Present: Aspy Ayrton, Joana Fejzaj, Maher Hamade, Mohamed Hamouda, Abdulkhaliq Herati, Dena Honig, David Hosten, Nasir Sarwar, Shuja Qureshi, Hana Pinthus Rotchild, Arvind Sahay, Zafar Siddiqui

Also Present: Maxine Carter, May-Marie Duwai-Sowa, Jaffar Hayat - Access & Equity Division, City of Hamilton, Ahmed Mohammed & Jenny Josipovic - Wesley Urban Ministries; Vivyan Salih - St. Joseph’s Immigrant Women’s Centre

Regrets: Minh Trinh, Thayra Marting, Dustin Rouse, Paul Hoang, Isaac Acquah, Teresa Simms-Obidi, Rita Giancarlo

Absent: Sumaira Khurshid

1. **Declaration of Interest.**
   None declared.

2. **Welcome and Introductions.**
   • All were welcomed and introduced themselves

3. **Approval of Agenda.**

   **S. Qureshi/A. Ayrton**
   To accept the agenda as presented.

   **CARRIED.**

4. **Approval of minutes of meeting June 9, 2011.**

   **A. Ayrton/S. Qureshi**
   To approve the minutes of June 9, 2011, as presented.

   **CARRIED.**

   **Matters Arising from the Minutes**
   • None at this time
5.1 Wesley Urban Ministries: Ahmed Mohammed, Manager, Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) & Jenny Josipovic, Manager, Client Support Services.

Ahmed Mohammed provided a detailed overview of the services provided by Wesley Urban Ministries, specifically the RAP program. He stated that Wesley Urban Ministries strives to be a model and catalyst for social transformation, whereby all members are treated with respect and dignity. With regards to the RAP program, it is designed to provide temporary resettlement services, orientation and life skills support to newcomers, specifically Government Assisted Refugees, in partnership with other community agencies and organizations. Hamilton receives between 300-350 Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) annually. 47 GARS are scheduled to arrive in Hamilton in September and about 39 are children. About 7,500 or more GARs arrive in Canada each year, comprising of more than 60% women and children.

Upon arrival, GARs receive an orientation package, medical treatment (physical examination through Public Health Services) and employment and life skills development. Ahmed identified key priority areas that require assistance and advocacy from the I & R Committee. These include:

- Playing an active role in public awareness about GARs to Council and Municipal leaders
- More participation from ethno-cultural communities and religious groups
- Advocacy for private sponsorship for GARs
- Building relationships with corporate sector, such as real estate, finance, doctors, etc.
- Advocate the establishment of a settlement office in every ESL school facilitated by the Local Immigration Partnership Council

Jenny Josipovic provided an overview of the Client Support Services program, currently operating at 6 sites across the province - Ottawa, Kitchener, London, Hamilton, Windsor and Toronto. The program provides short-term case management and capacity building support to GARs. The focus is primarily on community orientation and facilitating welcoming community adjustment and adaptation for GARs.

Committee members posed several questions to Ahmed and Jenny which included the following:

**Question 1:** How can the I & R Committee help? Dena
Response: Raise awareness, through advocacy, as there is a lack of knowledge and coordination among service providers. Also, one-on-one meetings are best suited to facilitate specific requests, as challenges vary, which limits the ability to be more specific regarding types of assistance sought.

Question 2: What are the apparent gaps in services that need to be addressed?
Response: Partnership with corporate sector, especially housing due to credit and deposit requirements for tenants. Only about 20 apartment buildings, in Hamilton, are accommodating to the financial and credit constraints of GARs. Health conditions are also a challenge, especially among seniors whom, in addition, also suffer from isolation. Ahmed suggested that a Refugee Summit can be organized, in collaboration with Hamilton’s Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) Council, as an opportunity for immigrant-serving organizations and agencies to share ideas and information, as well as address program and service overlap. David Hosten also mentioned that the I & R Committee is also planning a Newcomer Welcome Open House scheduled for November or December, targeting immigrants and refugees where City services staff, management, social services providers and other relevant stakeholders will be invited to participate to meet our newest residents (immigrants and refugees) in a social gathering at City Hall.

Question 3: Who does Wesley Urban Ministries report to, Citizenship & Immigration Canada or YMCA? - Aspy
Response: Wesley Urban Ministries reports to YMCA and YMCA reports to CIC.

Question 4: What can be done to assist youth population with regards to life skills development? - Hana
Response: The RAP addresses this need through life skills training facilitated by a Youth Worker. The YMCA also has a youth program, which GAR youth can participate in and are provided free membership for Y Fitness Centres.

In conclusion, a follow-up visit was requested by Ahmed and Jenny to help respond to the various questions posed by committee members. The I & R Committee was agreeable to this request and will follow up accordingly.

5.2 St. Joseph’s Immigrant Women’s Centre: Vivyan Salir.
Vivyan Salir, lead administrator at St. Joseph’s Immigrant Women’s Centre, provided an outline of their programs and services, which
include orientation, literacy assessment and settlement services to women and families. The Language Instruction, for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and employment facilitation programs, is the main programs coordinated at the centre and they provide bus tickets and childminding for women, to encourage participation. The centre works closely with Wesley Urban Ministries and other settlement agencies, to provide integration services to clients.

Committee members posed several questions to Vivyan which included the following:

**Question 1:** What are the specific challenges facing St. Joseph’s Immigrant Women’s Centre, as the services seems to be generic to what other settlement agencies provide? - Nasir

**Response:** Vivyan responded that challenges vary, which makes it difficult to be specific. David Hosten also mentioned that having various settlement agencies performing similar tasks is a risk management strategy now being implemented by CIC to avert a future collapse of services, as a result of the incident with SISO. It is CIC’s modernization of service delivery model, whereby several services are provided under one umbrella. This averts competition and promotes collaboration among agencies.

**Question 2:** Does St. Joseph’s Immigrant Women’s Centre provide services to men? - Aspy

**Response:** Yes. Though, Aspy observed that there appears to be a duplication of services and the name of the organization is misleading if it provides services to men. Vivyan reiterated that historically, the centre was developed to provide services to women but due to evolving needs, services are now provided to men based on need, as technically, men also comprise part of the family.

**Question 3:** Has St. Joseph’s Immigrant Women’s Centre taken over SISO? - Mohamed

**Response:** No, St. Joseph’s has simply expanded its settlement services.

**Question 4:** How does St. Joseph’s Immigrant Women’s decide what agencies clients are referred to avoid duplication of services? - Aspy

**Response:** There is no particular mechanism. All referrals are made in the best interest of the client.

The Committee members thanked Vivyan for her presentation.
6. **Business Items.**

6.1.1 **Work Plan & Priorities.**
Discussion and review of work plan – **Deferred**

6.1.2 **Newcomer Guide**
Committee members were advised to send their information, feedback and reviews to Maxine Carter.

6.1.3. **Newcomer Welcome Open House – planning.**
A planning committee was formed to plan the event. Members include Nasir Sarwar, Hana Pinthus Rotchild, Mohamed Hamouda, Maher Hamade. Maxine will follow up with an e-mail, suggesting meeting dates.

6.2. **Volunteer Orientation- New Section insert .**
Maxine handed out an insert to each member and reminded them to include it in their Volunteer Orientation Manual for future reference.

7. **Review and comment on reports, legislation and studies.**
Deferred.

8. **Correspondence/Current affairs – Deferred.**
8.1 Housing and Homelessness Action Plan- Community Engagement
8.2 Settlement Services Information

9. **New Business.**
9.1 Information Sharing Protocol
This matter will be discussed, in more detail, at the October meeting. In the meantime, committee members can send all e-mails and information for circulation, to Maxine Carter, for review.

10. **Next Meeting Date.**
The next meeting will be held on October 13, 2011.

11. **Adjournment.**
The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.