Filling the Data Gap: A Conversation on Coordinating and Using Program Data

What is the issue?

There is a growing amount of data being collected by community groups concerning the services they provide to immigrants to support their settlement and employment. Much of this data is collected for submission to government funders, along with other administrative data focused on accountability requirements. If this program data were better available for analysis by the research community, it could provide tools for community groups for program planning and evaluation, and complement the data already available from other sources such as CIC and Statistics Canada.

The purpose of this roundtable is to start a conversation between governments, community organizations and academics on what each can do to address this issue. It will explore the possibility of data sharing, data mining, and data analysis, in particular the sharing and analysis of administrative/program data collected by community organizations. It will also look at ways we might improve the type of data we collect, or the quality of the data already being collected.

Questions for Discussion

1) What data/information do you have/collect in your organization? Who decides this?
2) What information do you want to gather and what do you want to do with it?
3) What type of support would you need to do a better job of collecting and analyzing useful data?

What is the Toronto Immigrant Employment Data Initiative (TIEDI) model?

- Assist organizations whose mandate includes the better integration of immigrants into Toronto's labour force
- Research questions are driven by immigrant service organizations' request and not by academics
- Since 2008, TIEDI has produced 26 analytical reports, 34 fact sheets and 15 monthly labour force updates about the current labour market outcomes of immigrants in Toronto CMA. These findings are free for everyone to download on-line from our website and are distributed to over 600+ members. http://www.yorku.ca/tiedi/index.html
- Based in York University, with a team of academic researchers drawn from York, the University of Toronto, and Ryerson University. Core members of the project team also include representatives of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) and World Education Services.

What are some examples of data and analysis challenges experienced by TIEDI?

- Requests for analysis outside of TIEDI's mandate (e.g. non-labour market outcomes such as childcare needs, and health profile)
- Outdated data (e.g. census data) or non-existing data (e.g. information on temporary residents)
- Requests for neighbourhood-specific labour market outcomes of specific immigrants groups living inside or outside the Greater Toronto Area.
- Limitations in gender- and immigrant group-specific analysis