



**FRASER VALLEY**  
DIVERSITY & IMMIGRATION  
**PARTNERSHIP**

Minutes  
Fraser Valley Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council  
February 04, 2016 • 2:00pm to 4:00pm

<b>Present</b>		<b>Regrets</b>
Alda Messiah	Naomi Armstrong	Allan Asaph
Balbir Gill	Nicola Mooney	Bharati Sidhu
Camilla Boisvert	Scot Friskey	Danica Denommé
Danielle Nazarewich	Stephen Piper	Dave Sidhu
Dave Loewen	Sue Federspiel	Ghizlane Laghzaoui
Gugan Sidhu: Recording Secretary	Susan McAlevey	Med Manzanal
Hillary Russell	Tina Stewart	John Potts
Kanta Naik	Varinder Dhesi	Ruth Meehan
Kate Collins		
Manpreet Grewal		
<b>Guests:</b> Hanif Ladha		

1. Opening & Introductions
  - a. Scot called the meeting to order at 2:04pm, and announced the regrets.
2. Approve Agenda
  - a. Sue Federspiel moved to approve the agenda, motion second by Kanta Naik, motion carried.
3. Approve Minutes – November 12, 2015
  - a. Dave Loewen moved to approve the November 12, 2015 meeting minutes as presented, motion second by Kanta Naik, motion carried.
4. Syrian Resettlement
  - a. Status Update – Manpreet  
Abbotsford is receiving 23 families arriving Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>, the average family size is about 6-8 members, and approximately 166 people are coming through government assistance and 60 refugees coming through private sponsorship. The government assisted families have low English speaking levels. ACS has hired one Arabic speaking settlement worker and is looking at hiring one youth worker. Our number one need is finding permanent housing that is comfortable for big families at the government assistance rate of \$800 or

\$900. On average a 3 bedroom house is \$1400. ACS will provide charitable receipts for housing.

Kanta- The school district is expecting 60 children. Our plan is to give them time to rest and feel a sense of safety in this community for the first week, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> week, we will welcome them and orient them into the school system. Then it will be spring break. After spring break we will bring them into the classrooms etc.

**Action Item: Kanta and Manpreet will meet to coordinate the welcome and orientation from the school district.**

- b. Review of actions taken and actions that are planned in Abbotsford – Danielle  
ACS pulled together an internal planning committee who coordinated and executed 3 events.
  - i. Conversations with Abbotsford Residents of the Middle East - November 30 2015.
  - ii. Community Stakeholders Meeting - Dec 12 2015
  - iii. Abbotsford Syrian Resettlement Public Forum – January 26 2016
- c. Langley Response – Kate  
Langley is not a destination community. Approximately 23 Syrian Refugees are being privately sponsored in the Langley community.
  - i. Community Development and Asset Mapping Meeting November 24<sup>th</sup> 2015.
    - 104 participants
  - ii. Community Development and Asset Mapping Meeting
    - Funding for an Arabic speaking support worker
    - One family has already arrived, waiting for 3 more to arrive
    - Permanent housing is the biggest issue
  - iii. Wheels for Refugees – Bike and Scooter Drive – January 16 2016
    - Community Partners were LCSS, Options, Velocity Bikes, and Dayton Foundation
    - 140 bikes collected
- d. Welcome Package – Sue

**Action Item: Sue will coordinate with Social Integration Working Group to create a welcome package.**

- e. Welcome Event – Danielle  
Welcome event to be held during the first week of March at the Sandman. To sponsor, contact [Diversity Education](#).

Q. Community Foundations Canada has some money to offer communities. Are there any shared needs that we can help with?

A. Housing subsidy is the most important and crucial need right now. Budget is low for housing and food: 800\$ for housing and 10\$ a person for food and housing

Dave – Vacant old apartment building off of South Fraser Way on Old Yale rd.

**Action Item: Sue will talk to the City of Abbotsford to see if this building can be used for permanent housing for incoming Syrians.**

## 5. Executive Team Updates- Danielle

- a. FVDI is in its last quarter of its second year.

Med will be conducting an evaluation with each member of the FVDI Council, An Evaluation Report will be compiled and shared shortly after the quarter.

The Strategy and Action Plan has been finalized, designed and printed by the City of Abbotsford.

FVDI contract has been extended for one year, until March 31 2017.

FVDI Membership Certificates were handed to Stephen Piper and Varinder Dhési

## 6. Working Group updates

- a. Labour Market and Integration – Looking outside of IRCC contract to find funding for the Labour Market Liason, Possibly Kwantlen Polytechnic University. This position should not belong to a particular organization or municipality, but is for the Fraser Valley Community.
- b. Social Integration – Looking for more group members. We have completed ¼ pamphlets. The 2<sup>nd</sup> one will be regarding the Syrian Refugee families in Abbotsford. Still looking to find newcomer stories.

**Action Item: Kanta to get in touch with Kris Foulds at The Reach regarding the Roadshow.**

Stephen Piper has students that may be interested in interviewing individuals and compiling the interviews together.

Applications to have a Block Party are due March 30<sup>th</sup>. The Block Party must be had by November 30<sup>th</sup> 2016. [www.abbotsford.ca/neighbourhoods](http://www.abbotsford.ca/neighbourhoods)

- c. Research, Policy, and Practice

FVRL and UFV Library, and UFV Anthropology Class are a part of the working group.

The anthropology class has completed research on other towns like Abbotsford in Canada. The work was gathered in December, it will be compiled soon.

The working group is connecting with the settlement sectors to find out gaps in research topics.

Looking for settlement workers that are interested in being interviewed or participate in a focus group.

It is unknown if there will be funding allocated to hiring a research consultant in the coming years.

## 7. Member Updates

- a. Manpreet Grewal - Cultural Diversity Awards –Tickets available until Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>. Event is on March 4<sup>th</sup> 6-8pm at The Ramada.
- b. Camilla Boisvert – Funding available through the healthy communities program at Fraser Health. See application, attached with email.
- c. Nicola – UFV is working to create a new program called – Migration and Citizen – It will be provided in 2 years.
- d. Stephen Piper –Writing a proposal for a minor and extended minor for the Global Development Program at UFV
- e. Danielle Nazarewich - Black History Month Event Feb 20<sup>th</sup> at The Reach. 1-4pm  
International Women’s Day Celebration – March 8<sup>th</sup> at The Reach 1-4pm  
Ladies Night March 11<sup>th</sup> at ACS for newcomer women, mostly our clients.  
World Poetry Café - March 24 at Kariton Gallery 6:30-8:30pm  
March 21<sup>st</sup> International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination held at UFV – Focus will be on Truth and Reconciliation and the 94 recommendations

Action Item: Danielle will connect Alda with Andrea Loewen in regards to door prizes for Ladies Night

- f. Hillary – Fraser Valley Regional Libraries realize we have a role to play in welcoming immigrant communities  
<http://newtobc.ca/> is a great website that includes resources applicable to newcomers including libraries.  
Topping up on Arabic books  
Reprinted pamphlets in Arabic  
The library has space to hold events or orientations for Syrian Refugee families
  - g. Naomi – massive funding proposals for preparation of Syrian refugees  
Trained 15 Arabic speaking interpreters  
Trainings for staff  
A workshop to be created for the Fraser health staff and settlement services to connect  
Developing YouTube videos for health care related information
  - h. Susan – today is the first day to apply for scholarships for gr 12 students, MEI and public schools. Need a SIN to apply. More info on Abbotsfordcf.org  
The city can provide space for meetings and orientations for the Syrian Refugee families.
  - i. Alda - Academy of Learning campuses are available for space use in regards to Syrian Refugee meeting s or orientation.
8. Presentation  
Presenter: Hanif Ladha, Immigrant Employment Council of BC  
See Attached Handout for Presentation Notes.
9. Next Meetings
- a. **Thursday, April 7 2016, 2-4pm**
  - b. Thursday, June 2 2016, 2-4pm
  - c. Thursday, September 15 2016, 2-4pm
  - d. Thursday, November 3 2016, 2-4pm

Meeting adjourned at 3:59pm

## **Immigrant Employment Council of BC Presentation**

### **Who we are:**

The Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC) is a provincial non-government organization that stimulates the integration of skilled immigrant talent into BC's workforce by fostering solutions, building connections and being a catalyst to help employers attract and retain skilled immigrant talent.

### **What we do:**

We work directly with employers and provide resources to recruit, hire, retain, and integrate skilled immigrants in to their workforce. IEC-BC's role also includes to encourage new public policies and programs, and to change perceptions about professional immigrants in order to grow BC's economy through effective immigrant labour market integration.

### **Local Immigrant Partnership Involvement:**

IEC-BC's role in the LIP is to provide advice and strategy related to employer planning. Current involvement includes:

- Vancouver Mayor's Working Group on Immigration
- Vancouver LIP
- Surrey LIP
- Tri-Cities LIP

### **IEC-BC Programs & Resources:**

- MentorConnect Program
- Connector Program
- Tools & Resources Library
- Summit, Forums & Roundtables
- Webinars & Video Tutorials
- Employer Relations

### **Success Story:**

"Canadian experience is not required ... we prefer to train them ourselves into our way of doing things,"

- Harry Watson, President, Metro Testing Laboratories