

OCASI 2010 Executive Directors' Forum Summary Report and Evaluation

1. Introduction

Under the title of **From Vision to Reality: Building Canada through Settlement and Integration**, the OCASI Executive Directors (ED) Forum took place on Nov 1-3, 2010 at the Nottawasaga Inn Resort, in Alliston, Ontario.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the OCASI Executive Directors Forum 2010 is to come to a shared understanding and commitment to work together, to build and sustain an inclusive and immigrant and refugee-centered settlement and integration strategy for Ontario.

Its specific objectives, to be met through plenary presentations, seminars and workshops are:

- To strengthen the dialogue on immigrant and refugee settlement and integration among OCASI members, and between OCASI, government decision-makers, funders and other stakeholders;
- To strengthen the capacity of OCASI member agencies to engage more effectively with Citizenship and Immigration Canada's modernized approach to settlement;
- To strengthen organizational capacity and advance the professionalization of the sector;
- To facilitate the understanding and process of building constructive, formal and informal relations with external and new players in settlement and integration.

For detailed information about the program please visit www.ocasi.org/forum and access the *2010 Program Package*. A tag at the top of the main ED Forum page will allow you to obtain the Program in the French language.

2. Participation

A total of 150 participants from 134 OCASI member agencies and other Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) funded settlement service organizations attended the OCASI ED Forum. Other participants included 32 facilitators, guest speakers and panelists and 32 representatives from CIC and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, plus OCASI staff, for a total of 229 participants.

Seventy percent of the participants were Executive Directors and 30% were managers or staff in other positions that attended in representation of the Executive Director. Seventeen percent indicated that they attended the ED Forum for the first time. Eighty percent indicated that they attended more than one time.

Facilitators, trainers and panelists comprised of consultants, academics and representatives from immigrant settlement organizations, government and other relevant non-profit organizations.

The ED Forum program consisted of one opening plenary and keynote speech, 3 additional plenaries, 20 workshops and seminars, meetings of the OCASI Francophone Consultative Committee and the SWIS EDs, Regional Membership meetings as well as networking opportunities in the evening. All plenaries and 2 additional sessions were presented with simultaneous interpretation in French & English.

3. Evaluation

Participants completed an ED Forum Evaluation Form at the end of the Forum. The Evaluation Form was also accessible online. All participants received the link for the Online Evaluation form. Several participants completed this form online after the Forum.

Participants also completed an Evaluation Form for each workshop and seminar. Contact Paulina Maciulis, Conference Coordinator at pmaciulis@ocasi.org for results of workshops evaluation.

The following is a summary of the information collected from the ED Forum Evaluation Forms.

Quality of the activities

Participants were asked to rate the quality of the following activities. See below for their responses.

	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	N/A
How do you rate the forum?	27.8%	58.3%	13.9%	0.0%
Pre-forum communication	55.3%	44.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Online registration	81.1%	16.2%	2.7%	0.0%
Schedule of events	26.3%	63.2%	10.5%	0.0%
Forum materials: folder, bag, pen	34.2%	52.6%	10.5%	2.6%
Nottawasaga Inn Resort facilities (meeting rooms, beds, gym, etc.)	47.4%	47.4%	5.3%	0.0%
Meals & snacks	42.1%	44.7%	10.5%	2.6%
Plenary: Monday afternoon	25.0%	52.8%	22.2%	0.0%
Plenary: Tuesday morning	32.4%	32.4%	32.4%	2.7%
Plenary: Wednesday morning	23.5%	47.1%	17.6%	11.8%
Annual General Meeting	22.6%	25.8%	3.2%	48.4%
Networking opportunities / Social Time	37.8%	51.4%	8.1%	2.7%
(including evenings after dinner)	33.3%	26.7%	13.3%	26.7%

Summary of Comments:

Plenaries:

Many participants indicated that the Opening Plenary panel presentation was very inspiring and helpful in providing new knowledge and enhancing skills. They indicated that the speakers were excellent. Several commented about the passion and humour of this panel.

Several participants indicated that some of the other plenaries were too long and did not provide new information. Others commented that the content of the presentations was good, but the presenters needed to provide the information in a more stimulating way.

Several participants indicated the need to have more information about the objectives of each plenary.

Networking / Sharing of Information

As always, most participants welcomed the opportunity to network and share information, ideas and problem-solving with peers. Many indicated that the Forum provided with the opportunity to build relationships across the sector and to access CIC staff.

Workshops and Seminars

Different opinions were provided regarding the workshops. While several participants indicated that the workshops were very basic, many indicated that the workshops were very good this year. They highlighted the *Outcome-Based Performance Measurement – from Theory to Management*, facilitated by Sarah Delicate as one of the best sessions, useful and pragmatic, especially because it provided information on the Modernized Approach and the new CIC proposal procedure. In the same category are the sessions on Human Resources, such as *An Innovative Approach to Staff Performance Management*, facilitated by Mohan Doss and Bonnie Hunter, and the *Human Resource Management within an Outcome Based Settlement Service Model* facilitated by Mohan Doss and Ravi Subramaniam.

Participants recommended that all workshops at the ED Forum should be at the advanced level. They also requested to continue doing sessions on outcome-based service models with more practical exercises, considering that this is the main change in the way services will be accounted for in the near future. Sarah Delicate was one of the best evaluated facilitators and participants recommended to have her back in future forums.

Other recommendations include workshops such as:

- Staff negotiations / building good relationships with unions
- How to develop passion and mission driven organizations
- How to build succession planning
- Social change. Organizational change.
- Quality Assurance, Program Evaluation and Performance Coaching facilitated by Faed Hendry (this sessions has been previously presented at the OCASI Professional Development Conference)

Additional recommendations regarding the Forum program included:

- Invite good researchers / speakers from Conference Board of Canada
- Invite EDs from Calgary, BC, East Coast, Montreal to share with us what works in their own region and what doesn't work. Invite Mayors from Ontario and ask them what kind of agenda they have for their immigrants and refugees residents.
- Bring speakers from business sector related to HR, administration, enterprise, etc.
- Raise the standard of expectations and focus on the longer vision of what OCASI can do with the Executive Directors from the organizations from across the province. Ideas: strategizing about how to influence decision makers, review outcomes of municipal elections across the

province - any trends, what is happening in other municipalities. Though the primary funder is federal, there are a number of agencies that attend that receive no funding but do [similar] work.

Logistics and scheduling

Most of the participants indicated that the whole Forum was very well organized, with the exception of the Tuesday plenary that went over the scheduled time, did not allow all speakers to finish their presentations and affected the schedule of other activities/workshops during the day. Several “mishaps” with audio-visual equipment were noted. Many participants recommended shortening the ED Forum to facilitate the participation of more EDs that may not be able to be away from their organizations for 3 days.

Participants highlighted that the OCASI staff were visible and available at all times, providing very good services to Forum participants.

General Overview

Participants indicated that the Forum provided a good overview of the sector from different perspectives (OCASI and all levels of government), the opportunities for discussion on future trends and opportunities, and that through that they gained an understanding of where the sector is moving. “It was a crash course on settlement issues in Ontario,” said one participant.

They welcomed the updates from CIC and MCI that broaden their scope of knowledge about CIC directions, and the opportunity to interact with colleagues in the sector and learn more about OCASI's activities to advance the sector.

The following remarks summarize participants' additional observations re: the 2010 EDs Forum:

I would never miss this conference. It is very important to meet with other EDs to share perspectives, news, ideas, solutions, opinions, etc. Also, it is an opportunity to hear what CIC /MCI have to say given that more often than not, we get different messages.

As always, very well run, organized and efficient. Staff did a great job in ensuring a professional event.

I always enjoy seeing the OCASI staff working together as a team. It's a very strong group and it's always a pleasure seeing the interaction among them.

The conference was well organized and it offered a good opportunity for networking, sharing of information and socializing. Basically it provided a useful space to get a pulse on what is happening and what to expect in the future with regard to settlement issues.