REPORT: *A SENSE OF BELONGING*
WINNIPEG REGIONAL VISIT
September 24th– September 27th

Report

A Sense of Belonging aims to promote diversity and combat racism and discrimination in local communities across Canada through community outreach and public education. The United Nations Association in Canada's overall goal is to bridge gaps between distinct minority and "mainstream" groups to promote cross-cultural understanding and collective action and to promote fulsome and equal participation in Canadian society.

Objectives: The *A Sense of Belonging* (SB) project is in its second fiscal year, and, as such, there is a need to return to the nine communities to investigate whether the issues and concerns of the first round of regional planning meetings. Broadly the objectives of these regional visits can be outlined at follows:

- Re-introduce the project to key community stakeholders, including: UNA-Canada's mandate; project history; how *A Sense of Belonging* came to be; Objectives and Methodology; the Community action plan framework.
- Follow up to see how SB has made an impact in the community. Define modalities to evaluate the SB intermediate outcomes (effects) at the local level by the end of the project.
- To draw on expertise of local stakeholders, including:
    - What initiatives are currently underway in the community to address racism and discrimination? What is the SB project actual level of involvement?
    - Where might *A Sense of Belonging* be able to support some of these initiatives (i.e. instead of duplicating efforts)?
    - Where do gaps still remain where *A Sense of Belonging* might focus its resources?
    - Brainstorming for final legacy research product of SB
- Assess how *Sense of Belonging* will continue past March 2008.
- Check-in and reinvigorate Regional Coordinators.

Timeline: September 24th -27th, 2007.

Agenda: The regional roundtable was held at the University of Manitoba from 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. on September 25th. A meeting with Ms. Caroline Neufeld, mayor's designate on Winnipeg's Equity and Diversity Committee, was held on Sept 27th.

Invitees: Invitations were sent to stakeholders including members of Winnipeg's ethnocultural and Aboriginal communities. Representatives from the provincial government and Canadian Heritage were also able to attend.

Roundtable Discussion

The roundtable started with a discussion on the project's synthesis report and participant's reactions to the points raised. One participant did an informal survey of the University of Winnipeg and found a distinct trend in inappropriate comments (ex: racist jokes, etc). Ageism and gender inequality have been identified as prevalent. With regards to **institutional readiness** and **community collaboration**, concerns were raised that funding mechanisms, or rather the lack of continuance of those funds, have made it difficult to sustain needed projects over any significant length of time. This was seen as particularly problematic

with regards to **Aboriginal realities**. As in other communities, the **media** was seen as biased in its reportage. Negative stories involving, for example, gang violence in ethnic communities have contributed to a negative climate of fear that inhibits community integration. With regards to the issue of **new Canadians** and interactions with the Aboriginal community, one participant mentioned that there had been some conflicts between the two groups, but room for improvement in these relations exist through a variety of programs in Winnipeg. As in other communities, barriers do exist for newcomers due to the lack of recognition for foreign qualification. One issue that was brought up by participants was the issue of housing. Certain communities are quite full of available housing, but are unwilling to open them up to immigrants.

Figure 1: Brainstorming during roundtable

As in Yellowknife, a session was held on the **conjunction of Aboriginal and ethnocultural realities**. As Aboriginal realities was one of the priority areas in Winnipeg. Given the presence of newcomers in the city, and the large urban Aboriginal population in the city, it was thus incumbent to ask whether it was possible to encourage collaboration between the two groups or whether their concerns were too divergent to find common ground. Participants responses brought to light many issues. As mentioned above, funding for Aboriginal programs is not being sustained; as well, many Aboriginal groups are turning inwards and concentrating on their own issues. At the same time, the broader issue of racism is common to all groups. Having a sense of displacement is also a common denominator. Many newcomers, face fear, isolation, inappropriate support systems, and other issues that are not unknown to the Aboriginal community.

Some collaboration is already in existence. An organization called "Welcome Place" takes immigrants on a bus tour of the reserve and teaches new Canadians. There is a lot more diversity training and education in communities that are already diverse. The challenge lies in homogenous communities where it is difficult to convince people in charge of, for example, school systems to push them to reflect a diversity that does not necessarily represent them. It is easy for people who live in non-diverse areas to ignore and not engage with diversity and different communities. Even downtown Winnipeg is a culture shock for many citizens.

Racial profiling and violent crime are one of three priority areas for Winnipeg and there have been concerns about violence in immigrant and Aboriginal communities. Yet as one participant noted while crime in general has gotten more violent in the past few years, this is not related to ethnicity or race. The media in Winnipeg tends to focus on the violence. A woman's network funded a research project last year interviewing minority youth on the media and gang involvement. Conclusions from the interviews indicated youth felt terribly stereotyped in the community. There are many programs targeted at adults and school-aged kids. A gap does exist for youth between 15 – 18 years of age, however. An assumption exists that these children will go to school and get needed help there. This is not necessarily true as schools do not have enough services. Schools focus on doing well in school and English programs, yet there is a gap for children from violent backgrounds. As well not all children go to school.

Media education was one avenue that participants felt needed to be dealt with. Roundtables with the media to promote awareness of good practices in reportage were already being conducted. Participants indicated a difference in coverage over the last two years. This being said, more work is needed to be done to overcome the perceived negative, conservative bias often seen in the media. Working with the reporters directly is usually the best method participants have seen to get one's point across (rather than going through editors, etc.)

The next section is a summary of many of the points made during our discussion of the city's **priority areas**:

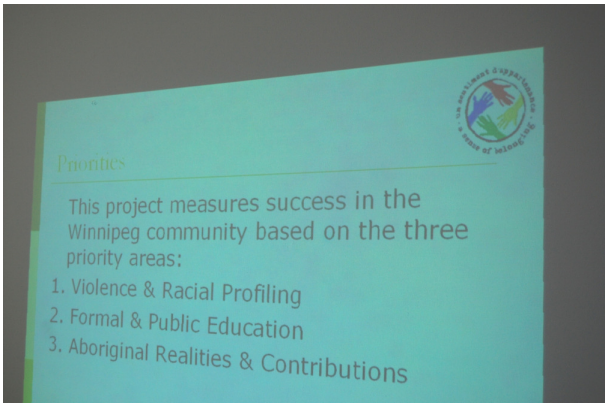

Figure 2: Priority areas for Winnipeg

Violence and Racial Profiling	
Do we see growing partnership between organizations around racial profiling awareness?	-Yes, there are lot of groups and partners combating racism; there needs to be collaboration to work together; this collaboration needs to be sustained with continued funding
Is Winnipeg seeing a reduced rate of racial violence?	-Violence in general has increased but is more related to poverty, negative media influences, political and social conditions and is not really racial in character
Formal and Public Education	
Have schools changed their curriculum to include issues of diversity?	-Some have, some have not-it appears that his reflects the immediate community -there is an action plan being developed -a lot of schools have been responsive vs. pro-active
Do teachers engage in professional diversity training?	-courses are offered; no knowledge as to whether they are mandatory or not. -teachers in service days? -is it part of teaching degree curriculum?
Has the general public engaged in debates about these issues?	-Yes, reflective of immediate community -parent-teacher nights -immigrants -fighting racism -education about religious differences

	-debate whether some elective courses should be mandatory (ex: High School comparative religions courses) -Workplaces should be responsible for education of their employees (ex. A plumber going into homes of people from different backgrounds) -workplaces could offer workshops where they bring in people to speak
Aboriginal Realities And Contributions	
Are there more inclusive environments for urban aboriginal youth?	-Lack of programming for pre-teen aboriginal youth -Inclusive environment at post-secondary -Institutions like University of Manitoba provide good programming and resources -need to address aboriginal people in transition
Has knowledge within communities about aboriginal cultures and realities increased?	-Media encourages negative stereotypes and misconceptions - More aboriginal events are open to the public -Depends on whether you have aboriginal people pushing for this education -Schools with large aboriginal population have implemented aboriginal culture -To make fundamental change we must work together, not just instigated by Aboriginal groups or otherwise
Do we see a higher level of participation of aboriginal people in civic activities such as election and community activities?	-Noticed more aboriginal election volunteers and aboriginal support of candidates -more aboriginal people running in all levels of government -more aboriginal programs/initiatives (ex: "Take back the night") -more aboriginal people in post-secondary institutions (academics, professors) -CBC has aboriginal reporters -presence of Aboriginal Peoples Television Network based out of Winnipeg

With regards to some of the action plan items, the Multiculturalism Secretariat is working on an ethnocultural profile of the province of Manitoba which would prove useful in developing a demographic makeup of Winnipeg. The Secretariat may be able to provide a list of community organizations. For the **future of the project**, Winnipeg maybe an ideal starting point for **private sector** engagement. Human Resources and Social Development Canada has an "Engagement Plan" aimed at eliminating racism in the workplace, with Winnipeg being one of the focus cities. The Chamber of Commerce has a diversity officer in place as well. The Multiculturalism Secretariat is developing a program to assist ethnocultural organizations to become more financially sustainable. Working with the Chamber of Commerce is an ideal way for presenting

Figure 3: Presentation by regional coordinator Elena Anciro on action plan.

best practices. To "sell" the idea of diversity within the workplace, it is necessary to present diversity as best for a business' bottom line. The word "diversity" itself is key; "anti-racism" may be too controversial or loaded a term for use with the private sector.

Many ideas for the project's **final resource** came out of the roundtable. The UNA-Canada's media guide was seen as a very useful resource. One suggestion given was that of a similar guide not for NGOs but for the media themselves to encourage accurate, non-biased, and sensitive reporting. One participant suggested that success stories and best practices were a good way of motivating people. Another suggestion was a settlement guide for newcomers.

Meetings

Members of the *A Sense of Belonging* team were able to secure a meeting with Caroline Neufeld. She suggested that Winnipeg's Citizen Equity Committee (C.E.C) would be the best avenue for engaging the municipality in any of the project's goals (more information can be found on their website at http://www.citizenequity.org/). The C.E.C. provides a diversity "report card" (http://www.winnipeg.ca/csinter/HRPlanningServices/shared/HRSP%20Condensed%20-%20Final.pdf) which details all that the City of Winnipeg does with regards to diversity promotion especially within the workplace. The report card could serve as a significant resource for any future UNA-Canada projects interested in promoting diversity in the workplace at a national level. Two contacts mentioned by Ms. Neufeld were Mike Pagtakhan (m.pagtakhan@winnipeg.ca), city councilor and Ray Ali (raali@familycentre.mb.ca) both affiliated with the C.E.C.

Conclusion

Winnipeg is a community that seems quite engaged in the process of social change. The roundtable illustrated not just the willingness of groups to collaborate in the city, but the general interest in the subject. Meetings with representatives of the city's E.D.C showed that this commitment to integration is a part of the local government's overall vision for Winnipeg. Local stakeholders were very willing to collaborate with the UNA-Canada and *A Sense of Belonging* through support given to project regional coordinators. This spirit of collaboration in Winnipeg is vital with regards to tackling some of the issues of concern in the community, such as the bridging of newcomer and Aboriginal groups and the lack of positive coverage given by the media to social issues. This being said, Winnipeg could serve as a very progressive base with

regards to the ideals of the project and the possibility of extending the project in key areas if support can be harnessed with the Chamber of Commerce (with regards to private sector engagement) and local committees.

Appendix A: Action Plan Items for Winnipeg

1 Community Facts Sheet

3 School Workshops

3 Community Events

1 directory of community leaders/anti-racism/diversity committee

1 supporting organization for in-kind contributions and local support

1 Brochure

School Presentations

Appendix B: Attendance Information, September 25th Roundtable

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Joanna Quail	Diversity Relations Officer	Winnipeg Police Service	joannaquail@winnipeg.ca
Maggie Duncan	Equity Advisor	U. of Manitoba	maggie_duncan@umanitoba.ca
Cathy Rocke	Program Director	Aboriginal Focus Programs, University of Manitoba	crocke@cc.umanitoba.ca
Hamza Mbabaali	Program Officer	Canadian Heritage	Hamza.mbabaali@pch.gc.ca
Mike Einarson	Vice President, Internal	University of Manitoba Students' Union	vpi@umsu.ca
Amanda Shiplack	Vice President, Student Services	University of Winnipeg Students' Association	vpss@theuwsa.ca
Arlene Draffin Jones	Health Director	Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba (PCWM)	adj@mts.net or pcwm@mts.net
Karen Sharma	Program Officer	Multiculturalism Secretariat	Karen.Sharma@gov.mb.ca
Rachel Heinrichs	Vice President Advocacy	University of Manitoba Students' Union	vpa@umsu.ca

Appendix C: Roundtable Agenda

United Nations Association in Canada
Association canadienne pour les Nations Unies

Agenda: Community Roundtable

(September 25, 2007)

9:00-9:15 am	Introduction to the *A Sense of Belonging* project
9:15-9:45 am	Introduction of participants
9:45-10:00 am	Presentation of synthesis report
10:00-10:15 am	Discussion of report findings
10:15-10:45	Aboriginal realities and Ethnocultural issues
10:45-11:00 am	Break
11:00-11:45 am	Group discussion on priority areas
11:45-12:00 pm	Reconvening on group discussion
12:00-12:30 pm	Brainstorming: community collaboration
12:30 am -12:45 pm	Brainstorming: future of project
12:45 – 1:00 pm	Conclusion