



## MINUTES

Abbotsford Local Immigration Partnership  
Archway Community Services - Boardroom  
Monday, June 17, 2019 – 2-4 pm

Attending		Regrets	
Manpreet Grewal	Alison Gutrath	Dave Loewen	Kanta Naik
Sue Federspiel	Natalia Deros	Jennifer Mpungu	Melissa Giles
Hillary Russell	Sharon Crawley	Nicola Mooney	Harold Rosen
Michael Spuls	Balbir S. Gill	Harpreet Singh	Sherry Wang
Seydou Keita	Stephen Piper	Tammy Johnson	Hillary Russell
Ghizlane Laghzaoui		Camilla Boisvert	
Max R. Aranguiz-Peterson (IAT)			

**PRESENTATION** – [Legal Advocacy for Agricultural Workers](#)- Gurcharan Dhillon, Program Supervisor; Claudia Stoehr, Spanish Legal Advocate.

The Legal Advocacy for Agricultural Workers program offers services to the most vulnerable Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) working in the Fraser Valley. Most come from Mexico, Guatemala, and India, among other places. TFWs may struggle with a variety of issues relating to employment law, such as the non-payment of wages worked, poor living conditions, abusive employers, and harassment. Many of the workers face multiple barriers such as a lower education level, being elderly, having limited English, or living in fear of the consequences of reporting abuses. Employers, from agriculture in particular, form powerful lobbying groups that dictate legislation. A letter of complaint from an employer can lead to immediate deportation without the chance to return to Canada, and so many do not report abuses due to fear of reprisals.

Legal Advocacy works with TFWs and employers, ensuring that employment and living standards are legal and ethical. However, the system and legislation itself has barriers in regards to workers having legal status within Canada. One of the higher profile cases that Legal Advocacy has worked are the Guatemalan TFWs currently suing the Aquilini farms for lost wages and poor living standards. Another example of Legal Advocacy's work is the coordinated aid efforts for the 78 workers who lost their residence and personal belongings after a fire last year.

Legal Advocacy's website can be found here: <https://fvfarmworkers.ca/>



## **MEETING OPENING AND INTRODUCTIONS**

### **AGENDA REVIEW**

### **APPROVAL**

#### **Stó:lō Land Acknowledgement**

“On the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the Matsqui and the Sumas Nations, of the Stó:lō nation.”

#### **Minutes April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

## **WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

### **Social Integration**

Social Integration is working on a Fact Sheet to be completed by the end of summer.

Project Management is peopling an Info table with Archway Community Services at the Fraser Valley Pride Festival at Jubilee Park, **July 20<sup>th</sup>, 3-8 pm**. Volunteers always needed- contact [Natalia.Deros@archway.ca](mailto:Natalia.Deros@archway.ca) if interested.

Project Management has been invited to sit on a design team committee for the HelpSeeker App, an initiative headed by the Housing and Homelessness Coordinator at the City of Abbotsford. Through the design teams, ALIP members have successfully advocated for the inclusion of newcomer services such as language and translation within the search categories.

### **Labour Market Integration**

The Labour Market Integration working group will reconvene after the summer. Working Group members and ALIP Project Management are inviting new members from workplaces who value diversity and hold newcomer hiring practices. The next Employment Engagement Series event will occur in the fall of 2019- focusing on HR hiring practices within the industry.

### **Research, Policy & Practice**

This working group has met once since the last ALIP council meeting. A presentation was given by UFV research student Darien Johnsen on her ongoing Settlement Success Stories Research Project. The Needs Assessment Plan was also evaluated by RPP members. The working group will reconvene in the Fall.



## **Settlement Success Stories Research Project**

UFV Research Student Darien Johnsen has completed the first two phases of her research project regarding Settlement Success Stories at Archway Community Services. The first phase was to interview three Settlement workers around their clients' success, and the second phase was to conduct a focus group made up of LINC students at an advanced level. The finished project is expected to be finished in late 2019, in the form of a final report that will be easily accessible to ALIP members and service providers.

## **Needs Assessment Research**

ALIP project management contracted former employee Lia Bishop to conduct a Needs Assessment for Newcomers in the Eastern Fraser Valley region. Trends noticed by service providers within the region is secondary settlement, where an undocumented number of newcomers leave their first place of settlement in search of cheaper housing and better employment prospects, often in Abbotsford and the adjoining areas, a pattern of which is not reflected in federal funding decisions. This report is an important document to help offset that trend.

## **GROUP DISCUSSION – What recent trends, barriers and/or observations have you made within your professional work in regards to newcomer needs in Abbotsford?**

### Roundtable Discussion

-Racism in the workplace is an ongoing issue. Employers may take advantage of employees with language barriers, placing them in employment positions that they are ill-equipped to navigate. This can cause tensions towards newcomers from frustrated customers.

-Question posed- how best to spread the word for opportunities and programs for Newcomers to Newcomers. There are many services that are available, but newcomers who aren't on the PR track or GARs often aren't aware of what is available, due to not being on the frontline for services.

Group Discussion Item for next meeting: How to spread the word most effectively in regards to Multicultural services at Archway Community Services.



## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Call for Proposals Update

Negotiations with the IRCC for the 2020-2025 LIP CFP and the UFV Continuing Education CFP are expected over the summer.

## **ROUND TABLE UPDATES/ UPCOMING EVENTS**

Inasmuch Community Services Documentary Night- *Inside My Heart*, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm, Matsqui Centennial Auditorium.

National Indigenous People's Day -**June 21<sup>st</sup>, 10-2 pm**, Mill Lake Park Bevan Avenue entrance.

MCC World Refugee Day- **June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1-4 pm**, Mill Lake Park, Bevan Avenue.

Canada Day- **July 1<sup>st</sup>**. Artisan Market and Community Booths, **1-5 pm**; Food Truck Festival, **1-10 pm**; Fireworks **10 pm**, Abbotsford Exhibition Park.

Archway Community Services- Family Fun Day Picnic for Newcomers, **Thursday, July 4<sup>th</sup>** from **11 am- 2 pm, Mill Lake Water Park.**

Literacy Matters- Learn About Series- Fire Safety for Newcomers, in **October** for Fire Safety Month. More details forthcoming.

## **NEXT MEETING DATE:**

October 2019 (Q3)