

Putting Women in the Picture

Building Equitable Access to Ontario's Labour Market

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A C T E W

a women's training community





1996 – 2004:
Women Dropped out of the Picture



Historical Context: Major Policy Changes 1995-1997

Employment Insurance (EI) Act (1996)

- Replaced the Unemployment Insurance Act
- Part I outlines financial assistance benefits to individuals (UI/EI)
- Part II describes Employment Assistance Services (EAS) considered to be Employment Benefits and Supports Measures (EBSMs)
- HRSDC enters into contribution agreements with “third-party providers” to deliver EAS and EBSMs, including community agencies, for-profit providers, and public educators (school boards, community colleges)



Historical Context: Major Policy Changes 1995-1997

Impacts of the new EI Act

- Tightened eligibility criteria, disproportionately affecting women
- Decreased access to training programs funded through Part II
- Loss of government funding for programs serving most contingent, non-EI eligible workers
- Introduction of “Accountability”
 - encourages “creaming” of more job-ready clients over clients with more barriers
 - Focus on short-term programs rather than long-term success
 - Inappropriate job placements that tend towards low-skill, low-pay

(Critoph, 2003)



Historical Context: Major Policy Changes 1995-1997

Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDA)

- transfer responsibility for delivering training and employment services from Federal to Provincial jurisdictions
- outline funding and decision-making protocols for provincial or territorial responsibility
- governed by EI legislation
- variation in terms of levels of responsibility for \$ or program decision-making
- every province/territory except Ontario signed an LMDA



Historical Context: Major Policy Changes 1995-1997

Impacts of LMDAs on Employment and Training Services for Women

- increasingly competitive bidding for third-party contracts that were increasing concentrated with certain types of providers
- provinces and territories under the LMDAs not required to address needs of equity groups (Designated Groups Policy abandoned)



Historical Context: Major Policy Changes 2000s

HRSDC/Service Canada Release New Policy Directives

- requirement for contribution agreements over a certain amount to go out to a full tendering, or Call for Proposal (CFP), process
- voluntary-sector programs designed to meet the diverse needs of clients were being placed in open competition with programs delivered by for-profit companies



Putting Women in the Picture

Policy Principles that Will Put Women Back in the Picture

Labour force development policy, programs and services arising from policy, and evaluations and monitoring should all be ***focused on the client, based on their contexts, experiences, assets, and aspirations.***



How Labour Policy Can Support Women

Seven Principles that Move Towards Client-Focused Labour Policy:

1. Access
2. Equity
3. Sustainability of Programs
4. Accountability
5. Quality Programming
6. Recognition of Prior Skills
7. Integrate Training, Economic Development and Livelihoods

(Lior and Wismer, 2003; Bradley-Siskind, 2003)



Ontario's Current Context: Emerging Opportunity



Ontario's Current Context: Emerging Opportunity

Voluntary Sector Accord

Solidifies the working relationship with the Non-Profit Sector in Canada

- Commitment to informed and sustained dialogue

Put into practice with the establishment of the Joint Service
Canada/Voluntary Sector Working Group on Developing New
Approaches to Funding Results (later VSACE)

- Now exists a vehicle to work with the government as collaborators



Ontario's Current Context: Emerging Opportunity

The Canada-Ontario Labour Market Development Agreement signed on November 23, 2005

Ontario's late signing may actually have meant the survival (if not growth) of women's employment and training services:

- commitment to Gender Equity at the federal level
- Ontario benefits from seeing longitudinal impacts of other LMDAs
- One major drawback: no buffer to the 2004 HRSDC Policy Directives and shift to full tendering process for proposals



Ontario's Current Context: Emerging Opportunity

Surprise! There are two Agreements...

Labour Market Partnership Agreement (LMPA) signed along with LMDA

Different from the LMDA in significant ways:

- Transfer of new money and not of programs
- Money is not from the EI Fund and so programs can serve more contingent workers
- Six priority areas named with flexibility according to the labour market development needs of Ontario
- Commitment to work with Stakeholders
- Passing mention of some equity groups

...will the current Federal Government honour this agreement?



Ontario's Current Context: Emerging Opportunity

Surprise! There are Three Agreements...

Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement signed in early November, 2005

- 5-year agreement for settlement and language training in Ontario
- Worth more than the LMDA/LMPA combined
- Funding expended by provincial Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (other agreements are between MTCU and Service Canada)

...will the current Federal Government honour this agreement?



Putting Women in the Picture: Seizing the Opportunity



About ACTEW – A Women's Training Community

A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women (ACTEW) is a provincial umbrella network of organizations delivering employment and training services to women in Ontario. We are a registered charitable organization.

ACTEW promotes women's full economic and social participation in the Canadian labour force by supporting community-based training programs through research, public education and professional development and capacity-building opportunities.



About ACTEW Members

- membership open to other non-profit agencies that support our mission
- currently 60 members
- most women clients face some kind of barrier to gaining and retaining employment or economic self-sufficiency
- ACTEW members serve over 50,000 women each year



Putting Women in the Picture

- Three-Year Project Funded by Status of Women Canada
- Four Objectives:
 1. To encourage greater awareness of the need for gender equity to be integrated into the development, implementation, and evaluation of a Canada-Ontario LMDA, and in all policy development.
 2. To monitor and document the longitudinal effect of the Canada-Ontario LMDA on women's training programs, and women's access to training and employment services, in communities across Ontario.
 3. To strengthen the capacity of women's training providers to contribute to policy dialogue and public education about women's equitable access to training and employment services.
 4. To undertake public educational activities about the impact of policy change on women's training and employment programs and services in Ontario and other provinces.



Research

- Build on what's already out there (Lior and Wismer, 2003; Critoph, 2002, 2003; Bradley-Siskind, 2003)
- Monitor research that comes out related to women's economic self-sufficiency
- Fill in the gaps with research that we can use in our work with agencies and with government bureaucrats and politicians
 - Longitudinal quantitative surveys to get a sense of women's employment and training services in Ontario pre- and post-LMDA
 - Detailed key informant interviews to get more in-depth, qualitative responses



Strategies in Government Relations

- **Sit on Formal Advisory Groups**

- Voluntary Sector Advisory Committee (Federal)
- LMDA Service Delivery Advisory Group (Provincial)

- **Formal Meetings and Presentations with Bureaucrats and Politicians**

- Combine research, statistics and client experiences and successes to back our request to support women-specific employment and training

- **Informal Opportunities**

- Attend public consultations
- Crash events (I told you we were opportunists!)



Educating Community Agencies

- Get information from agencies to share with government
 - Make Sure Research Moves into Action
- Disseminating Government info to Agencies
 - Educational Component: what's significant about these policies?
What are the implications? What might work better?
- Give concrete actions for individuals and organizations to take
- Communications are key:
 - Online: web site, blog, policy e-bulletin, downloadable fact sheets, research and tool-kits in plain language
 - Real-time: regional meetings, symposia and summits

Putting Women in the Picture is good for women and good for Canada



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