

# Advancing Cultural Diversity in Volunteer Management (519 and 905 Areas)



Group Discussion at the Peel Community Dialogue

(March 27, 2008)

*May 2008  
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## Profile: Peel Regional Diversity Roundtable

Within the 519 and 905 regions there are many initiatives that we can all learn from. In this month's e-Newsletter Njeri Damali Campbell, Coordinator, answers questions about the Regional Diversity Roundtable in Peel Region:

### What is the purpose of the Regional Diversity Roundtable?

The Regional Diversity Roundtable (RDR) is another response mechanism to the demographic changes (diversity) in Peel. The RDR's intention is to establish a roundtable/collaboration of agencies/institutions, etc. working on various diversity initiatives to share information, resources, experiences, and successes at one table. It is an opportunity to document Peel's journey, uniqueness, challenges and successes in implementing a series of "diversity initiatives/change processes" that will forever impact the Region. In the future, the RDR could be the conduit/vehicle for information and "best practices" on diversity initiatives for the Region.

### How did it get started?

The RDR originally formed as a resource sharing network among human service sector peers working in the Peel Region. The members knew that it would be important for them, and the diverse communities they served, to equip themselves with knowledge, tools, and practices in the area of diversity and equity.

### How is it structured: Who belongs and how often do you meet?

The RDR meets monthly, and presently has 23 member organizations. Member organizations are represented by individuals with a diversity and/or equity portfolio within their agencies, or who are engaged in a diversity & equity initiative.

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A Project of:  
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Njeri Damali Campbell at the Peel Region Community Dialogue  
(March 27, 2008)

## Profile: cont'd

### What has the Regional Diversity Roundtable done to date?

Four recent accomplishments of the RDR include: a position paper on diversity and equity within Local Health Integration Networks (LHINS), a Community Dialogue on Diversity in Volunteer Management (March 2008), the official launch of RDR (April 2008) and the delivery of an advanced diversity and equity training program for human service sector employees in the Peel Region (April 2008).

[Editor's Note: If you would like a copy of the RDR's position paper, please contact Njeri Damali Campbell at 905.890.1010 x 2239.]

## Community Dialogues on Diversity and Volunteer Management: Positive and Possible Actions

At the end of each of the Community Dialogues, participants were asked to discuss in small groups "positive and possible" actions that could be taken over the next several years to build capacity for advancing cultural diversity in volunteer management. Each group briefly presented their action items and then participants used "dotmocracy" to vote for their priority actions. Here's what participants voted as their top tier Positive and Possible actions:

### Durham

- Fund volunteer resource centre (with a diversity manager)
- Increase knowledge in the community among diverse groups regarding volunteer opportunities
- Establish local network to access and discuss best practices
- A partnership between cultural services and DRAVA (Durham Region Association for Volunteer Administrators)
- Forums that include representatives from diverse communities to identify not just needs but capacities

### Halton

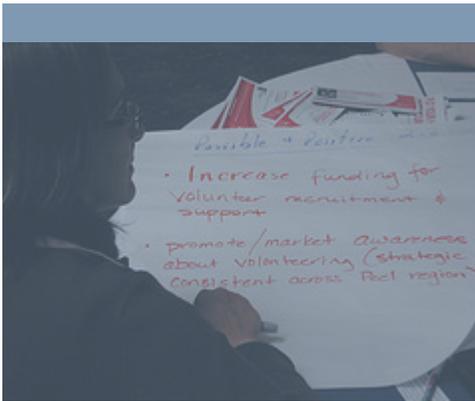
- Make volunteer opportunities meaningful – matching skills and needs
- Advertisement and promotion – be inclusive and show diversity in promotional outreach
- Pool resources and knowledge to tap into deep volunteer resource – stats are growing, therefore agencies may see benefit of working together
- Print materials at outreach sessions must reflect diversity to encourage/attract newcomers/diverse populations
- Advocate for a volunteer management position in your organization.

### Kitchener-Waterloo

- Collaborate with community organizations re: best practices.
- Build collaborative partnerships between organizations. Recruit volunteers from agencies that serve new Canadians.
- Create one central organization that handles everything related to newcomers. House all ESL, settlement services, supports and volunteer opportunities under one roof. All the little organizations continue to exist, but now there's only one number to call – it would reduce confusion and overlap.
- Hold a Volunteer Recruitment Fair at the Multicultural Centre. Go where the people are. X who works there is swamped with volunteer applications from newcomers – she has nowhere to place them.
- Engage newcomers who have benefited from volunteering to explain and promote the value and advantages of volunteering to other newcomers. They are the experts.

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## Positive and Possible Actions: cont'd



Positive and Possible action items identified during Peel Community Dialogue

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### Cambridge

- Reach out to faith communities, service clubs where people are, and make connection to recruit volunteers
- Volunteer Cambridge could increase its visibility in the community; act as a broker and referral system; offer diversity training for non-profit staff.
- Mutual education. Meet and cooperate with cultural groups. Discuss the benefits of volunteering, the opportunities available; learn their needs and goals in turn.
- Education that links populations to resources and services (e.g. Religious leaders are educated about volunteerism)
- Cultural sensitivity training for our staff and volunteers
- Network with service providers who can help us connect with diverse groups (e.g. YMCA offers oral interpretation; K-W Multicultural Centre translates documents)

### York Region

- Provincial Secretariat on Volunteerism. Professional Administrators of Volunteer Resources of Ontario has been pushing for it to be established.
- Create cultural ambassadors. Assist in promoting agency/service to clients; volunteerism; board of director involvement. Hopefully at some point recruit FTE from these communities.
- Networking and partnering with other agencies. Gain access to recruitment opportunities by working with organizations that support diverse communities. Build capacity through joint funding proposals.
- Centralized volunteer recruitment coordination. Renew Action 5: Volunteer and Leadership Development of the Inclusivity Action Plan. Collaborate with YRAVA
- Centralized volunteer recruitment coordination. Resection funding; create master list of York Region agencies
- Learning together - volunteers, board, and staff. First hold bias awareness training; then cultural competency training; then other training.

### London

- Database that: helps agencies locate diverse groups; allows diverse groups to research agencies/volunteer positions; facilitates inter-organizational communication about volunteers and positions available – so if there is a poor fit between a volunteer and an agency, they can be referred to a more appropriate organization
- Volunteer bank - “one stop shopping” for volunteers. Volunteers create their own profiles and search for the right organization to give them the best possible experience.
- Hire more diverse staff.

### Guelph-Wellington

- Train staff and volunteers with goal of developing mentoring initiatives to continue the learning/dialogue.
- Upper management can set formal diversity policies and procedures that lead to the recruitment and retention of staff, volunteers and board members who accurately reflect the cultural diversity of the community.
- Partnership between the settlement service agencies sending newcomers out to volunteer and the nonprofits that receive them. A committee could assess newcomers' needs and barriers and develop solutions. The committee could include the Multicultural Centre, International Student Centre, and Volunteer Centre.

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***Coming soon!***

## Positive and Possible Actions: cont'd

### Peel

- Volunteer Centre for Peel Region mandated to support cultural diversity in volunteer management. Envision a progressive centre that "thinks outside the box", recognizes all forms of diversity including gender, ability, age, etc., and works within a framework of social inclusion. It would perform many functions specific to this issue. Through it, a regional strategy could be implemented. It would be a centralized clearinghouse for volunteers: provide information, attract, recruit, screen, train, and certify, match volunteer needs to available positions, be a referral service, etc. Have a dedicated staff person to be "go-to" person for cultural competency information – this resource badly needed by agencies working with diverse populations. e.g., If planning a volunteer appreciation dinner, one phone call is all it takes to obtain needed information. Want tip-sheets on ethno-specific customs and practices, diversity toolkits, etc
- Toolkit on benchmarks and best practices of cultural diversity in volunteer management, with inventory component

## What's Next in the Project?

The completion of the eight Community Dialogues marks the end of Phase 1 of the Project. Phase 2 includes two Regional Dialogues (one each in 519 and 905 regions) in late Fall 2008.

In the meantime, Project activity focuses on launching the Project website. A central feature of the website is the searchable inventory to support your organization with resources and information related to involving volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds. If, during one of the Community Dialogues, you provided leads for resources to include in the inventory, we will be following up with you over the next couple of months.

Watch for more details about the website and inventory in upcoming issues of the Project e-News.

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**Advancing Cultural Diversity in Volunteer Management is an Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) funded project. The Social Planning Council of Peel is coordinating this project in selected communities in the 519 and 905 areas.**

**Advancing Cultural Diversity in Volunteer Management is a three-year initiative developing the organizational and community capacity of local partners in the 519 and 905 areas to engage and support a more culturally diverse volunteer base.**