



COALITION ON RICHER DIVERSITY (CORD)
Newfoundland and Labrador Diversity and Immigration Umbrella
Organization

Our mission is to increase the capacity & well-being of NL

1st Solutions Groups (SG) Meeting – Report

SG Meeting Summary

The Coalition on Richer Diversity (CORD) hosted its first Solutions Groups meeting on Monday February 18, 2008 at the Lantern on Barnes Road to offer members of the community an opportunity to kick off the Solutions Groups process. Due to poor weather conditions the turnout was modest, but significant progress was made nevertheless.

The evening began with a short address & exercise: what do you know about CORD? Instead of further clarifying the various aspects that make up CORD Fred gave a short introduction about the aims of the solutions groups and what CORD had envisioned to achieve with this meeting. Then Jose asked the participants to outline their impressions and understanding of CORD such as CORD's mission, vision, aims, appreciative approach and other key concepts. The aim was to make people realize how much they know about CORD & put them more at ease as well as inform new participants about CORD much like a mentoring process. (For more information about CORD check out: <http://www.cancord.org>)

Attendance: 10 + 2 facilitators

To take the next step in the SG's process Jose introduced the ideas behind the dot-mocracy process, further explained by Maria, and highlighted the dot-mocracy outcomes from the Diversity Winter Event's (DWE) **World Café Exercise** this past January – what DWE participants had identified as the top priorities (To view the dot-mocracy process and outcomes, go to CORD's website: <http://www.cancord.org>)

The aim to kick off the SGs meeting was to come up with an action plan for **one** of the top issues:
What to do - Who can do it - How can it be accomplished - Time lines

From the 6 Solutions Groups sheets on each table participants chose the SG they most identified with, determined the most important topic and then conferred with each other, brainstormed and identified solutions to the chosen issue. Ideas and recommendations were drafted including resources, people, organizations and time lines. Finally, a spokes person was chosen to present the outcomes to the plenary

Outcomes from SG conferring

Solutions Group – Community (Derek James, Maria Callahan, Fred Eckert-Maret)

Topic: How can we reach people where they live?

SG members focused on 1 neighbourhood with a highly diverse demographic population, Rabbittown

Step 1

Assess the correct demographics of the area (Who) – (e.g. CSC website) (research – check available public sources: library, government sources, public records, and census)

Identify potential resources for partnering – put together a team of volunteers – involve International Students Association – politicians

Step 2

Explore partnering opportunities with existing organization – first for information gathering, fact finding, personal experiences – these include Community Centre personnel & Board Members, ACANL, MWONL, African Association, Seniors Resource Centre (SRC), identify community leaders, activists, professionals (MDs, public health nurses, social workers, home care workers, youth and sports groups (Choices for Youth), local schools, Tenants Association, Community Centre Alliance, Vibrant Communities, worship centres, Wellness Coalition, etc)

Step 3

Explore communications channels – bulletin boards, neighbourhood newsletters, grocery & corner stores, *Same Page Magazine*. etc. to spread the word (possibly going door to door with well-known community members or acquaintances, translators,

Step 4

Strategy & Planning (How)

Door to door campaign

Media – spread the word

Translators

Surveys

Info Sessions

Identify & involve community leaders

Involve low income housing areas

Book available space for welcoming/information session – perhaps a cultural night for all community members

Step 5

Implement findings

Solutions Group – Education

(Barbara Burnaby, Danielle McNicholas,
Keith Davis, Tom Dawe, Terry Rielly)

Summary: As at least four of those present had some experience with the teaching of English to newly arrived persons to NL, the focus was on this very issue.

It was decided that

- a) A list of resources and programs should be compiled. This would include ESL programs and other language education programs for people without a full knowledge of the English language. Which ones liaise with one another? Are there duplications? What are the gaps?
- b) Out of the above establish a needs assessment for the different groups of people. i.e. children, students enrolled in schools, adults...
- c) Research to be done with immigrants who have stayed. Find out their personal experiences, i.e. what worked well / what were the challenges / how could the system be improved...
- d) Find funding for the proposal that Barbara has been a part of in designing. The ALKC proposal.
- e) Get a list of the others that were interested in the Education Solutions Group along with contact information to arrange a follow-up meeting with same.

Solutions Group – Solutions Structuring

(Judy Power, Sherril Gilbert,
John Kamara)

This group looked at these areas:

Immigrant Retention
Research
Outreach

1. Retention topic based on the DWE dot-mocracy (Friday Jan. 18th) outcome: Acknowledge those who came & stayed and what worked for them.
 - a. Food Security Network proposal: reasons for retention, why do people stay? Why do they go?
 - b. Retention topic based on the DWE dot-mocracy (Saturday Jan. 19th) outcome: Retention is a by-product of mentoring, mediation, advocacy and support....
 - c. Education plays a big part – exchange of information between newcomers and long-time residents
2. Outreach
 - a. Advocating for more cultural sensitivity & health
 - b. Research would be useful for both outreach and retention
 - c. Meeting with department of Immigration for people to tell their story