



TNLIP Employment and Labour Market Work Group (Winter 2024) Meeting Minutes

Friday, December 13th, 10:00 am – 11:30 am

Virtual – MS Teams

Attendees (22): Adey Worku (Toronto Newcomer Office), Behnaz Azad (Acces Employment), Cheryl Murray (Achēv), Claudia Bargellini (WCS), Danilla Moshi (NYCH), Diana Harrop (Centennial College), Hodan Mohamed (Arawelo Institute), Imman Ibrahim (Tropicana Employment Centre), Karine Vodopianova (Central Englinton CC), Mary Fragedakis (LIKE BIA), Mona Ali (Humber Polytechnic), Monica Brennan (York University), Nadya Weber (AWO), Radhika Sharma (Skills for Change), Sharvari Jois (JVS), Wendy Li (NYCH).

Facilitated by: Farheen Meraj (TNLIP/JVS), Srna Stambuk (TNLIP/JVS), Rachele Molto (TNLIP/JVS), Isabella Yan (TNLIP/WWCC), Misha Hossain (TNLIP/TNO), and meeting minutes recorded by Astha Priya (TNLIP/WWCC).

Time	Agenda Items	Notes
10:00 – 10:10 am	Welcome, Territorial Acknowledgment & Introductions	Farheen Meraj welcomed everyone and introduced the new members (Nadya Weber (AWO), Kara Bala (TCES), Grace Cao (YMCA)) to the workgroup, as well as updated all on some member changes. Territorial Land acknowledgments were shared Attendees used the chat to introduce themselves – name, role/organization Farheen overviewed the agenda for the meeting as well
10:10 – 10:30 am	Business Outreach through BIAs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EDI Task Group report indicated a need to engage businesses in our network. Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) are gatherings of local business owners with a shared vision of community improvement. We will explore potential opportunities of working with BIAs that are in proximity. LIKE BIA Director, Mary Fragedakis will join us to talk about her BIA. 	<p>Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farheen presented findings from Influencing Inclusive Practices through Employer Engagement: Role of SPOs. The report emphasized the need to address employer-side challenges and highlighted the importance of forming long-term relationships with businesses. There is a gap in engaging BIAs so there is a need to build networks with them – BIA (Business Improvement Area) represents the interests of local businesses and employers who are seeking reliable talent to grow their operations. 40% of Toronto businesses are in a BIA – Farheen shared a myMaps she made outlining some BIAs in North York and their proximity to current members. The goal is to form a BIA Task group that will focus on strengthening collaboration and building lasting partnerships, bridging talent gaps, and promote inclusive hiring. The group will also drive impact by supporting economic growth and track work force trends. If you are interested in this BIA Task group, please reach out to Farheen. <p>Presentation by LIKE BIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIKE BIA represents a diverse membership of retail, manufacturing, legal, and large employers.



- They are currently focused on strategic planning to address challenges such as finding reliable talent and maintaining a balance between housing and employment opportunities in Toronto.
- Preparing for a 2025 initiative to define goals and direction.
- Larger employers struggle to find skilled talent, affecting productivity.
- Highlighted the need to align job opportunities with local housing availability.
- TNLIP can help bridge the talent gap by connecting skilled workers with BIA member businesses.

Audience Contributions:

- *North York Community House* emphasized the importance of mapping local businesses and ensuring effective communication strategies.
- *York University* suggested bridge programs and engagement methods such as webinars and employer pipelines.
- *Central Eglinton Community Centre* expressed support for initiatives addressing systemic barriers for internationally trained workers.
- *Centennial College* shared insights on successful BIA collaborations, stressing the importance of understanding and participating in BIA activities.

To continue these discussions, feel free to connect with Mary at info.likebia@gmail.com

Action items:

- Farheen to share callouts for the Business Outreach & Engagement Task Group
- Members interested in joining were encouraged to contact Farheen for further involvement.

10:30 –
10:45 am

“Grants and Funding SUSTAINABILITY”.

Hodan Mohamed, Arawelo Institute
Hodan will focus on strategies of writing grant proposals that stay true to your organization’s priorities while effectively resonating with funders.
+ Q&A

Presentation Highlights:

- **Theory of Change (TOC):** Visual mapping of funding objectives and outcomes to align organizational goals with leadership vision.
- **Resource Mapping:** Identifying organizational strengths and addressing structural gaps to enhance competitiveness and effectiveness.
- **Case Study:** The Positive Change Toronto Initiative successfully secured funding by aligning community needs with funder priorities, leveraging research to demonstrate impact, and engaging community talent effectively.

Key Recommendations:

1. Explore diverse funding sources beyond traditional channels (e.g., Trillium Foundation, Laidlaw Society).



		<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Network across industries to uncover funding opportunities and partnerships.3. Demonstrate measurable community impact in funding applications.4. Utilize tiered grant proposals to secure support from various levels, including private donors.5. Maintain concise, focused grant narratives that align with strategic goals. <p>Resources: A list of funding streams in Ontario will be shared with members to support their funding strategies. If you want to connect with Hodan more regarding this: hodanam@araweloinstitute.org</p>
10:45 – 10:55	Some Quick Updates aligned with the ELM group: Evaluation, Info Bulletin, Housing Task Group, etc.	<p>TNLIP is creating an evaluation framework and so we are setting up an evaluation advisory group to help guide this in an effective, equitable, inclusive and with a strong GBA+ lens. We are working with the Data advisory task group to make this so make sure to participate in this task group and have your voices heard. Message Farheen or Rachelle to Join.</p> <p>Newcomer Housing Task Group – employment and housing are closely related. If you are interested, reach out to Isabella, isabella@torontonorthlip.ca.</p> <p>The new ELM Info Bulletin will be sent out every month! It has lots of info on news related to employment work in the sector, shares resources, discusses grant opportunities, and much more. So please engage and if you have any feedback, message Farheen.</p> <p>NewTO App and TNLIP YouTube – please download and subscribe!</p>
10:55 – 11:00	EST Updates By Srna Stambuk Updates from the Employment Services Transformation and WCG.	InterLIP EST Working Group Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose: Monitors EO transformation impacts on newcomers and engages with OCASI, WCG, and agencies to track progress and address concerns.• Funding Updates: Organizations await WCG funding decisions, expected by December 15, creating uncertainty for planning.• Training Needs: WCG stresses adopting the new EO model, supported by a robust training plan. Non-compliance risks failure.• Next Steps: A service provider-focused meeting will address support needs directly with WCG.
11:00 – 11:15 am	Key Themes from One-on-One Member Consultations and Discussion	<p>Overview of the Key themes that arose from one-on-one consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bridging and Wraparound Supports• Funding Uncertainties and Change Management• Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing• Employer-Specific Collaboration• Focus on Mental Health



		Discussions from members: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ WSC emphasized the importance of addressing service gaps collaboratively without duplicating efforts.
11:15 – 11:25 am	Member Updates & Discussion	Members will send any updates or sector discussion items to Farheen or Astha via email.
11:25 – 11:30 am	Closing and Happy Holidays 😊	Farheen thanked all the wonderful members for their valuable contributions to today's meeting as well as all the great projects/initiatives the workgroup is collaborating on. TNLIP sends a big, warm thank you to all for your attendance and wishing everyone a happy, safe, peaceful holiday season!