

**Notes of January 18, 2011 Newcomer Advisory Group meeting  
Prepared by Jason Stabler, Coordinator**

The members welcomed a new newcomer, Agnès Jallon (from France) to the group.

Chanda Kaziya gave a presentation about his reasons for coming to Canada, the struggles he faced while here and some strategies for overcoming these struggles.

Chanda came to Peterborough from Zambia in 2009 with his wife who is studying physics on a scholarship at Trent University. He described day-to-day living in Africa as more difficult than in Canada. While opportunities were greater for him in Zambia, peace of mind is greater here in Canada. He also thinks Canada does a good job of taking care of children and he is hopeful to raise his son here.

There are 73 languages in Zambia however the language of the education system is English. The education system in Zambia is based on the British system and this made it easier for him to have his educational credentials recognized here. In spite of this Canadian work experience has been a barrier to him finding employment here. This barrier eventually led him to the New Canadians Centre where he received help with his employment search. He also became involved in the community as a board member of the Community Race Relations Committee and as a member of the Partnership Council. This has been helpful to him in understanding the community and in making new connections. This engagement with the community helped him to move out of his comfort zone and to change his way of thinking.

His biggest challenge in Peterborough has been cultural shock. Peterborough is a community that isn't used to newcomers and as such is relatively closed to newcomers. His first impression of Canada was the weather (he arrived in winter). He described his first experience with winter clothing and with the cold at Pearson Airport, and how he stayed inside his house in Peterborough for two weeks upon arriving here in the winter. What he misses most about Zambia is the extended family system.

NAG members identified barriers to employment as a problem that immigrants face in Peterborough. The group conveyed knowledge of immigrants who were trained as pilots, doctors and nuclear physicists who are underemployed in

Peterborough. Specific barriers identified by the group included a lack of Canadian work experience, not having the money to get your credentials evaluated, a lack of understanding by immigrants of local culture and a lack of understanding by Canadians of the skills that immigrants have and the benefits of immigration. Suggestions for overcoming this included internships to get work experience, education of newcomers about local culture (e.g. reading maps, Canadian food etc...) and more opportunities for newcomers and existing community members to meet including multicultural dinners.

NAG also had a discussion about cultural differences generally and specifically between Canada and the United States. Members also suggested greater participation of newcomers in training sessions and the work of the PPCII.

Muhammad will tell his story at the next meeting.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, March 15, 5-7 pm, at the NCC Board Room

Please encourage newcomers you know to attend.