

Present: Amir, David, Ghana, Isha, Jelena (Elaine), Oleksandra, Reem, Richard, Selma, Yassinne, Carol, Deborah

1. Introductions

2. Additions to the agenda – future meeting dates; summer picnic idea

3. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

4. Draft Terms of Reference: Carol brought attention to highlighted portions in the Terms of Reference regarding the Information Exchange Strategy, addition of co-chair, responsibilities of chair/co-chair and representation at RRLIP Council meetings. Chair or co-chair could represent the IAT members at Council/working group meetings. If unable, IAT will receive minutes. All members signed the T/R, with the understanding that future addendums are possible.

Discussion Point Highlights:

- IAT members suggested a maximum of 15 would be a good number at the IAT table – otherwise the table discussions could become difficult; term could be longer – perhaps 3 years.
- Chair position should be reviewed after 1 year – it might be helpful to be 2 years – IAT to think about it
- It would be helpful to ask professionals from various sectors to give a short presentation at IAT meetings (15 -30 min), to build awareness and inform the IAT's feedback to the Council and working groups
- Might be valuable to have sub-committees to help deal with specific issues: (i.e. employment/settlement needs-bridging programs)
- Once newcomers have moved from federal government support to Social Services, they face many problems. It would be helpful to have some kind of coordination and cooperation between programs, so people don't become desperate.
- It would be helpful for local companies to come together to give newcomers a chance – give a job, an opportunity to prove themselves
- Employment priority– large gov't/local employers study was recently completed; the RRLIP will have research results by end of April; IAT would like to read and discuss the results from both studies
- Do local employers know all the incentive programs available to them when hiring newcomers? Paid internships are primarily funded by Gov't (Employer adds only small amount)
- What outputs can come from the IAT? Discussion of Advisory vs Advocacy: IAT can provide feedback, suggestions and information – but not take a political position on behalf of the RRLIP
- LIPs and RIFs (Francophone equivalent of LIPs – but with a provincial focus). With both the LIPs and RIFs, an agreement with a municipality, settlement agency or other immigrant serving organization is necessary, with the local agency holding the contract (the administrator).

Action Items:

- Revised, final copies of the T/R, with copies of signature pages will be distributed at next meeting
- Add chair/co-chair term lengths as a future amendment to T/R; decision will be an agenda item at the next meeting
- Bring findings from both surveys mentioned above to the IAT
- Yassinne to send info on Francophone/gov't initiatives

Future Action:

- Invite guest speakers from various sectors to give a short presentations at IAT meetings (15 -30 min), to build awareness and inform the IAT's feedback to the Council and working groups

5. Chair and Co-Chair Elections: Elaine and David let names stand for chair, Yassine for co-chair

- Elaine/David tied for chair: David encouraged Elaine to take chair position
- Yassine elected as co-chair
- David will be alternative, if others not available
- RRLIP staff will be working with Elaine to develop the next meeting agenda

6. Feedback Update:

- The Canadian Housing Advisory Committee found the IAT feedback very helpful, and the volunteer strategy suggested by IAT members may be implemented shortly, as a temporary measure, and possibly to be embedded in the long-term plan.
- Booklet sent by Reem will be shared with Canadian Housing Advisory Committee at the next meeting

7. Coordinated Community Response from the RRLIP Project (Partnership Council and IAT)

- A coordinated community response strategy will be developed early in Q1 - next fiscal year (i.e. the Quebec mosque tragedy). The RRLIP Council will ask for input from the IAT in Q1.

8. Future Meeting Dates: Sundays at 1pm work well; library great location

May/Sept/Nov/Feb

Action Item:

- RRLIP staff will send out meeting options, including a July date for an informal family picnic

9. Final comments: good information; learning – happy to see the team working well – happy to see new members; happy to get chance to help others, hope newcomers don't have to face same issues; happy to be facing problems; privileged to be part of process; honor and responsibility – bring added value to community/city; good exercise to practice democracy of organizations, like the idea of guest speakers at the meetings to educate and inform/ so IAT can inform others and share knowledge; hope to work well together; like the give and take of ideas, hope it will be smoother for newcomers in future; as a new member I felt welcome/ felt like home; a good resource and benefit; hope personal experiences will help to move discussions forward; should we create a face book group?

Further Discussion after Final Comments (Immigration Consultants for Newcomers with Work Permits) IAT Members with personal experience encouraged others to do the immigration paperwork on their own. Sask.ca has a list of accredited Immigration Consultants, but costs can be prohibitive - \$5000-\$8000 and sometimes people receive conflicting information and wait lists can be lengthy.

Action Items:

- Add agenda item for next meeting - *discuss Facebook group* to communicate the role of the IAT to the general community
- Elaine and Oleksandra will send work permit info to RRLIP staff, to distribute to all IAT members
- All IAT members consider best communication strategy for relaying reliable, helpful information to work permit holders