GUELPH | WELLINGTON

Local Immigration Partnership

Creating a caring, equitable community where everyone thrives.

Be part of achieving this vision.
The Guelph Wellington
Local Immigration Partnership Project
Phase 1 - Community Report February 2011

OUR STORY

This Settlement Strategy is dedicated to newcomers and immigrants for the contributions that you have made to Guelph-Wellington in shaping and building community.

The Story of the Kayeyes’ in Canada
(Excerpts from presentation made at Sept. 30/10 Community Consultation.)

“It was very difficult to leave together. I left my country in September 2003 because of the war, without my wife and my six kids. I preferred to come to Canada because I thought that as a French speaker, it would be easy for me and my family to settle and integrate. I knew that Canada was a safe country. People are very generous and helpful and I knew that this country would be a good place to raise my kids. Many people, organizations and churches helped me. But as a foreign trained engineer, I become discouraged. It was necessary to work 2 jobs, 16 hours a day to support my family back home. To encourage immigrants to settle and stay in the community, advise us in ways that will help us find a permanent job related to our experiences. Jobs, community centres, welcoming centers, affordable housing are all important in the beginning. My family arrived in Canada last year – October 1, 2009. I remind my children that there are no other Kayeyes’ in Canada – they are the first and because they are the first they must do their best and always remember why they are here.”
OUR VISION
“We envision a caring, equitable community where everyone thrives.”

Be part of achieving this vision.

• Are you a newcomer or an established immigrant interested in contributing to this vision by sharing your experiences, skills and aspirations?
• Are you a business, a corporate citizen, an entrepreneur interested in ensuring that you have a thriving business, within a thriving community?
• Are you a service provider contributing to the well being of the community?
• Are you a community member, possibly even a community leader that believes in giving back to community for the benefit of all?

This report shares and promotes the Guelph Wellington Settlement Strategy and encourages your involvement and participation in achieving this vision. There is a role for everyone to be involved in building a caring, equitable, thriving community.

... here’s how you can participate...

• Continue to offer your insight and feedback regarding the identified areas of priority in this report - the Strategy is a dynamic, living document.
• Sign the Guelph Wellington Settlement Strategy Declaration of Intent as a demonstration of your support.
• Consider committing your time and expertise to the Leadership Council, the Economic Inclusion Delivery group and/or the Social/Civic Inclusion Delivery Group of the Local Immigration Partnership Project.
• Be a champion, a voice for innovation and change in you areas of personal/professional interest.
• Learn about the Guelph Inclusiveness Alliance and other organizations/coalitions promoting inclusion.

OUR TEAM

Guelph Wellington Local Immigration Partnership Council
November 2009 – March 31, 2011

Front row from left to right Valerie Sauer, Konnie Peet, Christopher Love, Roya Rabbani
Back row – Don Drone, Mitra Salarvand; Sheila Nicholas; Adwoa Badoe, Daniel Moore, Barbara Powell (staff) Carol Simpson (Co-chair)
Absent from Photo: Momina Mir, Pat Case, Nicole Mailoux and Ann Pappert (Staff/Co-chair)
OUR PROCESS
Development of the Guelph Wellington Settlement Strategy

The creation of a “caring, equitable community” has guided the work of the Guelph Wellington Local Immigration Partnership (GW-LIP) Council and approximately 400 people who have contributed to this community planning process. Fundamental to the development of the Settlement Strategy is the recognition of the importance of immigration to ensure the continued prosperity of our community and to respond to the reality of an aging workforce. “One of the hallmarks of a civilized society is our capacity to understand and care about others.” 1 This has guided our strategy development discussions. “Caring” and “equity” are recognized in the GW-LIP vision and are underscored by the need to understand the experience of newcomers. The City of Guelph as the project convener of the GW-LIP acknowledges the vital role that Citizenship and Immigration Canada has made in the achievement of community based and co-ordinated approaches to newcomer economic and social inclusion.

Guelph Wellington Local Immigration Project Components

1: Plan 4.0 Mobilizing to Save Civilization, Lester Brown, Earth Policy Institute 2009
Research Component
(Jan.-Mar. 2010)

• A literature review highlighting best practices in the retention and integration of immigrants to small urban centers and rural communities.

• An environmental scan including: socio demographic data, service inventory, focus groups and key informant interviews to identify assets, capacities and opportunities in strategy development.

• Community dialogues conducted by ethnocultural facilitators in their language of origin with 190 participants primarily including newcomers/immigrants.

Strategy Development Component
(Apr.-Dec. 2010)

• Approximately 400 individuals were involved in individual meetings, two community dialogues exploring social and economic inclusion, and four public community consultations hosted throughout Guelph Wellington.

• The Guelph Wellington Local Immigration Partnership web-site http://guelphwellingtonlip.ca was developed.

• The Local Immigration Partnership Council deliberated and developed the strategy based on the findings from research components and feedback from all community consultations.

Transitional Component
(Jan.-Mar. 2011)

• Establishment of formal governance structure for Implementation Phase.

• Continued promotion and marketing of the Settlement Strategy including the hosting of a Community Forum.

• Introduction of Guelph Wellington Settlement Strategy Declaration of Intent.

Implementation Component

• Implementation of the Settlement Strategy guided by the Guelph Wellington Local Immigration Partnership Leadership Council, Economic Inclusion Delivery Group and Social/Civic Inclusion Delivery Group. The role of the Leadership Council and Delivery Groups is to strengthen community capacity to better support and improve settlement outcomes for newcomers/immigrants in Guelph Wellington.

• A collaborative approach to the economic, social/civic inclusion of newcomers/immigrants is the intended long-term outcome of the Settlement Strategy.
Guelph Wellington Settlement Strategy
Action Plan

EMPLOYMENT

Gap/need: A. Education/training opportunities that build on immigrants’ skills/education/training/experience

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: A 1. Business/ Government/ Educational Institutions recognize the value of the skills and experience which immigrants bring to Guelph-Wellington as potential employees.

Action Strategies

1.1 Market the bottom-line benefits to employers and the community when all sectors work together to build on the skills/ abilities/ experience/ education which immigrants bring to Guelph and Wellington County.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: A 2. Immigrants’ and employers’ expectations regarding immigrant employment prospects are realistic and employers are involved in assisting immigrants build on their skills/education/experience within a Canadian context.

Action Strategies

2.1 Develop new mentorship, bridging, job shadowing, “practice firms” programs for unemployed and underemployed immigrants, with government or other financial support to businesses and industries which support those programs, especially small businesses.

2.2 Make information available to immigrants and potential immigrants about employment opportunities in Guelph-Wellington, both before and after arrival, that is current and realistic and includes information related to professional associations and unions.

Gap/need: B. Employment services that are responsive to both employers and immigrants needs

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: B 1. Employment service providers are fully informed and funded to match changing immigrant/newcomer skills/ education/experience with changing employment realities

Action Strategies

1.1 Bring together employers from various sectors, employment service providers and immigrants so that all are fully informed about different language requirements, different workplace cultures, employment networking opportunities and about the variety of skills, education, training and experience that immigrants bring to Guelph-Wellington.
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING

Gap/need: A. Employment related English language training programs

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: A 1. A generic employment-related English language training program based on identified needs/gaps (e.g., communication skills beyond just reading & writing) is delivered in Guelph-Wellington

Action Strategies

1.1 Conduct an environmental scan of all English language training programs in Guelph-Wellington.

1.2 Strike a task force for coordination of English language training programs

1.3 Develop the components of a generic employment-related English language training program and begin to explore how that program may best be delivered and by whom in both rural and urban communities.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: A 2. A coordinated marketing strategy for existing employment-related English language programs

Action Strategies

2.1 Strike a task force for coordination of English language training programs

2.2 Determine what marketing strategies are best suited to spread information of existing English language programs (connecting users with providers) in Guelph and in Wellington County and develop a plan for use of appropriate strategies.

Gap/need: B. Transportation for all immigrants who need English language training services

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: B 1. Development of alternative English language training delivery models to reduce need for transportation

Action Strategies

1.1 Once the inventory of all current English language programs and services, urban and rural, is completed for Guelph-Wellington, explore successful alternative models in other communities

1.2 Partner with local school boards, neighbourhood associations and other community organizations to develop alternative English language services closer to where immigrants live and work.
COMMUNITY SERVICES/PROGRAMS

**Gap/need: A. Access to/ understanding of health care and education systems**

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION: A 1.** All immigrants receive information in a timely manner as needed that informs them about local health & education systems and how to access them – in both urban and rural contexts.

**Action Strategies**

1.1 Welcome Centres and/or Immigrant Service Centres develop standard information to share with immigrants, where possible in their language, about local health and education systems.

1.2 Existing settlement service providers partner with Public Health and School Boards to organize workshops for immigrants in local community facilities, about health and education systems.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION: A 2.** Health and Education staff understand the variety of immigrant experiences and have the ability/resources to hear and understand the real problems of individual immigrants

**Action Strategies**

2.1 A fully funded program of certified cultural interpreters is developed for Guelph-Wellington, with a focus on the health and education systems and availability throughout the County.

**Gap/need: B. Increased coordination and partnerships in all service sectors, focused on immigrant settlement**

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION: B 1.** Co-ordinated immigrant settlement services for seamless delivery

**Action Strategies**

1.1 Work toward identifying a lead agency that will facilitate urban and rural efforts to coordinate all immigrant settlement services.

1.2 Develop a “Welcome Centre” for Guelph-Wellington which will serve both Guelph and the rural communities (Wellington ISAP model of satellite delivery could be one alternative).
COMMUNITY INTEGRATION/INCLUSION

**Gap/need: A.** The City of Guelph, Wellington County and community agencies need to diversify their workforce and workplaces to reflect the diversity of the community

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION: A 1.** The City of Guelph, County of Wellington and community agencies are inspired and supported to diversify their workforce and workplaces

**Action Strategies**

1.1 Educate Guelph-Wellington institutions and agencies about the value and benefits of diversity in their workplaces and about the need to diversify their community outreach.

1.2 Share local and other community examples (across sectors) of promising practices related to diversity within institutions and agencies and in their dealings with the public.

1.3 Get commitment from local institutions and agencies to reflect diversity and address racism/discrimination in all of their policies and practices related to hiring, promoting, training, public information materials, use of volunteers, etc.

**Gap/need: B.** Outreach by social, cultural, recreational and neighbourhood groups to immigrants

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION: B 1.** Social, cultural, recreational, neighbourhood and faith groups receive support in creating a supportive environment and spaces for increased interaction/sharing among diverse ethnic groups and between immigrants and established Canadian residents.

**Action Strategies**

1.1 Create host/friendship program(s) for pairing established residents/families with immigrants in both urban and rural areas.

1.2 Increase the availability of, and encourage the use of, affordable public spaces for specific needs of immigrant/newcomer groups and for intercultural activities, including artistic, social, recreational and sports activities.
OUR NEXT STEPS

The Guelph Wellington Settlement Strategy is a foundation provided to the community on which we must continue to build collectively. Join us at http://guelphwellingtonlip.ca if you are interested in learning more about the work of the Local Immigration Partnership and the Guelph Wellington Settlement Strategy including:

- Guelph Wellington Settlement Strategy Action Plan;
- Guelph Wellington Settlement Strategy Declaration of Intent;
- Guelph Wellington Local Immigration Partnership Terms of Reference (Implementation Phase) including responsibilities of the Leadership Council and Delivery Groups.

Comments, questions and feedback can be provided directly to Barbara Powell, General Manager Community Engagement - Community Engagement and Social Services Liaison, barbara.powell@guelph.ca.

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