

# Advancing Cultural Diversity in Volunteer Management (519 and 905 Areas)



Deciding on "Positive and Possible Actions" to build the capacity of our organizations (Halton Community Dialogue – Nov. 13, 2007)

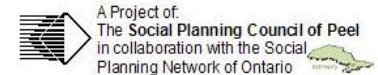
*February 2008*

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## What is the e-Newsletter all about?

Welcome to the first edition of the e-Newsletter for the "Advancing Cultural Diversity in Volunteer Management" project! Our local partners throughout the 519 and 905 areas will be forwarding future editions on a regular basis throughout the duration of the Project. Our intent is not only to keep you informed of Project developments but to also pass on to you helpful resources and information to support your organization's efforts to advance cultural diversity in volunteer management.



Funded by:



## Report on the Project's first four Community Dialogues

	Durham	Halton	Kitchener-Waterloo	Cambridge
<b>Date</b>	Nov 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2007	Nov 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2007	Nov 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2007	Nov 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2007
<b>Host</b>	Community Development Council of Durham	Community Development Halton/ Volunteer Halton/ Halton Multi-cultural Council	Social Planning Council of K-W and the Volunteer Action Centre of K-W and Area	Social Planning Council of Cambridge & North Dumfries and United Way of Cambridge & North Dumfries
<b># of Participants</b>	25	25	33	13
<b># of Survey Respondents</b>	27	38	46	

*Cont'd on p 3*

## Introducing the Project Team



Project Team (l-r): Peter Clutterbuck, Louise Chatterton Luchuk, Paula DeCoito, Anna Przychodzki



**Paula DeCoito** is the Executive Director of the Social Planning Council of Peel. The provincial Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration asked Paula's organization to lead the Project because of its record of research and development on diversity competence and Paula's leadership on diversity issues. Paula is a sociologist with over 25 years of executive management experience in the Canadian non-profit sector and the field of diversity and equity issues. She is the co-author of several recent publications on diversity management and the non-profit sector. Paula has led many research and training projects on diversity management, anti-oppression, settlement services and cross-cultural communication.

**Peter Clutterbuck** is the Project Manager overseeing the planning and organization of the project and serving as Facilitator of the Community Dialogues. Peter performs this role on behalf of the Social Planning Network of Ontario (SPNO), which has been contracted for this service by the Social Planning Council of Peel. Peter has 35 years experience working in the non-profit sector at the local, provincial and national levels both in senior management and project management positions. He is also an active community volunteer, currently chairing the development of an affordable housing project in a culturally diverse community in Toronto.



**Anna Przychodzki** is the Project Assistant carrying out logistical organizing of Community Regional Dialogues and Regional Forums. (Anna is performing this role on behalf of the SPNO.) Anna has worked for five years in a wide range of local community development activities in both a voluntary and professional capacity. In the summer of 2006 she was the "on the ground" organizer of a successful grassroots campaign to defeat the development of an incinerator for nuclear waste in her home town of Brampton.

**Louise Chatterton Luchuk** is the Researcher/Writer on the Project team. Louise combines her love of writing with eight years of consulting work with local, provincial and national non-profit organizations. When not writing, training or consulting you can find Louise out volunteering in her home community of Kingston, Ontario.



Kitchener-Waterloo Community Dialogue – November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007

## Community Dialogues *cont'd from p 1*

These are some of the major issues and needs raised by Community Dialogue participants in the first four dialogues:

### Recruitment

- How do we access culturally diverse volunteers?
- We need to “sell” volunteerism in a new way – using strategic, targeted approach
- The importance of adapting and marketing volunteerism as a vehicle to employment
- Failure to connect – “volunteers don't know where we are and we don't know how to say we're here”
- Organizations with limited experience in addressing anti-oppression, diversity and inclusion are often afraid of inadvertently being offensive or doing something illegal, and they become hesitant to act
- Some organizations still asking if they want to recruit diverse volunteers

### Cultural Understandings of “Volunteerism” (or lack of)

- Volunteerism is not a concept that is well understood
- New Canadians may be unfamiliar with philosophies and perspectives of Canadian organizations (e.g. feminist oriented organizations)
- The importance of understanding that even though volunteer work is unpaid, there are still important expectations of volunteers (a frequent misunderstanding).

### Creating Meaningful Volunteer Roles

- Make volunteer opportunities meaningful and match skills and needs. Newcomers arrive with education and skills. A volunteer opportunity to make photocopies is not meaningful nor will it help a newcomer move forward – match roles to their capabilities

### Partnering/Networking

- The need for partnering/networking between organizations *and* with organizations that support New Canadians

### Important Role of Volunteer Centres, Professional Associations for Managers of Volunteers, Paid Position Dedicated to the Professional Management of Volunteers

### Internal Capacity

- Training needed for working with diverse populations
- Financial limits (and resulting capacity limits) to support advancing cultural diversity in volunteer management
- Recruiting and developing a diverse work force.

### Creating a Welcoming Environment Within an Organization

- Confronting cultural and systemic prejudice
- Resistance to training by staff and volunteers (“I don't need it. I'm not a racist.”)
- Formal processes can be intimidating and discouraging for New Canadian volunteers.
- Hesitancies by New Canadians re: co-ed programs, culturally mixed groups or events with Canadian food, etc.
- No reciprocation – do we attend the functions of culturally diverse groups? We want them to be part of our community, but we have to be part of their community as well
- It's important to assess whether an agency's service is actually needed by diverse communities

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*Web Site:*

**Coming soon!**

*Advancing Cultural  
Diversity in Volunteer  
Management  
(519 and 905 Areas)*

## Community Dialogues *cont'd from p 3*

### Working Differently

- Adapting traditional ways of doing things
- Success metrics (e.g. **volunteer retention equals success**). **For example: The idea that volunteer retention equals success.** But if we want to meet the needs of diverse populations, we may have to reconsider our notions of success. Case in point: one volunteer wanted to improve her English and job shadow. Once she was able to find employment, she moved on. Statistically, it looked like a failure, because the organization didn't retain her. From another perspective, we met her needs, so it was a success.
- Learning from New Canadians rather than assuming a teaching role
- Organizational openness to change

### Screening New Canadians

- Reference checks can be difficult for New Canadians
- Police checks can be intimidating

### Language and Communications Barriers to Volunteer Recruitment and Support

### Other Dimensions of Diversity

- What about other aspects of diversity (e.g. LGBT, disability)? Will the project include these?

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The final four Community Dialogues (York, London, Guelph and Peel) are scheduled during February and March.

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Advancing Cultural Diversity in Volunteer Management is an Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) funded project. The Social Planning Council of Peel is coordinating this project in selected communities in the 519 and 905 areas.

Advancing Cultural Diversity in Volunteer Management is a three-year initiative developing the organizational and community capacity of local partners in the 519 and 905 areas to engage and support a more culturally diverse volunteer base.