

Promoting Equitable Participation of Professional Foreign-Trained Women

Skills for Change
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This report's findings and recommendations do not reflect the opinion of the Status of Women Canada or the Government of Canada.

I. Introduction

"A lot of emphasis is paid on what you don't have, and not on what you have. Canada is multicultural and hence people's varied experiences and backgrounds should be considered as an asset, not a limitation." (FTIW Respondent)

A. Goals of the Research

The purpose of this study was to address the lack of information about foreign-trained immigrant professional women residing in Toronto. As such, the overall goals of this research were to:

- ◆ identify systemic barriers to licensing and employment faced by foreign-trained professional immigrant women
- ◆ develop common strategies to overcome systemic barriers
- ◆ promote equitable participation of women through advocacy and public awareness activities
- ◆ to identify a critical mass of FTIW in Toronto; the most common groups of FTIW settling in Toronto; and gather initial data on the number who access their professions in Metro

B. Rationale for Study

Since its establishment in 1982, Skills for Change (SfC) has been an advocate for the integration of immigrant women into Canadian society. Moreover, since 1996, SFC has played a leadership role in addressing systemic barriers faced by the foreign-trained through its Access to Trades and Professions Program ((A)TP).

Dignity and Opportunity: Assessing the Economic Contribution of Foreign-Trained Newcomers (SFC, 1998), found that ten years after *Access! Task Force on Access to Trades and Professions in Ontario* was published, the reasons why the foreign trained do not get jobs still remain true.

Barriers such as 1) inadequate assessment of professional qualifications and experience; 2) additional testing requirements; 3) lack of technical language training and skills retraining opportunities; and 4) lack of appeals processes are still evident.

Many other studies since *Access! Task Force on Access to Trades and Professions in Ontario* have identified the continued existence of the problem for foreign-trained men and women. However, there has been a lack of comprehensive research documenting the specific barriers and offering constructive strategies to overcome these barriers faced by FTIW in Toronto.

C. Advisory Committee

An advisory committee of fifteen women, ten of whom were foreign-trained professionals, guided this project. Other members included representatives from Women in Trades and Technology, the Status of Women Canada, Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation and SfC. The committee provided leadership and direction to the project.

D. Research Methodology

The research methodology was action-based and policy-relevant. It employed a process of investigating, reflecting, discovering and action. This work is from the margins with the focus on the shared, lived experiences of FTIW. Data collection processes attempted to utilize a methodology which was participatory and inclusive. For the purpose of gathering the quantitative statistical information, a self-administered questionnaire¹ was completed by 151 FTIW participants living in Toronto.

The same 151 participants also participated in focus groups. Finally, all 151 participants were invited to discussion groups after the data was analyzed to help generate "common strategies."

¹ Based on the questionnaire developed by the Access to Professions and Trades Unit of the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation.

In addition, focus groups were also held with other key informants such as settlement service agency staff engaged in language training and employment re-training.

It was critical to involve other key informants, both on the advisory committee and in the study, in order to clarify questions, solidify stakeholder collaboration and identify participants for the study.

II. Summary of Research Findings

A. Introduction

One hundred and fifty-one FTIW living in Toronto participated in this research study through self-administered questionnaires and focus groups. They, along with other key informants, identified several systemic barriers to being gainfully employed in their profession. These barriers were reported to have adverse and negative effects on their ability to settle and assume full membership in Canadian society. Direct quotes from FTIW participants poignantly illustrate these barriers in their own voices.

In addition, participants in the research made suggestions regarding "common strategies" to overcome systemic barriers. Participants indicated that problems relating to a fair and equitable assessment, accreditation and licensing process including "meaningful employment" are not only a complex challenge but are also a political issue.

This summary report includes:

- ◆ a profile of the FTIW who participated in the study
- ◆ a description of the barriers as identified by the FTIW and other key informants in this study
- ◆ a comparison between the barriers identified in the *Access!* report and those identified in this study
- ◆ participants' recommendations for common strategies to overcome identified barriers
- ◆ a description of a critical mass of specific professions of FTIW living in the Toronto area

B. Profile of FTIW Participants

i. Background

The 151 respondents came from 10 broad regions of the world with the greatest representation from Eastern Europe (34%), South East Asia (25%), South Asia (14%) and Africa (9%). 92% were between the ages of 26 and 50 with 46% between 31 and 40.

The most commonly given reasons for coming to Canada were 1) for a better way of life (89%); 2) for better education for my children (62%); and 3) to seek new opportunities (51%). However, 71% felt that they were worse off economically or the same since they came to Canada.

ii. Immigrant Class

Approximately 41% came to Canada as independent immigrants and 50% came in under the combined status of independent immigrant and the point system.

iii. Professions

The five professions where participants were concentrated were teaching, counselling, law, medicine and pharmacy.

iv. Education

The majority of participants had post-secondary education with 39% having a Bachelors, 26% a Masters and 13% a college diploma.

v. Employment

Approximately 42% of participants were unemployed at the time of the study. 18% were full-time students; 13% worked part-time; 5% worked and studied part-time; 3% were self-employed and only 18% were employed full-time. Just 20% said they used their professional skills in their present job.

vi. Certification and Licensing

After three years in Canada, only 25% of respondents had submitted their certificates and/or transcripts for assessment to universities and colleges. Only 23% of this group had become certified in their profession with most having to complete retraining or take additional courses.

C. A Critical Mass of Specific Professions of FTIW in Toronto

To get an understanding of the critical mass of specific professions of FTIW in Toronto, SfC sent out a questionnaire to agencies in the Toronto area working with FTIW. This survey was over and above the original participation of the 151 FTIW in the research study. Two hundred and eighty-nine questionnaires (289) were returned. In addition, SfC examined its own statistics on FTIW through its Intake/Assessment/Training (IAT) unit.

i. Most prevalent professions

The most common professions according to the results of the survey were i) engineers (25%), ii) nurses (11%), iii) teachers/professors (11%), iv) physicians (10%) and v) and accountants (7%).

SfC's statistics corroborate these findings for the most part with some differences. Whereas engineers, teacher/professors and accountants were within the top five most common professions, clerk/secretary and student are also named within the top occupational classifications given by FTIW.

ii. Employment status

Out of the 289 responses of FTIW, 25% said they were employed; 33% said they were unemployed. Of those employed, 10% said their current job was related to their professional background while 27% said it was not. The most common kinds of positions these FTIW worked in included: sales clerk, caregiver, community worker, and factory worker. Others said they were upgrading or studying English.

iii. Conclusions

Both the original research study and follow-up survey with community agencies show that there are a concentration of FTIW in various professions living in Toronto. The combined results show that these professions include:

- ◆ Engineering
- ◆ accounting
- ◆ pharmacy
- ◆ counselling
- ◆ nursing
- ◆ teaching
- ◆ medicine
- ◆ law
- ◆ clerk/secretary

Both the research and the follow-up survey show that the situation for FTIW is abysmal. Unemployment and underemployment are critical issues for FTIW that must be addressed.

D. Barriers: Foreign Trained Women Speak Out

"Because of the country you come from you cannot get a license; because you do not have 'Canadian experience' you cannot get a job." (FTIW Respondent)

i. Lack of Canadian experience

Both FTIW and key informants indicated that not having Canadian experience was the rationale most frequently used to deny FTIW a chance to compete. They saw this as an unfair requirement of most of the newcomers who are excluded from employment consideration in spite of being appropriately qualified and in many cases accredited. This requirement also operates as a way of screening out applicants with racial minority clients seldom being granted an interview.

"There is no opportunity to discuss the assessment especially when we do not agree with it. There is no appeal process in place." (FTIW Respondent)

ii. Assessment and licensure

The key informants reported that professional and trades associations whether regulated by private or public statutes, are not providing fair and equitable access to obtaining Canadian accreditation or a license. In addition, it is confusing to know where to apply to for licensing and accreditation and it is also difficult to get useful information. Finally, they indicated that when applicants disagree with the determination or assessment, there are no provisions for an appeal.

"None of my supervisors have the experience or education I have, but my English is a problem because I have an 'accent'." (FTIW Respondent)

iii. English language proficiency

Of all the participants in this study, 73% had a need to take English classes. However, only 39% were taking advantage of free English classes. The cost of English classes is a barrier. With an increase in cost, the number of participants seems to decrease. At the same time, there is a correlation between the cost of these language classes and finding work in participants' field or related area.

As a result of a North American bias in many of the tests, interviews and screening tools, FTIW with English skills and high education face obstacles in finding employment in their professions. They cannot communicate their expertise or high technical knowledge in interviews. This leads to self-doubt and anxiety. The women identified their accent as another barrier and they expressed the view that this was discriminatory and racist.

"I just don't understand why we are given points for our education and profession and then come here to find our qualifications are not acceptable." (FTIW Respondent)

iv. Lack of information about the Canadian labour market

Many FTIW and key informants indicated that Canada needs immigrants and that many FTIW were admitted as independent immigrants on the basis of their education and skills.

However, they said, these skills are then not recognized in Canada. The FTIW experienced a lack of reliable labour market information from the Canadian embassy or consulate and even after coming to Canada.

"We need help with preparing for a job interview because culturally we are not accustomed to marketing our skills and ourselves." (FTIW Respondent)

v. Career Counselling, Retraining and Employment Preparation

Many FTIW mentioned they needed assistance with job search techniques since these are very different from those in their country of origin. They needed help with researching potential sources of employment, approaches to contacting a perspective employer by telephone, writing resumes, interviews, etc. Help with these was crucial to their success because they felt the failure to learn this was sometimes an obstacle to obtaining "Canadian experience." An additional barrier to enrolling in re-training and employment preparation courses is lack of childcare.

"I understood that I would have to spend another five years at the university to upgrade. The biggest issue was working and going to university. The high costs and time constraints killed my interest to pursue upgrading." (FTIW Respondent)

vi. Lack of financial support

In order to upgrade or re-train, FTIW need adequate financial support. **Lack of financial support is an insurmountable barrier for many FTIW.** Funding cuts to government-financed programs and difficult in securing a loan create barriers. Moreover, some FTIW felt that preconceived stereotypes and prejudices prevent them from being assessed as worthy of a loan.

"I approached the zoo to volunteer and get some Canadian experience. But they said that because I am a veterinarian the union did not want me there because I would take away a job." (FTIW Respondent)

vii. Employment

Many key informants and FTIW indicated that Canadian citizens believe that immigrants and refugees take away jobs from Canadians.

They also mentioned that there were prejudices and stereotypes about immigrants, refugees and people of colour in spite of information to the contrary.

The "lack of Canadian experience and their devalued education" coupled with these barriers often results in a serious downward spiral as a result of changes in their employment status.

Many of the FTIW mentioned that they had no choice but to take any job they could get in order to survive and support the family. Age was also identified as a barrier to getting employment.

"Shocked at prejudice I encountered everywhere, I had thought that racial discrimination was an issue that was always blown out of proportion but now I know better." (FTIW Respondent)

viii. Ethnocentrism and racism

Both FTIW and key informants were very explicit about the endemic prevalence of stereotypes, prejudice, systemic discrimination and racism. These have a direct impact on FTIW's ability to access information, good direction and advancement once they do get a job. Participants mentioned other barriers that are coupled with racism such as sexism and religious intolerance.

"I have a son who is 18 months old and I cannot leave him with a babysitter as I have little money to pay her with." (FTIW Respondent)

ix. Lack of childcare

The barriers presented by the lack of publicly funded childcare and decreased access to affordable daycare in general, particularly during training and employment preparation, were clearly indicated by the comments of FTIW respondents.

"I came to Canada with the feelings and thoughts that Canada was going to be home. Now I am angry. I don't feel the same way about Canada. I will always be an immigrant in people's eyes." (FTIW Respondent)

x. Personal challenges

In the face of culture shock, disorientation and awareness of being different, and racism, many FTIW participants have managed to struggle and persevere.

However, several women revealed that they began to doubt themselves, lose confidence, began to overeat and had to be treated for depression.

Many of the women came up with coping strategies to deal with these issues such as getting involved in:

- ◆ physical and spiritual activities
- ◆ meeting other women at a settlement agency
- ◆ getting involved in language and pre-employment training

"Lack of contacts or a social network, something you take for granted in your country of origin makes it very difficult both in terms of settling in a new country as well as finding a job without the help of contacts." (FTIW Respondent)

xi. Lack of social networks and supports

No longer being part of a majority, no longer being recognized for one's experience and lack of social contacts were issues affecting FTIW identified by participants.

E. Ten Years Since the Access! Report: Then and Now

i. Introduction

Since the *Access!* report, many additional programs and services have been put in place to assist the foreign trained in achieving their economic goals. In spite of these positive initiatives, systemic issues and gaps in service still exist. This is especially true for foreign-trained women. Many of the barriers for the foreign trained identified in the 1989 *Access! Task Force on Access to Professions and Trades in Ontario* still exist today according to findings of this report.

This section will 1) compare and contrast the barriers identified in *Access! Task Force on Access to Professions and Trades in Ontario* with those identified by the FTIW in this study; 2) summarize the types of initiatives that have been developed since the *Access!* report; and 3) identify current gaps in programs and services for foreign-trained women.

It should be noted that the *Access!* report does not focus on specific barriers related to FTIW. Therefore, there are a significant number of barriers identified in this study particular to FTIW that were either not identified or only touched on in the *Access!* report.

Additional barriers particular to FTIW centre on financial hardship with respect to getting licensed, retraining, childcare and eligibility for loans. Other critical barriers focus on racism, ethnocentrism, sexism and religious intolerance that the women face as they attempt to get employment in their profession or trade. Lack of a support system, self doubt and depression also factor importantly in the situation of FTIW.

ii. Comparison between barriers identified in the *Access!* report and this study

The Task Force on Access to Trades and Professions in Ontario identified major barriers for the foreign-trained with respect to:

- ◆ assessment of and appealing decisions made about professional qualifications and experience
- ◆ licensing requirements and testing procedures
- ◆ technical language training and skills retraining opportunities

Promoting Equitable Participation of Professional Foreign-Trained Women found that these same barriers and other significant barriers still exist for FTIW today.

Assessment of and appealing decisions made about professional qualifications and experience

The Task Force found that this was the most significant barrier facing the foreign trained and that all other issues around access tie back to the assessment of credentials and experience.

Significant weaknesses in assessing the background of applicants by occupational bodies included use of informal sources, lack of recognition of learning outside accredited or formal programs and subjective ad hoc standards. The Task Force thought that, in many cases, current procedures for assessment had the potential to be applied unfairly.

Key informants and the FTIW in this study reported that assessment of professional qualifications and experience is still a major barrier. Key informants said that professional and trades associations whether regulated by private or public statutes, are not providing fair and equitable access to obtaining Canadian accreditation or a license. They also reported that it is confusing to know where to apply for licensing and accreditation and it is also difficult to get useful information.

In addition, the women in the study reported that not having Canadian experience was the rationale most frequently used to deny FTIW a change to compete for a position even though they might be fully qualified and even accredited.

Both the *Access!* report and this study identified the need for a responsive and fair appeal process that candidates can access when they disagree with a decision made by a regulatory body.

Licensing requirements and testing procedures

The Task Force discovered that a foreign-trained candidate may be subjected to additional testing beyond what would be expected of an Ontario candidate. The rationale for additional testing on the part of occupational bodies related back to lack of an effective assessment mechanism. The Task Force saw this additional testing as overly expensive, subjective, and with the potential for cultural bias and to be applied unfairly.

Bias in testing and screening procedures and financial hardship were barriers that were also identified in this study. In spite of language abilities and high education, FTIW indicated they found it difficult to communicate their expertise and technical knowledge during employment screening processes. Financial hardship related to the cost of getting accredited and licensed was also well documented by the FTIW. For many of these women, these costs were prohibitive or out of the question, especially if they were single or sole parents.

Technical language training and skills retraining opportunities

The Task Force identified the need for more opportunities for occupational language training across the board.

The FTIW identified the cost of both language training and childcare as barriers in addition to the availability of occupation-specific language training. In addition, they seemed to indicate that even when FTIW have adequate language skills to work in their profession, these skills are not always recognized. This may be because of the ways in which they are asked to display their abilities and the identification of an "accent" by employers as a problem.

The *Access!* report also noted that without a comprehensive assessment of credentials and experience, retraining needs are not clearly identified. This issue was corroborated by the FTIW in this study. Retraining issues identified by FTIW included the need for accurate labour market information, career counselling, retraining and employment preparation. Lack of financial assistance and childcare are reoccurring barriers that prevent FTIW from taking advantage of retraining opportunities.

iii. Programs and services for the foreign trained

Since the *Access!* report, there has been both government and private support for the further development of programs and services for the foreign trained. As a result of this assistance, many innovative initiatives and resources have been developed over the years. These initiatives have included occupation-specific language training, employment counselling, job search training and coaching, mentoring programs as well as work placements for the foreign trained. In Ontario, a number of community-based organizations have developed effective responses to address the needs of the foreign-trained. For example, SfC offers sector-specific information sessions for foreign-trained professionals. These information sessions provide current and complete information about their occupational field, the Ontario labour market and licensing, accreditation and certification requirements. In addition, COSTI and Humber College Services operate a Centre for For Trained Professionals and Tradespeople.

In addition, SFC and other organizations such as the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women and Windsor Women Working With Immigrant Women have focused on the needs of FTIW.

These initiatives have included studies similar to this one that identify barriers and strategies specific to FTIW and a call to action to implement these strategies.

iv. Gaps in programs and services for FTIW

Despite the fact that the initiatives outlined previously on programs and services for the foreign trained have had excellent results, there is an ongoing need to address systemic barriers for the foreign trained generally, and specifically for FTIW.

There is a need to continue to address the original barriers identified in the *Access!* report. Barriers specific to FTIW must be addressed as well, including the need for:

- ◆ financial assistance while going through the accreditation and retraining process
- ◆ available and affordable childcare
- ◆ counselling for personal issues
- ◆ ways to network and create support groups with other FTIW
- ◆ ways to eliminate racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination that FTIW face

F. Considerations for the Development of "Common Strategies"

i. Introduction

Participants have indicated that there needs to be a comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing problems related to assessment, accreditation and the licensing process including meaningful employment. They believe that all stakeholders -- various levels of government, assessment and accrediting institutions, licensing and regulatory bodies, foreign-trained professionals as well as settlement service agencies working with immigrants need to be at the table to resolve these systemic barriers.

The FTIW participating in the study acknowledge the need for regulatory standards. They also recognize they may need to upgrade or retrain. They want to be assessed against a fair system with clearly articulated procedures.

However, they indicated that there is a need for creativity and flexibility through assessment tools such as Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). PLA, intended to give credit for experience, skills and knowledge, should be implemented.

PFTIW participants expressed strong views that systemic changes should be made to accreditation and licensure, education and training, financial and social support systems to eliminate discrimination and racism in these areas.

ii. Strategies

Participants' suggestions regarding common strategies to address systemic barriers indicated in this research fall under the following jurisdictions:

- ◆ Immigration Canada
- ◆ assessment agencies, universities, colleges and licensing bodies
- ◆ settlement agencies

Immigration Canada

Immigration Canada should make it clear to prospective immigrants that being accorded points for their education, profession, trade and skills will not guarantee them a job on arrival. In addition, Canadian consulates and embassies should provide accurate and comprehensive information to prospective immigrants. Finally, both Immigration Canada and Human Resources Development Canada should keep up-to-date on the education and training systems in other countries. This information should be readily available to assessment and accreditation agencies as well as licensing bodies.

Assessment agencies, universities, colleges and licensing bodies

PLA

Assessment and accrediting agencies as well as licensing bodies should implement and incorporate PLA and give immigrants credit based on knowledge and skills gained through prior experience. These agencies along with government should facilitate accreditation and licensing of foreign-trained immigrants through fair and equitable assessment procedures and processes.

They should also make provisions to assess applicants on the job and grant, where appropriate temporary license and provisional registration.

Assessment, accreditation and licensing procedures

A credible centralized credentials assessment and accrediting agency should be established. Assessment, accreditation and licensing in trades and professions should be transparent and unbiased with course outlines that constitute "Canadian Standards" against which foreign credentials can be assessed based on learning outcomes.

There should be an appeal process for those who feel their assessment has not been dealt with properly.

Accountability

Assessment and accrediting agencies should be accountable to applicants, educational and training institutions as well as professional licensing bodies. Similarly, professional licensing bodies should be accountable to applicants and educational and training institutions.

Financial assistance

The duration and cost of assessment, accreditation and licensing should be reviewed and provisions made for financial assistance where applicable. This applies to needed upgrading and retraining as well.

Networking opportunities for the foreign-trained

Licensing bodies, professional and trades associations with settlement service agencies could work together to facilitate networking opportunities for foreign-trained immigrants.

Settlement service agencies

Language training

The quality of English classes should be improved with different levels made available. Profession and trade specific English classes should be made available to assist foreign-trained professionals so they can learn terminology specific to their occupation. This would facilitate getting accredited and licensed.

Career counselling

Employment counsellors should hook people up to their professional associations. Agencies need to play an advocacy role for clients and not impose choices on foreign-trained immigrants.

They should provide job interview training that helps people market themselves and understand the cultural expectations in these interviews.

Assessment, accreditation and licensing

Agencies should work with foreign-trained professional groups to develop and implement strategies for equitable access and economic participation. They should work with assessment and accrediting agencies, licensing bodies and relevant government ministries and departments. Agencies should also work with foreign-trained professional groups to evaluate systemic policies and procedures to assess and license foreign-trained immigrants.

Lobby government

Agencies should work with other community-based agencies to lobby government to:

- ◆ review the Employment Insurance Act and regulations governing contributions and benefits
- ◆ improve funding for comprehensive, integrated social support services for immigrants as well as for universal childcare funding

Policies and strategies

Policies and strategies should be implemented to facilitate economic integration of foreign-trained professionals. Moreover, a process should be established to ensure that foreign-trained immigrants are not subjected to discrimination by assessment and accreditation agencies, licensing bodies and employers.

III. Conclusion

This study shows that the FTIW in their quest to access meaningful employment *are* operating in an environment that is basically, and of necessity, unfair. Basically unfair because it is inconsistent with the promise and norms of free democracy. Unfair, of necessity, because it supports and protects the ideology of the power-brokers in this society and some stakeholders through the process used by the designated “gatekeepers”, current at that time.

This process operates so as to limit access to the “unearned benefits” of some of the stakeholders, thereby imposing “unwarranted burdens” on “*outsiders*” through the exercise of discretion by the “gatekeepers.”

As this process unfolds, the following scenario seems to take effect:

- ◆ If you have the “language ticket,” you get a free ride so long as you are not obviously “ethnic”
- ◆ If you have the “money ticket,” there appears to be a presumption of “entitlement” and every accommodation, conscious or unconscious, will be made if you can buy the “language ticket”
- ◆ If you have neither the “money ticket” nor the “language ticket” you are then subjected to the arbitrary exercise of the discretionary powers bestowed on the “gatekeepers”. This is in turn fueled by conflicting presumptions of entitlement for some, and disentanglement for others, by way of a secondary process.
- ◆ The secondary, provisional assessment process now becomes subjected to auditory and ocular influences based on “what I hear” and “what I see” and “what you get.”

This research has revealed that the nature of the problem of access to trades and professions of FTIW is multi-dimensional. It is also evident that these problems related to inequitable access are a result of systemic barriers and

obstacles. For example, the basis of assessment, which was advantageous for the purposes of immigration, becomes subjected to question and discounting with respect to accreditation and licensing.

Aside from the assessment, accreditation and licensing process being largely arbitrary, inconsistent, exclusionary and discriminatory, the following additional conclusions can be drawn:

- ◆ The prohibitive cost of getting their certificates and transcripts was a financial barrier with not only critical short-term consequences, but also serious long-term implications for working in the professions and for social integration;
- ◆ The importance of providing accurate and comprehensive information to prospective immigrants on the assessment and licensing processes, as well as employment opportunities, cannot be overstated;
- ◆ Proficiency in English was a barrier for some of the FTIW, in spite of the seemingly reasonable access to English classes;
- ◆ Many of the women were not served effectively in terms of the quality because the curriculum was very basic and limited
- ◆ The content of the English curriculum should recognize that, over and above conversational English, there should be profession and trade specific classes
- ◆ A large number of the FTIW experienced cultural bigotry and discrimination. For example, the “lack of Canadian experience,” given as a reason for not qualifying for a job was seen as being discriminatory
- ◆ The FTIW are well educated, with Bachelors, Masters and College Diploma levels predominating. Moreover, a majority of the FTIW involved in this project had several years of experience working in their professional fields yet they remain either under-employed or unemployed.

The foreign-trained women who participated in this study represent a group of well-qualified and academically sophisticated women, yet a majority (some 45%) could not get work. This is unacceptably high when compared to the average provincial unemployment rate. As a result of an inadequate process

of accreditation, licensing and career counselling, there appears to be a large number of “professionals” seeking refuge in training, academic programs, and retraining after retraining without specific direction, as a means of dealing with their foreign credentials not being accepted.

The experiences of FTIW who participated in this study are absolutely consistent with previously reported evidence of their not being able to access “meaningful employment.” In the absence of a fair and equitable assessment, accreditation and licensing process they are unable to compete in the market place.

The affects of the financial and language barriers are compounded in that they operate to limit the women’s access to “tailor-made” profession-specific career counselling and similar programs designed to facilitate their entry to their professional fields. The affects of these barriers and obstacles have taken a toll on the self-confidence, esteem, as well as physical health of the FTIW, in some instances.

FTIW have poignantly articulated how these barriers and obstacles have affected them in their daily lives to the extent that they cannot integrate fully into Canadian society. They indicated that, without the opportunity to have steady jobs in their professions or any other “meaningful employment,” not only have their financial reserves dwindled rapidly, but they have also been deprived of any opportunity to replenish these. This, according to many of the FTIW, has in turn had significant adverse impact on their self-esteem and socio-economic status.

Lastly, the FTIW felt that Canada would have been outraged if it had made an investment in their professional education and training. Right or wrong, they feel that in this society they do not matter, as marginalized women. They also resent the general complaint that immigrants are a drain on the system.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Other Key Informants

**COMMUNITY AGENCIES
CONTACTED FOR
KEY INFORMANTS' FOCUS GROUPS**

Afghan Women's Organization	Polish Immigrant and Community Services
African Training and Education Centre	Portuguese Social Services Centre
Canadian Arab Federation	Refugees and Immigrants Information Centre of Toronto
Canadian Multilingual Literacy Centre	Rexdale Microskills
Chinese Information and Community Services	Rexdale Women's Centre
Coalition of Visible Minority Women	Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre
COSTI	Scadding Court Community Centre
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians	Somali Immigrant Aid Organization
Elsbeth Heyworth Centre for Women	South Asian Women's Centre
519 Community Centre	St. Christopher House
Hong Fook Mental Health Service	St. Stephen's Community House
Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre	Tamil Eelam Society, Toronto
Jamaican-Canadian Association	Toronto Chinese Community Services Association
Jewish Vocational Service	University Settlement House
New Experiences for Latin-American Refugee Women	Woodgreen Community Centre
North York Community House	Workers Information and Action Centre
Northwood Neighbourhood Services	Working Skills Centre
Parkdale Intercultural Association	Working Women Community Centre

Appendix 2: Advisory Committee Members

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FOREIGN TRAINED WOMEN

Marylin Anden

Nurse

Francis Antwi-Amponsah

Teacher

Fataneh Farahani

Engineer, Research Chemist

Ludmilla Gartun

Electrical Engineer

Prakovia K. Jain

Teacher

Jean Jovero

Draftsperson

Tatiana Petrova

Teacher

Darla Roguel

Veterinarian

Balneet Singh

Teacher

RESOURCE PEOPLE

Venier Wing Sang Wong

Co-ordinator

Access to Profession and Trades Program

Skills For Change

Izzat Jiwani

Consultant

Status of Women Canada

Michelle Goldberg

Research Analyst

Access to Profession and Trades Unit

Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and

Recreation

Barbara Gammon

Women in Technology and Trades

