

TRAINING STANDARDS

(THE WOMEN'S REFERENCE GROUP, September 28, 1992)

Introduction:

Women across the country have met to discuss their visions of a training system that would meet their needs. Central to these workshops was stepping back and describing our visions of a training system that is accessible to women and responsive to women's needs. We have identified concrete principles that can inform policy development and decision making and ideas on how to operationalize these principles.

These principles are Access, Equity, Right to Basic Education, Recognition of Skills, Quality, Accountability, and Integrating Training and Economic Development. Of particular significance here is that the first five of these principles have been included in the strategic plan of the Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB). Therefore, we assume an agreement in principle for the policy framework to be recommended by the Board.

We see these principles as the starting point for establishing comprehensive training standards. Clear standards can support our involvement and input at all levels (local, provincial and national) of the training system.

ACCESS:

Access to training has been consistently raised by women across the country as the central issue. Women (from diverse regions, immigrants, refugees, linguistic and visible minority women, women with all forms of disabilities and aboriginal women) face particular barriers to accessing training and education. It is essential that all groups have equitable access to training and education, that the needs of traditionally under-served groups be adequately addressed, and that specific resources be allocated to serve the needs of the employed, unemployed, underemployed and social assistance recipients.

Specific components of an accessible training system, identified by women across the country, are:

1. Access to information
2. Support services
3. Child care
4. Training allowances
5. Expanded eligibility criteria
6. Bridging programmes

EQUITY:

In the "Women's Agenda" workshops participants pointed to equity as an important principle of a transformed training system. We see equity as ensuring that people receive fair treatment, equal rights, and equal benefits regardless of race, gender, country of origin, class, religion, sexual orientation, geographic location, income, age and ability. Equity must be a guiding principle in policy development, decision making and within training programmes themselves. Therefore, mechanisms for achieving equity must include policies and legislation which ensure that the people who have historically been excluded from the decision making process are represented. In addition, within programmes, systemic barriers must be removed, equity targets established, and a mechanism for monitoring agreed upon.

RIGHT TO BASIC EDUCATION:

In our workshops, women spoke strongly for public training and education being recognized as a basic right. Training resources must be directed to general education and skill training programmes which lead to accreditation. In particular, literacy, language training for people lacking facility in English or French, academic upgrading for people with less than high school completion and bridging programmes for women in all areas including trades and technologies must be priorities. These programmes must be provided as part of a continuum of training to ensure that learners are equipped with portable skills that are broadly recognized by post-secondary education institutions as well as employers.

RECOGNITION OF SKILLS: Portability/Transferability:

Women's desired direction for change is a model that would permit women with a need and an interest in upgrading, training, or developing skills to do so at various points throughout their working lives. Transferability between various training, with credit given for every step, and career pathing are central to this. Learners should not be required to duplicate training in order to receive recognition for skills and knowledge which has been acquired in other regions, provinces, or countries. Mechanisms are, therefore, needed to ensure that skills acquired and accreditation received are portable and transferable from one level and type of learning and from one location to another.

Linkage and laddering criteria in all publicly funded programmes and institutions is required as well. Mechanisms are needed such as Prior Learning Assessment to ensure that skills acquired and accreditation are portable and transferable.

QUALITY:

Women support a view of training that places the learner at the centre of any discussion, involving the active participation of learners in decision making with respect to programme development and implementation, and that sees quality in broader terms than only attaching an individual to the labour market.

Components of a quality training system include:

1. An integrated system
2. Diversity of models
3. Learner centred
4. Curriculum development
5. Counselling
6. Funding of programmes

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Women also talked about accountability as central to a quality and equitable training system that is accessible to all. There is a need for accountability in decision making and representation, where all boards and committees must be held accountable for their activities. There must be accountability in project evaluation and client participation in evaluation and monitoring should be a requirement. There must also be accountability in funding mechanisms where the allocation of resources should be made contingent on demonstrated compliance with the principles identified above.

INTEGRATING TRAINING AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Recognition of the relationship between training and employment, the need for a comprehensive social-economic strategy and a commitment to full employment are key components of a training system that will work for women. Our communities are facing the devastating effects of economic restructuring, with mass layoffs and increasing unemployment. Women recognize that training alone will not lead to real jobs or economically viable communities. Training strategies must, therefore, include strategies for women's participation in economic development. We see a need to integrate training into local economic development plans, creating economic options for women. To do this effectively we must develop new approaches to community economic development and mechanisms for ensuring women's participation in them.

TABLE 2
ACTUAL % OF PARTICIPATION IN CJS PROGRAMS
BY DESIGNATED GROUPS

VISIBLE MINORITIES

Regions	87/88 %		88/89 %		89/90 %		90/91 %		91/92 %	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
NFLD.	0.4	1.1	N/A	1.3	N/A	1.1	0.5	1.2	1.0	0.8
N.S.	4.0	3.8	N/A	3.9	N/A	3.9	6.0	4.8	5.0	5.3
P.E.I.	0.7	1.7	N/A	2.0	N/A	2.3	2.0	2.1	2.0	3.5
N.B.	1.6	1.5	N/A	1.6	N/A	2.2	3.0	1.3	1.5	1.5
QUE.	3.9	2.9	N/A	2.8	N/A	3.8	5.0	3.4	3.5	2.1
ONT.	4.0	6.0	N/A	5.6	N/A	6.9	6.5	7.1	6.5	6.2
MAN.	3.8	6.0	N/A	5.1	N/A	6.3	5.0	6.8	5.0	4.7
SASK.	1.2	7.0	N/A	6.6	N/A	5.8	7.0	6.0	5.0	4.6
ALTA. N.W.T.	3.5	10.6	N/A	4.8	N/A	11.7	12.0	12.2	12.0	10.2
B.C. YUKON	3.6	3.9	N/A	4.8	N/A	8.6	5.5	7.2	7.0	7.2
CAN.	3.4	4.8	N/A	4.8	N/A	6.0	6.1	5.9	5.6	4.5

TABLE 3

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