



Participants' Views on the 3rd Biannual Ottawa Immigration Forum Monday, June 22nd 2015, 8:00 a.m. -12:25 p.m.

1. Background

- The 3rd Ottawa Immigration Forum convened at the Marriott Hotel, on Monday, June 22nd, 2015. Two hundred individuals attended the 3rd Ottawa Immigration Forum. The attendees included OLIP partners, officials from three levels of government, civic leaders, including immigrant associations' leaders, academic partners, and media representatives. The attendees also included the 2015 Welcoming Ottawa Ambassadors and their nominators.
- The Ottawa Immigration Forum is part of OLIP Governance system and approach. It is designed to (a) communicate and celebrate OLIP partners' progress on the Ottawa Immigration Strategy, (b) enable reflection on challenges, and (c) solicit community input into planned areas of action.
- The first Ottawa Immigration Forum convened in October 2012; and in its first two years, the Forum was hosted annually by OLIP in collaboration with its key partners such as the City of Ottawa or the *Reseau de soutien de l'immigration francophone de l'Est de l'Ontario*. As part of recent adjustments to OLIP governance, the Forum is now held every two years.
- This year, the Forum marked the end of the first five years of the OLIP partnership and coincided with the completion of the first period of implementation of the Ottawa Immigration Strategy (2011-2014). As such, the Forum focused on the theme: *Moving Forward on our Vision | Building on our Accomplishments*.
- The Forum program was designed to address the following four objectives:
 - a. To bring attention to OLIP partners' concrete accomplishments since the launch of the Ottawa Immigration Strategy in 2011, in five sectors: 1) economic integration, 2) settlement and integration capacity development; 3) health and wellbeing; 4) Language; and 5) Education.
 - b. To improve our understanding of the broad trends that have foreshadowed recent policy changes at both the federal and provincial levels and are expected to affect Ottawa's medium term planning.
 - c. To generate ideas on the following key areas of planned action.
 - i. Data and knowledge gaps to understand the conditions that shape immigrants' integration; and to gauge collective progress towards shared vision.
 - ii. Tackling the mental health challenges facing immigrants and good practices that worked elsewhere
 - iii. What would make Ottawa a more welcoming city?

- d. To recognize and celebrate the 2015 WOW Ambassadors, Ottawa citizens who have exemplified Ottawa’s welcoming spirit. The WOW Ambassadors are nominated by immigrants in Ottawa to receive community-wide recognition for their genuine respect and hospitality to newcomers to the city.
- Forum attendees were asked to provide their evaluative feedback on the Forum, its program components, speakers, and quality and effectiveness of its content and delivery. This report summarizes participants’ feedback.

About the 3rd Ottawa Immigration Forum Feedback Forum /Survey

All Forum attendees – with the exception of the planning team and Forum speakers - received a Forum evaluation form, both at the Forum and by email after the Forum to ensure that those who did not complete the form on location have the opportunity to offer their views. 171 individuals were invited to provide their feedback. Of these, 71 (60 English and 11 French) participants responded, representing a 42 percent response rate. The Forum feedback form consisted of the following three simple questions:

1. **Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following components of the Forum:** quality and effectiveness of Forum communications and information; registration process; keynote speakers; participant discussion segments; interactive engagement activity in networking period on how to make Ottawa more welcoming; Networking Opportunities; and Overall Experience.

Participants were given the following 5-point scale to rate their level of satisfaction: perfectly satisfied; very satisfied; somewhat satisfied; somewhat dissatisfied; and very dissatisfied.
2. **What did you find most valuable about the Forum?**
3. **What suggestions would you have for the improvement of next Ottawa Immigration Forum?**

2. Participants’ Satisfaction with Forum Components

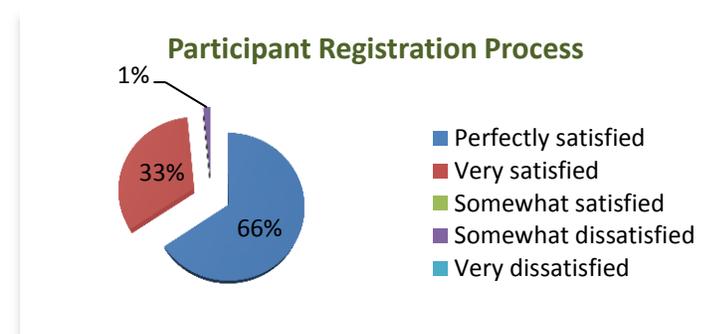
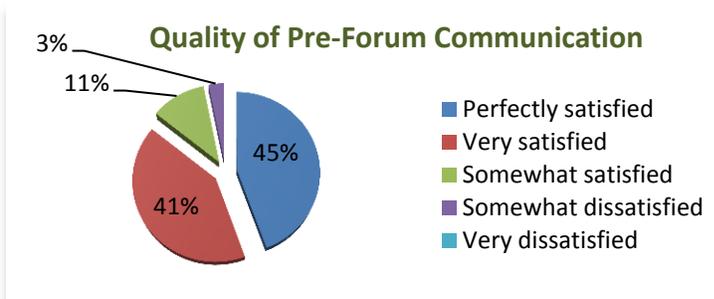
Forum participants were asked to grade key aspects of the Forum, along a 5 point rating scale of satisfaction / dissatisfaction. The following paragraphs summarize participants’ ratings on each component.

a. Quality of Pre-Forum Communication

Survey respondents expressed a very high level of satisfaction with Forum communication and registration: Eighty six per cent (86%) of respondents were either perfectly satisfied or very satisfied. Eleven per cent (11%) were somewhat satisfied.

b. Registration process

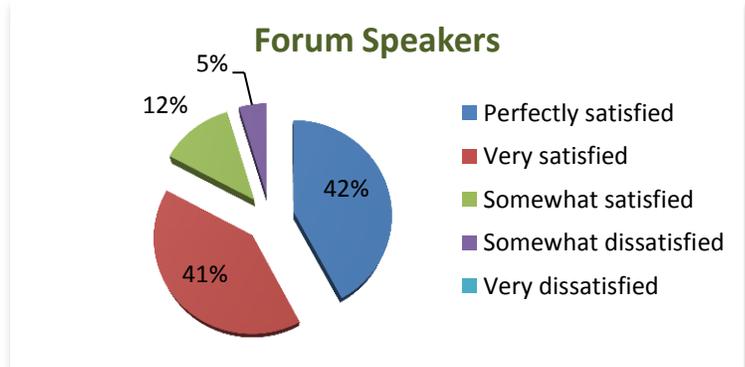
Ninety nine per cent (99%) of respondents were either very satisfied or perfectly satisfied with the registration process. One respondent expressed dissatisfaction with receiving too many registration email reminders about the Forum.



c. Forum Speakers

Overall, survey respondents were highly satisfied with the Forum speakers. Eighty three per cent (83%) of the respondents were either perfectly satisfied or very satisfied. Most respondents found the presentations by Dr. Micheal Haan, Associate Professor at the Western University and Dr. Branka Agic, Manager of Health Equity Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) excellent and very beneficial.

Participants most appreciated the longitudinal data on immigration (IMDB), presented by Dr. Haan. Data on Ottawa’s capacity to attract immigrants both from abroad and from other Canadian cities and how it compares to that of similar-sized cities, such as Hamilton, London, Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Calgary was seen as very practical and relevant to informing local planning.



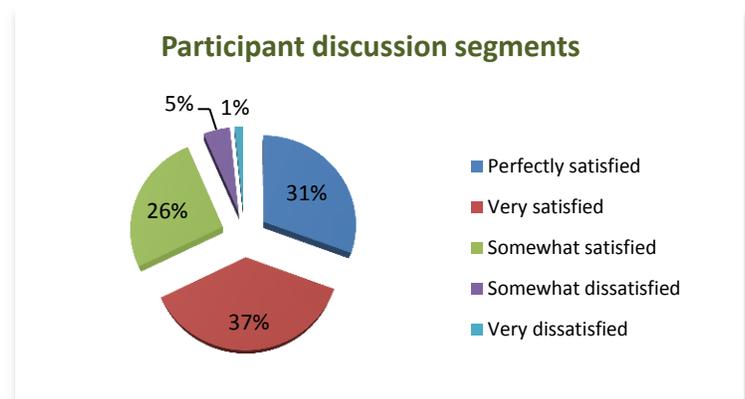
Participants’ appreciation for this segment of the Forum is further reflected by their responses to the survey question asking for suggestions for improvements in future Ottawa Immigration Forums. Here is what they said with regards to presentations that inform or report on action:

- Allocate more time to presentations that inform action and planning, and less on policy presentations.
- Profile OLIP partners’ initiatives and accomplishments in more detail.
- Schedule ‘knowledge on action’ speakers early on in the Forum program. Some participants felt key presentations were left too late in the program and some participants who left the forum early missed out on important information.
- Incorporate a series of topical panel discussions each involving few experts to explore defined issues and to interact with Forum attendees in longer Q&A sessions.

d. Participant discussion segments

A key objective of the Forum was to generate ideas that will inform OLIP partners’ continued planning. Participants were asked to discuss two broad questions:

- 1) *What do you think are the most important things Ottawa should focus on to make our City more welcoming to immigrants?*
- 2) *Where do you think we can achieve the most progress if we act together?*



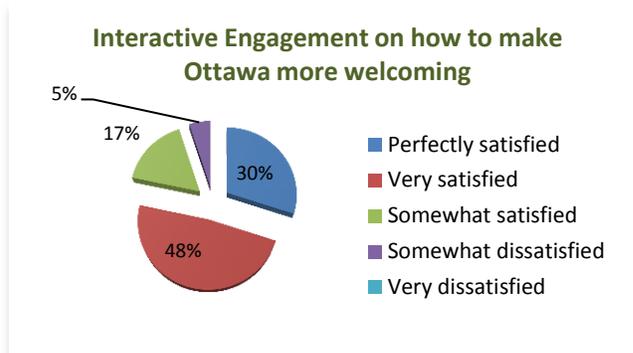
Sixty eight per cent (68%) of survey respondents found the small group discussions very effective, with almost equal split in the proportion expressing *perfect* satisfaction and those reporting that they were *very* satisfied. Twenty six per cent (26%) were

somewhat satisfied. Notably, six per cent (6%) of the respondents were either somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Suggestions for improving future participant discussions at the Ottawa Immigration Forum include:

- Allocate more time for small group discussions and less on presentations.
- Include segments in which immigrants voice their opinions.
- Organize smaller discussion groups to brainstorm ideas.

e. Interactive Engagement on how to make Ottawa more welcoming

The City of Ottawa conducted a bilingual brainstorming activity during the networking period of the Forum to gather ideas on what would make Ottawa a more welcoming city for immigrants. Over seventy five per cent (75%) indicated high levels of satisfaction with the interactive engagement. The five per cent (5%) that expressed dissatisfaction did not provide a reason for their discontent.

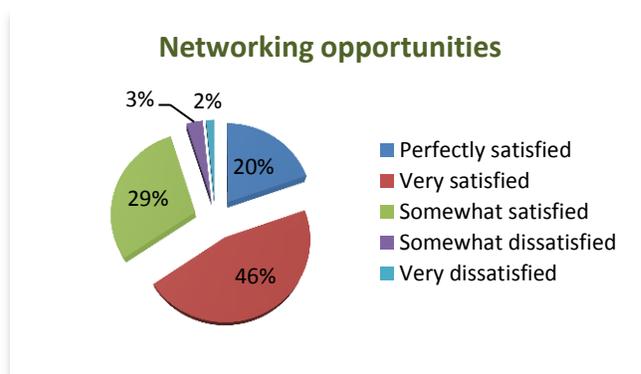


f. Networking opportunities

Overall, survey respondents expressed a high level of appreciation for the opportunity the Forum creates for community partners to come together and share ideas and insights on how to systematically remove barriers that delay immigrants' integration in the Ottawa community. Eighty six per cent (86%) were either perfectly satisfied or very satisfied. Twenty nine percent (29%) were somewhat satisfied while five per cent (5%) indicated some level of dissatisfaction.

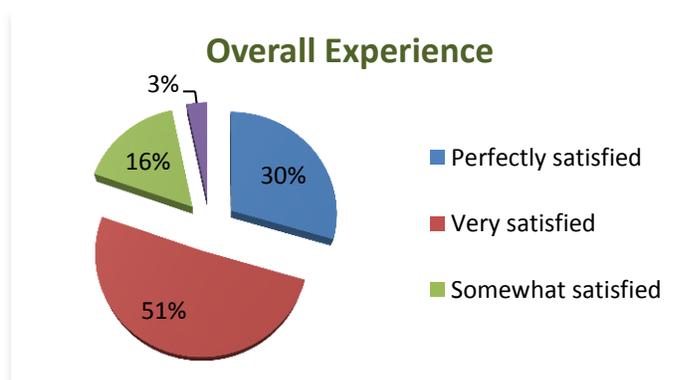
Suggestions for improving future networking opportunities include:

- Build in more time for participants to network with speakers and other community partners
- Allow more time for dialogue sessions and Q & A segment.
- Select appropriate background music during the networking segment. Several participants expressed difficulty in hearing each other with the drumming music in the background.



g. Overall Experience

Participants' ratings of their overall experience at the 3rd Ottawa Immigration Forum was indicated high levels of satisfaction with the Forum with thirty per cent (30%) rating the Forum experience as perfectly satisfied while fifty one per cent (51%) indicated very perfectly satisfied. Respondents felt the wealth of resources and intellectual capital brought together at the Forum (i.e. Keynote speakers and participants) was invaluable for future partnerships and the participants continued efforts in strengthening community capacity to



attract and integrate immigrants. Areas that were viewed somewhat less positively included the compressed Forum program and the limited networking time (16% "somewhat satisfied", 3% "somewhat dissatisfied").

Suggestions for improving the overall Forum experience include:

- Plan for a full day Forum and incorporate time for a series of panel discussions on different topics, small group discussions and interaction with experts.
- Include more participant-driven content and less presentations with a break out format divided by topics.

3. What did Participants Find Most Valuable about the Forum?

Participants were asked to express what they found most valuable about the Forum. Their responses are summarised (similar feedback were regrouped) below:

- Most participants thought the Forum was well organized and expressed appreciation for its significance as a platform where community partners can convene to exchange ideas on how to make Ottawa increasingly more welcoming city.
- The presence of the three levels of government i.e. Federal (Citizenship and Immigration Canada- CIC), Provincial (Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade- MCIT) and Municipal (City of Ottawa) signified to many participants a strong commitment of our governments on immigration and community integration.
- The Forum provided an excellent opportunity for community partners to continue building a shared vision that brings together ideas and interests.
- Networking accros sectors at the forum was considered both enjoyable and useful in that it presented opportunities for future partnerships.
- Presentation on the "Trends and Policies Affecting Ottawa's Progress" by Corinne St. Amand including the statistics on the immigration trends and the comparative analysis across the cities and provinces; and insights to the future direction of immigration were considered very beneficial.
- The intellectual capital present at the Forum and the opportunity to exchange knowledge and great ideas during small group discussions and Q & A sessions.
- Recognition of good work in Ottawa and economic value immigrants add to communities and province (Ontario).
- Highlights of the 2015 Welcoming Ottawa Week (WOW), its importance in bringing all Ottawans to convey a genuine welcome to newcomers.
- The opportunity to meet and network with 2015 WOW Ambassadors and the chance to view the "Faces and Stories of a Welcoming City" exhibit.
- The enthusiasm of community partners at the Forum in working towards a shared goal in order to create a welcoming city for immigrants.
- Learning about the extent of immigrants' challenges, what resources and supports are currently available and the viable plans presently underway to respond to these challenges.
- Many participants reported that they appreciated the high calibre of speakers on different aspects of immigration and the opportunity to network with the speakers. Participants felt the topics covered were very relevant and on par with the current immigration trends.

- Participants expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the longitudinal data on immigration presented by Dr. Haan including trends specific to Ottawa; and how Ottawa compares to similar-sized cities such as Hamilton, Calgary, London, Edmonton and Winnipeg; and future research and data collection directions.
- Participants also expressed appreciation for the presentation on mental health challenges among immigrants and refugees by Dr. Branka Agic. Participants felt the presentation was practical and relevant; and provided a good understanding of where collective impact could be made.

4. Participants' Suggestions for Improvement

Participants were asked to provide suggestions for improving future Forums based on their experience at the 2015 Forum. Participants' responses are summarized below:

- Promote the Forum to include a wider audience.
 - o Engage more politicians and business communities to participate in the Forum, and solicit their input on how to remove barriers to allow new Canadians to succeed and prosper.
 - o Invite representatives of non-conventional networks such as bankers, hairdressers and faith leaders to offer their perspectives.
- Provide speakers' PowerPoint presentations - in both English and French – in the Forum packages.
- Engage newcomers to offer their perspectives on barriers to integration; share their integration experience; and solicit their opinions on what needs to be improved.
- Allocate more time for small group discussions and less on presentations. Related to this suggestion, several participants indicated that they would like to see a full day Forum in order to have time for a series of panel discussions on different topics, small group discussions and interaction with experts. Participants would also like to see more participant-driven content with a break out format divided by topics.
- Provide more detailed description of OLIP partners' initiatives and their specific impacts. A number of respondents indicated that OLIP partners' accomplishments were not articulated strongly. In this regard, participants also suggested including in the Forum program discussion on present and future initiatives and soliciting feedback.
- Engage Chairs from OLIP's five sector tables in reporting on sectoral initiatives at the Forum. This would give participants the opportunity to network directly with the Chairs.
- Keep Forum content as practical as possible with a good mix of theory and front line, take action ideas.
- Incorporate more interaction with government speakers and generate discussion on how to fight poverty among immigrants and the reality of violence against immigrant women.
- Bring awareness to some of OLIP's challenges in their effort to build cross-sectoral solutions, that way participants can brainstorm together ways to mitigate these challenges.
- A number of participants offered suggestions for OLIP's work beyond the Forum. These include the following:
 - o Create opportunities for volunteers to take an active part in assisting new immigrants and provide volunteers with access to existing support infrastructures;
 - o Tap into the tremendous goodwill of ethnic minority communities in Ottawa and facilitate their direct involvement in welcoming new immigrants;

- In addition to existing efforts in dealing with the mental problems among immigrants, it would be of beneficial to invest in preventative measures for setting up the right environment to mitigate immigrants' post-migration, negative experiences.
- Provide data and analysis that is disaggregated by gender, language, arrival circumstances (refugee, economic, family re-unification), if possible.
- Maintain the bilingual nature of the Ottawa Immigration Forums for equity and inclusion for all immigrants, regardless of the official language of settlement and integration.
- Stay the course and continue to showcase what partners are already doing to welcome immigrants and build on those success stories and leading practices.