

GENDER EQUITY FRAMEWORK PROJECT
SKILLS NOW!

FEBRUARY - AUGUST 1995

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August 1995

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Foreword

I am pleased to present this report of the Gender Equity Framework Project of the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour. The project and its activities, outcomes and recommendations are described in the following pages.

Both the Deputy Minister of Skills and Training and the Assistant Deputy Minister of Skills Development requested a report that would leave a record of the project outcomes, and direction for the ministry following the project. As well, they indicated a need for some ongoing legacy from the project: something which would extend the project as a continuous aspect of the work and achievements of the ministry. They expressed a need to see equity provisions and initiatives "institutionalized" in the delivery of Skills Now! – and indeed in the Ministry of Skills Training and Labour practices generally.

This report, and the accompanying document proposing a coordinating structure for ministry equity activities, is a response to that request. It outlines the context for the Gender Equity Framework Project, the methodology, and activities, achievements and recommendations according to the Outcomes agreed to at the outset. Together with the proposal that the ministry establish a coordinating approach for integrating equity corporately, the recommendations sketch a framework for equity in Skills Now! and in the Ministry of Skills Training and Labour.

The content of the report is organized in terms of the Outcomes identified for the project by both ministries, when the project began in February 1995. Under each Outcome, specific projects are discussed and recommendations presented. The forty five recommendations are summarized at the end of the report.

It is my hope that this report, and the project it describes, will facilitate introduction of a framework for equity within Skills Now!. My six months working within the Ministry of Skills Training and Labour have convinced me that this must be achieved through a comprehensive approach to implementing equity within the Ministry, building on current commitments and efforts, coordinating them, setting specific goals related to equity, and integrating them into all aspects of policy, planning, management and program delivery and evaluation.

Elizabeth Carriere
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Skills Now!

Background

Skills Now! is a \$200 Million government initiative launched in Spring 1994 to reform the British Columbia post secondary system. It is focused on improving access to training, the relevance of programs, affordability and accountability. This emphasis came from the conclusions of the 1993 Premier's Summit on Skills Development and Training.

Extensive consultations preceded the development of Skills Now! programs and measures in four thematic areas:

- linking high school to the workplace
- opening doors to colleges and universities,
- retraining workers in their communities
- moving from welfare to the workforce

There were expectations from women and members of other equity groups that this significant government initiative should be inclusive, and contain measures to improve the participation and success of those previously excluded from training opportunities, or who had faced considerable barriers to participation. These expectations are reinforced by government's commitment to equity generally, and equality for women specifically, in its strategic priorities. In addition, a stated objective for "Skills for the 21st Century" is "to support participation and success in education and training programs by women, Aboriginal people, visible minorities and persons with disabilities".

From January to August 1995, the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour (MSTL), with the assistance of the Ministry of Women's Equality (MWE), undertook a project to establish a Gender Equity Program Framework for Skills Now!. The Executive Director, Policy and Planning, Ministry of Women's Equality was seconded as Gender Equity Advisor, Skills Now! (GEA) for a six month period to introduce a gender program framework for Skills Now!. This was in response to concerns expressed by the Ministry of Women's Equality and community groups that women in their diversity were not perceived to be sufficiently and substantially benefiting from Skills Now!

Approach

It was determined that the Gender Equity Advisor would report directly to the Deputy Minister, Skills and Training, with the support of the Assistant Deputy Ministers of Skills Development Division, and Post Secondary Division. Cooperation would also be provided by the Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy, Planning and Research Division.

The Gender Equity Framework Project was given office space and administrative assistance within the Skills Development Division (SDD) of MSTL. Expenses for the project were underwritten by that Division. It was arranged that in the absence of immediate availability of the Deputy Minister, the ADM Skills Development would provide *de facto* supervision and direction to the project.

Consistent with the program focus of the project; the need to produce tangible program outcomes within a short time frame; and the need for a consultative, non-confrontational approach in encouraging equity measures, the GEA adopted the following methodological assumptions for the project:

- *The process will be internally managed.*
Systems change from within: thus those responsible for implementing programs need to understand and experience the requirements for equity. It is also important that they know how to implement equity within the context of their programs.
- *The management approach would be "top engaged", "bottom up".*
This means that senior management will be engaged in promoting a commitment and vision for gender equality, but the actual characteristics will be developed in a program-specific manner.
- *The process will be organizationally empowering.*
It will give the people who can do it the resources and authority to do it.
- *The process will be content and context specific.*
To ensure clarity about what needs to be done, processes will be program, activity and action oriented.
- *The process will be results oriented.*
Success will be determined on the basis of outcomes.
- *The approach will be resource (not problem) focused.*
The approach will seek out capabilities and resources for equity within the programs and their delivery agencies and communities; it will use these as a starting point and resources for implementation.
- *Equity will be the method, not just the goal.*
Processes will be inclusive, participatory and effective.
- *The process will be supported.*
As necessary, measures will be supported by resources, expertise and training.

Early in the project, and constantly throughout, the Gender Equity Advisor (GEA) was challenged by ministry staff and community contacts to work towards equity for all groups, rather than singularly focusing on gender equity. The GEA's approach constantly stressed that gender equity recognizes the diversity of women and girls. It acknowledges that to talk of gender is simultaneously to address diversity within gender, and the ways in which discrimination based on gender intersects with discrimination based on other categories, such as aboriginal heritage, colour, class, ability, etc.

The GEA observed a degree of awareness, commitment and effort in the ministry concerning equity for all four designated groups, as well as for additional groups facing training and employability barriers, such as youth. She built on this expertise and momentum, contributing her own emphasis on gender equity, and worked collaboratively with ministry efforts for all equity groups.

Method

The six month project was accomplished in four interdependent phases:

Phase I

Mapping Supports and Resources in the System

- working with key people to identify advocates for existing and planned initiatives supporting gender equality
- familiarization with the system, players, issues, information
- setting up systems of communication and reporting schedules

Phase II

Building the Gender Equity Framework

- building partnerships
- bringing issues forward
- applying gender analysis and identifying and planning changes
- setting equity targets and objectives
- redesigning/reorienting programs, and procedures to meet objectives
- setting up teams, working groups, links as necessary
- providing training as necessary

Phase III

Managing and Implementing the Framework

- simplifying management and networks for retention
- laying out protocols for maintenance and evaluation
- establishing accountability for maintenance
- resetting objectives as necessary; setting longer term objectives

Phase IV

Communicating and Evaluating

- describing and communicate the outcomes for the project
- evaluating the success of the six month project

Phase II constituted the major thrust of the project. It began six weeks into the project and continued throughout. Some parts of Phase III and IV were undertaken before Phase II was complete. Phase III and IV mainly occupied the fifth and sixth months.

Outcomes

Activities are detailed in three reports submitted during the Project. The Activity Report, Project Update Report and the Framework Report. This document supplements and complements these other reports with analysis and recommendations concerning each of the Project Outcomes.

Outcomes for the Gender Equity Framework Project, as documented in the agreement between MSTL and MWE:

1. *The four thematic areas of Skills Now! will have individual and overall strategies for implementing and communicating a gender framework, including base targets for equity participation in all programs.*
2. *Measures will be defined and underway for program enhancement/changes to benefit single parents receiving Income Assistance.*
3. *The future of projects specifically addressing the needs of women victims of violence will be determined.*
4. *Measures will be in place to increase the number of women in apprenticeships, linked to the apprenticeship revitalization plans. Effective partnerships will be in place with the ministries of Women's Equality, Education, and Employment and Investment to strengthen and communicate these efforts.*
5. *Administrative and accountability measures, possibly including the establishment of an equity coordinator, will be in place to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the gender framework*

Outcome 1: *The four thematic areas of Skills Now! will have individual and overall strategies for implementing and communicating a gender framework, including base targets for equity participation in all programs.*

Below, theme by theme, are listed activities, analysis and recommendations respecting the Outcome 1.

Theme One: *Linking High Schools to the Workplace*

Secondary School Apprenticeship Program

The GEA was able to participate in a minor way in this important aspect of revitalizing apprenticeship and linking high schools to the workplace. This initiative does not have a defined strategy for equity. This needs to be specific, planned and proactive. Whether leadership for the equity approach for this initiative rests with MSTL or the Ministry of Education, or both, it needs to be developed and coordinated if current efforts are not to be wasted. There do not seem to be indicators of current participation of girls and other equity groups, nor specific goals for their participation. These features of an equity approach should be planned, not incidental. If specific strategies exist to incorporate or encourage exploratory courses as baseline component in the initiative, they need to be better communicated.

Theme One, Recommendation 1: *That Apprenticeship undertake discussions with Ministry of Education officials to ensure a planned, strategic and directed approach to equity in the Secondary School Apprenticeship Program and specifically the efforts to link high schools to work generally.*

Secondary School Apprenticeship Manual

GEA worked closely with Apprenticeship Branch and Ministry of Education to promote the inclusion of equity in the manual for the Secondary School Apprenticeship Program (SSAP). The first draft of the manual did not reference equity adequately. The current draft has not yet been reviewed by the GEA, nor the Equity Committee of the PAB. The Director of Apprenticeship has acknowledged that the manual should address equity substantively and usefully. The Manual represents a significant, visible and useful aspect of the SSAP, and the absence or misrepresentation of equity in this publication will be counterproductive in terms of both results and profile.

Theme One, Recommendation 2: *That the Secondary School Apprenticeship Manual be reviewed by equity experts with knowledge of its application, and that time and resources be made available by the Apprenticeship Branch to incorporate changes/additions. This task could be assigned to the MSTL Equity Resource Group, if it is duly constituted and resources are provided to carry out the task.*

Using the Equity in Apprenticeship
Resource Package in the Schools

The GEA managed the development, through an Apprenticeship Branch funded contract, of a regionally-specific Resource Package on Equity in Apprenticeship. This Resource Package is discussed in more detail under Outcome Four of this report. Although initially designed for use by apprenticeship counselors and coordinators, this Package has potential as a productive equity tool in the school system, connected with the SSAP, and the general goal of linking high schools with the workplace. It could serve as a resource and a base for curriculum.

*Theme One, Recommendation 3:
That a strategy be developed jointly
by MSTL Apprenticeship and
Ministry of Education to distribute,
promote and utilize the Equity in
Apprenticeship Resource Package
in the school system, and in
conjunction with the SSAP.*

Equity In K-12 Skills Fund

The GEA participated in a Equal Access and Opportunity Workgroup, which successfully identified and dedicated \$700.0 K of K-12 Skills Fund (administered by Ministry of Education, Skills Branch) to equity related projects in school districts.

*Theme One, Recommendation 4:
MSTL review its involvement in the
Equal Access and Opportunity Fund.*

Involvement by GEA and Apprenticeship staff in this initiative was based on the understanding that the project would be undertaken with solid equity community input, providing a framework for support and suggestions to assist school districts to mount specific programs to promote equity (eg. direct support for programs such as pre-apprenticeship; GETT Camps; exploratory courses for girls and other equity students; promotional campaigns to involve girls and other equity group students).

Ministry of Education has now ear-marked these funds for equity initiatives, but the current project outline appears to be reactive, rather than proactive with respect to equity. MSTL's involvement in reviewing and approving applications from districts is still anticipated. No funds or administrative costs for MSTL are associated. The original potential for a strong, proactive approach to equity in the districts could possibly be recovered, but this would require directed -- and senior -- intervention by MSTL.

General Comments: Linking Highschool to the Workplace

The "linking high schools to the workplace" initiative is jointly managed by MSTL and Ministry of Education (MOE). Despite the presence in the MOE of the Aboriginal Education Branch, the Social Equity Branch and the Special Education Branch, there does not appear to be an equity strategy in place for this initiative. For example, of the original expenditure of \$20 Million from the Skills Now K-12 Fund "an insignificant proportion is explicitly dedicated to projects which directly address or prioritize equity objectives." (Draft proposal for "Access and Opportunity Initiative", April, 1995).

Unless equity is specifically and measurably identified as a program outcome, it will continue to be an "add-on". Equity for the linking high schools to the workplace objectives of Skills Now! requires strategic definition and management.

*Theme One, Recommendation 5:
That MSTL, with the advice of the
Equity Resource Group, undertake a
strategic approach for equity in
linking high schools to the workplace,
in conjunction with appropriate
players in Ministry of Education*

Theme Two: Access to Colleges and Universities

Campus Safety Initiative and the Child Care Initiative

The GEA participated as a member of the government reference group, and has attended the colleges and universities reference group meeting. Jean Campbell, Manager of Social and Equity Programs, now of the Access and Health Programs Branch of the Post Secondary Education Division, established a consultative, networking approach for both projects, producing equity outcomes which exceed the program parameters. Through its coordination of these projects, MSTL supports a planning, reporting and learning network for on-campus and community practitioners and leaders.

This approach is perceptibly effecting changes in climate and practice with regard to campus safety and child care specifically, and campus equity more generally. Further, the body of knowledge and expertise created by the networking process is a valuable resource, and can make lasting change to campus cultures in British Columbia with regard to safety and access for equity group members.

*Theme Two, Recommendation 1:
That the networking approach used
for the Campus Safety and Child
Care Initiative be documented as a
"best practice" equity approach, and
be encouraged as a model for other
program areas working with
institutions or community groups.*

*Theme Two, Recommendation 2:
That an approach be developed and
resources provided by MSTL to
continue support for the two
networks established for the Campus
Safety and the Child Care Initiative
to promote continued community-
building and campus self-resourcing
in these areas.*

Equity Opportunities for Trades and Technologies Courses (EOTT):

In response to the recommendation (endorsed by the PAB) of the PAB Equity Subcommittee that apprenticeship exploratory courses for women and other equity groups be established through post secondary institutions, the GEA convened initial meetings in June and July 1995 to explore the practical establishment of such courses. The goal of this initiative is to enhance the potential , opportunities and success for employment and further training of participants. Senior staff from the Apprenticeship Branch, Colleges and Technical Programs Branch, Access and Health Programs Branch, and Training and Employability Branch met to put in place a process to establish five regional pilots and validate a curriculum approach for these courses. In addition, the group will facilitate the fast-tracking of a similar "readiness" course and other modular supports for the BC Transit Parallel Apprenticeship Initiative. These two projects will retain productive links to ensure the practical experience of implementing the Transit initiative informs the larger project of curriculum validation and pilots for courses, and vice versa.

Theme Two, Recommendation 3: That senior support from both Divisional ADMs be given for the EOTT Initiative, and that leadership and resources are provided to ensure success.

Theme Two, Recommendation 4: That Jean Campbell, Manager Social & Equity Programs, be designated by both Divisions MSTL lead on the EOTT.

Student Loans

A centrally-directed review of these programs is underway, and Ministry of Women's Equality is playing a significant role in determining program sensitivity to women and other equity groups. Ministry of Women's Equality will continue its involvement with the review, and has already provided general and one-on-one advice on gender impact analysis. A gender impact analysis by MSTL of the programs is underway. In addition, the GEA has attended the Lifetime Maximum Appeals Committee Meeting, and has discussed with staff (Allison Bridges, Jim Vanstone, Tom Austen) the need for ongoing reviews of assumptions, procedures and communications with a view to more equitable and culturally-sensitive approaches.

Theme Two, Recommendation 5: That Student Loans staff undertake Gender Lens orientation and/or outside contracted training/program review to ensure staff understand the implications of equity for their programs, and develop proactive "equity-friendly" measures.

Theme Two, Recommendation 6: With respect to procedures and communications, that a consultant review program procedures which present specific barriers to equity students (eg. directions or assumptions which may be understandable or applicable only to mainstream applicants), and adjustments be made. This could be done in conjunction with the general program review, or separately.

General Remarks: Access to Colleges and Universities

Understanding and reception of equity and its practical application in programs varies in the Post Secondary Division. Generally, equity is not an integrated aspect of planning and delivery, but is relegated to specific programs or projects (eg. Campus Safety, Child Care Initiative, English Language Training, First Nations access programs and coordinators in institutions, etc.). The presence in the Division of the Social and Equity Programs Manager, and Aboriginal and disability advisors is a positive indication of commitment to equity. However, there may be a tendency to see equity expertise and commitment "belonging" to assigned individuals, or specific programs, rather than incorporated into general programming and funding approaches. Nonetheless, there are some strong equity activities in this area, and the existence of MSTL funded First Nation coordinators, programs for students with disabilities, women's advisors, and women and trades focuses in some campuses is encouraging. As well, the post secondary Aboriginal Strategy represents the potential for a planned approach to aboriginal issues. Also particularly effective is the networking approach used for the Campus Safety and Child Care programs, described above.

The Innovations fund contains the objective to "support full participation of equity group members". Each proposal is reviewed considering how it addresses equity. The Community Outreach Partnerships fund (COPS) prioritizes programs that provide opportunities for people from equity groups.

While productivity targets are set and monitored for these projects, it is not clear to what extent outcomes are assessed in terms of funds dedicated to equity efforts. Statistical measures of levels and effectiveness of post secondary efforts to promote access for equity groups are not generally available, and when they are they may exist for gender, but do not give information on other aspects of equity and diversity, unless the program is specifically targeted for a specific group. This makes description of the overall equity strategy, and definition of intended and measured outcomes, difficult at present. Institutions may be more inclined to understand the need for change toward greater equity and diversity, and be less resistant to it, if there was good evidence of a strategic approach by the ministry, and a clearer communication of intent, approach and resources committed.

Theme Two, Recommendation 7: That measures currently being undertaken which promote or support equity be described and communicated in a coordinated way, so that efforts underway can be understood as part of a strategic framework. Involvement is suggested from senior staff of the Post Secondary Education Division; the Policy, Planning and Research Division; and Public Relations.

Theme Two, Recommendation 8: That a proactive plan for equity addressing the theme of access, participation and success in the colleges and universities be developed, with measurements and benchmarks specifically identified, and a management strategy for the plan. Specific accountabilities for outcomes with respect to equity in colleges and universities, should be articulated and assigned to appropriate program managers.

Theme Three: <i>Retraining Workers in their Communities</i>

For this theme, the GEA was mainly involved in activities related to apprenticeship equity and revitalization. Some of these projects were: facilitating an initiative for MSTL to design and support exploratory courses for women and other equity groups in trades and technologies; supporting efforts for Secondary School Apprenticeship; providing equity input and advice to Apprenticeship sponsored Workplace Coaching Course and videos; regularly and actively attending the PAB Equity Subcommittee meetings, and supporting the subcommittee's initiatives; providing equity liaison, support and advice to Crown Corporation initiatives respecting apprenticeship; responding to PAB Equity Report. These and other activities are documented elsewhere in this report. The activities and recommendations respecting apprenticeship appear under the section in this report dealing with Outcome 4.

Crown Corporation Initiatives

In addition to specific Crown Corporation initiatives respecting equity, the GEA kept regular contact with Crown Corporations Secretariat, Ministry of Women's Equality, Policy staff at Employment and Investment, staff at the Transportation Financing Authority, and community activists and programmers. As a result of this liaison, the GEA was apprised of equity issues and activities such as the Vancouver Island Highway, BC Ferries, BC Transit, and BC Hydro. This liaison was also related to issues such as the Ministry of Employment and Investment, Women's Employment Strategy, Columbia Basin Accord, and the BC Transit Apprenticeship Initiative. As a result of these links, the GEA was often aware of information and controversies not accessed by staff in the Skills Development Division. Nevertheless, GEA success at becoming more involved at the programming level was limited.

Theme Three, Recommendation 1: Skills Development Division clarify its functional, policy, programming and funding role with respect to equity in the Crown Corporations, to allow responses and initiatives to flow from an articulated approach for supporting equity in the Crowns, and employers generally.

Theme Three, Recommendation 2: Assign a specific person from Skills Development Division to link with the Crown Corporations on equity issues, and provide a profile for that person on initiatives to influence the capability of Divisional programs to influence equity in the Crown Corporations.

Adjustment: People with Disabilities

The Vocational Rehabilitation Service Branch (VRSB) of Skills Development Division has program and policy responsibilities for people with disabilities. This program area is responsible for the administration of the Public Service Training Program (PSTP) which assists people with disabilities to become economically independent by helping them develop job skills. It also appears to carry a coordinating or policy role for equity respecting people with disabilities, but it is not clear the extent to which this valuable resource and knowledge base effects policy, operations and programming in the Skills Development Division, or in Skills Now! generally. While expertise for these functions may exist within the Branch, it is not clear how the resources of VRS serve the Division or Ministry with respect to equity issues more generally, particularly regarding an integrated approach to equity that considers the cross-referencing of issues that affect people with disabilities, women, Aboriginal people, and visible minorities.

The GEA was an active participant on the Disability Lens Working Group of the ADMs Committee on Disability Issues. Leadership for this Working Group is provided through the VRSB. Through this project, the VRSB is strengthening its expertise in policy review, project planning, and educational approaches related to these functions. What will be the future application of this expertise, and what role will VRSB have in the delivery of a "Disability Lens" approach? The recent establishment of the Office of Disability Issues (ODI) defines government-wide policy role for the ODI for disability issues. It remains to be seen how the role of the ODI and its Regional Resource Group, the role of the Disability Representative and reference group of the BCLFDB, and the role the VRSB will mesh.

*Theme Three, Recommendation 3:
That the functions and capacity of Vocational Rehabilitation Branch (VRSB) be clarified, in relation to its purpose in supporting equity objectives of the ministry, and Skills Now! in particular.*

*Theme Three, Recommendation 4:
That the respective roles of the VRSB, the BC Labour Force Development Board (BCLFDB) and ODI be clarified with respect to responsibilities for establishing program parameters, goals and evaluation approaches for disability within a larger equity framework required for programs and projects related to Skills Now!*

General Comments: Retraining Workers in their Communities

Probably due to a high pressure work environment in the Skills Development Division, the GEA's input was most often solicited to add a "gender and/or equity perspective", rather than being integrated into planning and strategic aspects of programming. This may be the result of unclear definition of the role of an equity advisor in the functions of programming and funding. Whereas a number of programs may have had "equity objectives" and "equity components", the GEA was not able to discern a planned equity approach. This was further evidenced by a seeming necessity to sacrifice equity-dedicated positions as peripheral to program delivery. There appears to be a past history of tension with some equity groups and issues in the Division, which has the potential of prompting a "we/they" reaction among some staff. As well, the focus for adjustment programs on business partnerships suggests to staff, in the absence of an alternative strategy, the need to downplay equity in "business-driven" programs.

As a quality check on the experience of equity-based community program proposals in this system, the GEA shadowed the trajectory of an equity-focused community program proposal which seemed logically to fit the Adjustment Program funding criteria. The proponent's experience was reported to the GEA as a maze of directions, responsibilities and eligibilities, requiring multiple phone calls, and repeated dead ends. The Ministry has already noted the need to streamline and simplify frontline contact and referral with Skills Now! programming. While this is an issue for applicants generally, it may be perceived as a particular barrier to equity projects or equity applicants.

Theme Three, Recommendation 5: Adjustment Programs develop a plan or framework for equity for funding and program approaches, delineating specific objectives, activities and deliverables, measures and evaluation plans. These could include:

- *a program focus linked to internal employment equity and Multicultural plans*
- *approaches and strategies for equity group relations and partnerships with equity-seeking groups*
- *a strategy to work with business and other partners to encourage and develop a capacity for equity in projects*
- *clear objectives, approaches and skills for program and field staff to enhance equity outcomes in their work*

Training or orientation on how to "do" equity programming should be provided where this is not understood. This plan could be packaged for communication purposes, and a strategy for communication, integrated with plans in other Skills Now! areas, could be developed.

Theme 4: *Welfare to Work*

Related programs are administered mainly through the Training and Employability Branch, Skills Development Division. The consuming focus of the Branch until summer, 1995 has been putting into place the administrative structures and procedures for delivery, including transferring and adapting Ministry of Social Service staff and program and funding responsibilities, opening Skills Centers for a field delivery capacity establishing an operating and funding budget, and moving toward a regionally-managed funding process based on Requests for Proposals

(RFP) for programming dollars. This process is now substantively in place, and the Branch is turning its attention to some pressing issues with respect to women at risk and access by members of other equity groups.

Programs are directed to income assistance recipients, and are designed to respond to clients who often face multiple barriers to training and employment (eg. women, youth, etc.). But there are complications in meeting equity expectations for these programs. Social development objectives which were a significant part of some programs when the Ministry of Social Services managed them are superseded by training for employability objectives of MSTL's mandate. The Training and Employability Branch, in partnership with communities, clients and service delivery agencies is redefining funding structures and policy approaches for the programs. This is particularly so for the Community Employment Programs (CET) which have developed a high profile with women's and other equity advocacy groups. MSTL has undergone considerable criticism and pressure regarding the changes in focus and client relations associated with the transition of CET programming.

The GEA has been an active player in these issues, raising them within the Ministry at the program and senior executive level. She has also liaised with specific projects and community advocacy groups, as well as the ministry of Women's Equality. On July 28, the GEA convened an information exchange meeting between Training and Employability staff and Ministry of Women's Equality, to put the issues on the table. This productive meeting will be followed up by informal contact, action by MSTL in some areas of concern, and retention of the contact as a joint forum for discussion. Issues referred for resolution and further action include: the need to review some elements of Bridges program RFPs to include aspects such as "harm reduction", now contained in the Youth Employment RFPs; establishing stronger links between MSTL and MWE field staff; the need for awareness raising for MSTL field staff in setting up community partnerships, review processes and input which are proactively "equity interested" -- this may include training and orientation for MSTL field staff concerning equity issues, equity community relations, equity partnership processes, and equity awareness.

Bridges Evaluation

Both the GEA and MWE are involved in the MSTL Policy Planning and Research Division committee set up to manage the evaluation of Bridges programs. They play a significant role in keeping the review sufficiently broad to explore program and policy elements that may extend beyond the MSTL mandate, and require decision-making at a senior, interministerial level. This process, as well as MSTL/MWE liaison on CET have potential to generate senior decision-making, policy and program analysis, assessment and practical adjustments to make welfare to work programming more responsive to equity issues, particularly those concerning women.

Aboriginal Women

Members of the Salishan Pathways Human Resources Society have requested a meeting with provincial officials in MSTL, BCLFDB, MWE and MEI to discuss what they perceive as impediments to fairness in the administration of programs attended by both on- and off-reserve women. This forum/discussion is scheduled to take place in August, 1995, and has potential as a first step in an ongoing dialogue.

Apprenticeship Initiatives for Income Assistance Recipients

The GEA has been an active participant in the Parallel Apprenticeship initiative of BC Transit, and its possible application across other Crown Corporations as an equity initiative. As referenced elsewhere in this report, Training and Employability will play a key role in ensuring that this initiative is linked with, and benefits from the establishment of Equity Orientation to Trades and Technology (EOTT) courses, described elsewhere in this report.

General Comments: Welfare to Work

There is commitment and knowledge of equity issues among the staff in this area. However, past concentration on administrative matters has resulted in the pressing need to now incorporate equity processes and components into the programs and their administration. While the Bridges evaluation should go some distance resolving issues respecting women at risk who access these programs, the lessons to be learned from this equity-sensitive evaluation deserve a broader application. As in other areas, equity in Welfare to Work programming will require a strategic approach, with the identification of outcomes, statistical measures, partnerships, benchmarks, and a communication strategy.

Theme Four, Recommendation 1: That Training and Employability Branch, in conjunction with PPR, be given the resources to develop an equity strategy with a focus on the four equity groups, in conjunction with the planning and programming initiatives to be undertaken with respect to youth.

Theme Four, Recommendation 2: That the equity approach being developed for the evaluation framework for Bridges be communicated and adapted as a guide approach for evaluations in other program areas.

Theme Four, Recommendation 3: That Training and Employability and MWE continue their dialogue on the Bridges programs, and other aspects of programs for income assistance recipients that may affect women and members of other equity groups.

<p>Outcome 2: <i>Measures will be defined and underway for program enhancement/changes to benefit single parents receiving Income Assistance.</i></p>

Outcomes for this section are discussed under Outcome 1, Theme Four: Welfare to Work, above.

Outcome 3: *The future of projects specifically addressing the needs of women victims of violence will be determined.*

Outcomes for this section are discussed under Outcome 1, Theme Four: Welfare to Work, above.

Outcome 4: *Measures will be in place to increase the number of women in apprenticeships, linked to the apprenticeship revitalization plans. Effective partnerships will be in place with the ministries of Women's Equality, Education, and Employment and Investment to strengthen and communicate these efforts.*

The GEA was involved in a number of projects and initiatives linked to improving the involvement of women in apprenticeship discussed below and elsewhere in this report.

Workplace Coaching Skills Course

MSTL is developing a number of informational and instructional videos related to equity. One of these is a course developed in conjunction with the Open Learning Agency "Workplace Coaching Skills", designed to assist journey persons and other workplace trainers and coaches to increase their skills as effective instructors for workers. It is likely this course will be promoted for use by Crown Corporations, perhaps in conjunction with anticipated equity apprenticeship initiatives by BC Transit and, potentially, other Crowns and employers. Initial demonstration versions of the video were problematic from a number of points of view, but were particularly insensitive to the potential of promoting and addressing equity as part of the course approach. The GEA became an active participant in an Advisory Committee of business, trainers, labour and other associations brought together to review the development of the course and video. The new introductory demo, distributed for review in July, shows a marked improvement in "equity sensitivity". But strong equity input will need to be sustained throughout the development of the course, to ensure that it includes equity in a realistic and inoffensive way, and that the course content provides instruction in equity issues in various components.

Outcome Four, Recommendation 1: That a clear role be defined for equity review of the Workplace Coaching Course and other materials and videos developed as informational and promotional materials regarding apprenticeship. This role could be assigned to the ERG, or alternate bodies established by the Ministry.

Outcome Four, Recommendation 2: That arrangement be made to have the video and course materials reviewed by the PAB, as well as the PAB Equity Subcommittee.

Equity in Apprenticeship Course

Funded by Apprenticeship Branch, this contracted project was designed and managed by the GEA, to provide information, orientation and awareness of equity issues for counselors and coordinators, and improve service and accessibility for women and other equity groups. Completion is scheduled for late August 1995, and piloting with Apprenticeship Coordinators will be scheduled for September 1995. This course, designed specifically for apprenticeship coordinators and counselors, could be adapted for use by SSAP career counselors, and by Crown Corporations and other employers participating in equity apprenticeship initiatives. The course is being developed through a consultative, collaborative process. The project is being conducted by a team of people who have participated in apprenticeship training, equity training and programming, and apprenticeship. It is being led by Deanna Rexe, Public Consulting Group of British Columbia.

Outcome Four, Recommendation 3: That a strategic approach be developed within Apprenticeship and MSTL generally to ensure the application of the Equity in Apprenticeship Course and follow-up for counselors and coordinators, as well as adaptations and applications through the SSAP, the PAB, and with employers.

Outcome Four, Recommendation 4: That the Equity in Apprenticeship Course be reviewed by the Equity Subcommittee of the PAB, as well as by the MSTL ERG, or alternate bodies established by the Ministry.

Equity in Apprenticeship Resource Package

Funded by Apprenticeship Branch, this contracted project was designed and managed by the GEA, to assist counselors and coordinators to be aware of and use resources to promote equity in apprenticeship. Completion is scheduled for late August 1995. This package, which will have regionally-specific versions, is being designed specifically for apprenticeship coordinators and counselors. It could also be adapted for applications in the SSAP for use by career counselors, and could be useful for Crown Corporations and other employers participating in equity apprenticeship initiatives.

Outcome Four, Recommendation 5: That a strategic approach be developed within the Apprenticeship Branch and MSTL generally to ensure the distribution, promotion and use of the Equity in Apprenticeship Package by counselors and coordinators, as well as adaptations and applications in the SSAP, the PAB, and with employers.

The Package is being developed through a consultative, collaborative process, led by British Columbia leaders in equity in apprenticeship, and training and employability. This project is being developed simultaneously with the Equity in Apprenticeship Course (described above) with the same Principal Consultant and the involvement of a number of the same specialists. As well, this project contains a mentorship component for two immigrant visible minority women learning to apply their research and writing skills as Canadian contractors.

Outcome Four, Recommendation 6: That the Equity Resource Package be reviewed by the Equity Subcommittee of the PAB, as well as by the MSTL ERG, or alternate bodies established by the Ministry.

Equity Subcommittee of Provincial Apprenticeship Board

The GEA has been an active participant in this Subcommittee, with involvement in the following:

- relaying concerns about the PAB logo, and clarifying its use as a PAB symbol only;
- supporting and attending the federal (HRDC) course "Recruitment and Retention of Aboriginal Workers"
- reviewing and making recommendations on the collection of statistics on women in apprenticeship
- facilitating and participating in drafting the Ministry's response to the PAB report on Equity.

Outcome Four, Recommendation 7: T member of the Equity Resource Group other body designated by the min continue to liaise with the subcommittee regularly attend the meetings.

PAB Equity Subcommittee Recommendations

The GEA had intended to undertake jointly with the Director of Apprenticeship Branch, a response to the recommendations of the PAB Equity Subcommittee. This task is overdue, since the recommendations were submitted to the ministry some time ago. However, with the reorganization of Apprenticeship in the ministry, and the possibility of a newly delineated plan, this task could be undertaken under the new Executive Director's direction.

Outcome Four, Recommendation 8: That as soon as is feasible, the Executive Director of Apprenticeship assign the response to the PAB Equity Committee recommendations within his area, with timelines; and that response, once it has been approved, be communicated formally to the PAB and the Equity Subcommittee.

Site visit to Seattle: Apprenticeship Opportunities Project

With Gail Wilson Apprenticeship Area Manager; Deanna Rexe Public Consulting Group of BC, Brenda Ireland Aboriginal Advisor, BCIT; and Kate Pelletier Associate Dean, School of Trades Training, BCIT conducted site visit to the Apprenticeship Opportunity Project. The Apprenticeship Opportunities Project recruits people of colour, women and persons with disabilities into pre-apprenticeship training, then helps to place them in State approved apprenticeship programs and in jobs. The project works directly with individual businesses to meet their hiring needs and encourage use of apprenticeships. This model appears to have distinct applications to demand-based economic initiatives (eg. BC21, Columbia Basin Accord), as well as apprenticeship initiatives in the Crowns and with other employers. GEA has distributed and discussed this model with MEI Policy, Crown Corporation Secretariat, Apprenticeship staff, Training and Employability, and to the working group on Equity Orientation to Trades and Technology (EOTT).

General Comments: Apprenticeship Revitalization

The goal of increasing the number of women in apprenticeship has complex components, as has been noted many times. The apprenticeship system needs revitalization and to be made more accessible and welcoming to women and other equity group members. Thinking has to change, processes have to change, and commitment to that change has to be strong throughout the system. Encouraging women and other equity groups to participate in apprenticeship needs to start early, when young people are beginning to form their goals for post secondary training and work. The strategy for attracting and supporting equity group members to apprenticeship requires and deserves a strategic approach: a plan and stewardship. While Apprenticeship Branch leadership has been proactive in involving the GEA and initiating projects to promote equity, there remain entrenched attitudes among people working in this area, often reinforced by their contacts in the trades, and with union members, parents, schools and employers.

Accomplishing change is hampered as well by the lack of practical information, baseline data, analysis and comprehensive management of an equity approach in apprenticeship. The new structure for management of apprenticeship recently instituted in MSTL opens possibilities for a "fresh start" for implementing a commitment to equity. The following are some pressing needs for building an apprenticeship system that can achieve progress towards equity:

- Resources and expertise need to be applied to developing a system of documenting and monitoring the participation of women and other equity groups in apprenticeship. Presently, the collection and reporting of this data is inadequate, and analytic methodologies are needed for goal-setting, monitoring and evaluation. Associated with this, there is a need for effective and sensitive means of collecting equity information in apprenticeship. This issue was identified by the Director of Apprenticeship, and will require concerted work by an equity practitioner.

*Outcome Four, Recommendation 9:
That Apprenticeship initiate a project in cooperation with the Equity Subcommittee of the PAB to develop a data collection, statistical analysis system and reporting system for equity in apprenticeship.*

*Outcome Four, Recommendation 10:
That the data systems described in Outcome 4, Recommendation 9 be framed within a planning, monitoring and evaluation approach for equity in Apprenticeship where specific goals for equity are set, and outcomes and progress measured.*

*Outcome Four, Recommendation 11:
That resources be allocated by Apprenticeship to hire an expert in equity systems to design an appropriate format to collect equity data from Apprenticeship administrative forms.*

- Apprenticeship counselors and coordinators need to develop understanding and commitment to equity. Management approaches are needed to integrate activities and accountabilities. Counselors and others who liaise with employers require training and tools to effectively and appropriately promote equity to employers, gauge employers' and workplace readiness, and suggest supports. This can be partially achieved by use of the Equity in Apprenticeship Workshop and Resource Package, as well as the OLA course on Workplace Coaching (if it does indeed contain useful components on workplace equity). However, specific tools and skills are required to promote equity appropriately. Not all workplaces which indicate readiness to take equity candidates can support their success. As equity candidates are placed, there will be more pressure on the Apprenticeship Branch to ensure workplace readiness and retention.

Outcome Four, Recommendation 12: That Apprenticeship develop a strategy and training for promotion, placement and support of equity apprentices for field workers responsible for liaising with employers, including those finding placements connected with the SSAP.

Outcome 5:

Administrative and accountability measures, possibly including the establishment of an equity coordinator, will be in place to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the gender framework.

The GEA has worked toward administrative accountability for equity in MSTL by exploring existing frameworks and linking with other equity resource people in the ministry. In May 1995, the GEA initiated the Equity Resource Group, (ERG) an informal gathering of some key people in the ministry working on equity issues. The responsibilities and activities of the ERG remain to be determined, but if it were constituted as the body to ensure coordination of equity efforts, a definition of administrative accountabilities would be built into its mandate and activities. This group has already worked with Strategic Relations and Research Branch, identifying problems and requirements for collecting and reporting statistics on equity groups; has informally reviewed the OLA Workplace Coaching course; and has identified the need for an inventory of MSTL equity efforts.

Establishing a Corporate Coordinating Mechanism for Equity

For a ministry the size and complexity of MSTL, coordination is essential if duplication and cross-purposes are to be avoided, and effectiveness, integration and accountability achieved. As is stated repeatedly in this report, the ministry requires a strategic framework to define and implement equity in terms of program goals and outcomes, to manage them, and to assign accountabilities for them. This effort is partially and unevenly underway. But because equity cannot presently be described as a corporate effort, many inside and outside the ministry are unaware of measures already begun. Equity needs to be an integrated aspect of corporate management. It should not be relegated to individual advocacy, personal commitment or isolated programming.

Outcome 5, Recommendation 1: That MSTL give priority to establishing a corporate approach to coordinating and promoting equity activities within the ministry, which includes all aspects of corporate responsibility, both internal (eg. employment equity, policy review, program design, delivery and evaluation, consumer relations, communications, etc.), and external.

British Columbia Labour Force Development Board (BCLFDB)

The GEA established strong links with Director of Equity, BCLFDB, and promoted liaison with the Board by Ministry of Women's Equality and Ministry of Employment and Investment. In the BCLFDB's role reporting to and advising the Minister on business, labour and equity labour market issues, it seems the Board could play a more direct role in promoting equity within the ministry and with Skills Now!.

Outcome 5, Recommendation 2: That regular liaison mechanisms be set up at the program level (in addition to the current policy liaison) with the BCLFDB Director of Equity: to explore equity functions and activities for the Board and the equity reference groups (including the Board's focus on income assistance recipients) in the delivery of Skills Now! programming, and the development of specific equity initiatives.

The BCLFDB has an organized focus on equity, with community-selected reference groups offering existing for a review and participation by community equity proponents. In addition to its current activities reviewing and reporting to the Minister on these issues, a closer relationship at the program level could be established, in particular through the existence of the equity reference groups. These latter have the potential to be resources and sounding boards for partnership and advice.

Outcome 5, Recommendation 3: That the Director of Equity BCLFDB become a member of the MSTL ERG, or any alternative equity coordinating group established by the ministry.

Administrative Accountability Measures

With respect to administrative and accountability measures, several recommendations are made here, with the hope that they will become part of an overall corporate plan for equity.

Evaluation:

Outcome 5, Recommendation 4: That there be continued involvement of an equity practitioner with program expertise in Skills Now! evaluation frameworks.

Integration and Responsibility: More integration of equity could be achieved throughout Skills Now! programs by assigning specific equity focus and functions within each Division and/or Branch. This could foster recognition, definition and knowledge of what equity means, specific to operations and programming, and how to incorporate it. This requires leadership at program levels, activities related to ongoing functions, and links to policy for support in program planning, goal-setting, evaluation, benchmarks, and monitoring.

Outcome 5, Recommendation 5: That a scheme be developed so that one person in each Division be given functional and programmatic responsibility for equity. This could develop as part of ministry planning and assigning of accountabilities.

Baseline Data:

Outcome 5, Recommendation 6: That there be further review and enhancement by equity practitioners in the ministry of baseline data on equity groups currently compiled by the ministry.

Systems:

Outcome 5, Recommendation 7: That systems be established for gathering equity data, setting equity goals and monitoring and evaluating Skills Now! program according to these goals.

Accountability:

Outcome 5, Recommendation 8: That equity practitioners in the ministry assist the ministry to implement the Auditor General's and Deputy Ministers' Council "Enhancing Accountability for Performance in the Public Sector" (June 1995), regarding legal compliance and fairness, equity and probity (p. 34), with respect to Skills Now! programs.

Training, Standards, Outcomes:

Outcome 5, Recommendation 9: That the ministry continue to develop training, and practical tools to assist the implementation of equity in Skills Now! programming and administration, including the introduction of program standards and the articulation of outcomes;

Champions:

Outcome 5, Recommendation 10: That the ministry develop an approach for creating equity "champions" and experts throughout the system.

Rethinking Training Needs

In reviewing Skills Now! programs with a view to incorporating equity, the ministry will find an excellent resource in "Rethinking Training: Meeting Women's Needs" (the Report of the F/P/T Joint Working Group of Status of Women and Labour Market Officials on Education and Training May, 1994). Although this document is designed to implement gender equity specifically, the Gender Analysis Tool it contains is an excellent starting point for reviewing training from the point of view of general equity as well. The five key questions : where do we start? how will women and men participate? how will practical needs be addressed? how will strategic interests (social change) be addressed? and, what are the outcomes? are useful guidelines for review. They require planning which addresses: what data is needed; who needs to be involved; what will be the impacts of the programs; how initiatives can be linked to broader strategies and goals for equity; and what outcomes and impacts will occur. Further, the principles for equitable training outlined in the document should be considered as the standard for designing and reviewing Skills Now! programming.

Outcome 5, Recommendation 11: That in establishing its corporate approach to equity, MSTL be guided by the Report "Rethinking Training: Meeting Women's Needs", referenced in this document.

Communication

MSTL's efforts toward equity in Skills Now! need to be communicated. Although the ministry has not yet developed a framework for equity, communication of its intent to do so, and its investment in and the outcomes of the Gender Equity Framework Project, could be an important first step.

Outcome 5, Recommendation 12: That a plan be developed to communicate, both within the ministry and externally, MSTL commitment to developing an equity framework, and the outcomes of the Gender Equity Framework Project.

If the ministry adopts the recommendations for coordination, an early step could be to open a productive dialogue with equity partners. In the case of gender equity, links are needed with Women in Trades and Technology (WITT) and Women's Employment and Training Coalition (WETC). A follow-up Forum to that organized by Ministry of Women's Equality in November 1994, and attended by officials in MWE, MSTL and MEI would be timely and productive. The results of the Gender Equity Framework Project could be communicated to indicate which issues have been addressed.

Outcome 5, Recommendation 13: That the ministry consider collaborating with Ministry of Women's Equality and Ministry of Employment and Investment, concerning setting a follow-up meeting with women's and other equity groups concerning gender equity in Skills Now!

Conclusion

There exist both opportunities and barriers for the implementation of equity within Skills Now! programming. Some of these are listed below.

Some Opportunities

- There is an articulated, and in many cases, practical commitment to equity in the ministry. In addition to those with defined responsibilities in this area, there are a number of people who support a heightened emphasis on these initiatives, and a clearer focus.
- With regard to Skills Now! senior executive have expressed strong support for equity; it appears fairly consistently in program objectives, and in overall goals for Skills Now!
- There is a considerable amount of effort devoted to equity in the ministry in the form of formalized mechanisms and positions (e.g. Employment Equity Committee, Office for Disability Issues, Aboriginal Advisor, Post Secondary Education, etc.)

Some Barriers

- Equity efforts for Skills Now! are not well coordinated, and do not flow from a planned corporate approach.
- Equity planning was not substantially incorporated into program planning and design, so equity measures -- when present -- may occur as "add ons".

- Equity is low, or not on, the agenda in some areas. Reasons include the following:
 - genuine antagonism toward the concept and practice of equity
 - lack of knowledge of what constitutes equity, and how to apply it to particular programs or responsibilities
 - "we/they" attitudes toward equity advocates and groups, and the perception of being besieged by community equity advocates (this points strongly to the need for positive partnership strategies with community equity advocates)
 - the belief that equity is someone else's job, or is being taken care of
 - feelings that the ministry's efforts are adequate, or more than adequate
 - being too engaged in program pressures or crises to consider equity.

It has been repeatedly acknowledged that women and other equity group members are not benefiting equitably from labour market initiatives. Skills Now! presents an opportunity to address inequities and demonstrate initiative by increasing the participation and success of underrepresented groups in training and employment. Much of the focus to date has been on defining and implementing Skills Now! programming generally. But there exist ample opportunities and excellent resources within the ministry to develop an equity strategy for Skills Now!. A number of suggestions for managing equity have been put forward in this report. Most are possible with existing resources, and could be implemented immediately. Some are already underway and merely require follow-up and completion.

This six month project has produced some concrete results toward the goal of equity, and analysis and recommendations for next steps. It is hoped this report will stimulate effort and encourage continued corporate commitment for a comprehensive and effective approach to equity.

Summary of Recommendations

Outcome 1: *The four thematic areas of Skills Now! will have individual and overall strategies for implementing and communicating a gender framework, including base targets for equity participation in all programs.*

Theme One: Linking High Schools to the Workplace

Recommendation 1: *That Apprenticeship undertake discussions with Ministry of Education officials to ensure a planned, strategic and directed approach to equity in the Secondary School Apprenticeship Program and specifically the efforts to link high schools to work generally.*

Recommendation 2: *That the Secondary School Apprenticeship manual be reviewed by equity experts with knowledge of its application, and that time and resources be made available by the Apprenticeship Branch to incorporate changes/additions. This task could be assigned to the MSTL Equity Resource Group, if it is duly constituted and resources are provided to carry out the task.*

Recommendation 3: *That a strategy be developed jointly by MSTL Apprenticeship and Ministry of Education to distribute, promote and utilize the Equity in Apprenticeship Resource Package in the school system, and in conjunction with the SSAP.*

Recommendation 4: *MSTL review its involvement in the Equal Access and Opportunity Fund.*

Recommendation 5: *That MSTL, with the advice of the Equity Resource Group, undertake a strategic approach for equity in linking high schools to the workplace, in conjunction with appropriate players in Ministry of Education.*

Theme Two: Access to Colleges and Universities

Recommendation 1: *That the networking approach used for the Campus Safety and Child Care Initiative be documented as a "best practice" equity approach, and be encouraged as a model for other program areas working with institutions or community groups.*

Recommendation 2: *That an approach be developed and resources provided by MSTL to continue support for the two networks established for the Campus Safety and the Child Care Initiative to promote continued community-building and campus self-resourcing in these areas.*

Recommendation 3: *That senior support from both Divisional ADMs be given for the EOTT Initiative, and that leadership and resources are provided to ensure success.*

Recommendation 4: *That Jean Campbell, Manager Social & Equity Programs, be designated by both Divisions MSTL lead on the EOTT.*

Recommendation 5: *That Student Loans staff undertake Gender Lens orientation and/or outside contracted training/program review to ensure staff understand the implications of equity for their programs, and develop proactive "equity-friendly" measures.*

Recommendation 6: With respect to procedures and communications, that a consultant review program procedures which present specific barriers to equity students (eg. directions or assumptions which may be understandable or applicable only to mainstream applicants), and adjustments be made. This could be done in conjunction with the general program review, or separately.

Recommendation 7: That measures currently being undertaken which promote or support equity be described and communicated in a coordinated way, so that efforts underway can be understood as part of a strategic framework. Involvement is suggested from senior staff of the Post Secondary Education Division; the Policy, Planning and Research Division; and Public Relations.

Recommendation 8: That a proactive plan for equity addressing the theme of access, participation and success with measurements and benchmarks specifically identified, and a management strategy for the plan. Specific equity in colleges and universities, should be articulated and assigned to appropriate program managers.

Theme Three: Workforce Adjustment: Retraining Workers Closer to Home

Recommendation 1: Skills Development Division clarify its functional, policy, programming and funding role with respect to equity in the Crown Corporations, to allow responses and initiatives to flow from an articulated approach for supporting equity in the Crowns, and employers generally.

Recommendation 2: Assign a specific person from Skills Development Division to link with the Crown Corporations on equity issues, and provide a profile for that person on initiatives to influence the capability of Divisional programs to influence equity in the Crown Corporations.

Recommendation 3: That the functions and capacity of Vocational Rehabilitation Branch (VRSB) be clarified, in relation to its purpose in supporting equity objectives of the ministry, and Skills Now! in particular.

Recommendation 4: That the respective roles of the VRSB, the BC Labour Force Development Board (BCLFDB) and ODI be clarified with respect to responsibilities for establishing program parameters, goals and evaluation approaches for disability within a larger equity framework required for programs and projects related to Skills Now!

Recommendation 5: Adjustment Programs develop a plan or framework for equity for funding and program approaches, delineating specific objectives, activities and deliverables, measures and evaluation plans. These could include:

- a program focus linked to internal employment equity and Multicultural plans*
- approaches and strategies for equity group relations and partnerships with equity-seeking groups*
- a strategy to work with business and other partners to encourage and develop a capacity for equity in projects*
- clear objectives, approaches and skills for program and field staff to enhance equity outcomes in their work*

Training or orientation on how to "do" equity programming should be provided where this is not understood. This plan could be packaged for communication purposes, and a strategy for communication, integrated with plans in other Skills Now! areas, could be developed.

Theme 4: Welfare to Work

Recommendation 1: That Training and Employability Branch, in conjunction with PPR, be given the resources to develop an equity strategy with a focus on the four equity groups, in conjunction with the planning and programming initiatives to be undertaken with respect to youth.

Recommendation 2: That the equity approach being developed for the evaluation framework for Bridges be communicated and adapted as a guide approach for evaluations in other program areas.

Recommendation 3: That Training and Employability and MWE continue their dialogue on the Bridges programs, and other aspects of programs for income assistance recipients that may affect women and members of other equity groups.

Outcome 2: Measures will be defined and underway for program enhancement/changes to benefit single parents receiving Income Assistance.

Outcomes for this section are discussed under Outcome 1, Theme Four: Welfare to Work.

Outcome 3: The future of projects specifically addressing the needs of women victims of violence will be determined.

Outcomes for this section are discussed under Outcome 1, Theme Four: Welfare to Work.

Outcome 4: Measures will be in place to increase the number of women in apprenticeships, linked to the apprenticeship revitalization plans. Effective partnerships will be in place with the ministries of Women's Equality, Education, and Employment and Investment to strengthen and communicate these efforts.

Recommendation 1: That a clear role be defined for equity review of the Workplace Coaching Course and other materials and videos developed as informational and promotional materials regarding apprenticeship. This role could be assigned to the ERG, or alternate bodies established by the Ministry.

Recommendation 2: That arrangement be made to have the video and course materials reviewed by the PAB, as well as the PAB Equity Subcommittee.

Recommendation 3: That a strategic approach be developed within Apprenticeship and MSTL generally to ensure the application of the Equity in Apprenticeship Course and follow-up for counselors and coordinators, as well as adaptations and applications through the SSAP, the PAB, and with employers.

Recommendation 4: That the Equity in Apprenticeship Course be reviewed by the Equity Subcommittee of the PAB, as well as by the MSTL ERG, or alternate bodies established by the Ministry.

Recommendation 5: That a strategic approach be developed within the Apprenticeship Branch and MSTL generally to ensure the distribution, promotion and use of the Equity in Apprenticeship Package by counselors and coordinators, as well as adaptations and applications in the SSAP, the PAB, and with employers.

Recommendation 6: That the Equity Resource Package be reviewed by the Equity Subcommittee of the PAB, as well as by the MSTL ERG, or alternate bodies established by the Ministry

Recommendation 7: That a member of the Equity Resource Group, or other body designated by the ministry, continue to liaise with the subcommittee, and regularly attend the meetings.

Recommendation 8: That as soon as is feasible, the Executive Director of Apprenticeship assign the response to the PAB Equity Committee recommendations within his area, with timelines; and that response, once it has been approved, be communicated formally to the PAB and the Equity Subcommittee.

Recommendation 9: That Apprenticeship initiate a project in cooperation with the Equity Subcommittee of the PAB to develop a data collection, statistical analysis system and reporting system for equity in apprenticeship.

Recommendation 10: That the data systems described in Outcome 4, Recommendation 9 be framed within a planning, monitoring and evaluation approach for equity in Apprenticeship where specific goals for equity are set, and outcomes and progress measured.

Recommendation 11: That resources be allocated by Apprenticeship to hire an expert in equity systems to design an appropriate format to collect equity data from Apprenticeship administrative forms.

Recommendation 12: That Apprenticeship develop a strategy and training for promotion, placement and support of equity apprentices for field workers responsible for liaising with employers, including those finding placements connected with the SSAP.

Outcome 5: Administrative and accountability measures, possibly including the establishment of an equity coordinator, will be in place to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the gender framework.

Recommendation 1: That MSTL give priority to establishing a corporate approach to coordinating and promoting equity activities within the ministry, which include all aspects of corporate responsibility, both internal (eg. employment equity, policy review, program design, delivery and evaluation, consumer relations, communications, etc.), and external.

Recommendation 2: That regular liaison mechanisms be set up at the program level (in addition to the current policy liaison) with the BCLFDB Director of Equity: to explore equity functions and activities for the Board and the equity reference groups (including the Board's focus on income assistance recipients) in the delivery of Skills Now! programming, and the development of specific equity initiatives.

Recommendation 3: That the Director of Equity BCLFDB become a member of the MSTL ERG, or any alternative equity coordinating group established by the ministry.

Recommendation 4: That there be continued involvement of an equity practitioner with program expertise in Skills Now! evaluation frameworks.

Recommendation 5: That a scheme be developed so that one person in each Division be given functional and programmatic responsibility for equity. This could develop as part of ministry planning and assigning of accountabilities.

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Recommendation 7: That systems be established for gathering equity data, setting equity goals, monitoring and evaluating Skills Now! program according to these goals.

Recommendation 8: That equity practitioners in the ministry assist the ministry to implement the Auditor General's and Deputy Ministers' Council "Enhancing Accountability for Performance in the Public Sector" (June 1995), regarding legal compliance and fairness, equity and probity (p. 34), with respect to Skills Now! programs.

Recommendation 9: That the ministry continue to develop training, and practical tools to assist the implementation of equity in Skills Now! programming and administration, including the introduction of program standards and the articulation of outcomes.

Recommendation 10: That the ministry develop an approach for creating equity "champions" and experts throughout the system.

Recommendation 11: That in establishing its corporate approach to equity, MSTL be guided by the Report "Rethinking Training: Meeting Women's needs", referenced in this document.

Recommendation 12: That a plan be developed to communicate, both within the ministry and externally, MSTL commitment to developing an equity framework, and the outcomes of the Gender Equity Project.

Recommendation 13: That the ministry consider collaborating with Ministry of Women's Equality and Ministry of Employment and Investment, concerning setting a follow-up meeting with women's and other equity groups concerning gender equity in Skills Now!