

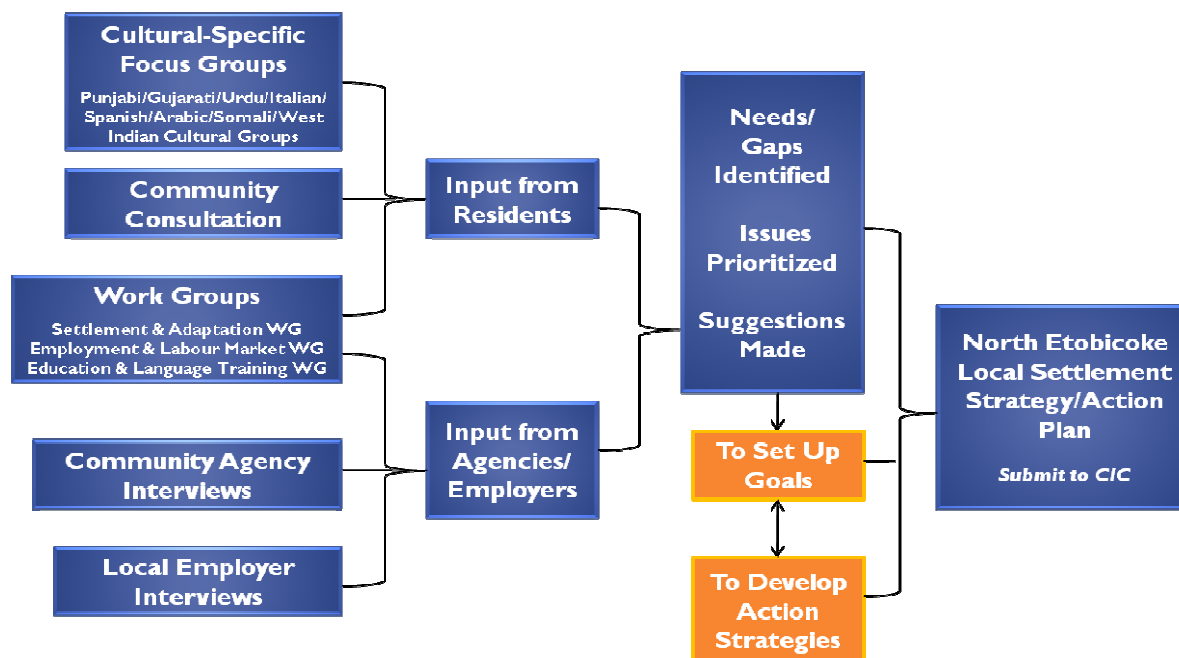
***North Etobicoke
Local Immigration Partnership***



**Highlights of
Consultations
and Surveys**

July 2010

Development of North Etobicoke Local Settlement Strategy



Partnership Council and Work Group Members

- Action for Neighbourhood Change-Rexdale,
- Albion Islington Square Business Improvement Area,
- Albion Neighbourhood Services-Newcomer Resource Centre,
- Canadian Intercultural Association of Students,
- City of Toronto,
- Coalition of Rexdale Organizations Serving Youth,
- Community Microskills Development Centre,
- Councillor Suzan Hall, Etobicoke North-Ward 1,
- Dejinta Beesha Multi-Service Centre,
- Dixon Community Services,
- Horn of Africa Community Development,
- Humber Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning,
- Iraqi Community Services of Ontario,
- Job Start,
- Leave Out Violence,
- Rexdale Community Health Centre,
- Rexdale Community Legal Clinic,
- Rexdale Ethno Cultural Seniors Association,
- Rexdale Protech Media Centre-Microskills
- Rexdale Women's Centre,
- Service Canada,
- Sister to Sister,
- Social Planning Council Toronto,
- Somali Canadian Association of Etobicoke,
- TDSB-Albion LINC,
- The Career Foundation/ Completing the Circle,
- Thistle town Community Services,
- Toronto Employment and Social Services,
- Toronto Public Library-Albion District
- VPI, Etobicoke Employment Assessment Centre,
- West Indian Volunteer Community Support Services,
- Women's Creative Club International,
- World Service Cargo (Working Skills Centre),
- YMCA-Rexdale Youth Resource Centre,
- YWCA-JUMP/LINC/REACH,
- and
- Residents

Community Agency Interview

Seven agencies interviewed:

1. Somali Canadian Association of Etobicoke
2. Rexdale Women's Centre
3. West Indian Volunteer Community Support Services
4. Rexdale Community Health Centre
5. Humber College
6. VPI Employment Services
7. Albion Neighbourhood Services-Newcomer Resource Centre

Suggestions made for LIP's action plan:

Facilitate partnership:

- Be a body that co-ordinates local organizations and partners to better serve the community, and be a conduit for grassroots and smaller organizations.
- Organize agency get-together meeting. Bring management staff from both larger agencies and smaller/grassroots agencies together, and share the experience, challenges and successes of agency/program development.
- Create mentorship/leadership between larger organizations and smaller/grassroots agencies.
- Develop agency/program/project partnerships on emerging issues or community needs in areas such as mental health and addictions, anti-poverty, and employment.

- Assist in supporting all levels of organizations from grassroots to larger agencies with regards to public relations of programs and services provided to the community.
- Facilitate agencies to post flyers in apartment buildings.
- Support quarterly forums with local organizations, stakeholders serving immigrants/newcomers in the community to allow opportunities for networking and cross-sectoral trainings.

Newcomer services:

- Create hotline or web portal for information sharing and referral.
- Create Welcome Information Centre. Make it mandatory for newcomers to have a 2-day standard orientation that would be covering all the services/programs related to newcomers. Create welcome package in CD or booklet format.
- Outreach and public education to newcomers should be more language specific not just in print materials but also on websites, media etc. Develop strong connections with community leaders. Utilize the resources we already have within the community.

Local Employer Survey

Eight employers interviewed:

1. JJ Hairstylist Salon
2. Scarborough Textiles
3. Shoppers Drug Mart
4. India Bazaar (Grocery Store)
5. Roti Roti Restaurant
6. Francois' No Frills
7. RBC
8. TD Canada Trust

Feedbacks from survey:

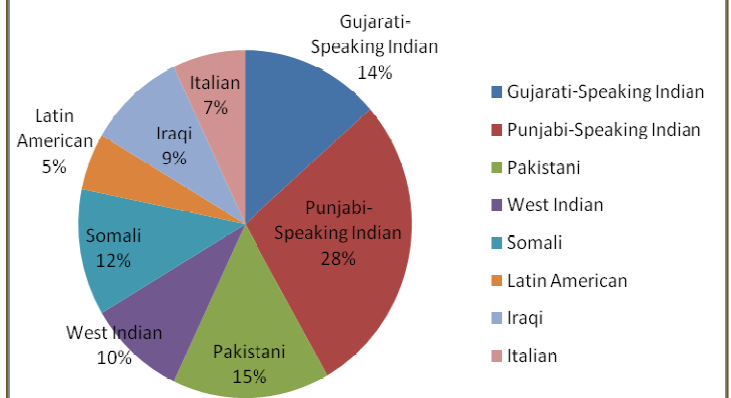
- Most interviewed employers recruit staff through personal reference.
- Most interviewed employers are satisfied with newcomer employees' hard-working performance.
- Most interviewed employers have identified language barrier as a work issue for newcomer employees.

- Newcomer employees are in lower-paid positions. ie. Cleaning position with NoFrills, shelving position with India Bazaar.
- Businesses having regulated-profession/skilled-trades positions tend to be aware of co-op/internship programs funded by government, ie. Shoppers Drug Mart has a Pharmacist student placement. JJ Hairstylist has identified the co-op program is helpful to start the career.
- Hiring process tends to be handled through corporate head office in TD Canada Trust and RBC.

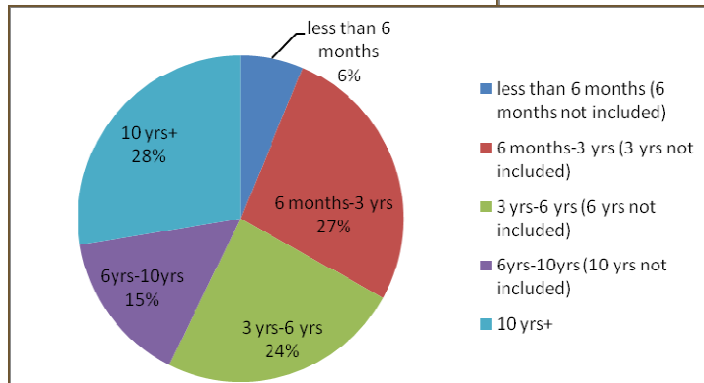
Cultural-Specific Focus Groups

January 19 & April 21, 2010, Thistletown Multi-Service Centre

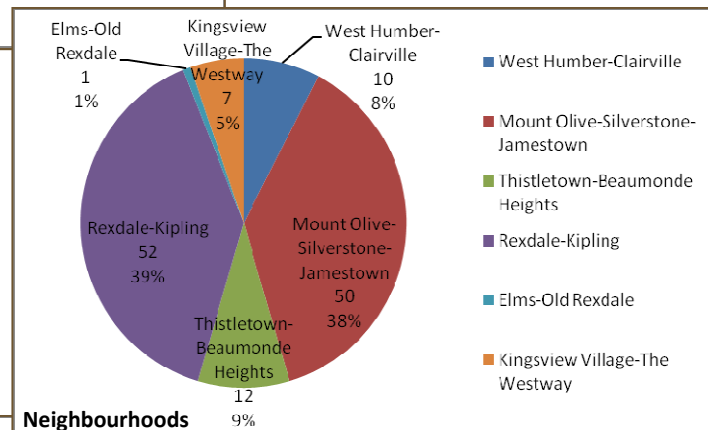
147 residents attended the series of eight cultural-specific focus groups.



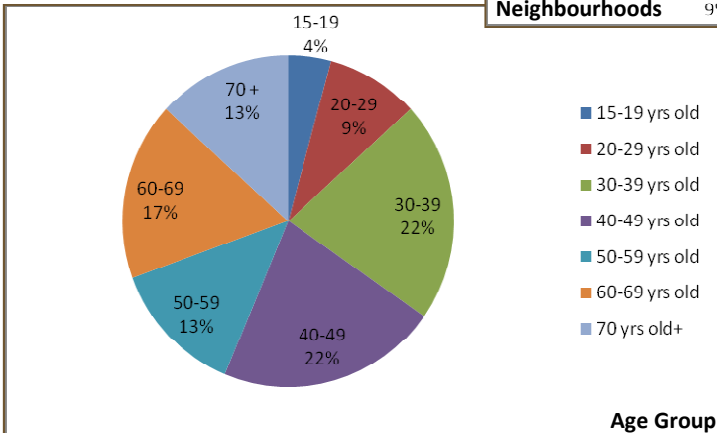
Cultural Background



Years of Residence in North Etobicoke



Neighbourhoods



Age Group

Cultural-Specific Focus Groups (Cont'd)

Highlighted suggestions to better address newcomers' settlement needs:

Settlement

- Government-funded settlement services should be eligible to not only newcomers but also citizens and non-status immigrants
- Provide immigration applicants with accurate and comprehensive information about settlement in Canada in the country of origin
- Mandatory/obligatory information sessions for newcomers, eg. Seminars on Canadian law, fire and safety, license issues, credit awareness, access to health care and public transit
- Delivery of more programs in multi languages; Increase ethno-specific settlement workers in more locations,
- Keep front-line staff up to date of programs and services; More training for staff to provide more practical, accurate, and friendly counselling services to newcomers
- Updated settlement packages should be offered to newcomers in the airport
- Visit newcomers, listen to their concerns, ask for their feedback especially after accessing programs, and then take actions for improvement
- Publicize information in multi-languages more often e.g. pamphlets, flyers, newsletters, brochures; more ethnic-cultural newspapers
- More ethno specific stores, eg. Italian stores should be more accessible location wise
- More after school programs for children, especially in winter
- Address security issues for seniors living on their own

Transportation

- Need support for first-time drivers: high cost for Drivers Education
- GTA public transit services should be united not separated by town/city, TTC fare is not affordable for newcomers

Health Care

- Start OHIP from the first day of landing
- Medication/ dental/ optical services are expensive
- Open 24/7 community health centres, as one of the solutions to long wait times in doctor clinics and hospital emergency rooms
- More interpretation services in hospitals

Food Bank & Clothing Drive

- Should provide food that is not expired
- Diapers, baby food and milk should be offered to newcomer mothers
- Should provide clothing for severe winter conditions
- Stationery should be available to low-income families with school age children

Language Training

- Language barrier is identified as the key obstacle for newcomers to settle and enter into the labour market.

- Basic language skills training, eg. Read street names
- Develop employment-related language training programs (eg. Occupation-Specific Language Training)
- More accessible support services, especially for female LINC students with children
- More accessible locations for LINC and ESL classes
- Create ESL classes for long-term immigrants. eg. A group of Italian seniors have been in Rexdale for over 20 years. There were no language training classes when they came. They still have language barriers.

Education

- More educational programs to support youth (Somali group identified a 40% drop-out rate in their youth community.)
- Enhance accreditation and education recognition process; Certify language level and university degrees in the country of origin
- Cost of Colleges and Universities should be more affordable to low-income people
- Educate people on cultural diversity of communities and Canadian system and culture (eg Workplace culture)

Employment

For Government/Service Providers:

- More Bridging programs/placement opportunities to help newcomers get Canadian work experience
- Hands on skills training, ie. language skills, job searching skills, computer skills and soft skills; Educate newcomers on how to access opportunities
- Affordable housing/financial supports for unemployed newcomers, especially during their first year in the country
- Support services: affordable transportation and day-care services to ease settling in; Shorten the wait time for subsidized daycare
- More on the job skills training programs for women with children
- More employment opportunities/ programs for specific age groups with higher needs (eg. Newcomer seniors who are capable and willing to enter labour market; youths, especially those involved with the law)
- Address substandard job issue: labour jobs are the only options for many of newcomers

For Employers:

- Engage employers, local businesses and develop more permanent job opportunities
- Identify their own social responsibilities to hire newcomers, no stereotype in recruitment process
- Recognition of back home credentials, education and experience
- Direct hiring should be there, not through private HR agencies
- Reserve a certain percentage of jobs for newcomers

For Newcomers:

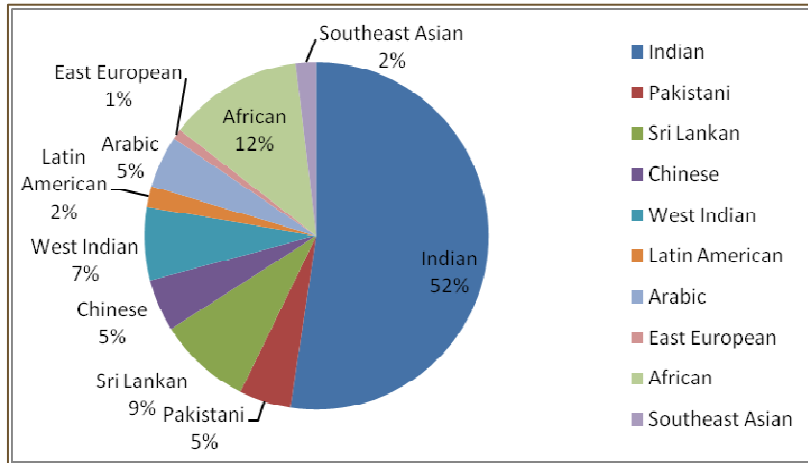
- Networking: eg. family support, friends referrals significant way of connecting with each other

Community Consultation

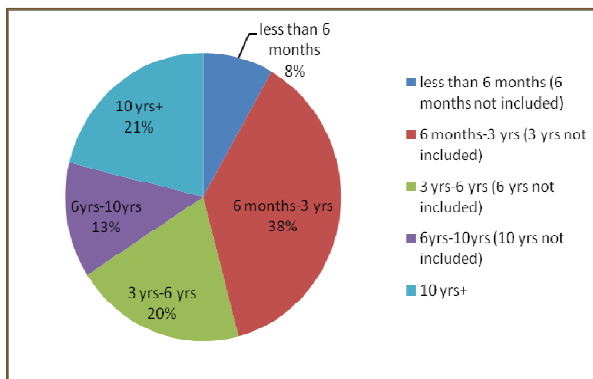
March 20, 2010, Elmbank Community Centre

120 residents attended the community consultation.

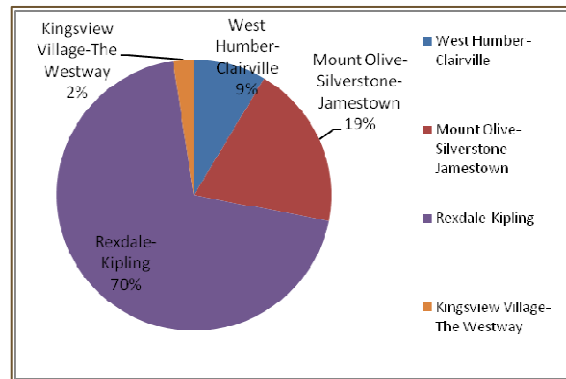
1. Cultural Background



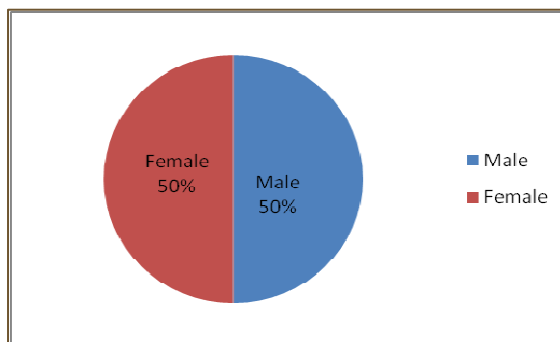
2. Years of Residence in North Etobicoke



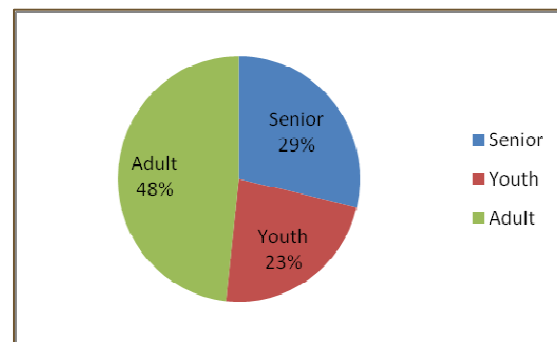
3. Neighbourhoods



4. Gender Group

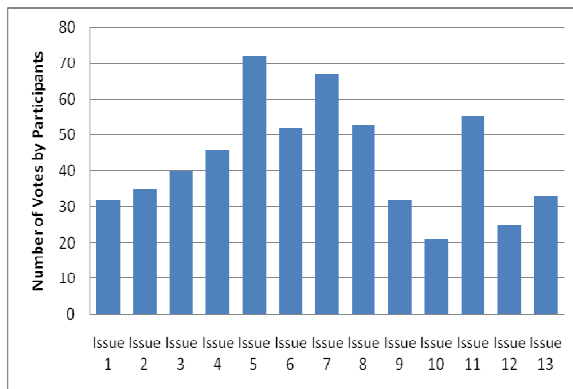


5. Age Group



Community Consultation (cont'd)

Prioritizing Outcome



Issues listed in priority sequence:

1. Employment (Issue 5)
2. Health Services (Issue 7)
3. Safety & Security (Issue 11)
4. Affordable Housing (Issue 8)
5. Language Training / Education (Issue 6)
6. Senior Services (Issue 4)
7. Child/Youth Programs/Services (Issue 3)
8. Accessible Support Services (ie. Child Care, Transportation) (Issue 2)
9. Community Gatherings/Civic Participation (Issue 13)
10. More/ Improved Community Services (general) (Issue 1)
11. Financial Assistance (Issue 9)
12. Public Awareness / Outreach / Access to Programs (Issue 12)
13. Recreation (Issue 10)

Suggestions on Top 5 Priorities

1st Priority--Employment

- On-Site Opportunities: (1) Develop start-up programs (e.g. Job Mentorship, Training Programs, Volunteer Placements) to allow immigrants to demonstrate qualifications; (2) Provide minimum wage to candidates in these programs
- Anti-Discrimination Recruitment: (1) Recruitment should be more focused on candidate's qualifications or abilities instead of language proficiency; (2) Impose strict fines to anyone involved in any type of discrimination especially during hiring process; (3) Create complaint process against discriminatory employment practices
- Job Creation: (1) Employers should reserve 10-15% of jobs for newcomers; (2) Create more bilingual/ community ethno-specific jobs
- Job Search/Assessment Programs: (1) Create job search programs in country of origin in relevant languages; (2) Fast track assessment of qualifications from other countries

- Advocacy: (1) As a community we have to come together and write a letter of petition to the government or advocate for systemic changes; (2) Invite employers to engage with community consultations and offer opportunities for local hiring; (3) Have more community meetings and gatherings to bring people together to dialogue for change

2nd Priority--Health Services

- Subsidized dental services for everyone
- OHIP should be issued at the same time as landing
- Free medical services to higher-need patients, eg. Door-to-door or walk-in services
- Increase the number of doctors and hospital staff, especially for the emergency room
- Free drug plan for seniors; Shuttle services for seniors to reach doctor's clinic or hospital
- Allow more foreign-trained doctors to practice: Proper assessment, training and certification for foreign-trained health professionals; Recruit more doctors with foreign credentials who speak ethno-specific languages

3rd Priority--Safety & Security

- Increase police patrols during the day and night
- Government should focus on wards and local communities instead of media reports that further stigmatize our community

4th Priority--Affordable Housing

- Give accommodation for some months (at least six months) when newcomers are landing
- Renting: (1) Subsidized rent amount for newcomers; (2) Introduce rent control; government should set the rates for rent.
- Housing loan with lower rate of interest for newcomers
- More affordable housing should be developed by government
- The assessment margin for affordable housing has to be changed, Should consider family expenses as well as income in determining the baseline for access to affordable housing
- Write a letter and advocate to the government, outlining issues with affordable housing and residents' suggestions.

5th Priority--Language Training / Education

- Change the rules concerning program eligibility for LINC
- Develop higher-levels language training beyond level 6 -7 for LINC

The North Etobicoke Local Immigration Partnership thanks everyone including community residents, partner agencies and other stakeholders involved at all levels of the process. Your responses, supports and cooperation have been helpful. Over 500 individual ideas were offered and have been processed into strategies and an action plan for Settlement, Employment, Education and Language Training. Now it is time to reconvene to review the work, prioritize inputs, and plan the implementation dates.

**North Etobicoke
Local Immigration Partnership**

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