

**Towards A Women's
Agenda On Training:
A Resource Kit**

**Vers un programme
des femmes en matière
de formation : Une
trousse de ressources**

This Resource Kit was prepared by Susan Wismer and Linda Szeto of Development Initiatives Inc. for the Reference Group to the Women's Representative on the Canadian Labour Force Development Board.

You are encouraged to photocopy all or any section of this Resource Kit, and to share it with women in your community.

This Resource Kit is available in French and English.

Susan Wismer et Linda Szeto de l'agence Development Initiatives Inc. ont préparé cette trousse de ressources à l'intention du groupe de référence qui appuie la représentante des femmes à la Commission canadienne de mise en valeur de la main-d'œuvre.

Nous vous suggérons fortement de photocopier cette trousse de ressources, intégralement ou en partie, et de la transmettre à des femmes de votre collectivité.

Cette trousse de ressources est disponible en anglais et en français.

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This report does not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of agencies or institutions sponsoring, funding or participating in the research.

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Ce rapport ne reflète pas nécessairement l'opinion ou la politique des organismes ou institutions qui parrainent ou financent les recherches, ou encore y participent.

New Directions In Education And Training: Where Do Women Fit In? An Introductory Fact Sheet

Women's Representative Appointed to New Training Board

After years of struggle and persistent advocacy efforts, women have been recognized as formal participants in the development of federal labour market and job training policy. Twenty-one national women's organizations recently selected Marcy Cohen as the Women's Representative to the newly created national training board, the Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB). During the next 1-2 years, regional and local boards will be established as well. Women will sit on those boards. With adequate organization and support, women can now have a voice in policy-making and an opportunity to create programs and services that truly serve our diverse needs.

Creating A Women's Agenda on Training

At the consultations where Marcy was selected, a Reference Group was formed to support and advise her in her work as Women's Representative. In order to take advantage of this opportunity, we will have to make our voices heard and develop a coherent agenda on women's training. Marcy and the Reference Group want to hear from women from across the country about what they believe in, how to make it happen and what should come first. The Resource Kit has been created to help women discuss what kinds of policies and programs are needed. Future plans, depending on funding, also include Regional Workshops to bring women together to talk about training, program and policy issues.

Women in grass roots community groups, women's organizations and educational institutions and agencies now have an opportunity to argue for a new approach - an alternate **Agenda on Training** for women in Canada. In order to create this alternate agenda women need to voice their concerns, tell their stories and organize. A package of materials has been developed to help women do this - called the **Resource Kit**. It contains background information on the CLFDB, women's experience and barriers to participation in education and training, and, ideas for sharing information and working collectively.

Training and Jobs - The Important Link

Women know that access to high quality education and training is required to obtain good jobs - jobs that pay a living wage, offer reasonable security and involve safe, productive and meaningful work. Right now, at the very most, only 14 out of every 100 women who need training are able to use federally funded training programs. And the few who get in find that most of these programs are short term and with limited resources. This results in training which can only provide entry level low-paying jobs. Problems are also encountered because of low training allowances, inadequate child care, and because programs do not adequately address the needs of aboriginal women, immigrant and visible minority women, women with all disabilities and women on social assistance. These programs also do not take into account the violence and abuse which are part of the daily lives of many women.

What is the Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB)?

The CLFDB was established in May 1991 and is part of the Canadian government's increasing interest in the link between training workers and Canada's ability to compete in a global economy. The CLFDB was set up to advise the government on priorities and standards for training. It is an independent organization, funded by Employment and Immigration Canada, but operating at 'arm's-length' from government. The CLFDB has 22 members: 8 from organized labour, 8 from business, 2 from education and 4 'social action' members, representing the interests of women, aboriginal people, immigrants and visible minorities and people with all disabilities. The Board also has representatives from the provinces who sit as ex-officio members. The government plans to have local Boards working with the CLFDB and making decisions about training all across the country within two years. As of September 1991, the local Boards are not yet up and running.

Who is Marcy Cohen?

Marcy has been involved in women's employment and training issues for over 20 years. She was active in the first grass roots feminist organization in British Columbia, has worked in day care, as an employment and training counsellor, developed curriculum for women re-entry the job market and has researched the effect of technological change on women's jobs. Marcy is active in the Women's Research Centre and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. She also represented the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) in federally organized consultations about labour market and job training policy.

How Does She Represent Women's Interest?

Marcy works with a collective of women from across Canada called the Reference Group. Representatives from women in trades and technology, francophone women, immigrant women, women of colour, native women and women with all disabilities, are members of the Reference Group. These women work with Marcy to advise her and support her and to ensure that she keeps 'in touch' with the common priorities and diverse training needs of women in Canada.

If you would like to participate and receive a free copy of the Resource Kit, please send your NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE and FAX information to the following address:

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Towards A Women's Agenda On Training:

A Resource Kit

Why A Resource Kit?

This Resource Kit has been developed by the Women's Representative to the Canadian Labour Force Development Board and the Women's Reference Group. The purpose of the Kit is to inform women about the latest changes in policy structures and to help women across the country outline their hopes and concerns about women's education and training. This information will help the Women's Representative bring the reality of women's lives to discussions about training policy and will help create our own position statement - an agenda on women's training. We want to hear about the problems women face, what kind of training should we strive for and what should be the priorities. Because there will also be new decision-making structures created at the regional and local level, the Kit also contains suggestions of ways for women to organize in their own communities.

What is in the Kit?

This Kit contains five sections divided into two main parts: **A Call to Action** and **Background Information**. The Kit also contains a glossary of terms. A Call to Action consists of ideas and exercises to help generate information on women's training needs and suggestions for working collectively to influence decision-making at the local and regional level. Background Information gives further information on how and why the CLFDB was created, detail on the selection of the Women's Representative, the activities and membership of the Reference Group, and an overview of women's participation and barriers to their participation in education and training.

The Kit has been colour coded and each section can be used together or separately.

A Call to Action:

- The Women's Agenda on Training (lavender)
- Organizing for Women's Training (beige)

Background Information:

- The Canadian Labour Force Development Board (green)
- The Women's Representative and the Reference Group (blue)
- Women's Education and Training in Canada (pink)

Glossary of Terms

(grey)

Women's Education and Training In Canada Background Information

- Kim, a 28 year old single mother living on social assistance with two years of college, wants to get off welfare but she has found that most entry level jobs will not pay a living wage - enough for child care and other basic needs.
- Betty, 48 years old and about to lose her job because the plant she has worked at for the last 10 years is shutting down and moving to Mexico, needs to retrain but cannot afford it.
- Jasmine, a trained bookkeeper with 10 years experience, immigrated to Canada six months ago and cannot find an employer to hire her because her English needs upgrading and she has no Canadian experience.

Although their situations are different, these women need some assistance to enter and re-enter the labour market - and they're not likely to find what they need in the existing government-funded job training programs..."¹

Learning, Work and Women's Lives:

Government training programs focus on women as trainees and as employees. But women are not only trainees and employees. They are mothers, daughters, sisters, friends, spouses and partners. Whatever else is going on in any woman's life will have a major impact on her efforts to learn new skills or find a good job. For example, in 1986, over 60% of women aged 15 to 24 years reported that they were responsible for a child living at home. Also in 1986, about 60% of women reported that they were living as wives or common-law spouses and a further 7% were single parents. The number of women who are single parents increased by 19% from 1981 to 1986². An increasing number of women also care for elderly family members. Clearly, family relationships and the work, joy and caring that goes with them are an important factor in most women's lives in Canada.

Housing is also a major issue for many women, and one that has a great impact on any woman's interest in training and her ability to find and keep a good job. A safe and stable living situation is one of the most basic of human needs, but an estimated half million Canadians are homeless. Many of these people are women and an increasing number are children. For these people, the lack of affordable housing in Canada deprives them not only of a place to live, but also of the opportunity to learn new skills and to get and keep a job. Without a job and the income it provides, it will continue to be almost impossible to find decent housing.

Our culture and our society creates situations which make it very difficult for many women to learn what they need to know, or to get good jobs. Some issues - such as child care - are beginning to be recognized as employment and training issues for women. For example, the Canadian Labour Force Development Board was formed as a result of reports from seven

¹. Shauna Butterwick, "Will women be aboard this training?", *Kinesis*, May, 1991, pp.7-8.

². Source: Statistics Canada, *Women in Canada: A Statistical Report* Second Edition, Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1990.

Background Information

different Task Forces on various labour force issues. The report from the Task Force on Social Assistance Recipients (SARs) states that "lack of subsidized child care is the single greatest barrier to SAR participation in training programs"³ The same Task Force Report lists a number of these "social policy issues" which have a major impact on training: child care, inadequate financial support for the working poor, housing, literacy and employment equity. It neglects however, to mention what is probably the most important issue, violence, because it affects so many women in such profound ways.

We live in a society which condones violence. Much of that violence is directed at women and at the children they care for. One research study says that 1 in every 2 girls and 1 in every 3 boys will be sexually abused before they are 18 years old. Other research tells us that 1 in every 4 adult women will be raped or sexually assaulted. At least 1 in 10 women are hit or hurt in their homes by some form of family violence. All of these women and children are affected by their experience. Some, for example, will be unable to learn effectively for short or long periods of time, or to find and keep steady employment⁴.

If women are to be full participants in the 'training culture' that the government wants to create, then the full reality of their lives needs to be recognized. Any discussion about women, training and jobs needs to take into account that work and learning do not happen in isolation from the rest of our lives. This is one of the most important reasons why women must be able to create their own learning environments. A new approach - a new **Women's Agenda on Training** - is needed.

Women in the Canadian Economy

Women's work is not visible nor fully valued. None of the unpaid work women do in their homes, on the land and in their communities is counted as part of the economy. Research has shown though, that if that work were counted it would amount to at least one-third of all productive work.

Even if we look only at women's paid work, the situation is not very good. For example, the number of women in the Canadian labour force is growing rapidly. Between 1975 and 1989, women's participation increased by over 60%. By 1989, 44% of the Canadian labour force was women. Sometime before the year 2000, it is expected that a full 50% of the labour force will be women. But equal numbers does not indicate equality. Women are still concentrated in clerical, sales and service occupations. In 1989, 57% of the female labour force worked in

³. Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre, Report of the CLMPC Task Forces. (Ottawa: Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre, 1990, p.110.

⁴. Source: Sexual Assault Advisory Committee of Guelph-Wellington.

Background Information

●Barriers from poor system and program design:

- racism and discrimination, which means that people with disabilities, visible minorities, Native Canadians, refugees and recent immigrants do not receive the training they are entitled to;
- lack of access to information about training opportunities;
- program criteria and targets (for example, age limits, or educational requirements) which exclude people who could do well and who could benefit from a particular program;
- a lack of general educational upgrading programs for people who need literacy training, English/French as a second language, adult basic education or other forms of pre-employment training;
- rigid definitions, such as who is "employable" and who is not;
- training which is only available to people who live in certain locations (for example, rural people often get left out) or who can come at certain times;
- training programs which are not long enough to teach the basic skills needed to get a job;
- training programs which train people for jobs which do not exist, or which are not in demand;
- lack of uniform criteria, meaning that people living in different places get different treatment even though they may have the same needs and interests;
- short-term funding which means that good programs never know whether they can continue from year to year.

●Personal Barriers:

- lack of self-confidence

●Financial Disincentives:

- loss of benefits, for SAR recipients and loss of employment income for people already in the workforce who want to take time for training;
- lack of employment after completing training programs¹⁰.

Barriers to women's participation in training have been well researched. Again and again studies have shown that among the most important are: lack of child care, lack of money, lack of control over their lives, cultural constraints, lack of transportation for the people with all disabilities, lack of information regarding program availability, geographical isolation and a lack of good 'fit' between program structures and the women who might enrol. In many cases as well, there is no established link between the training that is offered to women and the good jobs that they need. A 1988 CCLOW study, Women's Education and Training in Canada found that there has been almost no research done investigating the **quality** of training itself, or its impact on improving the quality of women's lives in the longer term. The federal government's Canadian Jobs Strategy programs, for example, surveys former trainees at 3 months and 10 months after completing programs to find out if they are employed or involved in further

¹⁰. Source: Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre, Report, op cit.

Background Information

training, but does not return to trainees after that. These surveys showed that just over 50% of Job Development trainees and just over 60% of Job Entry trainees were employed or in further training after 10 months¹¹.

In Canada, additional problems are caused because the responsibility for providing education and training is divided between the federal government and the provinces. In theory, the federal government is responsible for training and the provincial governments for education. But there is no clear definition of where training stops and education begins. There are also no national standards which set out what should be available to each Canadian in the way of education and training. As a result, what is available to a resident of one province will not necessarily be available to someone from another province. In some cases, the federal and provincial governments end up offering similar programs. In all too many cases, gaps are created. Important needs are identified and an argument ensues over whether that need should be met by the federal government or the provinces. These arguments can go on for years. Meanwhile, people are left without the training they need. This jurisdictional mess also creates confusion for individuals trying to find out what is available to them. There is no one place to find out. Programs may be sponsored by municipalities, provinces, or the federal government. It is difficult and sometimes impossible to find out if, where and when any particular training program is likely to be offered.

Working Toward Solutions

The problems are significant. There are, however, some very good ideas around about how to solve them. The SAR Task Force Report, for example, makes 28 recommendations about how to address barriers, including the development of community-based Training and Education Access Centres, which would act as brokers, matching people with training needs with the most appropriate resources available to them. We have included in the section on further reading a number of other reports and articles which have good solutions to offer. In addition, attached to this section, you will find the full text of the article by Shauna Butterwick, quoted from at the beginning of this section.

¹¹. Source: Employment and Immigration Canada, Annual Report, 1989-1990 (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1990).

Background Information

Table 2: Canadian Jobs Strategy, 1987-88 Year-End Expenditures and Participants.

Programs	Total Expenditures (\$million)	Total Participants (thousands)		Actual target group participant rates			
		Total	New Starts	Women	Natives	Disability	Visible Minorities
Job Development ¹	596.0	110.0	72.0	49.0	12.2	5.2	5.0
Job Entry:							
Challenge '87	122.5	80.6	80.6	51.8	7.5	0.6	3.2
Other Job Entry ²	363.9	80.0	57.2	63.7	8.4	2.5	12.8
Skill Shortages	234.7	99.6	75.5	7.8	2.5	0.2	1.0
Skill Investment	65.5	25.6	18.6	37.8	4.8	0.4	2.0
Community Futures	71.5	2.4	2.4	29.6	3.3	2.1	1.4
Innovations	38.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total:	1,491.1	398.4	307.3	41.8	7.4	1.9	4.8

¹ Includes SAR expenditures of \$47.5 million.

² Includes SAR expenditures of \$38.3 million.

Source: EIC Annual Report, 1987-1988.

Background Information

For Further Reading:

- "Canada's Occupational Training Programs: Three Decades of Deficiencies", by Susan Witter, Canadian Vocational Journal, Vol 26, No 4, Spring 1991.
- "Community Based Training for Women: Why We Should Care" by ACTEW, Toronto: Advocates for Community Based Training and Employment for Women, 1988.
- Education and Training: Document 5, 33rd Annual Convention, Ontario Federation of Labour, November 20-24, 1989, Toronto, Ontario
- Employment in the Service Economy, Economic Council of Canada, Supply and Services Canada, Ottawa, 1991.
- If Women Counted, by Marilyn Waring
- Income Support Issues for Women on Training: A Compendium of View, Compiled by Marcia Braundy, Journeywomen Ventures Ltd., May 1990
- "Labour Force Development Board", by Marcia Braundy, Women in Trades, Technology and Operations (WITT) National Network Newsletter, Vol 1, No 2, Spring 1991.
- "Operation Access: A Pre-Apprenticeship Bridging Program for Women", by ACTEW, Toronto: Advocates for Community Based Training and Education for Women, 1989.
- "Policy Statement on Job Training", Quebec Federation on Labour, adopted at the QFL Convention, November 1989
- Report of the CLMPC Task Forces, by the Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre, Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1990
- "Strategies for Change: A Position Paper on Literacy", developed for presentation to government by: Ontario Literacy Coalition, 365 Bloor St. East, Suite 1003, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3L4, Tel: 416-963-5787
- "Will women be aboard this training?", by Shauna Butterwick, Kinesis, May 1991.
- Women's Education & Training in Canada, a policy analysis prepared for CCLOW by Susan Wismer, 1988
- Women's Education des femmes, published quarterly by Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, Toronto, Ontario

New federal strategy:

Will women be aboard this training?

by Shauna Butterwick

• Kim, a 28 year old single mother living on social assistance with two years of college, wants to get off welfare but she has found that most entry level jobs will not pay a living wage-enough for child care and other basic needs.

• Betty, 48 years-old and about to lose her job because the plant she has worked at for the last 10 years is shutting down and moving to Mexico, needs to retrain but cannot afford it.

• Jasmine, a trained bookkeeper with 10 years experience, immigrated to Canada six months ago and cannot find an employer to hire her because her English needs upgrading and she has no Canadian experience.

Although their situations are different, these women need some assistance to enter and re-enter the labour market—and they're not likely to find what they need in the existing government-funded job training programs. Women have traditionally been under-served, ignored or shunted into low paying, "traditional" fields by the government's training strategies. A recent development in this area has the potential to either perpetuate existing problems or to create a system of job training which will truly respond to women's diverse situations.

In January 1991, Employment and Immigration Minister Barbara McDougall announced the creation of the Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB), a new structure which places policy-making in the hands of non-governmental labour market partners. According to McDougall "... labour, industry and governments at both the federal and provincial levels have co-operated in an unprecedented manner to establish a board that serves all of our interests."

Whose interests will be served is indeed the central question. For women and other groups who historically have not had a voice in government decision-making, this new non-governmental policy-making structure

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presents both new opportunities and new challenges.

The board consists of 22 members: eight each from business and labour (including public sector unions), two representatives from training schools, and one representative from each of the so-called "equity" groups: women, people of colour, Native peoples, and people with disabilities. Early reports indicate that a total of nine of the current representatives are women. The mandate of this new board is to identify labour market needs and design programs to train Canadians to meet those needs. The rationale is to ensure that the private sector plays an active role in decisions about skills training in the country. Equally important is the plan to put into place local and regional structures which will also be given

decision-making powers regarding training needs and expenditures.

Marcy Cohen, a longtime Vancouver feminist and activist who now lives in Toronto, has been selected as the women's representative on CLFDB. She was nominated by 22 national women's organizations through a consultation process organized by the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW). Lilly Stonehouse from Saskatchewan was selected as an alternate. Cohen is acutely aware of both the constraints and the possibilities of her new job.

"With this new board," says Cohen, "government won't be able to make policy behind closed doors without hearing about the reality of women's lives. The challenge will be to organize ourselves autonomously and to develop our own agenda on training based on broad consensus." Cohen's experience with previous labour market consultations will serve her well in her new role.

The Human Capital Approach

The creation of the CLFDB is part of a larger strategy of the Mulroney government to improve Canada's economic position in a highly competitive global market. Using a human capital perspective, the Tories have focused most of their efforts on training, viewing it as an investment which produces higher levels of productivity. Although the training of workers is a critical factor in economic development, this approach reduces a complex social and political problem to a purely economic one (see box). It is also an approach which ignores the structural inequality of the labour market.

Supplying workers or addressing needs?

The Canadian Job Strategies and the Labour Force Development Strategy are examples of "supply-side" policy where the focus is on supplying the labour market with trained workers. This approach is individualistic and blames the victim by locating the labour market's problem in the individual's lack of skills or competence. These policies do not include any effort to address the unequal power relations which produce the segregated labour markets that ignore women's skills and devalue women's work.

In contrast, a feminist political economy perspective recognizes that the labour market is shaped by political processes which are primarily driven by relations of power. A labour market policy informed by such an approach would be both strategic, addressing structural problems, and practical, addressing women's immediate needs such as child care, decent training allowances and flexible job training programs. Women have been expected to adapt to the labour market. Now, it's time to reconstruct the work place so that women's diverse needs and multiple roles are recognized. As well, the labour market must change to both encourage and enable men to do their fair sharing of parenting and household duties.

A feminist approach to labour market policy might include the following, to name only a few:

- pay equity and employment equity programs that not only have tangible, enforceable results, but actually alter the structure of the workplace
- on-site child care in training programs and at work
- flexible job training and work situations (eg. part-time, weekend programs)
- a minimum wage that is a living wage
- adequate pay for women's skills and talents
- work-based and classroom-based ESL (English as a Second Language) training
- sufficient maternity and paternity leave
- government and business support for unionization of female-dominated occupations

For many years, government and business have argued that community colleges and technical institutions were not responding to the real needs of the labour market for highly skilled, technologically competent, flexible workers. As a result, the government decided that business should be more directly involved and responsible for the training of workers. With the introduction of the Canadian Jobs Strategy (CJS)

in 1985, funds were withdrawn from training schools and routed directly to employer-sponsored and private-profit training programs.

Under CJS, most women are found in entry programs where the focus is on ac-

quiring minimal skills and job experience to enter the labour market. Feminists have criticized these programs because they are poorly funded, short-term and most of them have prepared women to enter low-paying female job ghettos.



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The idea for the recently announced

The government asked the Canadian Labour Market Productivity Centre (CLMPC) to manage the consultations. The CLMPC is an organization governed by a joint board with equal representation from the Business Council on National Issues and the Canadian Labour Congress. The consultations included two phases. During Phase I, only three women's representatives out of a total of thirty-nine members participated in the task forces created to make recommendations about training issues. During Phase II, where only business and labour were invited to participate, recommendations were made for the creation of a national training board, later renamed the Canadian Labour Force Development Board.

Some parties to the Phase II consultation were actively opposed to equity groups having representation on the new training board, but the government argued for their inclusion: after all, these four groups together constitute over 60 percent of the work force in Canada and they weren't going to quietly accept being shut out.

Marginalized

This past December and January, in response to concerns about the marginalization of women within the LFDS consultations and the opportunity to have a voice on the national board, CCLOW organized meetings with 22 national women's groups concerned with education and training, including business, Native, women of colour, and disabled women's organizations. The purpose of the meetings was to determine a consensus model for selecting the representative and to develop principles of fairness and equity regarding CLFDB activities.

Three principles were developed. First, equity must be a consideration for all parts of the LFDS. Equal gender representation and a full reflection of the diversity of our society must be central considerations in the creation of all national and regional structures. Second, monies must be made available so that equity representatives are able to communicate with their constituencies and for the required research and other consultative mechanisms. Third, structures

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must be put in place that would provide coordinating assistance to the women's representative, and for smooth and effective communication from community level organizations to the board.

Since those consultations, a reference committee has been established consisting of representatives from the 22 national women's organizations and representatives from community-based training coalitions, including the Women's Employment and Training Coalition (WETC) here in Vancouver. The mandate of the reference committee, which will meet in Toronto in April, is to develop communication strategies to support the women's representative and to begin to put into place opportunities for women's groups across Canada to create a women's agenda on training.

Women also face barriers due to shrinking resources and increasing demand. The Tories' recent budget cut \$100 million from CJS funding. Monies for training which were to be reallocated from UI funds have not materialized because of the recession and high levels of unemployment. Given shrinking funds and increasing demands, there is great risk of a divide and conquer situation as different sectors struggle to place their interpretation of training needs and funding priorities on the table.

There is also great potential to blame the victim, to locate the source of troubles with unemployed workers and people on welfare. Although these people were identified as most in need of programs to be developed from the reallocated funds, in reality, fewer resources are now available to serve them. Further tensions between employers, workers and those who were to receive the benefits of new programs are also likely as UI premiums are increased to deal with the removal of federal UI contributions.

If we are to see the changes to labour market policy and job training that will meet the needs of women, we must take this opportunity to define, for ourselves, what our interests and needs are. As Marcy Cohen states, women must be included and must change the process. "Links are being made with other representatives on the new CLFDB," says Cohen. "We are becoming an organized constituency which can no longer be ignored. We must take the opportunity to ensure that women's multiple needs are heard, that women not only participate, but contribute to a democratization of the policy-making process."

Shauna Butterwick is the BC representative on the national board of CCLOW and, as an active member of WETC, will be representing the coalition on the Reference Committee.

Glossary of Terms

Equity: a principle to ensure that citizens receive fair treatment, equal rights, and equal benefits regardless of race, gender, class, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, geographic location, income, and age and ability. Mechanisms for achieving equity include policies and legislation which ensure that the people who have historically been excluded from the decision-making process are represented.

Decentralization: the transfer of some decision-making process from a central authority to a regional or local authority. For example, in the Department of Employment and Immigration some decision-making is being transferred from central headquarters to regional or local offices.

Democratization: a process whereby groups representing a diversity of interests have equal participation and access to power and where the decision-making process is inclusive.

Labour Force Development Strategy: a set of policies and plan of action established by the government in 1989 to stimulate the commitment of employers and workers to skill development through programs that promote and reinforce private sector training, and thereby to strengthen the competition of Canadian industry.

Labour Force Partners: the term used by government to describe the groups involved in the creation of employment or employment-related training; these groups include organized labour, business, educational institutions, non-profit community-based training organizations, and social action or equity groups; government views business and labour as being the major labour force partners in its Labour Force Development Strategy.

Learning: learning is the internalized acquisition of skills and knowledge and is a lifelong enterprise. Learning takes place in a variety of settings as well as formal and non-formal situations. Individuals can learn through experience, through skills developed at the workplace or in the home, or through demonstration, or by "doing".

Polarization: the clustering of groups in directly opposing positions on an issue based on philosophical, social and political differences.

Private Sector: primarily business and industry; however, the government is including voluntary and non-profit organizations in its current definition of the private sector; voluntary organizations see themselves as part of a third sector of not-for-profit economic activity.

Privatization: the process in which activities or programs are moved into the realm of the private sector; activities may be completely or partially privatized; government believes that privatization is a cost-saving measure, involving the exchange of decision-making power for a reduction in financial support; as well, privatization reflects a value position which holds that the private sector ought to be responsible for certain types of activities.

Social Action Groups/Equity Groups: advocacy groups which represent and actively promote the interests of people who have not historically had social, economic or political equality; these groups represent women, aboriginal peoples, immigrants and visible minorities, and people with all disabilities.

SAR: social assistance recipients are sometimes referred to as 'SAR'.

Underemployment: situation in which available jobs do not make full use of the capacity of the labour force. For example, workers who want full-time jobs may be confined to part-time or temporary positions; or workers with qualifications may be unable to find jobs which make use of their developed skills and knowledge.

The Women's Representative and The Reference Group Background Information

The National Consultations:

The Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) was invited by Employment and Immigration Canada (EIC) to coordinate and host two consultations. The purpose of the consultations was to select a women's representative to the Canadian Labour Force Development Board. CCLOW lobbied EIC for enough time and resources to make sure that national women's organizations engaging in education and training could be gathered together to choose a women's representative who could truly represent the interests and needs of all Canadian women. After much effort and consultation with other women's groups, CCLOW constituted a Steering Committee for the consultations, including three women who had participated in the Phase I Task Forces, and the Executive Director and President of CCLOW. Consultants were hired to assist with logistics and facilitation. Representatives of 21 national women's organizations were invited to attend the consultations as participants. The Consultations were held December 2-3, 1990 and January 26-27, 1991 in Ottawa.

For EIC, the purpose of the consultations was to select a women's representative. The 21 national women's organizations that met had an additional purpose: to identify strategies for ensuring that the Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB) and its boards and committees would be responsive to the particular needs and interests of women. The consultation participants insisted that a formally recognized Reference Group be established, to advise and support the Women's Representative. The consultation also insisted that general resources be provided by the government to support the communication work between the Women's Representative, Reference Group and broader women's community. Because the 21 organizations stood behind this demand, we were able to convince the government of the importance and validity of the request. The government has committed a minimum of \$150,000 for each of the next five years to the Women's Representative and the Reference Group to carry out the organizing work of establishing a national communications network on women's training and education issues.

EIC has accepted the Reference Group, but it still has not yet accepted another recommendation of the consultations: that there should be an official alternate. The alternate would be available to fill in if for any reason the Women's Representative was unable to carry out her duties. Despite the lobbying efforts of women's organizations and other designated 'social action' groups, there are still not official alternates.

At first, some participants were concerned that the consultation process would not respect the varied needs and interests of women from across Canada. However, the consensus at the end of the consultations was that the objectives had been met in a collaborative, open and mutually respectful way.

Background Information

Twenty-one women's organizations participated in the consultations. Organizations selected were national voluntary, non-profit organizations with an established record of involvement in training, education and/or human resource development issues. All selected organizations are committed to working for equality as defined under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Twenty-one of the 24 invited organizations were able to send representatives. Two organizations based in Quebec decided not to come for political reasons¹. The *participating organizations* included:

- Association des femmes collaboratrices de leur mari
- Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale
- Canadian Association of Women Executives and Entrepreneurs/ Association canadienne des femmes cadres et entrepreneurs
- Congress of Black Women of Canada/ Congrès des femmes noires du Canada
- Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women/ Congrès canadien pour la promotion des études chez les femmes
- Canadian Farm Women's Network/ Réseau canadien des agricultrices
- Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs/ Fédération canadienne des clubs de femmes de carrières libérales et commerciales
- Canadian Federation of University Women/ Fédération Canadienne des femmes diplômées des universités
- Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women/ Institut canadien de recherche sur les femmes
- Les cercles des fermières du Québec
- DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN)/ Réseau d'action des femmes handicapées
- Fédération nationale des femmes canadiennes françaises
- The National Action Committee on the Status of Women/ Comité canadien d'action sur le statut de la femme
- The National Council of Women/ Conseil national de la femme
- The National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada/ Organisation nationale des femmes immigrantes et des femmes appartenant à une minorité visible du Canada
- The Native Women's Association of Canada
- Nouveau Départ
- Réseau national action d'éducation des femmes
- The Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology
- Women in Science and Engineering Corporation/ Femmes en Science et en Génie
- WITT National Network - Women in Trades, Technology and Operations & Blue Collar Work/ Réseau national WITT - Des Femmes dans les métiers, les technologies, et l'exploitation industrielle et les cols bleus

¹. The province of Quebec is not formally participating in any federally sponsored activities.

Background Information

The Women's Representative:

The Women's Representative is Marcy Cohen. Marcy is a Vancouver resident currently studying in Toronto. She has a long history of involvement in women's employment and training issues:

- In the late 1960's and early 1970's she was active in the first grass roots feminist organization in B.C. - the Vancouver Women's Caucus;
- She was involved in organizing a country wide caravan to Ottawa to pressure the government to remove abortion from the criminal code;
- From 1971 to 1974 she co-authored a resource booklet on day care in B.C. and was employed at the first day care centre in the province for children under three years old;
- For eight years she worked for the provincial government's welfare department as an employment and training counsellor. She worked with women from a number of community agencies to develop support groups for single parent mothers on social assistance;
- She co-ordinated Tools for Change, a curriculum on women and work for women re-entering the job market;
- In 1985 she was a founding member of WomenSkills Development Society, a community based women's organization working on labour market issues;
- She has researched and developed educational material on the impact of technological change on women's employment;
- Over the past five years she has been active in the Women's Research Centre and in the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) working mostly on employment and economic issues;
- She is also very involved in NAC's organization review process, working to make NAC structures more responsive to grass roots women's organizations across the country.

The Reference Group:

Marcy is supported in her work by a Reference Group. A list of the names, addresses and organizational affiliations of the members is attached. The Reference Group meets twice a year in order to discuss major policy issues and to engage in longterm planning. In between meetings, much of its work is carried out by ad hoc sub-committees working on various tasks, via conference calls, fax, the mail and a planned computer conferencing system.

The Reference Group has the following major responsibilities:

- to advise the Women's Representative on policy recommendations; and on ways to work with the CLFDB, its committees, and the other social action groups;
- to plan consultations including Reference Group meetings, an annual national consultation with women's groups and an annual consultation with the full Board;
- to develop and direct special projects and research activities;
- to network with other women's organizations and with other organizations offering training to women;

Background Information

- to provide the Women's Representative with a direct link to community-level learners, trainers, and programs;
- to evaluate the work of the Women's Representative and to provide her with feedback on her activities.

Right now, the Reference Group is working on the development of the **Women's Agenda on Education and Training**, and distribution of the first **Resource Kit**. We invite you to participate in assisting the Reference Group in its work. Please see the attached list of members for the address of the Reference Group member who lives nearest to you.

Preliminary Discussions on the Reference Group:

A first Reference Group meeting was held in April, 1991. Members decided to begin by talking about the issues in training and education that are important to women in Canada. We decided to do this by using a modified role playing exercise for small groups. One group acted out the experiences of an immigrant women applying for a job at Canada Employment Centre. Another group dramatized the competition between colleges, community groups and private training organizations in applying for government funds for training projects. The third group told the story of the experiences of one woman as she moved through the different stages of her life.

Some important ideas came out of the discussions that followed the role plays:

- *Starting from our strengths:*

The training system needs to start from our **strengths**, recognizing the full value of the skills and abilities which women have, and building on them. The training system must take into account the diversity of women's lives. In practical terms, this means that programs must be able to meet a variety of individual needs for child care, income support during training, assistance with integrating work and family life (including the particular needs of displaced homemakers who may be older women with little previous experience in the paid work force) and sensitivity to social and cultural differences. Based on these considerations, we talked about developing a **Women's Agenda on Training** that would tie together these diverse issues and make it possible for us to speak with one clear voice.

- *Bridging Programs:*

The Reference Group also talked about **bridging programs**. Over the past fifteen years, women's groups have asked repeatedly for these programs. They are designed to assist people, often women, who are entering or re-entering the labour force, to develop life skills, career planning, job search skills and computer literacy. Often, academic upgrading is built in, to allow for the development of entry level requirements for a chosen occupational field. The idea is to create a 'bridge' from home, or minimal labour force attachment, to either training or employment of some kind. WITT (Women in Trades and Technology) courses take career exploration a step further for those women who think they are interested in more

technical occupations but don't know where to start looking. They focus as well on Labour Market Trends and Employment Opportunities in Trades and Technology, actually Developing Occupational Fitness, Safe Work Practices, and on theory and practical expertise in a variety of trades and technical areas. In WITT courses, there are often tours of construction sites and industrial workplaces, and films and discussions with women who have effectively entered these occupations and dealt effectively with any barriers encountered.

- *Community-based Training:*
More recognition for the value of **community-based training** is needed. Training offered in the community offers women a supportive environment for learning transferrable and portable skills. The development of equitable forms of partnership between the public college system and community-based training groups is one important aspect of the change that needs to take place.
- *Recognition and Accreditation:*
New mechanisms need to be developed to give people credit for learning acquired outside formal educational institutions, either in community-based programs or through life experience. Experience and education obtained in other countries also needs to be better recognized.
- *The Whole Picture:*
Finally, the Reference Group discussed the link between training and other feminist strategies designed to improved women's position in the labour market. These include pay equity, employment equity and job creation - strategies that are aimed at reducing the wage gap, unemployment and underemployment for women.

The Reference Group also drafted a preliminary set of principles which members believe should guide the development and delivery of women's training and which must be **applied equally to all groups in society, regardless of gender, age, race, income, ethnicity, culture, ability, level of education, or region**. The Reference Group feels that funding at the local level should depend on following these principles. If these conditions are not met, funding should be terminated.

Defining these principles in practice will require further work. Your involvement and assistance is needed to define our shared interests, and to help us to realize these principles in action. As a start, please read the list of principles at the end of this section and let us know what you think. Do they address the issues listed above? Are there experiences or issues which are important to you which have not been identified or included adequately in our statement of principles?

To be able to pressure for real changes, we need:

- specific examples of the barriers that women face in gaining access to training programs;
- stories of women's experiences in training
- and information about how program criteria are undermining women's efforts to obtaining access to quality employment opportunities.

This documented experience is a very important aspect of our organizing work.

Usually policy decisions are divorced from the real experiences of women's lives. If this is to change, we must use our women's representatives on the new national, regional and local committees and boards to bring the real experiences of women to the table. Call or write us with your stories and let's work together.

PRINCIPLES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF TRAINING AND EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

Preamble: The position statement endorsed by the 21 national women's organizations which selected the Women's Representative to the Canadian Labour Force Development Board, states that the success of the CLFDB and the Labour Force Development Strategy rests on the implementation of an enabling policy framework and supporting regulations which address three basic principles:

- equity in representation at all levels;
- resources allocated which are adequate to allow for informed representation and effective communication;
- enabling structures allowing for systematic, frequent and efficient consultation with regional and local level groups.

Further, the Women's Representative and the Reference Group believe that it is essential that local Boards be governed by principles, guidelines and operating procedures which ensure that accountability be maintained and that historic patterns of systemic discrimination be eliminated. Principles, guidelines and operating regulations must be established by the CLFDB in the following areas prior to the establishment of local Boards. These principles must apply equally to all groups in society, regardless of gender, age, race, income, ethnicity, culture, ability, level of education, or region.

ACCESS: It is essential that the needs of traditionally under-served groups be adequately addressed and that specific resources be allocated to serve the training needs of the employed, unemployed, underemployed and social assistance recipients. For example, people with all forms of disabilities, immigrant and visible minority people, aboriginal people and women must have equitable access to training and education. Geographical barriers which put rural and isolated communities at a disadvantage must also be addressed with respect to equitable access to training.

EQUITY: Mechanisms must be in place so that women, aboriginal peoples, francophone groups, immigrants and visible minorities and people with all forms of disabilities are represented adequately in decision-making. In addition, within programs, systemic barriers must be removed, equity targets established, and a mechanism for monitoring agreed upon.

RIGHT TO BASIC EDUCATION: Training resources must be directed to general education and skill training programs 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 programs for women in all areas including trades and technologies must be priorities. These programs 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 educational institutions as well as employers.

PORTABILITY/TRANSFERABILITY: Mechanisms are needed to ensure that skills acquired and accreditation received are portable and transferrable from one level and type of learning and from one location to another. 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.

QUALITY: Programming must be reality-based, addressing the real needs of people for training which leads to 'good jobs'. Programs must be client-centred, based on the needs of those actually being served, and involving the active participation of clients in decision-making with respect to program development and implementation. The planning of education and training programs must be done from a developmental perspective, taking into account the varying needs and interests of people who are at different stages in their lives.

EVALUATION: Boards and committees must be held accountable for their activities. Allocation of resources should be made contingent on demonstrated compliance with the principles identified above. Client participation in evaluation and monitoring should be a requirement. Examination of outcomes, that is, of how effective the link between training and employment is, must be a central part of evaluation activities.

Background Information

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The Women's Agenda on Training A Call To Action

Introduction:

Women's training groups have been highly successful at organizing on the community level, developing models and programs that recognize systemic barriers and that work effectively to serve the interests of specific and diverse groups of women. To a large degree, however, these initiatives have been isolated. Women's groups have had to work on their own. We have had few networks for women's training and little opportunity to build a collective vision of training and education that really works for women. We need a **Women's Agenda on Training** - a collective statement of our own analysis regarding what we believe is needed and how it needs to happen.

The **Women's Agenda** will be a position statement. It will be written in consultation with groups and organizations involved in women's training from across Canada. The **Women's Agenda** will include:

- a set of general principles which should guide training for women;
- practical examples of how these principles can be used to shape policy and program development;
- descriptions of program models which effectively address women's needs.

We invite you to participate in setting the Agenda!

Why a Women's Agenda?

The Women's Agenda will be used as:

- a guide for women actively involved with the Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB) and its associated local Boards and subcommittees;
- an educational tool written by women, about women's training issues, for women who want to know more about what women want from training and how they can get it;
- an advocacy tool to use in educating and informing others about what needs to happen if training is to serve the interests of women.

How Will it Happen?

The Reference Group for the Women's Representative to the CLFDB wants the Agenda and the process used for creating it to be:

- inclusive, involving a wide range of opinions and encouraging individual women to voice their own needs;
- open-ended, changing over time and able to accommodate different situations;
- collaborative, based on dialogue;
- building on our strengths, recognizing good work which has already been done and including practical examples of 'good' training;
- focused on a group of critical issues;
- valuing diversity, recognizing regional issues and interests and acknowledging the contradictions and differences among various interests.

How Can I Participate?

There are several ways to participate:

- Send us position papers, case studies, reports or other existing documents which talk about what women want and need from training.
- Write us a letter, telling us about your own experience with training, as a trainer, a participant, an employer, an advocate, or
- Write us a short 1-2 page position statement of your own: What do you think that a **Women's Agenda on Training** should say?
- Organizing regionally....(see the section on **Organizing for Women's Training**)
- At a meeting or workshop try out one of the exercises suggested below....

Respecting Differences, Finding Common Ground

When Reference Group members have discussed the Women's Agenda, we have found ourselves talking about....

Access...Equity...Portability...Democracy...Quality...Empowerment...Learner-Centred...Regional services...the Training-Employment Link...Collaboration vs Competition...‘Good’ training for ‘good’ jobs...Support systems....

What we need in order to make these words come alive in the **Women's Agenda** are the stories and experiences of women like you. If the **Agenda** is to be useful, it must talk about how we can respect fully the ways in which women are different, as well as what we have in common regarding training needs. The Reference Group wants to be sure that the **Women's Agenda** discusses issues important to all women in Canada, including immigrant and visible minority women, aboriginal women, women with all disabilities and francophone women.

Please send us your stories, concerns and experiences so that we can include them.

Below we have made a start at identifying some of the particular concerns of these groups.

- **Immigrant Women:**

"The 5 months provided by the government for English language training is too short. As a result of this limited time, English skills of new immigrants remain low, limiting employment to job ghettos (eg. garment and farm work) where the workers all speak the same language (not English). Grade 10 English is required for most certified training programs and it is impossible for most immigrants to attain this level in 5 months. They need access to on-the-job language training, need flexible programs (eg. part-time, weekend, evening) with child care and help with transportation. Many women have little support from their families for pursuing language training, some face hostility and threat of violence from spouses. It is very important to provide special services and programs for immigrant women. Not focusing on women by developing programs and policies for both men and women would not address many immigrant women's needs."¹

- **Visible Minority Women:**

"I left my country with the purpose of to get somewhere to live in peace, safety and getting more opportunities for me and my three children. And I think this will be the best change to our life because this country is giving opportunities to the persons who want to progress, they can do it. I do not know how to write about my life since I came to Canada. It is a sad time for me. The days I was lonely, depressed...I have nothing to depend on that's why I must drop off english class and look for job. I worked for a cleaning company for three years. I got hurt. After I was recovered my boss did not want to change me to another job. I'm looking for job but everywhere I went to apply for they turned me down. I hope I can get into this course so my life will be better."

(Soledad)²

Women who may have lived for many years - or their whole lives - in Canada are often referred to as immigrants, simply because of the colour of their skin or because they speak with an accent. They find that people assume that they are poorly educated or only suited for certain types of training, and that when they go searching for jobs, their knowledge, skills and experience are not recognized or respected.

- **Women With All Disabilities:**

Disabled women, for example, often need transportation, special communication supports (such as interpreters for the deaf or large print texts for people who have limited vision) and an accessible physical space (including ramps, elevators and washrooms that accommodate wheelchairs). Without these supports, they cannot make use of opportunities for training. Like visible minority women, disabled women find that they are refused jobs or discouraged from taking training because people

¹. Extract from Minutes, April 24, 1991, Women's Employment and Training Coalition, Vancouver, British Columbia.

². Source: Participant, Job Training Program, British Columbia.

discriminate against them. Employers or educators sometimes assume that disabled women are not suited for training or work without bothering to find out what we really do have to offer.

- **Aboriginal Women:**

Aboriginal women, despite their position as First Nations people, are also not respected for who they are. Many aboriginal women live in small communities in remote locations. For them, distance education networks are essential. Other aboriginal women are living in urban areas on very limited incomes. They need training programs which are accessible to women who do not have much money. All aboriginal women need training programs which honour and respect Native cultures, languages and customs. In some situations this means special programs for Native women. In others, it means changing the course content of training programs and the way it is presented in order to respect and accommodate Aboriginal participants.

- **Francophone Women:**

Francophone women too have their own language, culture and history in Canada. For many francophone women it is particularly important that training programs and educational materials be made available to them in French. Training programs also need to recognize that francophone women living outside Quebec are a linguistic and cultural minority. Special consideration needs to be given to making sure that training programs strengthen and respect the language and culture of French-speaking Canadians.

Schedule:

The Reference Group will be gathering information for the Women's Agenda for the next several months. Early in 1992, we will summarize major themes and priorities and mail the summary to all of you who contributed, for your comments. We will have a draft of the statement available for comment and discussion in March or April of 1992. Once we have completed the initial statement, we expect to revise it annually.

To Participate:

To send us your ideas, or for more information, or to enquire about the Women's Agenda, contact:

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Workshop Ideas

1. The following exercise was used at the Annual General Meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, to generate some ideas for the Women's Agenda. We are hopeful that other groups might want to try it too. This exercise takes about 1 1/2 hours and is designed for a group of 12-18 people working in three small groups:

Roundtable:¹ Each participant introduces herself and talks about her interest in or questions about women's training. (30 minutes)

Brainstorming:² What should be included in a Women's Agenda on Training? List the ideas on flip chart paper or a black board. (30 minutes)

Priorizing: Each participant uses three coloured dots to identify the three most important issues for her, placing them on the paper or board. The places where the dots are clustered indicate where each small group's priorities lie. Results are brought back to share with members of the other two groups and to be discussed. (30 minutes).

Sending: Send us the results of your work!

2. At a Reference Group meeting, we used roleplays as a way to discuss the Women's Agenda. This exercise requires about 3-4 hours for up to 20 people. A facilitator should be available to guide discussion of the roleplays and to keep the exercise moving along.

Introductions: Participants form three small groups. Each group member quickly suggests 2 important ideas, issues, or experiences related to women's training. The group then chooses one to create a scenario around. One group member should describe the scenario briefly, another summarizes and repeat it back in order to be sure that the idea is understood in the same way by everyone. (20 minutes)

Making a Roleplay: Each group develops a 5 minute role play, based on the chosen scenario. The roleplay can include some discussion or description of the issues or questions that need to be addressed in the chosen situation, and of alternative strategies for addressing the situation. (40 minutes)

Presentation: Each group makes its presentation. Afterwards, players discuss briefly how it felt to be their 'character' and what it was that they wanted to portray. Audience members ask questions and offer their reactions. (60 minutes)

1. Roundtable rules: No one speaks twice until everyone has had the opportunity to speak. Some groups choose to pass a stone or stick from hand to hand as each person speaks. The one who holds the stone or stick has the right to speak uninterrupted and to be listened to until she chooses to pass it on.

2. Brainstorming rules: a. Say whatever comes into your head, don't censor. No idea is stupid or inappropriate. b. No discussion or criticism. Questions of clarification only, in order to be sure that each person has been understood. c. Everyone should be encouraged to speak.

A Call To Action

Synthesis/ Debriefing: Each participant comments briefly on what the role plays said to her about a women's agenda on training. The best approach is usually to go around the circle, asking each person to comment in turn. The facilitator and/or a recorder keep track of people's comments. The facilitator then summarizes, identifying some of the common themes and ideas being expressed, and any contradictions or differences of opinion that seem to exist. Group members add to or change the facilitator's summary. (60 minutes)

Sending: Send us your summary - and a description of the scenarios, if you can! In any form available - audio tape, drawings, mind maps, etc..

3. Here is another exercise that works well for larger groups of up to 60 people, but is also useful with smaller groups. It takes about an hour:

Introduction: Three people speak about their own experience with women's education and training to the whole group, taking about 5 minutes each to 'tell their story'. (15 minutes)

Write a letter, draw a picture: All participants reflect on their own stories, or those of people they know. Each person takes a piece of paper and pen or coloured pencils and writes a letter or draws a picture to be sent to: a participant in a training program, a trainer, an administrator or a funder sharing some important thoughts about how to benefit from training, or giving some advice about how best to serve women's needs. Letters should be about one page long. (20 minutes)

Sharing: Share your letter or drawing with a person sitting near you. No criticism is allowed, discuss with your partner what it was that you were really trying to say and find out if it was clearly expressed in your letter or drawing. You may wish to add a note of explanation as a 'P.S.' or caption, after your discussion. (15 minutes)

Posting: Each participant posts her letter or drawing on the wall, so that others can circulate and read it. People are encouraged to browse along the wall at breaks and after the meeting is over. (10 minutes)

Sending: Gather up your letters and drawings and send them to us, or send us copies.

The Canadian Labour Force Development Board Background Information

In January 1991, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, Barbara McDougall announced the creation of The Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB), a new body for making decisions about training policy in Canada. The Board is funded by the federal government, through Employment and Immigration Canada (EIC), but operates independently, as an 'arm's-length' organization. It has 22 members, representing organized labour, business, educational institutions and four 'social action' groups: women, aboriginal peoples, immigrants and visible minorities, and people with all disabilities¹. According to McDougall, the CLFDB is established to serve "all of our interests". For Canadian women who historically have not had a voice in government decision-making, this new Board presents both new opportunities and challenges.

Why Labour Force Development?

The federal government believes that Canada must develop its labour force in order to compete successfully with other countries. Most people agree with the government that Canada should **develop its labour force**. People should be able to get the training they need to become as skilled, as flexible, as creative and as productive as possible. Various groups do not agree, however, on how to do this. Women's organizations are concerned that those who have traditionally been left out will still be denied access to needed training, unless we can be a strong voice at the CLFDB table.

How was the Board Established?

In April of 1989, the Minister of Employment and Immigration announced the **Labour Force Development Strategy**. This strategy had two components. First, changes were made to the Unemployment Insurance Act (Bill C-21) which meant that many people now receive less Unemployment Insurance (UI) than they would have before. Now UI recipients have to work longer in order to receive UI. The UI monies which are 'saved' will go to training, instead of to helping people maintain their incomes during times when they have no work. This is against the recommendations of both Business and Labour.

The second part of the strategy involved consultations which were managed by the Canadian Labour Market Productivity Centre (CLMPC). The CLMPC is an independent organization governed by a joint Board of business and labour from various sectors.²

¹. These groups have been called 'social action' groups and have been designated as equity groups by the federal government, because they are in an unequal position in the labour force.

². Nominations for the business seats are made by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Manufacturing Association (CMA), and the Business Council on National Issues (BCNI). Labour seats are nominated by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the Canadian Federation of Labour (CFL). In addition there are two seats for educational representatives, nominated by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and several ex officio seats for federal and provincial government representatives.

Background Information

The consultations were in two phases. In Phase I, seven task forces were established, including representatives from business, labour and community groups which look at: programs for older workers, programs for people on Unemployment Insurance, programs for people receiving Social Assistance, human resource planning, co-operative education, apprenticeship, and entry-level training. Only 9 out of the 64 task force members were women. The Phase I final report was presented in March of 1990.

During Phase II, only Business and Labour were invited to participate. The Phase II report was released in July of 1990. It recommended the creation of a national training board with 22 seats. Although some people were opposed to allocating 4 seats to social action groups, the government argued that equity is an economic necessity if the Canadian economy is to remain competitive internationally. The women on the Task Force also supported the participation of the social action groups on the board. After several months of further consultation, the formation of the **Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB)** was announced in January of 1991. It held its first meeting in May of 1991.

At the same time, a parallel system of aboriginal training Boards is being established. The aboriginal representative to the CLFDB is nominated by a National Board for aboriginal training which answers to local aboriginal training boards. The new aboriginal system is described in Pathways to Success.³

Who Sits On The Board?

The Board members have been selected by the groups they represent. Eight Board members come from business organizations, 8 from organized labour, 2 from educational institutions and one each from the 4 social action groups: women, people with all disabilities, aboriginal peoples and immigrants and visible minorities. In addition, the federal government has 3 ex officio federal deputies from EIC, and one ex officio each from all provinces and territories. Marcy Cohen is the Women's Representative. She was selected at consultations involving 21 national women's groups. For more information on our representative and the process in which she was selected, see **The Women's Representative and The Reference Group**.

The co-chairs of the Board were announced in April, 1991: Gerard Docquier, Canadian National Director, United Steelworkers of America, and J. Laurent Thibault, President of the Canadian Manufacturer's Association. These are full-time positions.

What Will The Board Do?

The official mandate of the CLFDB is to identify labour market needs and design programs to train Canadians to meet those needs. The CLFDB will also be responsible for carrying out the recommendations of the Phase One Task Reports. The recommendations from the reports on Social

³. Aboriginal Employment and Training Working Group, Pathways to Success: Aboriginal People and the Labour Force Development Process, (Ottawa: Aboriginal Employment Training Working Group, June, 1990).

Assistance Recipients and Apprenticeship Training are particularly important for women⁴. The Reference Group believes that the CLFDB should also make decisions about job creation, economic development and how to make sure that jobs are available to people who need them. So far, these responsibilities are not part of the mandate.

The CLFDB will meet on a regular basis to advise the federal government on all national training policies and programs. The Board is also responsible for establishing standards to ensure that "the training provided to workers is of high quality, accessible, broadly-based and portable".⁵ One important task will be to make sure that the federal government is aware of the diverse needs and interests of people across Canada. Much of the Board's work will be carried out in subcommittees. These committees will work on issues such as apprenticeship, programs for social assistance recipients, and the concerns of various industrial groups or 'sectors'. The CLFDB will also work with about 60 local Boards across Canada. **Women's organizations need to be concerned not only about what takes place at the CLFDB table, but also with the sectoral committees and local Boards where much of the 'action' will take place.**

Why Was The Board Established?

In Canada, the federal government has always been an important sponsor of training. No one has ever been completely satisfied, however, with how decisions about training were made. Now, the federal government wants the private sector to play a more active role in making decisions and in the provision of training in Canada. Government and business argue that public educational institutions such as the community colleges and technical institutions are not responding to the "real" needs of the labour market for highly skilled, technologically competent, flexible workers. However, many women's groups believe that school boards and community colleges, and community-based programs are good vehicles for women's training. These public sector-sponsored groups know the needs of their constituents better than private sector trainers do and as a result, the public sector-sponsored groups can match the content of their training to the varying needs of individual trainees in a way that most private sector sponsors cannot. Public sector and community-based groups are also accountable for the quality of the training they provide, to their Boards, to their communities and to their trainees in ways that private sector organizations are not. Many women's groups feel strongly that public sector sponsored training is better for women.

In spite of these and other objections, the federal government is committed to 'privatization' - putting training in the hands of the private sector. The government believes that business - the private sector - should be responsible for the training of workers. In 1985, the federal government redirected some of the funds from community colleges and other training schools to employer-sponsored and private, for-profit training programs. Since then, a number of other initiatives - such

⁴. Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre, Report of the CLMPC Task Forces (Ottawa: CLMPC, 1990).

⁵. Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre, Phase II Task Force Report, July, 1990, p.7.

as the passing of Bill C-21, regarding changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act, have continued this process. The formation of the CLFDB is one more step toward further privatization of training.

Questions and Concerns about CLFDB

Privatization continues...

The CLFDB presents new opportunities and new challenges. The central question is **whose needs will this Board serve?** The CLFDB continues a trend toward privatization which has not served women's interests very well. Unemployment Insurance is now completely funded by employers and employees. The federal government no longer makes any contribution other than administering the plan. All training funds for UI recipients will come out of UI funds. This means that all training for UI recipients will effectively be funded through private dollars. At the same time EIC has cut back on the amount of money it gives to training from its general revenues. The result is a reduction in the total amount of federal money available for training. This may force women's groups and the other sectors represented on the CLFDB to compete more fiercely for declining amount of training money. The Reference Group is concerned because recent EIC policies seem to be promoting fragmentation, competition, and polarization of training programs in Canada.

Privatization is not necessarily bad. But when it results in a loss of accountability, the shutting down of valuable programs at community colleges, a focus on specific rather than generic or portable skills and a tendency to 'go with the winners' - with those who are already doing well under current conditions, then it is a problem. Many women's organizations believe that these have been effects of privatization so far. If the interests of women are to be well served, the decision-making process will have to change.

Who gets left out...

The majority of CLFDB seats are for Business and Labour. This suggests that the emphasis is on training for the employed work force. The implication here is fewer training dollars for the unemployed, the underemployed and those on social assistance, women, immigrant and visible minority people, aboriginal people and people with all disabilities.

Decentralization...

EIC's plan for the CLFDB and its 'machinery' involves decentralization - moving decision-making down to the local level. So far, there is no indication that decentralization, as it is defined by EIC, will ensure equity, quality training standards, transferability, or recognition of accreditation. The Reference Group believes that the result could be further fragmentation of training programs, and of the lobbying efforts that make a difference in ensuring quality and equity. In addition, the EIC plan totally ignores the provinces even though public education and training institutions are provincial responsibilities. Co-operation from all levels of government will be necessary if we are to make any significant change to our education and training system.

Process...

The present process being used by EIC to implement the CLFDB and its associated committee and local Boards does not follow the joint recommendations of the business, labour and community groups involved in the Phase One Task Forces. All 7 Task Forces recommended that UI funds be devoted solely to income maintenance and that training costs be paid out of other federal and provincial funds. Despite this recommendation, EIC has moved some UI funds to the private sector for training purposes. In addition, EIC has started creating local Boards before the CLFDB is firmly in place, and without clear guidelines. The Reference Group believes that EIC's use of some local organizations which **do not** have true community representation as the starting point for setting up Local Boards is a mistake.

What Can We Do?

If we want the CLFDB to create training policies and programs to meet the needs of women, we must define for ourselves and for the Board what our needs and interests are. We need to create a **Women's Agenda on Education and Training**. As well, we need to work with other representatives on the Board. Our task is to create an organized constituency which cannot be ignored. We have to work together to ensure that the Board is informed about and acts on the diverse needs of women. We need to make sure that decision-making at the CLFDB table and within its related Committees and local Boards is democratic, so that equity is a reality. We need your participation, energy and input. Sections on **The Women's Representative and the Reference Group to Working Together in Women's Training** include ideas and strategies on how you and your organization or group can participate.

For Further Reading:

Employment and Immigration Canada has produced a number of documents of interest:

- EIC on the Move to Meet the Employment Programming Objectives of the Labour Force Development Strategy discussed Employment and Immigration Canada's plans to change its programs in response to the recommendations of the first Report of the Task Forces.
- Pathways to Success: Aboriginal People and the Labour Force Development Strategy, is a discussion of the plan for aboriginal training boards.
- The Labour Force Development Strategy Phase II Report is a discussion of the recommendation for a new national training Board.
- The Report of the CLMPC Task Forces on the Labour Force Development Strategy is the report of the seven task forces, described above.
- Success in the Works describes how changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act will impact on training programs.

Background Information

These documents are available through your local Canada Employment Centre, or by contacting:

Employment and Immigration Canada
Employment
Strategic Policy and Planning Branch
Place du Portage, Phase IV, 8th Floor
Hull, Quebec
K1A 0J9

or, for the two Labour Force Development Strategy reports:

The Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre
6-66 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada. K1P 5H1
Tel: 613 234-0505 Fax: 613 234-2482

Below is a list of the names and addresses of the members of the Board:

Co-Chairs:

Mr. Gerard Docquier, National Director
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6 - 66 Slater St.
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K1P 5H1

Mr. Laurent Thibault, Pres.
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604-792-1073 (h)

Disabled Communities:

Ms. Sandra Carpenter
25 Elm St. #1205
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416-326-0211 (w)

Visible Minorities:

Mr. Navin Parekh
111 Colonnade Road, Suite 206
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613-224-8174 (h)

Employment & Immigration Canada:

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NEWSFLASH

The proposed amendment to Canada's constitution to give the provinces and territories jurisdiction over labour market training makes regional and local organizing by women even more important!

We need the Women's Agenda on Training to help us to outline standards which will guide Canada's training policy and ensure equality of training across the country.

We need to hear from you!

Organizing for Women's Training A Call To Action

Introduction:

There are many ways women can work together on training issues. One is through women's groups. A second is by documenting women's stories. Another is by organizing regionally.

Regional organizing is important, but it is not for everyone. It takes time, effort and resources. Not everyone has these available at any particular time. The Reference Group and the Women's Representative are eager to work with women who are interested in regional organizing, but we do not expect that everyone will be. There are many other ways to work together - on information exchange efforts, such as the one we begin with here, on developing the **Women's Agenda on Training** and on specific issues or problems that come up from time to time. The Reference Group wants to hear your stories.

Please share your experiences and ideas with us!

Documenting Your Experiences with Training Programs:

One of the committees that has been formed by the Canadian Labour Force Development Board is an Employment Priorities Committee. It is a permanent committee of the Board and is responsible for reviewing how Employment and Immigration (EIC) has responded to the Task Force Reports in Phase I of the Labour Force Development Strategy. It is also going to make policy recommendations on EIC programs.

Marcy is representing women on this committee. She needs to know how Employment and Immigration's new policies are affecting women. For example, in response to the criticism in the Task Force Reports that the eligibility criteria were too rigid, EIC has made entrance requirements for training programs more flexible. How has this decision affected women applying for training? Who is being excluded and on what basis?

Please document how these changes have affected women in your area. To assist you in this activity, we have included a survey tool (attached at the end of this section) which you and your organization can use to record this information over the next few months. Please send this information to Marcy Cohen by Christmas 1991.

Working with Women's Groups:

There are women's organizations all across the country which are involved in training and education for women. Some offer training programs, some are groups of learners, some are engaged in lobbying and networking. If you would like to know more about some of these organizations and what they are doing, get in touch with the Reference Group member who lives closest to you. A complete list of the names, addresses and organizations of Reference Group members is included in the section of the **Resource Kit**, entitled **The Women's Representative and the Reference Group**.

Regional Organizing:

The Canadian Labour Force Development Board will work with a series of local Boards, to be established in regions and communities across the country. **If we want to be sure that those Boards act on women's needs and interests, we need to get organized locally and nationally, be visible and speak with a loud voice about what it is that we need and want.**

Regional activity can create a forum and opportunity for local women's groups to communicate their experiences, interests and needs to the Women's Representative and the Reference Group. The Reference Group would like to work with local 'organizing committees' to set up regional workshops. The objectives of these regional workshops will be to discuss ideas and models for regional coalitions and ways to communicate between the Women's Representative, the new Reference Group and the regional coalitions. It is also a way for women's groups in regions to contribute to the **Women's Agenda on Training**. The Reference Group wants to work with the existing regional coalitions and help to start new ones. Below are some examples of coalitions which have already been established.

Regional Coalitions

The Reference Group would like to encourage women's groups across Canada to participate in creating and/or supporting regional coalitions. Regional coalitions are emerging in several locations. They provide the opportunity for effective networking, lobbying and coordinated action among groups with limited resources. The Reference Group is working actively with the two coalitions described below, and wants to work with other coalitions, as they emerge.

Regional coalitions of women's training organizations currently exist in Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba. In Ontario, ACTEW - Advocates for Community-based Training and Education for Women is a 50-member organization of community-based training groups. In British Columbia, WETC - the Women's Education and Training Coalition is a more loosely organized "permanent ad hoc committee" of 15 member groups. In Manitoba, a new coalition was in the process of getting organized in the spring of 1991. Below, we give you 'snapshot' pictures of ACTEW and WETC, as examples of what is possible.

ACTEW

ACTEW was incorporated in 1985 as a provincial coalition of community-based programmes that combine skills training, life and language skills, literacy, interpersonal communications training and job search skills. These not-for-profit programmes have been funded through the federally sponsored Canadian Jobs Strategy programs of Employment and Immigration Canada (EIC), as well as through provincial, municipal and private sources.

Individually, ACTEW's member programs do not have the resources to undertake advocacy and public education work. ACTEW, as an umbrella organization, takes on this work on behalf of its member organizations. ACTEW also works as a member of other networks and coalitions and

with groups and organizations which share its interests. ACTEW aims to enhance opportunities for women, by supporting existing education and training programs through: networking and information-sharing, staff and curriculum development, government consultation, public education, research and advocacy.

ACTEW's objectives are:

- to advocate and lobby on behalf of low-income, immigrant, visible minority and Native women, so as to improve their educational, occupational and economic opportunities.
- to promote employment equity for women.
- to advocate in support of existing pre-employment education and skills training programmes for all women of Ontario and to provide them with consultative services.
- to encourage and assist in the development of new and innovative training initiatives for women, with a particular focus on non-traditional employment and on programmes that meet the specific needs of women who are older and/or facing displacement in the labour market.

Services to member organizations include a newsletter, a resource centre and monthly information-sharing meetings. ACTEW's advocacy and public education activities and independent research projects have resulted in the production of a number of publications which are available for sale at cost plus postage.

ACTEW is an independent incorporated non-profit organization. Finding funding to support ACTEW's work is a continuing problem. Presently ACTEW has a Coordinator and an Administrative Assistant (who is a placement student from a member organizations) as staff. However, it is the voluntary participation of members (on ACTEW's Board, committees and at monthly meetings), giving their time and expertise, that contributes to ACTEW's success and ongoing survival.

WETC

The Women's Employment and Training Coalition (WETC) started in 1985. Its members got together to present issues and concerns regarding women's training and employment to Flora MacDonald, then federal Minister of Employment and Immigration. The coalition found that working collectively was a powerful way of making their concerns heard. Since then, the coalition has continued to develop its membership base and expand its activities. An average of 15 core members representing community-based training, college, immigrant and visible minority agencies and other women's organizations attend bi-monthly meetings. Information is mailed to another 25 groups and agencies. WETC participates in federal and provincial government commissions, submitting briefs and sending representatives, writes letters of concern to various government agencies on behalf of women and develops proposals to advocate for improved services to women, such as core funding for bridging programs. In 1989 WETC together with senior officials of the BC and Yukon region, established the Women's Employment Advisory Committee (WEAC).

A Call To Action

WEAC, with a core membership of three WETC members and three senior CEC officials, meets four times a year to review policy and make recommendations to improve services for women.

WETC works on a completely voluntary basis with no government or agency funding or paid staff. It operates with the support of the Women's Centre at Douglas College and the assistance of other individuals and organizations such as CCLOW who give their time and skills to provide services in kind, such as the preparation and distribution of minutes, information packages and proposals.

To learn more, contact:

ACTEW
801 Eglinton Ave. West,
Suite 301
Toronto, Ontario.
M5N 1E3
Tel: 416-783-3590

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COALITION

c/o Elizabeth Wilson
Women's Resource Centre
Douglas College
P.O. Box 2503
New Westminster, B.C.
V3L 5B2
Tel: 603-527-5486

or

Shauna Butterwick
2586 W. 12th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
V6K 2P3
Tel: 604-733-7480

Suggestions for Organizing

- Why not have an initial meeting with a small group of people and talk about how to get other groups in your area involved in a second, larger meeting? This **Resource Kit** can be used as the starting resource and information kit in this meeting to discuss women's education and training issues.
- Identify existing networks and coalitions and contact the member(s) of the Reference Group in your area to find out what other organizations and groups might be interested in meeting with you to talk about organizing a regional coalition.
- Contact your provincial Federation of Labour, Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and/or Employment Immigration Canada to find what they are doing about education and training for women, and what plans have been initiated to establish the Local Boards.
- Organize a session to discuss what the Women's Agenda should be, using the exercises suggested in the Women's Agenda paper (lavender). Build in some time to talk about getting together again to continue the discussion and to arrive at a common position on values and principles. The results of the discussion should be sent to the Reference Group and/or Marcy Cohen.
- Use a prepared document, either a short position paper written by a member of your group, or something that someone has read and liked and talk about how your group's values and principles are the same or different than those discussed in the paper.
- Contact a member of the Reference Group in your area to discuss organizing a workshop which could include an opportunity to examine shared values and principles.

Survey Tool for Documenting How EIC's Policies Affect Women¹

1. How many intakes do you have each year? _____

2. What are the intake dates?

3. During your last intake for participants:

A. how many applicants did you have? _____

B. how many spaces did you have
available? _____

4. Do you keep waiting lists?

_____ Yes (go to 4A.) _____ NO (go to 4B.)

4A. How many are on the list? Number _____
(Please go on to question 5 below)

4B. Why do you not keep waiting lists?
Please explain (and then go on to question 5):

¹. Source: Advocates for Community-based Training and Education for Women, Toronto, Ontario.

5. Of those who were accepted into your programme, how did learners find out about it?

Give number:

Canada Employment Centres:

Community based employment services:

Employment Support Initiatives, ie welfare workers:

Word of mouth: _____

Posters in the community: _____

Advertisements: _____

Other (please specify source and number):

6. Many women either do not have access to training or, for a number of reasons, cannot complete the selection and training process. In order for us to identify who is screened out and why and when this happens please fill in the form below.

a) In your last intake how many women:

Phoned/
walked in ()

Came to information/
orientation ()

Were
Selected ()

Graduated ()

b) How many were unable to continue and at which stage of the intake/selection process?:
(Please give actual numbers for each of the categories below. If you are "guess-timating"
indicate by place a "?" beside the number.)

Due to:	After phoning/ walk in	After information/ orientation session
Inadequate Training		
Allowance		
Lack of		
Childcare		
Transportation		
Difficulties		
<u>Funding criteria:</u>		
SAR		
SED (name the designated group)		
Employment Status		
Parental status (eg. sole support parent)		
Other: (please name)		

A Call To Action

Programme Criteria:

Employment status

English level -too high

(ESL) -too low

Math level -too high

-too low

Formal Educ. -too high

-too low

Other: (please name)

7. Does your programme do any follow-up with those women who were not accepted into the programme?

Yes _____ No _____

Please explain and give examples where appropriate:

8. Does your programme do any follow-up with your graduates?

Yes _____ No _____

Please give details of what this involves and examples where appropriate: