

Introduction

In 2013-2014, The Board of Directors at the Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto (MNLCT), together with staff and key stakeholders began the task of reassessing the needs of immigrants against the political, economic and social realities of the years to come. Through research and consultation, MNLCT appreciated the different perspectives that newcomers, community partners, clients and students, funders and other stakeholders bring to the conversation about its role in fostering immigrant success.

The result is a Strategic Plan that accounts for these different perspectives, and builds upon the learnings of more than 30 years of presence in the community. This new plan would guide MNLCT's work in furthering its mission and vision for the next five years (2014-2018).

MNLCT reaffirms its approach to support individuals and build healthy communities by walking together with newcomers, working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders, and promoting community engagement. Moreover, as a member-based, community organization, MNLCT keeps ensuring that clients, students and participants are served within a gender-justice, anti-oppression and social justice framework.

The 2014-2018 Strategic Plan has identified three main Strategic Priorities that will ensure the sustainable offering of programs and services to immigrants, while promoting MNLCT Mission, Vision and Values.

Strategic Priorities



BUILDING A RESILIENT ORGANIZATION

The current environment in the immigration sector challenges us to build upon our strengths and adapt, in order to meet and exceed the expectations of generations of immigrants to come.

In the upcoming years, we will witness a shift in immigration policies, fiscal changes, new technologies and new stakeholders in the sector, to name a few.

These times demand a resilient agency driven by effective leadership and guided by a sound governing body. The task is to work collaboratively with traditional and nontraditional stakeholders and develop new initiatives in response to these changes.

Sustainability is another significant element to thriving in this environment. Throughout the sector, agencies are diversifying funding streams, embracing alternative funding models and exploring social enterprise. This is the right moment to undertake this transformation for the future of a stable organization.

Mission

The Mennonite New Life Centre's mission is to facilitate newcomer settlement and integration through holistic services and community engagement, carried out within a gender justice and anti-oppression framework.

Vision

The Mennonite New Life Centre envisions a society in which all people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds participate fully in all aspects of Canadian life. We will model an approach that brings together community engagement and community services, working together with newcomers to reduce insecurity and reach integration, strengthen voices and increase social equality.

Values

Respect
Community Building
Participation and Voice
Equity and Integration
Peace with Social Justice



DESIGNING RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS

With the shift in immigration selection policies favoring economic migration, the needs and priorities of newcomers are shifting as well. Our goal is to support them in innovative ways, facilitating access to information, resources and services when and where they need it and to support maximum mental health for economic integration.

Now more than ever, it is paramount to build strategic alliances throughout the sector to reduce duplication of services, and facilitate a seamless and adaptive settlement experience for newcomers, in which economic integration goes hand in hand with social and civic integration and enjoyment of the highest level of mental health.

The design of responsive programs requires from us not only innovation, creative thinking and the incorporation of new technologies in service delivery, but also a heightened capacity for data analysis to stay abreast of emerging trends.



MAXIMIZING COMMUNITY IMPACT

We know that when newcomers are fully included in society, it results in the best outcomes for the individual, his or her family, the workplace, the community and our society.

Still today, many newcomers live in political, economic, cultural and social exclusion, resulting from both systemic and individual barriers.

We acknowledge that each newcomer brings a wealth of experiences and talents with them, and we wish to increase our commitment with communities to engage in action that promotes inclusivity through social change – change at both the individual level, and at the broader, systemic level.

We believe by combining adult education and participatory action research, we can promote active civic participation in immigrant communities to help address barriers that result in social exclusion. The outcome is an inclusive and globally minded society.

Strategic Objectives

Resilient Organization

- > Development of strategic alliances and sectorial collaboration.
- > Succession planning supporting organizational sustainability.
- > Leadership and staff development through the building of strengths in cultural competency, evaluative capacity and cross-program collaboration.
- > Diversification of funding streams to include alternative funding models such as social impact bonds and social enterprise.

Responsive Programs

- > Conversion of the Community Mental Health Program to a core service.
- > Innovation in service delivery model through the development of self-directed, on-line integration content and reaching out to newcomers where they live, work and play.
- > Creation of program initiatives that support the economic integration of newcomers.

Engage Communities

- > Development of an adult education framework for community engagement.
- > Increased awareness in both newcomer communities and the public at large about civic participation, social change, and the value of newcomers to our economy and society.
- > Engagement of policy makers through participatory action research to enable systemic change.