

■ **Balancing the Budget but
Who's Left to Budget the Balance:**
A Visual Representation of Professional Networks
within Toronto East Local Immigration Partnership

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October 2012

ISBN: 978-0-9916995-0-6

Produced by:

Meta Strategies

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Partners:

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Funding Support:

This project was made possible via the financial support of:



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Acknowledgments

This project was conducted by *Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work* at *University of Toronto* in collaboration with *Meta Strategies*. Partial funding was provided by *MITACS Accelerate*, a national internship program endowing financial support for project driven research collaborations between the private and the academic sectors. *Meta Strategies*, a company with a long history of assisting non-profit groups in developing creative approaches to their everyday working relationships, was the second financial contributor on the project.

Without the ongoing assistance provided by *WoodGreen Community Services*, the lead organization for the *Toronto East Local Immigration Partnership (TE LIP)*, this project would still be in its infancy phase. The research team's commitment, contributions and support, were equally essential to the success of this report: thank you, Sandra Guerra, Diane Dyson and Liz Rykert. Many thanks to Rupaleem Bhuyan, for her thoughtful guidance throughout all the stages of this research, as well as to Lesley Johnston and Beth Wilson, for their invaluable feedback on the final version of the report. Special thanks to Mohammad Hayat, Michelle Lopes, Sevgül Topkara-Sarsu and Tom Zizys, for being available over the busy winter holiday season, to test our network mapping survey prior to its official launch.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to the service providers, settlement workers, language trainers, community workers and all other *TE LIP* members, who took time out of their busy schedules to answer the survey. We hope that findings outlined in this report will add to their future professional work, as it particularly relates to the delivery of settlement services for newly arrived immigrants.

Executive Summary

In December 2011, *Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)* put an end to the funding agreements previously supporting the creation and development of Toronto's neighbourhood based *Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)* model, in favour of a larger regional structure of settlement services.

The neighbourhood based *LIP* settlement model came together at the end of 2009, following a joint call for proposals between *CIC* and the *Provincial Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)*, under the preceding *Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COLA)*. It aimed to better integrate and coordinate newcomers' service delivery, by building alliances across settlement service providers. Seventeen *LIPs* across Toronto were formed, as networks of community stakeholders – settlement agencies, community organizations, language training providers, local associations, and members of school boards or municipal government. Locally, *Toronto East (TE) LIP* developed settlement based strategies within the geographically defined east neighbourhood of Toronto. Its catchment area was territorially delimited by the eastern portion of the Old City of Toronto and the district formerly known as the City of East York (WoodGreen Community Services, 2010).

On April 1st 2012, a new regional settlement model was implemented. It merged the initial seventeen neighbourhood based *LIPs* into four regional Partnerships. Simultaneously, it reduced the federally funded *LIP* workforce by 75% across the Partnerships. For instance, *TE LIP* lost half of its staff, the *Downtown East LIP* went from five to two members, whereas the *Downtown West LIP* decreased its personnel by about two thirds. At the start of this project, in September 2011, *TE LIP* was fully operational. By the end of it, it ceased to exist as an entity. It became part of a larger geographical Partnership, the *Toronto South (TS) LIP*. Primary *TE LIP* funded positions have been eliminated. New postings were announced in the spring, once *CIC* signed the new regional agreements with its lead partners. It is uncertain if the existing professional networks will be carried over to the newly created regional Partnership, the *TS LIP*.

Using a network centered process evaluation, this project aimed to:

- Examine the current working relationships and desired future collaborations among professionals delivering immigrant and settlement services within the former *TE LIP*
- Explore the possible impact of *CIC*'s decision to restructure the *LIP* model, in relation to its resulting workforce reduction

We asked immigrant and settlement service providers within the Toronto East neighbourhood, to answer a survey about their occupational network. We invited them to identify those to whom they are professionally connected to, and those with whom they would like to form future working relationships. This report visually represents their patterns of collaboration. Next, it provides recommendations on how *CIC* could better support the coordination, planning and delivery of settlement services.

Since *TE LIP* was established with the goal of coordinating and integrating immigrant and settlement services, social network analysis (SNA) was deemed a fit methodology to assess the collaborative networks within the Partnership. SNA is a set of theories and tools, using relational data to examine network structures, to create visualizations of connections between people, and to visually explore how relationships shape collaboration flows. Network approaches are applicable in strengthening community partnerships and examining relational ties within a downsizing and outsourcing environment. Given the recent *LIPs* restructuring, we have chosen a SNA approach to structurally explore the possible impact of *CIC's* decision to amalgamate the local *LIPs* into a regional model, as it particularly relates to their consequential staff reduction. We hope the *TE LIP* network's analyses will help the Partnership as it transitions to the *TS LIP*.

KEY FINDINGS

TE LIP: A Dense Network with a Strong Configuration of Professional Linkages

- Respondents identified 246 colleagues with whom they have well-established working relationships
- Stakeholders were sustaining a dense configuration of 1466 professional linkages, crossing many sectors and organizations and serving various geographic areas within the Toronto East neighbourhood

LIP Paid Staff: the Partnership's Bare Bones

- *TE LIP* paid staff played a vital role in connecting settlement service providers
- Individuals whose positions were funded through *CIC* agreements, supported half of the Partnership's professional linkages (n=702), three times as many connections based on their proportional representation (16%) within the network

Network's Sustainability: Uncertain without the Paid *LIP* Staff

Following the removal of paid *LIP* positions:

- 50 % of the Partnership's collaborative relationships were no longer sustainable
- Professional linkages halved to 764 from the initial 1466
- Nineteen stakeholders became completely isolated
- Network's overall density reduced by a quarter (26%)
- The average path length (number of steps connecting professionals among them) increased by 17%, suggestive of lengthier routes needed to form collaborative relationships
- Network's integration score decreased by 64%, indicative of less information spread within the Partnership.

BACK TO SQUARE ONE

The *LIP* funded positions were vital to the Partnership's operational performance. Our analysis indicates that network's strategic positions were occupied by the paid *LIP* staff. Their roles were fundamental in sustaining a strong network of coordination and integration services, and setting up the basis for collaboration and knowledge sharing. Representing only 16% of the collaborative network, members directly funded through the *LIP*, supported 50% of the Partnership's connections. Without them, the network's density was reduced by a quarter, its professional linkages were halved and almost a tenth of service providers remained completely isolated.

Within the current restructuring process, *TE LIP* members are back to square one. Across the city, the amalgamated regional model contains up to 75% fewer paid *LIP* positions. This places the local professional networks in a weakened state. It rolls back the clock to 2009, when localized immigrant services were not yet integrated. Service providers are left to wonder if their previous years of localized settlement planning were in vain and if the regional model, with only one year of guaranteed funding, is worth their planning efforts. Proceeding with the amalgamation, without thoroughly exploring professional dynamics within the *LIPs*, may negatively impact the provision of settlement services for Toronto newcomers. It is uncertain if *CIC's* stated objective of strengthening the local integration capacity for immigrant and settlement services, will match its adopted regional model. Will professional collaborations extend to the new regional Partnerships? Networks could possibly grow weaker, given the loss of the paid *LIP* staff's cohesive role. How will this translate into the delivery of settlement services? Moreover, how will the regional *LIPs* respond to newcomers' needs?

This report does not seek to critically assess the current regional settlement model. It simply notes that no prior evaluations guided the transition to a regional *LIP* model.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reinstate funding for the *LIP* neighbourhood based operational model. Restructuring the *LIPs* entails moving away from a neighbourhood based settlement model. Settlement services are sustained by relational processes. Relations take time to develop and could potentially be lost within the larger regional Partnerships. The consequential workforce reduction may also impede the provision of locally based immigrant services. It is uncertain if the regional model is well equipped to develop a comprehensive settlement service delivery plan for newly arrived immigrants. Perhaps Toronto, a city with half of its residents born outside Canada, is not the best place to test the regional model's ability to address newcomers' social, cultural and economic needs.

2. Make use of evidence informed evaluation research to guide the *LIPs* future developments. It is important for funders to increase their research capacity in order to better explore the collaborative and professional linkages within the *LIP* settlement model of service delivery. Restructuring the former neighbourhood based *LIPs*, without previously evaluating the coordination and integration of immigrant and settlement service delivery, indicates a lack of foresight in providing the best services for Canada's newcomers. Cutting back investments that could improve newly arrived immigrants' settlement process may have negative implications for their social and economic integration. Although *CIC*'s concerns of service duplication are well-founded, there is no evidence of services being doubled up. Moving away from the neighbourhood based settlement model on the fear of service duplication, could unfortunately translate into reduced service coordination for newcomers.

3. Adopt a long term perspective on the settlement and integration process. Immigrant and settlement service recipients would benefit from a long term *Strategic Plan* lead by *CIC*. A multi-sectorial and multi stakeholder community consultation process would best guide the future development, planning, coordination and integration of its proposed model of immigrant and settlement services.

Introduction

Toronto East Local Immigration Partnership (TE LIP) was established at the end of 2009, as a network of community stakeholders- settlement agencies, community organizations, language training providers, local associations, members of school boards and municipal government- with the purpose of coordinating newcomers' services within the geographically defined Toronto East neighbourhood.

Using a network centered process evaluation (Pope & Lewis, 2008) this project aimed to:

- Examine the current working relationships and desired future collaborations among professionals delivering immigrant and settlement services within the *TE LIP*
- Explore the possible impact of *Citizenship and Immigration Canada's (CIC)* decision to restructure the *LIP* model, in relation to its resulting workforce reduction

Context

Immigration has been defined as an urban process (Grant & Sweetman, 2004). Metropolitan areas are magnets for immigrants (Galabuzi & Teeluckksingh, 2010) and almost three quarters of newcomers are making their home in one of Canada's largest cities, Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). Toronto, with half of its residents born outside Canada, remains a primary destination for newly arrived immigrants (City of Toronto, 2011). Between 2000 and 2009, it received an average of 48 900 newcomers, representing twenty percent of all new immigrants to Canada (City of Toronto, 2011).

Newcomers experience social exclusion (Richmond & Shields, 2005), marginalization from the labour market and limited access to social services, such as housing, education or health care (Galabuzi & Teeluckksingh, 2010). Systemic barriers often impede on their ability to socially and economically participate within the Canadian society (Richmond & Shields, 2005; Simich, Beiser, Stewart & Mwakarimba 2005). These include: non-recognition of foreign credentials (George, 2002), lack of Canadian work experience, unfamiliarity with practices and behaviours existent within Canadian workplaces (Tufts, Lemoine, Phan, Kelly, Lo, Preston & Shields, 2010) lack of transferable skills (Schellenberg & Hou, 2008) or a lack of awareness about services, mainly due to real and perceived cultural bias and racism (Dowding & Razi, 2006) or to economic, linguistic, cultural and educational (Dowding & Razi, 2006; Simich, Beiser, Stewart & Mwakarimba, 2005) limitations or discrimination (Schellenberg & Hou, 2008).

Immigrant serving agencies (Dowding & Razi, 2006) and settlement services do facilitate newcomers' integration (Burr, 2011) and their resettlement process (George, 2002). Mainly funded by the state (Landolt, Goldring & Bernhard, 2009) settlement services are provided via community based organizations or third sector agencies (Richmond & Shields, 2005). Although re-settlement is a long life process (Richmond & Shields, 2005), contact with these community organizations is usually established very soon upon arrival (Rose, Carrasco & Charbonneau, 1998). Service agencies assist newcomers across all settlement stages, with a variety of basic needs (Landolt, Goldring & Bernhard, 2009): advice (Rose, Carrasco & Charbonneau, 1998), language acquisition (George, 2002), access to public institutions (Dowding & Razi, 2006) employment, housing, health care (Dowding & Razi, 2006) or family counselling services (George, 2002), job seeking skills, (Rose, Carrasco & Charbonneau, 1998), community connections (George, 2002), career advancements, political and social participation (George, 2002) and cross cultural exchanges (Norquay, 2004). They help immigrant families integrate (Yan & Lauer, 2008), adjust (Norquay, 2004) and adapt to a new environment (Dowding & Razi, 2006; Yan & Lauer, 2008) and to the Canadian way of life (George, 2002; Norquay, 2004). Ultimately, they help newcomers get through familial or work related precarious circumstances (Rose, Carrasco & Charbonneau, 1998) and overcome social exclusion (Galabuzi & Teeluckksingh, 2010).

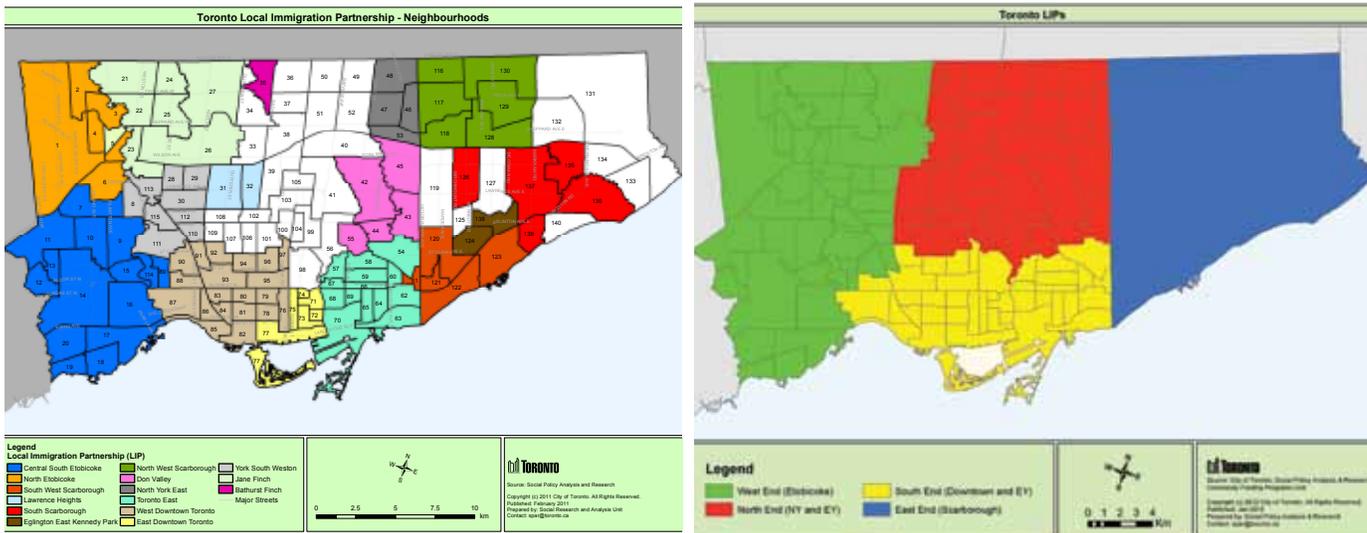
Within the last decades, the Canadian settlement model lost its core government financial support (Richmond & Shields, 2005) to contract restricted, short term funding (Simich, Beiser, Stewart & Mwakarimba, 2005). Coupled with recent recessionary effects of increased service demands and falling funding revenues (Hildebrandt & Wilson, 2010) these financial endowments left many organizations struggling to develop comprehensive service plans for newcomers (Richmond & Shields, 2005; Yan & Lauer, 2008).

In attempts to ameliorate immigrant service delivery, *CIC* developed a localized model of community partnership, aimed to build alliances across settlement service providers (Galabuzi & Teeluckksingh, 2010) and to integrate, coordinate, as well as incorporate immigration specific programs, information sources, referrals and services. At the end of 2009, following a joint call for proposals between *CIC* and the *Provincial Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)*, under the preceding *Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA)*, seventeen *LIPs* were formed across Toronto. A *City Wide*

LIP (CW LIP) was additionally created. Ever since, *TE LIP* developed strategies to coordinate and integrate settlement services for newcomers within the Toronto East geographical neighbourhood. Its catchment area was territorially defined by the eastern portion of the Old City of Toronto and the district formerly known as the City of East York (WoodGreen Community Services, 2010).

The *COIA* agreement, which directed funding for immigration related services, expired on March 31st 2011, as the provincial and federal levels of governments could not reach a consensus on how to best deliver settlement services for Ontario's newcomers (Amanat, 2011). Failure to renew this agreement translated into a fragile and precarious financial state for the *LIPs*. It paved the way for *CIC's* decision, announced on December 2011, to withdraw the funding support for the neighbourhood based settlement model, in favour of a new regional operational model. Within this transitional process, a workforce reduction of up to 75% across the Partnerships followed. Prior *LIPs-CIC* funding agreements came to an end on March 31 2012. Paid *LIP* staff has been laid off and new positions were re-posted. The newly adopted operational model was in place by spring, once *CIC* signed its regional agreements with lead partners. It guaranteed one year financial support for four geographically based *LIPs*, down from the seventeen initially created. It maintained the *CW LIP*. As seen in *Figure 1*, the former *TE-LIP* was incorporated into a regional Partnership, the *Toronto South (TS) LIP*. This is a far larger area, covering most of the former City of Toronto.

Figure 1. Toronto's Former Neighbourhood LIPs and the Current Regional LIPs



Social Network Analysis as a Best Practice

Relationships have been considered the cornerstone of effective community work (Brown and Hannis, 2008). They are channels for transferring resources and information among interdependent actors (Hoffer-Gittell & Weiss, 2004). In fact, it has been shown that social interactions have a significant effect on organizational value creation (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998), that a cohesive, well-connected network is a resource to its members, by means of mutual trust and a willingness to cooperate (Flap & Volker, 2001), and that “who you know often has a great deal to do with what you came to know” (Cross, Borgatti & Parker, 2002).

Network theory is relevant to the study of relationships (Hoffer-Gittell & Weiss, 2004). As a set of theories and tools, social network analysis (SNA) uses relational data (Pope & Lewis, 2008) to create visualizations of structural connections between people (Hoppe & Reinelt, 2010). It sheds light upon large patterns of social interactions (Tsai & Ghosal, 1998) and identifies individuals’ structural specific roles and positions (Schultz-Jones & Cheung, 2008). One of its strengths is the ability to explore the organizational degree of interconnectedness (Oehler, Sheppard, Benjamin & Dworkin, 2007), the ways in which relationships shape information flows (Borgatti & Cross, 2003; Shah, 2000) and the way they add to existent organizational knowledge and future executive directions (Cross, Borgatti & Parker, 2002), particularly within community partnerships (Schultz-Jones & Cheung, 2008).

Partnerships’ effectiveness (Pope & Lewis, 2008; Valente, Chou & Pentz, 2007) and workforce reduction changes (Shah, 2000), have been previously assessed by network based research efforts. In fact, examinations of organizational relational ties showed a negative impact of downsizing and managerial layoffs on professional networks (Zyglidopoulos, 2005) particularly by disrupting existent working relationships (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007) and limiting regular organizational activities (Shah, 2000).

TE LIP was established in the name of coordinating and integrating immigrant and settlement services. A SNA approach, with its inherent examination of structures as networks of relations (Scott, 2010) is a fitting methodology to assess not only the collaboration networks within the Partnership, but also the possible impact of *CIC*’s restructuring and its resulting staff reduction. We hope the network maps and analyses will additionally help the Partnership, as it transitions to the *TS LIP*.

Methodology

This project received approval from *University of Toronto's Office of Research Ethics*. A network survey was administered with immigrant and settlement service providers within the *TE LIP*. Although survey respondents were representing organizations, the unit of analysis was not the individuals nor their organization, but rather the relationships between them.

Survey participants were professionals working within the broader community sector, either directly with newcomers, or indirectly on program and policy related issues.

- In depth consultations and discussions with representatives from *WoodGreen Community Services* were instrumental in developing the survey instrument
- A dataset containing 136 names was compiled by *WoodGreen Community Services* and served as the main contact list for those to receive the survey
- The list included individuals directly involved within the *TE LIP* (i.e. *Partnership Council* members or those conducting their work within specific workgroups) but was also extended to contain members of local networks and neighbouring *LIPs*
- The survey was tested for validity (if its content appropriately assesses *TE LIP's* collaborative relationships) and reliability (inter-raters' level of agreement regarding the wording, content and format of each survey question)
- A convenience sample of five participants completed the online network mapping survey and rated its questions on a score card
- Survey testing scores were analyzed with a statistical software program (*SPSS*) and informed the instrument's revisions
- 136 settlement service providers were invited to electronically complete the revised survey
- Outreach was conducted through follow-up emails and phone calls
- 70 professionals responded
- Participants provided basic organizational information (type of organization, sector, length of time worked within the sector, professional role), job details (geographic catchment areas, workgroups, affiliation to local networks, involvement in neighbouring *LIPs*) and were prompted to identify people to whom they are connected, by selecting them from a list of names
- Service providers were asked to select their colleagues based on *four dimensions of collaboration: current working relationship, innovation, leadership and potential cooperation*
- Respondents additionally identified collaborative relationships with 145 professionals not originally included in our dataset, giving us a total of 281 named stakeholders delivering settlement services within the *TE LIP*
- Network maps were created with a network analysis software package (*Smart Network Analyzer*)
- Data was further analyzed with *In-Flow*, a different social network analysis software, for *density* (number of connections as compared with the maximum number of possible connections), *average path length* (number of steps connecting individuals) and *influence* (stakeholders' strategic position within the overall network) on all four collaboration dimensions and on a variety of demographic combinations
- Maps are based either on respondents' (n=70) or named stakeholders' (n= 281) demographic or professional characteristics
- Each map indicates the exact number of members supporting its professional linkages
- Informal interviews (unstructured, hand written) were conducted with three *TE LIP* stakeholders, in order to contextualize the Partnership's restructuring process

Survey Results

Summary of Respondents

A total of 70 respondents, representing immigrant and settlement service providers within the *TE LIP*, completed the network mapping survey. As shown in *Table 1*, participants had many years of practice within the settlement sector, ranging from less than one year to over 20 years of experience (mean of 13.8 years). Two thirds of respondents were white (67%), nearly half were Canadian born (49%), more than half occupied executive or management positions (57%), and nearly two thirds worked within the non-profit sector (60%).

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic and Organizational Profile (n=70)

Years in the Sector (n=69)	Number	Percent
1-5 Years	24	34.8%
6-10 Years	19	27.5%
11-20 Years	13	18.8%
Over 20 Years	11	15.9%
Less than 1 Year	2	2.9%
Ethno-racial Background (n=70)	Number	Percent
White	47	67%
Racialized	23	33%
Immigration Status (n=70)	Number	Percent
Canadian Born Citizen	34	49%
Canadian Citizen/Immigration Background	29	41%
Permanent Resident	7	10%
Professional Role (n=70)	Number	Percent
Executive/Management	40	57%
Program Delivery/Client Services	25	36%
Administrative/Support Services	3	4%
Other	2	3%
Organization Type (n=70)	Number	Percent
Not for Profit Organization(NGO)	42	60%
Public Health Unit (i.e. hospital)	7	10%
Educational Unit (i.e. School Board)	7	10%
Government (i.e. City Division)	6	9%
Faith Group	3	4%
Other	3	4%
Coalition, Alliance or Network	1	1%
Grassroots/Informal/Non-Incorporated NGO	1	1%

Note: Not every participant answered each question and therefore, the actual number (n) of respondents is reported for clarification purposes.

A further 27% of respondents were members within the *Partnership Council*, the governing body overseeing, guiding and informing *TE LIP*'s activity and its development process. Similarly, 21% of participants were paid *LIP* staff, meaning their position was waged via *CIC* funding, although they were affiliated to, or working under a community organization (*Table 2*).

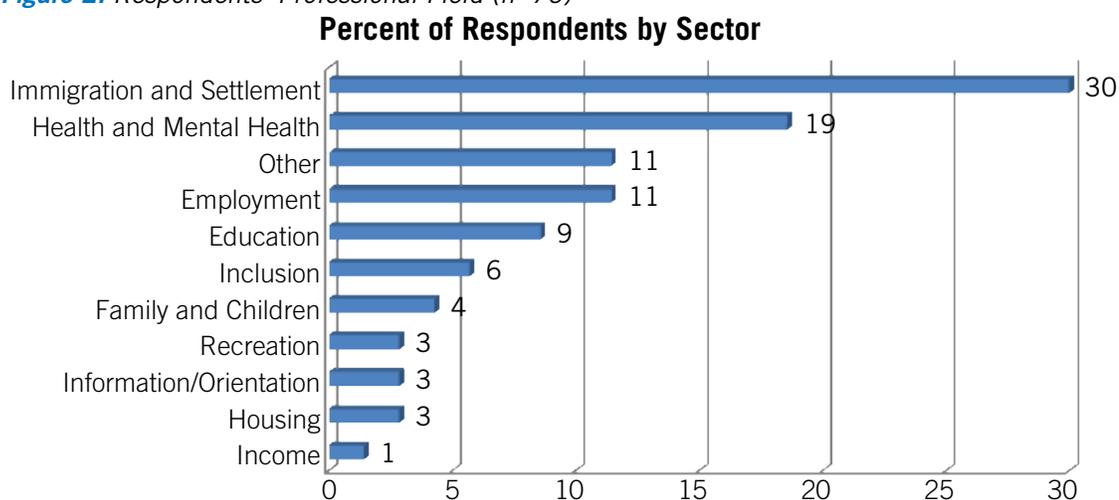
Table 2. Respondents' Organizational Membership (n=70)

Partnership Council Membership	Percent
Member	27%
Non-Member	73%
Members' Remunerative Status	
Paid TE LIP Staff	21%
Positions funded by Community Organizations	78%

Area of Service

Respondents were asked to identify the sector in which they primarily work or volunteer (see Figure 2). The top professional field was *Immigration and Settlement* (30%) followed by *Health and Mental Health* (19%) and *Employment Services* (11%). Other service providers were conducting their work within the fields of *Education* (9%), *Social Inclusion/Integration* (6%), *Family Support* (4%), *Recreation* (3%), *Housing* (3%), *Information/Orientation* (3%) and *Income Support* (1%).

Figure 2. Respondents' Professional Field (n=70)



Several thematic workgroups related to the provision of newcomer and immigration services were originally established within the TE LIP: *Informal Economy*, *Informal Settlement*, *Language Learning*, *Employment Services*, *Child Care and Child Minding*, and *Model Development*. A *System Wide Coordination* section, along with a *Front Line* service providers' workgroup, were additionally created. For descriptive purposes, we examined participants' relationships within these workgroups. More than half of respondents did not conduct their work within these groups (51%) nor within the separate front line segment (76%). Low participation rates in local networks were also reported, as very few participants were actively involved within the *Neighbourhood Action Partnership Table (NAPT)* – 26% or the *East End Network (EEN)*– 24%. Out of those carrying out their work within the NAPT network, most of them (83%) were drawn into the *Employment and Volunteer Strategy* segment.

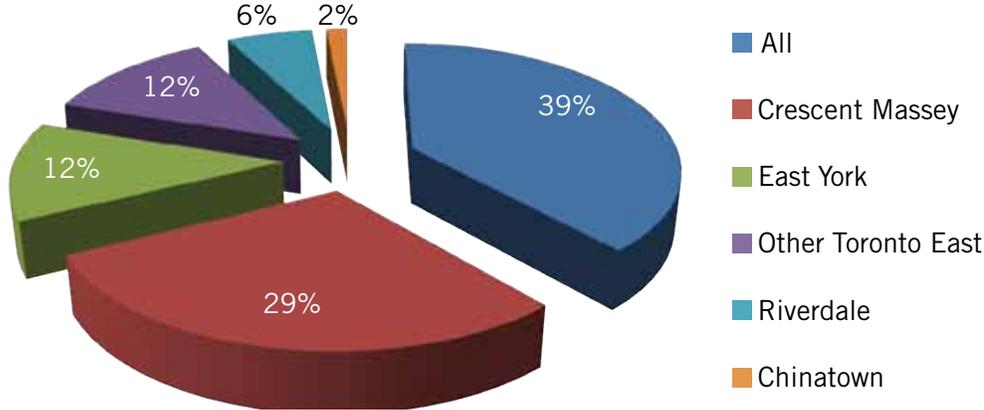
Population Served

Most respondents were providing services to permanent residents (67%) from Southeast Asian (27%) or Southern Asian (26%) ethno-racial background.

Geographical Distribution

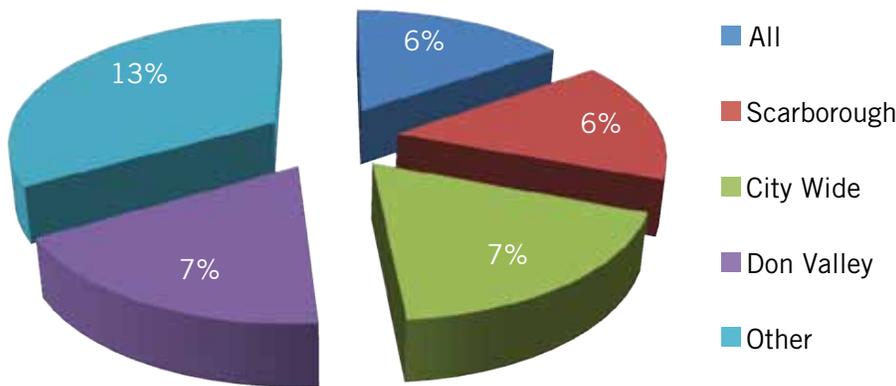
As shown in *Figure 3*, the highest proportion of participants' agencies (39%) were not spatially confined to local boundaries, but were rather servicing all geographical areas within the Toronto East neighbourhood. A further 29% of respondents identified Crescent Town/Taylor Massey as their primary service delivery area, 12% identified Broadview East York, and 12% indicated the rest of the Toronto East. On the lower end, Riverdale (6%) and Chinatown (1%) were the least geographically represented areas.

Figure 3. Respondents' Geographic Area of Service Delivery (n=65)



More than half of participants highlighted their collaboration with neighbouring *LIPs*, including *Don Valley LIP*, *South West Scarborough LIP* or the *CW LIP* (*Figure 4*).

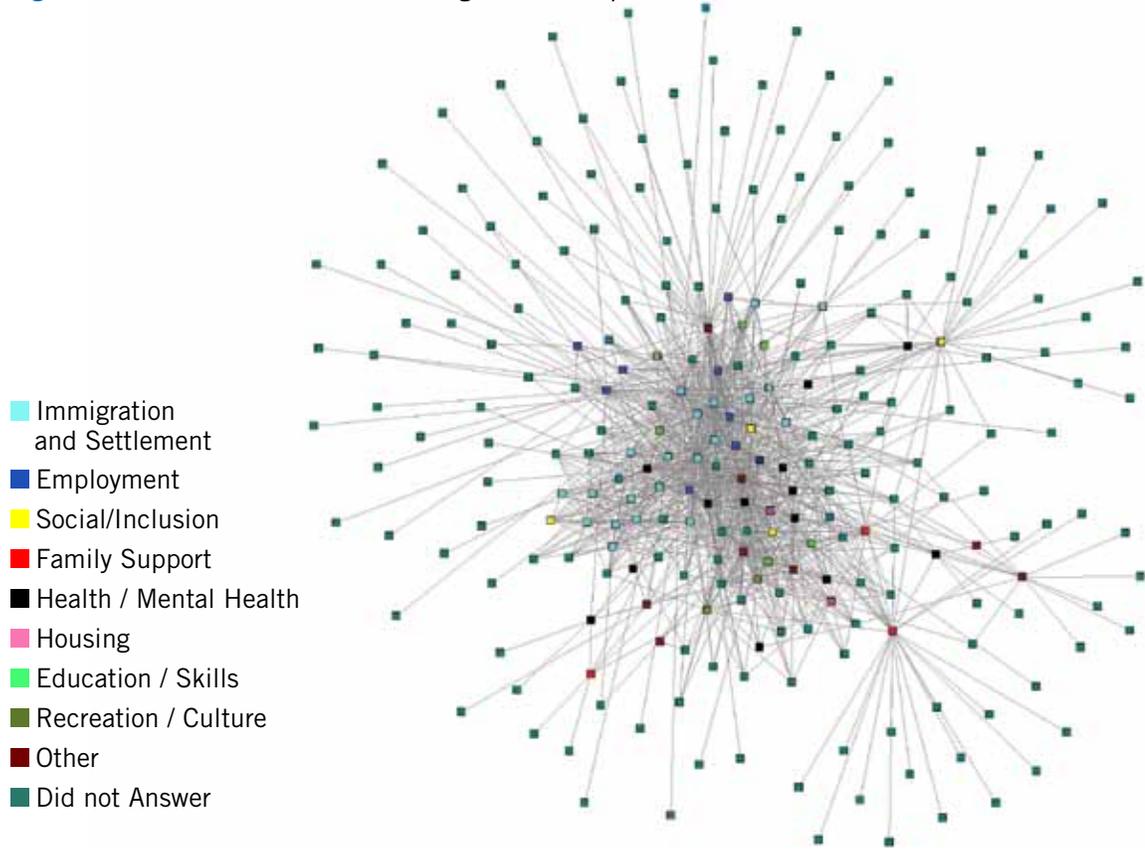
Figure 4. Respondents' Participation within Neighbouring LIPs (n=39)



A Strong Configuration of Professional Linkages

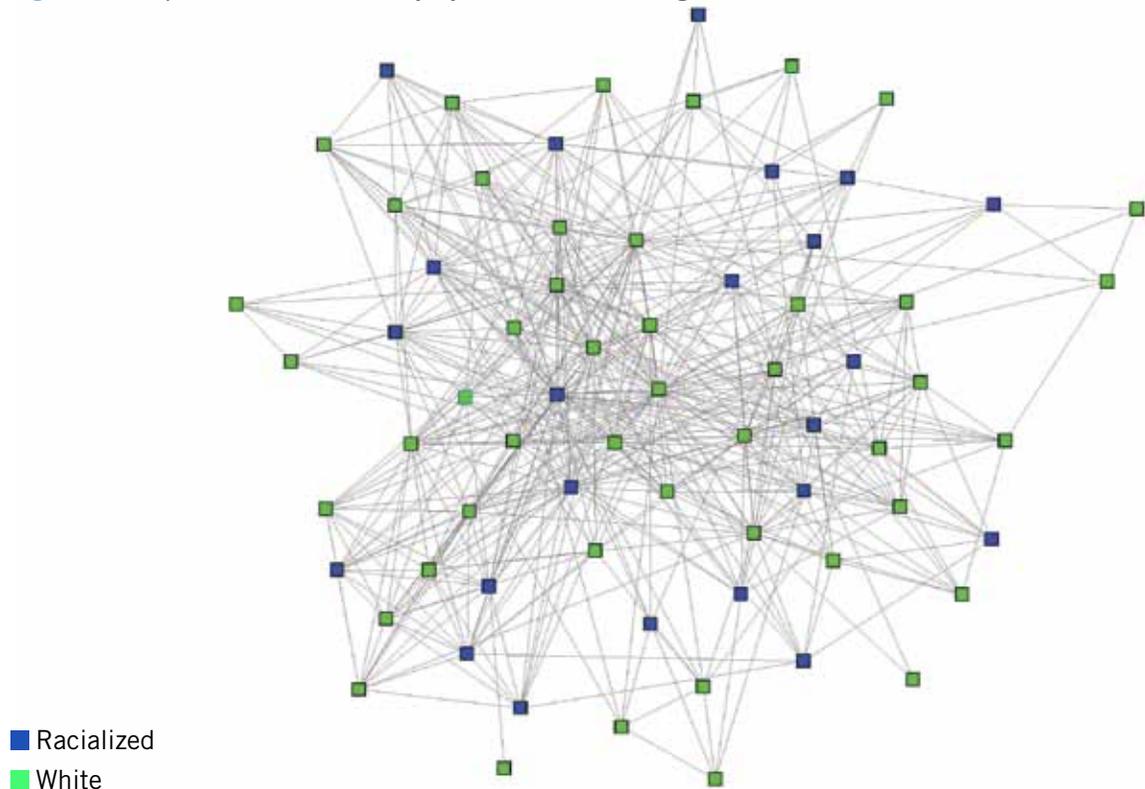
Asked about their current working relationships, respondents identified 246 colleagues with whom they have well-established collaborative networks within the Partnership. As seen in *Figure 5*, the network map created on the working relationship dimension portrays the *TE LIP* as a highly dense network, with a strong configuration of professional linkages (n=1466). Unsurprisingly, the network's core was dominated by those working within the *Immigration and Settlement* sector. However, individuals representing other professional fields were additionally positioned within the network's core, a good indication of multi-sectorial collaboration within the Partnership.

Figure 5. Stakeholders' Current Working Relationships (n=246)



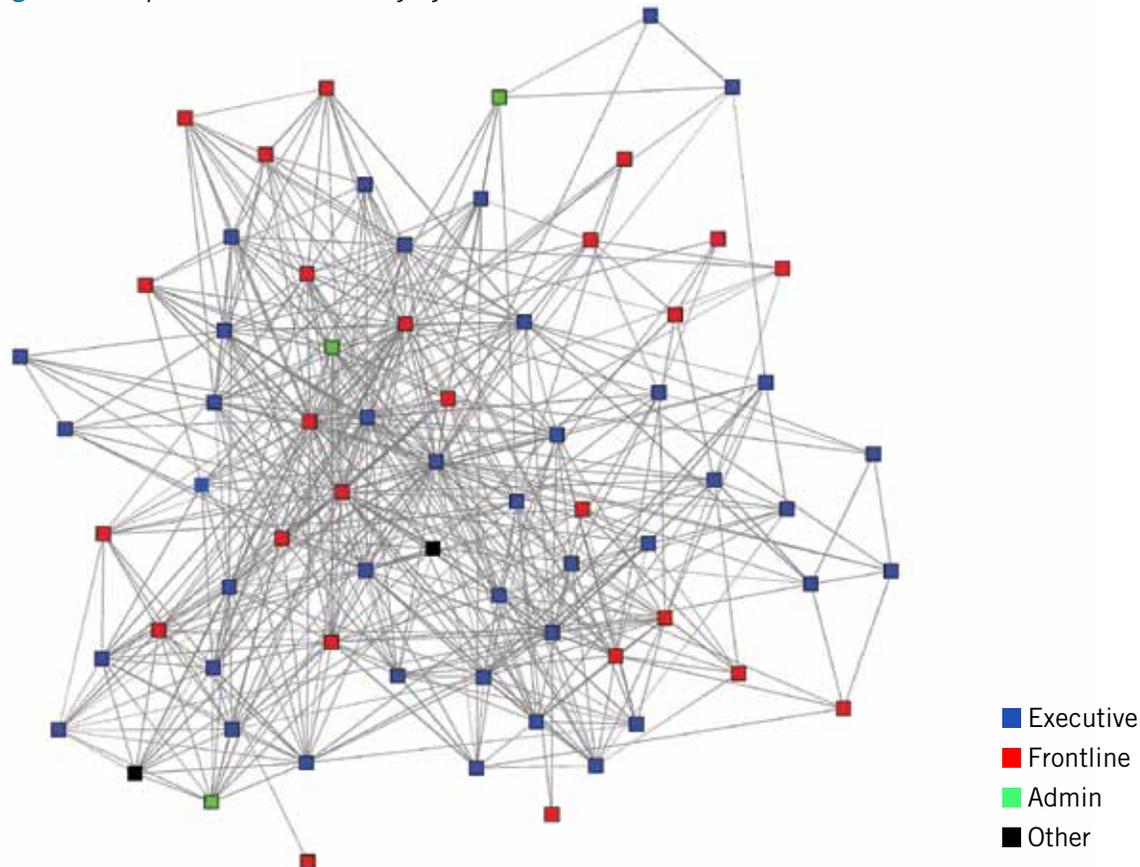
Survey data was used to create network maps by participants' self-identified ethno-racial backgrounds. *Figure 6* shows an even distribution of central and peripheral positions among both, racialized and white participants, on the working relationship network dimension.

Figure 6. Respondents' Positionality by Ethno-racial Background (n=67)



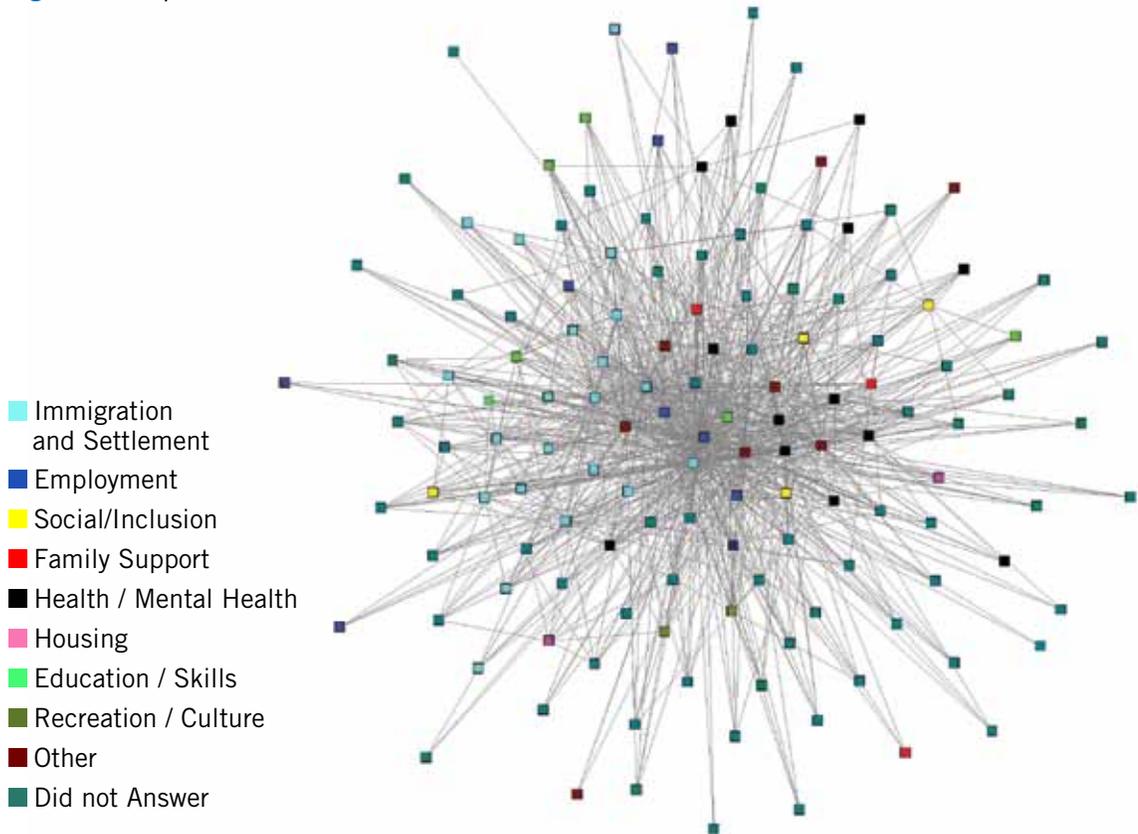
Additionally, we examined the Partnership's working relationships with an overlay of respondents' organizational roles (*Figure 7*). Although executives outnumbered those providing direct services, there was a good representation of front line staff within the network. Having both, executives and direct service staff occupy central positions, is indicative of collaborative exchanges between individuals in various organizational roles. Analyzing the degree to which participants connected among themselves or externally to others, strictly based on their professional role (E/I ratio), we discovered that both, executives and front line staff were slightly more connected with other executives. Strong interconnections of executives could possibly reflect the practice of linking senior management staff, an objective formerly stated within the *LIP* settlement model. Yet, this further evolved to connect front line staff within the Partnership.

Figure 7. Respondents' Positionality by Professional Roles (n=67)



Asked to identify connections they would like to develop, respondents indicated they desired twice as many collaborative relationships than those already existent (*Figure 8*). A further 1103 professional ties between 138 stakeholders were identified as desirable for future developments. This finding is indicative of participants' strong desire to build up new collaborations. It is reflected by the network's density index, which more than doubled to 6% from the original 2.43%, previously calculated on the Partnership' current working relationships.

Figure 8. Respondents' Desired Collaborative Networks (n=138)

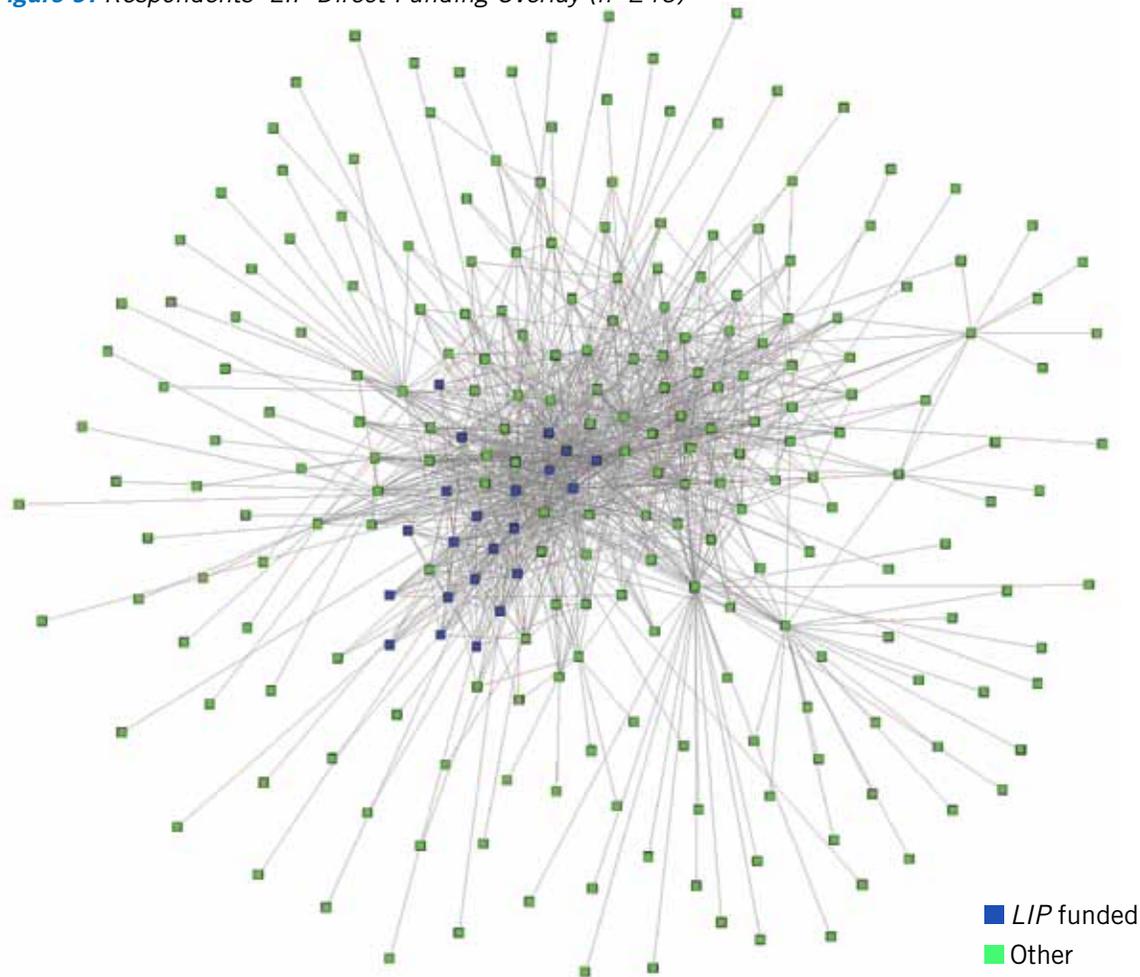


LIP Paid Staff: the Partnership's Bare Bones

SNA visually represents positions occupied within networks. It identifies key individuals, those perceived as influential by their colleagues. Their presence or absence positively or negatively affects the network's performance. Within the current restructuring context, we thought it is worth exploring *TE LIP* funded staff's positional roles, as they particularly relate to the Partnership's collaborative relationships.

As shown in *Figure 9*, members whose positions were funded through *CIC* agreements had vital locations within the network. While representing only 16% of the network, *TE LIP* paid staff sustained approximately half of its professional linkages. Forty-one stakeholders supported 702 of the Partnership's current collaborative ties, three times as many connections based on their proportional representation within the network.

Figure 9. Respondents' LIP Direct Funding Overlay (n=246)



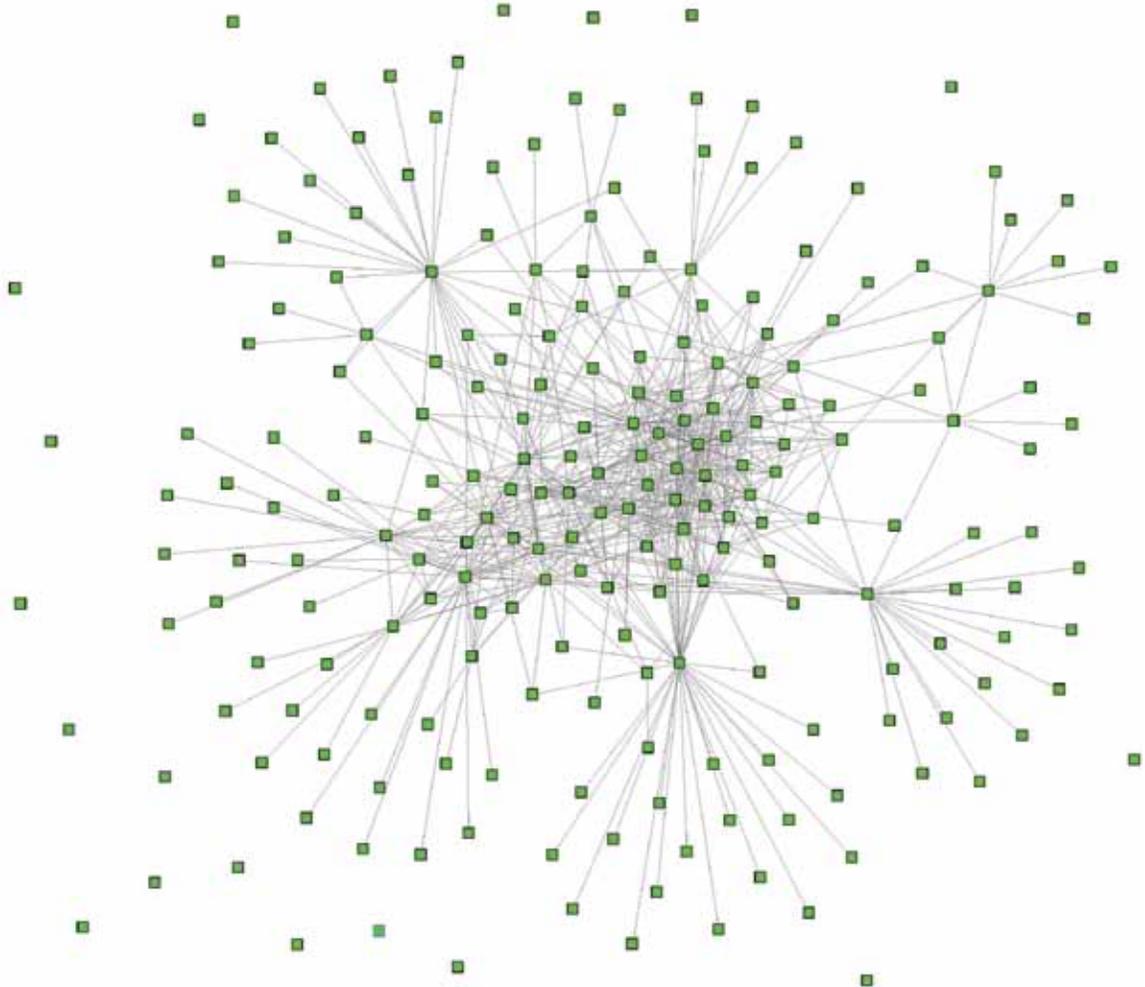
Network's Sustainability: Uncertain without the Paid LIP Staff

With the purpose of assessing the workforce reduction within the LIPs transitional process, this report visually explored the TE LIP's professional linkages, after removing the paid LIP staff from the network. Originally designed as a "What If" scenario, given the current restructuring process, this might be closer to reality than initially expected. Across Toronto, up to 75% core staff has left the Partnerships. Visualizing the TE LIP network, without the LIP funded positions, gave us a good sense of how the network of settlement services within the Toronto East neighbourhood will look like following the amalgamation process (Figure 10).

Surprisingly, 50 % of the Partnership's professional linkages were unsustainable, once the paid LIP staff members were removed from the network. Although representing only 16% of the Partnership's working relationship network, without them, the number of professional collaborations was halved to 764 from the initial 1466. The network's density dropped by a quarter (26%) and nineteen stakeholders remained isolated. This loss of connections is particularly relevant within the current transitional process. It draws attention upon the possible negative impact of CIC's restructuring on already established work relations within the TE LIP. Prior analyses have indicated a weighted average path length (the average number of steps connecting professionals) of 2.94, for the Partnership's current working relationships. Removing the staff members directly waged via CIC funding, increased the network's weighted average path length score by 17 % to 3.52. A greater distance between network members further inhibits the Partnership's collaborative relationships, as it takes much longer for professionals to connect and cooperate with each other. In turn, a short path facilitates the communication distance between stakeholders, and therefore, their professional collaboration.

Most active individuals, the ones playing key coordination roles (Knoke, 1993) are usually centrally located within networks (Oehler, Sheppard, Benjamin & Dworkin, 2007). Although the paid *LIP* staff's central positions were visually apparent within the Partnership (*Figure 9*), we additionally calculated the network's integration score. The lower the score, the harder the information spread within the network, as stakeholders use fewer routes to disseminate information. Initially, the working relationship network had an average integration score of 179. After removing the *LIP* funded individuals from the network, its successive integration score dropped to sixty-five. A 64% decrease, clearly emphasizes the important role played by the *LIP* staff, as it relates to the coordination of immigrant and settlement services within the Toronto East neighbourhood.

Figure 10. Partnership's Network without the Paid *LIP* Staff (n=205)



A similar scenario replicates on the leadership collaboration network. Many respondents identified those directly funded by the *LIP* as the ones to provide them with support, advice and resources in their daily work. Following the *LIP* funded staff removal, the network's density score dropped to 3% from 3.06%. Once again, the actual number of leadership connections halved, from 685 to 334, leaving eighteen professionals in isolation, with no ties to the network.

Conclusion

Back to Square One

Findings outlined in this report demonstrate that community services for immigrants have reached a high level of integration within the geographically defined Toronto East neighbourhood. Partnership's stakeholders established a dense and reachable network during its short period of operation, of just over two years. Relationships were diverse, in regards to participants' racial and organizational background. Crossing sectors and organizations, traversing geographical communities and many neighbouring *LIPs*, the Partnership's professional linkages reflected a highly integrated immigrant and settlement service provision. Stakeholders have indicated their aspirations to further build and develop the current working relationships, as they would like to develop twice as many connections than those already existent.

The roles played by the funded *LIP* staff were vital to the Partnership's operational performance. Paid *LIP* positions were 'brokering' positions (Bender-deMoll, 2008), as defined by network mapping terminology. Highly central within the network, they were held by well-connected individuals, those likely to play a leading role in future collaborations. Bringing together professionals otherwise isolated, and connecting peripheral individuals with key network stakeholders, the paid *LIP* staff was vital in sustaining the coordination and integration of settlement services and setting up the Partnership's future collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Representative of only 16% of the Partnership's current professional collaborations, those holding *LIP* funded positions sustained 50% of its connections. In our hypothetical analysis, the collaborative relations within the Toronto East neighbourhood became fragmented without them: the network's density was reduced by a quarter, its professional linkages halved, and almost a tenth of the network remained isolated. Within the current restructuring process, such a scenario is certainly possible, particularly as half of the *LIP* positions have been eliminated through the amalgamation process. It is indeed difficult to envision a successful regional *LIP* model of immigrant and settlement service coordination, without the very same key actors sustaining such professional linkages.

As dense networks smooth communication flows (Valente, Ping Chou & Pentz, 2007) it would be beneficial to enhance the *LIP* funded staff's roles, by deliberately connecting them with peripheral members within the network (Stephenson, 2008). This would realize better returns on the multi-sectorial coordination and integration of immigrant services. It will also make better use of individuals' central network positions and their professional linkages. Conversely, eliminating their positions and failing to support their already established connections, could lead to organizational failure (Cross, Borgatti & Parker, 2002) and could impair the network's effectiveness and relationships' development. As social interactions are manifestations of organizational resources (Tsai & Ghosal, 1998), we expect the *CIC*'s restructuring process and its subsequent workforce reduction to negatively impact the overall integration of settlement services within the Toronto East neighbourhood and within all other *LIPs* across the city. This change could result in not *more with less* but in *less with fewer*.

Asked about the *LIP* restructuring process, stakeholders worried their settlement service provision would be locally disenfranchised.

“My problem is that we might be growing the project too big... so connections won't be strong...less frequent and more formal...”

The semi informal interviews conducted with some of the Partnership's stakeholders, highlighted the current *TE LIP* struggle in its transition to the regional model. Member agencies were left with no choice but to take on the restructuring process themselves. Disagreements were common at

the discussion table and negotiations created tensions among the Partnership's members. *TE LIP* settlement service providers felt they are back to square one, supported only by one year of funding commitment for future collaborations:

“ It created tensions amongst agencies... it forced agencies with different visions to work together ”

“TS LIP will only have one Council...there will not be enough Council seats. There are worries that some people will be left out... Some areas will only have a couple of representatives. People are disappointed...it seems like starting over. Multiyear funding wasn't offered, it's a structural problem that they can't offer long term commitment ...”

“The process that CIC set up ruptured many relations. We are starting back at zero...processes slandered amongst agencies in term of future leadership...people fought over resources ... CIC only is committed for one year...”

“They couldn't afford to support that many so they put us in the pool and had us fight...”

With fewer *LIP* funded positions, the threats to the network are real. *CIC* turns back the clock to 2009, when localized settlement services were not yet integrated. Across Toronto's *LIPs*, many professionals are left to wonder if their preceding years of localized settlement planning were in vain and if the regional model is worth their future planning efforts:

“ 75 percent job losses...25 percent remaining... depending on how many LIP staff they had before ”

“Regional will do work that already has been done... challenge to be able to explain what is the value added... why is this worth doing again...”

“They [CIC] don't have clear ideas... they think a region is the same as neighbourhood...”

“It will feel that we are back to square one...new people... a bigger geographic area... so it is like starting over. We all do things very differently or we have different vision. It will be difficult.”

Additionally, service providers felt the change came too abruptly, disrupting their working life and forcing them into uncertain employment situations.

“ We are four days away [of the March 31st deadline] and they have approved no confirmation. People might lose their jobs... they can't tell us anything until CIC approves it ”

“Agencies also have protocols unionized ...so everyone had to be laid off...two weeks ago...with the understanding that we do expect something but we don't know what and when,... but internally the HR stuff closed down, email accounts, clean up desk... They made the announcement before Christmas; that means they knew before, but they didn't give people enough time ”

CIC's decision to change the *LIP* neighbourhood based model, without evaluating its settlement services coordination, could possibly challenge the continuation of already established professional networks within Toronto East neighbourhood and potentially within all other areas across the city. To efficiently use social networks for social ends and connect people to achieve collective goals (Plastrik & Taylor, 2004), *CIC* could have continued to support the already established professional relationships, as a best practice for developing stronger collaborations in the future.

It is uncertain if *CIC's* stated objective of sustaining and strengthening the local integration capacity of immigrant and settlement services will match its newly adopted regional model, or if the local professional collaborations will extend to the new regional Partnerships. Networks could possibly grow weaker, given the loss of the paid *LIP* staff's cohesive role.

Newcomers experience economic and social changes first at the neighbourhood level (Galabuzi & Teeluckksingh, 2010) and often, local organizations are sites for addressing newly arrived immigrants' social exclusion (Galabuzi & Teeluckksingh, 2010). They best support civic participation, facilitate long term integration, coordinate communication and maintain existing partnerships (Dowding & Razi, 2006). As proximal points of contact for people who seek help, they tend to represent flexible service hubs for ethno-cultural diverse immigrants in their community (Yan & Lauer, 2008). Neighbourhood organizations are best equipped to identify local needs and to mobilize community resources to respond to such needs (Jenson 2001). In fact, an exploratory study assessing the effectiveness of local neighborhood houses, showed their positive impact on newcomers' ability to connect, integrate and settle within the community (Yan & Lauer, 2008). It is problematic that *LIPs* will no longer operate at the local level. Over and above, how will the regional coordination translate into the delivery of settlement services? Will the amalgamated *LIPs* continue to respond to newcomers' needs?

Similar questions should be addressed by all funders when considering restructuring and downsizing strategies, to avoid entrenching an already marginalized settlement service system (Richmond & Shields, 2005). *CIC's* proceeding with the amalgamation, without thoroughly assessing the professional dynamics within the neighboured based *LIPs*, could possibly impede the future of community-based planning, as it relates to newcomers' service provision.

This report hopes to provide some baseline information on the structure of working relations within the settlement sector. It credits the *TE LIP* high level of integration and coordination of settlement services to the Partnership, although no previous relational assessments were conducted. It also raises questions about the *LIPs* transition to the regional model, in relation to newcomers' needs, the very same needs that should be at the forefront of any settlement service delivery model. A renewed stated commitment (Jenson, 2001) with better funding and not just more funding (Richmond & Shields, 2005) is needed to create opportunities for newcomers' integration (Dowding & Razi, 2006). It is desirable that funders will gain a structural understanding of the overall settlement system in order to advance valuable policies and strategies (Moore & Wesley, 2011). Bringing together different stakeholders, relying on community consultations, or developing participatory planning processes, could be useful ways for expanding a comprehensive vision of immigration policy to truly support newcomers' settlement and integration.

Recommendations

1. Reinstate funding for the *LIP* neighbourhood based operational model. Restructuring the *LIPs* entails moving away from a neighbourhood based settlement model. Settlement services are sustained by relational processes. Relations take time to develop and could potentially be lost within the larger regional Partnerships. The consequential workforce reduction may also impede the provision of locally based immigrant services. It is uncertain if the regional model is well equipped to develop a comprehensive settlement service delivery plan for newly arrived immigrants. Perhaps Toronto, a city with half of its residents born outside Canada, is not the best place to test the regional model's ability to address newcomers' social, cultural and economic needs.

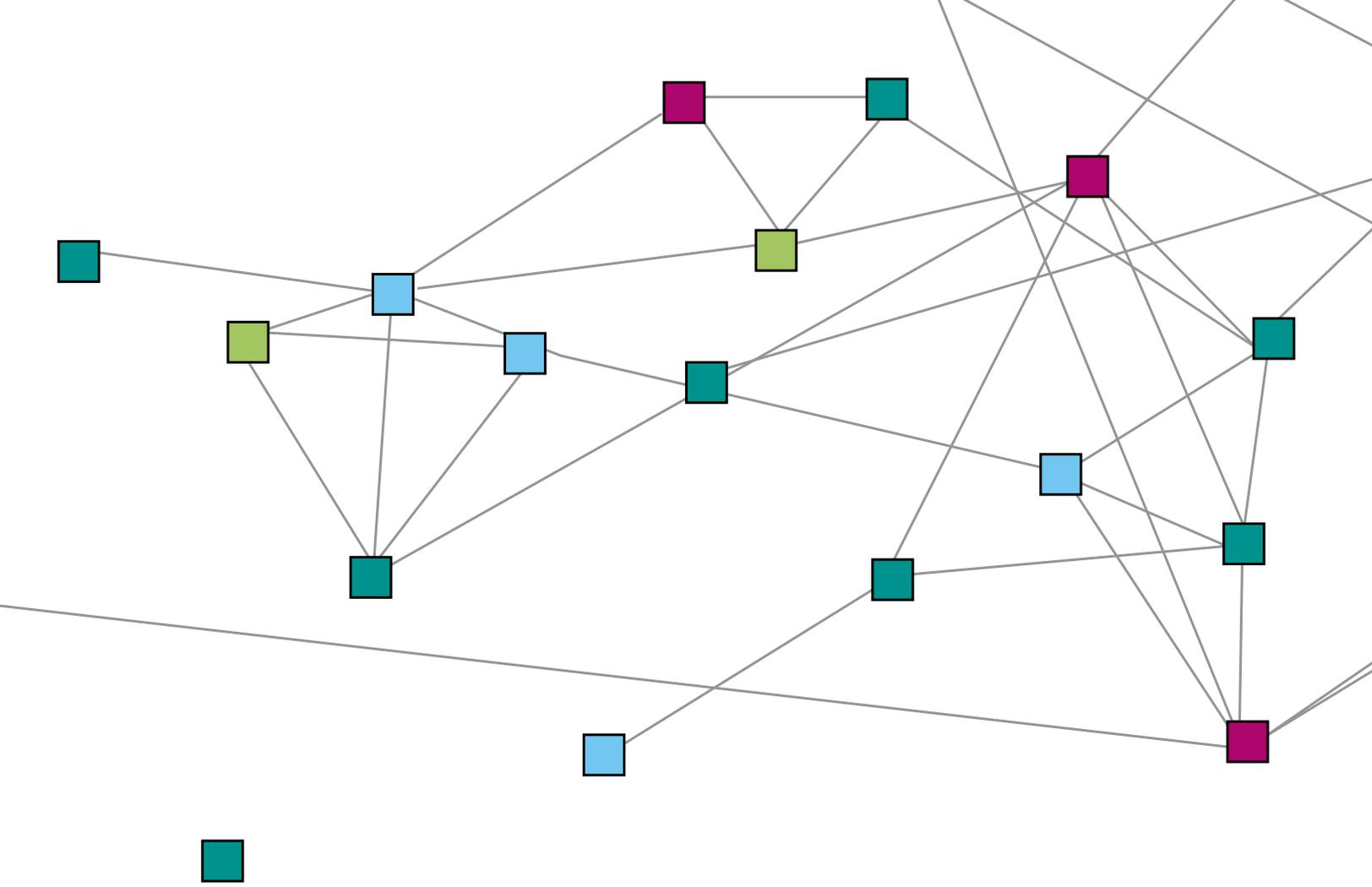
2. Make use of evidence informed evaluation research to guide the *LIPs* future developments. It is important for funders to increase their research capacity in order to better explore the collaborative and professional linkages within the *LIP* settlement model of service delivery. Restructuring the former neighbourhood based *LIPs*, without previously evaluating the coordination and integration of immigrant and settlement service delivery, indicates a lack of foresight in providing the best services for Canada's newcomers. Cutting back investments that could improve newly arrived immigrants' settlement process may have negative implications for their social and economic integration. Although *CIC*'s concerns of service duplication are well-founded, there is no evidence of services being doubled up. Moving away from the neighbourhood based settlement model on the fear of service duplication, could unfortunately translate into reduced service coordination for newcomers.

3. Adopt a long term perspective on the settlement and integration process. Immigrant and settlement service recipients would benefit from a long term *Strategic Plan* lead by *CIC*. A multi-sectorial and multi stakeholder community consultation process would best guide the future development, planning, coordination and integration of its proposed model of immigrant and settlement services.

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