants a better picture of the structure and governance of the HLIP.

*Several participants expressed that this was the first time that they had the opportunity to hear about the work of other subcommittees and identified further opportunities of collaboration just based upon these updates.*

Mayor Mike Savage joined our consultation and expressed his gratitude to the group for all the work that they have been doing to help newcomers to settle successfully in Halifax. He said "I appreciate the fact that people step in from different organizations, from different levels of

government, different points of view, coming together to work on this partnership, which I think is really key to the changing face, I think the improving face, of Halifax". According to Mayor Savage, HRM is, indeed, becoming more welcoming to its newcomers. An example of this is the extraordinary response that the people of Halifax had to the Syrian crisis and to the more than 800 refugees received in the municipality within the past four months. He stressed the key role that newcomers will play in the growth of HRM and the significance that the collaboration herein built has, and will have, in helping them to integrate and succeed. "I think that the Halifax of today looks different than the Halifax of 20 years ago, and the Halifax of 20 years from now will look a whole lot different than the faces of the people who built this city", he concluded.

### Questionnaire

A questionnaire was prepared and given to attendees to evaluate how our stakeholders perceive the work that the HLIP has done as well as the impact that it has had.

*Has the HLIP had an impact on how immigration is perceived?  
"Hard to say but it helped"  
(respondent's comment)*

28 members filled out the questionnaire, the results of which are outlined next:

- **Most respondents (20) agreed that the HLIP has helped to raise awareness** about immigrant needs amidst a broader range of community stakeholders **and that it has enhanced collaboration** amidst a broad range of stakeholders (26). However, regarding the impact that the respondents feel the HLIP has had (on their organizations, on their work, on the community at large, on newcomers' better integration and settlement), the view was less unanimous. As to **the impact the**

**HLIP has had on how immigration is perceived** in this city by a broad range of stakeholders, **the majority of respondents were neutral** (13), while 9 agreed, 2 disagreed and 4 found it not applicable. As one respondent commented, with the information at hand, it is hard to evaluate the HLIP's impact, even though, intuitively, it can be assumed that the it has made a contribution.

*There is a need to keep a better track of what we are doing and find better ways to help us gather data that is representative of the impact that we are having.*

- Similarly, **the "key role" that the HLIP has played in helping to better coordinate the services already existing in HRM** so as to facilitate the successful settlement and integration of newcomers was met with skepticism. **The majority of respondents (14) were neutral**, while 10 agreed and 3 disagreed, only 1 found it not applicable. As to **the "key role" of the HLIP in helping identify needs of newcomers**, the views were somewhat less skeptical, with **most of the respondents agreeing** (16), while 11 remaining neutral and only 1 finding it not applicable. The views, however, did not keep consistent as to the work of **the HLIP once after needs were identified** and to **how it has contributed to better respond to those needs**, as **the majority of respondents remained neutral** (15), with 10 agreeing, 2 disagreeing and 1 abstaining. It is worth noting that these views did keep consistent regarding **the role that the HLIP has had in**

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**helping improve access to services** that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration, as **the majority respondents were either neutral** (12), **disagreed** (2), or **abstained** (3); the number, however, of those agreeing is still representative (11).

*Most HLIP members feel that we have done a very good job at identifying needs. However, we have not been as effective in developing plans to address those needs once identified. This may be the reason why it is difficult for members to tell whether the HLIP has helped to improve the access and coordination of services for newcomers.*

- Regarding the quality of the partnerships, **most respondents agreed** (18) **that the HLIP has helped to expand broad-based multi-sectorial partnerships**, only 8 were neutral and 2 abstained to respond. Yet the opinion is more divided when it comes to assessing **to which degree these partnerships have increased each member's organization to collect and analyse data** that helps them **increase their planning capacity**; **8 members were neutral, 5 agreed and 7 disagreed while 8 abstained to respond**. It is worth observing, however, that **most members** (16) **felt that the internal communication of their subcommittee has enhanced their capacity to work collaboratively**, just 6 were neutral and 6 abstained. And, although this consultation certainly helped to start a conversation among subcommittees and with the Advisory Committee, **most respondents felt unsure about whether this communication has been effective or whether it has created new opportunities to identify and address barriers and challenges in the services offered to newcomers**, as most respondents were either **neutral** (11), **disagreed** (3) or **abstained** (3); it is worth noting that 9 respondents agreed with this statement, and some noted that this consultation has taken a step towards making this communication more accessible.

*We have been successful at building sustainable partnerships and at creating ways to ensure there is an effective internal (inter-subcommittees) communication. Nonetheless, we have not developed ways to regularly check-in with our members as to the value that sitting at the HLIP's tables has for them and what it brings to their organizations. Lastly, our job communicating each other's roles (i.e., our governance) and activities (i.e., amidst subcommittees) can be substantially improved, as most members are not aware of what others are doing. Potential opportunities of greater collaboration are (and have been) likely missed due to this lack of communication.*

- On a similar note, most **members feel unsure about our external reach to the community and, more specifically, to newcomers**, as **half** (14) were neutral, 5 abstained and 5 disagreed; only 5 agreed.

*We need to decide to which degree the HLIP wants to reach out to newcomers, and to the community at large, as a public-face organization, in which case we will have to work on our external communications strategy.*

- About **having other organizations represented in the HLIP**, **more than 90% (26) of the respondents agreed that this should be an ongoing process, identifying groups that can make a difference in working with immigrants**. These organizations include:

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more Francophone representation, more post-secondary education institutions, more industries, youth organizations and faith groups,

*Almost all members expressed their desire to keep the tables open for new members.*

- Our members' views on the role that the HLIP has played in the community are consistent with their views in the previous questions.

*Most members agree (21) that the two main strengths of the HLIP so far have been **Networking** and **Identification of needs**. On the networking side, the partnerships, connections and collaboration that have resulted from the HLIP's conversations are consistently highlighted by its members. Correspondingly, on the identification side, most members highlight how successful the HLIP has been in identifying gaps, challenges and barriers for better integration and settlement of newcomers in the city.*

- The majority of respondents (15) commented on the open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire. These comments made for a good segway to what the table-discussions brought more in detail. The comments can be clustered in three main categories:
  - 1) *Better structure: shared definition, vision of what the LIP is and, more importantly, what it does and who does what (more detailed terms of reference, strategic plans, etc.)*
  - 2) *Better communication, more particularly at an internal level (i.e., amongst subcommittees) and, if necessary, externally (i.e., reaching out to newcomers and the community at large)*
  - 3) *Translate all the work into (coordinated) actions*

*Key themes that we heard:  
Collaboration, Network,  
Identification of needs!*

### Discussion Tables

The answers of the discussion about **what we have been doing right** kept consistent with what was identified in the questionnaire: **Collaboration, Networking and Identification of needs** were the three main assets that members recognized from the HLIP.

**With respect to what we could have done differently**, the answers kept consistent as well: **Better internal communication (amongst subcommittees), role clarification (i.e., HLIP's strengthened structure, governance, terms of reference)** were the two main issues that members identified they could have dealt with differently. Regarding external communication, the HLIP's lack of visibility was the main problem that members identified. **Having more organizations represented** (grassroots organizations, industry, etc.) was also an issue that several members (three out of five tables) thought the HLIP needed. Lastly, **four out of six tables mentioned the need of having a full-time coordinator**.

Regarding where members see the HLIP going next year, there were **three issues** that came consistently from all five tables:

### Consultation participants have said...

#### What we could do differently:

- Better communications amongst subcommittees
- Better external communications
- Better role clarification

#### What the HLIP should do in next year:

- Increase internal communications
- Increase external communications
- Influence public policy

#### How:

- Develop a clear structure with defined roles
- Develop a communications strategy
- Identify how to influence public policy
- Identify external financial resources

#### How to increase collaboration:

- Involve each other at the beginning of planning stages (information sharing between sub-committees)
- Identify additional partners

1) **Better internal communication (amongst subcommittees).** According to our members, this communication can only start if:

- The role of the HLIP is well defined for all its members (what the LIP is, what it does, identifying everybody's roles, etc.): All have the same point of departure as to where we are going.

- A longer-term Strategic Plan is developed (3-5 years plan)

- More people is included at the Advisory Committee (first-voice was encouraged by three out of the five tables)

- The role of the coordinator is better defined

- There is consistent messaging amidst and between members and subcommittees

2) **Better external communication.** According to our members, we need to develop the tools and resources to reach out to the community at large, to newcomers in specific and to keep members in the loop of what everybody is doing. Suggestions included:

- Identifying how we want the HLIP to connect with the public

- Fostering a common understanding of Cultural Proficiency/Competency: via public awareness initiatives (i.e., producing materials for schools, for employers, etc.).

- Developing strategies for more community engagement

- Having a website

3) **Influencing Public Policy**, as an “engine”, and “advocator”, so as to address systemic changes.

**About how can we get there**, answers also kept consistent with these three main issues. We will be able to achieve our objectives if we:

1) **Develop a clear structure (governance) with a clear definition of roles**, including the HLIP role at large (are we doers or planners? Who leads, the stakeholders or the LIP? What a supporting role look like? What is expected from stakeholders?). This could be the basis for a long-term strategic plan (3-5 years) that will enable stakeholders (and subcommittees) to outline clear parameters and priorities. The role of the HLIP coordinator should be better defined, and maybe even redefined to focus more on communications—having it as a full-time position was brought about again.

2) **Develop a Communications Strategy that both focus on internal and external communications.**

- Internally: Better strategies for information sharing both within subcommittees (involvement of parties earlier in the process [of planning an event, or of developing a

program, etc.]) and between subcommittees (knowing what others are doing, enhanced collaboration, more cross-pollination).

- Externally: Market the HLIP as a connector; develop a website to have all resources linked together, ensure a consistent and ongoing communication, and create a repository of information where data, results from public forums/consultations, etc. can be shared and stored→ this all tied up to the idea suggested by one table and widely endorsed by the other tables: Create a Marketing and Communications Subcommittee.

### 3) Influence policy-making by:

- More consultations, first voice experiences
- Better dissemination of findings at public consultations, forums, etc.
- Invite more key people to the table: Legal Services, Industry leaders, Universities

**As to how we can collaborate to create new and relevant opportunities for the better integration of newcomers in the city and the province and how each member visions their self and/or organization in this collaboration, most of our participants agreed that the collaboration is working. However, it is necessary a better information sharing system so as to facilitate a better coordination (i.e., with events), as well as to identify possible partnerships at the early stages of planning.** This connects with the idea of leveraging resources by identifying those that already exist and have them working collaboratively. As well, the idea of **inviting more people to the table**, particularly having more representation from other organizations (including those not directly working with newcomers) was brought about once again. This also resonates with the communications plan and the **HLIP's visibility**, as participants pointed out that **building a welcoming environment for newcomers also requires to engage and to better understand the receiving population.**

In general, the participants appreciated the chance to talk freely about their concerns and vision of the HLIP, and they all agreed that it will be better off once it is better defined. They agreed that the collaboration is working. Having a better communication, however, both internally and externally, could be the best way to achieve our goals.

### Next Steps:

Based on the feedback gathered from this consultation and from the Advisory Committee, the HLIP's main priority is and should be improving our communications. This will be achieved by:

1. Determine a communication strategy, both internally and externally.
  - Internal
    - Find and implement ways to share information more effectively so that members from any subcommittee can identify opportunities of collaboration at early stages (i.e., organizing events)
    - Promote intentional collaboration (cross-fertilization) amongst subcommittees
      - ◆ The HLIP coordinator to identify opportunities for collaboration and to set joint subcommittee meetings
      - ◆ More gatherings/check-ups like this (maybe half a day) were proposed at least twice a year

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- Produce a one-pager for LIP members of where the LIP is and where we want it to be
  - 
  - External
    - Produce a one-pager on what the HLIP is and how it works for the general population and post it at halifax.ca Web presence:
      - ◆ Create a social media platform for the HLIP
      - ◆ Create a website for the Halifax LIP
2. Identify the advocacy role that HLIP could have in helping to shape policy. Since the HLIP is already gathering information, analysing it, and identifying gaps, it can, as a collective, share these data and results, ask informed questions to decision-makers and help policy-makers inform their decisions.