



AGENDA

**Abbotsford Local Immigration Partnership Council
Archway Community Services – Virtual Meeting
Thursday, June 11, 2020 – 2-4 pm**

Attending		Regrets
Manpreet Grewal (co-chair)	Balbir S. Gill (FVRL)	Tanuja Gill (IAT)
Sue Federspiel (City of Abbotsford)	Sharon Crowley (Literacy Matters)	Camilla Boisvert (FHA)
Alison Gutrath (Project mgt)	Amrit K Gill (FVRL)	Jennifer Mpungu (MCC)
Natalia Deros (Project mgt)	Nicola Mooney (UFV)	Michael Spuls (VanCity)
Seydou Keita (IAT)	Sherry Wang (IAT)	
Kanta Naik (SWIS)	Adrian Bontuyan (UFV)	
Ghizlane Laghzaoui (UFV)	Max R. Aranguiz-Peterson (IAT)	
Tammy Johnson (Inasmuch)	Ranni Tolman (Archway)	
Gagan Phulka (IAT)	Stephen Piper (UFV)	

1. Meeting Opening and Introductions

We recognize that we are on the unceded, ancestral and traditional territory of the Semá:th and Máthxwi communities of the Stó:lō territory. We give thanks that we are able to live and work on this land.

Alison Gutrath is chairing the meeting from her home on the traditional, ancestral and unceded Katzie and Kwantlen land.

Welcome to the new members of the Immigrant Advisory Table who are participating in their first ALIP meeting.

2. Agenda Review & Approval

3. Acceptance of Minutes January 23, 2020

4. Presentation: Ranni Tolman, Archway Community Services Settlement Program

Archway's Settlement program has had to adapt to the new reality of COVID. Flexibility around appointments has taken some brainstorming. An increase in remote calls, online applicants, three-way calls with clients, SWIS workers, the school district have become routine. Clients have had a bit of difficulty in adjusting to making firm appointments to see settlement staff, and not dropping in.

Staff work hard to accomplish quick turnarounds, especially in the aid of COVID-related relief, and in aiding parents in supporting their school-aged children with homework.

5. Working Group Updates

- a. Social Integration Working Group virtually met on May 29th. Some topics brought up were the increased reporting of racism since COVID-19 and the adaptation of work and daily life since the pandemic started, Concerns around immigrant families of local inmates and the challenges around supporting their needs was discussed, with follow-up with the John Howard Society and other organizations who work with inmates.



Literacy Matters is planning an online Learn About Series on the topic of online fraud during COVID on September 23. Further information will be sent out closer to the date.

b. Labour Market Integration

Labour Market WG met virtually on May 28th. Previous business discussed included the Employment Mentors dialogue session with clients and employers in the healthcare industry. Feedback from both parties were positive. Further sessions are in the works, although with COVID this may be tricky. A virtual career fair for the Fall is being discussed.

Feedback on the Benefits of Employing Newcomers factsheet was given, and a secondary factsheet to better divide the subjects may be in the works.

In future, Van City may be able to distribute the fact sheet to new business owners with the idea of promoting hiring for diversity.

c. Research, Policy & Practice

The final draft of the student research paper “Stories of Successful Settlement” was presented with feedback for staff in a few extra edits. A short summary was created as a handout. The Benefits to Hiring Newcomers factsheet was reviewed and will be

d. Immigration Advisory Table

The IAT will be meeting in the next few weeks. Five new members were selected from the application process in the winter.

6. Previous Business

- a. Pathways to Prosperity LIP and RIF Conference 2019 Highlights.
Natalia sent out document.

7. New Business

a. 2020-2025 LIP Contract

The federal contract for LIP has been finalized, spanning the timeframe of 2020-2025. This time span gives the project a longer time frame to actualize longterm goals. Funding was granted for the new position of Indigenous Engagement Coordinator to create ties with the Semá:th and Máthxwi First Nations locally, as well as the large urban indigenous and Metis population in Abbotsford.

8. Group Discussion

How has COVID impacted racism towards newcomers and racialized communities?

-The COVID pandemic has brought up a serious dialogue around equity concerning students’ access to technology and services.

-Worries around graduating class, and other school children’s development in education with the switch to online learning at home.



-School District 34 is proactive around communication, especially with newcomer families with language barriers. Serious concerns around the mental health needs of all students, especially those who live in unstable living situations.

-The Sikh community in Abbotsford are originally a minority in India, and are a minority in Canada too, and face discrimination. Personal traumas are being triggered for those who have lived through violence against them as oppressed people in other communities such as India in 1984, and other places as well.

-The BLM movement has highlighted daily acts of discrimination against BIPOC people. These actions range from microaggressions to overt violence. BIPOC folks are feeling more supported and empowered by speaking out with their experiences. On the flip side, more white folks are open to listening and learning since the recent events with the Black Lives Matter movement after the death of George Floyd's death in the states.

-Canada and Canadian police have a lot of work to do regarding brutality against minority groups and BIPOC folks. A recent example of police brutality is the tasing of UBC football player Jamiel Moore-Williams while walking down the street of Vancouver.

-The police have so many roles to fill under the current system: social services, counselling, etc, that they are not prepared for.

-Proper funding for social services and community organizations around mental health, advocacy, and anti-poverty is needed.

-Anti-racism education needs to start in the early years- more funding necessary for this to happen, as those formative years are crucial in fostering healthy communities.

-Racism against those of Asian descent has drastically increased since the COVID pandemic started. Incidents of assault have been reported in Vancouver, and racist comments spoken to those of Asian ethnicity have been reported locally. For the first time, some folks of Asian descent are worried about going out in public.

-There's a lack of open dialogue around issues of racism, power and privilege, and discrimination within workplaces. Training for employers to openly discuss issues they find uncomfortable would be beneficial for BIPOC staff.

- Archway hosted an internal Lunch and Learn on racism- there was a more open discussion of people with lived experience of racism within the agency.



-Literacy Matters is preparing a bulletin against racism, in order to better inform/educate staff and community network. Abbotsford is a diverse city.

-The City of Abbotsford Mayor and Council recently issued a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion message. This gives more freedom to staff to work on projects within the community around that messaging.

-Individual microaggressions against BIPOC folks may feel petty or small, but collectively and daily they add up to systemic violence and racism. More tracking is needed, and more work needs to be done in this regard. Archway Diversity has a form to report incidents of racism and discrimination in order to track local trends. UFV RAN has managed projects such as “Postcards from the Margin” where UFV staff and students reported their experiences of racism on campus.

9. Round Table Updates /Upcoming Events

World Refugee Day Virtual Event, June 20th, 2020. Registration on the MAP BC website. UFV Migration and Citizenship certificate is to be launched soon. More information and a webinar will be promoted over the summer.

Fraser Valley Regional Library is open for book requests- phone lines open Monday-Saturday, 10-5.

Fraser Valley Human Dignity Coalition, June 18th, 6-8 pm, virtual meeting.

Upcoming ALIP Council Dates:

- ALIP Council Meeting –Thursday, October 8th, 2-4 pm
- ALIP Council Meeting –Thursday, January 7th, 2-4 pm.
- ALIP Council Meeting- Thursday, April 8th, 2-4 pm.
- ALIP Council Meeting- Thursday, June 10th, 2-4 pm.