
What About the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement?

A one-day forum for key stakeholders

March 28, 2006

Forum Proceedings

Sponsoring Organizations

Social Planning Network of Ontario (SPNO)

Ontario Teachers Federation (OTF)

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)

People for Education

Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)

Joint Centre for Excellence in Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS)

Community Social Planning Council of Toronto (CSPC-T)

Report prepared by

Community Social Planning Council of Toronto

What About the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement?
A one-day forum for key stakeholders
March 28, 2006

Forum Proceedings

Sponsoring Organizations

Social Planning Network of Ontario (SPNO)
Ontario Teachers Federation (OTF)
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)
People for Education
Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
Joint Centre for Excellence in Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS)
Community Social Planning Council of Toronto (CSPC-T)

Report prepared by
Community Social Planning Council of Toronto

April, 2006



What About the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement?
A one-day forum for key stakeholders Forum Proceedings

April 2006

Community Social Planning Council of Toronto*
2 Carlton Street, Suite 1001
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1J3

*Our thanks to the United Way and the City of Toronto, our key funding partners.



Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Introduction	2
Background	2
Sponsoring Organizations	3
Overview	4
Participants	4
Forum Activities	5
Forum Proceedings	5
Forum Opening	6
Keynote Speakers	7
Introduction	7
Irene Bader	7
Director General, Ontario Region, Citizenship and Immigration Canada	
Joan Andrew	10
Deputy Minister, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration	
Thanking of Speakers	14
Panel Presentation	15
Panel Moderator	15
Panelists	16
Discussion Groups	28
Discussion Questions	28
Plenary Session	29
Summary of Reports from Discussion Groups	29
Closing Remarks	41
Next Steps	41
Appendices	42
Appendix A - List of Participants	42
Appendix B - Forum Agenda	46
Appendix C- Summaries of Reports Published by Sponsoring Organizations	48

Acknowledgements

The Sponsoring Organizations wish to thank all individuals and organizations involved in organizing and financially supporting this event, the Federal and Provincial Governments for their participation and, in particular, all the participants whose active involvement contributed significantly to making this event a success.

Sponsoring Organizations:

- Social Planning Network of Ontario (SPNO)
- Ontario Teachers Federation (OTF)
- Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)
- People for Education
- Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
- Joint Centre for Excellence in Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS).
- Community Social Planning Council of Toronto

Planning Committee:

Pedro Barata (Atkinson Foundation),
Kathryn Blackett (People for Education)
Ruth Baumann (OTF),
Barbara Burnaby (Canadian Coalition
for Immigrant Children and Youth)
John Campey (CSPC-T),
Amy Casipullai (OCASI)
Susan Cook (OPSBA),
Miriam DiGiuseppe (CSPC-T),
Peter Dorfman (Settlement Workers in
Schools - SWIS),
Sherrill Game (CSPC-T),
Tam Goossen (CSPC-T),

Sam Hammond (Elementary Teachers'
Federation of Ontario - ETFO),
Graham Hollings (Campaign for Stable
Funding of Adult ESL Classes),
Cyndie Jacobs (OTF),
Martin Long (Elementary Teachers of
Toronto - ETT, ETFO),
Terri Preston (CUPE 4400),
John Shields (CERIS),
Bob Spencer (Trustee's Constituency
Office, Ward 1, TDSB),
Jeff Sprang (OPSBA).

Administrative Support:

CSPC-T: Margaret Hau, Mary Micallef, Maria Serrano

Funding Contributors:

CUPE Local 4400, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, The Atkinson
Foundation, The Ontario Teachers' Federation

Forum Proceedings:

Susan Cook, Miriam DiGiuseppe, Jeff Sprang

Site

Metro Central YMCA

Introduction

Background

During the course of the past year, a significant number of organizations, with a particular concern about the settlement and learning needs of newcomers, published extensive reports and research documents about the state of English Language Learning and the need to improve the delivery of services to newcomer communities. At the beginning of February 2006, some of these province-wide organizations came together as an informal coalition to share information and strategies to promote effective community and school-based initiatives. Their shared vision was to improve the social and economic inclusion of all newcomers, including children, youth and their families, through:

- Systematic focus on newcomer success,
- Support for English language acquisition,
- Support for enabling optimum employment opportunities.

Timely, in the context of that vision, was the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement. The signing on November 21, 2005 of this first-ever Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement represented an exciting step forward in improving the delivery of services to newcomers and the participating organizations had a keen interest in understanding how they could contribute to the improvements that such an agreement can achieve.

As one of the first steps in their collaboration, they decided to seek clarity about the agreement and its implications for settlement and education programming for newcomer communities in Ontario. With that aim, they organized an open forum, ***What About the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement? – A one-day seminar for key stakeholders***, to develop a shared knowledge base, clarify the current situation with funding, and identify ways in which they could partner with each other and the federal and provincial governments to enhance the delivery of services to newcomer families in the province.

Sponsoring Organizations

The organizations co-sponsoring this event were:

- Social Planning Network of Ontario (SPNO),
- Ontario Teachers Federation (OTF),
- Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI),
- People for Education,
- Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA),
- Joint Centre for Excellence in Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS),
- The Community Social Planning Council of Toronto (CSPC-T).

The Community Social Planning Council of Toronto acted as the facilitating organization/secretariat for this event.

Overview

The Forum, *What About the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement – A one-day seminar for key stakeholders* was held on March 28, 2006 at the Metro Central YMCA, 20 Grosvenor St. in Toronto. The main objectives of the Forum were to:

- Share information about the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement and its implications for the settlement and education of newcomer families;
- Explore ways in which all stakeholders can be included in the consultation process around the Agreement;
- Identify ways in which all sectors and levels of government can work together to enhance the delivery of programs and thus improve the lives of all newcomer families in Ontario.

Participants

188 participants from a wide range of organizations and institutions from across Toronto and Ontario attended the Forum. The uniqueness of the Forum lay in its success in bringing together representatives from many sectors, which serve and/or are concerned about newcomer families - a range of sectors that has seldom come together for a common concern. Included among these were:

- Settlement Organizations
- Elementary, Secondary and Adult Education,
- Health,
- Community Organizations
- Research,
- Academia,
- Public School Boards,
- Parent Organizations
- Post-Secondary Education
- Media
- Charitable Organizations
- Student Organizations
- Charitable Foundations
- Labour Organizations
- Professional Organizations
- Municipal, Provincial and Federal Levels of Government

A full list of participants appears in **Appendix A**.

Representing the Federal and Provincial Ministers of Citizenship and Immigration were **Irene Bader**, Director General, Ontario Region, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and **Joan Andrew**, Deputy Minister, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, respectively.

Forum Activities

The agenda for the morning session included opening remarks from the Executive Director of the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, keynote speeches by representatives of the Federal and Provincial Governments, a panel presentation involving representatives of the sponsoring organizations with responses from the Federal and Provincial Government participants and followed by a question and discussion session from the floor.

The afternoon session consisted of small group discussions, reporting back to the Plenary Session and closing remarks with next steps by the representative of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. The complete Forum Agenda appears in **Appendix B**.

Forum Proceedings

The aim of this document is to share the ideas and insights, gained through the presentations and discussions at the Forum, with the Forum participants and also with a wider audience. It includes an overview of the Forum objectives and its structure, presents transcripts of the speeches and presentations, provides a summary of the small group discussions along with issues raised by participants and finally examines the next steps for action. Through the inclusion of this material, and through the interaction evident within it, this document reflects some of the energy that was present at the Forum and that contributed to its success.

Forum Opening

The forum was called to order by John Campey, Executive Director of the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto. He thanked the co-sponsoring organization, the planning committee, CSPC-T staff and volunteers, the organizations which provided funding support for the event, the Federal and Provincial Government representatives and the Forum participants for making this event possible and delivered the following opening remarks.

Opening Remarks

John Campey
Executive Director
CSPC-T

Following the publication of the CSPC-T's report, *Renewing Toronto's ESL Programs* in the spring of 2005, a wide range of individuals and organizations contacted the Planning Council with an interest in pursuing further action in support of ESL. Many of these groups and individuals had been doing similar or related work – a number had produced significant reports of their own.

Informal discussions among a number of these groups over the fall of 2005 pointed toward the usefulness of bringing together the wide array of interests in this field, and the suggestion of conducting a one-day session on the anticipated Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement provided a positive focus for an initial collaboration. To that end, the six provincial organizations that agreed to co-sponsor the event were approached for their support, with the CSPC-T providing secretariat and organizing support.

This event is not a “beginning” – given the immense amount of work already undertaken by the organizations and individuals present and represented today – but is an opportunity to pause, clarify our knowledge base and shared objectives, and to begin to think about ways in which we can move forward collectively to further our shared goal of improving the prospects of newcomers to Canada.

Keynote Speakers

Introduction

The speakers were introduced by Emily Noble, Vice President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation and President of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

Speakers

Irene Bader
Director General
Ontario Region
Citizenship and
Immigration
Canada

Thank you and good morning. It's a very great pleasure to be here today. I'm especially proud to be here with so many of you who play such a vital role in helping newcomers adapt to their new lives. The settlement sector and the education sector has a long and proud history in this province -- and you are very much part of that legacy, helping as you do people who might be wary, people who might be frightened, but people who share the dreams of the immigrant of more than a hundred years ago. Let me therefore join with my colleagues in welcoming you here this morning.

I'd especially like to extend to each of you the very warmest greetings on behalf of the Hon. Monte Solberg, as well as his best wishes for a very useful and productive conference.

The Minister recently committed to maintaining strong support for settlement services and language training and to working with the provinces, territories and municipalities on settlement support policies for immigrants.

He spoke about the importance of making sure each newcomer's journey is a success if this country is to flourish and prosper in the years ahead. He talked about the need to ensure everyone can fully participate in the nation building exercise that our ancestors started if Canada is to achieve its true potential. And he emphasized that we need to ensure all of us work together in a spirit of common purpose and cooperation to achieve the best results for all Canadians. So I'd like to think forums such as this one represent a good step forward in that direction.

The Minister has spent the last few weeks listening to Canadians and people such as yourselves about how we can do a better job of welcoming newcomers to Canada and about how we can do a better job of ensuring that each prospers in their new life. He is also meeting and listening to provincial and territorial partners as

well as other levels of government about how we can work more closely together. He is also listening to businesses, service providers, educators, non-governmental organizations, research groups and, of course, to newcomers themselves.

Many are talking about skills shortages and the importance of immigration in general. Some are telling him about the problems newcomers face in finding work that matches their skills and experience. Others are saying that we need to do a better job helping newcomers prosper and thrive in their new lives. While still more are suggesting that the government needs to do more to help more genuine refugees around the world in need of Canada's protection.

What he and all of us at Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) are hearing most of all is that immigration is critical to Canada's future. It's critical for the future of our communities. It's critical for our growth as an open, inclusive and prosperous society. It's also critical for business success and for Canada's economic growth in the years ahead. This, of course, is particularly true in Ontario, where a majority of newcomers choose to settle and start new lives.

How, then, can we make sure Ontario and the rest of Canada derive the maximum benefit from immigration? The Minister recently outlined several priorities in this regard. The first deals with credential recognition. Today, CIC is working collaboratively with Human Resources and Social Development Canada to set up a new agency that will help improve the recognition of foreign credentials. One of the goals of the new agency is to cut through the red tape that marks the present system. The Minister recently noted that the agency will help ensure that people get the right information about what their training will give them once they arrive in Canada. The hope is also that newcomers will also get a good idea of what skills if any they will need to upgrade in order to get a job in their field once they arrive.

The Minister's second priority addresses the big expense that many newcomers face on arrival in Canada. The goal is to cut the Right of Permanent Residence fee in half and make it easier and more attractive for newcomers to come to Canada. So this is good news for everyone. The Minister's third priority deals with citizenship. The Government of Canada has committed to supporting Canadian parents who adopt foreign-born children by extending citizenship to these children provided the adoption is legal and in the best interests of the child. This would help put them on an equal footing with children born to Canadians.

As the Minister has noted, success in each of these areas will represent an important step forward in our efforts to improve the immigration and citizenship programs. I think it goes without saying that agreements such as the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement will also be important in this regard. Effective immigration is about close partnerships, and the new *Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement* reflects this reality.

It will mean the delivery of settlement services and language training that is more comprehensive and on a continuum with other services. It means that all of us will work

hard to ensure immigration to this province remains a success for this and future generations. It opens the door to even closer consultations and the chance to move forward together with an even stronger sense of common purpose and mutual understanding. It means the province that receives the largest number of newcomers to Canada every year will have a new way to match the skills newcomers have to local needs through tools like the Provincial Nominee Program.

I'll speak more on some of the details of the Agreement during the upcoming panel session. One area has to do with the Agreement's provisions on consultation on language training and settlement strategies. The Minister recently spoke about the important role communities in the broader sense can and should play in welcoming newcomers. This is as true for communities like Sudbury and Windsor as it is for Toronto. Newcomers, after all, don't just come to Canada. They settle in communities. It's in communities that immigration does or doesn't work. Immigrants need to feel welcome and want to stay in the region in which they settle. The Minister has frequently cited the example of his own community of Brooks, Alberta to highlight this point. Brooks is now home to 1,200 former Sudanese refugees, nearly ten percent of the community's total population. The Sudanese are one of many diverse groups who have flooded into Brooks in the last five years in search of jobs, mostly at the local meat packing plant. This is happening right across Canada, and especially here in Ontario. What we're finding is that there's often a myriad of cultural and other barriers that need to be addressed in order for newcomers to feel truly welcome and at home in their new surroundings. So, as the Minister has noted, governments and other stakeholders need to work together evaluate the needs and impact of newcomers on local infrastructures, and ensure the necessary welcoming and settlement services and language training are in place. Communities need to know who is arriving and when. They also must know how to be ready to meet their early needs. Consultation is key. That is one reason why the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement is so significant.

I've now come to the end of these remarks. I look forward to our panel discussion and elaboration on the Agreement and I look forward to hearing your views and your ideas over the course of the coming session as well as over coming weeks and months.

Thank you.

Joan Andrew
Deputy Minister
Ontario Ministry of
Citizenship and
Immigration

I want to thank the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto and their partners for hosting today's event. And I'd like to bring you warm greetings from Ontario's Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the Honourable Mike Colle.

At this session you'll be talking about a theme the minister feels passionately about: the importance of immigration – and the integration of newcomers – to Ontario.

The minister was proud to sign the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement last November. At that time, he said, "This is truly a landmark agreement for our province and a history-making investment in the successful integration of the 125,000 new immigrants Ontario welcomes each year."

We at the ministry of Citizenship and Immigration appreciate this opportunity to bring you up to date on the steps being taken to turn the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement into action.

Over a five-year period, this historic agreement brings \$920 million in new federal resources to help newcomers settle, for adults to obtain language training and integrate more quickly into Ontario's economy and society. This agreement involves direct federal investment in communities with Ontario working jointly with the federal government to set priorities and establishing a planning framework.

Nearly three in four newcomers of working age have at least some postsecondary education or training. They offer the skills demanded by the knowledge economy. Yet only 40 per cent of immigrants find employment in their chosen field or a related field within two years of arrival in Canada. And just a few weeks ago, Statistics Canada reported that one in six male immigrants leaves Canada for better opportunities within the first year of arrival.

The Ontario government is determined to meet these realities head-on. Its goal is to ensure that Ontario's newcomers have every opportunity to succeed – to build a better life for themselves and their families – and to make the maximum contribution to the province. The new federal-provincial agreement will help to do that. The agreement will lead to improved settlement services and the reform of adult language training. But to get there, we need your input. Today we will be issuing a Request for Proposals to conduct stakeholder consultations on what our joint service

priorities should be. Contract will be awarded toward end of April. We expect these consultations to get underway in mid to late May wrapping up in late July. This process will consider what newcomers' needs are, where gaps in services exist, and what delivery models work best.

Our aim is to develop four-year strategies for both settlement services and adult language training.

We're aware, for example, that the 905 belt is less well served. And we understand that some new approaches – such as storefront locations in shopping malls and settlement workers in schools – are getting an enthusiastic response. So we want to explore options like these.

Our focus is on results – we're looking for the solutions that work best for newcomers. We are counting on people like you the people on the front lines – to give us firsthand insight and help us shape our priorities and strategies.

Let me also say a few words about what Ontario is doing in its own provincial settlement services and adult language training programs. The March 23 Provincial Budget underlined Ontario's commitment for newcomers to have access to more and better language classes and bridge training programs, as part of a comprehensive plan to maintain Ontario's skills advantage. The minister recently announced that provincial funding to settlement agencies will increase by \$1.2 million to \$5.3 million annually. The new investment will support specialized staff training and help agencies modernize their facilities and make them more welcoming.

The settlement strategy under the Canada-Ontario agreement will see that these provincial services are better coordinated with federally funded services.

In the field of language training, as you may know, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration has taken on responsibility for adult, non-credit, English- and French-as-a-second-language instruction. These courses are delivered by 37 school boards through continuing education programs.

To move forward, we first need to know more about how these courses currently operate. In the coming months, we are going to do research on strengths and weaknesses and best practices. We'll be surveying learners to ask how well their needs were met. And we plan to pilot standards and benchmarks in such areas as curriculum content and the qualifications of instructors. We have a stakeholder advisory group to provide input on the new directions we are considering.

The federal-provincial agreement breaks new ground by providing funds for occupation-specific language training. Our long-term vision is a comprehensive system of language training, assessment and referral. This would permit learners to move seamlessly from basic to advanced language instruction and occupation-specific training, according to their needs. Eventually, we intend to include adult, non-credit programs in this seamless

system. The emphasis on occupation-specific language instruction will help remove a significant barrier to access to the workforce.

This will fit in with other efforts to speed up the labour market integration of newcomers. For example, a second federal-provincial agreement signed late last year – the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Partnership Agreement – includes \$292.5 million in additional federal funding over six years to help recent immigrants to Ontario integrate into the labour market.

We already have a solid foundation. After several years of experimentation, we have developed a series of bridge training programs that work. We will soon be announcing the bridging projects approved for funding under the 2005-06 Request for Proposals. And in April, we expect to issue the RFP for 2006-07.

One of the keys to labour market integration is the recognition of skills and credentials. As you may know, the government appointed George Thomson to review the current approaches of regulatory bodies and develop a set of common principles and best practices for a fair registration and appeals process. The government is reviewing his report and considering his recommendations and will be responding in the not too distant future.

World Education Services (Canada) provides academic credential assessments. We're supporting an employer outreach campaign by WES to increase the use of their assessments in the hiring process. We will work with the federal government on the best ways for them to contribute to a national system for credential recognition.

An element in the federal-provincial immigration agreement is a new website recently launched for recent and prospective newcomers. This is now up and running at OntarioImmigration.ca. You may have seen our television ads about newcomer services directing newcomers to the site. Through approximately 300 links, the website provides access to current information on Ontario's communities, labour markets, professional licensing and other practical aspects of starting a new life here. Over the next two years, more information and features will be added, making the site a one-stop gateway for immigrants from around the world. We will work with municipalities to add to the website with specific information on their programs and services for newcomers.

The federal-provincial agreement involves municipalities in planning and discussions on immigration. Last week, representatives of the City of Toronto and the federal and provincial governments had an initial meeting to start work on the memorandum of understanding that will guide our joint efforts. My ministry and CIC also met with members of AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, in a tripartite forum known as the Municipal Immigration Committee on March 20. This committee is doing important work to ensure that municipal interests across the province are addressed under the Immigration Agreement. For the first time, the three levels of government are working together to see that programs are in place – they are coordinated and seamless and meet the needs of immigrants in regions and communities across Ontario.

From Ontario's perspective we are working on a number of fronts to improve our services to assist newcomers to succeed in Ontario:

- We are working to improve the information available to those thinking about coming to Ontario and those recently arrived through our Website: www.OntarioImmigration.ca;
- We are working both on our own adult language training and settlement services and with the federal government to jointly plan improved and coordinated services through federal funding under the Agreement.
- We are improving our own labour market integration services in partnership with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities through Job Connect and Bridging programs.
- We are examining options to improve access to regulated professions like medicine, nursing, engineering and teaching.
- We will work with the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities and the federal government on the implementation of the Labour Market Partnership Agreement.
- We will also work with a variety of organizations like World Educations Services (WES) and Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) to make employers more aware of the services available to them to help internationally trained individuals gain meaningful employment.
- We will also address issues with the federal government on Temporary Foreign Workers and a pilot Provincial Nominee program. We will review and adapt our programs to meet the needs of newcomers.

All of us in this room share the belief that welcoming newcomers and fostering their integration is the right thing to do – socially, culturally and economically.

I hope this forum will give you the information you need to work with government to usher in a new era of seamless, effective services for newcomers and a bright future for Ontario.

Thanking of Speakers

The speakers were thanked by **Usha George**, Director of CERIS and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto. She noted that the gathering was timely in the context of the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement and that this is the first time in a decade or so that participants from many sectors have come together. Toronto, a city with the greatest diversity in the world, receives a significant number of newcomers to Canada. As such, it faces many problems with settlement and language learning needs of newcomers. In light of recent research pointing to the increasing gap in incomes between the Canadian-born and new immigrants, discussions, such as this one today, are critical.

Panel Presentation

The panel consisted of representatives of the sponsoring organizations and a representative each of the Federal and Provincial Governments.

The presentations of the representatives of the sponsoring organizations included an outline of their organization's activities and their perspective on the issues of the settlement and educational needs of newcomer families. Some of the panelists made reference to reports and research documents which their organizations published on this issue. Summaries of the documents published by CSPC-T, ETT, OPSBA and People for Education appear in **Appendix C**.

The panelists representing the Federal Government were **Irene Bader**, Director General, Ontario Region, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and **Marilyn Ziedenisberg**, Regional Program Advisor, Settlement & Intergovernmental Affairs Directorate. The panelist representing the Provincial Government was **Riet Verheggen**, Director, Citizenship Development Branch, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. The government representatives did not make prepared presentations as their respective ministries' positions were presented in the keynote speeches earlier in the morning session. Their role on the panel was to respond to the presentations of the panelists from the sponsoring organization.

The panel presentations were followed by questions from the floor and an open discussion session with the panelists and Forum participants.

Panel Moderator

The panel was moderated by **Dr. Joanna Anneke Rummens**, the Chair of the CERIS Governance Board, Health Systems Research Scientist and Assistant Professor, Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto. Dr. Rummens welcomed and introduced members of the panel and noted the importance of this day in which so many sectors come together to share their perspectives, ideas and common concern about the settlement and educational needs of newcomer families in Ontario.

Panelists

Debbie Douglas
Executive Director
OCASI

Introduction

On November 21, 2005 the governments of Canada and Ontario signed a historic agreement. On that day, Ontario got its first immigration agreement - once of the last provinces to do so in Canada. What is more important is that the agreement came attached with a promise of increased investment in immigration in Ontario - an amount of \$920 million over the next five years.

Perhaps it was the money, or perhaps it was the fact that this was an Ontario 'first' - but whatever the reason, immigration and settlement have now become topics that can be mentioned in polite conversation. And the agreement has begun to attract interest from sectors that up to now have treated the immigrant and refugee-serving sector as a poor second cousin. OCASI sees this as a positive development. We see it as an opportunity to engage constructively with diverse stakeholders to work towards a common goal of building strong, vibrant and inclusive communities in Ontario.

In my allotted seven minutes, my goal is to introduce you to OCASI; provide an overview of the immigrant and refugee-serving sector; identify challenges in settlement; and to share with you our vision of building strong and inclusive communities in Ontario through the mechanism of this new agreement.

About OCASI

The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, popularly known as OCASI was formed in 1978 by a small group of organizations that provided services to immigrants and refugees. The Council was created to act as the collective voice for the immigrant and refugee-serving sector, and to coordinate responses to shared needs and concerns.

We are a registered charity governed by a volunteer board of directors, drawn from our member organizations. OCASI's Mission is to achieve equality, access and full participation for immigrants and refugees in every aspect of Canadian life. The Council has grown to more than 170 autonomous members across Ontario. OCASI has members in virtually every community in this

province. More than 60% of our membership, constituting more than 100 organizations is based in Toronto.

Our members provide a broad range of services to immigrants and refugees. Services include settlement, employment, language training, woman abuse counseling, housing assistance, legal services, health services, shelters, youth services and community capacity building.

OCASI's work, and that of our members receive financial support primarily from the federal Departments of Citizenship and Immigration, Human Resources and Skills Development; the provincial Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities; and from municipal governments. Our members also depend on financial support from several other departments and ministries, but the ones named are those that provide primary support for immigrant settlement and settlement related services.

Immigrants and Refugee-Serving Sector Overview

The immigrant and refugee-serving sector is comprised of community-based organizations. Many are registered charities. Their members are drawn from the communities they serve and community-based boards of directors govern them. Thus, they operate through their foundation principle of remaining accountable to the communities - A principle that is absolutely critical in a society where immigrants and refugee communities continue to be marginalized and where their voices are silenced.

Historically, a mix of multi-ethnic, ethno-specific and multi-service organizations have delivered the range of settlement services both independently and in partnership with other organizations and institutions, such as delivering language training programs in partnership with local Boards of education. Often based and located in the community, such organizations have played the dual role of providing services while building the capacity of the communities that they serve.

Settlement services go well beyond providing information and referral in a culturally sensitive manner, to a process that is unique in supporting community development and that facilitates the full and equitable participation of newcomers in all aspects of Canadian society. It also involves engaging in ongoing advocacy to address systemic barriers that limit newcomers to less than full participation in all aspects of life in Canada, such as effective labour market access for all immigrants and refugees.

It is an area of work that deserves long-overdue recognition as a unique function in human service delivery, one that is built on credibility and trust within newcomer communities, and that requires specific skills and training in order to be effective and fully responsive to settlement needs. Being grounded in immigrant and refugee communities gives the sector, and OCASI its legitimacy and strength.

Settlement Challenges

Most settlement initiatives are focused on the early periods of arrival in Canada. However, we in the sector recognize that effective settlement is a dynamic, life-long and non-linear process.

Our work is founded on the principles of access and equity, the recognition that not all immigrants are equally privileged, and that there are degrees of difference in newcomer communities capacity to organize and advocate for themselves in the process of legitimizing their place in Canadian society.

Our work in settlement must be seen as the building blocks of community capacity building. This understanding is especially important in our contemporary reality.

The growing poverty of immigrants and refugees, especially those from racialized communities is well documented in Canada, and has produced a settlement backlog. Limited opportunities for effective labour market participation has had a considerable negative impact on the settlement process, with immigrants and refugees taking much longer to settle and become active contributors and consumers in Canada's social, economic and political life.

Equitable access to basic services and meaningful opportunities for civic engagement is central to an effective settlement process. This can only be accomplished through building a strong community infrastructure. The lack of adequate social housing, lack of equitable and accessible healthcare and the gutting of Ontario's education system are some of the crises that have compounded the settlement backlog.

The Canada-Ontario Agreement provides us with a mechanism to articulate these realities and to work together to shape settlement policy in Ontario that is responsive to the contemporary reality of immigrants and refugees.

OCASI Vision

The Agreement promises to bring new strength to a sector that has consistently been under-funded, ignored and de-legitimized. Funding for settlement had been flat-lined for the last ten years. The pay scale for our staff is among the lowest in Canada's human services sector. With every government fiscal scandal in other federal departments, it is funding for immigrant services that have come under the greatest scrutiny creating an additional burden for sector organizations.

The experience with Immigration agreements in other provinces taught us that we need strong checks and balances in order to ensure that money that is intended for immigrant settlement is invested only in settlement. For example, the British Columbia government put the additional dollars allocated through their agreement, into the province's general revenue. The sector in Quebec had a similar experience where funds intended for

immigrant settlement were siphoned off into education and other areas. We do not want to see this repeated in Ontario.

We are strong in our belief that Ontario will not repeat these mistakes, and that the agreement will provide us with a mechanism to build a shared vision of settlement based on the principles of equity and social justice.

OCASI's vision for the future of settlement in Ontario was outlined in a position paper that we released prior to the signing of the agreement. We were pleased to note that many of our priorities were included in the final document.

We had recognized the importance of clearly articulating the role of municipalities in decision-making, and in building a strong infrastructure that would support effective settlement. The Canada-Ontario Agreement does that and more. It is unique in that it is the first to provide for a memorandum of understanding between a province and a municipality in the context of settlement. In this case, the MOU is between Ontario and the City of Toronto, a municipality that welcomes the highest number of immigrants in Canada.

The Agreement specifically recognized the need to include provincial priorities in developing Canada's annual immigration plan, and the role of a broad range of stakeholders in helping to shape immigration and settlement policies in the province. It recognized the need to support the needs of Ontario's Francophone community, specifically naming minority official language training. This is consistent with OCASI's recent initiatives to develop appropriate responses to the settlement needs of Ontario's growing Francophone immigrant and refugee communities.

The agreement will provide OCASI with the means to continue our advocacy on the need to also adequately resource the education needs of immigrant children and adults through the appropriate budget allocations in Education. It will provide us with the means to call for affordable housing, social services, healthcare and affordable childcare through increased investment in the appropriate Ministries. It will give us opportunity to share our expertise and knowledge with a broad range of stakeholders to make all services appropriate and responsive to immigrants and refugees, regardless of jurisdiction.

The immigrant and refugee-serving sector is more than a service provider or a third-party sub-contractor for government services. We intend to continue our efforts in asserting our legitimate role as an advocate for immigrants, refugees and newcomer communities beyond settlement alone. This new agreement is can n one of many elements that can contribute to shaping an immigration policy framed by the values of inclusion, equity and anti-oppression.

Tam Goossen
Spokesperson,
Social Planning
Network of Ontario
President,
CSPC-T

Adult ESL Programs – LINC and Provincially Funded Programs

This is indeed an important opportunity for immigrants now that the Federal Provincial Immigration agreement will be honored by the new federal Conservative government. All of us in the community welcome an infusion of \$920M over 5 years of federal funding to help settle immigrant families in Ontario. In fact, it's been long overdue.

My remarks today will focus on the Provincially funded adult ESL programs.

Despite the fact that they are funded inadequately (no money for facilities that house the classes) compared to federal LINC programs, Ontario's Adult ESL programs are both useful and popular with many learners. Their admission criteria are flexible and give learning opportunities to many that are shut out of LINC classes, such as naturalized citizens and refugee claimants. Classes tend to be more school-based. In some cases learners will actually be in the same school as their children, encouraging them to be actively involved in the life of their children's school as they improve their English skills. Adult ESL strengthens the link between home and school that is so critical in children's academic achievement.

On the other hand, unlike LINC programs, provincially-funded ESL has no funding for child-minding or transportation subsidies. This makes it difficult for many learners to access language instruction.

One of the key questions is, now that the Agreement provides a significant increase in funding for LINC that should result in much-needed expansion of services, what will be the future of provincially funded Adult ESL and how will we meet the language learning needs of people who are only eligible for these provincial programs?

I hope today's forum will shed light on this and other questions.

To help frame this discussion, I'd like to make reference to the report "Ontario Learns: Strengthening Our Adult Education System" that came out last year under the direction of MPP Kathleen Wynne. Although it's aimed at the broader adult education field, many of the recommendations apply to adult ESL

programs.

First, it defines goals: “Adult ESL programs” should enable learners to acquire the skills and knowledge to participate fully in the economic and social life of their community. “Adult ESL programs” should empower learners to successfully perform their roles in the workplace, in the family and as citizens and community members. Inevitably, preparation for the workplace is stressed when society as a whole looks at the need for ESL. But successful integration into Canadian life involves much more than career success, and learners need a well-rounded language program that helps them deal with other facets of Canadian life, including schools, health issues, the law, social relations, racism, multiculturalism and civic and political participation.

Secondly, the report recommends that provincially and federally funded language learning programs be integrated and delivery be better coordinated. At the moment, Adult ESL and LINC programs operate side-by-side, not hand in hand. Sometimes they appear to be in competition with each other. The right hand doesn’t just need to know what the left is doing. Both hands have to work together to help learners succeed.

Thirdly, we all want to see the system benefiting the learners, which means accountability and better tracking measures. Perhaps for most, we need to know if they are moving on to work or further education. But these are not the only purposes of the program, and some students, such as homemakers and seniors, have other goals in learning English, which improve their lives and strengthen our community. For example, one Adult ESL student who has been retired for many years uses the English he learns to interpret for other seniors on doctor’s visits. He also volunteers in an income-tax clinic for low-income people. So the “Ontario Learns” report recommends that accountability in Adult Education include economic, social and personal development measures.

Students don’t all have the same needs, so a “one-size-fits-all” program won’t work. Effective, well-coordinated and flexible language learning for adults is crucial if immigrants are to achieve their potential in Ontario.

Annie Kidder
Executive Director,
People for
Education

The full text of the speech delivered by Annie Kidder was not available for this publication. The following is a short summary of some of the highlights made during the presentation (taken from notes made during the presentation by a member of the Planning Committee).

State of ESL in Schools

- There is a shortage of ESL teachers.
- In 5 years, the number of schools with ESL students but no ESL teacher has doubled.
- There is no recognition of *how* we should be supporting ESL.
- We have done badly keeping up with demographic changes.
- All organizations need to “interfere” - we need to cross boundaries so that community organizations, settlement organizations etc., are talking about what's happening in schools, and education organizations need to learn to work more effectively with groups who work with newcomer parents and students.

Parent Inclusion Project

- New People for Education project funded for three years by the Ontario Trillium Foundation - working on removing the many barriers parents experience when it comes to their children and schools.
- Working to develop strategies to do better at including so-called "marginalized" parents.
- Planning to work with organizations who work with newcomers, low income parents, aboriginal parents, parents of students with special needs to improve the system for students and parents.
- Developing mult-lingual tip sheets for parents.
- Planning to work with principals' councils, teachers' federations and ministry of education.

Plea

- Continue communicating together.
- Need to talk to each other to find areas of intersection.
- Need to cross boundaries, interfere with what each other is doing.
- Talk loudly about what is happening in the schools.

**OPSBA Position Paper on Second Language Learning
How It Relates to the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement**

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association in issuing its position paper on Second Language Learning argues for the needs of immigrant and Canadian-born English Language Learners (ELL) in Ontario's schools. Some arguments focus on language acquisition and academic supports which are a provincial responsibility in terms of education funding and curriculum policy. Other arguments focus on the fact that there are many non-academic supports required to support the unique needs of newcomers throughout their acculturation process that should be considered as settlement issues. These supports, such as school-based settlement and parent engagement programs, are best funded through the settlement sector.

Fully half of the quarter million people who immigrate to Canada each year come to Ontario. They choose Canada because of its international reputation as a 'land of opportunity'; rich in its diversity with public access to a quality education for their children. The Greater Toronto Area including Peel and York Region continues to receive and settle the majority of Newcomers. Increasing settlement patterns of Newcomer families are also being identified in Ontario communities such as Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Ottawa and Windsor. With recent federal commitments to increase immigration over the next four years, Ontario can expect to welcome many Newcomers to its communities, workplaces, and schools. Immigration is hugely important in Canada's efforts to sustain and improve its cultural and economic prosperity and our priorities today need to reflect this.

For school districts across Ontario, the challenge and opportunity to make the reception and orientation of Newcomers into our schools and learning communities seamless is critical to ensure the learner's overall engagement and academic achievement. Currently, some school districts have Reception Centres with trained staff to initially assess the English language proficiency of Newcomers and make recommendations to schools about class placements and appropriate program supports/interventions; we have increasing numbers of teachers who have Additional Qualifications in English as a Second Language (ESL); we have programs and resources to support children as they acquire both the social (everyday) and academic language required to actively participate and thrive in school. What we don't have is *enough* of all these supports. And we don't have them for as long as the children require them! Continued efforts to lobby the provincial

government and Ministry of Education are underway to support the needs of our English Language Learners (ELL).

It's an unfortunate fact that the people and resources we could dedicate to the needs of immigrant children were proportionately more plentiful ten years ago. The cuts to education funding in the 1990's took a heavy toll on these services and it is only in the last couple of years that this is beginning to turn around. We're concerned that the turn-around is not on a scale or at a pace that matches even the current need. We're concerned that the shortfalls in other education funding lines have forced some school boards to draw from discretionary areas of funding, especially when that area is English as a Second Language. We want to see changes in funding that make this unnecessary. We want to see school boards able to balance their budgets and still spend every single ESL dollar on services for immigrant children and Canadian-born English Language Learners (ELL).

OPSBA's position paper is clear on this aspect of provincial education funding. We're calling for funding that recognizes how long it really takes for a child to get to the level of proficiency in English or French that allows them to be successful in school. In two years or less a child can have a level of fluency that allows him/her to easily carry on a conversation. But it takes from five to seven years to master the nuances of the English language including the language of instruction upon which many of our resources and provincial standardized assessments are based. The current funding model in the province recently increased from three to four years of support but it is dependent upon the student's country of birth, not English or French language proficiency. The funding formula is based upon a weighted four-year scale: 1.0 in the first year, 0.75 in the second year, 0.5 in the third year and 0.25 in the fourth year. The total amount for the four years is not to exceed the per student cap of approximately \$8,000. Other funding options for our Canadian-born ESL learners are based upon the Census data which is often dated and provides significantly less funds to school districts. We want to see more invested by the province and the Ministry of Education over a more realistic timeframe to make sure that immigrant and Canadian-born English Language Learners have every chance to succeed in school.

On a broader societal level, OPSBA welcomes the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement that was signed last November. It has the potential to clarify responsibilities and build bridges as we make the connection between immigration, settlement services, the school system and the academic achievement of immigrant children. Historically, the federal government has set immigration levels. Historically, services have focused mainly on adults and the world of work. There has been little recognition that thousands of newcomer children enter the school system every year and limited recognition of our Canadian-born English Language Learners. There has been little recognition that the academic success of these children depends heavily on (a) how well their parents understand the school system and become engaged with the school and their children's education, and (b) how well schools are positioned to understand the specific needs of newcomer students and their families. Newcomer families and schools need support to help them communicate with one another, and adjust to each other's needs. The

involvement of community-based agencies facilitates that process.

Schools rely heavily on the known community based supports that are available to them. Equitable access to information including supports and services is vital to newcomer families and their children. For these reasons, resources such as Settlement Workers, Community Based Newcomer organizations and translators support schools in communicating with both parents and students about the ‘culture of schools’, provide materials that are critical to supporting the orientation and settlement within the schools, offer professional development opportunities for the school board staff and make connections with other community agencies around such issues as health and wellness, legal aid etc. Both school districts and individual schools need to forge ahead with increased community based partnerships to provide greater opportunities for the families and students we serve.

When the federal government and Ontario signed the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement last November, its provisions called for consultation and involvement of municipalities. We see in this the potential for organizations that work with children and families - and that includes community-based agencies and school boards - to have a role in defining the supports and services that will help families settle in their new communities.

Using schools as a way to facilitate the link to settlement services helps the families, helps the schools and fosters student achievement. As Newcomers continue to settle in towns and cities across the province, it is vital that there is equitable access to community-based resources. Regions such as Hamilton, Simcoe, York, Quinte, Kingston, Rideau, Waterloo, South Western Ontario (London/Windsor) are but some that have self- identified the need to participate in training programs such as ‘Building Bridges’ as their populations become more diverse.

When Canada promotes immigration, a huge part of the deal we are promising newcomers to this country is a better life. We have to live up to that promise. That means making sure that immigrant children have a solid start in their new life in Canada. That means putting more resources into the kinds of community-based settlement services that build positive links between newcomer families and the school system. Yes, the provinces are responsible for education but the federal government, through an Agreement such as this, can demonstrate equal responsibility for creating the level playing field that will allow immigrant children and youth to take full advantage of that education and, as a result, become full participants in Canadian society.

This Accord offers a great opportunity to respond effectively to the needs and aspirations of newcomer families. It offers a great opportunity for true partnership at all levels of government – federal, provincial, municipal, community. Those of us who work with school-aged children have considerable insight and expertise to contribute to the development and expansion of the kind of quality community-based settlement services that translate into children’s success in school and in society. We want to join with all of you today in playing our part.

Ruth Baumann
Secretary-Treasurer
OTF

Many different organizations and institutions work with newcomers to Canada. These include settlement agencies, schools, and other community organizations. Each sees the issues from its own perspective – and this has become worse because of funding cuts over the past ten years.

My own view of the issues facing newcomers, whether children and youth or adults, has been influenced by three things:

- The needs of newcomer children and youth in our schools;
- My experience with Teach in Ontario, a bridging program for internationally trained teachers in Toronto, Ottawa and now Windsor; and
- My experience working with the Canadian Teachers' Federation and the Canadian School Boards' Association in lobbying for recognition of the needs of children and families as part of the immigration puzzle.

Settlement agencies and many agencies serving immigrants focus primarily on the adults in the newcomer household and their needs for language, housing, and employment. Schools and agencies serving children and youth focus on the language, education and social integration needs of the children of newcomers. Schools often have a limited awareness of other community-based support for children, and less awareness of support that may be there for their families. Neither settlement agencies nor schools are always conscious of the connection between the needs of children and youth and the needs of their parents and families.

There are some significant differences between schools and government agencies and community based not-for-profit organizations:

- Schools and government agencies generally have some stable core funding, even if often seems insufficient;
- Many community agencies, including settlement agencies and other agencies providing service to immigrants are dependent on project-specific funding and fund-raising.

Through our experience with Teach in Ontario, the Ontario Teachers' Federation has learned much about community partners and their work.

I am convinced that we need to build of vision of support for the needs of newcomers that is inclusive of children and adults, where support and services are delivered by a variety of organizations

including settlement agencies, community organizations and schools.

We need to know what the possibilities are within the federal-provincial agreements, and how to influence outcomes.

The challenge will be to work together to articulate both needs and solutions and to be persistent in pursuing the solutions. We must find the will to interfere. It is easy to admire the problems and expect others to fix them. It is much harder work to find viable solutions.

If schools, agencies serving immigrants and other community organizations can see the work of supporting newcomers as a whole that includes both adults and children and has many delivery points, we can collaborate to create a political and social environment that values newcomers and understands the benefits to society of supporting newcomers to become fully participating citizens.

Discussion Groups

Seven discussion groups were held in the afternoon session of the Forum. These groups were heterogeneous in nature, representing a range of sectors, in order to provide a variety of perspectives to the discussion. In each group a facilitator encouraged discussion among participants with a purpose to share and collect idea, which would be subsequently reported at the Plenary Session.

Facilitating the discussion groups were: Kathryn Blackett (People for Education), Ruth Baumann (OTF), Susan Cook (OPSBA), Christine Davis (CSPC-T), Anita Dhawan (ETT), Graham Hollings (Campaign for Stable Funding of Adult ESL Classes) and Cyndie Jacobs (OTF).

Each group identified two volunteer participants whose responsibility was to record the discussion of the group on flip charts and report back to the Plenary Session.

Discussion Questions

The focus of the discussion in each group was centred on the following five questions:

1. What are the settlement and learning needs of newcomers that must be addressed?
2. Which needs will potentially be addressed by the Agreement?
3. Which needs will potentially not be addressed by the Agreement?
4. How can the consultation about the Agreement be conducted to include all stakeholders so that all voices can be heard?
5. How can we all work together?

Plenary Session

The purpose of the Plenary Session was to report back from the small group discussions and to identify next steps. The Plenary Session was facilitated by **Martin Long**, Executive Member, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and President, Elementary Teachers of Toronto and **Karen Brown**, Executive Liaison, Elementary Teachers of Toronto.

Summary of Reports from Discussion Groups

The ideas and concerns generated through the discussions are grouped by area of focus and are set out below.

1. The settlement and learning needs of newcomers that must be addressed

General Comments

What is a “Newcomer”? There are at least 3 definitions: Newcomers who have recently arrived; Immigrants who are still in the first 1-3 year period and have significant settlement needs; Immigrants who have been in Canada more than 3 years, in many cases as long as 10 years and who, because of a range of circumstances, are still marginalized and still need many settlement services. These various and differentiated needs have to be acknowledged.

The settlement and learning needs of newcomers touch on every aspect of life and include access to services and supports that facilitate daily living: religion, health, medical, school, groceries, cultural support, transportation, foreign credential assessment, language acquisition. The goal should be one of seamless service where “one-stop” service hubs are established as a result of cross-sectoral planning. This is not to be confused with adopting a “cookie cutter” approach. There needs to be flexibility to respond specifically to the diversity of newcomers, including the specific needs of youth, family and seniors.

Immigration Process

- Establish a Pre-application process both here & in other countries.

-
- Accelerate the process involved in deciding or clarifying a person's status. The delays have a significant impact on ability to settle and the services needed.
 - The Issue of family reunification needs to be addressed. We need to break down the resistance, for example, to permitting immigrants to bring their parents to Canada. We need to stop seeing this as a "burden" on the economy and take into consideration that the children of these elderly parents came to Canada, fully schooled and trained, thus relieving Canada of the costs of their education.
 - It is essential to have communication before immigrating so that potential newcomers will have realistic expectations and knowledge of obstacles they have to overcome. We are good at selling Canada but often fail to deliver. There is a "disconnect" between the offered vision of Canada and the reality of the immigrant experience. Providing good information to people before they immigrate is key to the preparation process.
 - Non-documented immigrants and migrant workers are falling through cracks.

Information about and Access to Services

- There needs to be strong improvements in the range and depths of information provided about well basic settlement issues.
- Part of what should be offered is helping newcomers to become effective advocates for their own needs.
- There must be recognition that settlement goes beyond language acquisition: employment opportunities are limited and inadequate; access to programs is limited or non-existent. These need to be coordinated and seamless – people need to have choices.
- Availability of services do not match demographic shifts, i.e., downtown Toronto may have well-established services but the newcomer population is migrating to the suburbs and to other towns and cities in the province where service structures are not so fully developed. We need a more "real time" response to this issue.
- We need to develop more diverse and creative ways of getting out information about programs for newcomers so that there is equitable access to programs for all newcomer groups not just those that are well organized and well connected. Invest in communication – how can we afford not to?
- We need more agencies that deliver service rather than make referrals. Many immigrants face the frustration of being shuttled from one agency to another without actually receiving any substantive help.
- We need to create forums for a "voice" of our communities so that their experiences and needs can be heard.
- We need a separate body to assess both the needs of newcomers and how these needs are being met by existing services.
- Newcomers need many opportunities to become familiar with Canadian ways, e.g. internationally trained teachers getting volunteer opportunities in schools. The need for opportunity to experience Canadian ways of life through inclusion in a range of activities applies equally to children and youth.

-
- We need systematic alignment of resources/materials regardless of political boundaries or “turf”.

Services to Families

- Housing is a critical issue and newcomers need services that address access to affordable housing options.
- Support for access to places of worship is important to many immigrants
- Information about emergency services and health services should be provided early.
- Providing understanding of laws, regulatory bodies and general legal information is a key settlement need.

The School System

- Newcomer families need information about how the education system works and how to get involved. Resources for newcomer families such as the outreach provided by Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) are critical. More school-settlement workers outside the GTA are needed.
- School staff need more information and awareness about the communities served by the school.
- Restrictions on the range of responsibilities and activities that can be taken on by Settlement Workers represent a disservice to communities. Settlement and integration are not sequential steps – an integrated approach is essential – a new way of doing things.
- ESL delivery in Primary/Secondary Education is funded for only 4 years for newcomer students. Funding does not provide full-time programs. Capacity of school boards to expend ESL funding is compromised by general underfunding – there are fewer ESL teachers now than existed several years ago.
- All teacher candidates should have ESL & ELD training incorporated into the teacher education program.
- There should be defined and transparent standards for delivery of ESL with funding to support them.

Language Training

- Childcare services need to be provided for families where the adults are engaged in language programs or training.
- Adult ESL programs have to be funded to address transportation and other access issues.
- Adult ESL programs require additional funding to cover “real” costs.
- LINC programs should offer higher levels – up to “8”.
- More support needed for Labour Market Language Training (L.M.L.T.) and Enhanced Language Training (E.L.T.).

-
- There is a need for increased access to language training (ESL classes) in the workplace.
 - Under current structures, language learning needs are time limited and not sufficiently flexible to accommodate the varying times it can take individuals to acquire proficiency in English. The funding since it is based on the time-limited model doesn't adequately address the language learning needs. Language support should be based on need not an artificial timeframe.
 - Lumping together adults in language learning, without considering individual proficiencies is not helpful. It is not unusual to have language learning classes that include both individuals who have no experience with schooling at all and individuals who have post-secondary qualifications and professional designations. This is not helpful to either group.

Employment

- There should be greater coordination of Ontario labour market needs and skills/training offered, especially with regard to skilled trades.
- We need incentive programs to train for skilled trades and access to integrated services (language training combined with job training, etc.).
- Fair and equitable means of evaluating foreign work experience is critical.
- Newcomers need accurate information about the aspects of their skills that need to be upgraded to qualify them to work in their trade/profession in Ontario.
- Employers are a critical part of the equation. They need to be fully involved in measures and services that link newcomers to the labour market.
- We need to get at the reasons why employers are not employing newcomers even for entry level jobs and find ways to address those issues. This kind of consultation should also seek out the perspective of immigrant job seekers.
- There should be work done on an acceptable level of language for work purposes – Human Resources and Skills Development Canada considers language proficiency at Canadian Language Benchmarks Level 3 sufficient for a person to be considered “job ready.” It is important to address this issue with employers and increase employer awareness around job-ready language proficiency.
- Newcomers who have credentials and even schooling in Canada are still not being employed. Employers need to be encouraged, through programs that offer wage subsidies, job shadowing and mentorships.
- The primary, number one, settlement focus of newcomers is on employment and economic survival when they first arrive in Canada. The energy and time that goes into meeting this priority can result in delays in getting involved in language learning. These delays may mean, in many cases that the newcomer has gone beyond the eligibility period for free language training by the time they can focus on this aspect of settlement. This is another argument for not having language training so time-limited.
- A barrier for newcomers is that of employers insisting on Canadian work experience – we need to increase and add value to the opportunities available

-
- through volunteering and include the employer community in the development of these opportunities.
- We need systems to assess language competencies for specific professions and mechanisms for credential evaluations.
 - We need more information about the federal agency that is going to be set up to evaluate international skills.

Cross-cultural anti-racist training and practices

- Work needs to be done on an anti-oppression framework for use in a range of institutions/organizations.
- Hiring practices in schools and government departments need to be free of systemic barriers.
- Training programs dealing with racism (anti-black racism is particularly noted) and systemic discrimination need to be strengthened and made widely available.

Marginalized Groups

- The specific needs of Youth never seem to be addressed when designing settlement and integration services for newcomers. This has to change.
- There is a concern about options available to young people, e.g. the “streaming” of high school students which results in ESL & racialized students not being encouraged to take University-bound courses.
- It is critical to have timely and effective mechanisms for assessment of youth learning.
- There should be specific focus on under-served groups of immigrants, e.g., lack of services for French-speaking immigrants in Ontario including education options for their children.
- We need to deal with the issue of isolation – this is a barrier to settlement and integration. Many immigrant women spend all their time isolated in high-rise apartments with no opportunity to engage with their new country.
- There is an issue related to the entry into Canada of single men. Many begin in “homeless shelter” type situations such as Seton House. Positive alternatives have to be developed.
- Settlement services have to meet social as well as language needs, e.g. conversation circles for seniors and specific services for newcomers with disabilities.

Collaboration and Sustainability

- The agreement needs to address issues of stability in program delivery for newcomers to streamline funding processes and increase sustainability. This could include addressing such things as the problem of capital costs (rent) for agencies serving immigrants.

-
- Partnerships between sectors in the community and agencies serving immigrants are critical.
 - There is a high need for coordination and integration with other government ministries and community agencies to avoid fragmentation of programs.
 - We need to build solid infrastructure and administration processes for programs.

2. *Based on what we heard this morning, which needs will potentially be addressed by the Agreement?*

Immigration Process

- The decision at the federal level to cut back the landing fee is helpful.

Information about and Access to Services

- The agreement offers the capacity to provide better quality programs for newcomers.

Language Training

- Under the agreement, there will be more ESL dollars for existing programs.

Employment

- Settlement organizations are strengthened as the “launch pad” for good employment opportunities for newcomers.
- There are opportunities to boost occupational language bridges, e.g., in the trades and professions.
- There is enhanced potential to support and augment bridging programs.
- The agreement provides hope that Canadian Language Benchmarks will be used more widely in the employment sector.
- There is also hope for more job-shadowing programs.

The School System

- Settlement organizations can be supported in assisting with successful integration of students in schools.

Collaboration and Sustainability

- There is a chance for effective partnerships among public, private and not for profit organizations.
- The agreement can open up voices from non-conventional groups and give people in the community more provincial say in policy development.

-
- There is more “buy in” at all levels – municipal, provincial and federal governments. There is more opportunity for cross-sectoral communication and coordinated, integrated, strategic planning that involves community engagement.
 - The agreement provides opportunity (for planners) to get concrete information to enable the establishment of more effective plans.
 - The involvement of municipal level and communities will enhance service coordination.
 - The degree of coordination afforded by this agreement will enhance the credibility of the sector servicing newcomer needs.
 - A 5-year deal will lend some stability.

3. *Based on what we heard this morning, which needs will potentially not be addressed by the Agreement?*

Immigration Process

- There is a need to provide more strongly for support for newcomers even after they become citizens, e.g. expand period of eligibility for newcomer support to 5 years.
- There have to be changes to bring a more inclusive approach so that the settlement needs for those out of status can continue. Those who have recently become Canadian citizens or are landed immigrants or are refugees all need many of the same services.
- The current definition of “newcomer” is limited and needs to be reviewed.
- Many primary needs may be addressed in the agreement but the longer term needs of a “new” citizen can take years to resolve.

Information about and Access to Services

- Grass roots needs may be different in different locales and it is important that there are mechanisms for various voices to be heard and for the range of needs of particular newcomers to be met.
- There need to be mechanisms to ensure equity of access to settlement services. This requires effective public education about available services.
- Support should be provided to ensure that a broad range of services is available especially in smaller centers.
- Services should be structured to respond to the needs of groups of every status.

Services to Families

- There is a real concern that basic needs related to health, housing, and employment may not be seen as an integral part of the process that is defined as either “settlement” or “language”.

-
- Families need a holistic model or approach that eases their access to healthcare, pensions, social assistance, childminding, housing, OSAP (support for post-secondary education).
 - There is a need to address access to counselling for issues such as mental health, violence in the home.
 - Healthcare coverage for first 3 months that immigrants are in Canada is non-existent. This is a burden on new immigrants requiring health services since providers want to be paid up front. An example to consider is that of a woman who is eight months pregnant at the time of landing in Canada. She will not have had the choice to delay her arrival in Canada until after her baby is born and will have to face the costs of delivery shortly after arriving in Canada.

The School System

- Initiatives that recognize the value of maintenance of children's first language need to be incorporated.
- The agreement provides no support for strengthening of elementary and secondary ESL programs.
- Clarity is needed around the connection between programs and outcomes as is the case with Canadian Language Benchmarks for adults.
- There is a need for stronger and more comprehensive ESL and literacy support for adult students.

Language Training

- This is an opportunity for examination of language programs, their content and how they are delivered with a view to choosing the best of LINC and adult ESL programs.
- There should be integration of LINC and provincially funded adult ESL. This could result in access to ESL learning at higher levels than is available under LINC currently. We need to be careful about not bringing eligibility down to the LINC level (first 3 years in Canada).
- Eligibility for language learning should be based on need and not on the time-limited criteria currently applied to the LINC program.
- There should be consideration of the possibility of a training allowance for language acquisition as new immigrants settle into the workforce (as in the Quebec model).
- Teacher training should include components on ESL and cross-cultural awareness.

Employment

- Credential recognition and assessment requires a pan-Canadian approach.
- We should recognize and provide the opportunity for getting qualifications equivalency. Bridging programs to help immigrants work in their profession are

-
- very expensive – they can be \$10,000 or more – and definite support is needed there. There should be subsidies and/or loans to support individual choices/opportunities for upgrading.
- There is no consistency in the information provided from country to country on how credentials will be assessed and this needs to be coordinated.
 - We need to facilitate labour market access by stronger services to address the lack of employment opportunities and the training needed to ensure job readiness. The cost of this has always been a big issue.
 - Because programs need to be linked to real job opportunities – employers need to be partners in these services.
 - Some scope for job creation is required.

Cross-cultural anti-racist training and practices

- There is a need for cultural sensitivity training for educators including guidance teachers, social service workers and all those who provide service to newcomers.
- There is a need for initiatives to combat systemic & institutional racism.
- Hiring practices need to be improved to eliminate systemic barriers.

Marginalized Groups

- The needs of seniors are frequently ignored in the design of services for newcomers.
- Women who are isolated need to be able to access services that will promote language acquisition as well as participation in society and in the workforce
- Development of programs and services specifically for newcomer youth are urgently needed.

Sustainability

- There is a lack of clarity around who “owns” what across federal, provincial and municipal levels.
- There is a potential for duplication of services – need for caution.
- The way things are funded and how groups are held accountable does not lend itself to effective integrated outcomes.
- Responsibilities need to be sustained for government at all 3 levels. There should be recognition that the \$920m in this accord is based on negotiated agreements not needs.
- Although it is good to have an agreement that spans five years, a stronger position would be to have established ongoing core funding for settlement services at this level just like the department of defense.
- The pilot funding represented in this Accord needs to roll over to sustainable funding.

Employment in Settlement Services Sector

- This agreement should address a range of issues affecting the conditions of workers in the settlement services sector. These include wages, the need for professional development, career path issues and general working conditions.

4. *How can the consultation about the Agreement be conducted to include all stakeholders so that all voices can be heard?*

Developing/Advertising Consultation Process

- Look at existing effective models and best practices for ways to consult with diverse and hard-to-reach communities (one example named was Scarborough Civic Action Network).
- There should be a marketing/promotion (e.g., OMNI) campaign regarding the consultation itself and the benefits to stakeholders of participating. Ensure the Agreement is available on the Web. Provide TTC maps, brochures, and advertisements.
- Notify the general public including neighbourhood revitalization programs
- In advertising consultations, employ as wide a range of media, e.g. ethnic media, multi-language radio, TV and print media.

Engaging Participants

- Use a range of tools to reach the diversity of newcomer communities – there should be consultation sessions at various venues, at various times of day and employing various formats to suit the situation.
- Consultations should be held close to where immigrants live, work, and congregate. Useful locations to hold consultations include schools, libraries, immigration centres, wherever ESL is taught, shelters, mosques, temples, and churches.
- Hold some consultations/focus groups sessions that are exclusively directed at the gathering the input of youth.
- It is important to speak to front-line workers, social services workers and to recently arrived immigrants themselves. Having interpreters on hand is particularly essential.
- Include consultation sessions with employers and the small business community.
- Pre-education material should be available ahead of time to allow participants to prepare for consultation.
- Town hall style meetings can increase accessibility.
- Interactive Websites are also a useful medium to engage people who cannot attend fixed consultation events.

Holding Consultations

- Offer videoconferencing with language support (translation/interpretation).
- Organize focus groups in first languages of the participants.
- Community groups & organizations could be supported in discussing the issues and merging their input into mainstream consultations.
- Consultation sessions should incorporate flexible timing, a range of locations, childcare services, and incentives (monetary or otherwise) to participate. They should also incorporate formal and informal formats.
- The criteria for participation should be transparently inclusive.
- In addition to substantial consultation opportunities for newcomers, there should be consultation offered to workers/service providers in the following sectors: municipalities, community services, provincial federal, NGO's, school system, unions/professional groups.
- There should be an opportunity for refugees to provide input.
- Generate consultation/focus group questions at the ground level to ensure that the right questions are asked.
- Make sure that sufficient time overall is given to the consultation process (6 to 8 months is more realistic).
- Experts in mediation should be involved in the consultations.

Looking at Consultation Outcomes

- In the consultation process, the government should be upfront about what they are willing to change to minimize false expectations.
- RFP processes are rarely transparent and they need to be.
- People want all of their voices heard and represented in the report – this is important if we are to ensure that the report cannot be characterized as “the report the government wants written”.
- The report should include a set of transparent objectives so that all sectors can see if, where, and how they fit in.

5. *How can we all work together?*

Defining “Us”

- Clarify our focus – start with clients needs so that we are immigrant not sector focused and are clear on the outcomes that immigrants want to see. We can then work together from that base.
- Work with common language and set of understandings that serve the objectives of newcomers. Ensure common goals, common purpose and mutual respect for each other's role.

-
- Re-evaluate our terminology with regard to refugee, immigrant – maybe we need new definitions and ideas.

Structure

- Develop a steering committee/a council of leaders.
- Decide who assumes a lead/facilitator role.
- Break down barriers so that representatives of different sectors can work collaboratively.
- Foster alliances/relationships through events/meetings/conferences.
- Clarify roles – who is responsible for what in various sectors: federal, provincial, municipal, immigration, education, grass roots groups. All levels must be committed to mutually supportive program development.
- Find ways to remove the “fear of duplication”.
- Identify areas of mutual support, e.g. integration of LINC and adult ESL. Schools and Settlement Workers. Include other settlement based organizations, e.g., TRIEC (Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council).
- Share expertise among non-status community groups, e.g., how to do a business plan, get a loan.

Communication/Information-sharing

- There should be a good, accessible information sharing process/communications hub, e.g. website, to ensure that all stakeholders can work in collaboration rather than competition. - conferences like today (but who can come to these conferences?). Include a mailing list of participants’ websites and areas of interest/activity. Include a database of services available across government sector boundaries.

Final Comments

Participants noted that there seems to be “an intense need for governments to gather huge amounts of information and do very little with it”. There was strong support for ensuring this does not happen in this critical area of meeting the needs of newcomers:

“The actions implemented should deal with the existing systemic problems and address future immigration needs so that in 2012 we are not back here in the same place.”

**Closing
Remarks**

Martin Long
ETFO
ETT

On behalf of the Sponsoring Organizations, I would like to thank all the Forum participants for their contribution in making this a productive and successful event. This day was not a beginning, nor is it an end, but a step in the process of working together to ensure the provision of the best possible settlement and educational services to newcomers in Ontario.

Throughout the day, during the panel as well as during the group discussions, there was evidence of many different experiences and perspectives, providing all of us with an opportunity to hear, share and understand each other's point of view.

In reference to a seamless delivery of services, we recognize that there is a major seam – one that separates the education side and the settlement side. It is important that we look across and close this divide.

As an education spokesperson, I am sensitive to what we have heard from the settlement sector and want to state clearly that we are not looking to fund our issues from settlement funds. As you know, the education sector is engaged in its own struggle for appropriate funding for educational programs for newcomer children and youth. Our recent survey shows that our ESL programs are receiving only approximately one half of the funds allocated for that purpose.

In closing, I would like to stress the value of the dialogue that occurred today among the participants from such a wide range of sectors, including all three levels of government and also express the hope that we will continue to learn about each other's areas and continue this dialogue in the future for the benefit of all of our newcomer families in Ontario.

Next Steps

Plans were made to hold a follow-up open meeting for participants to review the material that came out of the group discussions and explore ways in which we can move forward in working together to enhance the settlement and educational needs of newcomer families in Ontario. This meeting is to be held as follows:

Date:	Tuesday May 2, 2006
Time:	9:30 AM – 12:00 noon
Place:	Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) 480 University Ave., 12th Floor Corner of University Ave. & Dundas St. St. Patrick Subway Station

Appendix A: Forum Participants

Name	Title	Organization
Liban Abdi	ISAP Manager	Settlement & Integration Services Organization
Ibrahim Absiye	Executive Director	Midaynta Community Services
Naomi Alboim	Fellow	Queen's University, School of Policy Studies
Abla Ali	Executive Assistant	Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services
Khalid Ali	Director of Business Solution	SkillRoute Canada
Joan Andrew	Deputy Minister	Ontario Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration
Seymore Applebaum	President	Cross Cultural Connections
Irene Bader	Director General, Ontario Region	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Pedro Barata	Outreach & Communications Coordinator	The Atkinson Charitable Foundation
Luz Bascunan		CCAS Toronto
Rebecca Bassej	Community Health Officer	Toronto Public Health
Norm Beach	Adult ESL Instructor	TDSB
James Bejar		Ryerson University
Cassie Bell		Inter City Advisory Committee
Elaine Belore	Coordinator, Immigrant and Refugee Services Program	St. Christopher House
Ina Berard	Special Assignment Teacher	Newcomer Reception Centre (Mason Centre)
Rakesh Bhardwaj	HOST Program	Culturelink
Judith Bishop	Trustee Wards 1 & 2	Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
Kathryn Blackett		People for Education
Lesa Bogle		Parkdale Community Information Centre
Virginia Boruvka		Hincks Dellerest Centre
Paul Bosgon		Abrigo Centre
Karen Brown		Elementary Teachers of Toronto
Jim Buchan	Vice President	SkillRoute Canada
Terry Burrell		
John Campey	Executive Director	Community Social Planning Council of Toronto
Marcelo Castro	Community Development & Health Promotion Coordinator	Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Centre
Robert Cazzola		COSTI Rehabilitation and Training Centre
Patrick Chartrand	Labour Market Coordinator	City of Toronto
Sandra Clandfield	Program Officer, Adult ESL	Toronto District School Board
Nel Coloma-Moya	Rep Filipino Nurses's Association of Ontario	PROMPT
Susan Cook	Policy/Communications Associate	OPSBA
Bill Crothers	Chair	York Region District School Board
Tony Da Silva	Director	Centre for Education and Training
Christine Davis	Staff	CSPC-T
Fal Desai	Placement Student	CSPC-T
Josie Di Zio		COSTI
Miriam DiGiuseppe	Member, Board of Directors	Family Services Association of Toronto, CSPC-T
Souhaila Dihaini	SWISH Manager	Settlement & Integration Services Organization
Peter Dorfman	Provincial Coordinator	SWIS
Yasmine Dossal	Director, Social Services	COSTI - Immigrant Services
Jinjiang Du	Site Manager	TDSB Continuing Education
Judy Du		CPWC
Greg Edwards	Program Officer	Toronto District School Board
Beth Ellis		PDSB
Dmitry Elyashevich	Manager of Language Training and Newcomer Services	St. Stephen's Community House
Karen Evans	Program Officer, Adult ESL	Toronto District School Board
Maureen Fair	Director of Community Response and Advocacy	St. Christopher House

Azar M. Farahani	Community Housing Worker	Shelter, Housing & Administration
Beth Feffer	Manager JF&CS	York Region Branch
Rose Boaba Folson		University of Toronto
Tim Frakes	Senior Program Analyst	Community Services and Housing
Michael Fung	Reporter/News Anchor	Fairchild Television
Sherrill Game		Community Social Planning Council - Toronto
Gerri Gershon	President	Canadian School Boards Association
Deka Gilao	Newcomer Elderly Support Program Worker	CANES Home Support Services
Nathan Gilbert		Laidlaw Foundation
Angela Girardo	General Manager	COSTI Immigrant Services
Usha George	Director	CERIS
	Associate Dean	Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto
Victor Gomez	Co-Artistic Director	Refu-Yes Collective
Tam Goossen	President	CSPC-T
Michelle Gordon	Program Administrator	Internationally Educated Professionals
Florence Gruer	Settlement Counsellor	The Salvation Army
Grant Guo		OMNI TV
Sam Hammond		Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
Sherri Hanley	Corporate Management & Policy Consultant	City Manager's Office
Shelley Harding-Smith		Greater Essex County District School Board
Kadhim Hasan	General Manager, Employment Initiatives	YMCA of London
Graham Hollings	Co-Chair	Campaign for Stable Funding of Adult ESL Classes
Sheryl Hoshizaki		York Regional District School Board
Claire Huang-Kingsley		Parkdale Community Information Centre
Mary Catherine Hudakoc	Community & Labour Market Manager	North York Central Social Services
Najma Iqbal	Community & Labour Market Manager	Toronto Social Services, Etobicoke South Office
Cyndie Jacobs		Ontario Teachers' Federation
Maria Jiniernes		Scott Mission
Alketa Kalaja	Youthink Coordinator	Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work
Elizabeth Kaminsky	Student	
Georgia Kapelos	President	TKC Group
Judith Kaufman	Community and Labour Market Manager	York Humber Social Services
J. Liam Kelly		CultureLink Settlement Services
Annie Kidder		People for Education
Lisa King	Community Health Officer	Toronto Public Health
Kelly Kipfer	LINC Program Coordinator	Catholic Cross Cultural Services
Jasminka Klacar	SEPWR Program Coordinator	Kitchener-Waterloo YMCA
David Kraft		Strategic Communications
Gopi Krishna	Staff	SCPI
Liliane Kvarv	Director of Employment & Settlement Services	Centre Francophone de Toronto
Anna Kwan	District Manager	Toronto Public Library
Noeline Laccetti	Literacy Consultant, Secondary Program	Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB
Nathan Lachowsky	President	Ontario Student Trustees Association of Ontario
Maureen Lalla-Khan	Policy Director	Ontario Federal Council
Stephen Lam	Director, Immigrant Services and Community Programs	Catholic Community Services of York Region
Ron Lavoie	LINC Manager	Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization
Winnie Lee		Ralph Thornton Centre
Rose Lee	Coordinator, Diversity Management	City of Toronto
Martin Long	President	Elementary Teachers of Toronto
	Executive Member	Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
Andre Lyn	Researcher	CSPC-T

Jill Maar		York Regional District School Board
Alidad Mafinezam		University of Toronto
Jack Maga	President	Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education
Cathy Mallove		People for Education
Paula Markus	District-Wide Coordinator, ESL/ELD	Toronto District School Board
Amira Masud	Coordinator, enhanced Language Training	Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services
Julie Mathien	Policy Development Officer	City of Toronto
Jacquie Maund	Coordinator Social Reform/Ontario Campaign 2000	Family Services Association of Toronto
Terry McDermott		Abrigo Centre
Jennifer McKenzie	Vice President	Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization
Sharon McMillan	Co-ordinator, Communications & Media Relations	Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
Nancy Meehan	1st VP	Hamilton-Wentworth Occasional Teacher Local
Dawn Michael	Co-Director	The Canadian Co-operative for Language & Cultural Studies Inc.
Dan Moulton	English Public President	Ontario Student Trustees Association of Ontario
Wangari Muriuki	Director	Jiamini Community Consultants
Peter Murphy		
Colette Murphy	Program Manager	George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation
Abou Nabe	Program Officer	Department of Canadian Heritage (Ontario Region)
Peggy Nash	Member of Parliament Parkdale/High Park NDP Toronto Critic	Government of Canada
Zheni Nasi	Project Development Coordinator	Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council - TRIEC
Huma Nauman	S.E.P.T. Coordinator	Catholic Cross Cultural Services
Cathy Nevins	Superintendent of Instruction	Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
Diane Newman		OECTA
Susan Nielsen	Executive Director	Toronto Adult Student Association
Elga Nikolova	Planning & Evaluation Consultant	Freelance Consultant
Emily Noble	President	Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario
Tamara Novik	Manager, Employment Services	JVS Toronto
Grainne O'Donnell	Program Manager, Continuing Education	Toronto District School Board
Miranda Oliver	Project Co-ordinator	Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre
Shan Palanisamy	President	SkillRoute Canada
Glenn Pand		MTML
Amanda Parr	Research and Policy Coordinator	Ontario Federal Council
Sonal Patel	Deputy Executive Director	Toronto Chinese Community Social Services Association
Abdul Hai Patel	Director	Ansaar Foundation
Lyle Pearson	Education Officer	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch
Anton Philip	Settlement Worker	Tamil Eelam Society
Terri Preston		CUPE 4400
Rashed Rahman		
Roland Rhooms	Manager, Program & Services	Skills for Change
Pamela Richardson		The Learning Enrichment Foundation
Ted Richmond	Coordinator, Children's Agenda Program	The Laidlaw Foundation
Erica Rimkus	Director	York Region District School Board
Carol Ringwood	Manager, Community & Labour Market	East Toronto Social Services
Nury Rugeles	Program Coordinator	Delta Family Resource Centre
Joanna Anneke	Chair, Governance Board	CERIS
Rummens	Assistant Professor	University of Toronto
Niranjala S.		Parkdale Community Information Centre
Maysa Salem	School Settlement Worker	Catholic Cross-Cultural Services
Jafar Selim		Canadian Business College
Rocky Serkowney	Program Officer	Department of Canadian Heritage

Eileen Shannon	Program Director	St. Stephen's Community House
Eileen Sharron		St. Stephen's Community House
Laura Sheehan	Project Manager	Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario
Linda Sheppard		
Elena Shkrab	SEPT Coordinator JF & CS	CICSWIS
Anne Sidnell	ESL/ELD Facilitator	Durham District School Board
Kathy Simo	Program Officer	Toronto District School Board
Kristen Somers	Community Development Coordinator	Parkdale Community Information Centre
Jeff Sprang	Director of Communications	Ontario Public School Boards' Association
Anita Srinivasan	Manager	The Maytree Foundation
Susan Stone	Toronto Outreach Coordinator	Community Info. Centre-Possibilities Project
Jacqui Strachan		People for Education
Toni Sutherland	LINC Instructor/Coordinator	Hincks Dellcrest Centre
Brooke Sykes		
Shawna Teper	Placement Student	Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Centre
Aurelia Thomas	Facilitator	Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Centre
Sharon Thorpe		
Bill Torrens	ESL/NSL/Equity Consultant	H.W.D.S.B.
Denise Uba		People for Education
Miron Uddin	TDSB Adult ESL Student	
Ron Van Horne	C.A.O.	The County of Lambton
Jenny Vane		Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
Grace Varrecchia	Community and Labour Market Manager	North York East Social Services
Riet Verheggen	A/Director, Citizenship Development Branch	Citizenship and Immigration Division, Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration
Hema Vyas	Project Manager	ACTEW
Kathi Wallace	Superintendent of Education	Simcoe County District School Board
Cathi Wallace	Coordinator	LAMP ASK! Community Information Centre
Judith S. Whitfield	Central Co-ordinating Principal	Toronto District School Board
Maria Williams		The First Communities Media Project
Mary Williamson	Executive Director	London Cross Cultural Learner Centre
Paul Wilson		Elementary Teachers' Federation of Toronto
Denise Wilson	Senior Research Officer	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Helen Wong	Project Director	Internationally Educated Professionals, Ryerson U
Shinobu Yajima		Halton Multicultural Council
Deanna Yerichuk	Project Coordinator	ACTEW - A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women
Cynthia Yu	President, Chief Editor	Chinese Professional Women of Canada
Kelly Yuen	Service Specialist	Toronto Public Library
Ted Zatylny	Project Leader	New Resident Attraction and Retention
Nancy Zavarise	ESL./LINC Program Supervisor	Community and Continuing Education
Marilyn Ziedenberg	Regional Program Advisor, Settlement & Intergovernmental Affairs Directorate	Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Appendix B: Forum Agenda

**What About
The Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement?
*A one-day forum for key stakeholders***

**TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2006
Metro Central YMCA Auditorium
20 Grosvenor Street, 2nd Floor**

AGENDA

8:30 AM *Registration, Refreshments*

9:30 AM *Opening Session*

Call to Order

John Campey

Executive Director, Community Social Planning Council of Toronto

Introduction of Speakers

Emily Noble

Vice-President, Canadian Teachers' Federation

President, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

Speakers **Irene Bader**

Director General,

Ontario Region, Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Joan Andrew

Deputy Minister,

Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

Thanking of Speakers

Usha George

Director, CERIS

Associate Dean, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

10:30 AM *Refreshment Break*

10:45 AM Panel Presentation

Moderator Dr. Joanna Anneke Rummens

Chair, CERIS Governance Board, Health Systems Research Scientist
Assistant Professor, Psychiatry,
Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto

Panelists Irene Bader

Director General,
Ontario Region, Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Riet Verheggen

Director,
Citizenship Development Branch,
Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

Debbie Douglas

Executive Director, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

Tam Goossen

Spokesperson, Social Planning Network of Ontario
President, Community Social Planning Council of Toronto

Annie Kidder

Executive Director, People for Education

Jill Maar

Spokesperson, Ontario Public School Boards Association

Ruth Baumann

Secretary-Treasurer, Ontario Teachers' Federation

11:35 AM Question & Answer/Discussion Session

12:15 AM Lunch

1:30 PM Discussion Groups

3:00 PM Refreshment Break

3:15 PM Plenary Session

Report Back from Discussion Groups

Next Steps

Martin Long

Executive Member, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
President, Elementary Teachers of Toronto

Karen Brown

Executive Liaison, Elementary Teachers of Toronto

3:45 PM Adjournment

Appendix C: Summaries of Reports

Renewing Toronto's ESL Programs

...charting a course towards more effective ESL program delivery

A Report from the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto

Renewing Toronto's ESL Programs...charting a course towards more effective ESL program delivery report provides a comprehensive overview of ESL programs at the elementary, secondary and adult levels and examines the difficult realities faced in delivering ESL programming in Toronto. It identifies gaps between the current situation and effective ESL program delivery and identifies core principles and proven ideals which create a framework for successful programs. Finally, the report recommends actions that will narrow the gap between current realities and that ideal effective framework.

Among the many challenges identified in the report are a lack of the following: a comprehensive government policy on ESL; adequate and protected funding for ESL programs and support services; a consistent student assessment and placement; appropriate testing of ESL students; adequate and appropriate training of all teachers to deal with immigrant students; effective support structures that enable community and family involvement in the school system.

Based on best practices and research in the field of ESL and education, the report distills the following set of eight principles, which are fundamental to the establishment of effective and successful ESL programs: equitable access for all who are in need of ESL programming; an accountable and effective programming framework designed to meet student needs; a thorough and consistent assessment process for all ESL students; placement that reflects ESL students' potential; specific ESL literacy components for those students facing literacy challenges; ongoing monitoring of individual student progress through appropriate assessment methods; inclusion of ESL methodology, cross-cultural and equity studies in all teacher education programs; support structures that enable the progress of ESL students through community and family involvement.

The report explores these principles in the context of the current ESL situation in Toronto and makes 39 recommendations that can help to bridge the gap between the current reality and the goal of effective and successful ESL program delivery. The recommendations, which address issues such as policy, funding, assessment and placement, testing, teacher training and community support, are targeted at the Federal and Provincial governments, boards of education and organizations providing adult ESL programs.

**Supporting ESL in Schools and the Community: Statement of the
Elementary Teachers of Toronto
Supporting the Needs of Newcomers in Schools and the Community**

Teachers know that when a family is settled in the community, it is easier for the children to focus on their schoolwork, and for the parents to link with the school.

Services for newcomers are provided by community-based settlement agencies and by the schools and thus locating the services in schools in an excellent way to help families settle as quickly as possible and thereby foster student achievement.

The ETT also recognizes the need for increased funding for ESL programs. In December 2005, the **Elementary Teachers of Toronto (ETT)** surveyed 467 of its members including, 100 ESL teachers, to explore teachers' perceptions regarding the adequacy of English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs.

The survey concludes that there are by far not enough ESL programs and that the allocation of teaching resources to ESL needs to be doubled to meet the current needs of students. Inadequate ESL funding is having a negative impact on all students. Classroom teachers report spending an average of one day a week compensating for the limited ESL resources available to the students in their classes.

The ETT calls on the provincial government to increase funding for ESL programs. In addition, the ETT recognizes the importance of increased community access to ESL programs and the related supports required to make those programs effective. We support the community agencies working to improve settlement support services through the implementation of the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement

ADVOCATING FOR IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AND YOUTH

A POSITION PAPER ON SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING ISSUED BY THE ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

The public education system opens its doors to all immigrant students and their families. Schools, more than any other institution, become the portal through which they learn about their new country. Schools offer newcomer children and young people the key to success through language and literacy. How can schools strengthen their links to newcomer families and communities? How can existing community-based supports be expanded? The answers to these questions are a key component of OPSBA's position paper on Second Language Learning.

The paper speaks to the successful programs that are in place in schools today and highlights the improvements and added resources that are necessary to fully meet the language acquisition needs of newcomer students. The specific in-school needs are a provincial responsibility but there are other critical needs that relate strongly to the immigration and settlement process. To address those needs, many of our member school boards have formed partnerships with settlement agencies. School boards would like to build on those links and hope that the federal-provincial agreement makes that possible.

A strong focus of OPSBA's position on responding to the needs of immigrant children and their families relates to the settlement and integration concerns that are an essential foundation for student success. There is, for example, an emphasis on parent involvement and the need for resources to ensure that parents understand how the education system works in general and how their local school and child's teacher, in particular, will work with their child to ensure effective integration into the life of the school and timely progress towards expected academic achievement. Parent involvement also helps the school understand and meet the specific needs of newcomer students and their families. Supporting parent involvement requires that schools work in close partnership with community-based agencies and bodies serving the needs of immigrant families. These organizations offer a crucial form of support that interprets the education system for newly arrived families and schools, and connects them to the broader community. In the interests of improving the "school readiness" and successful integration of newcomer children and youth, it is a service that needs to be significantly expanded.

A key recommendation of OPSBA's position paper is:

“That the Federal government fund, as part of the settlement process, the resources necessary to support the integration of newcomer children and their families into the school system, including such initiatives as first language services in school board Reception Centres, translation and interpretation services to promote parent engagement in their children's education, settlement worker services, and community programs to promote school readiness and to accelerate the pace at which newcomer students catch up to their peers.”

Support for ESL Students

In March 2006, People for Education published a report raising concerns about programs and supports for Ontario's English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Among the findings:

- ◆ Province-wide, the number of schools with ESL programs declined from 58% in 1997/98, to 36% in 2005/06.
- ◆ The number of schools with ESL teachers declined from 41% in 1998/99, to 27% in 2005/06.
- ◆ In schools with ESL students, 51% report this year that they have no ESL teachers, compared to 33% in 1999/00.

The results are even more dramatic in schools in the Greater Toronto Area, where 71% of all Ontario's ESL students live.

- ◆ Only 51% of GTA schools have ESL teachers, a decline from 55% last year, and 68% in 1999/00.
- ◆ The percentage of GTA schools with ESL students but no ESL teachers has more than doubled over the last five years—from 16% in 1999/00, to 42% in 2005/06.
- ◆ Despite recent increases in funding for ESL, the number of GTA schools reporting ESL students but no ESL teacher increased from 32% in 2004/05, to 42% in 2005/06.

The report makes a number of recommendations for changes to provincial education policy:

- ◆ The provincial government should amend funding for ESL so that ESL students are supported for as long as it takes them to acquire the language;

- ◆ The province should include in the requisite education of teachers, the teaching of English as a Second Language and Special Education, as well as pedagogical skills to deal with the real needs of students in inner city settings; and
- ◆ School boards should be required to report on their use of ESL funding and the effectiveness of their ESL programs.

The report also recommended more cooperation among all levels of government, and that federal and provincial governments and school boards do more to co-ordinate funding and policy for settlement services so that newcomer parents and children receive all the supports they need to successfully settle in their new communities.

The report pointed to reports from Ontario's Auditor General, Toronto Mayor's Roundtable on Children and Youth and Education, the City Summit Alliance, Campaign 2000 and the United Way that have all urged federal, provincial and municipal governments to do more to address the needs of newcomer children and their parents.

The group says that that the province must give newcomer students an equal chance to succeed, by ensuring that every student has access to the supports and programs that will give him or her a chance to thrive in school, graduate successfully, and enter society ready and able to participate fully.

The full report is available on the People for Education website at: www.peopleforeducation.com