

TNLIP Newcomer Indigenous Relationship Building Task Group Meeting (Virtual)

Wednesday May 29th 2024 11am-12pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Dwayne O’Connor (MNLCT), Zarine Dordi (WWCC), Nkeiruka Osagie (ACT Toronto), Parwana Siddiqi (Afghan Women’s Organization), Rola (Willowdale Community Legal Services)

Regret: Danielle Ungara (the Children's Aid Society of The Region of Peel)

TNLIP Team: Isabella Yan (TNLIP/WWCC) and Srna Stambuk (TNLIP/JVS)

| Agenda Item | Discussion | Follow up Actions |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Welcome, Introductions, and agenda review | Isabella welcomed all attendees and the attendees introduced themselves. Agenda was reviewed. | |
| Background | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>How this came about:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 21 is National Indigenous day. Decided to host an event for TNLIP PC member to celebrate. • Srna had a chat with Joan Frame, Truth and Reconciliation Coordinator at NYCH 2. <u>Feedback from Joan Frame</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joan felt that we should have consulted with her before deciding to host an event on the National Indigenous day because 1) it is a national holiday for all indigenous people so expecting an indigenous person to work on that day is shows ignorance, 2) June is the month when there are a lot of Indigenous events and it is an opportunity for indigenous artists to make money - anything that interferes with that also shows that one does not have a relationship with the indigenous community ... • Joan also did not think that we should hold an event without an Indigenous elder... • So Srna told her that we would hold off on the event and instead work to support her in a Reconciliation Conference for the settlement sector in Toronto | |

| | | |
|------------|---|--|
| | <p>on how to embed indigenous content into their services and programming. The event would happen in October or November so planning has to start now. Joan will invite all the speakers and educators. TNLP can support her by asking our members to sponsor specific sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Srna plans to reach out to the other LIPs too to provide an opportunity for their members to also support this conference - financially. The conference will be free for all settlement workers in Toronto. | |
| Discussion | <p><u>Where are we with our Indigenous Cultural Competency in the sector?</u> <u>How do we assess our own indigenous cultural competency now? How to increase it?</u> <u>Srna:</u> reflected that it is easy to jump to action in an inconsiderable way, which is actually in conflict with truth and reconciliation. We should be always aware that nothing is about us without us. <u>Dwayne:</u> unless you know somebody personally. If we don't have access to indigenous community, we still can start it up. We can ask elders to join our event. I sit in different group and I am happy to ask the elders in his circle what they think and get back to this task group. <u>Srna:</u> we don't have strong relationship with the indigenous community. I am wondering about the future of indigenous newcomer relationship. We wanted to get something started this year. We could talk about what we want to do it together and the main piece we like to do this year. Meanwhile what we need to do now is to learn and build relationship. How do we assess our own indigenous cultural competency now? How to increase it? <u>Zarine:</u> since 2021, we have done presentations every year to the entire 400 LINC students by placement students in different languages (Mandarin, Farsi, Arabic, Spanish). We brought the indigenous artists to talk about indigenous culture in the presentations. We also organized the training for staff. We are proud that every training in our agency has indigenous component, in the past and present and going forward. <u>Srna:</u> How to do it better? <u>Parwana:</u> involving indigenous community is in the initial stage at our agency. At AGM, we invited an indigenous group located in Winnipeg to conduct <i>braving the healing</i> session which was amazing! The elder did opening remarks. He was invited to conduct 8 sessions for clients. Maybe we can invite an elder to do a presentation. We are very keen to connect with them and learn from them. Looking forward to creating the opportunity. <u>Rola:</u> Our agency hired an indigenous coordinator during the pandemic. The coordinator is very strict about nothing about us without us. In the beginning we reflected what's wrong with us while reaching out to indigenous community. We were told that the biggest barrier is Mistrust</p> | |

| | | |
|-----------|--|-------------------------------------|
| | <p>from legal system. High wall exists between indigenous community and the rest. We have made lots of efforts and need to find the right connection and build the relationship upon which we failed. We had two meetings with our Board. The meeting results are: planning our own event, or collaborating with the interested agencies or assigning the staff to attend the already planned indigenous events. The current situation we are facing is no funding, no relationship, and no expertise. Therefore, our final decision is assigning the staff to attend the already planned indigenous events. In all, we are interested in the conference and will check with management team to see if we can support financially. In terms of outreach, I spoke to the indigenous Community Centre located at Leslie and Sheppard, and was told that Less than one percent of indigenous community in North York and most from downtown. I also tried to reach out to the Indigenous centre in Seneca college a few times but failed.</p> <p><u>Dwayne:</u> Huge amount of mistrust exists. They don't self identify and they don't trust the system. It takes a while. Will meet the elder this afternoon.</p> <p><u>Rola:</u> Feel hopeful now. We like to engage with the indigenous people who are willing to connect.</p> <p><u>Dwayne:</u> We should keep it in mind that the work is to help making the things better. It is a learning curve. We should try our best to bring the indigenous people to bridge the gap.</p> <p><u>Parwana:</u> I am here to look for guidance and how to educate our people. Yes, It's best to bring real people in.</p> <p>Srna: We have to understand what they need, not only focusing on what we need. Not about check box.</p> <p>Parwana: we wanted to know what they wanted us to learn from that.</p> <p>Stella: Let ingenuous to teach us. Patient to do that. Respect, respect, and still respect.</p> <p>Ongoing relationship</p> <p>Dwayne: some treaties are retreated. Particular schools there are many things happened now. Understand the background and maybe do one in person session.</p> | |
| Next step | Next meeting: 1 pm-2pm June 27 th , 2024 Discussion continues on a monthly basis. | Isabella to send out meeting invite |