

Present: Amir, David, Ghana, Isha, Jelena (Elaine), Reem, Selma, Yasinne, Carol, Deborah

**1. Introductions**

**2. Additions to the agenda – none**

**3. Overview of RRLIP project:** Carol briefly described history, governance, some projects to date

**4. Current activity: Research Phase – important Local Study.** Carol described study – U of R researchers looking at Education (practical transition skills), Employment (Canadian experience) and how Childcare affects both.

**Action Items:**

- RRLIP will re-send IAT Application to members so they can share it with others. **Update:** completed
- IAT members will ask for hard copies of survey if desired. RRLIP can deliver and pick up if desired.  
**Update:** 2 members have requested paper surveys –\_have been printed and given

**5. Role of IAT Members –** Carol and Deborah shared the importance of IAT membership (i.e. members will bring lived experience, will ensure the newcomer perspective informs the work and decisions of the RRLIP Partnership Council and will represent a diversity of cultures, languages, educational levels, ages and stages of settlement and integration).

**Discussion Point Highlights (Role of IAT):**

- Although members understand that their role is to share the newcomer perspective with the Partnership Council, **they hope and desire some action will follow, as a result of their input.**

**Discussion Point Highlights (Member Insights):**

- Newcomer challenges need to be addressed (i.e. wait time for language classes)
- International students are a minority and don't get co-op placements or internships, so it's hard to get Canadian experience and/or a job
- Many newcomers are facing problems getting jobs and ending up on social assistance (they don't want that, they want to work!) They have work skills, but not English skills.
- Have a work-place interpreter (i.e. team-leader) available for a number of employees capable of doing the job but are lacking English skills.
- Newcomers want a FIRST chance (some are even willing to work for nothing just to prove they have the skills). Casual or temporary positions would also be of value.
- Employer challenges exist but government incentives might encourage increased newcomer employment.
- Employment training would be more helpful to newcomers than going on social assistance.
- Gov't should become more aware of newcomer issues, in particular employment issues.

**6. Draft Terms of Reference for IAT –** reviewed draft, discussed points, received feedback

**Action Items:** T/R additions -

- 5.3 *Agree to share contact information with each other for the purposes of networking.*
- 5.2. a) **Special Note:** *IAT members hope and desire some action will follow as a result of their input.*

**Action Item:** IAT members will review the revised T/R and provide feedback

**7. Request/Housing Advisory Committee:** - The Housing Advisory Committee (HAC) was formed to address challenges with newcomers adapting to Canadian housing. The HAC requested IAT member participation and/or feedback.

**Member Feedback:**

- Picture instructions and signs in multiple languages for the bathroom, appliances, locking the door, etc.

- Winter: basic safety education, maintenance; windows; etc., not just outings for fun
- Need information on using appliances, Canadian norms (cleaning, care and maintenance), etc.
- Small Arabic/English book was developed for Syrian newcomers – possibly shareable with HAC
- First weeks are crucial. Pairing newcomers with volunteers who speak the same language, who would spend a short time every day would be beneficial. (Caseworkers don't have enough time, often don't speak the same language)
- Demo suite valuable idea. Important to also visit the family home, as appliances, etc. might be different. May have come from no electricity, camps. Need to make sure they understand and can do tasks
- Problem: men coming to orientation without wives. Women need to come, as they are the ones usually caring for home and children
- Information needs to be visual and hand's-on, multi-faceted, and respectful, not intrusive. Videos could be very helpful; perhaps make a CD that every new family could have, covering basics in their language
- Many know how to use YouTube and internet – make 5 or 6 videos of 3 minutes – in different languages
- DO NOT cover the same topics as RODS, but different ones
- Give links in partnership with RIF/RODS/through children/school/NWC/internet, using social media
- Many people aren't informed about housing care and maintenance/could benefit from the HAC's efforts
- Need information about Canadian norms, expectations and culture, the buying market
- Some issues with children – sometimes unsupervised outside, causing damage, trespassing, noisy - parents need to be instructed on what is acceptable; legal age for leaving kids home alone is 12+
- Need to focus on concerns that affect most newcomers
- Many of the Syrian refugees are from rural/border communities and cannot read or write, but want to improve – could use 'family friend' meeting every week to help give information

**Action Items:**

- Reem will ask about sharing Arabic/English booklet with HAC.
- RRLIP will share information from meeting with HAC.

**Update:** Reem sent booklet/info to RRLIP to share in meeting.

**8. Date/location for next meeting:** fairly soon

- Weekends best during colder season – not summer
- Library location is great

**Action Item:** RRLIP will send out options for next meeting.

**9. Final comments:** great ideas, passionate people; appreciate initiative and enthusiasm; want to make a difference – appreciate RRLIP being open to our ideas; nice to see different communities represented, hear different ideas and have opportunities to share; interesting; contact info for IAT members will aid cooperation; hope fruitful experience; thanks for the chance to help; happy to get to know more; great opportunity to learn and help; very positive

**Action Item:** RRLIP will send out email asking for everyone's languages – will compile list to send to all members.