



ISTEP

**Immigrant Settlement Transition,
Employment and Partnerships
“ A Community Partnership at Work”**



Grand Erie Training And Adjustment Board
Commission de formation et d'adaptation de la main-d'oeuvre du Grand Erie

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Introduction

Newcomers from over 100 countries, speaking over 70 languages call Grand Erie home. Arriving primarily from Mexico, United Kingdom, People's Republic of China, India, Pakistan, Viet Nam, South Korea, Poland, the variety of language, cultural, and educational backgrounds create the need for good social and employment supports. Without these types of programs, transition to the Canadian workplace is difficult.

During consultations in 2007 and 2008, the Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk community identified several challenges for newcomers.

1. The lack of skills training and educational bridging programs available to immigrants within the region
2. A lack of clear, comprehensive information about the services available
3. A lack of *advanced* workplace language training
4. The absence of a immigrant/community-based advisory

In recognition of the needs identified, the community agreed to establish a taskforce comprised of immigrant and community stakeholders to explore solutions to the above issues, and to raise the publics' awareness of the talents, skills, and contributions immigrants make to vibrant communities.

Our Name

*Immigrant Settlement
Transition, Employment
and Partnerships*

Sometimes a name says it all. ISTEP reflects the vision, the mission and the objectives of the committee.



The Committee

In April 2007 a core working group, comprised of Ontario Works – Brantford.Brant, Y-Immigrant Settlement Services, The Brantford Mosque, GETAB, TD Canada Trust, and newcomers, Emily Bolyea-Kyere, Collins Yaw Kyere, and Bharati Sethi worked together to develop a membership list, taskforce name, and terms of reference.

Committee Members	
Karen Williamson	Y Immigrant Settlement Services
Peter Van Meerbergen	Canada Trust
Sharon Rodobolski	Community Resource Services
Bharati Sethi	Newcomer, Master's Student (Researcher)
Emily Bolyea-Kyere	Newcomer
Collins Yaw-Kyere	Newcomer
Vinesh Bhagat	Newcomer
Rashda Rana	Newcomer
Jo-Anne Procter	Mohawk College
Nancy Huffman	Mohawk College-Employment Assessment Centre
Wanda Jacobs	Fanshawe College
Edward Shizha	Wilfrid Laurier University
Pearl Keba	Ontario Works Brant
Dr. Patricia Franklin	Probation and Parole
Anita Menon	Newcomer
Marlies Redekop	Grand Erie District School Board
Cindy Doyle	Training Visions
Carrie Sinkowski	Sexual Assault Centre

Our Vision

ISTEP will help newcomers in the City of Brantford, and the Counties of Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk to settle comfortably and to reach their maximum potential

Our Mission

ISTEP will support the successful integration of immigrants into our communities by facilitating the sharing of information and establishing diverse, effective partnerships

Our Objectives

ISTEP shall:

1. Advise on issues relating to the immigrant settlement in the following areas:
 - Social
 - Professional
 - Educational
 - Employment
2. Assist communities to develop and implement programs to orient newcomers to life in Canada especially in Brantford and the counties of Brant, Haldimand & Norfolk
3. Identify the gaps in services for newcomers and create solutions
4. Create strategies to increase awareness of services that are available in the community for newcomers
5. Develop strategies to increase cultural sensitivity and of adaptation challenges associated with the influx of newcomers
6. Evaluate ISTEP's progress annually or on an "as-needed" basis

A Work In-Progress

This dedicated committee has met seven times since April, thoughtfully considering their role, the outcomes they wish to accomplish, and strategies to achieve their goals.

Objective

Assist communities to develop and implement programs to orient newcomers to life in Canada

In late spring of 2007, the City of Brantford received funding to develop an "information portal" to attract newcomers to the region, and to provide immigrants and their families with the resources and information needed to transition successfully. **ISTEP** serves as the formal advisory, providing information and feedback on content, usability, and appearance.

Objective

Identify the gaps in services for newcomers and create solutions

As part of her Master's practicum, Bharati Sethi, newcomer and committee member is undertaking a comprehensive gaps analysis. Through a series of interviews, focus groups, and qualitative research, Bharati will identify gaps in the area of employment, training, education, social, and community supports. The project will run from March through April and will bring together a spectrum of stakeholder groups from the tri-county area.

Objective

Develop strategies to increase cultural sensitivity and of adaptation challenges associated with the influx of newcomers

ISTEP provides support and encouragement to other community partnerships that enhance the integration of newcomers into our local communities. Examples of such partnerships include

Women Welcoming Diversity – hosted by the Y Immigrant Settlement Services, women from diverse cultural backgrounds join together monthly to learn about Canada's employment and social culture. The lively, informative evenings provide women the opportunity to exchange ideas, build friendships, and practice English skills and network.

Host Program – hosted by Y Immigrant Settlement Services, the host program provides new immigrants and their families with a "mentor" individual and/or family.

The Road Ahead

ISTEP will continue to grow its' membership. Preliminary research indicates the need for continued work in the area of service delivery – particularly in the areas of bridging programs, advanced language skills, and exposure to the Canadian workplace.

We anticipate that the gaps analysis will provide valuable data for informed planning and decision-making.

We invite all interested community members in joining ISTEP.

For more information, call Jill Halyk, Executive Director, GETAB at 519 756 1116 or email j.halyk@on.aibn.com