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CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE PHASE 2

INTERIM ACTIVITY REPORT #4

Submitted to the
Law Foundation of Ontario
Access to Justice Fund

On behalf of the
CONNECTING OTTAWA NETWORK

July 2014



Effective communication
Accessible justice



Une communication efficace
Une justice accessible

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INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth Activity Report describing the implementation and outcomes of the Connecting Ottawa/*Connexion Ottawa* project, funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario under the Connecting Region Initiative of the Access to Justice Fund. The report describes activities and performance milestones for the six-month period that ends the second full year of operations: 1 January to 30 June 2014. Our focus has been the continued implementation of the planned activities, training and assignment of trusted intermediaries, sharing our lessons learned via our third annual conference, providing a learning environment for four students on practice placements from the University of Ottawa Law School, drafting additional legal system navigation tools and adding new functionality to our website, and continued interim case management support to our partner organizations.

During this period we have operated well within the approved budget. Please see the attached financial statement; this period has ended with a positive fund balance of \$44,326; actual expenditures were \$33,589 under budget. Our budget for Year 3 (2014-15) proposes a total that is essentially unchanged from previous years although there has been reallocation of funds among some activities. We anticipate July/August expenditures to be about \$45,000 so request that the next funding instalment be forwarded no later than mid-September to facilitate cash flow.

Any project can expect setbacks but this period has been a particularly challenging time for Connecting Ottawa because of human resource issues. In January, our social worker (Marian Green) left the program in order to explore professional opportunities elsewhere. We immediately began recruiting a replacement from among 59 applicants but our preferred candidate (Roya Ghafari) could not be employed until mid-March. During the intervening 10 weeks project activities were continued by our lawyer (Natalie Drolet) working alone; during this time we had very limited resources to allocate to continued development of the facilitator program and social work consultation services were suspended. Unfortunately there was a further staffing setback at the end of April when Roya Ghafari was obliged to take extended leave to address serious health concerns. She remains on sick leave and is not expected to rejoin the project. We immediately recruited another social worker (Erin Fitzpatrick) who also has a legal education (although not called to the Bar of Ontario). Erin joined us in mid-May. Now fully staffed once more, we have resumed all activities.

Another issue that was resolved related to legal liability insurance for Natalie Drolet. We had assumed that the professional liability insurance provided by the employer of record (Vanier Community Service Centre) would adequately cover Natalie's activities as a resource person and consultant to trusted intermediaries and service providers. However, the Law Society of Upper Canada advised us that as a lawyer called to the Bar of Ontario Natalie's activities are to be considered the provision of legal services that require the legal liability protections afforded by ProLaw. Insurance could not be purchased via la Clinique juridique francophone de l'Est d'Ottawa at Vanier CSC because Connecting Ottawa is not funded by LAO; further, since Natalie does not act as "house counsel" for the employer, Vanier CSC's professional liability insurance does include legal services; finally, the Law Society determined that Natalie cannot practice law through a non-profit corporation (LAO-funded programs are exempted). The issue was resolved by Natalie establishing a "sole practice", with Vanier CSC and the Connecting Ottawa project as her only client, and purchased ProLaw insurance on this basis. It is difficult to see how this issue could have been avoided, unless LFO seeks an exemption from LSUC for LFO-funded initiatives that employ lawyers who are considered to be providing legal services.

We hope that we will not experience any further human resource challenges but employee retention and staffing continuity will be growing concerns as Connecting Ottawa nears its termination date; understandably, staff will be anxious to secure employment elsewhere as the expiration of their contracts approaches.

Each one of these Interim Activity Reports offers an opportunity to share what we have learned to date. The issues that most preoccupy us at the end of Year 2 of the project are as follows:

- Case consultation and legal system navigation support for the organizations in our network has always been a priority and the majority of the project’s resources have been devoted to this work. Our last Activity Report noted a shift away from consultation to interim case management and we expressed concerns then that this could divert considerable time and resources from other activities. Although we have acknowledged that our partners sometimes have limited available resources it has never been our intent to provide an alternative or supplementary service that would be unsustainable. We are continually re-evaluating our approach to ensure that our partners are actually building their organizational capacity to provide accessible services to our focus populations. Most recently, since we are frequently asked to consult about clients that do not fit the profile of our focus populations, this has required reassessment of case referrals to ensure that the client does in fact lack a proficiency in English or French or faces communication challenges as the result of a disability or sensory impairment. We are also taking additional steps to ensure that our involvement with a client will always present an opportunity to transfer knowledge and to develop the skills of the front-line worker who referred to us.
- Inspired by Thompson and Cohl¹, we set out to create “a consortium of local legal and non-legal organizations and provincial bodies to develop strategies to improve linguistic access to information and services, working together as a coherent system within the region”. Our network is a highly diverse collection of organizations with often very different capacities, priorities, and resources to commit to this project. We have communicated regularly with these 43 partners via presentations, the annual conference, newsletters, and the web site to reinforce their continued engagement, to collaborate, and to support implementation of best practices and other proven strategies. In our last Activity Report we discussed the importance of evaluating partnership effectiveness and proposed using the Hardy model². Upon further reflection by our Advisory Group we have explored an alternative approach that should better complement the Collective Impact³ model that has been the foundation of the project from its inception; project staff has completed training in in the use of the Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework⁴. We have begun by categorizing partner organizations according to their level of engagement⁵ and will evaluate results in this context. For example, one outcome will measure the extent to which organizations have identified key liaisons and their capacity to act as PLE resource leads. We will be consulting with each of the “category 1” and “category 2” partners; all legal clinics were consulted in April [see Appendix 3 for the questionnaire] and we will consult with settlement agencies in Q2, services for persons with disabilities in Q3, and community agencies in Q4.

¹ The final report of the Linguistic and Rural Access to Justice Project (Karen Cohl and George Thomson: *Connecting Across Language and Distance: Linguistic and Rural Access to Legal Information and Services*, Law Foundation of Ontario, December 2008)

² Hudson, B., and Hardy, B. (2002) What is a successful partnership and how can it be measured? In: Glendinning, C. (ed.) *Partnerships, New Labour and the Governance of Welfare*. Policy Press, Bristol, UK

³ Kania, John and Kramer, Mark. "Collective Impact". *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2011. p. 36-41.[1]

⁴ Mark Friedman: *Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough*, Trafford 2005

⁵ By adapting the [IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum](#).

- An increased demand for public legal education (PLE) has been a welcome by-product of our work to raise awareness among trusted intermediaries about legal issues that may be an important part of clients' complex problems. A review of our Logic Model (see Appendix 1) confirms that PLE activities were never identified as part of our project. Our focus has been on legal system navigation and ensuring that clients access justice with the support of legal and non-legal service organizations that can work collaboratively. However, we have been approached to partner with organizations interested in educating their service workers about legal issues. For example, the LASI Coalition is delivering a program funded by Ottawa Police Services and the Crime Prevention Council as part of the Ottawa Gang Strategy ([Community Leadership Network for Families Project](#)) in order to educate trusted intermediaries and parents about youth criminal justice issues using a “train the trainer” approach, and the [Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership](#) (OLIP) is interested in requesting *Connecting Communities* grant support to train settlement workers about legal issues with a focus on employment, immigration, and health/disability. We are supporting these and other PLE initiatives as best we can within current resources. We are interested in ensuring that there is no duplication of effort and that our activities are complementary. We will consult with LFO if we perceive any conflicts.
- Inspired by [No One Is Illegal](#) (NOII) in Toronto, [Hamilton Sanctuary City Coalition](#), and Hamilton CLC's presentation about Sanctuary Cities at the 2014 OPICCO Conference, Connecting Ottawa convened a meeting to determine the level of interest in Ottawa becoming a Sanctuary City. A diverse group of organizations and individuals have come together to explore options for a coalition. During this early stage we have assisted with logistics only and do not anticipate taking a leadership role in the coalition. Our Advisory Group is very clear that the Connecting Ottawa project cannot be engaged in community advocacy and our role will remain limited to sharing information.
- Our Advisory Group has recommended that we submit a funding proposal to LFO to extend the project into a fourth year (2015-16). We see this as an opportunity to
 - continue with consultation support to our network partners
 - address the growing interest and demand for PLE,
 - implement tools to enable trusted intermediaries to identify legal issues with confidence, and
 - train selected facilitators to initiate outreach activities to focus population communities.

We expect to submit our recommendations for consideration before the end of September 2014.

Here is a report of our progress so far. We thank the Law Foundation for its continued encouragement, interest and support.

ACTIVITY REPORTS

➤ CENTRALIZED HUB FOR INFORMATION, ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL

OUR CHALLENGE

To ensure that the first point of service for our focus populations becomes a “trusted intermediary” that *always* has the capacity to communicate with the client, assess the problem presented, provide comprehensive information about all facets of the problem presented, and take immediate steps to refer and connect the client to legal and other services that will resolve the problem.

OUR INTENT

- To support and promote *211 Eastern Ontario* (delivered by a partner, the Community Information Centre of Ottawa - CICO) as a centralized hub for information, assessment and referral (IAR) services for all partners
- To reach out to our partners to build awareness of *211* as not just another IAR resource but as the *default* source of information and referral services for issues that have a legal component
- To augment the already very comprehensive *211* database as necessary, to be assured that *all* local legal services have been described using the *211* taxonomy.

PROGRESS

The Community Information Centre of Ottawa continues to be an important resource and valued partner during project implementation. Connecting Ottawa has

- Continued to promote *211 Eastern Ontario* as the default IAR resource in all project communications, materials and activities, as well as through our use of social media.
- Regularly tested the capabilities of CICO’s IAR professionals to assess and refer persons who contact them with an issue that could be addressed by a legal service.
- Continued a training program for CICO staff to strengthen capabilities regarding legal services information, assessment and referral. We provided one training session to two groups of staff during this reporting period.
- Maintained a feed of the CICO database to the Connecting Ottawa/*Connexion Ottawa* web sites.
- Extended the reach of the [CICO Community Bulletin](#) by posting events on the Connecting Ottawa/*Connexion Ottawa* web sites.

To the end of May 2014 there were 360 calls to the Community Information Centre of Ottawa/211 Eastern Ontario related to legal issues: topics included non-urgent police services, access to Legal Aid clinics, legal advice, law

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information, questions related to family law and mediation services, court issues, probation issues, human rights, detention issues, and advocacy. There appears to have been no significant change in the rate of call traffic related to legal issues/services, 2012 to date.

<i>Issue</i>	2012	2013	2014 (to 31/05)
Non Urgent Police Services	203	210	82
Legal Advice	136	140	59
Legal Aid Clinics	98	101	58
Law Information	120	121	61
Family Law	40	40	30
Mediation Services	4	4	3
Court issues	110	112	43
Probation & Parole issues	14	14	15
Human Rights	12	12	2
Detention Issues	15	15	7
TOTAL	752	769	360

We are working closely with the Community Information Centre of Ottawa to develop a customized data template that would enable us to collect information about each call that was identified as having a legal issue or a referral to a legal service. This will enable us to track agency and (anonymized) caller information; language and communication barriers; access to interpretation services; the legal issues (using the same *YourLegalRights* taxonomy that is used in in our websites); requirements for accompaniment, accommodation or other facilitation; eligibility for services; source and level of income; need for follow up; etc. We expect to have CICO agents trained in the use of the template and collecting the information on our behalf by the end of September 2014.

➤ DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A WEB SITE

OUR CHALLENGE

There are excellent public legal education and information (PLEI) resources available, especially given the leadership of Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) and their web site initiative, [Your Legal Rights](#). However, the fact remains that navigation of the legal system remains challenging for many front-line service providers in Ottawa.

OUR INTENT

To supplement the on-line information available from *Your Legal Rights* and the Community Information Centre of Ottawa (CICO) by developing a local web site resource that includes comprehensive and current information about local legal services, and by sharing information about the Connecting Ottawa project and the ways in which it can support project partners to ensure access to justice by our focus populations.

PROGRESS

We have established web sites in both English and French: the [English site](#) was launched on 9 January 2013 and the [French site](#) was launched on 19 February 2013. The domains are registered until September 2015.

During this period we have implemented a number of improvements to the site:

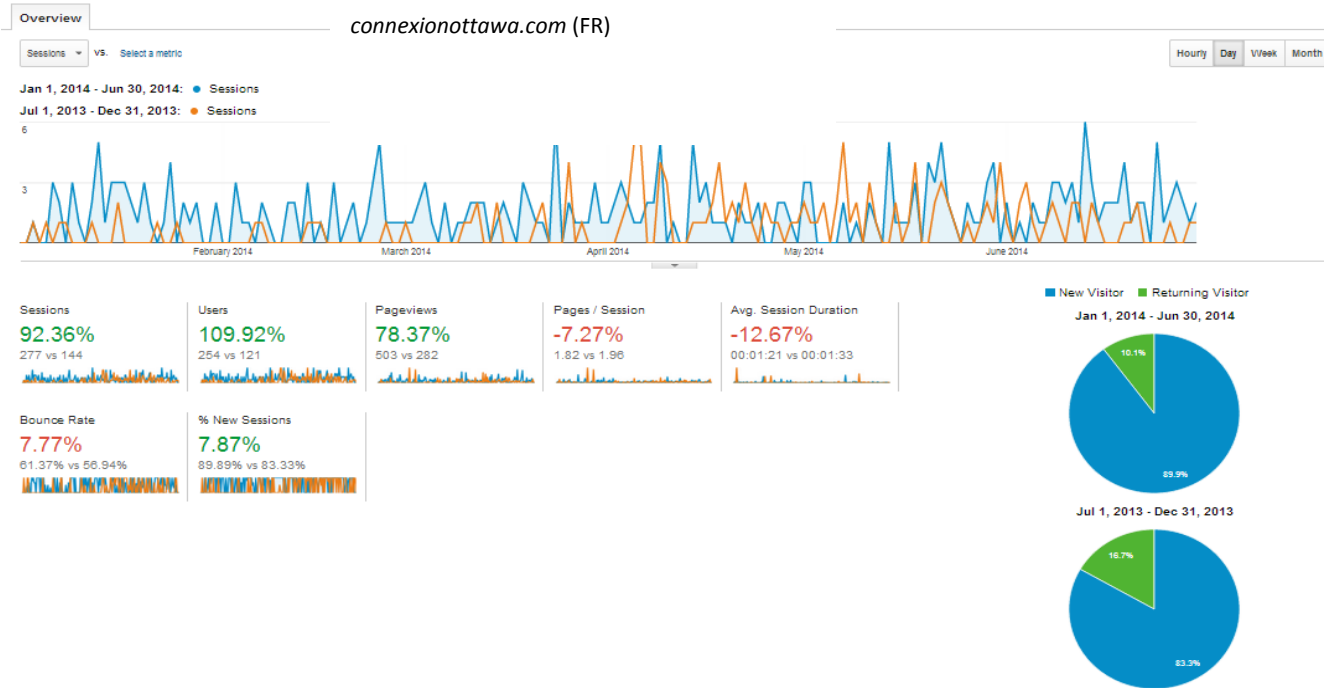
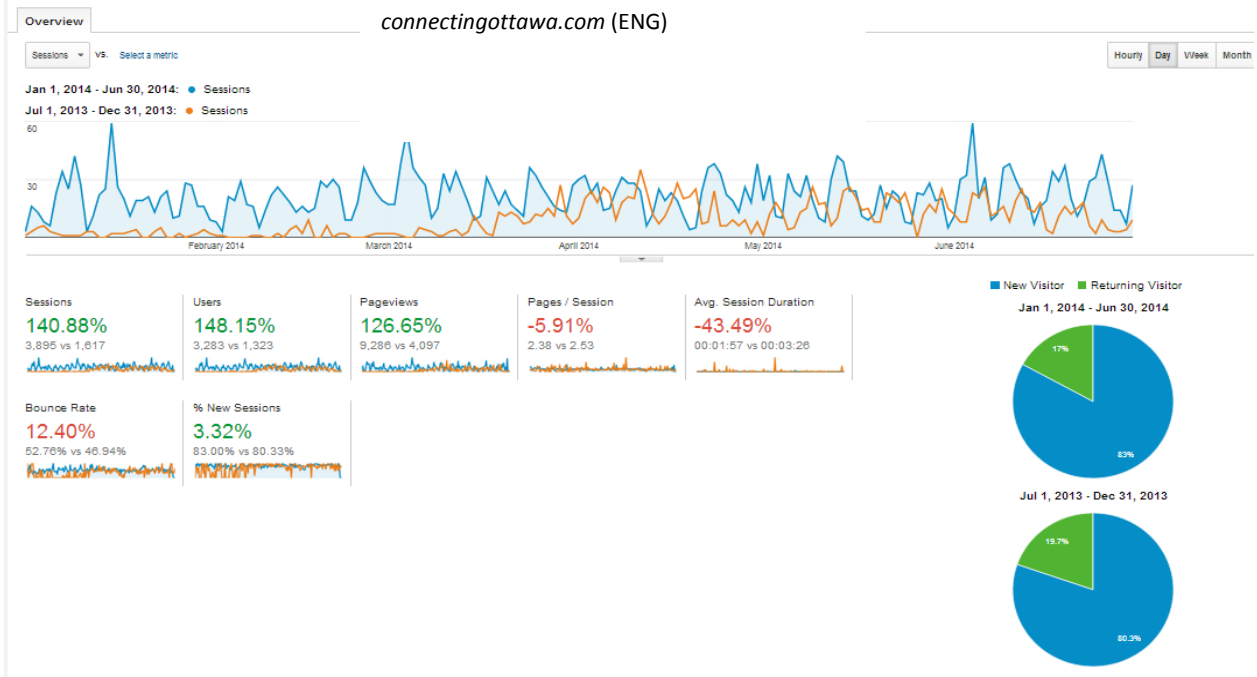
- Security updates
- Changing the menu for the "About Us" tab; creating a menu for a new "Resources" tab
- Adding an "Events" calendar to share information about workshops, public legal education sessions, conferences and other learning opportunities of interest to our partners
- Updating and expanding content to "Services", "Links"
- Making it easier for users to "contact us"
- Added Twitter plug-in to display real-time social media messages
- Embedding the News feed from [Your Legal Rights](#)
- Removal of RSS link
- Removal of Disqus dialogue

We are still working on:

- Embedding a brief video tutorial about how to use the site
- Adding resource documents for download and reference, using a taxonomy complementary to "legal topics/subtopics"
 - Accessing Justice in Ottawa
 - Mental Health Resource List for Refugees and Refugee Claimants in Ottawa
 - Communication Accessibility Resource List
- Integrating client scenarios from our Legal Health Check List to better define legal issues/sub topics and referral services
- Adding video presentations of our keynotes from our 2014 Conference
- Evaluating how the site is being used, via an embedded user survey

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Google Analytics informs us that traffic to the sites has been modest but growing steadily. Comparison data (July-December 2013 vs. January-June 2014) is displayed in charts below. The topics that appear to have been of greatest interest are the Public Guardian/Trustee, youth diversion, eviction, partner abuse, and refugees/people without status.



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TOPICS

- Aboriginal Issues +
- Abuse and Family Violence +
- Consumer Law +
- Criminal Law +
- Education Law +
- Employment and Work +
- Environmental Law +
- Family Law +
- Health and Disability +
- Housing Law +
- Human Rights +
- Immigration and Refugee Law +
- Legal System +
- Social Assistance and Pensions +
- Wills and Estates +

Welcome to Connecting Ottawa

A site to find legal services in the Ottawa region.

1. Choose a topic on the menu to the left.
2. Choose a subtopic.
3. Read about relevant legal services and other information.
4. Link to legal information resources.

LEARN MORE ABOUT US.

[Français](#)

Feel free to contact us about access to legal services.

Connect with our lawyer (Natalie Drolet) at 613.402.9437 and our social worker (Erin Fitzpatrick) at 613.402.9376.

Connecting Ottawa is collocated with la Clinique juridique francophone de l'Est d'Ottawa at Vanier Community Service Centre, 290 Dupuis Street, Ottawa ON K1L 1A2.

Tweets

Connecting Ottawa @connectottawa 29 Jul
Thanks for support: @Muslim_link @LegalAidOntario @LSHCT @LAO_Mallin @LAO_Kjustesen @PASCUNB @ParalegScope @HeatherBadenock @PLEIS_NB

Connecting Ottawa @connectottawa 29 Jul
Thanks to @cleonet our website now embeds @legalsightsON news, resources & "common questions" feeds. goo.gl/ul7nic #a2j

Connecting Ottawa @connectottawa 29 Jul
Got anything to add to the upcoming events calendar on Connecting Ottawa's website? goo.gl/GYWHB5

Connecting Ottawa @connectottawa 29 Jul
#OntBudget includes big investment over a number of years in both legal aid certificates & community legal clinics. goo.gl/teeCtN

OCASI @OCASI_Policy 24 Jul
Long detentions of immigrants in Canada questioned by

Upcoming Events

Speed Recruiting Night - Ottawa Police Services
Date/Time: August 19, 2014
Location: Ottawa Police Association, 141 Catherine Street, Ottawa
View on Map

American Sign Language (ASL) Classes - Beginner Level
Date/Time: September 09, 2014 - November 11, 2014
Location: Canadian Hearing Society, 2197 Riverside Drive, Suite 600
View on Map

Access to Justice: Challenges and Future Directions
Date/Time: September 12, 2014
Location: Reach Canada, 400 Coventry Road (3rd floor), Ottawa
View on Map

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When compared to the previous period (1 July-31 December 2013), the number of users of the English web site has increased by 148%; the number of users on the French web site has increased by 110%. The volume of page views has also increased significantly - by 127% (English) and 78% (French) respectively. We are pleased to see that our bounce rate (which measures the volume of users who immediately leave the site) has dropped – by 12% (English) and 8% (French) respectively. 83% of traffic to the English site and 90% of traffic to the French site is comprised of new users.

Each of the sites contains links to the project’s presence on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Social media is another vehicle for the project to share news and information related to our focus populations, their access to services, and emerging legal issues, especially concerning immigration, poverty, and accessibility for persons with disabilities. Twitter and Facebook are both “broadcast” media and it has been difficult for us to assess our impact aside from crude measures related to “follows”, “retweets”, “likes”, etc. Although we have been active contributors to the Twitter feed, the only posts to Facebook have been generated from that feed.

Between 1 April 2013 and 30 June 2014, Connecting Ottawa posted 860 tweets that triggered 417 retweets that extended the reach of our message. 272 persons or organizations are now following us each day (up by 20% over the previous period); we are following 286 persons and organizations.

]

➤ DEVELOP A POOL OF FACILITATORS AS INFORMED AND TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES TO CONNECT CLIENTS

OUR CHALLENGE

For many clients – and particularly among our focus populations - a gap can exist between the point of referral and the point of legal services delivery; clients never actually connect with the services to which they have been referred. This gap can be bridged by trusted intermediaries who are volunteer facilitators trained and supported to problem solve with the client to systematically overcome the barriers to connection.

OUR INTENT

Although Connecting Ottawa originally planned to contract with [Catholic Centre for Immigrants](#) (CCI) to administer a program that would recruit, train, and pay honoraria to a pool of volunteer facilitators, it transpired that project staff have been directly receiving the referrals from partners and then matching facilitators with clients on the basis of gender, culture, languages spoken, and availability. Connecting Ottawa will implement a strategy to recruit, train, engage and retain volunteers who can be effective trusted intermediaries. CCI remains a committed and valuable partner.

PROGRESS

Connecting Ottawa has continued to promote opportunities for multilingual persons to volunteer their time and experience to facilitate access to needed services by our focus populations. Our initial recruitment campaign netted 36 expressions of interest: 22 women and 14 men, including 14 foreign-trained lawyers and 3 foreign-trained physicians. Our screening and orientation process includes interviews, information sessions, a positive Ottawa Police Service Record Check appropriate for volunteers working with vulnerable populations in community non-profit agencies, and completion of a full-day of training prior to assignment with a client. Our training offers a shared learning experience re: active listening, problem solving, cultural competencies, privacy and confidentiality, maintaining personal boundaries, roles and responsibilities, etc. However, the training days also create an opportunity for project staff to assess the capacities and capabilities of prospective facilitators in a dynamic setting. Successful volunteers are required to sign a Volunteer Agreement that describes the expected relationship between Facilitators and Connecting Ottawa. We have developed policies and procedures designed to appropriately manage risk associated with this activity; for example, related to the use personally owned vehicles to transport clients, and related to maintaining appropriate personal boundaries with clients.

It has been – and will continue to be – challenging to maintain a pool of motivated and engaged trusted intermediaries. By definition, our Facilitators are a highly diverse group, ethnically, culturally, linguistically and in terms of their “Canadian experience” in the work force. Many have chosen to volunteer as another step in the

process of finding meaningful paid employment where they can use their professional skills. We are always pleased to support the employment aspirations of our Facilitators and we celebrate with them when those aspirations are realized, even though it means that our volunteer pool is depleted. There are a number of Facilitators who have yet to receive their first assignment, either because their cultural and linguistic profile does not match the needs to the client, or because of their limited availability, or because there has been a drop in the number of referrals for Facilitator support.

For most of the time during this period we were understaffed following the loss of first our social worker (Marian Green, in January) and then the community worker we employed as a replacement (Roya Ghafari, in May). As a consequence there was insufficient staff time to allocate to the Facilitator program. There has been no new recruitment, orientation or training. Further, we have had no opportunity to implement the proposed role expansion for selected Facilitators; a strategy to include community outreach to raise awareness of legal issues. Now that we have returned to a full staffing complement we have the resources to reach out to all Facilitators on our roster to determine their continued availability and training requirements. We have continued to respond to referrals for facilitators to accompany clients to legal and non-legal service appointments and have also used CILAT-certified Facilitators as paid interpreters whenever appropriate.

Currently there are 19 facilitators documented as available for assignment, with the capacity to speak 22 languages. Another seven are inactive, of which two have yet to submit police reference check documentation. Five facilitators have withdrawn and one was terminated because of confidentiality and social boundary issues. Two are CILAT-certified interpreters (English, French, Spanish, Arabic). During this period two Facilitators received assignments. Since April 2013 nineteen clients have been assisted by our volunteer Facilitators.

➤ CONNECT LEGAL SERVICES AND SOCIAL SERVICES

OUR CHALLENGE

The challenge was set by Thomson and Kohl:

- Develop a multi-sectoral network of organizations with the potential to build sufficient capacity for legal services to work in closer cooperation with community health and social services, local agencies serving immigrants, and services for disabled persons with a view to ensuring a more integrated service response for clients from the our focus populations, and
- Build the capacity to advocate at a systemic level whenever the system itself has created barriers to accessible legal services.

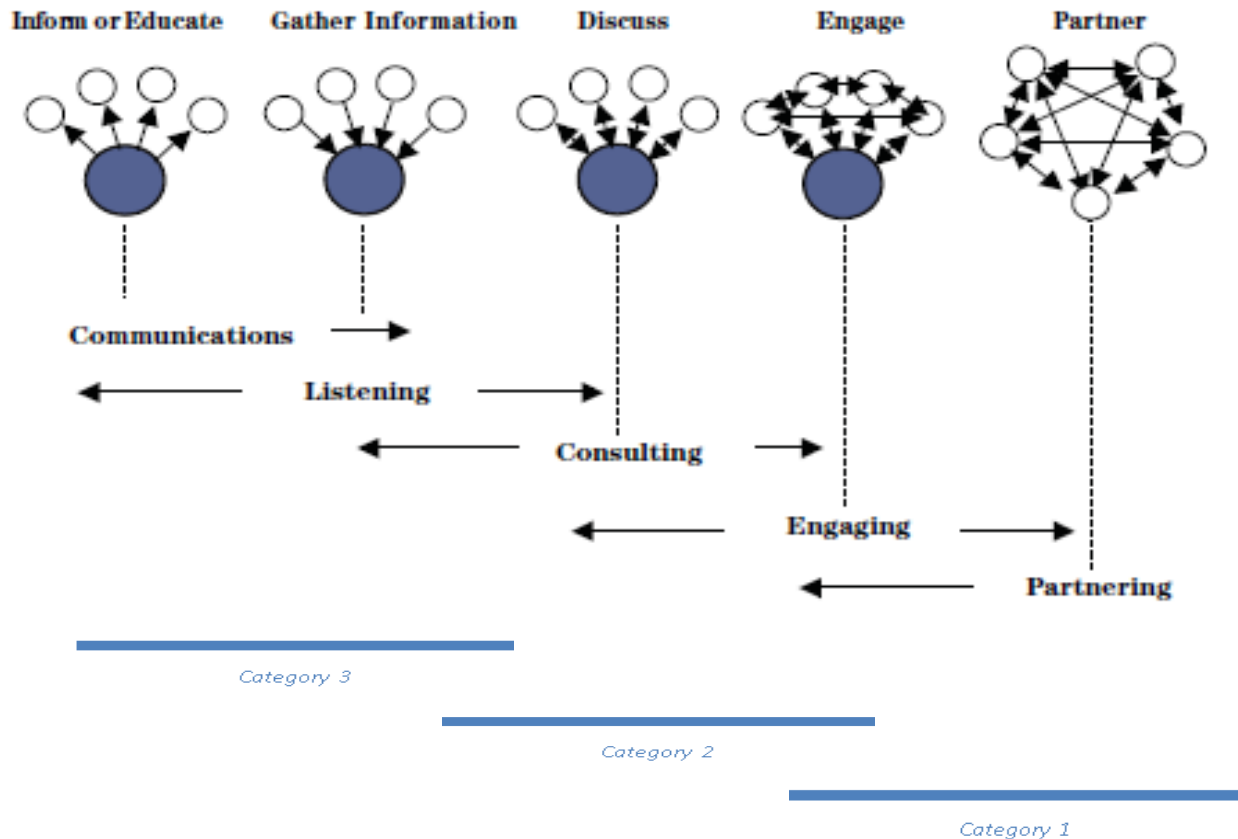
OUR INTENT

At an inaugural conference in Ottawa in January 2011, Connecting Ottawa developed a multi-sectoral network of local service organizations committed to finding new ways of working to ensure access to justice for our focus populations. They endorsed a plan that would add staff resources to the network: a social services worker and a legal services worker that would be available to advise and consult with front-line providers of information, assessment and referral services to people with issues that would benefit from legal services. Our original intent was not to relieve the overflow of demand for case management services, but to strengthen the existing capacity for competent case

PROGRESS

- The [network of partners](#) currently includes 44 organizations: 18 community service agencies, 10 agencies serving immigrants, 9 organizations providing legal services, 6 agencies serving people with disabilities, and 1 agency providing interpretation and translation services. The project also reaches out to additional organizations that could contribute to successful outcomes and liaises with other networks and coalitions (including Local Agencies Serving Immigrants [LASI], the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership [OLIP], and the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres).

We have recognized that organizations engage differently with the project; partners participate according to their capacity and resources. To better manage our relationship with the network we have categorized the partners according to the quality and extent of their engagement (Levels 1-3). Organizations in Category 1 are integral to the success of the project; they are fully engaged in decision making processes and contribute time and resources. Organizations in Category 2 communicate regularly with the project, frequently consult concerning clients, and share their perspectives about our focus and direction. Organizations in Category 3 have expressed an interest in our activities and wish to be kept informed about



access to justice issues and opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration. All organizations (44) will receive our communications (information, newsletters, events calendar, etc.), have access to the web site, and be invited to our annual conference and other learning opportunities. During the next year we will reach out to the 24 organizations in Category 2 and the 6 organizations in Category 1 to assess how our legal issue awareness and system navigation tools can be improved, determine the training priorities for trusted intermediaries within the organization, and consult about access to justice for our focus populations. In addition, we will ensure that our partnership agreements with Category 1 organizations are reviewed and our working relationships remain productive.

- Further to the Partnership Agreement that was renewed in September 2013, office accommodations and human resources services continue to be provided by [Centre de services communautaires de Vanier](#), a Community Resource Centre that is already home to la [Clinique juridique francophone de l'Est d'Ottawa](#). CSC Vanier is the “employer of record” for project staff, manages payroll and benefits administration, provides the security of mature personnel policies and other human resources infrastructure, and provides office accommodations.
- Connecting Ottawa has engaged the following staff under contract: Natalie Drolet MA, LLB and Erin Fitzpatrick MSW, LLB, RSW. They are both bilingual in English and French. Roya Ghafari BScN remains under contract but is on extended sick leave. David Hole MSW is an independent consultant under contract to provide project management services.

During this period we

- Reached out to our partners to
 - Raise awareness and promote use of project services.
 - Discuss ways in which the project can build local capacity for case management for clients from our focus populations
 - Share best practices when responding to issues raised by these populations
 - Understand partners' history and experience when referring to legal services
 - Explore ways that the project can improve this experience
 - Explore PLE and shared training opportunities
 - Determine the most effective ways to maintain productive liaison with partners and other stakeholders.
- Provided interim case consultation and advice to network partners. Staff primarily responds to requests for service but our lawyer and our social worker are now regularly collocated with partner organizations with consultation hours weekly for one half-day at [Catholic Centre for Immigrants](#) and one half-day at Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization ([OCISO](#)).

Partner organizations consult with us about hard-to-serve clients; we provide information and advice and/or agree to provide casework services on an interim basis, that is we assess the legal issues and communication challenges, connect the client with needed services, and identify an ongoing case manager before terminating our involvement. The daily workload is increasingly consumed by these casework activities. Nevertheless, we understand that consultation and advice alone is insufficient support for overburdened front-line service providers who are often poorly prepared to respond to the additional demands of clients who have difficulties communicating their issues. Entering Year 3, we are exploring alternative strategies to resource service providers, including the assignment of students and Facilitators to provide regular access hours at the organizations that most frequently seek our consultation and case advocacy expertise.

Not all this activity is logged by us as a “case”; in many instances we are consulted without clients being identified, or our consultation was relatively brief and did not require opening a file per se. Regardless, we track all activities: there were 129 cases opened during this activity period, 19% more than during the previous six month period and 207% more than the same period in Year 1. A total of 278 clients and their families have benefited (directly or indirectly) from interventions by Connecting Ottawa to date. The value of collaborative practice and a holistic response has been demonstrated by the 37 cases (to date) that required a shared response from both the lawyer and the social worker. In 13 cases (to date) Connecting Ottawa included the services of an interpreter, and in 19 cases (to date) a Facilitator was assigned.

The cases presented a full range of legal issues: Immigration, family law, child protection, employment, poverty (CPP, ODSP, etc.), criminal law, civil law, housing, tax law, and affidavits/notary services. The predominant social issues related to poverty and access to social benefits, employment, housing, access to health care, gendered violence, mental health, family and marital issues, and disability.

See Appendix 2 for a [case study](#) for an example of services delivered.

CASELOAD ANALYSIS							
	# Cases: Jan-June 2013	# Cases: July-Dec 2013	# Cases: Jan-June 2014	# Cases: Total	# Orgs Referring	YTD: # Interpretn Arranged	YTD: # Facilitators Assigned
Social Worker	14	28	12	54	5	2	10
Lawyer	20	67	103	190	13	10	5
Shared	8	13	13	34	5	1	4
TOTAL	42	108	129	278	19	13	19

- Added four students to the project from the Faculty of Law at Ottawa University (352 hours placement). Sadia Chowdhury and Dawood Nasir joined us between February 1 and April 30, 2014. Each student allocated ⅔ of their placement experience to consultation support to clients and service providers within the Connecting Ottawa network. For the remaining ⅓ of their time the students collaborated on an independent research project related to an access to justice issue; an exploration of the intersection of community legal services and social services and the ways in which collaborative practice can facilitate access to justice. The internships proved to be excellent learning opportunities.

“...With Access to Justice becoming an important area of concentration within the legal community, alternative lawyering establishments such as Connecting Ottawa are going to become increasingly important and necessary to furthering the goal of a more easily accessible and navigable legal system. . The “alternative lawyering” methods and practices used by my supervisor provided me with incredible insight into various creative solutions available to advance access to justice initiatives, and I feel the increased knowledge I have regarding access to justice issues will serve as highly beneficial to my future legal endeavours. I feel it is important for my peers and other future legal professionals to gain exposure to initiatives such as this one, in order to gain insight into areas of the legal system which are in need of reform, and also, in order to gain an understanding of “alternative lawyering” models and practices...” (S. Chowdhury)

“...Connecting Ottawa re-imagines the solution to legal problems. Collaboration between legal and non-legal service providers is at the centre of all of the work that the organization undertakes. Building effective and long-lasting solutions to access to justice problems is about fostering connections in the community and building a fluid network of people and organizations which guide people through their legal dilemmas.” (D. Nasir ⁶)

Cemone Morlese and Amelia Calbry-Muzyka joined us on 2 June and will be on placement until 5 August 2014. In addition, we are currently exploring the possibility of accepting students on placement from Pro Bono Law.

⁶ This is an extract from an [article written by Dawood Nasir](#) in which he reflects upon his placement experience with Connecting Ottawa. The full article is attached as Appendix 5.

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There were no social work students on placement with the project during this period, primarily because of our precarious staffing at the beginning of the Spring semester and concerns that we would be unable to provide a high quality learning experience with an experienced student supervisor. We have updated our application to receive students from Carleton University School of Social Work in the Fall semester.

- Drafted a tool to assist trusted intermediaries and service providers to more readily identify the complex, and often interconnected, non-legal barriers facing clients: a Legal Health Check Up. Our draft is derived in part from the assessment tool discussions at the CHI-COP (Collaborative-Holistic-Integrated Community of Practice) working group that incorporates a holistic and integrated approach to client intake, assessment, and referral to legal services. We have critically reviewed “legal health” tools developed by CALC (Belleville) and by Halton CLS and created a list of statements that correspond with the *YourLegalRights.on.ca* taxonomy. The draft tool has already been critiqued by a focus group of trusted intermediaries and service providers and we will invite review from community legal services before deciding how to best package and implement the tool. We anticipate that the statements will be integrated with our web site as one implementation strategy. We will also develop a training and orientation module for our partners.
- Participated in learning opportunities, workshops and conferences:
 - Webinar: Better Legal Information: The How-to of Plain Language
 - Workshop: Refugee Law
 - Ottawa Immigration Conference
 - Webinar: Facilitating Claims for the Huronia, Rideau and Southwestern Class Action Settlements
 - Conference: Ontario Project for Inter-Clinic Community Organizing (OPICCO)
 - Conference: Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers (CARL)
 - Eastern Region Spring Training for Community Legal Clinics
 - Workshop: Collective Impact and Results-Based Management
 - Seminar: Connecting Communities
- Made presentations and collaborated with other groups on complementary initiatives:
 - Round Table Discussion with UNHCR High Commissioner (Catholic Centre for Immigrants)
 - Round Table Discussion on Disability and the Settlement Sector (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants)
 - Continued contributions to the work of CHI-COP (Collaborative-Holistic-Integrated Community of Practice) – CLEO
 - Continued contributions to the work of the Connecting Communities Advisory Committee
 - Collaboration with ARCH to provide logistical support for a series of workshops in Ottawa for the claims process for former residents of the Huronia, Rideau and Southwestern Regional Centres
 - Collaboration with the Community Leadership Network for Families to develop a train the trainer framework.

➤ SUBSIDIZE COSTS OF CONNECTING CLIENTS WITH LEGAL SERVICES

OUR CHALLENGE

Because our focus populations are invariably living with incomes below the poverty level (LICO), their access to justice is limited not only by their relative inability to communicate their issues and navigate the legal service system, but also by the costs of actually accessing affordable legal services and translation/interpretation services, and even public transit fares and child care.

OUR INTENT

To advocate for measures that will ensure the affordability of legal services for all persons accessing justice, and to manage a modest fund that could purchase interpretation and translation services that are not eligible for LAO subsidy; sign language interpretation, assisted and augmentative communication services for people with disabilities, and language translation and interpretation services for allophones that are just beginning their navigation of the system (often via contact with a community health or social service partner organization)

PROGRESS

There has been little activity related to this, and given that access to the project fund is intended as an option of “last resort” this has probably been a good thing. During this period the only expenses related to the purchase of bus tickets to facilitate client transit to appointments.

At the outset, Connecting Ottawa had identified the need for skilled interpretation and translation as potentially a significant barrier to accessing justice. However, immediately prior to Year 1 of the project LAO announced the availability of funding to community legal clinics to purchase interpretation services. This has greatly assisted allophones to access the legal services they require and reduced the anticipated demand for the kinds of subsidies that we were prepared to make available. The exceptions remain the Family Law Information Centre (FLIC), LAO Duty Counsel, and services provided by Pro Bono Law, where clients continue to experience barriers because of an inability to speak one of the Official Languages. In addition, the majority of non-legal services have extremely limited budgets (if any) to allocate to interpretation for clients. Most commonly, clients are asked to bring a family member or friend to provide interpretation at the cost of confidentiality and privacy concerns.

In our approach we will continue to try to strike a balance between encouraging trusted intermediaries to ensure that clients have access to interpretation provided by CILAT-certified interpreters when necessary without opening the flood-gates to a demand for interpretation subsidies that could be beyond our budget. Meanwhile, we encourage LFO to work with LAO to make interpretation services more readily available to FLIC and Duty Counsel.

We have successfully negotiated the services of a network partner, [Community Interpretation Services for Our Community](#) (CISOC) at a preferred rate that is considerably reduced from their established rate (almost \$70/hr). Further, we have arranged to purchase interpretation services directly from three of our Facilitators who are CILAT-

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certified. Finally, we have strengthened our connection with our network partners that provide services to persons with disabilities; we now have an increased awareness of the high costs of interpreters, interveners and other augmentative communication services required by this population and have budgeted accordingly.

➤ COORDINATE ALL ACTIVITIES, MANAGE PROGRAMS, EVALUATE OUTCOMES

OUR CHALLENGE

To manage a project that will move from being “a good idea” to being a demonstration of “good practice” and excellent outcomes.

OUR INTENT

Our purpose is to strengthen the capacity of network partners without creating another organization, by resourcing and coordinating activities, evaluating performance and outcomes, ensuring that all partners understand their contribution and role over time, and communicating regularly and effectively with our network partners and other stakeholders.

PROGRESS

The project coordinator provides progress reports at every meeting of the Advisory Group, consults with project staff weekly, approves all project expenditures, works with the bookkeeper (at South Ottawa CLS) to ensure the project’s financial health, and is always available for consultation about the many and varied issues that emerge with almost frightening regularity.

- During this reporting period, the Advisory Group met on 20 March 2014 and again on 14 June 2014 (at which the contents of this Activity Report were received). It will meet again on 18 September 2014. The current membership of the Advisory Group is as follows:

NAME	SECTOR	ORGANIZATION
Daniel Gagnon	Legal Services	CLS Ottawa Centre
Christine Sharp	Community Services	CIC / 211
Tim Simboli	Community Services	CMHA (Ottawa)
St-Phard Désir	Immigrant Services	CÉSOC
Michel David	Services to Persons with Disabilities	Canadian Hearing Society
Cindi Rye	Community Services	Pinecrest-Queensway CHC
Mohamoud Hagi-Aden	Community Services	South-East Ottawa CHC
Gary Stein [CHAIR]	Legal Services	South Ottawa CLS
Sarah Caspi	Immigrant Services	Jewish Family Services
Maria-Teresa Garcia	Immigrant Services	Catholic Centre for Immigrants
STAFF		
Natalie Drolet	[Lawyer]	Connecting Ottawa
Erin Fitzpatrick	[Social Worker]	Connecting Ottawa
David Hole	[Secretariat]	Connecting Ottawa

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- Work has continued to develop and improve administrative systems required (role descriptions, program descriptions, eligibility requirements, work flow, invoicing and payments, records management and administration), and to provide the logistical and administrative support services necessary to build the overall capacity of the network.
- All partners have signed a Partnership Agreement that is valid until 1 October 2015. (Although LFO funding is currently scheduled only until 30 June 2015, we have anticipated the need for a sustainability plan beyond this date, if some activities can continue.)

➤ SHARE LESSONS LEARNED

OUR CHALLENGE

To share our experience – good and not so good - with peers and colleagues so that the system of legal services is strengthened and is more readily accessed by our focus populations.

OUR INTENT

We will not only host an annual conference for network partners and interested stakeholders but also to seek out conferences, symposia and other opportunities to make presentations, participate on panels, offer workshops, and poster lessons learned to audiences of our peers and colleagues in community services, especially legal services. In addition, to further develop and inform our network of partners, the project will produce and electronically distribute a newsletter (the *Communiqué*) periodically.

PROGRESS

- We hosted our 3rd Annual Conference on 5 March 2014 at Centre Richelieu-Vanier in Ottawa, with 64 participants registered and 67 attending. In response to feedback obtained during our evaluation of the 2013 Conference we scheduled only a half-day program; participants networked during lunch and the conference concluded thereafter. There was no fee to participate; feedback informed us that settlement services have a very limited budget for professional development of service providers and time allocated to training is similarly limited, so we aimed to remove as many barriers to participation as possible. The event was fully accessible to persons with disabilities; although CART service proved not to be available to us after all, we contracted two ASL interpreters to be present. Although most of the content was presented in English, we ensured that there were opportunities for Francophones to participate in their preferred language. Conference expenses were kept well under budget thanks to our collaboration with University of Ottawa Law School to present a colloquium on access to justice issues on the evening before the conference. Because our keynote speakers agreed to participate in a panel presentation at this event, the university absorbed their travel and related expenses.

Our purpose was to:

- Explore the roles and responsibilities of “trusted intermediaries”;
- Discuss access to justice as a determinant of community health and well-being;
- Provide opportunities to reconnect and be accountable to partners.

The program was divided into two plenary sessions:

- A panel presentation on *The Role of a Trusted Intermediaries* shared by Dierdre McDade (lawyer at CALC Belleville and the Acting Executive Director during Michelle Learning's

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sabbatical) and Ab Currie (Lead Researcher, Canadian Forum on Civil Justice), followed by a panel of three trusted intermediaries who spoke about their experience in the role (Lois McIntyre from the Canadian Hearing Society, Maria-Teresa Garcia from Catholic Centre for Immigrants, and a Connecting Ottawa Facilitator).⁷

- A panel presentation shared by Patricia Hughes (Executive Director, Law Commission of Ontario), John Sims (Chair of the Canadian Bar Association's Access To Justice Committee that recently released the "Reaching Equal Justice Report"), and David Wiseman (Professor at the Law School, University of Ottawa, a member of the *Cost of Justice* project and Director of the *Refugee Assistance Project* funded by LFO). They spoke as an expert panel on the prevailing conversations about changes to the justice system, including increased collaboration between legal services and non-legal services to respond holistically to legal issues. Their panel was followed by a facilitated "table talk" among participants to explore the current barriers to proposed collaborative approaches.⁸

Participants rated their satisfaction with the conference as high:

- 100% said we met their expectations;
- 93% rated the meeting room and accommodations very good-excellent;
- 89% and 82% rated very good-excellent the Currie/McDade and Wiseman/Sims/Hughes panels respectively.

We also took the opportunity to rate the usefulness of the website:

- 78% of participants had visited the site;
- 74% found the site useful.

There was somewhat less satisfaction with the opportunities for participation:

- Only 57% rated this very good-excellent.

A small group discussion followed the second panel presentation; participants were asked, "How can lawyers work more collaboratively with others in the community and who can be part of the solution?"

Here are the recommendations:

- Improve 2-way communication between service providers/trusted intermediaries and lawyers;
- Strengthen capacity of legal clinics for community outreach;
- Develop a roster of lawyers that can regularly meet with service providers;
- Make all interventions client-centered;
- Make all interventions solution-focused and holistic (multidisciplinary multiservice responses);
- Support clients to bring trusted intermediaries with them to legal services;
- Collocate lawyers with non-legal services;
- Improve accessibility of legal services;
- Help clients to understand legal documents and processes;
- Train non-legal workers re: legal issues and the law; and legal workers re: cultural, language and literacy barriers and available community resources;

⁷ Videos of the presentations are available here: [Dierdre McDade](#), [Ab Currie](#)

⁸ Videos of the presentations are available here: [Patricia Hughes](#), [John Sims](#), [David Wiseman](#)

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- Incorporate legal education into social work programs and educate lawyers about diversity and anti-oppression;
 - Service providers should shoulder the cost burden of accommodations for persons with disabilities, not the client (e.g. lack of interpretation at FLIC)
 - Simplify legal language;
 - Shift the conversation about costs: if it is expensive to do it right, consider the costs of *not* doing it right.
-
- Connecting Ottawa produces and distributes a newsletter (*Communique*) for our partners and project stakeholders/contacts. The following issues can be downloaded: [January 2014](#) and [February 2014](#). All issues are available via the [Connecting Ottawa website](#).

 - Connecting Ottawa has produced and distributed promotional materials to our partners and other referral sources: rack cards, posters, and sticky notes.

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FINANCIAL
REPORT

[YEAR END 2013-14]

CONNECTING OTTAWA		2520	
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2014			
	Budget	Actuals	
	(12 Months)	(12 Months)	
REVENUE			
2.0 Law Foundation of Ontario			
414 Received During Year	271,008	242,143.20	
414 From Deferred Revenue (Prior Year's Surplus)		34,594.76	
414 To Deferred Revenue (Current Year's Surplus)		-	
	271,008	276,737.96	
EXPENSES			
3.1 Promotion 211/Training			
540 Equipment		-	
545 Materials and Supplies	500	-	
615 Travel	600	-	
555 Training/Professional Development	1,000	-	
	2,100	-	
3.2 Website Hosting, Management and Administration			
535 Database Development		-	
565 Translation	200	-	
585 Staffing Costs		150.75	
625 Website Hosting, Management and Administration	6,000	10,015.23	
	6,200	10,165.98	
3.3 Facilitators to Connect Clients and Legal Services			
545 Materials and Supplies		-	
550 Meeting Costs		25.33	
590 Training	900	287.66	
620 Volunteer (IPL) Honoraria	2,700	325.00	
615 Travel	1,000	45.00	
510 Administration		-	
	4,600	682.99	
3.4 Legal Worker/Social Worker Connection			
515 Allocated Administration	10,000	10,000.00	
520 Annual Conference		200.00	
530 Cloud/Mobile Services	2,000	1,964.19	
540 Equipment Purchases	1,500	902.90	
545 Materials and Supplies	1,200	2,006.14	
550 Meeting Costs	600	199.94	
555 Professional Development		-	
557 Professional Fees	1,500	-	
565 Salaries: Legal Worker	64,500	63,600.03	
566 Salaries: Social Worker	61,500	60,137.42	
580 Employee Benefits	24,600	18,960.47	
585 Staffing Costs		267.13	
590 Training/Professional Development	2,500	2,416.88	
595 Translation/Interpretation	2,000	-	
615 Travel	5,000	3,463.76	
699 Sundry		-	
	176,900	164,118.86	
3.5 Overcoming Barriers to Accessibility			
545 Materials and Supplies		-	
595 Translation/Interpretation	6,000	1,134.77	
615 Travel		36.00	
610 Transportation/Child Care, Etc	1,000	12.00	
	7,000	1,182.77	
3.6 Secretariat			
545 Materials and Supplies		306.22	
550 Meeting Costs	250	271.24	
560 Purchased Services	50,000	46,773.00	
590 Training/Professional Development		-	
595 Translation/Interpretation		-	
615 Travel	1,000	232.17	
	51,250	47,582.63	
3.7 Shared Lessons Learned			
520 Annual Conference	4,000	1,442.63	
550 Conferences, etc	1,500	-	
560 Purchased Services		200.00	
615 Travel	2,500	-	
	8,000	1,642.63	
3.8 Administration			
542 Lead Agency Stipend	5,000.00	5,000.00	
527 Bookkeeping	1,000.00	1,039.40	
525 Bank Charges	50.00	69.00	
522 Auditing	800.00	800.00	
699 Sundry		126.81	
799 Contingency	8,108.00	-	
	14,958	7,035.21	
		271,008.00	232,411.07
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES (EXPENSES OVER REVENUE)		0.00	44,326.89

NOTES

- At the end of Year 2, all expenses were within budget with the exception of *Website Hosting, Management and Administration* where we contracted with Agentica Digital Media to add a number of new features to our web sites.
- The Excess of Revenues over Expenses will support needed cash flow until August 31st 2014 at which point the project will urgently require further financial contribution from LFO. (See our Financial Position, below.)

CONNECTING OTTAWA	
FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT JUNE 30, 2014	
ASSETS	
110 Cash	67,149.19
115 Accounts Receivable	10.00
120 Due from General Fund	22.59
150 Prepaid Expenses	1,666.67
LIABILITIES	
120 Due to General Fund	-
210 Accounts Payable	(24,521.56)
330 Deferred Revenue	-
FUND BALANCE	<u>44,326.89</u>

PROPOSED BUDGET

[2014-15]

	1/07/2012- 30/06/2013	1/07/2013- 30/06/2014	1/07/2014- 30/06/2015
Promote 211/Training re: IAR			
Equipment	\$800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Materials/Supplies	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
Travel	\$1,200.00	\$600.00	\$0.00
Training/Prof Development	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
SubTotal	\$4,500.00	\$2,100.00	\$1,500.00
Website Hosting, Management, Administration			
Database Development	\$6,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Translation (Eng-Fr)	\$800.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
Website Hosting, Management & Administration	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$7,000.00
Subtotal	\$13,300.00	\$6,200.00	\$7,200.00
"Facilitators" to Connect Clients & Legal Services			
Training	\$300.00	\$900.00	\$900.00
Volunteer honoraria	\$1,500.00	\$2,700.00	\$2,700.00
Travel	\$225.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Subtotal	\$2,025.00	\$4,600.00	\$4,600.00
Legal Worker/Social Worker Connection			
Salaries: Lawyer	\$60,000.00	\$64,500.00	\$68,000.00
Salaries: Social Worker	\$65,000.00	\$61,500.00	\$63,000.00
Benefits (@ 20%)	\$25,000.00	\$24,600.00	\$22,600.00
Professional Fees/Liability Insurance	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$4,000.00
Equipment	\$3,000.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Materials/Supplies	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$2,000.00
Meeting Expenses	\$600.00	\$600.00	\$1,500.00
Cloud/Mobile Services	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Translation/Interpretation	\$4,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Travel	\$4,800.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Training/Prof Development	\$2,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Allocated Admin	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Subtotal	\$177,600.00	\$176,900.00	\$183,100.00
Overcoming Barriers to Accessibility			
Interpretation/Translation	\$2,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$2,000.00

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Transportation/Child Care, etc.	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Subtotal	\$3,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$3,000.00
Secretariat			
Purchased Services	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
Meeting Expenses	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$250.00
Travel	\$1,500.00	\$1,000.00	\$800.00
Training/Prof Development	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Subtotal	\$53,250.00	\$51,250.00	\$51,050.00
Share Lessons Learned			
Annual Conference	\$2,500.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
Travel	\$2,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Conferences, etc	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Subtotal	\$4,500.00	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
Administration			
Lead Agency Stipend	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Bookkeeping	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Bank Charges	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
Audit	\$0.00	\$800.00	\$800.00
Subtotal	\$0.00	\$7,300.00	\$7,300.00
SUBTOTAL	\$258,175.00	\$263,350.00	\$265,750.00
Contingency	\$12,833.00	\$8,108.00	\$4,700.00
FINAL TOTAL	\$271,008.00	\$271,458.00	\$271,450.00

NOTES

The total budget request for Year 3 of the project is essentially unchanged from the previous two years. However, there are some changes to the amounts allocated to particular activities:

- Promote 211: Our experience to date is that costs associated with training of 211 agents are minimal and no travel budget is required. We wish to purchase and distribute promotional materials to our partners in Year 3.
- Website Hosting, Management and Administration: We plan additional functionality for our web sites in Year 3 and have budgeted accordingly.
- Legal Worker/Social Worker Connection: We have budgeted for a modest increase to salaries and for additional costs for professional fees and liability insurance. We anticipate lower equipment costs but higher expenses for materials/supplies and meeting costs.
- Overcoming Barriers to Accessibility: Our experience to date indicates that we can safely reduce out interpretation budget.

APPENDIX 1

THE LOGIC MODEL

Connecting Ottawa will demonstrate ways and means that networks of organizations can better support the focus populations to access justice. Our plan requires a clarity of purpose and a clear articulation of the resources available, the assumptions upon which we propose to act, and why we believe that our proposed activities will achieve the desired outcomes. Our logic model is a versatile tool that can support project development, implementation, and evaluation. When combined with a detailed work plan, we have a roadmap for our program, highlighting how it is expected to work, what activities need to come before others, and how desired outcomes can be achieved. It provides a framework that will enable us to reflect upon the impact of our activities and reassess our direction and process.

Many of our activities are innovative; they are based on assumptions and a theory of change that will be tested as the project unfolds over time. As we learn from our experience and share what we have learned with others that may be interested in doing what we have done, we need a model that articulates the plan and can inform future changes to the plan that will improve outcomes.

The logic model that follows has value and relevance for our ...

- Planning - It helps us to think through program strategy and helps clarify where we are and where we want to be;
- Management – It connects the dots between resources, activities, and outcomes to serve as a foundation for creating budgets and work plans and managing results;
- Communication – It shows our partners how activities link to what we want to achieve;
- Consensus Building – It builds common understanding and promotes buy-in by the full network of partners;
- Resource Development – It demonstrates to funders that we have purposefully identified what the CR/O project will do, what it hopes to achieve, and what resources it will need to succeed.
-

An effective demonstration will depend on our evaluation strategy – which begins with this logic model. Further refinement of the model will define outcomes in measureable terms. Our experience to date suggests that there is little by way of “baseline data” against which we can measure the impact of our activities. Accordingly, we will devise an evaluation strategy that will include process measures (number of events associated with an activity, number of clients and trusted intermediaries impacted, etc.), qualitative data collected from clients and front-line staff (anecdotal evidence of impact, collected via surveys and interviews), and case studies. The evaluation plan will be completed by month 6 of Phase 2 implementation.

CONNECTING REGION/OTTAWA Logic Model

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Build capacity within Ottawa's community health and social services sectors to identify legal issues and provide basic legal information and timely referral to legal services for our focus populations; persons who speak neither English nor French and for persons who have a significant communication difficulty as the result of a sensory impairment or a speech or language disorder.

PROGRAM GOALS

1. Provide information that will help the focus populations (and those who act as trusted intermediaries) understand their legal rights, and provide information about the legal services available to help them to exercise those rights.
2. Ensure that "every door is the right door" to legal services by training and supporting assessment/information/referral (AIR) professionals and other front-line service providers to identify when a client from the focus populations requires a legal service and then to connect the client to the appropriate legal service.
3. Ensure that the focus populations have timely and appropriate access to interpretation and translation services and/or augmentative communication devices and services by systematically removing barriers to access.
4. Support legal services organizations to provide services to the focus populations within a framework that acknowledges issue complexity.
5. Demonstrate a collaborative model that is cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary and effective; evaluate; share lessons learned with interested others in Canada.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

- Network of Ottawa community health/social/legal services organizations - 35 partnership agreements.
- Designation as a "Connecting Region" by Law Foundation (Access to Justice Fund). Funding required for plan implementation/sustainability.
- Interim funding support for project coordination & website development (LAO Poverty Law Client Services Coordination Fund).

RATIONALE - Theory of Change	ASSUMPTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus populations are unaware that complex issues may have a legal component that would benefit from a legal service. • Access to interpretation/translation services will enable their communication re: these issues. • Trusted intermediaries can facilitate communication & assist with system navigation when appropriately resourced. • System change is possible when motivated organizations share resources and collaborate using a client-centred approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trusted intermediaries (incl. agency staff) need access to information & resources to assist successful navigation of legal system to justice by focus populations . • Even if focus populations know how to access the desired legal service there are often affordability, language/communication and related accessibility barriers to overcome. • Community health/social/legal service agencies are committed to change processes to improve system navigation & service outcomes for diverse linguistic minority populations.

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ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES	INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES	LONG TERM OUTCOMES
[1] Promote 211 as coordinated hub for AIR services	211 is an effective IAR resource for legal services	Increased use of 211 by partners as default referral resource	211 recognized by partners as the centralized hub for referral services for focus populations	<p>A network of diverse community agencies collaborate to demonstrate new & effective ways to improve the experience of accessing justice for our focus populations;</p> <p>Our focus populations have been supported by informed and resourceful "trusted intermediaries" to understand and exercise their legal rights;</p> <p>All barriers to timely, appropriate & affordable access to community legal services have been removed;</p> <p>The CR/O model is widely acknowledged as a successful multi sectoral initiative that will stimulate further innovations in system navigation by marginalized populations..</p>
[2] Promote & sustain CR/O website	Website is a reliable resource to access local legal services	Website is stable, regularly updated, secure, & maintained Website is a source of comprehensive information	Website is used as the portal to Ottawa legal services for our partners & clients from focus populations	
[3] Develop pool of informed "trusted intermediaries" to connect clients	Train & support staff & foreign-trained legal professionals as trusted intermediaries	Staff & volunteers will be skilled & trusted intermediaries for focus population	Referred clients will actually connect to the legal services to which they have been referred	
[4] Connect legal services & social services	Employ 1 legal worker & 1 social worker as team to be collocated at partner site	Legal services & social services work closely together using a holistic response to complex issues	Focus populations with complex social/legal issues appreciate a more comprehensive & coordinated services; Intersectoral collaboration grows	
[5] Manage a fund allocation that can offset costs of connecting client with legal services	Subsidize interpretation, translation, and transportation for low income clients	Low income clients can afford transit; partners can access interpretation to communicate with focus populations	Financial barriers to accessing legal services will be lowered	
[6] Coordinate all CR/O activities; manage programs; evaluate outcomes	A secretariat resource supports all planning & service coordination activities	Partners remain meaningfully engaged; activities proceed; goals achieved	A sustainable CR/O Network performs well and meets its objectives	
[7] Share lessons learned	Annual conference for partners; post web news; CR/O experience is shared at workshops/ conferences locally & provincially	Other legal services and agencies serving focus populations are aware of strengths/ weaknesses of CR/O model	The best features/ functions of CR/O model are replicated in other communities.	

APPENDIX 2

CASE STUDY

Kyaw

REASON FOR REFERRAL

Kyaw is a Convention Refugee who came to Canada in 2007. He is a frequent visitor at the Catholic Centre for Immigration (CCI) where he obtains various types of support and assistance. The client has virtually no command of the English language and his settlement counsellor had been providing informal interpretation and support to help him complete his divorce application. The counsellor recommended that he go to the Family Law Information Centre (FLIC) to ensure that his application was complete and for summary legal advice. For this, the client needed a liaison as well as an interpreter who spoke his native language, Burmese.

Kyaw's settlement counsellor referred him to Connecting Ottawa and asked if we could provide him with an interpreter as well as accompaniment for his appointment(s) at FLIC.

ASSESSMENT

- Kyaw had been back and forth between FLIC and CCI on numerous occasions trying to complete his application for divorce.
- Client has virtually no understanding of the English language, and as such, he was often confused by and/or unaware of the purpose of the applications he was completing, as well as the purpose behind his various visits to the FLIC
- Client was largely unaware of his rights, entitlements and obligations with respect to divorce and separation.
- Upon review of his paperwork, it was revealed that his application for divorce was incomplete as it failed to incorporate two vital elements – a request for spousal support and child support. This particular form with its missing information had been completed by a FLIC lawyer.

ACTIONS TAKEN

- Kyaw was accompanied by a Connecting Ottawa intern to an appointment at the FLIC office. Connecting Ottawa arranged for a Burmese-speaking interpreter for the appointment.
- The FLIC lawyer provided Kyaw with an overview of the divorce process, the purpose behind the paperwork he was completing, and his next steps
- The accompanying intern sought information from the FLIC lawyer about how to amend Kyaw's divorce application to include requests for child and spousal support – this was later done by the intern in the presence of his CCI settlement counsellor
- The FLIC lawyer asked the client to file the amended application as soon as it was completed to Court Services
- The intern met Kyaw at Court Services the following week to file the amended application, at which point the service clerk said that documents could not be filed until they have been served and the client receives a response from his wife.

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- The intern informed Kyaw and the settlement counsellor about his critical next steps – to serve the documents to his wife and wait for a response, and then after a response is received, to serve all original documents with Court Services

OUTCOMES

Client must serve documents to his wife who has moved to Alberta. He must await her response before any further steps are taken.

COMMENTARY

This case illustrates the importance of providing holistic support and interpretation to clients who face communication barriers and are navigating the legal system. Assisting this client in an effective manner required the joint efforts of a lawyer, settlement counsellor, legal advocate and professional interpreter. These efforts were all critical to ensuring that the client was aware of his legal rights and entitlements, the purpose behind his various applications and the next steps needed to complete his application for divorce successfully.

This case also illustrates the need for clients with communication and language barriers to have effective legal advocacy and assistance beyond what is provided by summary legal information agencies like the FLIC. As previously stated, the incomplete nature of Kyaw's application for divorce was due to an error made by a FLIC lawyer. In addition, although the client had been to the FLIC on numerous occasions, he was largely unaware of the purpose behind his visits. It is important for those who cannot effectively advocate for themselves to have additional support to ensure their needs are being met.

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE – LEGAL CLINICS

Clinic: _____

Contact: _____

Date: _____

Housing - tenants

Legal issue	Direct Representation	Summary legal advice	Appointment needed?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Evictions				
Human Rights (discrimination)				
Harassment				
Maintenance, repairs and unsafe conditions (mould, bugs, rodents, environmental factors)				
Rent and rental agreements, rent deposits				
Rental arrears				
Co-ops				
Rooming houses				
Non-profit housing				
Tenant lives with landlord				
Emergency housing				
Long-term care homes				
Retirement homes				
Student housing				
Other legal issues (landlord entering unit without permission, restrictions on pets, restrictions on guests, etc.)				
Small Claims Court btw tenants				
Loss of rental subsidy				

➤ Where do you refer clients for the issues not covered by your clinic?

- Where do you refer clients for non-legal issues related to housing?

- Which staff work on these issues?

- Does staff speak languages other than EN or FR?

Social benefits

Legal issue	Direct Representation	Summary legal advice	Appointment needed?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ontario Works				
Ontario Disability Support Program				
Canada Pension Plan Disability				
Disability Tax Credit				
Veterans Benefit				
Employer’s Long-term protection				
Registered Disability Savings Plan				
Old Age Security/ Guaranteed Income Supplement				
Employment Insurance				
Canada Pension Plan				
Child Benefit				
WSIB				
Assistance with filing tax returns				

- Where do you refer clients for the issues not covered by your clinic?

- Where do you refer clients for non-legal issues related to social benefits?

- Which staff work on these issues?

- Does staff speak languages other than EN or FR?

Immigration and Refugee Law

Legal issue	Direct Representation	Summary legal advice	Appointment needed?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Citizenship applications				
H & C - PR applications				
H & C – Judicial Review				
Refugee claimants – BOC/ RPD				
Refugee claimants - RAD				
Refugee claimants – Judicial Review				
Refugee sponsorship – group of 5, community sponsors				
Family sponsorship				
Work Permits (TFWP, LIC, students, etc.)				
Temporary Resident Permits (ie. victims of human trafficking)				
Visitor visas				
Permanent residence (Canadian Experience Class, LIC, etc.)				
Admissibility Hearings (refugees, PRs, citizens, etc.)				
Detention Review Hearings				
Pre-removal Risk Assessments				

- Where do you refer clients for the issues not covered by your clinic?

- Where do you refer clients for non-legal issues related to immigration and refugee law?

- Which staff work on these issues?

- Does staff speak languages other than EN or FR?

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Legal issue: Criminal Injuries Compensation Board	Direct Representation	Summary legal advice	Appointment needed?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Application				
Review				
Appeal				

- Where do you refer clients for the issues not covered by your clinic?

- Where do you refer clients for non-legal issues related to criminal injuries compensation?

- Which staff work on these issues?

- Does staff speak languages other than EN or FR?

Criminal Law

Legal issue/ offence	Direct Representation	Summary legal advice	Appointment needed?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Drug offences				
Theft				
Fraud				
Other offenses where Crown is not asking for incarceration				
Provincial offenses				
Peace bonds				

- Where do you refer clients for the issues not covered by your clinic?

- Where do you refer clients for non-legal issues related to criminal law?

- Which staff work on these issues?

- Does staff speak languages other than EN or FR?

Human Rights

Legal issue	Direct Representation	Summary legal advice	Appointment needed?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Discrimination: Ontario (housing, employment, contracts, services, goods and facilities, unions or occupational/professional associations)				
Discrimination (Federal)				

- Where do you refer clients for the issues not covered by your clinic?

- Where do you refer clients for non-legal issues related to human rights?

- Which staff work on these issues?

- Does staff speak languages other than EN or FR?

Summary legal advice/ brief services

Legal issue	Summary legal advice		Appointment needed?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Affidavits/ Statutory Declarations				
Certified Copies of documents				
Employment Standards				
Powers of Attorney				
Wills				
Small Claims Court				
Family law, incl. restraining orders				
Child protection				
Consumer				
Education				
Home care				
Capacity and consent				
Criminal				
Aboriginal				
Elder abuse				
Criminal injuries compensation				
Human rights				

- Where do you refer clients for the issues not covered by your clinic?

- Where do you refer clients for non-legal issues related to these issues?

- Which staff work on these issues?

- Does staff speak languages other than EN or FR?

Volunteers

- Does your clinic have any volunteers who might be interested in acting as a Connecting Ottawa liaison?

- Would your clinic be interested in working with a volunteer Facilitator as a Connecting Ottawa liaison? _____

Challenges

-
-
-
-

APPENDIX 4

NETWORK PARTNERS (SHOWING CATEGORIES OF ENGAGEMENT)

Cat.*	PARTNERS	PRIMARY CONTACT	E-MAIL ADDRESS	MAILING ADDRESS
	Community Services (18)			
1	211/Community Information Centre	Marie-Andrée Carrière	ma.carriere@cominfo-ottawa.org	CICO - 211 Ottawa 1910 St-Laurent Blvd ; PO Box 41146 Ottawa K1G 1A4
2	Action-logement	Étienne Grandmaître St-Pierre	egsaintpierre@action-logement.ca	Action-logement 261 Montreal Rd #200, Ottawa K1L 8C7
3	Carlington Community Health Centre	Janet Bowes	jbowes@carlington.ochc.org	Carlington CHC 900 Merivale Rd, Ottawa K1Z 5Z8
3	Centretown Community Health Centre	Simone Thibault	sthibault@centretownchc.org	Centretown CHC 420 Cooper St, Ottawa K2P 2N6
2	CMHA (Ottawa Branch)	Lisa Jamieson	lisaj@cmhaottawa.ca	CMHA (Ottawa) 1355 Bank St #301, Ottawa K1H 8K7
3	Distress Centre Ottawa & Region	Judy Grunwald	jgrunwald@dcottawa.on.ca	Distress Centre of Ottawa PO Box 3457, Station C, Ottawa K1Y 4J6
3	Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre	Ken Mackenzie	ken.mackenzie@eorc-gloucester.ca	Eastern Ottawa CRC 2339 Ogilvie Rd, Ottawa K1J 8M6
2	Housing Help	Trudy Sutton	trudy@housinghelp.on.ca	Housing Help \309 Cooper St #502, Ottawa K2P 0G5
2	Nepean Rideau & Osgoode CRC	Sheila Norquay	snorquay@nrocrc.org	NROC 1547 Merivale Rd #240, Ottawa K2G 4V3
3	Orleans-Cumberland Community Resource Centre	Joffre Malette	jmalette@crcoc.ca	Orleans-Cumberland CRC 240 Centrum Blvd. #105, Ottawa K1E 3J4
3	Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre	Armand Kayolo	armand.kayolo@crrc.org	Rideau-Rockcliffe CRC 225 Donald St #120, Ottawa K1K 1N1
2	Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre	Cindi Rye	c.rye@pgchc.com	Pinecrest-Queensway CHC 1365 Richmond Rd, Ottawa K2B 6R7
3	Sandy Hill Community Health Centre	Robin McAndrew Josée Anne Gauthier	rmcandrew@sandyhillchc.on.ca Jgauthier@sandyhillchc.on.ca	Sandy Hill CHC 221 Nelson St, Ottawa K1N 1C7

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3	Social Planning Council	Clara Jimeno	claraj@spcottawa.on.ca	Social Planning Council of Ottawa 790 Bronson Ave, Ottawa K1S 4G4
2	Somerset West Community Health Centre	Anne Christie-Teeter	achristi@swchc.on.ca	Somerset West CHC 55 Eccles St, Ottawa K1R 6S3
2	South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre	Mohamoud Hagi-Aden Leslie McDiarmid	mohamoudh@seochc.on.ca lesliem@seochc.on.ca	SEOCHC 13 55 Bank St #600, Ottawa K1H 8K7
1	Vanier Community Service Centre (CSCV)	Michel Gervais	mgervais@cscvanier.com	Vanier CSC 290 Dupuis St, Ottawa K1L 1A2
3	Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre	Cathy Jordan	jordan@wocrc.ca	Western Ottawa CRC 2 MacNeil Ct, Ottawa K2L 4H7
Immigrant Services (10)				
1	Catholic Centre for Immigrants	Maria-Teresa Garcia	maria@cic.ca	Catholic Centre for Immigrants 219 Argyle Ave, Ottawa K2P 2H4
2	Conseil Economique et Social d'Ottawa-Carleton (CESOC)	St-Phard Désir	sdesir@cesoc.ca	CESOC 649 Montreal Rd #202, Ottawa K1K 0T4
2	Immigrant Women Service Organization	Lucya Spencer	spenluc@immigrantwomenservices.com	IWSO 219 Argyle St #400, Ottawa K2P 2H4
2	Jewish Family Services	Mark Zarecki Sarah Caspi	mzarecki@jfsottawa.com scaspi@jfsottawa.com	Jewish Family Services of Ottawa 2255 Carling Ave #300, Ottawa K2B 7Z5
3	Newcomer Services, YM-YWCA	Tanya Mendes-Gagnon	tanya.mendes@nationalcapitalregionymca-ywca.ca	Newcomer services, YM-YWCA 240 Catherine St #308, Ottawa K2P 2G8
2	Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO)	Elwira Felczak	efelczak@ociso.org	OCISO 959 Wellington St W, Ottawa K1Y 2X5
2	Ottawa Public Library /Immigrant Settlement Partnership	Karen Molina	karen.molina@bibliottawalibrary.ca	OPL Immigrant Settlement Partnership 120 Metcalfe St, Ottawa K1P 5M2
2	Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre	Rupert Yeung	rupert.yeung@ocsc.org	OCCSC 381 Kent St #4004, Ottawa K2P 2A8
3	Somali Centre for Family Services	Abdirizak Karod	a.karod@scfsottawa.org	Somali Centre for Family Services 1719 Bank St #200, Ottawa K1V 7Z4
3	Sexual Assault Centre / Women & War	Roya Ghafari	womenandwar@istar.ca	Women & War PO Box 4441, Stn E, Ottawa, K1S 5B4
Interpretation & Translation (1)				
2	Cultural Interpretation Services for Our Community (CISOC)	Benjamin Chacon	benjamin@cisoc.net	CISOC 44 Eccles St #100, Ottawa, K1R 6S4

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Legal Services (9)				
1	ARCH Disability Law Centre	Ivana Petricone	petricoi@lao.on.ca	ARCH 425 Bloor St E, #110, Toronto M4W 3R4
3	Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA)	Megan Evans Maxwell	megan@equalityrights.org	CERA 340 College St #215, Box 23, Toronto M5T 3A9
1	La Clinique juridique francophone de l'Est d'Ottawa	Kakomire Kashongwe	kashonk@lao.on.ca	
2	Community Legal Services Ottawa Centre	Daniel Gagnon	gagnond@lao.on.ca	CLS Ottawa Centre 1 Nicholas St #422, Ottawa K1N 7B7
2	Legal Aid Ontario (Ottawa District Office)	Nathalie Champagne Karima Karmali	champanr@lao.on.ca karmalk@lao.on.ca	LAO (Ottawa District) 73 Albert St, Ottawa K1P1E3
2	Reach Canada	Paula Agulnik	paulaagulnik@reach.ca	Reach Canada 400 Coventry Rd, Ottawa K1K 2C7
1	South Ottawa Community Legal Services	Gary Stein	steing@lao.on.ca	SOCLS 1355 Bank St #406, Ottawa K1H 8K7
2	University of Ottawa Community Legal Clinic	Louise Toone	Louise.toone@uottawa.ca	u Ottawa Community Legal Clinic 17 Copernicus St, Ottawa K1N 6N5
2	West End Legal Services	Vicky Watson Laurie Joe	watsonv@lao.on.ca joel@lao.on.ca	WELS 1301 Richmond Rd, Ottawa K2B 7Y4
Services for Disabled Persons (6)				
2	Aphasia Centre of Ottawa	Gillian Gailey	Gillian@aphasiaottawa.org	Aphasia Centre of Ottawa 2081 Merivale Rd #300, Ottawa K2G 1G9
2	Canadian Hearing Society	Michel David	mdavid@chs.ca	CHS 2197 Riverside Dr #600, Ottawa K1H 7X3
2	Citizens Advocacy	Siddhartha Kumar	SKumar@citizenadvocacy.org	Citizens Advocacy 312 Parkdale Ave, Ottawa K1Y 4X5
3	The In Community	Teena Tomlinson	ttomlinson@theincommunity.ca	The In Community 1150 Morrison Dr #110, Ottawa K2H 8S9
2	Stroke Survivors' Association	Janet McTaggart	janet_mct@hotmail.com	Stroke Survivors Association 323 Coventry Rd #72, Ottawa K1K 3X6
2	TOH Rehabilitation Centre	Elly Nadorp	enadorp@ottawahospital.on.ca	TOH Rehabilitation Centre 505 Smyth Rd #2225, Ottawa K1H 8M2

APPENDIX 5

REFLECTIONS OF A STUDENT (DAWOOD NASIR)

In December 2008, the Law Foundation of Ontario tasked Karen Cohl and George Thomson with the responsibility of finding durable solutions for individuals facing linguistic and rural barriers to accessing justice . In response to their findings, a pilot project was funded by the Law Foundation and Connecting Ottawa was born. I had the opportunity to intern with the organization this past winter. Having always thought of myself as a social justice law student, I naturally gravitated towards Connecting Ottawa for its simple but powerful mandate: to break down all linguistic barriers to accessing justice.

Armed with a firm (and somewhat naive) resolve to combat social injustice, I arrived to my first day of training with Natalie Drolet, senior counsel in charge of the day-to-day operations for the project. I quickly discovered that my idea of social justice needed some revamping. I had always thought of access to justice issues as being purely legal problems, to be solved by lawyers and law makers alone. Connecting Ottawa changed my perception of this by introducing me to one of the most powerful access to justice tools: collaboration between legal and non-legal service providers.

Located at the Vanier Community Service Centre, and sharing facilities with the Francophone Legal Clinic of Ottawa East, Connecting Ottawa is a truly collaborative project. During my time there, I was able to observe the various partnerships that Connecting Ottawa has developed with legal clinics, community service organizations, and other trusted intermediaries. Being on the front-lines of access to justice work meant that I was interacting directly with vulnerable clients in an effort to maximize the resources available to them.

My work most often involved brainstorming different organizations that might be able to assist individual clients and then contacting those organizations to facilitate referrals. During my time with Connecting Ottawa, it was clear to me that one of the most important functions that the organization serves is to help vulnerable people with legal problems navigate the complex maze of resources to find the ones most relevant to them.

That's the short-term goal. The long-term goal is more difficult, and brings us back to the work of Karen Cohl and George Thomson. Their report to the Law Foundation of Ontario surveyed the deficiencies in the way that the current justice system was addressing barriers to access, and ways that it could improve. The most salient point that grew out of the report was the need for a fundamental paradigm shift in the way that we think of solutions to access to justice problems. The solution to the problem is, indeed, to think about the issues in a different way. The solution to the problem is **building a system**.

In Ontario now, there is some innovation and promising, isolated experiments to improve linguistic and rural access to justice. Apart from some notable exceptions in

particular areas, however, there is no harmonized sense of direction, and no collective decision making about areas of priority.

-- “Connecting Across Language & Distance” (2008), Cohl and Thomson.

Cohl and Thomson looked at the current system and saw a plethora of organizations, some legal and some non-legal, who were working independently to improve access to justice. These organizations often did not communicate with one another to ensure that they were not duplicating services, or to identify any gaps in the services that were being provided. Cohl and Thomson also highlighted a schism between what were traditionally identified as legal service providers and non-legal service providers.

The old system was predicated on the idea that individual organizations should be designed to address problems in a narrow way. The old system also created a false dichotomy between problems that were legal, and problems that were non-legal, without leaving room for areas where these two problems intersected and converged.

The old system ignored the fact that legal problems often come with non-legal problems, and vice versa. For example: a dispute with your spouse brings with it emotional unrest as well as property and child custody disputes; a criminal law issue brings with it issues of mental health and economic instability. It is not surprising that no one organization can resolve all of these problems. It is also not surprising that individual organizations addressing issues in isolation cannot contribute towards the solution when they do not communicate with one another.

Connecting Ottawa represents a much-needed paradigm shift in the way that legal services are organized, facilitated, and operated. It offers a move away from isolationist policies, and a move towards providing a holistic solution to legal problems.

We take a holistic approach and draw upon strengths that already exist within our network of over 40 community health, legal, immigration, disability, and social services agencies.

Connecting Ottawa re-imagines the solution to legal problems. Collaboration between legal and non-legal service providers is at the centre of all of the work that the organization undertakes. Building effective and long-lasting solutions to access to justice problems is about fostering connections in the community and building a fluid network of people and organizations which guide people through their legal dilemmas.

I was fortunate enough to have attended the 2nd Annual Connecting Ottawa Conference, where lawyers, community legal workers, settlement conference workers, policy makers, scholars and other members of the community came together to build connections and strengthen their network. Moving forward, I hope to see Connecting Ottawa continue to foster an interconnected community within Ottawa, and serve as a model for the change that we so desperately need.