Content Working Group Report
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Introduction

This report reflects the sentiments, preferences and ideas of workers in the Settlement Sector across Canada. Through their participation in the Content Working Group (WG), members indicated what they would like reflected in the National Settlement Sector Community of Practice (CoP. Their responses were collected through surveys, webinars and phone calls. This report aggregates the main themes and discussions that took place in the webinars and phone calls. All of the webinar and survey responses were compiled in a more exhaustive document that captures all of the WG questions and answers.

The information that was gathered through the Content WG process has been essential to the development of the Content, Partnership and Community Engagement strategies that will guide the evolution of the CoP in the short, mid and long-term. Questions about anonymity and how to display content have shaped our direction and have clearly outlined what users believe will make the community successful in the eyes of the broader community as it grows and sustains itself into the future. The Project Management Team and the National Advisory Committee would like to extend our most grateful appreciation for all the members of the Content Working Group. Their dedication to this process reflects their steadfast commitment to our sector and to the services we provide to newcomers across Canada.

Participants

The Content WG consists of English-speaking settlement professionals from across Canada. They were identified through recommendations from each provinces' Settlement Umbrella Agency and through our agency partners. They represent small and large agencies and hold positions ranging from frontline worker to team managers. They were handpicked by leaders in the sector for their experience, perspective and wealth of knowledge of the sector. The project team plans to implement similar information gathering activities with Francophone groups at a later date.

To learn more about the members of the Content Working Group, please visit the project website: sites.google.com/ocasi.org/cop/home

Key Responses

The following is an example of the formatting for the responses below.

Response Format

    a. **Relevance**: All sections of the platform.

    b. **Rationale**: The purpose of this area of discussion is to identify what motivates users to visit the CoP and what they expect to gain from the experience. This will also help us understand our messaging when communicating the CoP to the sector.

    c. **Response**: "To Learn." The almost unanimous response from respondents was that "learn" was the best descriptor for what they sought from the CoP.

        i. **Caveats**: Many respondents didn't see a need to distinguish between; learn, share and connect.

1. Marketplace of ideas

    a. Content Library and Discussion Forum.

    b. We wanted to understand how users want content displayed to them, in terms of ranking and prioritizing search query results.

    c. The majority of respondents indicated that they want the system to "democratically" display content based on "likes" or "favorites" by users. They do not want the CoP to play a role in indicating what content is the most valuable to the community. Most WG members would like the option to sort through the various options they are presented with.

        i. This mainly pertains to settlement partner submitted content, such as intake forms, best-practice guides and other files where there may be duplicates or more than one answer. This does not pertain to government forms where it should always be clear which form they are looking for.

        ii. The CoP should try to ensure that new files have a chance to rise to the top of searches, or that certain, high priority files that are deemed important still appear in searches even if they are not popular.

2. Private Companies and Consultants

    a. All sections.

    b. Should the CoP be driven and resourced exclusively by the sector.

    c. Most WG members indicated that the CoP should only represent resources provided by settlement agencies. The resounding opinion was that the CoP should be a "for us, by us" resource. They demonstrated a lot of concern about

the type of resources private companies would offer, understanding that they generally want to drum up business and may not have the best intentions behind their services.

    i.   Some WG members indicated that if the service was valuable, there should not be a concern with private companies providing resources on the CoP.

    ii.   A compromise that was accepted was that either private companies are clearly identified as such, have a separate area for themselves or that they only exist on the CoP via the "supervision" of a settlement agency/partner.

3. Intellectual Property

a. Content Library.

b. We want to understand what level of IP protection and attribution users would be comfortable with.

c. We should follow standard attribution and community commons guidelines used on other websites. These should allow users to indicate what type of attribution each of their resources are accompanied with. This will largely be enforced via a code of ethics and an "honour system."

    i.   Some organizations may want to include their customized legal language for their content.

    ii.   There should also be a method that allows for traceability between files wherein a user can see where files have evolved from their source document. E.g. when a user downloads, adapts and uploads a new file, the new file should indicate which file it began as.

    iii.   Other felt that this was unnecessary for their agency, but can respect how it would be important for others. They would like choose not to specify any attribution or reproduction guidelines for using their resources.

4. Orientation Space

a. Blog Section and Content Library

b. Should the CoP play a role in orienting new employees to the sector?

c. Everyone expressed that they hope that the CoP will be a resource for new workers in the sector. They would like to be able to direct workers to a place on the CoP where new employees can learn from best practices, find information on competencies and connect with veterans from the sector. This was seen a great way to onboard people who are new to the sector especially if they are joining understaffed or under-resourced agencies that need the support.

  i. There could be many versions of orientation materials, each agency may want to create a folder of what the believe is essential for their staff. Others could borrow/copy those folders.

5. Permission to post
 a. Content Library and Discussion Forum.
 b. Should any member be allowed to post content and discussions to the CoP?
 c. Most WG members expressed that the CoP should allow agencies to designate someone with permission to post content to the content library on behalf of their organization. This would presume the agency has already vetted the information and has ensure it is up to date. Some WG members also highlighted that agencies might have concerns about their employees sharing details that they shouldn't in discussion threads. Policies about limiting conversations in discussion forums should not be provided by the CoP but by the agencies themselves.
  i. Some WG members from smaller agencies suggested this isn't much of a concern for them, but that they understand the necessity for this type of control and verification.
  ii. Larger agencies will need more than one contact person to have permission to submit files to the CoP.

6. Quality standards on the CoP
 a. Content Library
 b. This discussion area was to identify what standards users expect from resources on the CoP. We wanted to understand if works in progress (WIP) should have a place on the CoP or not.
 c. Most WG members said that while they identify it as useful for the CoP to enable sharing WIPs, the CoP should reflect reliable, finished resources that can be deployed immediately. Users should expect that the Content Library only displays vetted and quality controlled resources.
  i. However, some WG members did express that they would like to share files that they are working on in smaller groups. These would ideally not be itemized in the content library and would exist only in limited locations on the CoP, or not on the CoP at all.
  ii. Given that we want WG members to take and adapt resources, we need a traceability mechanism to demonstrate how resources have been changed. E.g., a user downloads a needs assessment form, changes it to suit their needs and reuploads it. It should be evident where they started from so others have that context.

7. Posting to discussions anonymously
   a. Discussion Forum
   b. The area of concern is whether users have the ability to post anonymously in the CoP.
   c. WG members indicated that they require the option to post anonymously, some even went as far as to say that they won't be able to post to discussion forums without the option of being anonymous. One option that was proposed was for users to select a generic title to replace their name so that other users at least know sometime about the anonymous person.
      i. Some WG members reflected that they believe no one should be saying things they require them being anonymous and so don't see the need for it. However, given the number of WG members who identified it as important, it likely be necessary for users to have this option.
      ii. A couple WG members also indicated that they believe this would make following up with users almost impossible as you may not be able to contact them.

8. Displaying Newcomer Stories
   a. Blog section
   b. We wanted to know what users want to get out of this section so that we know how to structure it's formatting.
   c. While there was some interest in the inspirational benefits of this section, the majority of WG members indicated that they want this section to serve as a way to "study" a best practice and to learn the what steps were taken to helping a newcomers settle or achieve another goal. Learning from success is the main purpose.
      i. Some WG members mentioned that they want elements of inspiration incorporated into this feature.

Other Findings

Project Directory

Users want a way to learn from each other's work and experiences. One way for them to do so would be to review a directory of projects undertaken across the sector. This directory would allow for users to review project information and contact project leaders to learn from their experiences. This feature would go along way to developing best practices and encouraging

sharing of information between members of the sector. It would also allow users learn from one another's failures and challenges.

Discretion

While most WG members agreed that the CoP webpage should be open for anyone online to visit, there should be a way to lock discussions or content behind a login wall. This would give users more protection to have conversations that would be limited to people in the sector and would not be searchable by anyone online. Also, some agencies may want to share files that they prefer their clients not have access to.

Discussion Subjects

While there are a number of subjects that would engage settlement workers in a discussion forum, the following are subjects that have surfaced repeatedly in the WG:

- Topics in Settlement
    - Mental health and addictions, and family violence
    - Working with youth
    - Techniques for supporting families
    - Dealing with difficult clients
    - Needs Assessments/Case Management
    - Employment for newcomers
    - Collaborating with community partners
- Government programs and forms;
    - Citizenship Application, Family Class Sponsorship, and Refugee Sponsorship Application, and IRCC regulations.
    - Family reunification program
- Working in the sector
    - Maintaining personal boundaries
    - Creating/establishing meaningful settlement programs
    - Exploring alternative funding sources
    - New programming areas

This is not meant to serve as an exhaustive list, but as an example of the types of topics that might engage users in discussion.

Changes in Forms

Many participants noted that changes to government forms is one of the most disruptive occurrences in their work. Knowing what changed about gov forms was identified as the key need from our participants. The second desire was to know when a form was going to be

changed next, addressing this would require a relationship with IRCC's team that addresses governmental documents.

Taglines and Bios

WG members indicated that they believe it will be valuable to quickly learn more about one another, whether researching who they are learning from or trying to identify people with a specific background. Others did articulate that they think this could be a little pretentious if users are employing monikers such as "expert in Ontario refugee sector" or "Elearning pro." Respondents simply want a way to know who you are, where you work and what role you are in. It should be used to validate and weigh the value of responses. It might also be helpful for users from small or rural centres to know if the advice they are receiving is relevant to their context, and vice versa.

Useful Guides and How-Tos

Participants identified a number of documents that they believe would be helpful in their work, examples include:
- Guide to professional certifications for regulated fields
- A standard/template settlement plan and needs assessment process
- How to fill out forms, how to get information about certain law issues

Public Information and Data

Participants also identified the kind of statistics or information that might be useful to them with planning and designing projects. The following is short list of the type of information that would be interesting:
- Newcomer's statistic by province and city
- Information on bridging programs for regulated professions and alternate professions for certain professions
- Provincial employment and education stats