

**Developing a Collaborative Partnership Model  
for a Vancouver Island  
Regional Immigrant Integration Strategy**

**Report on Session  
January 20, 2009  
Parksville, B.C**



>WelcomeBC



# Developing a Collaborative Partnership Model for a Vancouver Island Regional Immigrant Integration Strategy

## AGENDA

**Tuesday January 20, 2009**

**10:00am** Welcome & Introductions - Why is this important?

**10:10am** Project History - Cori Lynn Germiquet, President, VIEA

**10:20am** Immigrant Services - Jean McRae, Executive Director,  
Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria

**10:25am** Project Overview - 6 Areas defined.

**10:30 am** Key Question: How do we build an Effective & Valuable Regional  
Immigrant Integration Strategy on Vanc Island?

- Grass Roots Initiatives - Passion & Responsibility
- Task Groups set. Small group breakouts.

**11:30am** Small Group Discussions

**12:00pm** Big Group Discussion

- What are the key themes identified?
- What would be the best way to build an effective & valuable regional immigrant?
- Which organizations would be willing to be partners in the process?
- In what capacity?
- Next Steps

**1:00pm** Meeting Adjourned. Lunch served. Networking.

## List of Attendees:

Jean	McRae	Inter-Cultural Association of Victoria
Kim	Walker	Inter-Cultural Association of Victoria
Rachel	Blaney	Campbell River & Area Multicultural & Immigrant Services
Dorica	Skobalj	Immigrant Settlement Office (courtney)
Christine	Fagan	Cowichan Intercultural Society
Hilde	Schlosar	Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society
Terre	Flower	Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society
Jennifer	Bricker	Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society
Nanette	Longo	Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society
Kathie	Landry	Creative Employment Access Society
Joy	Andrews	Career Centre
Browyn	Brown	Career Centre
Douglas	Smith	City of Parksville Economic Development Office
Douglas	Campbell	North Island College
Elaine	Parmenter	Ethos Management Group
Cherelynn	Minshall	Ethos Management Group
Clayton	Morris	ISTEP
Joanne	Hogan	L'association de francophones
Kathy	Lachman	VIEDA
Kevin	Douville	Community Futures Nanaimo
Rick	Roberts	VIEA, Director
Dennis	Silvestrone	Vancouver Island University
Ron	Acros	CFDC Alberni Clayoquot
Linda	Reynolds	Vancouver Island Health Authority
Ed	Mayne	Mayor, City of Parksville
Laurie	Jones	Concepts Unlimited
Maureen	Shakespeare	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Andy	Mackenzie	Service Canada
Detlef + Siggy	Weismuller-Ehrhardt	Immigrants
Cori Lynn	Carlson	VIEA, President
Kathy	Bishop	Kathy Bishop & Associates

**Regrets/Distribution List:** Ron Trepanier Whalebone Productions Ltd.; Ted Godien BC Ferries; Carlos Gaete Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society; Cyndy Bresden Career Centre; Lori Camire CFDC Alberni Clayoquot; Deborah Bromley Ethos Career Management; Paul Mitchell ISTEP; Wendy King Nanaimo Daily News; Russ Hellberg Nomis PowerCorp; Neil Smith Mt Waddington EcDev; Bobbi-Jean Goldy Tourism VI; Glen Terrell Victoria Real Estate Board; Drew Harris Victoria Real Estate Board; Caroline Spira Town of Ladysmith; Nola Dunn Woodgrove Centre; Bruce Carter Greater Victoria Chamber Of Commerce; Mike Carter Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce; Cathy Mailhot Duncan Chamber of Commerce; Ron Holmes Canadian Forces - Workforce Renewal Officer; Robert Duncan Hupacasath First Nation; Cheryl Fortin Ministry; Doug Preston North Island Employment; Rod O'Connell Vancouver Island Health Authority; Brian Barnett Ocean Industries; Patrick Nelson Marshall Ocean Industries: Lawrie Garret CFCW; Patti Smedley Economic Development Office, Port Hardy; Beth Parmaham Port Hardy Mayor; Michele Thompson Detailed Design; Laurie Sagle Tigh-Na-Mara; Sandra Mark Edible Strategies; Samantha Letourneau Edible Strategies; Sohee Ahn Ministry; Pat Darling Citizenship & Immigration Canada; Deborah Hollins Ethos Management Group - Business Works.

# Developing a Collaborative Partnership Model for a Vancouver Island Regional Immigrant Integration Strategy - January 20, 2009

**Project History** - Cori Lynn Germiquet, President, VIEA gave a project history.

**Immigrant Services** - Jean McRae, Exec Director, Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria spoke on behalf of the Island Immigrant Services .

## Project Overview

The Vancouver Island Economic Alliance received a grant from the Ministry of Attorney General and Citizenship and Immigration Canada to launch a Welcoming & Inclusive Communities & Workplace Programs Project focusing on developing a Collaborative Partnership Model for a Vancouver Island Regional Immigrant Integration Strategy.

It was recognized that 6 key focus areas for a successful Regional Immigrant Integration Strategy were identified previously (See Report on Strategy Session, June 16, 2008). These areas would need to be developed in accordance with a final proposal. Namely:

1. Information
  - a. Packaging
  - b. Dissemination
  - c. Tracking
2. Employment
  - a. Access
  - b. Retention
3. Community Receptivity
  - a. Orientation
  - b. Connection
4. Community Awareness
  - a. Opportunities
  - b. Challenges
5. Communication
  - a. Expectations
  - b. Opportunities
  - c. Successes
6. Policy issues

## Discussion Groups Formed

Participants self organized into 4 groups to consider key aspects on how to build an Effective & Valuable Regional Immigrant Integration Strategy on Vanc Island.

Key aspects to address were determined as:

- I. Asset/Gaps Analysis
- II. Information Sharing
- III. Business/Employment
- IV. Welcoming & Inclusive Communities.

### **Small Group Discussions Notes:**

#### I: Assets/ Gaps Analysis

##### *Topic Groupings:*

Asset Assessment; Policy Issues- Extending services to Temporary workers( Bronwyn Brown); Equal Opportunities for all communities whether rural/ metro; Trying to fill existing gaps while working out what other gaps are; Identify organizational (or regional/ sectoral) strengths and allocate sections of a strategy (i.e. to maximize resources) Kim (process orientation).

*Convener:* Kim Walker

*Participants:* Bronwyn Brown; Andy Mackenzie; Rick Roberts; Hilde Schlosar; Kathy Lachman; Dennis Silvestrone

##### *Highlights/ Key Point of Discussion:*

- Gap in govt - eg. Temp foreign workers
  - But what is the community role/ responsibility? Therefore need to prepare to talk beyond what the gov't will fund. There are many resources available outside the CIC transfer money.
- Gaps in life cycle from introduction (immigration) to integration.
  - Services (formal/informal)
  - Community preparedness- to serve people/ immigrants
  - Beyond the 3-5 years of residency for services
- Attracting to VI- regionally- foreign workers- an entity for a local organization to hook up with to attract immigrants and foreign workers.
- A structure that knits together local and regional needs, intentional and proactive.

##### *Action Items:*

- Cultural/ communication training (workshops) for people in the community
- ID provincial policy needs that can be developed (not in legislation). New move to a provincial office. Labour Market- Min. of Housing
- Create a regional coordination function
- Strategy needs to include both content and a structure for how it will be implemented.

## II: Information Sharing

### *Topic Groupings:*

Media Strategy (expansive) to educate- communicate need for immigrants on a local basis. Specific examples that “appeal” to defined demographic groups. (Joanne); Strong information sharing- good ideas –best practices etc.(Jean); Opportunities to share successes (Kathie Landry); Asset Assessment - Gap Analysis ( Kathy Landry)

*Conveners:* Jean McRae, Kathy Landry

*Participants:* Rachel Blaney; Linda Reynolds; Laurie Jones; Joanne Hogan

### *Highlights/ Key Points of Discussion:*

- Info exchange amongst those engaged in the process- service providers and immigrants
- Informing the public about the need (i.e. foreign workers) and why immigrant settlement services are valuable
- VIHA- “welcoming foreign hires”- recruitment strategy many successful hires on VI- email link w/ someone from their own background
- Who are key target groups/ common messages doe media strategy

### *Action Items:*

- Facilitation of linking “recruiters”, Such as VIHA, w/ immigrant settlement organization.
- Expanding/ promoting the Welcome BC website to be able to easily access regional info.
- Targeted media strategy on the value/ need for immigration
- Develop a vehicle for sharing info between people doing the work/ (inter/intra) communities including hearing from minorities.
- Centralized information for immigrants

## III: Employment/ Business

### *Topic Groupings:*

Do not forget to include strategies as to how we can better provide self-employment coaching and assistance service to immigrants when discussing overall employment service, as this area/ focus tends to be forgotten; Example 1- I have a resume done professionally. Employers seem to be not interested in hiring me. My language is pretty good. What should be done in future? (Dorica); Need to implement a non competitive approach to attracting business immigrants to VI. (Ron); How do we get employers of temporary foreign workers closer to immigrant serving agencies, also the associates (shellfish and similar), because they are not really approachable in Comox Valley.(Interpreters are not very often to get in touch with foreign workers); Latest info- Shellfish Association is not being more interested in living there, too much work.

*Convener:* Nanette Longo

*Participants:* Kevin Douville; Elaine Parmeter; Dennis Silvestrone; Clayton Morris; Dorica Skobalj; Maureen Shakespeare ; Ron Acros; Detlef and Ziggy W.

*Highlights/ Key Points of Discussion:*

- How to help prepare employers; similar to (and learn from work with disabled and work with employers)
- Employers looking for programs to provide support
- Re-evaluate attachments for programs and services when serving immigrants; for example self employed coaching
- Non competitive forums/ approach to attracting business ex. Match forum for disabilities, but designed for immigrants
- Employer perception that it is too complicated to hire immigrant/ student/ PNP, etc.
- Distinguish clearly between immigrants/ foreign workers

*IV: Welcoming & Inclusive Communities*

*Topic Groupings:*

Opportunities for ALL people to learn new ways of being inclusive (Joy Andrews); How to encourage community engagement that is truly inclusive of aboriginal and non aboriginal, immigrant and non immigrant and of all members of our diverse community? (Terre)

*Topic:* Education, Community development, developing community capacity to welcoming and inclusive

*Convener:* Joy Andrews

*Participants:* Christine Fagan; Jennifer Bricker ; Terre Flower

*Highlights/ Key Points of Discussion:*

- Authentic engagement= truly inclusive
- Business/ employers- 'too busy'
- Define the community – immigrant and non immigrant ;Aboriginal and non Aboriginal;and other diverse members of the community
- Opportunities for all people to learn new ways of being inclusive
- Sharing resources - Safe Harbour - engaging businesses, resources available-into schools - Create opportunities - Concrete actions
- People- good will - knowing things are wrong but don't know what to do about it- awareness, knowledge, skills.
- Relationships with people who are different from ourselves= between diverse group, between whites diverse group
- Opportunities e.g. potluck, games evening, recreations community service e.g. habitat relevant to community
- Literacy now - skills necessary to acquire information- Social networking is part of literacy ability to be inclusive

- Skills for the converted as well as educating the non converted
- People don't know what they don't know.
- Gaps - don't serve long time immigrants, Temporary foreign workers, international students
- \$\$\$- whose responsibility is it? Energy spent trying to get money to do the work ; Lack of ongoing/ through year of funding cycles; Narrowly funded more often than not ; Often community want to use our resources and skills but no funding for this work.

#### Action Items:

- Sharing resources
- Identify easier to engage to start- build on it
- Funding

### Big Group Discussion

There was consensus to move forward on a Regional Immigrant Integration Strategy. Now is the time, despite current economic conditions, to be ready when things shift.

The next step is to send out session notes, determine who will champion and/or be a partner with a Regional Immigrant Integration Strategy Planning Committee, set next meeting date for determining a concrete action plan for Regional proposal.

#### Ideas for Planning Committee to keep in mind:

- Lots of Good work already done - Service Providers, Business/Industry Groups, Innovative Businesses - Part of larger Collaborative WorkForce Strategy
- Convergence - Not about duplicating but interconnecting. Service Providers, Regional Skills Councils, Businesses
- Infusion of \$ by Government.
- Can get more done together than alone. Build on what has gone on before.
- Utilize today's think tank plus past strategy session (June 2008) when formulating an action plan.
- Need for Regional Strategy/Sub Strategy for local Communities
  - A Mosaic not melting Pot. Different Communities. Different Immigrants.
  - Larger centers- flagship models. Smaller - systems in place when ready
  - Changing Economic Times - Reality of yesterday, today, tomorrow
- Need to Define Spirit of Partnership - Both in Structure & Outcomes
- Ideas to consider for partnership: Regional Coordinator; Multi layer coordinated approach; Key stakeholders represented; Creative meetings - video conferencing, linked in, gotomeetings, 1 - 2 annual full day/2 day meetings with plenty of notice.