

**REPORT OF PROGRAM EVALUATION OF  
YORK REGION'S INCLUSIVITY ACTION PLAN**

**December, 2007**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Human Services Planning Coalition (HSPC) of York Region is a co-ordinating body established to enact long-term, sustainable integrated planning and funding of human services in the York Region. The HSPC launched the Inclusivity Action Plan (IAP) in May, 2005, in recognition of the rapid growth and changing demographics of York Region. In the autumn of 2007, near the conclusion of the IAP, the IAP Steering Committee requested a program evaluation in order to advance service delivery in the region, and contribute to the understanding of Best Practices Models for an inclusivity plan. The program evaluation was conducted from October to December, 2007, and is summarized in this report.

The goal of the IAP was to make York Region more ethno-culturally inclusive by working with service providers on three themes: Improving communication between service providers and users; increasing ethno-cultural awareness in the region; and promoting ethno-cultural representation in human service agencies. The purpose of this program evaluation was to evaluate the extent to which the IAP met these goals.

The evaluation process included four principal activities: development and a brief pilot testing of the instruments; collection of the data; review of the data; and the writing of this report by a team of researchers at York University. The instruments used included document reviews, structured interviews, focus groups, surveys, and minutes of the Blue Sky Retreat. The majority of the data collection source emanated from members of the IAP Steering Committee, HSPC, and Working Groups, the Program Director, and the Program Leader.

The evaluation provided key informants' perspectives on how effective the program has been in accomplishing what it intended to do. Implementation of the IAP through its 6 Working Groups achieved several important outputs related to the IAP's goals. These included launching a Welcome Centre that was designed to improve service delivery for newcomers to York Region; documenting and increasing English Language Development classes; raising awareness of the efforts and outcomes of the IAP; developing a plan to raise awareness of diversity issues in the schools; developing plans for increasing civic engagement of diverse community members by promoting and facilitating their participation in the voluntary sector; and developing and implementing a program to promote more inclusive organizations.

A key indicator of the success of the IAP was the level of relationship building that evolved amongst different levels of government, politicians, service providers, human service stakeholders and community members, leading to strong partnership and collaborative work in the area of inclusivity. The support and leadership of the HSPC has been instrumental in increasing the credibility and visibility of the IAP with community partners, funders, and other agencies and governing bodies, both within and outside of York Region. Another key indicator of success was the increasing visibility and awareness of the IAP by organizations both in and beyond York Region, as indicated by the number of requests for information, external participation in the IAP Blue Sky

Retreat, and by reports that municipalities and organizations are developing IAP-type models of their own. From these observations, it appears that the IAP has begun the work of promoting ethno-cultural awareness in York Region and securing partnerships to advance project goals and activities.

The evaluation also revealed unintended outcomes of the implementation of the IAP. Although the definition of diversity encompassed the many dimensions of diversity, due to the constraints of time and resources, the IAP focused on ethno-cultural diversity. One unintended outcome of this focus was the perception by some respondents that since some dimensions of difference (e.g., sexual orientation) were not addressed, there were different levels of inclusion for different categories of diversity; in effect, a subtle form of exclusion. Another unintended outcome was a lack of communication between the Working Groups, which each tended to focus on only their own specific goals.

The overall results of this evaluation suggest that the IAP has demonstrated early success in York Region in terms of its outputs. With the exception of evidence of increased awareness, however, evaluation of whether the IAP has met its intended outcomes is difficult to document. One measure of the program's success, however, is that there is a great deal of support and enthusiasm for efforts to continue the IAP, and to extend its reach to the public, to other communities, and to other sectors.

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## **ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROGRAM BACKGROUND**

### **York Region Inclusivity Action Plan**

The Human Services Planning Coalition (HSPC) of York Region is a co-ordinating body established to enact long-term, sustainable integrated planning and funding of human services in the York Region. HSPC partners include representatives of government, service provider organizations, the non-profit sector, and community members. In January, 2004, in recognition of York Region's rapid growth and changing demographics, the HSPC of York Region established a task force to consider options for promoting ethnic inclusivity. In May, 2005, following extensive consultation with stakeholders and a planning summit, the HSPC launched the Inclusivity Action Plan (IAP), with the goal of mobilizing York Region human service providers to work together to make York Region and ethno-culturally inclusive community. The IAP had three thematic objectives

- Improving Communication between Services Providers and Users
- Creating Ethno-Cultural Awareness in York Region
- Promoting Ethno-Cultural Representation in Human Service Agencies

In October, 2007, as the IAP was nearing its completion, the Steering Committee of the IAP commissioned York University to conduct a Program Evaluation of the Inclusivity Action Plan. The goal of this formative program evaluation of the York Region Inclusivity Action Plan was to ensure accountability for the delivery of the IAP to its sponsors, i.e., the Human Services Planning Coalition, and to the Regional Municipality of York, participants, and stakeholders of the IAP. The program evaluation was also intended to contribute to the understanding of Best Practices Models for an inclusivity plan. A comprehensive program evaluation was therefore conducted and is summarized in this report.

## **GOAL OF PROGRAM EVALUATION**

Program evaluation is a systematic investigation of the worth or merit of a program (Joint Committee Evaluation in Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994). It is "the identification, clarification, and application of defensible criteria to determine an evaluation object's value, quality, utility, effectiveness, or significance in relation to those criteria" (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004, p. 5). A program's accountability includes meeting program objectives and evaluating the effectiveness of the program, making program evaluation a key element of maintaining program accountability.

Accountability indicators can be grouped according to Stufflebeam's CIPP model into four categories: Context, Inputs, Process and Product or outcomes (Stufflebeam, 2000). A context evaluation collects information on the stakeholders' needs and rationale of the program, the organizational strengths, and the opportunities for strengthening the program to determine the goals and objectives of the program. This type of evaluation contributes to planning decisions. Input evaluations collect data on how the human and physical resources are allocated to support a program, and assess alternative approaches for cost-effectiveness and give information for structuring decisions. Process evaluations

assess the implementation of the program to detect or predict defects in the program design. Lastly, product evaluations identify and assess both the intended and unintended outcomes of the program by comparing the outcomes to the identified needs of the stakeholders, therefore contributing to possible recycling decisions (Stufflebeam, 2000, 2003).

One main purpose of accountability measures is to identify successes and failures of the performance of a program. Accordingly, for the current evaluation, a program evaluation matrix was developed based on the CIPP model (Stufflebeam 1983). CIPP corresponds to the core parts of the model, which are C (context), I (input), P (process) and P (product) evaluation. “The CIPP Evaluation Model is a comprehensive framework for guiding evaluations of programs, projects, personnel, products, institutions, and systems” (Stufflebeam, 2002).

The findings of this evaluation can be used to:

- strengthen relationships;
- strengthen the program design and delivery;
- maintain a record of the program’s progress; and,
- report on the program’s progress to other stakeholders (Stufflebeam, 2002).

Information was collected via a variety of data collection methods including document reviews and participants’ responses to the matrix questions/sub-questions.

This evaluation was participatory where possible as this embodies a collaborative process that leads to interaction between the evaluator(s) and the community or stakeholders in order to make the results fully comprehensible. The evaluators engaged in frequent communication with the Program Director of York Region responsible for Human Services Planning and the Program Leader of the IAP. In addition, there was communication with the IAP Steering Committee to guide this evaluation.

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION DESIGN**

Given the time constraints placed on this evaluation, the focus was on a product evaluation but, where possible and/or necessary, we included the broader evaluative framework of Context, Inputs, Process and Products. Focusing on Context, Inputs, Process and Products ensures depth as well as breadth given the diverse data collection methods.

### **Program Evaluation Questions**

The program evaluation questions are divided into the four areas noted above: Context, Inputs, Process and Outcomes (See matrix in Appendix A). Different questions were asked of different stakeholders, since not all stakeholders would have opinions or information about all aspects of the evaluation. The sources of answers to the questions are also indicated in the matrix.

## **SAMPLE**

Inclusion of all stakeholders in a participatory evaluation ensures relevancy, validity, fairness, and the utility of the evaluation (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994). We also value the input of stakeholders from a formative perspective so that current participants benefit from the evaluation project and ongoing quality improvement can occur. Without stakeholders' input, the evaluation may focus on areas that do not reflect stakeholders' concerns (Chen, 2002). In keeping with these values, the following list of stakeholders was initially proposed. Due to the stage of the IAP and time constraints, however, not all of the stakeholders were accessed. In particular, it quickly became clear that accessing community members at this point in the IAP was premature.

### List of Stakeholders/Key Informants

- Members of HSPC
- Member of Working Groups
- Members of IAP Group/Steering Committee
- Program Director
- Program Manager
- Program Leader
- Program Staff
- Human Service Providers (only sampled as members of working groups)
- Clients/Service Users (were not part of data collection)
- Community Members (were not part of data collection)
- Member Organizations (only sampled as members of working groups)

### Documents Reviewed

- Inclusivity Action Plan Proposal
- Road to Inclusivity: Six Proposed Actions for York Region
- Relevant minutes from HSPC meetings
- Minutes of IAP Steering Committee
- Minutes of Working Groups
- Written Reports
- Summit Meeting report
- IAP Membership list
- IAP Accomplishments
- IAP Projects and upcoming activities
- Working Group 5 inventory survey on volunteer board of directors
- Minutes of Blue Sky Retreat

## **METHODS AND MATERIALS**

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were developed to give richness to the database and to maximize the results of the evaluation. These methods included document reviews, interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Data and method triangulation were used to validate conclusions and to enrich understanding of the delivery of this IAP.

### Development of Measures

A preliminary review of the documents was used to generate a set of questions that focused primarily on outputs, and short-term and long-term outcomes. These were separated into questions that focused on the overall IAP goals and those that focused on the goals of the six individual Themes. It was noted that the Welcome Centre was undergoing an extensive program evaluation of its own, so questions for this particular theme were kept to a minimum.

A list of all reasonable sources of information was then generated. This list included the key informants and stakeholders listed in the Sample section, above, and whatever documents had been generated that relate to the IAP. It was expected that additional documents would be discovered as the evaluation progressed and these were included in the evaluation as they were uncovered.

The questions were then reviewed in light of the list of available information sources and the short time frame. Wherever answers were available from existing documents, these written materials took priority. Where the documents could not address the questions, key informants and stakeholders were approached.

It was intended that data would be collected from the community, and that the survey would also be translated into Mandarin and Urdu, and then back-translated into English to confirm the validity of the translation (Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997), but because the IAP was not yet targeted at the community, this data collection was not done.

Focus groups were planned for exploring outputs and outcomes with the working groups and steering committee. Focus groups allow for the exploration of key themes, interactions around these themes. They also allow exploration of how different groups of stakeholders perceive the outputs and outcomes being evaluated, and why (Freeman, 2006; Kreuger & Casey, 2000). Individual interviews were planned for in-depth explorations not only of the outputs and outcomes, but also the context, input and goals (Berg, 2007). Written (or web-based) questionnaires were developed to allow us to ask more specific questions about attitudes, beliefs and experiences. They are easy to distribute and collect, allowing access a large number of respondents (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991).

### Pilot Testing the Measures

The original set of questions was presented to the Project Director, Project Leader, and an additional member of one of the Working Groups for feedback to confirm their relevance and that all critical questions have been included. The results of these consultations were used to refine subsequent questions to the Working Groups.

Throughout the process, materials were modified based on previous results. The intention was to have the community surveys collected last and so that they would be most influenced by the insights of key informants. As noted above, though, the community survey part of the evaluation was not conducted following reports from several key informants that the community was not yet involved in the IAP program.

## Data Collection

Documents collected included minutes of meetings of the HSPC, the IAP Steering Committee, and the Working Groups; written reports and publications; and the Summit Report on the Road to Inclusivity. On November 28, 2007, a Blue Sky Retreat was held for participants and stakeholders of the IAP to celebrate IAP achievements, discuss challenges, and envision another IAP. A total of 55 participants reported on achievements, challenges, and future goals of the IAP. Because of the summative and reflective nature of this meeting, the minutes of the Blue Sky Retreat played a key role in the evaluation.

Information from key informants and stakeholders was solicited in one of three ways: individual interviews (in person or by phone) (N = 14); two focus group (N = 2 and N = 5); and questionnaires (web-based) (N = 14), of whom only 6 participants completed the quantitative survey. Response rates were low. All members of the HSPC (N = 46), IAP Steering Committee (N = 21) and the 6 Working Groups were asked to participate (N = 52). Thirty-five participants completed a survey and/or were interviewed or participated in a focus group for a response rate of 29.4%.

Our intention was to survey the Steering Committee, Working Groups and service providers using focus groups and supplementary questionnaires, to get responses to specific questions that do not require the focus group approach, but also to get confirmation of some of the results that are obtained from the focus groups. In the end, however, the majority of the members of the Working Groups opted to have individual phone interviews rather than focus groups because of scheduling difficulties.

Access to the Working Groups, Steering Committee and HSPC was facilitated by the Program Director and Program Leader. Many members of the Working Groups were also service providers, or worked in service agencies, so to some extent, service providers were sampled. However, we were unable to arrange for focus groups with service providers outside of those who were members of the Working Groups because of time constraints on the evaluation.

An additional survey was sent to chairs of Working Groups requesting a list of group outputs and outcomes. This was sent by e-mail as an attachment, with a request that chairs complete the survey and e-mail the attachment back. Three of the 6 Chairs returned these surveys.

Finally, a brief open-ended survey was created for external respondents who had expressed interest in and knowledge of the IAP, through their participation in the Blue Sky retreat. This was distributed to 10 potential respondents via e-mail by the Program Leader and responses could be sent back to the Program Leader or the Program Evaluation Team. Unfortunately, none of these surveys were returned.

Table 1. Data Collection Method, Date and Sample Source

| Method of Data Collection | Date of Collection                                          | Source                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Document Review           | October 25 to Dec 1, 2007                                   | Working Groups Minutes, Work plans, Publications, Minutes, Agendas, Terms of Reference<br>IAP Steering Committee Publications Minutes, Agendas<br>HSPC Agendas, Minutes                                                                                  |
| Focus Group               | November 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2007                             | Program Leader, Program Director                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                           | November 13, 2007                                           | Working Group 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Interviews                | November 7 <sup>th</sup> to December 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2007 | 2 Members of Working Group 1<br>0 Members of Working Group 2<br>1 Members of Working Group 3<br>1 Members of Working Group 4<br>0 Members of Working Group 5<br>3 Members of Working Group 6<br>3 Members of HSPC<br>4 Members of IAP Steering Committee |
| Surveys                   | November 9 <sup>th</sup> to December 8 <sup>th</sup> 2007   | 2 Members of Working Group 1<br>1 Members of Working Group 2<br>2 Members of Working Group 3<br>1 Members of Working Group 4<br>0 Members of Working Group 5<br>1 Members of Working Group 6<br>5 of HSPC<br>1 IAP Steering Committee                    |
| Blue Sky Retreat          | November 27, 2007                                           | Minutes and report of meeting                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

nb. Numbers across the different categories exceeds the number of respondents, as respondents were often members of more than one category, and are represented in each category if they explicitly addressed each category in their responses.

### DATA ANALYSIS

The original intention had been to use both descriptive and inferential statistics to explore survey responses, and to report findings using both tabular and graphic means. However, only 6 participants responded to the quantitative questions. As a result, the overall means on questions will be reported below, but no further analyses will be conducted. This also limits the usefulness of tables and figures to explore relationships between variables.

Data from document reviews, such as minutes from meetings, reports, publications, and the Blue Sky Retreat report were reviewed and summarized. Qualitative data from interviews/focus groups were transcribed. Interpretive, narrative, and exploratory/descriptive approaches were used to analyze transcripts. Direct quotations and stories from participants about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts were analyzed and included in the evaluation report, with a particular emphasis on

modifications to be made to the IAP for future years, and to develop a Best Practice Model.

#### Document Reviews

Documents were submitted to a content analysis, a deductive process that involved looking for specific instances of narrative data to illustrate a predetermined content area or theme (Norwood 2000). The authors of the report analyzed the data with one member of the research team, developed the initial themes independently, and then collaborated to ensure the content categories accurately reflected the data.

#### Structured Interviews and Focus Groups

A conceptual analysis was conducted of the phone interviews, focus groups and on-line open-ended survey responses, with coding of the texts for themes using NVivo software. The first author developed a primary coding scheme and reviewed it with the second author, who refined and added to the scheme. The first author and a research team member coded interviews separately but met to discuss and review coding. Any disagreement regarding coding was resolved through discussion between the coders and the second author. Approximately 25% of the coding was conducted by both to confirm the validity of the coding.

## **RESULTS**

#### Document Reviews

All available documents from January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005 onwards were retrieved through the internet, and through archives of meetings and group proceedings. As intended, this included publications of the IAP and HSPC, minutes of meetings, agendas of meetings, terms of reference for Working Groups, Working Group work plans and, where available, media reports. The assistance of the Program Leader was invaluable in the collection of these materials.

#### Interviews

Structured interviews were conducted from November – December 2007. The participants included members of each Working Group, the Program Manager, members of the HSPC, and members of the IAP Steering Committee (who were also members of their respective Working Groups). The interviews were conducted by phone by members of the Program Evaluation Team and recorded for verbatim transcription of participants' responses.

#### Focus Groups

Focus groups were arranged for whichever committees were available to meet for this purpose. Only two focus groups were conducted: one with the Program Director and Program Leader (N = 2), and the second with Working Group 3 (N = 5). The former was conducted by phone and the latter in person. In both cases, the focus group proceedings were recorded and transcribed verbatim by a member of the Program Evaluation Team

#### Surveys

A separate survey was developed for each response group: HSPC, IAP Steering

Committee and each of the six Working Groups, for a total of 8 different surveys. Many individuals belonged to more than one of these groups, but they received only one of the surveys (see Table 1).

These surveys existed in two on-line forms. Closed ended survey questions that were comprised of several rating scales were used to obtain quantitative measures of participants' perceptions of the success of the IAP structure, goals and outcomes. Quantitative surveys were sent to members of Working Groups, the HSPC, and the IAP Steering Committee who had completed an interview. Open-ended surveys were created for completion by potential interview participants who were not available for phone or in-person interviews. The questions were identical to those used in the phone interviews but were completed using an on-line survey. For Working Group and Steering Committee members, these open-ended surveys also included the closed-ended quantitative questions described above. In both types of survey, participants were e-mailed links to an on-line survey hosted on the SurveyMonkey site, which allowed them to complete the survey anonymously. Table 1 describes how many surveys or interviews were completed by the topic of the interview/survey, rather than by the membership of the respondent (e.g., someone who was a member of the Steering Committee and a member of Working Group 2 who completed a Steering Committee interview would be coded only as responding for the Steering Committee). In interviews where respondents identified their membership in another category and referred to that group in the interview (e.g., a Steering Committee interviewee discussed their membership in Working Group 2 in their responses), they were coded as responding for both categories (they would be coded as responding for both the Steering Group and Working Group 2). In cases of surveys, participants were coded as only responding on the basis of the survey the completed. As noted in the Data Collection section, response rates were low.

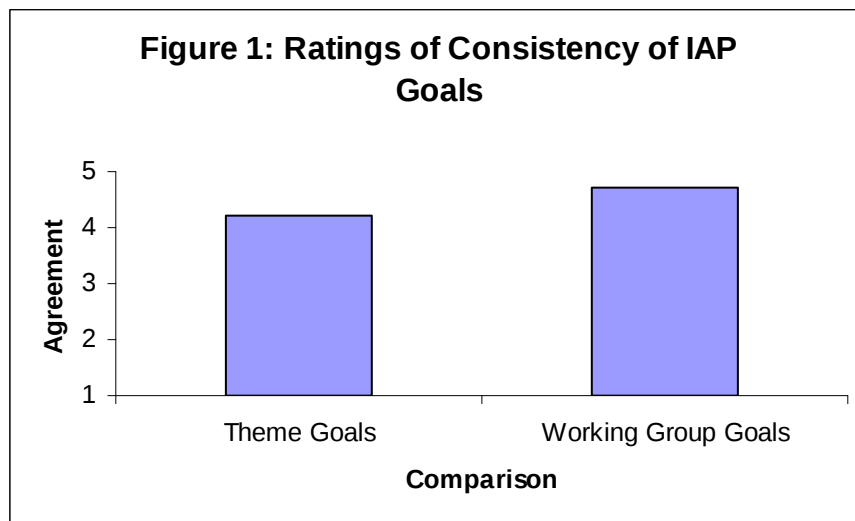
## **FINDINGS RELATED TO THE PROGRAM EVALUATION MATRIX**

The question matrix that was developed in the workplan and that generated the survey, interview and focus group questions was used to organize the responses (see Appendix A). The responses from the different question formats (surveys, interviews, focus groups) are organized below under each of the major questions posed in the question matrix. Every effort was made to maintain confidentiality of the responses.

### **CONTEXT**

#### **1.1 To what extent are the goals, objectives and mandate of the IAP still relevant?**

It was generally agreed that the six themes of the IAP addressed the IAP goals. Participants who responded to the Working Group quantitative questions (N = 6) were asked to rate the extent to which the goals of the themes were fully consistent with the goals of the IAP, whether their own group's goals were highly consistent with the IAP goals. Answers were made on a 5 point scale, with 1 indicating no agreement and 5 indicating high agreement. As can be seen in Figure 1, participants agreed that the goals of the six themes, and the goals of their specific group, were highly consistent with the overall goals of the IAP. More detailed quantitative data from the surveys are available in Appendix B.



All six themes were seen as important in this first stage of the IAP for achieving these goals. Specifically, improving services for newcomers to York Region through the Welcome Centre and improved access to English Language Development classes; creating awareness of the efforts and outcomes of the IAP, and of diversity issues generally in the schools; and increasing civic engagement of diverse community members by promoting and facilitating their participation in the voluntary sector, and by promoting the creation of more inclusive organizations, were all seen as important in achieving the goals of the IAP.

It was generally agreed that focusing on service provision at this stage of the IAP was an important first step. As one participant noted:

*Because human services provision or delivery is where members of ethno-cultural communities make that initial contact it can affect their comfort level or sense of belonging of being understood.*

Some participants, however, felt that this focus was too narrow. For example, one participant stated,

*So I think if you ask me to compare, awareness would come first before any sort of services or product.*

Many indicated a desire to expand the IAP to reach community members directly, both in terms of making them aware of the work of the IAP, and more generally to increase the community's awareness of diversity and inclusivity issues in York Region, as illustrated by the following comment:

*The real issue is trying to get more improvement in all the organizations that are working in this area. And then there is obviously some public exposure that is required to say we are doing something. And I don't think that message has gotten out very well.*

Several respondents reported that they wanted to see the IAP expand its focus to include the for-profit sector. It was noted that social inclusion often begins in the workplace, and that targeting businesses and employers was therefore critical. Several participants identified employment as central to inclusion:

*The principle vision of the IAP was really, in my view employment equity. Something we have been trying to get for a long time, how do we get those people who are disadvantaged, either because they are recent immigrants or whatever the reasons are, they are not on board in terms of employment. Either they do not get the right kind of employment or they are denied employment altogether in their area of expertise because of the professional qualification and so on.*

Finally, a small number of respondents emphasized that the program needs to address genuine political change. While the provision of better immigration services, for example, is important, true diversity and inclusion only happens when those in power reflect more than one social and cultural group.

*Cultural proficiency is specifically overtly political; it's about power and privilege. Your position is going to be challenged.*

There were concerns that many of the changes that were being sought did not go far enough to changing the political and power structures to create true inclusivity and power sharing.

*You look at the advisory board for communities, youth and children it is almost 100% white, and it has been for 10 years and it is constantly on the table as an issue. [P]eople aren't fooled by what it means, people do perceive diversification as a threat. The agenda changes so the nature of communication changes, the perspectives and experiences and for a lot of people, those kind of change for people is scary. Do I think that all the people around the table are overtly saying "no I don't want that change, how will it effect my position of power?" No, consciously most people do not think of it like that. But culture, more so in Canada than other places, we don't believe we actually have a culture, so how do you deal with the inclusiveness of your organization if you're not even aware that diversity is an issue?*

Participants in focus groups, interviews, and open-ended surveys were all asked to indicate minimum indicators of success for the IAP program. Many were related to the six themes but some also introduced somewhat different elements. The most commonly reported indicators of success were:

- the development and maintenance of relationships between human service organizations, government, and not-for-profit organizations
- members setting aside personal agendas to come to a common goal
- trust and credibility provided by the relationship with the HSPC
- improving the delivery of human services
- creating awareness within organizations, government, and/or the community of the need for inclusivity

- making diverse communities actually feel welcome

The latter 3 goals are clearly in line with the goals of the IAP. The first of these six indicators was not an obvious goal of the IAP, but was identified as a necessary condition for change to occur. By fostering relationships between organizations, the IAP created the possibility for working together to address diversity.

In terms of competing or unstated objectives, only two emerged. One relates to the remarks noted above regarding creating real change. It was suggested that by focusing on providing services rather than creating political change, especially in places of power, members of diverse communities are still being excluded—the services are located in a separate centre, rather than being fully integrated into day to day operations and activities and into the way communities and organizations make decisions.

The second concern had to do with assumptions about the definition of diversity. This came up under the issue of unstated assumptions, but may be seen as more of an unintended outcome. Although the official definition of diversity was recognized as being very broad, it was remarked that the focus on immigrants resulted in an exclusion of Aboriginal communities, people with disabilities and other dimensions of difference (e.g., sexual orientation), and this was frequently raised as a concern. By not recognizing other dimensions of difference, this program for inclusion may actually have been engaging in a form of social exclusion. Thus, although it was recognized that the program had initially intentionally focused on ethno-cultural diversity and immigration, there was a desire to see the program expand to include a broader focus on diversity.

## **1.2 Are the IAP model and its components clearly defined?**

Respondents expressed strong endorsement for the way the IAP was defined. Specifically, the process of having representatives of a wide range of human service organizations, communities, and government agencies collectively develop the themes gave the model credibility and validity in the eyes of participants.

*My recollection is that there was good open process in terms of you know starting off with a conference, getting input from a broad section of the community and coming up with some objectives. So there was good process.*

Participants in the IAP Working Groups included service organizations, community members, government representatives and representatives of the school boards. There was therefore wide representation in terms of service provision. It was noted, however, that smaller organizations had a harder time finding the resources to send representatives to meetings and working groups, resulting in less representation for small organizations. It was also noted that organizations representing other dimensions of diversity, such as groups serving or representing primarily Aboriginal communities, were not at the table.

*I think the big organizations have more time to spend with these things, little organizations don't, then some organizations have a client group that tends to be*

*fairly homogenous, whichever service they're providing and so their ability or capacity to be more inclusive is often a problem.*

Several respondents expressed a desire to see these other groups brought in for future programs.

The IAP model seems to have generated considerable interest and attention in regions outside of York Region. Respondents reported that during the course of the IAP, several representatives of organizations outside of York Region, including both service organizations and governmental organizations, expressed interest in learning more about the IAP. Likewise, at the Blue Sky Retreat, several representatives of organizations who had not previously been involved in the IAP participated in the retreat, perhaps as a way of learning more about the program so that they could consider this model for their own organization. This suggests that the model is both novel and effective in the eyes of the external community.

## **INPUTS**

### **2.1 Does the IAP have adequate human resources?**

As noted above, a large number of service organizations from across York Region participated in the IAP. Many participated in the summit meeting in 2005, and some also participated on the subsequent working groups. Participation in the working groups was done on a voluntary basis with enormous time commitment. The following organizations were represented in any IAP activity, including just participating in the summit meeting:

- **Education:** York Region District School Board; York Region District School Board (ESL Programs); York Region District School Board (Community Liason); York Region Health Services Early Child Development; Harmony Movement; York Region Catholic School Board; York South Simcoe Training & Adjustment Board; York Region Early Intervention Services; Literacy Council York-Simcoe; Parkland Public School.
- **Immigration:** COSTI Immigrant Services; Jewish Immigration Aid Services
- **Family/Community Services:** York Region Neighborhood Services Inc.; Catholic Community Services of York Region; Centre for Information & Community Services; RH Presbyterian Church; South Asian Community Support Network; Town of Markham – Varley Art Gallery; The Maytree Foundation; The York Centre for Children; Youth, and Families; United Way of York Region; Ebony Village Community Support Services; Human Endeavour; Toronto and Region Conservation Authority; Community Social Planning Council of Toronto; Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition; Human Resources Department, York Region Police; Labour Community Services; Blue Hills Child and Family Centre; Social Services Network; Community Living Aurora/Newmarket District; Krasman Centre; New Leaf Living and Learning Together; York North Family Resources Program;

Richmond Hill Community Foodbank; Slovak Canadian Women's Association; Kinark Child and Family Services; Jewish Family and Child Services; Operation Catch-Up; Catholic Community Services of York Region; Yellow Brick House; Toronto Chinese Community Services Association; York Region Children's Aid Society; Interface Program Regional Centre; Parkview Services for Seniors; Community Action Program for Children, York Region; Slovak Canadian National Council; Markham Federation of Filipino Canadians; Centre for Information and Community Services; YMCA of Greater Toronto; Rose of Sharon Service for Young Mothers; The Family Resource Centre; Family Life Centre (Aurora/Newmarket); Character Communities; The Order of Now; Pathways for Children; Youth and Family, Trinity United Church; Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation; YRNG; Community Home Assistance to Seniors. Transitional & Supportive Housing Services of York Region;

- **Business:** DAO Research and Consultancy Group; Rogers Television
- **Housing:** Traditional and Supportive Housing Services of York Region; Unionville Home Society; Ja'Fari Islamic Housing Corporation; Parkview Home for the Aged.
- **Health Services:** York Region Abuse Program; Social Services Network; Canadian Cancer Society; York Region Children's Aid Society; Sandgate Women's Shelter of Georgina Inc.; Epilepsy, York Region; Hospice Vaughn; Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region; York Paediatric Therapy Services; Kerry's Place Autism Services; Canadian Paraplegic Association, Ontario; Addiction Services York Region; Regional Nursing Services; Canadian Hearing Society; Evergreen Hospice; Canadian Diabetes Association; York Simcoe-Brain Injury Services; Alzheimer Society; Victim Services of York Region Inc.; York Durham Aphasia Centre; Victim-Witness Assistance Program; Canadian Red Cross, Region of York Branch; Centre for Addiction and Mental Health; Hospice Georgina.
- **Legal/Employment:** Job Skills; Markham Job Finding Club; York South Simcoe Training and Adjustment Board; Community Legal Clinic of York Region; Job Solutions; Future Abilities and Creative Employment.
- **Government Services:** Town of Markham; York Region-Long Range and Strategic Planning; Municipality of York Region; Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Tourism and Recreation; York Region Tourism; York Region- Community Services and Housing; York Region Health Services;

Despite the remarkable achievement of bringing many organizations and agencies to the table, it was noted that the townships of Georgina, Whitchurch-Stouffville, King City, and East Gwillimbury were not well represented in the Working Groups, and that further efforts need to be made to include these areas. At the same time, it should be noted that

some organizations, such as Family Services, do have a wide geographic area and are represented in these townships.

As previously mentioned, smaller organizations were seen as not being able to participate in the working groups because they lacked the resources to be able to do so. There was also a desire to actively involve a wider range of religious community groups. In addition, it was recommended that the Aboriginal population of York should be more involved in the next IAP.

## **2.2 In what manner and to what extent does inclusion complement, overlap or work at cross-purposes with other programs?**

The IAP was seen as a unique program. As noted by one participant:

*[T]o my understanding, IAP is the only current initiative that focuses on a very large scale on diversity and inclusivity in York region and Toronto.*

However, other smaller or more focused initiatives were remarked upon. It was felt that the IAP influenced other programs by both increasing support for these programs and providing a model for these other programs to follow. One participant stated:

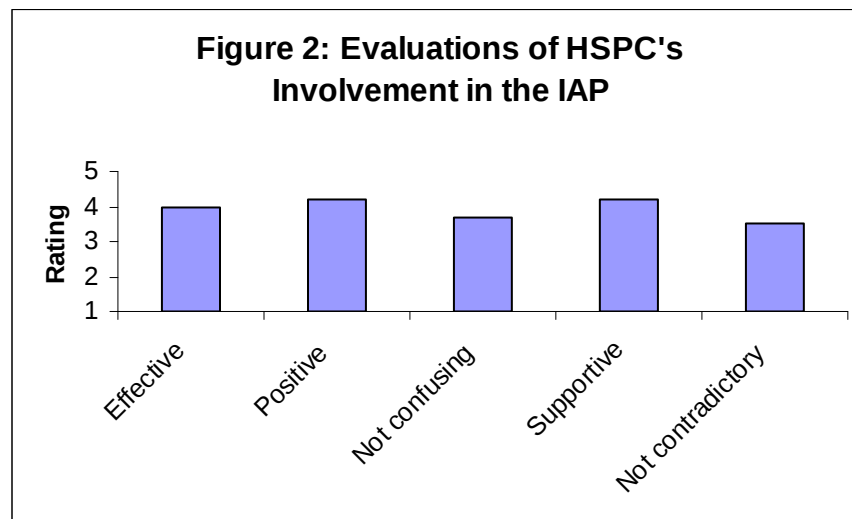
*[T]he IAP set up a model of the importance of some structured place to increase diversity and they followed what we do.*

As evidence of this, it was noted that other organizations, ranging from Local Health Integration Networks to municipal governments to non-profit organizations have been approaching members of the IAP to learn more about the model as they prepare to develop inclusivity and diversity programs of their own.

## **2.3 What has been the value of York Region's involvement in the IAP?**

The involvement of York Region in this initiative, and in particular the HSPC, was seen as overwhelmingly positive. Participants responding to the quantitative survey rated the involvement of York Region in the initiative on a scale of 1 to 5 as very effective, positive and supportive, and moderately clear (see Figure 2).

A number of positive benefits of York Region and HSPC involvement were noted. These included increased accountability, credibility, the engagement of all levels of government, making resources available, supporting or building on relationships between organizations, increasing visibility, and making the IAP generalizable to the entire region. These issues were often intertwined, and are discussed in more detail below.



### Accountability

The involvement of the HSPC was seen as creating a kind of accountability, for both the member organizations and the government itself. This seemed particularly important in terms of obtaining funding and resources, both from outside agencies and from the government itself. One participant noted that:

*Without the structure being in the place, there would have not been any accountability that funneled back up to the political levels in York region, that would had to have to countenance this, there would have been zero political support or a case for the support to be built.*

### Credibility

In a related vein, the support of the HSPC was believed to make the IAP project more credible. The involvement of the HSPC was seen as demonstrating that the IAP had broad-based support and was not just representing special interest groups. It reassured potential funders that the project was long-term and that participants were committed. Participants spoke of the IAP gaining status and respect in the eyes of the community by virtue of its association with the HSPC. For example, one participant remarked:

*By the region taking a leadership position it produced a high profile perception that people were willing to set their own agenda aside because of the regional leadership involved.*

### Engagement of All Levels of Government

Several participants noted that it was critical to engage all levels of government, from municipal to regional to provincial and federal. They felt that having the HSPC behind the IAP project involved several levels of government at the outset, and facilitated building bridges to other levels of government as the project went forward.

It was also noted that the HSPC served as the link between the IAP project and the regional government. By having an “official” government spokesperson, communication between the IAP and the government was facilitated and, in this way, communication to

other levels of government was also supported.

### Resource Availability

One of the most frequently cited advantages of being associated with the HSPC was in terms of access to resources. This emerged in three ways: through facilitating the contribution of participants; through the resources that the HSPC itself provided; and through increasing the likelihood of obtaining external funding for the projects.

Several participants commented on how many resources were brought to the project from the participating organizations, and how HSPC involvement was what motivated or permitted a variety of service agencies to invest in the process. Because it was a regional initiative, and because the regional government supported it, several regional community organizations were able to make significant contributions to the project.

*We would never have been allowed to dedicate the amount of staff time and resources. This has been a tremendous in-kind contribution by many organizations. This never would have happened without the HSPC.*

Participants also noted that the HSPC itself provided resources to the IAP that might not otherwise have been available.

*They provided access to research information, meeting space, tools to get the jobs done by the Working Groups, GIS mapping, printing, graphic design, the list goes on.*

These resources were seen as critical in supporting the work of the Working Groups and participants felt that the IAP could not have succeeded if those resources had not been available.

Lastly, the involvement of the HSPC was seen as a critical piece in securing funding for the various projects undertaken by the IAP. The strong involvement of the regional government brought the IAP to the attention of potential funders, including other levels of government, and also reassured potential funders that the project was broadly supported, had a strong structural framework, and that it would be implemented. To quote one participant:

*Their biggest support has been the fair share funding lobby. They have been able to create a climate where funding has been more available and accessible to support the plans' initiatives.*

### Relationships Between Organizations

Several participants spoke of the HSPC's credibility as a factor in their ability to bring community organizations to the table. While several agencies would have stepped forward to participate, the breadth of involvement was clearly attributed to the involvement of the HSPC. According to a participant:

*For the first time you had people from different organizations, both government and non-governmental who sat down and worked together and made plans around certain next steps.*

Another salient benefit that came around the involvement of the HSPC was that of building on existing relationships. The HSPC was identified as representing a collection of service agencies across York Region, and thus agencies participating in the IAP often already had working relationships with one another through their involvement in the HSPC. Because these relationships already existed, agencies had the opportunity to develop a common language and shared set of concerns. As a consequence, they were more committed to the IAP project and more comfortable working together. One respondent noted:

*The concept came from those early discussions where the HSPC was looking at where we need to be active could have arisen in other ways, but not with the broad support it has with the HSPC involvement.*

#### Increasing visibility

For many of the reasons mentioned above, the involvement of the HSPC was seen as providing greater visibility to the IAP project and agenda. Other agencies may be motivated to initiate their own inclusivity projects now in part because they have observed the commitment of York Region, via the IAP. Within York Region, agencies were more likely to know about, respond to, and participate in the IAP because it had York Region backing.

#### Generalizability

The last advantage of having HSPC involvement was in terms of involving the entire region. Several participants remarked that the HSPC kept the IAP project under the umbrella of the entire York Region. It was noted that there is always a danger of these kinds of projects being identified with specific special interest groups, or specific local municipalities. By being situated within the HSPC, the IAP was perceived as being relevant to, and emerging from, the entire York Region. It was observed that:

*This is a regional initiative. If we had not had that regional council support which you get through the agencies and their structure, which in time follows down to the IAP and the [Working Groups] this would have been seen as a Southern York Region initiative.*

#### Disadvantages of HSPC Support

Some participants also offered shortcomings of having the IAP come out of the HSPC. The main shortcoming was that involvement of the HSPC meant that the IAP was perceived as more of a top-down than grass-roots initiative. As observed by a respondent:

*The more effective approach would be that networks of agencies would be working on the development of the IAP and that, if anything, is somewhat a weakness of the approach because it is somewhat of a traditional instead of a network or community based approach.*

Nonetheless, even those participants who observed that HSPC involvement undermined the extent to which this could be described as a community initiative still found that HSPC involvement was advantageous. Another respondent remarked:

*The approach is not a grassroots based approach and you could argue the merits one side or the other. I think if you want balance, given the times, given the community, given the need to move the issue forward, the government led approach is quite appropriate.*

The concern seemed to be that when there is a government body overseeing a project, like the IAP, there is a need to stay vigilant that community organizations are genuine partners. This was also seen as a critical concern when government agencies are paying for the programs.

### **2.5 How well does the infrastructure of the HSPC support this program?**

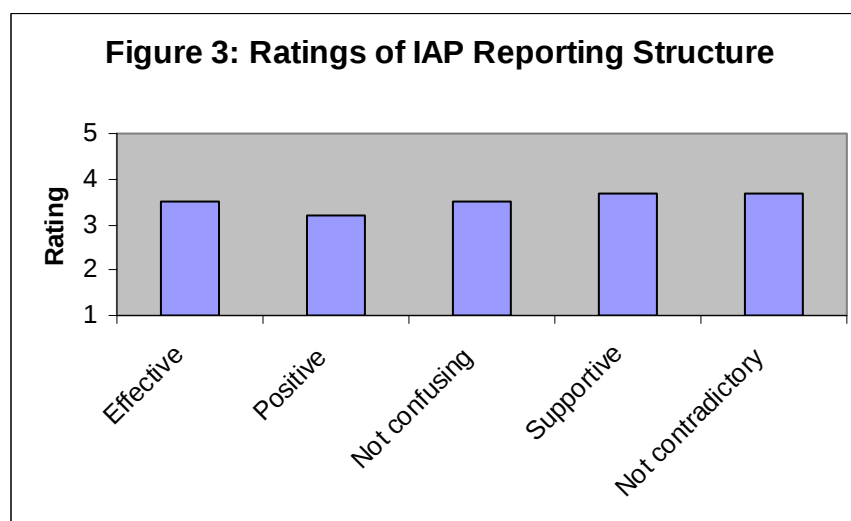
Participants spoke very favourably of the IAP structure and its relationship to the HSPC. They noted that the structure of reporting created accountability within the focus groups, and within the IAP overall. They also noted that the reporting structure resulted in the sharing of knowledge between the working groups, and that this strengthened the IAP overall. A participant remarked:

*The groups were so overlapped and the strategies were so overlapped that there needed to be a point of collaboration and exchange. So there was a lot of value in that.*

The structure of the HSPC itself was also a benefit to the IAP. As noted above, the fact that the HSPC was in some sense a collection of service organizations created a platform for the development of the IAP in the first place, and subsequently facilitated connections for the IAP to other levels of government as well as to other agencies and organizations. This was also seen as a benefit to accessing funding. It was observed that:

*They could hear what was going on, they could direct the lobby effort around those types of initiatives and create a culture amongst the funders that there was support for those initiatives coming forward.*

Not everyone was globally positive about the reporting structure of the Working Groups to the IAP. When asked to rate the reporting structure on a scale from 1 to 5, participants rated it as only moderately effective, positive, clear, and supportive. These ratings appeared to be somewhat lower than ratings of other aspects of the IAP, suggesting that the reporting structure may have had some room for improvement.



Communication was highly dependent on chair-to-chair communication, and so may have varied across groups. Other factors that may have influenced these ratings are limited staff support and resources. These moderately positive ratings may also be better understood in light of suggestions made in the process evaluation section below.

## **2.6 Who were the members of the IAP Group? (How representative were they of the community?)**

The IAP Group as a whole, including members of the HSPC, Steering Committee, and Working Groups represented a diverse number of employees from community, health, education, family, safety, employment, immigration, and government services, as can be seen in the membership list above. Members from private businesses and general community members (i.e. students, community volunteers, teachers, etc.) were less well represented. As noted earlier, there was a desire among respondents to see the membership expand to include more employers and more of the for-profit sector.

## **PROCESS**

### **3.1 To what extent is the IAP implemented?**

As noted earlier, the general structure of the IAP model was evaluated favourably and seen as supporting the goals of the IAP. Remarking on the structure, one participant stated:

*I think the synergies and the shared knowledge capacities and exchanges between the six initiatives were critical. The groups were so overlapped and the strategies were so overlapped that there needed to be a point of collaboration and exchange. So there was a lot of value in [the IAP structure].*

Nonetheless, some shortcomings were noted. These included a need for improved communication, fatigue, inclusivity of IAP membership, lack of resources, and the length of time it took to implement programs (speed of process). These concerns are described below.

### Communication

Some noted that there was a need for more communication within the Working Groups, and more efficient communication between the groups. One participant suggested:

*We also didn't have much time to read long reports so briefing sessions about what the other groups are doing would have been helpful.*

These concerns may be especially salient given the other concerns listed below.

### Fatigue

The problem was exacerbated by the fatigue of group members who were all volunteering their time, on top of their regular jobs, for about two and a half years. The fatigue of participants was mentioned frequently and it was noted that this could interfere with the work of the IAP. As one participant said:

*People are tired and there's not enough energy in planning high level funding strategies.*

Participants also mentioned that a high turnover in members of working groups was a challenge in the implementation of plans. It would be interesting to know whether this high turnover was a consequence of the fatigue mentioned by so many participants. No doubt it also contributed to the low response rate on the surveys and interviews.

### Inclusivity of Membership

One of the most frequently mentioned concerns, and one that has already been mentioned above, has to do with which communities were targeted by the IAP. A small number of participants voiced a concern that the groups that were included were those that are "approved of" and, as a result, the ones that were excluded are more marginalized. While this specific perspective was not widely shared, the related desire to expand the number and nature of the groups included was pervasive. This included a desire to involve a wider range of community organizations, both large and small, and also a wider range of community groups. A typical response is reported below:

*We didn't engage the entire community in the process, not enough diversity in the people involved, such as faith based groups, business community, disabled, seniors. Involve all the different groups out there, or we can not say we are inclusive.*

### Lack of Resources

Another major concern focused on lack of resources to allow for implementation of plans. This included the need to provide additional staff to give more support to the Working Groups, given that there were very few staff available and there were six groups in need of support. Most comments, however, focused primarily on the need to obtain external funding. Those groups that succeeded in meeting their goals were those that obtained funding. Without funding, the groups could not implement their plans. A respondent remarked that:

*The problem was that now we have a clear operational objective but no resources to implement it.*

The fact that many working groups were applying to the same sources for funding also meant that they were sometimes in competition with each other, and the success of one Working Group with a specific funder could mean the failure of another Working Group to obtain the necessary funding for their own project. Accessible and sustainable funding was therefore identified as a necessary element in order for this model to be implemented. It was also suggested that any new IAP should have a unit with dedicated staff, with an ombudsman link or Secretariat.

### Speed of Process

Many participants felt strongly that the process was too slow. A participant remarked that:

*It has been a very ponderous and slow process. These groups meet once a month and it is just taking far too long to get anything tangible that we can achieve from these deliberations.*

Many of the respondents attributed the length of time it took to implement the IAP as partially due to the funding problems. As noted by one participant:

*Some of the work of IAP did not pick up until recently and has not even begun because of lack of resources and lack of funding to move it forward.*

Several participants noted that the nature of the IAP model itself contributed to the slowness of the progress, but some of the characteristics of the model that slowed it down were also the model's strengths. In particular, the collaborative process was identified as one of the model's strengths, reflecting true consensus and buy-in from all partners. At the same time, it was also recognized as slowing the process down. An observation from a participant was that:

*Like any broad community structure it moved slowly and some people just wanted to get on with it. But at the end of the day by moving slow you get better buy-in and result.*

Other participants felt that there were times when they were rushed to come to a conclusion when more time was needed:

*Sometimes we weren't ready to move along and they wanted the decisions on something and there were times that someone came to our meetings to try and move us along. There were times when I thought this was inappropriate, then there were other times it was quite helpful.*

In contrast though, a small number of participants were less satisfied with the collaborative nature of the IAP model and expressed frustration about how hours of

discussion and negotiation based on solid data could be derailed by a single individual who disagreed with the final decision.

### **3.2 How is the IAP Implemented within each Working Group?**

At this time, each Working Group is at different stages of implementation. This is due to resources and timing of activities. Nonetheless, many of the stakeholders seem to be passionate about the success of the IAP and its impact in York Region.

Each Working Group consisted of multi-agency representation with an effort to promote diversity and this was the first and crucial implementation of the IAP overall. What follows is a brief outline of how each Working Group has enacted the IAP.

The Welcome Center implemented the IAP by developing a centre for newcomers. The centre is based on a thorough study of Best Practices, and integrates new immigrants into York Region, promoting diversity and ethno-cultural awareness.

The IAP was implemented by the ESL (English as a Second Language) Working Group by the publication of the English Language Services Study, which documented English language needs of immigrants in York Region, and the English Language Issues in the Workplace report, which reported on discussions held with York Region employers. The ESL group also worked with service agencies including COSTI, York Region District School Board, English as a Second Language Program, and CHS York, to study the needs and recommend improvement of ESL classes to a diverse mix of new immigrants.

The Awareness Campaigns Working Group implemented the IAP by introducing it to a wider audience through media efforts, conferences, special celebrations and the development of the IAP Pinwheel logo and “Winds of Change” slogan.

The Education for Children Working Group implemented the IAP by building partnerships with York Region School Board, and developing the Youth Mentoring Program for students, which is awaiting funding and reviewing Best Practices.

The Volunteer and Leadership Working Group has developed an inventory of non-profit organizations in York Region. They have conducted information sessions for individuals to learn about the governance structure of non-profit organizations, available volunteer opportunities, and the recruitment process, as well as the importance of diverse perspectives at the governing level.

The Organization Development Capacity Working Group enacted the implementation of the IAP by developing Charter of Inclusivity, which is foundational to the IAP moving forward, and the Circle of Champions.

## **PRODUCTS (OUTPUTS) AND OUTCOMES**

### **4.1 To what extent was the IAP considered effective?**

The IAP model was considered a very effective method to increase diversity and inclusivity for all in York Region. On a 5 point scale, participants rated it 4.2, suggesting

that they perceived the model as being a very effective way to promote diversity. The major outcomes of the IAP were the passion, dedication and commitment of staff and volunteers; the collaboration of all levels of government in realizing the success of the IAP; and the belief and trust of participants who continue to engage in efforts into making York Region an inclusive place of living and working. As noted by one participant:

*[A] lot of different projects of this kind might have been already aborted, suspended or quietly disappeared a long time ago, but I think because we stuck together and our commitment, of all the partners, and the relationship that we had before the project ... it is even more strengthened now... This makes the project sustain for 2.5 years and coming to where we are now. This is almost like a miracle to me.*

#### **4.2 What impacts and outcomes, both intended and unintended, have resulted from this model?**

The Intended and Actual Outcomes of the six Working Groups are presented in Appendix C. This information was obtained from document reviews and from reports from Working Group chairs.

The IAP also had some unintended outcomes. One of the unintended outcomes of the IAP is due to each Working Group having its own agenda. Some participants noted that there was a lack of communication among the Working Groups in the sharing of information:

*[T]here wasn't really a coming together to say ok, these were the original objectives, how is each stream contributing to the overall objectives and what specific objectives is each stream achieving? That didn't seem to happen, so we felt a little bit out of the loop in terms of that. I think for most people it kind of got lost, what other people were doing in their streams.*

On a more positive note, the IAP may have influenced the Central Local Health Integration Network (CLHIN) in considering a coordinated IAP campaign for its region.

All of the Welcome Centre outputs identified at the Summit meeting were realized, with the exception that only one centre has been established, rather than five. They included: development of a business plan; securing start-up funds; building in an evaluation process; and engaging committed champions and leaders in the community (see Appendix C). Of course, the ultimate success was the opening of the Welcome Center, with several other Centres in the region being considered for the future.

The ESL Programs outputs were also largely fulfilled. They included: the establishment of a multi-agency working group; the compilation of an inventory of existing ESL/ELD programs; development of a strategy to document the need for English language classes and raise awareness of under-funding; articulating relevant policy and program responses to ensure York Region receives fair share funding; and the development of ESL classes targeting immigrant women.

The outputs of the Awareness Campaign Working Group to some extent depended on the other Working Groups, since they were charged with communicating the IAP's

successes. The following outputs were successfully accomplished: establishment of a multi-sector Working Group; establishing linkages and partnerships with other stakeholders who share the objective of increased ethno-cultural awareness; promotion of the *Peace tree/Places of Worship Tour*; development of the *Pinwheel/Winds of Change* slogan; commitment of champions and leaders; the launching of a region wide social marketing campaign in non-traditional places such as the *Rogers One on One Series*; and working with multi-sector partners. At this time, there was no evidence of the following outputs: development of a comprehensive understanding of York Region's assets and gaps in educational resources that can be used to raise ethno-cultural awareness; development of a strategy to create and launch a region wide education campaign and link to Character Community initiatives; celebration of businesses that are ethno-culturally inclusive; development of awards to encourage positive actions; and identification of resource requirements.

The outputs of the Education for Children Programs are in various stages of completion with the following outputs being achieved: establishment of a multi-agency working group; development of a school curriculum, *Harmony Movement*, that promotes ethno-cultural inclusivity; development of a region-wide strategy to provide opportunities for children to learn about different cultures; a mentoring program focused on gaps, barriers and needs of new immigrant youths; development of activities to remove stereotypes; development of teacher in-service programs; commitment of champions and leaders. The following outputs are still to be completed: linking with ethno-cultural agencies; linking with Community Alliance for York Region Education; and the development of scholarships. It is unclear from the documents whether a one-day sensitivity training scheduled for spring, 2007, was undertaken; information from one interview suggested that this training was not done.

The Volunteer and Leadership Programs are also in various stages of completion with the following outputs being achieved: establishment of a multi-agency working group; establishing partnerships with leaders of ethno-cultural communities and organizations such as *abc/GTA Maytree Foundation*; an inventory of leadership strengths and gaps; encouragement of involvement and participation by members of ethno-cultural communities; creation of opportunities for leaders to become involved in the activities of mainstream organizations; exploration of best practices; and the development of a leadership strategy. The ethno-cultural bank of community leaders and communities has begun but is presently incomplete. Community dialogues to assist agencies in leadership and Board recruitment have been planned for 2008. The following outputs are still to be completed: establishing of mentoring programs; involvement of potential leaders and training to become Board members of mainstream organizations; and the development of a training resource strategy.

The Organization Development Capacity Programs outputs were primarily fulfilled by the multi-agency Working Group developing the Charter of Inclusivity, which is a gold standard of inclusivity. This Charter has been incorporated into the activities of other Working Groups such as the Education for Children Group. In addition, the following outputs were completed: an inventory of cultural sensitivity training resources; recommendation of policy framework for practices/governance structures; directory of

cultural sensitivity training resources; and opportunities for storytelling. In addition, a working website was created to list toolkits and other resources, which may also be counted as an exploration of best practices. The Circle of Champions of inclusivity was initiated and efforts are underway to expand into a larger community base. Champions will support the organization in which they are working by explaining the Charter of Inclusivity and how it may unfold in that organization. The following outputs have not been met at this time: ensuring that human service agencies job descriptions and performance are a reflection of inclusive practices; celebration of inclusive employers; and the development of report cards.

## **DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The IAP had three thematic objectives:

- 1) Improving communication between service providers and users
- 2) Creating ethno-cultural awareness in York Region
- 3) Promoting ethno-cultural representation in human service agencies

This overall evaluation suggests that many short-term goals were achieved on the road to accomplishing these overarching outcomes, but progress towards meeting the larger goals was more clearly achieved for some outcomes than for others.

In terms of improving communications between service providers and users, the majority of the planned activities were implemented. For many respondents, the crowning success of the IAP was that a Welcome Centre designed to deliver improved services was established. The Welcome Centre is presently undergoing a program evaluation; it remains to be seen whether it does indeed improve service delivery, whether it serves the people who need it most, and whether there is widespread awareness of this centre in the community.

The second Working Group focused on the provision of English Language Development programs. Just by documenting the existing programs, they have taken an important step in improving awareness of available services. What remains to be seen for this initiative is whether the list of available services is utilized by those planning and needing the services, and whether it is used to increase and modify existing services.

The second theme was creating or raising ethno-cultural awareness in York Region. Interestingly, while the Working Groups that were addressing these issues struggled to meet their objectives, often by virtue of lack of funding or lack of communication between groups, it is here that we see the most evidence of achieved outcomes, as opposed to just outputs. Participants frequently reported being approached by other organizations, both within and outside of York Region, who were interested in the program, or hoped to develop a similar program of their own. Clearly, the IAP was noticed by other agencies and organizations, and in this sense, awareness of issues of ethno-cultural awareness was indeed raised.

Changes in awareness of ethno-cultural diversity in the community itself, however, and the need for greater inclusivity, has not yet been documented. Several respondents felt that the IAP was not widely known among community members. Working Group 4 developed a promising program that would address this in the schools, but this has not yet been funded. In fact, the short-term goals of the IAP were not focused on the community but rather on service providers. Nonetheless, while there is evidence that agencies were aware of this initiative, and endorsed it through their participation and/or interest in the program, there was no evidence that changes had occurred in the awareness of the providers themselves. The hope and expectation is that the increased awareness at the level of the agencies would result in changes among employees of the agencies. It may be too soon to see these changes, but efforts need to be made to confirm these assumptions.

A number of initiatives have also been discussed that are not part of the IAP. York Regional Council has endorsed staff participation and representation on a newly-created York Community Information and Volunteer Centre (YCIVC) and the Access 211 Project Steering Committee. 211 is a three-digit telephone number for access to information and referral for community, health, social and government services. Recently approved for use by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, 211 would provide residents with an easy-to-recall telephone number. These initiatives, and York Region's willingness to commit staff participation in them, indicate an increasing awareness of the need to improve services for ethno-cultural communities. Ideally, these efforts would interact with IAP initiatives to create even greater changes. Once again, the effectiveness of these initiatives in achieving improved services needs to be documented, but their existence alone is promising.

The third theme was in the promotion of ethno-cultural diversity in human service agencies by promoting greater diversity in participation. Many promising initiatives were undertaken and achieved by the Working Groups addressing this theme. A framework has been developed for identifying and promoting diversity through the Charter of Inclusivity along with a website documenting existing toolkits for interested organizations, the Circle of Champions was created, and events targeted at promoting diversity in volunteerism were held. It is too soon to see any changes in the diversity of human service agencies, but by observing the number of organizations that employ the Charter of Inclusivity and the number of individuals who are identified in the Circle of Champions, success in this area will be easy to monitor and demonstrate in the years to come.

Despite the limitations noted above in documenting whether long-term outcomes were achieved, many of the short-term goals of the IAP were met through the delivery of a wide range of products, and the creation of the IAP as a means of promoting ethno-cultural diversity was strongly endorsed by the participants. The very process of creating the IAP was seen as a positive outcome. It built relationships between diverse agencies, engaged the government at several levels, and created dialogue about diversity and inclusion.

The creation of the IAP under the umbrella of the HSPC was viewed as critical to its success. While future IAP initiatives could perhaps be better served by moving it out from under the HSPC umbrella so that it becomes independent, the endorsement and

engagement of the York Region municipality was clearly very beneficial to this initiative in its early stages. Any changes in how the IAP relates to York Region in the future needs to be cognizant of the benefits that were derived from the HSPC leadership: it ensured that the IAP was seen as a region-wide initiative, it gave the IAP stability and credibility in the eyes of potential funders, it facilitated communication with government at all levels, it increased awareness of the IAP to governmental and non-governmental agencies, and it brought with it much needed resources.

Finally, participants spoke very strongly in favour of implementing another IAP now that this one has come to a close. Several suggestions were made for how the IAP could be improved for the future. This included expanding the definition of diversity and ensuring the involvement of a broader range of agencies, sectors and municipalities; expanding the goal of the IAP to address inclusivity in terms of employment and health care; reducing and focusing subsequent IAP initiatives in terms of the number of actions and Working Groups, since there was seen to be overlap and duplication in their efforts; strengthening communication and social marketing about diversity and inclusivity and about the IAP initiatives to the community at large; ensuring sustainable funding for IAP initiatives; ensuring adequate resources for any subsequent IAP initiatives, including staffing needs for Working Groups; addressing the demands that participation in the IAP Working Groups makes on the participants; and recognizing the need to have appropriate evaluation in place so that the successes of the IAP initiative can be documented and improved upon.

In sum, due to time constraints and a lack of pre-existing benchmarks, this evaluation relied primarily on the documents and reports generated by the HSPC, IAP Steering Committee, and the Working Groups, and perceptions of participants in the IAP program itself. IAP participants reported tremendous commitment to the program, were enthusiastic about the IAP model and structure, and, depending on the Working Group they belonged to, were moderately to very satisfied with the products and outputs achieved. When all of these outputs were documented, the IAP appears to have achieved a great deal with limited resources and in a short time frame, suggesting that this was a very successful initiative. In the eyes of the participants, there is clearly still a need and a strong desire for another IAP, and there are several useful suggestions for how the IAP can be improved upon in the future to be an even more effective means of achieving this important goal.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE PROGRAM EVALUATION**

One major limitation of the program evaluation was time available to collect the data. Given the 6-week period to engage in data collection, it was difficult to schedule interviews and focus groups with the stakeholders, whose time was already dedicated with responsibilities towards the success of IAP. A consequence of this limitation is that we had limited participation from Working Group members, and did not have time to evaluate service providers in agencies involved in this project. The low response rate may call into question how representative our data are of the IAP participants as a whole. Nevertheless, in the short time period, the support and time commitment by all is very much appreciated by the Program Evaluation Team.

A related limitation of the evaluation was that this program evaluation focused more on outputs than outcomes. We could document that initiatives that were intended to improve services were put into place, but not whether services actually improved, or whether service providers' practices and attitudes actually changed. A longer time frame for the evaluation would have allowed us to survey the service providers, and permitted a proper evaluation of outcomes in addition to outputs.

Another limitation was that the program evaluation was not planned at the outset of the project. Appropriate benchmarks were therefore not set and data could not be collected to measure changes over time. Ideally, if a new project is proposed, program evaluation will be built into the model to allow for a fuller assessment of the program's success.

Finally, the IAP was an ambitious program with long-term goals that would best be evaluated several years from now. The changes that the IAP hopes to accomplish will take years to accomplish. There is every reason to believe that many of the products of the IAP will indeed deliver these outcomes, so the present evaluation may be underestimating the success of this ambitious project. We hope that the IAP team will undertake another evaluation at a later date to more adequately evaluate the program's success.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The findings in this report need to be disseminated and applied towards future endeavors, both by the current stakeholders, and by other organizations and agencies. To that end, this report will be part of a larger effort at developing policy briefs and constructing a Best Practice Model for inclusivity. The policy briefs will be aimed at other municipal, regional and provincial government and social agencies to communicate the findings of this evaluation and to summarize information on Best Practices. There will also be the development of a limited media campaign to highlight the successes of the IAP to the community.

In order to accomplish these goals, the following steps will need to be undertaken. Best Practices need to be decided upon in light of the findings of this program evaluation and other existing inclusivity promotion projects. Policy briefs will need to be developed for distribution to other committees, and political and non-governmental agencies; it has been proposed that graduate students at York University who have experience in social policy be engaged to undertake this work, under supervision by York University faculty. Finally, a limited media campaign will need to be developed to raise awareness of the IAP program and its successes among service providers, governmental and non-governmental agencies, and the community at large. One possible route for this campaign is the development of a short documentary about the region, the issues, and how the IAP program has addressed them.

An additional step that will need to be taken is to make a decision about whether there will be another IAP for York Region, and what format this will take. Hopefully, this evaluation will be of use in assisting committee members in this important decision.

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