



## Minutes

### Fraser Valley Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council

December 4, 2014 • 2:30pm to 4:30pm

Present	Regrets
Hardeep Sidhu, Council Chair Kanta Naik, School District #34 John Potts, UFV Varinder Dhesi, Fraser Valley Packers Tina Stewart, Abbotsford Downtown Business Allan Asaph, Chamber of Commerce Alda Messiah, Academy of Learning Ravi Philips, UFV Scot Friskey, Academy of Learning Danielle Richard, Fraser Health Naomi Armstrong, Fraser Health Stephen Piper, UFV Ghizlane Laghzaoui, UFV Ruth Meehan, Vybe Realty George Murray, City of Abbotsford Med Manzanal, Global Stakes Consulting  <b>Secretariat:</b> Manpreet Grewal, ACS Danica Denommé, ACS Danielle Nazarewich, ACS, Recording Secretary	Andy Sidhu, Punjabi Patrika Kathy Kharod, AbbotsfordWORKS Benjamin Bhoem, Cascade Areospace Sue Federspiel, City of Abbotsford Susan McAlevy, Abbotsford Community Foundation Bharati Sandhu, Raymond James

#### 1. Opening

- a. Danica Opened, and welcomed new participants: Stephen Piper, Ghizlane Laghzaoui, Ravi Philips and Naomi Armstrong
- b. Danica Introduced self and Abbotsford Community Services Secretariat. Manpreet, Danielle
  - i. 1<sup>st</sup> meeting: goals and what we aim to do
  - ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting presentation from group sectors
  - iii. Introduced Hardeep

#### 2. Call to Order and Roundtable Introductions

- a. Hardeep called the meeting to order at 4:05pm
- b. Hardeep led introductions by inviting members to share with the group the story of their immigrant background.

3. Approval of the Agenda
  - a. Motion was made by Ruth Meehan and seconded to approve the agenda of today's meeting. **Motion carried.**
  
4. Approval of Minutes
  - a. Motion was made by Allan Asaph and seconded to approve the minutes of Sept. 23, 2014. **Motion carried.**
  
  - b. Motion was made by John Potts to approve the minutes of Oct. 28, 2014 as corrected. **Motion Carried.**
  
5. Sector Presentations – Asset-Mapping
  - a. Business
    - i. Tina Stewart - See notes **attached.**
    - ii. Varinder Dhesi – See notes **attached.**
    - iii. Allan Asaph – See notes **attached.**
  
  - b. Education
    - i. Kanta Naik – See PDF **attached separately.**
  
6. Presentation on Services to Multicultural and Newcomer Communities in Abbotsford
  - a. Council members participated in a World Café session with Multicultural Division Staff to learn about the programs offered to newcomers in Abbotsford.
    - i. Skills Connect – Shauna Svekla  
Preparing Immigrant Professionals for careers in Canada
    - ii. Community Connections – Andrea Dykshoorn  
Helping the Community welcome newcomers
    - iii. Settlement Services – Joo Namgung, Dardane Shushka, Dora Arriola  
Counselling immigrant families to meet basic needs
    - iv. Employment Mentors – Krista Perrey  
Matching new Canadians with experienced local professionals in their sector
    - v. Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) – Paula Mannington  
Upgrading and learning English for workplaces, higher education and daily life
    - vi. Interpretation and Translation Services (IST) – Ivona Kado

- vii. Moving Ahead Program | Youth Buddy | South Asian Community Resource Office  
– Palwinder Kelay, Mohammed Jabbe, Manpreet Badwal

#### 7. Reviewed Terms of Reference – Danica Denomme

- a. Revised Terms of Reference document was distributed. See PDF **attached separately**.
- b. Based on feedback received at the last meeting on the terms of reference Danica proposed that we meet in January before our next scheduled meeting to clarify as a group our mandate, goals, and objectives, and to participate in a joint visioning process:
  - i. Adla, Scot, John Potts, Danielle and Naomi expressed interest in this additional visioning meeting interested
  - ii. Rest of group decided by consensus that this visioning meeting will be valuable to the group
  - iii. Meeting was agreed to be held on Thursday January 22, 2:00-4:30.

#### 8. Next Steps

##### a. Discussion

- i. Hardeep recommended the report *Labour Market Legacies*.
- ii. Hardeep requested suggestions for working groups and topics for future meetings.
  - 1. Manpreet suggested we have this conversation after facilitated visioning of terms of reference. That the facilitator can lead into this in January.
  - 2. Adla suggested access for immigrant students for free English language testing.
    - a. Free testing available at UFV and at LINC for prospective students/clients
- iii. George inquired where an inventory of services to immigrants can be found
  - 1. Manpreet noted the availability of welcome packages created by ACS under a previous project.
  - 2. Danielle noted that Delta, Langley, Surrey and White Rock have developed a [website](#) that houses a wealth of information for newcomers.
  - 3. Manpreet: network together on a regional site, possibly may become a priority to create this network
  - 4. Med referred to the paper she wrote, *Emergent Themes for Community Planning* to let people know where they can find an inventory of services to immigrants.
- iv. Manpreet announced that the nominations are open for the [March 6<sup>th</sup> Cultural Diversity Awards](#)



**b. Action Items**

- i. Danielle will email the evaluation survey links to Ghizlane, Stephen, and John as requested.

**c. Next Meetings**

- Thursday, January, 22, 2015 2:00-4:30pm
- Thursday, February 12, 2015 2:30 – 4:30pm
- Thursday, April 9, 2015 2:30 – 4:30pm

9. 4:32pm Meeting Adjourned



## Attachments

Business Sector Presentation – Tina Stewart	page 6
Business Sector Presentation – Varinder Dhesi	page 7
Business Sector Presentation – Allan Asaph	page 9
Education Sector Presentation – Kanta Naik	page 11
Revised Terms of Reference	<i>attached separately</i>

### **Mutual Benefits of Work Experience**

#### **Business and Immigrants**



Tina Stewart

**Companionship** – Everyone deserves and needs to feel included. Work Experience doesn't only involve work, it involves companionship and making relationships in the community that may develop in other parts of the person's life.

**Local Workplace Etiquette and Conduct** – each country has its own form of etiquette and conduct, work experience offers the chance to learn local E&C.

**Interview Tips, Practice and Techniques** – both oral and practical benefits. I believe work experience shouldn't just be just handed over, the person should go through the interview process, as its part of learning our customs.

**Awareness of Local Business Opportunities** – a full list of business opportunities should be given to the applicant to choose from, they should experience several work experience locations, diverse selections.

**Experience** – something to put on their resume.

**Development of Interpersonal Skills** – interaction with fellow workers, supervisors, patrons.

- Communication Skills - as above

**Improved Job Opportunities** – all (communication, interaction, experience, etiquette, conduct, interview techniques, interpersonal skills) of this will give the person a much better chance to be hired into a job in which they can support themselves with a job that pays a Living Wage.

**Business Connections** – let's face it, often it is who you know. If a business does not have an open position for you, they may know someone who does. Work experience will help the applicant reach out to many other businesses, opening up many doors for them.

**Practical Experience** - Regardless of how much you think you have learned at home, about your chosen career you will learn so much information and acquire so many skills from a work placement. Local work experience will help the applicant relate their experience in their home country to Canadian customs and traditions in business.

**So how does this help business?** Small business benefit greatly from work experience. Often small businesses don't have the time or funds to do the "extras" around the office that work experience people can do for them. Small business also want to give back to the community that gives to them, but can't necessarily do it by giving money (that they just don't have); by offering work experience positions, they have a sense of pride in giving back to their community, and often find amazing future employees.

Fraser Valley Packers

Varinder Dhési

October 28, 2014



Presentation to Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council

- 1) Give an example of how immigration and cultural diversity have impacted your work.

Immigration has helped us hire employees for minimum wage, and from them, we get good hard workers. They are determined to work hard and make money, which makes it easier to get the work done. When working with the immigrants one on one, you learn about their culture and experience, which makes the workplace friendlier. We currently have Mexican, Chinese, and Indo Canadians employed. Cultural Diversity helps to learn and experience their culture. Every year, we celebrate Mexico's Independence Day, India's Independence Day, the local Nagar Kirtan (Sikh Parade) and Diwali. On these days, the immigrant employees cook food or bring food to work during lunch and celebrate. We give them an hour to 2 hour lunch break so they have time to dance and interact with one another.

- 2) What are some of your and your colleagues' needs, in relation to working with or serving newcomers? (ex. information about demographics, market access to certain groups, support in hiring new immigrants)

For our new Mexican immigrants, we need to show them around Abbotsford and Surrey (we have 2 locations) to where the grocery stores are, where restaurants are, and where they can go have some quality time on their days off. We usually have one of the previous immigrants help translate and show them around. We would also need to teach them Food Safety and the law system in Abbotsford and Surrey.

- 3) What **needs** have you noticed that newcomers have, related to your field? (i.e. your immigrant clients, or employees / colleagues at your place of work who are new immigrants)

They have the needs and determination to work hard and make a future for themselves and be successful. They have the extra push to learn.

- 4) What are some existing strengths in your sector? What does your industry excel at, or do already that works well and helps the community benefit from integration of diversity?



We apply for more immigrants thru the work-based program for India and Mexico. We have successfully applied for and have had 6 immigrants from India whom have been working for us for 5 plus years and have sponsored their family to Canada and are Canadian Citizens.

With our Mexican immigrant employees, we apply for 30-35 Mexican immigrants every year, provide shelter and housing for them and provide them with transportation for 6 months. (June-December) We are trying to apply for more immigrants every year.





## BARRIER I: SKILLS SHORTAGES

### The issue

Canada's labour market is affected by a demographic shift resulting in retirements and a growing gap between the skills needed and those available.

Skills gaps cost the economy billions of dollars annually in foregone GDP.<sup>1</sup> Tight labour markets are evident in parts of Canada, despite high unemployment levels elsewhere. A high proportion of businesses are projected to face skills shortages in the workforce.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the gaps between job seekers and job openings anticipated in the next 10 years are considerable for some occupations projected to face shortages.<sup>3</sup> These shortages threaten economic growth as companies, large and small, cut back production and turn down contracts when they lack employees with the requisite skills.

Given the demographic reality of an aging population and shrinking labour force growth, combined with the policy complexity of Canada's labour markets, these projected shortages and gaps will take time and collaborative action to resolve.

### The barriers

Social biases and education policy are affecting the pool of entrants into skilled trades and science-based occupations. The chronic shortage of highly qualified and skilled trades professionals stems from a social bias against the skilled trades as occupations. Despite growing registrations of



certified, creating a shortfall in journeymen to train future apprentices. For in-demand science-based occupations, including engineers and IT professionals, the education system is failing to engage enough students. A lack of essential skills is also holding back many existing employees who could become more productive through training. Employers recognize the need to develop their employees, but cost, time and the lack of human resource capacity are key barriers to employee training.

For many small businesses without Canadian candidates to fill short-term positions, a stricter temporary foreign worker program is cutting off employers from the foreign skilled workers necessary for projects in Canada.

<sup>1</sup> Skills gaps cost Ontario's economy up to \$24.3 billion in foregone GDP annually, as estimated in: Stuckey, James and Daniel Munro. *The Cost of Ontario's Skills Gap*. The Conference Board of Canada. June 2013.  
<sup>2</sup> Tal, Benjamin. "The Haves and Have Nots of Canada's Labour Market." *CIBC Economics*. Dec. 3, 2012.  
<sup>3</sup> Employment and Social Development Canada, *Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS)*, "Imbalances Between Labour Demand and Supply - 2011-2020" available at [www.23.hrsdc.gc.ca/1.3bd.21.11shtml@-eng.jsp?hid=16&fid=1&lang=en](http://www.23.hrsdc.gc.ca/1.3bd.21.11shtml@-eng.jsp?hid=16&fid=1&lang=en)

## **The way forward**

The Canadian Chamber will focus on four priority areas that are currently of high concern to members:

### **Upskilling**

Upskilling of the labour force needs to cover the gamut if Canada is to make progress in tackling the skills gap. Improved data and analysis are sorely needed to help us capture a more detailed picture of Canada's skills mismatch. Increasing apprenticeship completions, advancing essential skills learning in the workplace and providing more employer-sponsored training are a few of the necessary actions. Small business requires separate consideration to overcome its lack of financial and human resource capacity for training.

Both younger workers who are recent entrants into the workforce and older workers approaching retirement are important segments in the current labour market composition. Canada needs to direct more attention to retaining older workers in flexible employment arrangements and without tax disincentives. Intergenerational workplaces will facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills between age groups and the transition to a post-boomer workforce.

### **Immigration**

The government must ensure its immigration policy changes respect regional differences in labour markets. Measures to tighten the Temporary Foreign Worker Program must be reconsidered, especially for small employers and in areas of low unemployment.

As Citizenship and Immigration Canada moves to introduce the new "expression of interest" system for permanent residents, it must not lose sight of where and why there will be ongoing needs for temporary foreign workers. The Canadian Chamber will press government to take those needs into account and ensure a transition to the new system without losing immigration programs that serve smaller centres or remote locations, in particular.

### **Education**

Youth unemployment and underemployment numbers highlight a critical gap: Canada has a highly educated population of young people but too many of them are not qualified or skilled for entry-level vacancies in the workforce.<sup>4</sup> Business and post-secondary institutions need to expand their connections between classrooms and workplaces. The Canadian Chamber's network will continue to be an important avenue for those relations.

The Canadian Chamber will take action with its members and advocate foreign and interprovincial credential recognition; job-readiness initiatives for youth; better integration of international students; and coordinated government attention to how educational policy can better resolve gaps.

### **Aboriginal workforce development**

In certain regions of the country and in key sectors of the economy, Aboriginal peoples are an important source of potential employees. The Canadian Chamber will continue to advocate increased investment educating and training Aboriginal peoples. Increasing Aboriginal youth participation in the workforce is a critical economic and social opportunity.

<sup>4</sup> The lack of skills is the main reason for entry-level vacancies for almost 40 per cent of the employers in nine countries surveyed by McKinsey. McKinsey Center for Government. *Education to Employment: Designing a System that Works*. 2013.

ESWIS- SD #34  
IPC Meeting- Kanta Naik  
December 3rd, 2014



# ESWIS

- Abbotsford School District is one of several school districts in the province that are part of an innovative program to help new immigrant families settle effectively into the community including our schools.
- Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, SWIS is an outreach program that helps immigrant and refugee students and their families. The SWIS workers assist new families adjust to the new culture by:

# How Immigration and Diversity Impact Schools and Community

- Reaching out to new arrivals, including visiting hard-to-reach families
- Providing information and orientation about Canadian culture, and service systems
- Referring students or their families to appropriate school or community programs, workshops or support groups organized by school districts, community agencies, social services, health authorities and other groups
- Providing cultural interpretation and services for health authorities and other groups, and
- Providing cultural interpretation and facilitating culturally sensitive communication for school staff, immigrant parents and children.

# Partnership

- Abbotsford School District partners with Abbotsford Community Services to deliver SWIS services. There are 12 SWIS workers who can communicate in 20 different languages when facilitating communication between home and school. The languages offered are:

# Language Support Available

<b>Arabic</b>	<b>Punjabi</b>
<b>Albanian</b>	Russian
<b>Bosnian</b>	Spanish
<b>Cantonese</b>	Serb-Croatian
<b>Dinka</b>	Swahili
<b>English</b>	Turkish
<b>Mandarin</b>	Urdu
<b>Hindi</b>	Vietnamese
<b>Japanese</b>	Taiwanese
<b>Korean</b>	Macedonian

# How does it work?

- Registration and needs
- School placement and orientation
- Family needs assessment
- Needs and Support
- SWIS/ MCW



- Support can also be provided in languages other than those above if requested.
- SWIS workers also inform parents of various district programs available to them such as: Strong Start, IPALs (Immigrant Parents as Literacy Support ), preschool programs., graduation requirements, careers, curse planning, sports, PAC, etc

# Benefits

- Families have wrap around support
- New families understand school system
- Kids stay in school while SWIS assist parents
- Settled families do well
- Relationships are builds without the language barrier
- A village helps
- Builds a welcoming and inclusive community

# Integration of Diversity

- Finding what is **common** among us and sharing how **uniquely** we do those things

Bread Day

Tea Day

International Music Day

International Sports and Games