



SERVING ETHNOCULTURAL COMMUNITIES:

A Scan of Organizational Capacities in 24 Ethnocultural Community Associations

Appendix B

Profile Summaries of Interviewed Ethnocultural Organizations

This appendix provides summaries of the 24 organization, which were scanned for this project

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1. Association of Haitians in Edmonton (AHE)

Circumstances of Formation

The Association formed as a means of gathering Haitians to celebrate national events and provide opportunities for immigrants to teach their children about their culture and identity.

Services Today

The service users of the Association are Haitians and benefit from a variety of programs including:

- Offer after-school programs for children in partnership with the Congolese community as they share a French background.
- Provide services for government in translating French.
- Welcome newcomers who are members of their community.
- Some members of their association provide French lessons.
- The women's association also provides relief services for mothers, such as shared baby sitting, organizing baby showers and prayers.

The Association has a board of directors, women's, and youth committees.

Internal Links

The representative believed that the organization was seen as legitimate because "community members always come together and seek advice from the association."

The Association engages community member at functions or meetings they organize. Communication with members is by word of mouth, phone, and e-mails.

External Links

The Association has close relations with the Congolese community, as exemplified by the jointly offered after-school program and co-attendance at community events.

With respect to relation with government, the representative noted that the Association has a partnership with the Association of French Canadians, which has influence in government.

Funding Sources

The main funding sources are: membership fees, City of Edmonton, and Association of French Canadians.

Challenges to Integration

The Coalition's key issues (access to employment, education, health services, and social inclusion) resonate with the Association. The main barriers they see the Haitian community to face include the fact that the French language, as it is taught in high school, does not accommodate immigrants and refugees with a French background. It is also difficult to find health practitioners who speak French, and there are limited translation services. There are also no bridging programs for professionals who do not have an English background.

Responding to Challenges

The organization has been proactive and took on initiatives, and sought to be recognized and accepted. They see their greatest success to be motivating Haitians to move from Eastern Canada to the West since those who settle in Montreal and Ontario soon face limited job opportunities.

Coalition's Role

The representative noted that the Coalition was important because immigrants and refugee communities are isolated and do not know what is happening with other communities. The Coalition can also take a lead and help move the foreign credentials issues forward.

2. Association of the Congolese Community of Edmonton (ACCE)

Circumstances of Formation

ACCE was formed 8 years ago with the goal of bringing Congolese community members together to help each other with immigration issues and organize social events. It was formed for the future of community members' children growing up in Canada. ACCE also intended to work with government on behalf of the community.

Services Today

- A major activity of the Association is to organize projects for youth to encourage them to attend school. The group also offers summer computer classes for children.
- They assist and encourage community members to start businesses and invite speakers to come and talk to the community.
- ACEE organizes recreation for community members and at times debates between the youth and elders of the community.

The organization has an elected Board and an Advisory Board, which acts as a mediator with the community. An executive board is needed, although the capacity for it is currently lacking.

Internal Links

ACCE has a strong influence in the community as result of the widespread participation in social events. The community is engaged in discussions about the Association's issues and is welcome to give their own views. Evidence that ACCE is seen as legitimate because community members access the association for advice.

Communication is generally achieved by word of mouth, e-mail, and phone.

External Links

ACCE has partnerships, though not all ongoing, with associations that share a common background whether based on language or culture. They also collaborate with Catholic Social Services.

ACCE has ongoing relationships with the City of Edmonton, although they do not believe to have a strong influence with government. At times, they have more influence depending on the issue. By aligning themselves are normally aligned with the French side of government, they believe that they can move their interests further and gain some influence in government, though small.

Funding Sources

Most funding comes from membership fees, friends (e.g. politicians) and from non-profit organizations. They also apply for funds; seek assistance from private people or associations, other organizations or the public.

Challenges to Integration

The main barriers they perceive the Congolese communities to face were related to youth issues, lack of recognition of foreign credentials and work experience leading to unemployment, language issues, and failure to integrate into Canadian system because of their minority status. ACCE is very concerned about the youth who are growing up in a different environment and would like to offer them some programs to keep them out of trouble.

Responding to Challenges

ACCE has responded to these challenges by trying to do their best and bring people together to discuss issues affecting their community. They recognize that it is not easy to find common goals even among members of the same community, and sometimes there are squabbles. It is also difficult to get people together; this hampers the association's ability to work successfully. Nevertheless, they have overcome this by involving mediators and pastors in the community who are also involved in the association.

The ACCE representative noted that bringing youth and adults together and engaging them in discussions is the organization's greatest success. Further, the high level of attendance at social gatherings is another major success.

The greatest challenge for the association is helping community members finding jobs and overcome the systemic barriers associated with this.

Coalition's Role

ACCE suggested that the Coalition could help in building new community goals. They are interested in joining the Coalition and would like to know more about it.

They are very impressed about the research the Coalition is undertaking and would like to become more involved if it were beneficial to their organization.

3. Bosnian Community Association (BCA)

Circumstances of Formation

The Association started in 1993 when several released prisoners of war, who came to Edmonton as refugees, got together and formed an association to address the need of refugees and other immigrants in Edmonton.

Services Today

BCA is particularly active in trying to keep members' culture and language alive among youngsters. They offer classes for elementary school children where they are taught the Bosnian language, Muslim religion, and Bosnian folklore.

The Association has a president who coordinates all the activities. A number of permanent members meet on regular basis to discuss issues the community faces and ways to address these. They are in the process of buying a small dwelling where services can be located and to "better organize ourselves."

Internal Links

BCA is very active in the community and they try to respond to the people's needs. BCA members engage people by talking to them, finding out what their issues are, and what motivates them. A representative noted that it was "important to bring up positives in them, by acknowledging their potentials, by trying to educate them that it is important that they participate. If organized, we can impose changes and reach our goals."

To bring a hundred people together, members would first make people understand the purpose of getting together, the structure, their/community benefits, ask for their inputs, and do some networking etc.

BCA sees word of mouth as the most efficient way of communicating.

External Links

BCA has very good partnerships with the Shia Muslim Community and Pakistani Community. In cooperating with the Pakistani Community last year, they conducted a very successful fund raising event to support senior population left Mostar, Bosnia. They also organized a presentation about war in Bosnia at the Shia Mosque in Edmonton, who showed a tremendous interest to learn about their "war history."

BCA has a good relationship with the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Changing Together, their MLA, and the Public Library.

Funding Sources

Funding sources include: private donations, funds from casino and bingo, selling tickets for community parties, Heritage Festival, Soccer games, "Wild Rose Foundation," and fund raising events, etc.

Challenges to Integration

Member of the Bosnian community in Edmonton face isolation, unemployment and underemployment. The representative noted that "these are common 'immigrant issues'. Working in partnership with the Coalition towards solving/reducing these issues would be an excellent idea."

Responding to Challenges

The BCA is very proud for being able to organize their community and being able to offer the school program, folklore events, and parties. They are also excited that they will have their own place to gather soon.

One of the biggest challenges they face is getting people to participate and "raise their voices" since "people are not really active." There is a small group of people who come out and contribute, but somehow it is the same people all the time. BCA would like to see others participating too since they have issues and skills to participate.

"Each person is valuable. This is why I believe it is very important that we educate people that they understand the importance of coming and working together. I am positive that people have potential to get together and impose changes. The more people, the stronger their voice. I am working hard to organize people. We struggle with lack of funding. We need more money from the government. They are not responsive to our needs."

Once BCA settles in our new place, they will also need more activities. The representative is planning to set up a library with books, magazines, tapes and other material from Bosnia. She noted that it was important that people have something together around.

"A place where people can come together, watch a movie, read a book, and chat having a cup of Turkish coffee will preserve our language and culture. Organize structured community events will bring more people out."

Coalition's Role

Considering the fact that the Bosnian community is facing the issues the Coalition is trying to address, the representative noted that she would be happy if the two organizations worked together. She committed herself to joining the Coalition at least a few times per year (big events).

4. Burma Watch International (BWI)

Circumstances of Formation

Burma Watch International was founded in 1989, after the political uprising of 1988 in Burma. The main objectives behind the organization's formation were to bring attention to the problems that the Burmese citizens faced, help refugees, and raise international awareness regarding the human rights abuses in the country. They aimed to inform the Canadians of these problems and urge them to contribute to the organization's efforts, particularly with respect to the influx of the refugees.

Services Today

Currently, the organization is involved in conducting awareness campaigns, promotes cultural exhibitions and fundraising activities to help refugees in Burma, Thailand, India, and Malaysia. We also provide medical services and training in the refugee camps in Thailand, as well as assisting the refugees financially.

Internal Links

BWI has a very strong influence in the community. They connect with members by through executive meetings, monthly gathering, and sponsored events.

External Links

BWI has connections and partnerships with many communities such as the Thai, Vietnamese, Southeast Asian, Japanese, and Indian community (Ghandi's Foundation), as well as with Canadian Friends of Burma in Ottawa.

They have relations with some organizations all over the country such as Right and Democracy in Montreal, Canadian Friends of Burma in Ottawa, as well as with the federal and provincial government and parliament members who advocate the Burmese cause.

Funding Sources

BWI does not have government funding. Rather, funding is obtained through membership fees, fund raising activities, contributions and donations of the individuals and organizations.

Challenges to Integration

The organization focuses on the political, social, and economical issues in Burma, rather than the Burmese in Canada. Since the organization's main objectives are political, BWI faces a lack of formal government financial support, which in turn limits the organization's activities.

Responding to Challenges

The organization is trying to survive on its members and other communities' support. However, the community needs the government's legitimate support "to overcome the lack of financial and moral support that pushes the organization beyond the borders so that we can work efficiently and effectively."

Coalition's Role

BWI would like to see the Coalition's involvement and support in the organization's activities.

5. Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW)

Circumstances of Formation

The Council was organized in 1982 as a voice for Muslim Women by Dr. L. Fhalmen.

Services Today

The CCMW tries to formulate policy and projects to correct the image of Muslim women regardless of ethnicity and opinions. They offer workshops in areas that concern Muslim Women, whether addressing issues social or political, or health,-related issues.

The Council has a national Board and chapters in most Canadian cities.

Internal Links

The Council is seen as legitimate leaders in Muslim communities.

Communication with communities is mostly done through phone calls and word of mouth in the absence of an advertising budget.

External Links

The Council is a member of a broader organization called The Edmonton Council of Muslim Community.

Relations and influence with government is moderate.

The Council does not have much influence with other organizations or with the public.

Funding Sources

Funding from the Multiculturalism and Women Departments from Canadian Heritage comes in the form of grants they get by applying.

Challenges to Integration

The Council strongly agrees with the Coalition's issues.

Responding to Challenges

A great success of the Council has been moving the first mosque in Canada from to its present site in Fort Edmonton Park in spite of a lot opposition.

The main challenge remains fund raising.

Challenges are overcome by dedicated community volunteers committed to achieve the organization's goals. Networking is a key strategy to ensure success.

Coalition's Role

The Coalition should publicize the problems facing immigrant communities and to coordinate communities local, provincial, and federal government efforts.

6. Canadian Kurdish Friendship Association (CKFA)

Circumstances of Formation

The CKFA was formed in 2000 as a non-profit organization by community members willing to help the community. There had never been a Kurdish organization before 2000.

Services Today

The Association consists of determined members (including seniors, youth, women, and men) that are focused and aim to provide quality service in areas of need essential for the Kurdish community. Services include counseling, assisting with transitions, education, cross cultural issues, and health brokers.

The organization includes members capable of providing necessary aid with the education system, health services, and government systems. Community events are also organized.

Internal Links

Being the only Kurdish association, they have a lot of influence when it comes to decision-making in the community. The Association engages the community by being aware of their needs, and helping them in the best of their efforts. By speaking to them in Kurdish and letting them know they are available for all their questions. This contributes to being seen as legitimate by community members. By being aware of their needs and expectations when they asked for our help, listening to their needs and offering to help if they ask for it, the Association gains its status as a legitimate representative of their community.

The CKFA is not “recognized by the Canadian Government, therefore we have the respect of the Kurdish community.”

The Association mobilizes community members by helping them understand what can be gained by the gathering and the information can be aware of. The community members trust the Association to provide them with the accurate services that are vital to them.

Mobilization strategies include conducting meetings and including members in every aspect of the gathering and helping them understand how they can benefit from the gathering.

External Links

The CKFA has good relations with other communities. For example, in 2000, they had partnership with the Somalian community. The Association also has relations with Multi-cultural Health Brokers, Mennonite Centre, the YMCA, and the Catholic Social Services.

With respect to the government, they influence “when we are able to participate in voting.”

Funding Sources

Funding sources include ECALA grants.

Challenges to Integration

The Association shares the Coalition’s issues, which are very much the same common experience. The representatives recognized ethnocultural groups share the same common barriers and strengths as their community group. They added that “overall we all try to be part of the larger Canadian community and we all group challenge systematic challenges to be part of the system.”

The Kurdish community is a minority group in Canada; therefore, many ethnocultural groups were not aware of their dilemma and situation. Most of the community members come from refugee camps where they did not have access to education system and health services, thus, when coming to Canada, they were not aware of opportunities offered to them due to a lack of information. The CKFA has changed that by helping members directly and connecting them to other organizations.

Responding to Challenges

Providing them with essential services that they need in order to live a healthy content life in Canada.

Coming from refugee camps most members had to deal hardship memories, by having access to many services in Edmonton they are able to get past the hardship times and live in the present.

A key success has been engaging youth to attend school regularly. Another has been having members participate in the Canadian society by obtaining jobs and enjoying services provided to them.

A challenge that remains is overcoming memories of refugee camps. The community has never had foundation; the group had to overcome community barriers and system barriers. By being consistent, the organization is striving to overcome these challenges.

Coalition's Role

The group believes is the Coalition and respects its vision. They want to see different communities working together through the Coalition, who “can assist us by doing the works they have done in the past. They strengthen the capacity of minority communities and they are able to provide communities with access to resources such as health services, employment, and education.”

The Coalition has been able to “bring all of us together by being together we are more flexible and capable to overcome the barriers”.

7. Council of Canadians of African and Caribbean Communities (CCACC)

Circumstances of Formation

The Council was formed in 1985 as an umbrella group for Black organizations who shares cultural norms in order to effectively lobby better conditions for members.

Services Today

Currently, membership is both individual and group-based. The Council is no longer an umbrella body because so many different organizations represent immigrant and refugee communities.

The Council members act as educators of African and Caribbean history and as referral agents for people wanting information or support services.

The clients include organizations of African and Caribbean heritage, the inner city, and the poor. The Council also provides food to the less fortunate once a month.

The Council is governed by a board of directors and advisors.

Internal Links

Although the Council used to have a lot of influence, their legitimacy is currently “in danger” as the umbrella body of African and Caribbean Associations. There is less participation by groups as result of increasing number of associations in place. These are smaller and not known “well enough” by the Council.

Communication is achieved through a website and through email.

External Links

The Council works with the Black pioneers to educate other on how Blacks came to Canada. They also work with the Aboriginal community and engage their youth in similar programs provided at CCACC.

They do not have that much influence with the government; the representative noted that the Council would have more influence if there were a stronger coalition of communities.

Funding Sources

They have projects that are funded by the government relating to education, which is a program of learning about Africans in the Diaspora.

Other funding sources include casinos (Alberta Gaming Commission), individual contributions, and cultural activities.

Challenges to Integration

Members of the African and Caribbean ethnocultural communities face barriers in getting suitable employment opportunities, limited access to educational opportunities, and not so sure about isolation and exclusion of ethnic minorities from civic and political participation in Canadian society.

Responding to Challenges

The Council does research on why some problems happen with their community.

A major success is their ability to support youth in schools. The increase of Black students in post-secondary education is an indication of their success.

The main issues facing the organization are decreasing participation by members. Currently, few members are being overworked. Similarly, getting groups to act and unite for organized change is a major issue.

They also find it difficult to get new information on Afro-quiz study program.

To overcome challenges, the Council developed a 3-year plan, which is review it every year and adjusted to needs and demands.

Coalition's Role

The Council representative noted that a Coalition would better "voice our concerns."

8. Council of Edmonton Filipino Association (CEFA)

Circumstances of Formation

As the number of Filipinos in Edmonton increased, so have the number of Filipino organizations with varying agendas. The Council of Edmonton Filipino Association was organized in 1989 to coordinate a common voice for the Filipino Canadian community in Edmonton. The Council has 24 members representing their organizations.

Services Today

CEFA coordinates major Filipino celebrations and support members of the Filipino community in Edmonton as well as others as they need support.

Internal Links

The Council is very influential as a collective voice for the Filipino community to all levels of government.

They engage community members through a number of social activities and are seen as legitimate representatives. Communication is done through one-on-one dialogue and written communication.

External Links

The organization has good relationships with some other ethnic association who are invited to different Filipino functions. Government officials are also invited to attend events.

Council members participate in multicultural community events and share our visions to others.

The representative noted that the Council has influence with the government as result of the visibility of their community activities.

Funding Sources

Financial support is achieved through fundraising campaigns and solicited from business.

Challenges to Integration

The same issues as those identified by the Coalition are barriers for the Filipino community.

Responding to Challenges

Motivating participation from community events is a challenge. There is also a need for a stronger collective multicultural voice to effect change.

A great success has been the organized collective voice for the Filipino community.

Intra-community competitions interfere with activities and pose challenges for the Council. These are overcome through open and ongoing communication.

Coalition's Role

The Council would like to work with the Coalition towards achieving a stronger common voice to address shared barriers.

9. ECCOS (Colombia)

Circumstances of Formation

The organization was established less than two years ago. Motivation for the formation of ECCOS included shared community needs, interests combined with an increase in the Colombian population in Edmonton.

Services Today

ECCOS coordinates sport activities, welcome newcomers by providing them with support and information. As a non-profit, they are governed by a board of directors.

Internal Links

Cultural activities, which are attended by community members, are a major way of linking with their community. They also have ties with the Columbian consulate.

Main means of communicating are by phone, through the website, and meetings.

The organization sees itself as legitimate vis-à-vis their communities and note that they are able to mobilize members depending on the activity at hand.

External Links

Links are active with the Lions Club, the Multicultural Health Brokers Coop, and the Toronto-based Columbian Consulate.

Funding Sources

Main funding sources include the Lions Club, membership fees, and proposal writing.

Challenges to Integration

ECCOS is in strong agreement that they share the Coalition's issues, and emphasized the language and cultural barriers.

Responding to Challenges

Major successes have been their orientation service to newcomers, obtaining some resources, community networking, and ability to engage members in activities.

Their main challenge is meeting all community expectations. Challenges have been overcome by working with willing participants as a team to achieve common goals and appropriate delegation of tasks.

Coalition's Role

ECCOS wants to learn the experiences from other groups, particularly how government resources can be obtained. They also recognize that it is important to know what other groups exist and they work.

10. Filipino Nurses Association in Alberta (FNAA)

Circumstances of Formation

Challenges experienced by the Filipino graduate nurses in the passing of the RN exam in Alberta have spurred the creation of the FNAA to assist foreign-trained Filipinas gain employment in their field.

Services Today

The FNAA provides support, mentorship, networking opportunities, and educational review programs to internationally educated nurses who are not only Filipino, but also to other ethnicities facing the challenges of the nursing accreditation process. Thus, clients of the FNAA are all internationally educated health care workers, whether nurses, licensed practical nurses, or nursing attendants.

The FNAA is governed by by-laws, an elected executive officer, and board members.

Internal Links

The association is very influential within communities and as advocates to employers. By being very active in their communities, members are able to effectively mobilize others.

Communication is achieved through newsletters, word-of-mouth, telephone calls, focus groups, and educational programs.

They believe that they are definitely seen as legitimate, not only as professional association but at all levels of government and academic institutions.

External Links

The association is a member to the International Council of Nurses through the Philippine Nurses Association in the Philippines. They are also a member of the Edmonton Filipino Association.

FNAA has had meetings with the government, and thus have some influence. They are also actively involved with other ethnic group activities. FNAA participates in research done by the government and non-profit organizations.

Funding Sources

Membership fees, community fund raising, donations from the community, government grants from the Continuing Education Department are all main sources of funding. The educational program also has a fee, which is used to fund programs.

Challenges to Integration

FNAA agrees with the Coalition's issues. They emphasized that their work for foreign-trained nursing professionals is not limited to Filipinos but also assists nurses from other ethnic origins.

Responding to Challenges

By working as team, being understanding and patient, members are volunteering to help others. Their main challenges are financial to fund the educational program and having their own facility. Main successes are the active membership in the association and being successful in challenging the nurses' board exam and assisting members in gaining employment in their field.

Coalition's Role

The FNAA believes that by working together with the Coalition, all communities can better address shared issues. They recommend that emphasis be placed on the issue of accreditation and employment equity.

11. Filipino Senior Citizen Association in Alberta (FSCAA)

Circumstances of Formation

Realizing the isolation experienced by Filipino seniors, two concerned members of the Filipino community organized this association in 1982 with a mission to enhance the quality of life of these seniors in Edmonton.

Services Today

The FSCAA's membership is restricted to those over 55 years of age and the current average age of members is 80 years.

Social programs, entertainment, and exercise programs are offered activities through which members feel they have enhanced their quality of life. A memorial fund was also organized and helped bereaved seniors spouses.

This organization is governed by bylaws with executive officers and board members of 2-year terms. Executives and board members must be of 60 years old and have been active with the association at least a min. of 2 years in good standing.

Internal Links

The association is a strong voice in the community as it is helping members enjoy their lives by organizing aforementioned activities.

The meeting members' needs depend on the strength of the association's leaders. Community engagement is achieved through networking and cooperation with other non-profit organizations, volunteering services in the community and inviting participation.

Communication strategies to mobilize members include formal and informal meetings and gatherings, newspapers, flyers, adds, social events, monthly meetings with members and weekly recreational activities.

The association believes that it is seen as legitimate by the community.

External Links

The association participates in the activities of the other Edmonton Filipino organizations as they support ongoing other organizational activities and volunteerism.

The group does not have much communication with the government, except regarding the necessary activities for casinos.

Funding Sources

Sources include casinos every 2 years, membership fees, revenues from social functions, business, and private donations. In order to get funds, the association must be “on top of everything” while keeping membership motivated to get involved.

Challenges to Integration

Since the mission of the organization is to help seniors enhance the quality of life, the issues identified by the Coalition are also experienced by members during their working age and now. They agree with the Coalition’s identified issues, which is why they want to get involved and paid their membership fee.

Responding to Challenges

Support from membership, casino funds, and from other organizations has assisted the group be successful in increasing their membership and providing more senior activities.

Challenges are overcome by members supporting each other, strong leadership and positive role models as well as involving “everyone and get them motivated”.

Coalition’s Role

The group will be involved with the Coalition, as they are now members. They wish to give more strength for the Coalition to effect change for the benefit of all immigrants. The representative will encourage members to attend Coalition activities and most importantly support the Coalition mission.

12. Handicraft Centre - South Asian (HC)

Circumstances of Formation

Mrs. Sofia Yakub founded the Handicraft Centre to offer South Asian seniors and women social activities recognizing their need for information and a place to chat and support each other.

Services Today

Today, services are targeted towards seniors, women, and students/youth. Skill building classes, weekly craft, sewing, computer, English, and Math classes are offered. There are also small income generating opportunities to women by working at home.

The Centre is a registered non-profit organization governed by a Board of Trustees as a non-profit society. The HC has one paid full-time and one part-time worker.

Internal Links

Community members are engaged in activities through meetings, projects, and events. The Centre has legitimacy in the community.

Communication is achieved through e-mail, newsletters, and radio announcements.

External Links

Resource people are called on to assist with projects. In turn, the HC provides similar support to others and partake in joint projects.

They have had good response from government, other organizations, and the public.

Funding Sources

Funding sources have been mainly provincial and municipal government grants.

Challenges to Integration

The HC agrees with the Coalition's four issues.

Responding to Challenges

A main success has been the establishment of a centre for sustained activities and having a place for meeting for women and seniors. Through this, the HC has been able to mobilize the community and assist them in integrating successfully with Canadian society.

The main challenge for the organization is providing services suited to the needs of the community. They have attempted to overcome these challenges by introducing services and building trust within the community.

The organization believes it has achieved goals by getting good people involved and by “being sincere in our work.” Strategies used included “continually doing good work and involving good people.”

Coalition’s Role

The HC sees the Coalition’s role to help the centre obtain more stable funding, supporting good projects, and building partnerships.

13. Indo-Canadian Women's Association (ICWA)

Circumstances of Formation

ICWA has been serving Edmonton communities for the past 20 years about 100 members who are registered. It was formed to assist the newcomers of South Asian origins in the settlement in Canada.

Services Today

It is a non-profit organization, which offers many types of settlement services, such as ESL and computer literacy, and conducts community research and surveys. The association serves all newcomers.

It is managed by a group of 8-10 elected members who serve on the board.

Internal Links

ICWA engages members by inviting them for group sessions, workshops, and community interfaith celebrations. Communication strategies include sending newsletters and flyers informing about our events and activities.

External Links

They work in collaboration with two major settlement services in Edmonton such as the Edmonton Mennonite Centre and Catholic Social Services, and partner with academic agencies like the Prairie Centre.

Many federal and provincial political leaders attend events on a regular basis.

Funding Sources

ICWA receives funding from all the three levels of government: Federal, Provincial, and City. These funds are granted for opening full-time positions as well as for research and survey projects.

Challenges to Integration

ICWA feels very poignantly the unmistakable presence of all these four issues and many more. These experiences are shared across all the ethnocultural groups of South Asian people. They feel a special concern for immigrant women

of South Asian origins as they often suffer from a kind of triple jeopardy being women, then immigrants, and women of color.

Responding to Challenges

ICWA has undertaken several projects to meet the challenges faced by the community. Their main success have been their successful projects while a key remaining challenge is obtaining funding, especially for English classes. To overcome these challenges of funding, members make personal donations and organize casinos, which require commitment and consistent effort.

Coalition's Role

ICWA plans to continue offering existing services, and if possible add on more. They are interested in collaborating to apply for funding and offer services with the Coalition.

14. Kenya Community in Greater Edmonton (KCGE)

Circumstances of Formation

The group came together to organize Kenyans living abroad, bring them together and create opportunities for them to meet one another. Initially, the organization aimed to welcome new members of the Kenyan community who arrived to Edmonton as well as “for the sake of their children growing up in foreign land, to each other and learn about their culture.”

Services Today

The current services offered are aimed at Kenyans and others who have lived in Kenya. As a young organization, they have fewer services to offer members than more established groups.

The association provides a platform, especially for women, to engage with each other, create feeling of belonging, and lessen feelings of loneliness, which cause stress in their lives. To this end, the social activities are organized.

The organization has a board, and standing committees on gender issues and youth. They are also considering creating a finance committee.

Internal Links

The group has a strong influence within the Kenyan community, as evidenced by the number of people who participate in social events. Members of the association organize and attend events, contribute positively to the community, listen to peoples’ views and consider their needs.

Communication generally occurs via e-mail, telephone, and word of mouth.

External Links

The organization has a relationship with the Edmonton Multicultural Society. There is also a partnership in place with the Zimbabwean, Congolese, and Haitian community associations evidenced by their joint participation in Heritage Days.

The representative of the association noted that the group does not have a partnership or influence with government, which is a matter they regret, particularly considering the issue of foreign credentials recognition.

Funding Sources

The main funding sources are membership fees and the social events participants pay for to attend.

Challenges to Integration

The Coalition's key issues (access to employment, education, health services, and social inclusion) resonate with the organization.

In particular, the issue of employment, social isolation, and exclusion from civic and political participation in Canadian society are key to their community. These barriers in turn contribute to financial stress and create family problems.

Responding to Challenges

The community members responded to the challenges faced by forming this association, which acts as a platform for people in the community, especially women, to participate and belong in a new environment.

The main challenges they face as an organization have been finances. There are also community members who are not working and the association has been unable to assist them with basic needs (food) because of lack of resources.

The group has been successful at mobilizing the community to coordinate and address the association's objectives. The association's greatest success has been being able to get Kenyans to celebrate their national holidays. Another success is exemplified by the community planning, funds organizing, and participation in the Heritage Days festival. In turn, the group's greatest challenge has also been motivating community members to participate in the festival.

While not all challenges are overcome, Board and community members try to come together to discuss ways of addressing these.

Coalition's Role

The association is interested to know more about the Coalition and see its key role to be helping to build a space for civic engagement. In particular, the Coalition should consider the issue of employment, which "demoralizes immigrant and refugee youth to work hard in their lives because they see that their parents who are highly qualified are not employed in their professions."

15. Mexican Cultural Society of Edmonton (MCSE)

Circumstances of Formation

In 1995, a group of Edmonton residents decided to form a club to promote the Mexican life and culture by organizing of fiestas, dances and other cultural events. “We felt that so many other cultures had their own organizations that the Mexican community should have one too.”

Services Today

The group continues to grow and still carries on the cultural activities while helping Mexican newcomers to orientate themselves to the city and to cope better with Canadian way of life. The association also participates in the Heritage Festival. Newcomer orientation is informal and focuses on providing them with references to government services.

MCSE is a registered society as a non-profit organization government by elected members of the board of directors.

Internal Links

The association has strong influence in the community, sees itself as a legitimate representative of the Mexican community, and receives calls from government, schools, other community organizations, and the private sector.

Community members are engaged in cooperating to educate the public (especially the schools).

Communication is mainly done through email, word-of-mouth, meetings, and phone calls.

External Links

Currently, if other communities request dancers or cultural activities the association can make the connection but has no partnerships with anyone.

They are in contact with the Mexican Consulate and Embassy and have interacted with the Canadian federal government and a provincial organization focused on HIV organization. They do not feel that they have influence with the government.

Funding Sources

Funding comes from revenues from parties and membership fees. Word of mouth and advertising on the radio, newspaper and other (poster) are strategies to engage community in fundraising.

Challenges to Integration

Major issues facing their community is misinformation about immigration – “we receive many questions and inquiries about how to stay here.” They strongly agree that their community faces the same issues as those put forth by the Coalition.

The organization also has no place for people to gather, no funding to better help the members of their community, and are not connected to other helping organizations. One of their biggest challenges remains getting volunteers who are reliable.

Responding to Challenges

Successes have included mobilizing members to participate in many community events, especially Heritage Festival. The organization has also been able to come up with the money to participate in the Heritage Festival. This success is due to “hard work and private loans from members” as well as committed volunteers who work long hours and are willing to cooperate.

Coalition’s Role

The group’s plans for the future are to grow and strengthen in membership size, and they believe the Coalition can assist. The organizations can “learn from one another and to exchange ideas and get help as required.”

16. Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe Church - El Salvador (NSGC)

Circumstances of Formation

This is a religious group formed by the Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe Church. The church serves Latin Americans, thus membership is multicultural. The group was formed to help immigrants from Latin America.

Services Today

Today the group is trying to organize information sessions on health, immigration, and multicultural issues. Their main goal is to help others by providing information and support. There is also a youth, a women's and families' group.

The organization consists of both leaders and permanent members.

Internal Links

The group believes it has a lot of influence in the Latin American community whose members are engaged in its activities. By inviting the other leaders of the Latin American community to participate in events targeted to their communities, the group is able to mobilize community members.

Links are primarily based on personal community connections and shared membership at the church.

To promote events, the group sends letters of invitation or emails makes telephone calls, networks, and advertises on the radio.

External Links

Links with other NGOs include the Catholic Social Services, Change for Children, Changing Together, Development and Peace, Action for Healthy Communities, and the MCHB.

The group believes they have influence with schools and some with the government.

Funding Sources

The funding sources are presently in place are drawn from community fund raising and donations. "There has been some help from the food bank and Action for Healthy Communities, other churches and Latin American businesses." The group sends out requests for donations by mail to fund different events or activities.

Challenges to Integration

The group agrees with the Coalition's issues. The key issues for their community surround a lack of settlement information for new immigrants. There is also a lack of services available for immigration counseling for youth and families, health issues, and the isolation of seniors.

Other challenges include community members not having decent transportation, access to community sites, and lack of funding to pay for those facilities.

Another challenge is in accessing available services and their effectiveness in meeting needs:

"The places that are purposed to help foreign trained professionals only help themselves by adding the number of people seeking help but those are not helping at all."

Responding to Challenges

The group has responded to challenges by advocating community issues to government or other agencies.

Successes include organizing workshops, information sessions, and helping individuals directly. One of the factors that limit the group's ability to provide more permanent programming is the lack of funding. There is a need to have paid staff to provide services, not only volunteers. The group is constantly looking for ways to motivate volunteers to recognize the need of the community and to solve them and to "create a real community."

To achieve their goals, group members talk to the agencies that provide services and send the people in need directly to them to solve each case.

Coalition's Role

The group plans to open a Latin American Multicultural Centre. The Coalition can assist by including them in their organization, informing them of their objectives, and continuing to advocate to the government.

17. Pangasinan Dynamics of Canada – Filipino (PDC)

Circumstances of Formation

The organization started with a few friends who wanted to help unfortunate children in the Philippines as well as community members from Pangasinan region experiencing challenges in Edmonton. The group also wanted to create opportunities for Filipinos to socialize with others united in the same interests.

Services Today

At this time, the PDC has been successful in building eight school playgrounds in the Philippines. They have gained the support from the community to sustain the organization's mission and to raise funds through donations.

The group's services target Filipinos in Edmonton whose origins are in the Pangasinan region of the Philippines.

The organization is governed by bylaws, officers, and board members who are elected by members.

Internal Links

The representative believes she is a credible leader of the organization. The association engages members by involving them, acknowledging their contributions, and telling them, they are key to achieving organizational goals.

“Communicate to people, explain your objective and motivate them to get involved, solicit input recognize their contributions the importance of their involvement in achieving their goal.”

Formal and informal communication is used whether in person or by telephone.

External Links

The association is communicating and collaborating with other leaders of different organizations. They recognize that in order to “address issues that two community face, not much action will happen if there is only a single voice.”

The group does not have “much” influence or interaction with the government.

Funding Sources

Donations from public, business, friends, and other members of the community, large fundraising activities, and membership fees are main sources of funds.

Challenges to Integration

The group agrees with the Coalition's issues. The main issues facing the Filipino community are related to the lack of recognition of foreign credentials. Highly educated members with a lot of skills experience are working low paying jobs because these professional credentials are not recognizing the Canada.

It is also difficult to find and obtain funding for newcomers to return to school to accredit their professions. Newcomers also experience challenges as result of language barriers, which can result in isolation.

Responding to Challenges

To respond to the challenges facing the community, the group collaborates with other groups in the community to help those in need.

The success of the association has been the high level of participation of members in events. Their greatest accomplishment has been exceeding their target number of schools to help. "We were able to build 8 school playgrounds in 4 years."

Challenges remain the balancing of different ideas, lack of funds, and finding committed volunteers to help to avoid burnout of other members. To overcome these challenges, the members have focused on the organization's mission, carry out goals, and take action to achieve their mission.

Coalition's Role

The Coalition can involve or represent the organization in a "better and stronger voice to affect policy change, better recognition, inclusion, easier access to government funding of acknowledging our existence in the community of the contribution we make in Canada."

18. Philippine Women's Association in Alberta (PWAA)

Circumstances of Formation

Several Filipino women informally met and discussed the needs and interests of Filipino women in Alberta. Existing Filipino organizations did not seem to meet the needs of the Filipino women, which is what motivated the creation of this organization. The group was organized and in 1988 became a formally registered with the Alberta Societies Act.

Services Today

The membership consists of Filipino women 25 years and older as well as other ethnic groups. Members of the organization volunteer their services to the needy.

The group offers women's education programs, and volunteer services to other non-profit organizations regarding publicly funded programs for disabled, diabetes, and the elderly.

The association is governed by by-laws with executive officers and board members serving 2 year-terms in office.

Internal Links

Influence is limited to issues of interest to their members. "We focus to achieve our association's goal to help others that need our help." The group sees itself as legitimate only in representing the interests of their members.

Engagement of members is done through networking, collaboration, and cooperation with other organizations and community activities. Informal and formal written and verbal communication, meetings, newsletters, radio announcements, and telephone calls are communication strategies. Ads, coordinated word of mouth, and written invitations are key to mobilizing participants.

External Links

The association is a member of the Council of Edmonton Filipino Associations maintains involvement in church volunteer activities and publicly funded programs for the disabled and elderly.

They do not have much influence with the government and rather “focus on our associations’ activities.” Through not involved with politics, the group recognizes when the need arises that requires them to participate.

Funding Sources

Sources include annual membership fees, revenues from social events, donations from friends and businesses. “We never applied for any government grants or fundraising activities like casino or bingo”.

Challenges to Integration

The four major issues identified by the Coalition have been challenges experienced by their members – yet “we didn’t have the energy and capability to do something about it to affect change.” The group takes every opportunity such as this interview participation to learn from others and voice their concern as the need arises.

Responding to Challenges

The association sees open communication as involvement with other organizations that have the capability to help them as key to addressing community issues.

Membership campaigns are main challenges as are lack of funding resources. Another struggle is making our association visible in our community and a period when “our association’s membership was status quo.”

The group has increased the number of happy and committed members and funds to help operate their activities. This was achieved through well-organized membership campaigns, getting more involved with other organizations making in order to make their group visible. Committed leaders and members who act as positive role models have been keys to success.

Coalition’s Role

Bring an active member of the Coalition can provide strength to help change the lives of the immigrants. “We are interested to be a member of the Coalition. We support the Coalition’s mission.”

19. Romanian Community Newspaper “Aici Romania” (RCN)

Circumstances of Formation

Aici Romania is a “community magazine.” The group who produces the newspaper was formed in November 2004 by three co-founders. Along with a couple of friends, Razvan Rancov and Daniela Rancov, and Sorin Mihailovici came up with the idea. The Romanian community needed a publication, which could provide useful information, and there was nothing of this kind available.

Services Today

The mandate of the group is to provide the Romanian community in Alberta with useful information. The magazine is published monthly and is distributed throughout Alberta.

Aici Romania has a board of 3 leaders and 10 collaborators (members). The three leaders share the editorial, digital layout, and printing of the publication. The members contribute with the articles once a month.

Internal Links

The leaders believe the paper to have “pretty big influence in the community” and that the group is seen as legitimate. They engage their community in different activities such as meetings or fundraising, social events. In order to mobilize 100 people, the “only thing that we have to do for that is inserting an article in the magazine therefore I don’t think we would have a problem in getting 100 people together at once”.

A leader noted that he “can notice this after the volume of the magazines we sell and the interest of the people in it. I get a good feedback from the people. In our community especially about the editorials which makes me believe that I am seen as a legitimate representative by my community.”

External Links

The group has a strong relationship with the Romanian Orthodox Churches in Edmonton and Calgary. They distribute Aici Romania every Sunday in the churches. They also have a good relationship with the Canadian Romanian Society of Alberta, which introduced the group to their members. The group is helping the Society in promoting their events, such as Heritage Days or Klondike Days events, which in turn bring the newspaper more readers.

The group does not have any kind of relations with the government.

Funding Sources

The following sources include: an initial “boost” from the Canadian-Romanian Society for \$1000, which helped start the magazine (buying all the materials, renting the equipment); second, they approached advertisers – which is the only source of funds “keeping us alive now.” This is why the group is “always looking for business people willing to advertise their products for our readers. Especially, we are looking for people who do community services.”

Challenges to Integration

None reported.

Responding to Challenges

The group’s biggest challenge is to find people that can support the magazine. The advertisers are hard to find because the publication’s target market is not as big as other communities (Ukrainian, Italian, and Polish). “The advertisers want to pay money but they also want to be seen by many people...without sources of funding we won’t be able to survive, since we all have full time jobs as well.”

Their greatest success is nevertheless their ability to find sponsors – although they had to approach 80% of Romanians with businesses. The quality of the magazine is also very good, which has motivated Romanians to subscribe to our magazine.

Coalition’s Role

There is a Canadian Heritage bursary program that the group would be eligible for; unfortunately, the funders' requirements are very hard to meet for a group such as this.

“For instance, they say they support ethnic community magazines, but the condition is that they content of the publication should be in English more than half. We think the point for a community newspaper or publication is to keep the community people updated with their own roots and tradition, especially the language. We want to keep the kids learning our language. We want to keep kids talking with their parents in Romanian too. We want to provide older people with something that they missed so far since they do not speak perfect English. Hence if English is the main language is an ethnic community publication, we do not see the point in helping them out. This is how the Coalition can help us. If you know by any chance any supporting programs that we can be part of that would be great.”

20. Romanian Orthodox Church Constantin and Elena Board (ROCB)

Circumstances of Formation

Pioneers and later immigrants built the church so an organized leading structure of Romanian community evolved. As an increasing immigration in Edmonton in the 70s and the building of the only Romanian Orthodox Church.

Services Today

Our organization is strong by its members, projects, and successes. It grows continuously because of the last 15 years immigration from Romania especially intellectuals. Organized under religious umbrella our organization extended activities to a level where every Romanian is welcome to participate and benefit. Organizes most of the cultural and social activities for members providing assistance where required.

The Romanian community gathered around the Romanian Orthodox Church. Religious services, cultural and arts activities.

Membership consists of 200 members and about 500 non-members who do not pay membership fees.

Internal Links

The representative considered that he had “a high level of influence as a Board member.” Engagement of community members is achieved through general assemblies, social events, and church services

Communication is maintained through monthly community newspapers and discussions in small groups.

External Links

The group has links with other Christian community especially Orthodox (Greek, Ukrainian). It has a very strong relationship with the Canadian-Romanian Association, though not with the government. “The government recognizes us but we have no influence with the government. I don’t feel that we have too much influence with the government.”

Funding Sources

Membership fees, donations, and social events are the key funding sources.

Challenges to Integration

Although noting that his “community’s experience is not well enough shared across other ethnocultural groups...it is mostly shared within the community,” the representative noted that the four key issues were “experienced by many of our community members especially 1 (employment) and 4 (social isolation)”.

Responding to Challenges

Active participation and continuous strive to bring members together for specific goals have been strategies to overcome challenges.

Generally, the Board is well organized through there are still some problems with decisions when is about to spend the funds. This has been resolved through negotiation and mutual agreement. The increase of membership and funds, the building and extension of church and hall, and increase in cultural activities have been main successes.

Coalition’s Role

“The Coalition can make itself known as an organization that represents the interest of all minorities. The Coalition is going to be more politically oriented and will have more influence with the government so it would be a good bridge between the government and other ethnocultural organizations.”

“I consider that the Coalition is necessary for most ethnocultural organizations and minorities to create a legal organization to deal with the politicians and the government for equal rights, for education, employment, and cultural identity. The Coalition can bring together most ethnocultural organizations to be united for a specific goal.”

21. Sudakan Organization (SO)

Circumstances of Formation

The Sudakan Organization is a non-governmental humanitarian organization registered in Canada, which aims to help Africans affected, by disasters, civil wars, and instability. They are concentrating in Sudan's internally displaced refugees, victims of wars, such as those in Darfur and Southern Sudan, as well as helping the most vulnerable groups in disaster zones.

Services Today

Sudan is a vast country that is formed of different tribes and ethnic groups that turn to live in isolation of other ethnic groups, which often lead to collision. Therefore, the organization is trying to represent the Sudanese people as a whole rather than being fragmented. With this objective in mind, they strive to assist in the provision of basic human needs services in collaboration with international organizations.

Internal Links

Since their objectives are to fulfill the basic needs of human beings, they have partnerships with local and international organizations.

External Links

The organization is working together with volunteer and charity organizations in Canada such as African We Care, and local non-governmental organization in Sudan, such as Global Wealth Foundation. The group maintains contact with government bodies concerned with non-governmental organizations' affairs.

Funding Sources

There is no government funding and the organization is based on volunteer work.

Challenges to Integration

Most Sudanese community members in Canada who came from the war torn areas and believes strongly in the necessity of the immediate assistance and restoration of these areas, as well as the urgent need to the reconciliation process between the tribes in those areas. With regard to this, the group needs the local and international community's attention and assistance to bring back life and peace to these areas.

Responding to Challenges

The organization has an action plan to submit in the form of a proposal to donors, government authorities, and bodies that have the same goals and humanitarian work objectives in Canada and worldwide. They are also building strong links, while propagating voluntary ethics among the community members.

Coalition's Role

The organization noted that they need the support of the Coalition in their voluntary work.

22. Sudanese Canadian Community in Edmonton (SCCE)

Circumstances of Formation

The organization was formed to connect Sudanese refugees in Edmonton and with those in Sudan. It was formed because of integration challenges related to social inclusion. The organization aimed to provide opportunities for Sudanese to meet socialize and help each other as well as provide help their children and instill in them with cultural values.

Services Today

The growing population of Sudanese, who are being resettled, has resulted in a population of over 2000 members in the community to date. SCCE serves the Sudanese community to increase their interconnections in Canada and collaboration in community fundraising to assist those in Africa.

Their services are mostly geared towards youth, women, and elders because they are the most vulnerable members of their community. Computers and internet programs “keep them (youth) away from trouble” and create “civic spaces” for them.

The organization is governed by an Executive, Board of Directors, and General Assembly.

Internal Links

The organization has influence and its representatives are listened to by the community. They engage through functions, cooking and sharing food. Engagement is achieved through constructive ideas that address specific issues and yield results.

Communication is done through a public relations officer, secretary, by word of mouth, phone, a monthly newsletter, and internet.

External Links

The organization has friends in other associations, and the courts to help the youth. Contact with politicians begins prior to elections and connections continue thereafter. “Our populations approach and need has drawn in many politicians paving us was to influence some ideas”.

Funding Sources

The organization has been successful in writing funding proposals, which have been awarded by the federal government to support the organization's activities.

Other sources are political organizations (Sudanese Community Association), newsletter membership subscription fees. Some individual agencies have been helpful in supporting our programs through the provision of the needed resources.

Challenges to Integration

The Coalition's issues are shared by the Sudanese community as well. The barriers surrounding education and foreign credentials are a key issue. Discrimination in employment practices and in the government is another barrier. "Our problems are same as below with the addition of youth involvement in drugs, crime etc."

Responding to Challenges

To deal with the barriers faced by community members, the organization needs time, coordination, and "exchange of views." The organization has introduced traditional counseling, conflict resolution, and has involved members to have time to socialize. Nevertheless, "some clients/members not demonstrating any degree of change but rather continued engagement in the same issues".

Their main success has been the youth program's outcomes in resolving family conflicts, encouraging school attendance, and independence. The organization still struggles to assist community members dealing with family conflicts and youth involvement in crime (drugs, prostitution, and fights).

As an organization. A key challenge remains "collaborating things that people want you to do" and convincing "people to attend meetings."

Challenges have been overcome through "constructive engagement in issues, but not emphasizing on blames." Cooperation from all parties, being trusted, and following up on the issues are key strategies.

Coalition's Role

The representatives recognized the importance for groups to work together and on common issues. They recognize the need for groups to push doors open for employment training, interpreters, and jobs for immigrants.

"This is a very good exercise however as long as it does not become a research shop, it can attain so much. We have tried in our community to work with many agencies but they have let us down."

“Whenever we have secured funding we are ignored and never involved. It is unfortunate that most agencies come at a time of their own need and desperation. We look forward to your interest in either partnership or cooperating on many common challenges.”

23. Ugandan Cultural Association of Alberta (UCAA)

Circumstances of Formation

Since there are not many Ugandans in Edmonton, newcomers felt alone and isolated. The UCAA was formed in 1989 to bring together community members in order to lessen the experience of isolation, provide opportunities for socialization and learning from each other.

Services Today

The association started as an informal organization in 1988 with few members. It was formalized in 1989 and remains the only Ugandan organization in Edmonton with a total of 150 members. Services are open to all members of the Ugandan community in Edmonton.

Members support one another, and concentrate their efforts on helping integrate in the Canadian society. The association provides opportunities for socialization, youth cultural programs to help them maintain cultural heritage, offers scholarship funds for students, and emergency funds.

The association is governed by By-laws. Five executive officers are elected by members for 2 years terms in office.

Internal Links

The association is very influential in the Ugandan community as it is the only organization of its kind in Edmonton. It is able to get cooperation from members in activities of this organization. The organization is seen as legitimate by members who feel secure when getting involved in the organization. They see this organization as their voice, even though it is not strong enough and affect change.

Community members are engaged through regular informal and formal meetings or gatherings. Flyers are distributed to increase awareness of members on the community re-existence of this organization.

Communication strategies include telephone, written and flyers or newsletters, formal and informal meetings/gatherings, social activities of the organization.

External Links

The association is a member of the Alberta Multicultural Society in Edmonton.

It has been involved in the yearly Edmonton Heritage Festival, and is attending functions of different community groups in the Edmonton Multicultural Coalition.

Association representatives attend government program forums and organization forums where their participation is requested. They also attend workshops that they see helpful to members of the organization.

The groups does not have “much voice or influence being a very small organization” with respect to the government.

Funding Sources

Funds come from membership fees, social fund raising activities, Heritage Days participation, and casinos. The association also solicits private or business sector donations.

Challenges to Integration

“The coalition had identified major issues that we the immigrant and refugees experience. All these issues affect each of our members and I am sure also the same in other immigrant organizations in the country.”

Responding to Challenges

The response to community challenges is to organize the association and address the struggles faced by members collectively. Major success includes being able to help improve newcomers’ quality of life. Key challenges are funding the necessary resources to help those in financial need. Cooperation among community members has been paramount to meet these challenges.

Coalition’s Role

The representative sees joining the Coalition to have positive impact on his community as “this organization can have a positive strength to face the Government to have policy changes.”

24. Zimbabwe Cultural Society of Alberta (ZCSA)

Circumstances of Formation

The Society is only one year old. It was formed in April 2004 and motivated by the influx of Zimbabwean people who share common interests and cultural backgrounds.

Services Today

The group is looking at starting language classes for Chona and Ndebele (main languages in Zimbabwe) for children, adults, and interested parties. Services are open to Zimbabweans and others interested in Zimbabwean culture.

The organization includes an Executive board, President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and board members for publicity and outreach, social issues and culture. There is also a general membership.

Internal Links

The Society has influence with organization members and they are seen as legitimate. The organization is still new and thus as of yet not involved in many initiatives.

Communication strategies include mailing lists, internet, phone, word of mouth.

External Links

The ZCSA is a member of the Edmonton Multicultural Society, and is involved with the EMS and the Edmonton High Schools Coalition and Change for Children.

The group has not dealt with the government as a community organization, though they have interacted with individual politicians.

Funding Sources

Subscriptions and fundraising events. (Social events) are main sources of funding.

Challenges to Integration

Underemployment is the key to the other problems proposed by the Coalition. ESL not an issue with the Zimbabwean community. People grew up in the Britain

system and everyone speaks English. They face problems similar to other immigrant and refugee communities. The representative highlighted the issue of recognition of foreign credentials and work experience obtained outside Canada.

Responding to Challenges

Response to community challenges has been mainly on an individual level. The group is planning to do research to find out main issues that affect Zimbabwean community.

The greatest success is forming the organization and having it registered. Challenges faced are mainly those of membership: only 30% of Zimbabweans belong to the organization. The society addresses this by putting out information about the organization and trying to get people to participate.

Coalition's Role

Issue of employment equity and recognition of foreign credentials should be a priority for the Coalition. The Society will join the Coalition "if it offers something different."