February 21. 1996

Dear Regional Meeting Participant:

Enclosed please find a summary analysis of regional meetings held last Fall to assist in developing an employment strategy for women in British Columbia. My apologies for the delay in getting this out to you.

I trust you will find that the Regional Consultations Report reflects discussions at the meeting you attended. If you have any questions or comments, I would be pleased to talk with you. I can be reached at the Ministry of Employment and Investment on Tuesdays at 387-4667.

For your information. work on the strategy is proceeding well. I am planning to meet with representatives from various provincial organizations next month to get feedback on the regional report and on findings from our research on national and international employment initiatives for women.

Again. thanks for your contribution in developing the women's employment strategy. It was a pleasure connecting with you in this way, and I sincerely hope we have the opportunity to work together again at some point in the future.

Sincerely,

Joan Cowderoy
Women's Employment Advisor

Attachment

Women's Employment Strategy Regional Consultations Report

February, 1996

Table of Contents

Appendices

Executive Summary

In July 1995, the Ministry of Employment and Investment initiated the development of a province-wide Women's Employment Strategy to enhance opportunities for women to participate more equitably in the B.C. labour market.

As part of the research in developing the strategy, ten regional meetings were held around the province during the six-week period from mid-October through November. The purpose of the meetings was to identify barriers to women's employment and opportunities for communities and the Province to work together to support women's employment in British Columbia.

Each meeting involved a cross-section of up to fifteen women from the private, non-profit and public sectors. Meetings were structured using a community development approach in order to generate information that would be useful to both communities and the Province. A key outcome of this approach was the creation by participants of a vision of women's employment for the year 2005. with associated strategies on how to make the vision reality.

Elements of the vision articulated at the meetings included:
- equal opportunities for women in all sectors of the workforce
- equitable participation of women in economic decision-making
- the existence of women role models in all sectors
- the perception of child care as an economic issue
- valuing of all work done by women
- solid links between training and employment
- ease of movement in and out of the workforce
- pervasiveness of entrepreneurial thinking
- safe workplaces

In determining how to achieve this vision, meeting participants identified factors working to both impede and support movement towards it. Impediments to attaining the vision included: attitudes of employers, lack of cooperative planning between economic sectors, lack of attention to the particular needs of women, inflexibility in current programs, a

mismatch between available jobs and current training, and lack of good quality, accessible labour market information. Factors identified as supporting movement towards the vision included: increased awareness regarding equity issues, a growing interest in developing innovative partnerships, new opportunities in small business, recent improvements in the child care system, computer technology, and existing support networks for women.

Subsequent to developing impediments and supports, participants identified specific strategies for action for various sectors: employers, labour, schools, community colleges, local governments, women's organizations and individual women and the Province.

Employers were seen by participants as central to balancing current inequities in employment for women. It was suggested that "best practices" in the field be promoted, so that employers come to better understand the particular benefits women bring to their operations and that the participation of women is a critical ingredient to future success in the global marketplace.

The perceived lack of support for gender equity of **labour** was identified as a significant barrier to improving women's present status in the labour market. Women want unions to become a stronger force for equity in the workplace by role modeling within their own organizations, becoming more flexible and promoting mentorships, apprenticeships, and other supports for women in the workforce.

While there was acknowledgment of growing changes with respect to gender equity in the **school system**, particularly in elementary schools, participants felt educators generally still have a long way to go. They want schools to integrate more effectively with the economic and social lives of their communities and to better support girls, particularly in moving into the trades and technical fields.

Community colleges and other post secondary institutions are an important resource for developing access to and readiness for employment. However the experience of women at the meetings was that many institutions still offer training for jobs that will not exist in the future or for low-waged work in the service sector traditionally done by women. Participants indicated the importance of role-modeling gender equity across the system, and linking curriculum and training to jobs and current labour market trends. Flexible

delivery and laddering of programs for long-term career development was seen to be especially important.

Many participants felt that **local governments** remain isolated from or disinterested in key economic issues and related social concerns affecting women and families. Those participants with local council experience described how they had been successful in placing women's issues on the agenda and emphasized the importance of women being at the table to continue this process.

Participants were encouraged and energized by the richness of discussion generated among **individual women and cross-sectoral organizations** around economic and employment issues. They affirmed the particular contributions that women make to the economy and the benefits of cross-sectoral planning in employment development.

Participants acknowledged recent steps taken by the **Province** to improve the economic and social situation of women. In addition, however, they indicated that significant barriers remain, especially around lack of collaboration and coordination within government and program inflexibility. Women want all parts of government to better understand how their experience differs from that of men; to develop flexible programs that are responsive to the diverse needs of individuals, communities and regions; to involve women in development processes; and to let communities implement employment initiatives in ways that work best for them.

Issues of particular concern to women in the regions, First Nations women, immigrant and visible minority women, women with disabilities, women on social assistance, mature women and young women are highlighted in the report, and point to some specific strategies for action.

1.0 Background

In July 1995, the Ministry of Employment and Investment initiated a process to develop a province-wide employment strategy to enhance opportunities for women to participate more equitably in the B.C. labour market. During the months of October and November, as part of the research in developing the strategy, the ministry held regional meetings to consult with women around the province.

The purpose of these consultations was to solicit input into the employment strategy from a diverse group of women in various regions of the province. Run as intensive working sessions, the meetings helped identify barriers to women's employment and opportunities for communities and government to work together to support the development of women's employment in British Columbia.

Each meeting involved a cross-section of ten to fifteen women from the private, non-profit and public sectors. Participants included women from small business and the corporate sector; school districts and community colleges; federal, provincial and local governments; community agencies involved in local economic development, employment training and labour force adjustment; private consultants in the employment and training fields; First Nations women; immigrant and visible minority women; women with disabilities; mature and young women. This diversity was critical in stimulating cross-sectoral dialogue and in developing a comprehensive picture of the barriers to employment and advancement facing women in the province and potential opportunities for creating effective change.

Ten sessions were held during the six week period from mid-October in the following centres: Burnaby, Castlegar, Courtenay, Cranbrook, Kamloops, Kelowna, Prince George, Smithers, Terrace, and Victoria. Meetings drew participation not only from communities in which they were held, but also from women throughout the surrounding region.

The meeting originally scheduled for Dawson Creek was canceled due to insufficient numbers; however, a small group of interested women in the area later held related discussions and submitted written material to the ministry. In addition, members of the Women's Reference Group of the B.C. Labour Force Development Board provided input through two conference calls.

Each regional meeting ran for five hours and was scheduled so that participants living some distance away could travel, meet and return home all within the same day. As mentioned earlier, meetings were run as intensive work sessions; the format was set to generate a significant amount of information within a short period of time, based upon the direct experience and knowledge of participants. Prior to each meeting, participants received an agenda and an information sheet on the Women's Employment Strategy. At all but the first two meetings, they also received information on the Ministry of Employment and Investment, as it became clear that many were unfamiliar with its mandate.

The meeting agenda was designed to create results that would be useful both to communities and to the province in developing effective strategies to enhance the employment of women in BC. This was done for several reasons:

- to make optimal use of participants' time and provide something of immediate value to communities following the meeting
- to develop ideas which could have the effect of stimulating local action
- to enhance the potential of creating systemic change for women at various levels of society
- to develop/build on a base for future collaboration between the province and communities on issues related to women's employment

At the beginning of the meetings, participants introduced themselves, described their background related to women's employment and outlined expectations for the day. Following these introductions, they articulated a vision of what they want women's employment to look like in ten year's time, by the year 2005.

At the lunch break, participants listed on flip charts examples of current successes: projects and programs that are making a difference in women's lives, enhancing employment opportunities and outcomes. These lists reflected a wide variety of initiatives and can be found in Appendix F with associated contact information for future reference.

After lunch, participants compiled a list of current factors supporting movement towards the identified vision and those that impede action forward. Next, they broke into small groups to identify specific actions to actualize the vision by 2005. Each group listed strategies for implementation categorized as follows: business/employers, labour, schools, community colleges, local government, women's organizations, individual women and the Provincial government.

Finally, the small groups reported back to the large group, and where time allowed, participants summarized key themes from the day.

Flip chart records of discussions kept by recorders, dedicated specifically to this task, were transcribed and returned to participants within two to three weeks of each meeting.

Following is a summary of highlights and key issues identified from consultations held throughout the province.

2.0   A Vision for the 21st Century

2.1   What Women Envision
Participants described a vision for women's employment in their communities by the year 2005. (See Appendix B for a full record of "future pictures" created at the meetings.) Key elements of the vision include:

- Women have equal opportunities in all sectors of the workforce, including science and technological fields, the trades and management. Women have equal benefits and benefits are in place for non-standard work. Available work is distributed equitably.

- Women participate equitably in all decision-making structures including those influencing economic development.

- Women role models exist and are noticeable in all sectors. Women's ways of "doing things" (e.g., management) are valued equally to those of men.

- Child care is recognized as a social and economic issue, not solely a women's issue. Flexible workplaces accommodate family responsibilities (e.g. job sharing, onsite daycare).

- Society places value on all work done by women, both paid and unpaid. GNP calculations include unwaged work. Employers recognize skills developed from life experience and educators grant credit for them.

- Training and employment opportunities are linked. Government funding for training is not solely based on population, but takes into account the geography and specific needs of diverse regions. Training opportunities are readily available in rural communities through telecommunications.

- Women are able to enter and re-enter the workforce with relative ease. They can access information and training to enhance job skills and are able to ladder into higher skill/higher paying work throughout their lives. Internships and/or apprenticeships exist for women in business, the trades and technological fields, management and other areas. Mentorship and other support networks are abundant and easily accessible.

- An entrepreneurial mindset is valued and encouraged. Widespread supports exist for women wanting to start small businesses, including those on social assistance.

- Workplaces are safe and free from sexual harassment, intimidation and violence.

- Taxation is structured to better support women.

One woman's vision...

"More jobs are available to women in their 20's at acceptable wage levels. Women in their 30's have good tax benefits which allow them to be homemakers. Women in their 40's have opportunities for management. Women in their 50's are able to move out of the workforce in a secure way. Women who are over 60 are able to retire if that is what they want."

Another way of seeing the future...

"Women understand what a sustainable community is/means. They have a vision of meeting community needs and the knowledge to create opportunities and options."

And a third...

"We're talking about social revolution...a decrease in the consumer society mentality and the impact of consumerism, a new attitude to the environment with less depleting, less polluting lifestyles, co-operative models of investment and lending."

It is interesting to note that the above vision is entirely consistent with those put forth by national and international bodies such as the United Nations Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women produced at Nairobi in 1985, the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, and the 1992 Yukon Declaration on Economic Equality of Women jointly signed by the then Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women in Canada.

2.2   Impediments to Attaining the Vision

Participants identified current forces at work locally, regionally, provincially, nationally and globally which act as impediments to the vision of economic equality articulated above. (See Appendix C for the complete list.) The main factors identified were:

- negative attitudes of employers, unions and some women regarding the potential of women and the value of their contribution
- lack of cooperative planning, coordination and cohesion between various sectors of the economy, between senior governments, among provincial ministries and among local services and programs; short-term thinking and band-aid solutions that create gaps and new problems; inadequate or no evaluation of program outcomes
- lack of care and attention to the particular needs and experiences of women and the potential impact on women of government regulations, policies and programs
- complexity of many government processes (e.g. RFP and grant proposal processes, process for starting a small business)
- inflexibility/narrowness of training, adjustment and welfare programs and of some front line workers who administer them

- mismatch between jobs and skills/training, lack of resources to access training, unavailability of particular training where it is needed, continued emphasis in training and work experience programs on work traditionally done by women
- lack of information and/or access to needed information on the labour market, training programs and other employment-related supports
- lack of understanding and skill of employers regarding the organizational supports required for workplace diversity
- success measured by investors/bankers on the basis of potential profits only, job creation not considered

2.3 Current Supports for Moving Forward

Participants listed those forces presently supporting movement toward the vision. (See Appendix D for the complete list.) Key factors included:

- women's belief in themselves, desire for increased self-reliance and positive attitudes concerning employment and career advancement
- increased awareness regarding equity issues, recent employment equity initiatives in government and the private sector, increased cross-cultural communication
- networks, mentorships and supportive individuals
- recent partnership initiatives and an increased willingness to develop innovative partnerships
- flexible bureaucrats who are willing to help make things work
- some training programs/funding
- recent improvements in the child care system
- computer technology
- new opportunities in small business
- improvements in the educational system, increased awareness of gender equity issues among youth, career days

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2.3   Current Supports for Moving Forward

Participants listed those forces presently supporting movement toward the vision. (See Appendix E for the complete list.) Key factors included:

- women's belief in themselves, desire for increased self-reliance and positive attitudes concerning employment and career advancement
- increased awareness regarding equity issues, recent employment equity initiatives in government and the private sector, increased cross-cultural communication
- networks, mentorships and supportive individuals
- recent partnership initiatives and an increased willingness to develop innovative partnerships
- flexible bureaucrats who are willing to help make things work
- some training programs/funding
- recent improvements in the child care system
- computer technology
- new opportunities in small business
- improvements in the educational system, increased awareness of gender equity issues among youth, career days

3.0 Strategies Towards Achieving the Vision

At this point in most meetings, participants broke into small groups to determine potential action strategies for local organizations as well as the Province. Following is a summary of key strategies outlined for each of the categories. (A complete list is available in Appendix E.)

3.1 Employers/Business

Key strategies recommended:

- recognize the contribution and abilities of women in the workplace; become knowledgeable about the advantages of diversity (i.e. the "business case"), create equity plans to increase women's participation and provide training for working effectively in diversity
- emphasize employee retention, commit to employee training
- develop human resource plans that include strong career paths for women, support the development of women in management
- work closely with the educational system to develop and deliver quality training, including experientially-based entrepreneurial training
- participate in apprenticeship and work experience programs, mentorships, job fairs, job shadowing, information interviews, school presentations
- establish "success circles" and share "best practices"
- allow for more flexible work scheduling (e.g. job sharing, hours of work, telecommuting, family supports, etc.)
- participate in benefits programs for standard and non-standard workers
- decrease the work week and hire more people, reduce/eliminate overtime
- provide access to capital for women starting businesses (i.e. financial institutions)

Employers are clearly seen as central to balancing inequities in the present employment situation for women. What participants wrestled with was how to get employers to shift their underlying values in order to integrate women more equitably into the workplace. Building on "best practices" in the field is seen as a way to begin. First and foremost, women want businesses to understand the specific benefits that they can bring to their operations at all levels of the organization, and that without strong participation by

women in their workplace, they are missing an essential ingredient to future success in the global marketplace.

Core Message: Gender diversity makes good business sense. Recognize and value what women contribute and be proactive in making use of their knowledge, skills and abilities.

3.2 Labour

Key strategies recommended:

- support and enforce equity clauses in contracts, when negotiating consider the needs of individuals and create options to reflect the changing labour climate and market (e.g., flexible work hours, worksharing)
- promote equity, encourage and support women in trades/apprenticeships, expand the definition of trades into new areas
- reduce structure and rigid parameters, create partnerships, be more entrepreneurial
- hire women for higher management within the union, ensure women participate on negotiating teams
- educate the labour force regarding equity issues and women's economic contributions; encourage women's participation in union conferences, seminars, and workshops and invite women's groups to address membership on women's issues
- support mentorship programs for women, partner with business in developing and supporting work experience placements, be flexible in allowing trainees access to the workplace
- support zero tolerance of sexual harassment, partner with the province to deliver awareness programs regarding personal safety in the workplace
- partner with government and other organizations to make child care available
- ensure continuation of benefits through periods of short-term employment layoff

At many of the meetings, the perceived inflexibility and lack of support for gender equity within unions were seen to be significant barriers to improving women's current status in the labour market. Many women believe unions will contribute little or nothing towards changing their present economic reality; in fact, they feel that attitudes and practices of many labour organizations decidedly work against the advancement of women. One group suggested setting up parallel organizations for women. Others believe labour has a significant role to play and that change is possible within the current structures. As with

employers, attitudinal change is at the heart of the matter. Progressive leadership is also seen to be key.

Core Message: Become a stronger force for gender equity in the workplace. Place women in union leadership roles, partner with business and women's organizations and support increased flexibility in the workplace.

3.3   Schools

Key strategies recommended:

- educate the educators re gender equity and women's issues
- eliminate gender bias in programs and curricula
- partner with other parts of the community and integrate practical application into the teaching/learning process
- expand work experience to include a broad range of businesses, trades, non-profit organizations and other institutions
- good quality information about employment opportunities for young women (e.g. career days, career/education planning, labour representatives. community role models) and arrange for mentors
- value and promote alternatives to university (e.g. trades, apprenticeships. self-employment. small business). establish focused strategies to encourage girls and young women into sciences, the trades and technological fields
- provide employability training (e.g. resume writing, job search and interview skills, entrepreneurship. appropriate workplace behaviour/skills)
- provide on-site daycare facilities for student and staff

While participants acknowledged growing changes with respect to gender equity in the school system, particularly in elementary schools; in their experience, many educators still have a long way to go. Schools are formative in the lives of British Columbia children. Women want them to become more effectively integrated with the economic and social lives of their communities and to better support girls, particularly in science and technical fields, towards becoming economically independent.

Core Message: Integrate gender equity across the system. Educate the educators, partner with community and increase special measures to support the development of girls and young women in non-traditional fields.

3.4   Community Colleges

Key strategies recommended:

- put equity plans in place, role model equity issues
- educate the public, educators, staff and students regarding women's issues
- eliminate gender bias from programs, curricula, admittance policies and assignments
- partner with other schools, businesses and other organizations to provide needed training and arrange placement opportunities, develop more co-op programs; involve women in development
- target programs to individual needs of students
- link curriculum more directly to labour market demands, adopt a regional market-driven focus in meeting training needs, keep programs current and relevant, link training with planned economic development
- develop accessible, flexible programs that are laddered and long-term career-oriented
- ensure career counsellors are informed regarding labour market trends
- expand access to training/education in the rural areas, improve distance learning
- incorporate employability skills into all programming, include entrepreneurial training
- expand programs for exploring trades and technology, build transition courses in math and science for women to get into technical fields, establish support networks for women in non-traditional fields
- establish mechanisms to assess prior learning and recognize foreign credentials
- ensure campuses are safe, run workshops on sexual harassment for staff and students
- provide on-site daycare

Community colleges and other post secondary institutions are understood to be an important resource for developing access to and readiness for employment. But, women often experience them as behind the times, training for jobs that will not exist in the future or for low-waged work in the service sector traditionally done by women. Although innovative programming occurs in some institutions, the practice in many

continues to reflect values which inadequately support gender equity in employment and training. Women at the meetings were clear: gender equity must start at the top.

Core Message: Role model gender equity across the system. Link curriculum to labour market trends and focus on accessibility, flexibility, program supports and laddering for long-term career development. Involve women in development processes.

3.5 Women's Organizations

Key strategies recommended:

- be inclusionary, broaden the scope and skills of the organization to include economic and social sectors and ensure diversity, join gender-mixed organizations, involve men
- network, plan collaboratively and partner with other organizations, exchange information, incubate new initiatives and transfer them to the community
- be solution-oriented, foster entrepreneurial skills and self responsibility, base programs and services on measurable results
- provide forums for employment, training and labour market information
- support women in business, set up peer-assisted lending circles
- establish mentoring circles; empower, nurture, support and mentor women
- establish a World Wide Web site, connect with other women on the Internet and provide access for women to the electronic highway
- educate regarding the barriers to women, go into the schools, involve young women
- continue to lobby for equity for women, ask questions in upcoming election campaigns

For many participants, these regional meetings provided a unique opportunity to dialogue in a cross-sectoral meeting, where business and community groups interacted around economic and employment issues for women. Participants frequently commented on the richness of discussions created by this diversity. As a result, many committed to continuing this conversation with other sectors and planning together for economic and social development in their communities.

Core Message: Diversify, work cross-sectorally, educate and take positive concrete action.

3.6 Individual Women

Key strategies recommended:

- take leadership, ownership and personal responsibility
- be a mentor, serve as a role model, support other women
- parent for parity, teach daughters and sons about equity
- support in likeness and in diversity, interact with people who think differently, stay open to alternatives
- share/partner, including child rearing responsibilities

Participants were abundantly clear that work, family and community activities are tightly interwoven for most women. Each overlap and intersect continually throughout the course of women's lives. Woman speaking from this integrated life experience have a unique contribution to make. The message which surfaced again and again at meetings to individual women was be yourself and contribute wherever possible.

Core Message: BE a force for change in everything.

3.7 Local Government

Key strategies recommended:

- commit to equity program/practice at all levels of the organization from development through implementation: be proactive, anticipate trends and model the way; monitor and evaluate equity initiatives
- partner with school boards, educators and community groups to promote women's employment opportunities and women's participation in decision making, engage in joint ventures and shared use of space
- focus on community economic development, support and participate in community initiatives
- groom women for key professional, management and political positions
- consider needs of women in bylaw and zoning decisions (e.g. home-based businesses, child care)
- communicate more openly, support information outflow, hold round table community meetings of diverse individuals/groups to address economic and employment issues, coordinate local dissemination of information regarding equity

Many participants felt that local governments were isolated from or disinterested in key economic issues and related social concerns affecting women and families in their communities. Former or current council members participating in the meetings described ways in which they had worked successfully to place women's issues on the municipal agenda and emphasized the importance of women taking their place in this venue. Women want local governments to be more open and responsive and to better reflect the needs of their whole constituency.

Core Message: Be more proactive with respect to gender equity. Partner with the community and educators to develop concrete supports for women's economic development at the local level.

3.8   Provincial Government
This section has been further sub-divided under headings reflecting responsibilities of of the Province. Key strategies recommended:

Coordination and Planning
- improve coordination and planning with the federal government, across provincial ministries, between government and communities, between local economic and social sectors and between educators and employers
- consult with communities on major economic issues/initiatives such as the Women's Employment Strategy, support communities to take the lead in enhancing women's employment locally
- develop cross-sectoral partnerships

Skills Training
- individualize programming, designate funding to follow individuals
- recognize previous learning and foreign credentials
- support the delivery of flexible training in core competencies for job entry, pre-employment training in the trades and technical fields, and job enhancement skills in management
- create more work experience and co-operative programs to link theory and practice
- expand access to the electronic highway for purposes of education and information dissemination

Information and Communication
- establish mechanisms to disseminate labour market and program information, put info on-line, educate regarding labour market trends and opportunities

Leadership and Awareness
- be a role model in employment equity and in creating flexible work environments
- promote the business case for employment equity with employers
- promote and use women role models

Employment and Social Supports
- strengthen existing support networks, mentorships, etc., particularly in science and technical fields
- continue to increase the number of child care spaces
- establish and maintain specialized supports to improve the economic and social situations of marginalized women and integrate them effectively into the labour force

Participants recognize steps that have been taken recently by the Province to improve the economic situation of women in British Columbia and their equitable participation in the labour market. Some of the greatest barriers to further building on this success are seen to be the lack of collaboration and coordination and the inflexibility of many parts of the bureaucracy. Women want government to understand how their experience differs from that of men, to develop programs that are much more responsive to the diverse needs of individuals and communities, and to involve women and communities at all levels from planning through implementation.

Core Message: Work in partnership with communities, disseminate labour market information, and plan for the long-term. Increase flexibility and individualize programming. Further strengthen existing supports (eg., child care), particularly for marginalized women.

4.0 Issues Specific to Particular Regions and Communities of Interest

4.1 Regional Issues

Women in the North were clear that what works for the southern part of the province is often not a good fit for the North. It is inappropriate to use the South as the norm in developing programs for the province. Rural communities require employment strategies that are realistic and take into account the unique needs and resources of the region.

Geography is a significant barrier to training in many rural communities. Large distances between communities and poor weather conditions impede mobility. Frequently, women must leave the regions for education and other opportunities. Many, however, do not have the financial resources to do so. The heavy focus on numbers in the delivery of local training programs works against rural areas. Improved access to technology is seen as a partial solution to this barrier.

Lack of availability and variety of jobs create particular difficulties for women in rural communities. This is true for professional women as well as for women with other skill sets, and is additionally so for aboriginal women, women in single-industry towns and women who have been abused. Many felt the solution to this issue was for women to create their own work through starting small businesses. Local roadblocks to micro-enterprise and home-based businesses need to be removed in order to support this kind of economic development in small communities. Others were concerned that this solution could further ghettoize women into low skill, low-waged work and suggested a different approach: providing training in non-traditional sectors, so that women who move with their families to the regions are able to develop job-ready labour market skills in the trades and technical fields required locally.

In agricultural communities, low wages and lack of development opportunities for farm women were identified as ongoing systemic problems, with little hope for change, as the financial return is not there for employers to do otherwise.

In the North and the Kootenays, social problems such as teen pregnancy and alcohol and drug abuse were identified as additional barriers to effective labour market participation of women.

4.2 First Nations Women

The disproportionate number of unemployed aboriginal women was a particular concern for First Nations participants. Frequently, First Nations people are only able to find part time work. Although employment equity is policy in both the federal and the provincial government, aboriginal people are poorly represented at both levels of the public sector.

A distinct difference in employment was noted in the Prince George area recently, where almost half of the First Nations women employed in business work at a management level. This was attributed to local cultural roots which, for generations, have recognized and valued women's strengths.

In many areas, bands have become primary employers of First Nations people. Information was not generally available as to how women have fared in this regard. At one meeting, however, it was noted that there is no employment for women in First Nations communities and that they are under-represented in aboriginal administrations. It was generally agreed that small business presents a unique development opportunity for many women in aboriginal communities.

First Nations participants emphasized the importance of aboriginal women developing their own employment strategies and running their own programs. At the same time, they indicated that it was critical to also be involved in provincial processes such as the development of the Women's Employment Strategy.

Dependable child care was identified as integral to the successful participation of aboriginal women in the labour market.

4.3 Immigrant Women

The inability to receive recognition in Canada for foreign credentials is a major barrier to the effective participation of professional immigrant women in the Canadian labour market. Many, therefore, are severely under-employed for extended periods of time and become de-skilled in their areas of expertise. It is not only new immigrants who have difficulty getting appropriate employment; many women who have been in B.C. for years face identical barriers.

Language is a further barrier which ghettoizes and isolates immigrant women, often in low paying jobs in sweatshop-like environments.

Exploitation of foreign domestic workers by local employment agencies is common. Many times these agencies are partnered with agencies in a home country, and the cycle of exploitation is perpetuated for extended periods of time.

Dealing effectively with inclusivity of immigrant women in the workplace requires the development of specific interventions and ongoing support systems to help equity groups break out of ghettoized sectors. It also means being prepared to address the backlash which occurs from increased attention to diversity in the workplace.

4.4 Women With Disabilities

As with other sectors of the social security system, the current structure of disability pensions creates disincentives for women with disabilities to work. Until these disincentives are addressed, disabled women will continue to be additionally and unnecessarily disadvantaged in transitioning effectively into the workforce.

Rather than following an individual woman and her specific needs, funding for people with disabilities is channeled through groups. This is a significant barrier for individuals wanting to make a change.

Wage subsidies for those who are disadvantaged may give employers the impression that the person and/or the work is defective. Although this is a perceptual problem, it can act as a barrier to women with disabilities gaining suitable employment.

4.5 Women on Social Assistance

Provincial regulations for social assistance require the inclusion of business revenues as income. This significantly diminishes the value of the Self-Employment Assistance Program (SEAP) as a workable option for women on social assistance. In addition, recent changes to SEAP essentially disqualify women on social assistance from participation. This is in spite of documented past success of women in this group active in the program.

Disincentives to work are built into the fundamental structure of the provincial welfare system. (Although changes recently introduced in the B C Benefits program have begun to address this issue, major gaps continue to work against particular groups of women.)

4.6   Mature Women

Increasingly, work previously done by mature women is being taken over by technology. This can be devastating for mature women whose employment skills are out-of-sync with present labour market needs. They have years of work experience, and limited education. Without a significant investment of time and money on upgrading, few opportunities are open to them.

4.7   Young Women

Young people need access to good quality labour market information and better overall preparation for the labour market. They also need time, without being rushed or pushed to decide prematurely, to determine direction for their lives. The fact that many young people remain in the family home longer nowadays has a further economic impact on parents and families.

Young women continue to be channeled into pink ghetto jobs, as a result of messages from the school system, their families and peers, and the media. Science, the trades and technical jobs need to be promoted more strongly to girls and young women and more opportunities made available for exploring potential futures in these sectors.

5.0   Summary

5.1   Conclusions

One meeting participant neatly summed up the strategic challenge of developing a Women's Employment Strategy in the 1990's: how to improve the economic position of women at the same time that the global economy is experiencing major restructuring and government budgets are being cut in response to large deficits and growing public debt.

Nevertheless, women were confident that much can be done in spite of this difficult climate. At the regional meetings, there was general consensus on key themes related to women's employment. Participants indicated the need for better access to dependable, accurate labour market information to assist women in making strategic training and

employment choices and enable communities to develop appropriate and timely labour market adjustment responses. Although many of the meeting participants work with employment and training issues on a regular basis, they reported critical gaps in accessing essential information.

Concern was also expressed repeatedly throughout the province about the numbers of women who "fall through the cracks" of the various employment and training programs available. In particular, these are women not receiving social assistance or unemployment insurance who are without the necessary financial resources to access training to upgrade skills and improve their position in the labour market. Often they are women needing to re-enter the workforce after having children. Many are ghettoized into low-skilled, low-paying jobs.

Related to this was the strong message from participants about the importance of building greater flexibility into existing programs and focusing more directly on the particular needs of individual women. Further, women recommended that processes for accessing resources (e.g., for small business development, training programs) be simplified and greater choice be available in how resources can be used. These issues present a significant challenge for bureaucratic organizations built upon a foundation of standard and regularized systems.

It is interesting to note a different emphasis between rural and urban areas of the province. Participants from the regions often focused on specific needs and concrete ways to address those needs at the local level. Women in urban areas tended to highlight system problems more, recommending government responses for addressing them. Together, these two perspectives reflect the scope of needs and barriers to employment and economic development experienced by women throughout the province and the potential strategies for ameliorating them.

In addition to the above recommendations, women at the regional meetings identified the following key strategies for enhancing women's employment in the province:
- support small business development and expansion
- enhance community economic development
- broaden work experience programs into all economic sectors and industries
- establish mentorship supports for women in various occupational fields

- build apprenticeship programs for women in science and technical fields and in management
- ladder training programs to increase women's mobility into higher-skilled, higher-paying jobs
- facilitate access to the electronic highway
- promote flexible, family-friendly workplaces
- ensure the provision of quality child care
- establish benefits for part-time workers
- extend employment equity into all economic sectors
- develop special measures for marginalized women

As mentioned earlier, participants indicated that both government and communities share responsibility for enhancing women's employment. Women recommended building upon the recent trend of partnership initiatives as a model for moving forward. They agreed that coordinating efforts across economic sectors with all labour market partners presented the greatest opportunity for success. The need for joint planning, collaboration and decision-making was heard over and over again.

Women throughout British Columbia are working to create economic futures for themselves and their families, utilizing local resources and building capacity in their communities as they proceed. As part of this process, they are looking for partners to work with them in developing opportunities for new and different ways of structuring local economies in order to create sustainable employment and build healthy communities.

5.2   Next Steps

Results of the regional meetings summarized in this document are currently being considered in conjunction with material from a comprehensive review of initiatives designed to enhance women's employment at the provincial, national and international levels. A draft report summarizing these findings will be distributed to representatives of key provincial stakeholder organizations for discussion and feedback in the next month. Following this review, recommendations for action will be finalized and the Women's Employment Strategy will be presented to Government for consideration.

Women's Employment Strategy
Regional Meetings - October 17 to November 28, 1995.

Summary of Issues/Trends

Economy/Labour Market
- women's employment strategy needs to have teeth, needs accountability, follow through, action with timelines
- while we as women are trying to find our place in the economy, the economy is constantly changing around us
- equity is treated as a social policy rather than an economic policy, and is therefore marginalized
- we need less consumer orientation, more self-reliance
- need for private and public sector to dialogue together

Coordination/Planning
- lack of communication/co-operation/coordination between ministries
- Federal/Provincial overlap/duplication
- Federal/Provincial funding changes will result in support for women on Income Assistance and UI only, no support for women not on assistance (often homemakers with a family income. widowed or divorced women) = major deskilling and need for significant upgrading
- better evaluation of existing/new programs - baseline criteria/data needs to be established
- multi-year funding for good programs
- funding cuts must not disproportionately affect women - women's improvement in labour force needs to be a priority in spite of cuts (concerns this focus and focus on equity groups will be lost)
- government should facilitate and get out of the way

Government Programs
- links between training and employment lacking (training in areas that are downsizing, no opportunities for training in emerging and higher paying jobs)
- barriers to women in apprenticeships
- better evaluation of existing/new programs - baseline criteria/data needs to be established
- need greater flexibility in training (in particular at MSTL)
- renumeration for coop programs
- MSTL programs - funding must be individualized, focus on needs of individual women

- training not where it needs to be, skewed focus on numbers, increase access through technology
- on-the-job/workplace-based training

Skills/Training
- re-entry into labour force
- general need for entrepreneurial skills training
- exploratory programs for women to discover occupational options
- networking/mentoring/partnerships crucial to any support system
- need to help women identify skills so they have a place to build from
- essential to ladder education over the changing needs during a lifetime so $ aren't wasted, this requires greater flexibility, ways in to and mobility through the educational system
- recognition for prior learning
- less pressure on youth to make lifetime career decisions
- confidence/self-esteem issues - must be addressed in training programs
- generic employment skills - communication/interpersonal skills; basic math/science/computers

Regional Issues
- Columbia Basin Trust
- regional strategy to recognize uniqueness of parts of the province (Lower Mainland not the norm, rural economics: e.g., farm women)
- lack of coordination between the North and the resources of the South
- new Community Health Councils may weaken advocacy for programs for women and other groups
- teen pregnancy rates especially high in particular areas
- community adjustment issues - different opportunities and roles available to women,. men and families in resource-based communities
- capacity building in communities is essential - regional employment strategies, self-esteem/confidence

Awareness/Attitudes
- ghettoization of women in certain jobs
- networking/mentoring/partnerships crucial to any support system
- positive public images and role models
- education about equity in the home and schools (long term)
- more support for women in management (e.g., apprenticeships for positions)
- women need to stand up, be counted, get involved, be part of the solution (a more concerted effort to what is happening already)
- changing attitudes re value of work women do - education is key
- women need to be leaders, role models over long term

<u>Miscellaneous</u>
- self-employment/small business/home based and micro-enterprises - barriers include access to capital, lack of technical assistance, supports to start and grow a business, low wages, poor benefits, municipal bylaws
- underemployment of immigrant women (result=deskilling, particularly of professional immigrant women)
- lack of credential recognition
- particular needs of aboriginal women, requires special focus (e.g., child care)
- child care as employment/societal issue - education needed that it is not just women's issue
- concern for mature women with work experience but limited education, possibility of funding cuts in government organizations/women in 40's and 50's being replaced by technology
- imbalance in workloads between women and men
- costs of violence
- costs/benefits of volunteering (unpaid, lack of accreditation, social and economic development, networking resource for women)

Women's Employment Strategy
Regional Meetings - October 17 to November 28, 1995.

Summary of Future Picture

Economy/Labour Market
- change from resource-based economy in the area
- better money
- shorter work week (i.e. 3-4 days)
- we focus on work instead of jobs
- education and health fields change the nature of jobs
- job sharing is accepted and commonly practised
- job sharing generates more work and supports life choices outside of work
- workaholics are not rewarded
- greater flexibility for women in the workplace (e.g. daycare)
- more volunteer work
- imbalance between the over-employed and un(under)employed is rectified
- [women working fewer hours]
- ability to adjust to market changes, up-to-date research and analysis help with making the necessary changes
- equitable access for women to all sectors of the labour market including trades and education, women are accepted in non-traditional occupations
- links/connections are established
- no waste of money, know what we're training for
- we have new language to describe the global change that is occurring, are thinking "new" rather than just "re-new", people are excited about these changes
- young aggressive strong gender-balanced workforce with equitable wages
- women understand global economics, large macro-economic issues
- women are involved in international trade
- GNP calculation includes unwaged work
- economy is based on creativity rather than war and competition
- women take 5 years leave and keep their seniority
- women job share in the public and private sectors
- no hierarchy in employment (e.g. clerical staff are not undervalued/underpaid)
- people hiring in Canada are not exploiting offshore workers

Business
- more opportunities for women in small business in the new climate (e.g. hospitality industry, education, the arts, local manufacturing, etc.)
- women's business incubation centre
- entrepreneurial mindset is the norm and there is support for this

- opportunities exist for immigrant women to develop successful businesses, legal information is available and cultural barriers have been eliminated
- local retail business is valued, people are willing to pay a little extra to shop at home

Equity/Glass Ceiling
- won't need employment strategy for women, instead will be a worker strategy because women will have equitable employment
- equal employment opportunity for women
- skill-based hiring is emphasized
- women are more involved in all decision-making structures
- career development in place for women to move into high end positions
- women are represented at all levels of government
- less bureaucracy
- many women in government
- women are heads of major corporations and are visible in upper management
- First Nations people are the last to be fired and the first to be hired back
- there are more professional aboriginal people (i.e. doctors, lawyers, dentists, engineers, etc.)

Networking/Partnerships
- more networking
- women's initiatives are linked globally
- access to information for remote communities
- women support one another, including those in high places
- Women's Employment and Training Centre under one roof, challenges male values, feminist analysis and value systems, empowerment of individuals and communities, linkages and networking are abundant
- private/public partnerships
- Women's Enterprise Centre provides personal support, mentoring, co-operative work situations, opportunity for career exploration, specific skills training
- women are not isolated at work, in their homes or communities

Awareness/Attitude
- more choice for women
- young women are supported to develop goals
- young women recognise the importance of work and balancing work with family
- more positive public images (i.e. of working women) for girls to see as role models
- young women value and are encouraged to go into science, they complete sciences in high school
- women who work full-time in the home are valued, there is support for this choice
- women are channelled away from the traditional occupations as there are fewer of them
- women are motivated, self-confident, focused and self-directed

- management recognizes the domestic roles of women and men, and work around/with them in a flexible manner
- women's ability to clarify and explain is valued
- self-confident women develop dreams and passions and have fun, women create work from their passions rather than just find/get jobs
- the day of the "housewife" is gone
- young women are more prepared to be a financial supporter for their family and themselves
- aboriginal women are at an equal place with white women as well as aboriginal men
- overall change in societal attitudes towards aboriginal people
- aboriginal have had opportunities to catch up
- increased connections, decreased isolation for aboriginal women
- lots of women's faces are seen in the Globe and Mail
- when choosing "best experts", women are picked 50% of the time
- children have opportunities to see what business and employment are all about, accompany parents to work; employers are more open to this idea
- less focus for women on body image
- domestic engineering is recognized and supported
- we use what we NEED, return to traditional economy and basic values

Skills/Training
- training and employment opportunities are not limited by geography, more opportunities in rural communities through telecommunications
- credentials are given for life experience/skills
- women and men have much more diversified skill sets
- more women and men capitalize on their natural strengths
- conflict resolution is taught in the schools
- opportunities for internships are expanded
- internships for young women exist in business and occupations using technology
- educational system is supported to deliver quality career counselling
- career and personal planning for young people in the school system is valued and resourced
- parent training programs support empowering parenting styles and produce empowered children
- apprenticeships are seen in a new light
- post-secondary education is linked with apprenticeships
- professional immigrant women gain accreditation
- Access Learning Centres exist regionally
- extensive and thorough assessment and direction are provided for training programs, all this is done within the context of labour marker trends
- more training consultants are available to handle the heavy workload
- mentorship programs are in place for women
- people on social assistance are supported to become self-employed

- on-the-job training programs are common, incentives encourage employers to provide workplace-based training
- regional college has degree-granting status and more technical training
- women have mathematical, technical and mechanical skills
- schools are attached to industry
- less need for pre-pre-employment programs
- training programs don't require high numbers to run, so that overcapacity is avoided
- women's studies programs are implemented at early grades in the schools(*), including discussion of women's absence from positions of power, a different future is modelled
- community circles to cross teach life skills

Technology
- more technology in our homes; women are knowledgeable about using this technology
- electronic media expands choices for young women
- the Internet is accessible to all women

Supports
- supports are in place for home-based self-employment for women
- daycare and eldercare support are available
- programs for immigrant women bridge gaps
- language upgrading and support for self-development are available for immigrant women
- built-in rewards
- women have equal benefits
- women's union acts as a support network for women
- workplaces are free of sexual harassment, intimidation and violence
- strong political agenda concerning $7/hour
- child care is seen as a responsibility of society
- employment is seen as a community responsibility
- help is available for women to leave minimum wage jobs and step-up to higher paying work
- more support is available for women's cooperatives
- family is working together
- more women have full benefits
- affordable and accessible housing for women and children with a quality safe environment
- more jobs are available to women in their 20's at acceptable wage levels
- women in their 30's have good tax benefits which allow them to be homemakers
- women in their 40's have opportunities for management
- women in their 50's are able to move out of the workforce in a secure way
- women who are over 60 are able to retire if that is what they want
- no longer believe the myth that a university education means a job

- aboriginal land claims are settled
- codependent issues are recognized and there is action to help women take charge of their own lives and no one else's
- career consultants have broadened their scope to include range of employment opportunities for women
- corporations, business. etc. offer daycare as a benefit
- women's centre for Nisga'a women
- inter-cultural educational exchange
- First Nations healing is occurring within
- women's centres provide support regarding access, equality, workplace issues, family stress, etc.
- guaranteed annual wage
- no poverty for women and kids

Community Economic Development/Regions
- Kootenay region has a plethora of environmental, sustenance and replenishment activities and jobs exist for women in these areas
- region has control over its local resources
- women are taking charge of local economic development
- values- and needs-driven approach to economic development
- economic development is based in communities, rather than in regions
- women understand what a sustainable community is/means, have a vision of meeting community needs, and have the knowledge to create opportunities and options
- community village; economics linked to women's lives, child-rearing needs, etc.
- community/grassroots drives employment initiatives, not the province; dollars are available for communities to take actions they determine are needed
- transit is available for women in the North to get to jobs
- increased tourism opportunities/employment

Finance
- greater reliance on barter
- alternative sources of financing businesses are available to women
- student loans are pro-rated and repaid on the basis to women's incomes
- women's lending bank exists
- taxation is restructured to better support women
- "sunshine tax" eliminated
- banking structures have changed, there is better access for women [e.g., to credit]
- banks use Grameen Bank model for investment (e.g. support co-ops, education, etc.) rather than World Bank model
- businesses share their profits
- co-operative lending models are used (e.g. lending circles, Mondragon - worker ownership)
- a First Nations owned lending agency exists
- First Nations control own resources, funding, etc.

<u>General</u>
- more process orientation in the workplace
- women and men work collaboratively
- new attitude to the environment: less depleting, polluting lifestyles, less material influence in our lives
- organizations serving women are financially stable
- lower rates of personal indebtedness exist
- ministries monitor their programs, community connections with ministries are realistic and supportive
- government funding takes into account specific needs and geography of the area, are not just based on population figures
- decrease in consumer society mentality and the impact of consumerism
- young families are able to have an acceptable lifestyle and standard of living
- foundation of programs from the past has been maintained
- we're talking about social revolution
- federal and provincial bureaucracies are disbanded or conversely the bureaucracy employs everyone
- provincial government gets on with regulatory reform, resulting in access and equal opportunities for women
- policy and practice are reality-based and work well
- policy development examines social impact, impact on women
- government is a model for the values and recommendations of the Women's Employment Strategy
- women are building and creating our province
- construction and industry have created a place for women in these occupations

Women's Employment Strategy
Regional Meetings - October 17 to November 28, 1995.

Summary of Impediments

Economy/Labour Market
- structural unemployment and the flow of capital in global markets
- lack of teleconferencing link-ups for training delivery in outlying areas, CRTC regulations affecting this
- lack of community support systems/community infrastructure (in some rural areas)
- lack of access to capital; educational and business loans are based on family income
- process of growing a business: energy used in step 1 is great, not enough energy left to grow it the next phase, fear inhibits many women
- technological infrastructure not available to isolated communities, many of which are aboriginal
- under-employment/under-utilization of highly-qualified people
- professions and corporations don't value part-time work
- lack of support from business for training
- disparity in income, salaries, wages
- lack of responsibility of business/corporate sector
- poverty trap - intergenerational
- training women for non-traditional occupations that have no future
- low pay in child care field
- lack of access to information/inadequate dissemination on programs/services
- lack of labour market information regarding the future
- external changes are occurring faster than personal adaptation to processes
- lack of understanding of the principles of economics and the impact on women

Coordination/Planning
- lack of co-ordination in government/ministry programs and across agencies
- lack of cohesion among resources/services
- programming is not laddered; women are not able to enter the educational/training system based upon their current skill level
- lack of education/understanding at all levels of government re women's issues, what works and what doesn't, inflexible regulations of MSTL, MSS and CEC
- many contracts for short band-aid programs that tend to offer training for the sake of training
- lack of government prioritizing; what should be immediate action? what needs further research/planning?

- inability of bureaucracies to change with any speed, government program overlap: HRDC/MSTL/MSBTC/MEI all doing similar things, need to get beyond study to action, work in partnership
- lack of long term strategies/planning; no Canadian "technology" policy
- no long-term commitment
- lack of accountability for programming in general
- lack of planning and consultation between business and government in developing work placements

Government Programs
- government promotion of stiff competition between training agencies with respect to the RFP process
- lack of good career counselling related to future of work
- due to lack of sensitivity to women and special needs groups, policies are often not followed (e.g. equity, harassment)
- programming is not laddered; women are not able to enter the educational/training system based upon their current skill level
- insufficient length of work experience programs
- training transfer from federal to provincial government
- government cutbacks, effect women to a greater degree, cut valuable programs which help women
- competition
- lack of legislation in support of women's employment issues (i.e. employment equity, flexible work schedules, etc.)
- outdated policies around GAIN for the handicapped and employment for the disabled
- limitations of the Self-Employment Assistance Program for SAR's
- the way Ministry of Social Services policies handle self-employment income for social assistance recipients
- elder-care is all institutionalized
- local bylaws impede home-based businesses
- front-line workers that are inflexible, won't try to make programs work for people
- no teeth in employment equity legislation, doesn't require employer planning and follow-through
- programs designed to assist women (e.g. minorities) are not ability-based
- cost of using Community Skill Centres
- no maternity leave for women who are self-employed
- MSTL training is all done through big training institutions, old boys network again getting stronger, insufficient flexibility for women
- prior learning assessment and foreign credentials
- insufficient political will to support equity
- over-governing of First Nations

Skills/Training

- people/skills often not matched or connected with available jobs
- training is often not where it needs to be to break down the access barriers for women in rural areas
- education system doesn't necessarily give the skills needed for the real world
- out-of-date training programs (out of touch with labour market needs)
- lack of recognition, understanding and valuing among managers regarding the transferability of basic employability/people skills (e.g. communication, customer-service. etc.)

Regional Issues

- extremely low regional education level in some areas
- social problems: high teenage pregnancy in region, high divorce rate, high incidence of alcohol and drug abuse
- lack of community support systems/community infrastructure
- training not accessible where the needs are

Evaluation/Measurement

- limitations on eligibility for pilot projects (e.g. age, income level, family status)
- no follow-up on pilot projects. no evaluation as to effectiveness
- lack of accountability to people being served
- little or no needs assessments for clients; assessments not acted on
- living by the "numbers game" in training programs (e.g. for new training programs, there is a requirement for 95% job placement - but jobs not there)
- idea of what "success" is. still measured in $ only
- poor data collection. too piecemeal: lack of analysis

Flexibility/Access

- women not flexible/mobile due to factors such as family, partner's job
- lack of societal and family support and awareness (i.e. cultural issues get in the way of supporting young women)
- backlash against women's equity and women's issues (i.e. perception that women have had their day)
- lack of child care support/ over-regulation of child care/ lack of co-operation between child care and educational facilities
- inflexibility in training programs and upgrading (e.g., not available year-round and in the evenings)
- disabled persons lose supports upon re-entry to job market
- no services/supports for working poor

Awareness/ Attitudes
- lack of focus on equity in education
- continued expectation among girls that they will be taken care of
- lack of positive images of women in the media
- male systemic role models are the norm, lack of women as role models
- women's work/skills not valued/potential not recognized
- women are still not participating in or in charge of decision-making on boards and committees for diverse reasons both personal and systemic; too few women as elected representatives in municipal, provincial and federal governments
- local cultural beliefs (i.e. closed-minded, lack of exposure to other initiatives, ideas and thought processes)
- attitude determines altitude (i.e. how high you go, how far you want to reach); current attitudes detract from possibilities
- women's confidence, self-esteem, self-image, sense of disentitlement
- perception that aboriginal people are a drain on tax dollars; instead it's bureaucracies that do not serve aboriginal people well or work against them that drain tax dollars
- history of aboriginal people and minorities being educated to become someone else, their heritage not honoured
- system structure, lack of understanding in working with native and minority communities (i.e. myths, perceptions, reactive stance, lack of communication, token recognition only)
- legislation, Indian Affairs staffed by white people; binding not empowering
- perceptions of preferential treatment for First Nations results in de-valuing of programs by FN people
- negative, stereotypical view of women in the workplace by employers
- union doors closed to women
- women's own use of language which discounts women
- low expectations re what women can do/achieve among employers and women themselves
- programs are not reaching men/changing their attitudes, they're not part of the support network
- old boys network, including unions
- women's fear of bureaucracies
- archaic attitudes re sex roles
- no acknowledgement of women's ways of doing things
- glass ceiling prevents women from moving ahead
- negative personnel practices

<u>Miscellaneous</u>
- gender violence
- lack of commitment and understanding by senior management (i.e. mostly male) in the competency of women
- lack of interpersonal skills among current managers and workers for dealing effectively with new/different people coming into the workforce
- geography; distances to training make access difficult for northern women
- past experience taking Human Rights issues forward

Women's Employment Strategy
Regional Meetings - October 17 to November 28, 1995.

Summary of Current Supports

Economy/Labour Market
- deregulation/downsizing/downloading/decentralizing (this means we have to do it ourselves)
- new opportunities, e.g., home based business
- computers

Flexibility/Access
- increased acceptance of job sharing in society
- decentralized education (e.g. correspondence, telecommunications, etc.)
- some individuals in the bureaucracy who are flexible, can see the grey beyond the black and white

Government Programs
- opportunity for single parents on social assistance to get dollars for living while completing training/education
- training programs for women (e.g. job search, job readiness, networking, etc.); these can be a catalyst to move on to others things
- women's re-entry programs
- government programs: MWE, Business Women's Advocate, MSBTC training, FRBC, HRIF, Summer Challenge grants, SEAP, BC21, ESA
- improvements to day care system
- government acknowledgement of importance of working with aboriginal women
- MSTL acknowledgement that violence against women is an employment barrier
- government initiative in employment equity/pay equity (particularly government attempts to address pay equity in non-profit organizations)
- Human Rights legislation/Employment Standards Act

Partnerships
- organizations: WITT, WETC, local community-based programs (e.g., Community Futures, multicultural societies, women's centres, sexual assault centres, Chambers of Commerce, Healthy Communities)
- partnership programs between government and community
- desire by all of society for a good employment picture in B.C. (i.e. taxpayers, workers, educators, all levels of government)
- Columbia Basin Trust
- broader awareness of need for partnerships

Schools/Youth
- some school districts are working on developing entrepreneurial training programs
- career days at colleges and high schools
- young people who can think on their feet, high numbers of youth who are aware, concerned and positive
- youth development support programs/work experience and employment shadowing programs in schools
- increased focus on career decision making

Key Supports
- individually and collectively, women are our own supports/networks
- mentorship support
- increased number of women involved in advocacy and on council

Awareness/Attitudes
- some improvement in role modelling
- media attention in support of businesses that have good jobs and flexible opportunities for women more cross-cultural diversity and communication across cultures
- broader more modern liberal thinking that has replaced insular thinking of the past
- more supportive family environments
- increase in public awareness about the intelligence of women
- sexual harassment awareness/support
- increased awareness that the current system is not working, and that women are a key aspect of the solution
- more men willing to support women
- women's studies programs
- belief in women/women can make a difference

Miscellaneous
- aboriginal leadership (varies across regions)
- employment equity counsellors in some organizations to assist women in dealing with sexual harassment and other workplace issues

Women's Employment Strategy
Regional Meetings - October 17 to November 28, 1995.

Summary of Strategies for Action - Business/Employers

Skills/Training
- provide incentive-based job training/work experience for women, ensure placements are well-matched to participants pre-program employment equity awareness orientation/training, involves mutual exchange between employers and women in development and implementation
- provide training for working in diversity
- support pre-entrepreneurship training
- work with educational system in training program delivery
- set up employer training group to provide customer input to development of training programs
- ensure training is ongoing
- partner with community to place trainees in the workplace
- establish and coordinate a central clearinghouse for workplace-based training
- establish a matching service for needed skills
- provide specific training in non-traditional fields targeted specifically for women
- make presentations in schools

Hiring/Glass Ceiling
- be proactive in hiring women at all levels
- eliminate discriminatory hiring practices and wage levels
- create voluntary equity plans to increase women's participation at all levels
- acknowledge value of and support apprenticeship training
- create policy regarding equity employment within the organization
- have hiring policies reflect the customer base
- make hiring decisions based on skills, not just credentials such as Masters degrees
- encourage/mentor women already employed to "groom" for management
- alter expectations for managers (e.g. overtime, transfers)
- do not discriminate on the basis of age
- value diversity in the workplace
- put more emphasis on retention of employees
- be clearer about expectations and standards
- set up and participate in "job fairs"
- be more vocal/proactive with governments about actions that help employers
- share "best practices"
- recognize the contribution and abilities of women in the workplace

- provide education to women employees with incentives/bonus for completion of programs
- establish success circles, provide mentors

Support/Access
- financial institutions to make capital more available for small businesses
- support women in business and through organizations (e.g. Chambers)
- be supportive in dealing with needs for child care and transportation (e.g. child care facilities, public transportation)
- corporate sector involvement/partnerships in training for women (POVERTY IS BAD FOR BUSINESS)
- become more educated in being an employer and in long-term planning
- provide increased support and knowledge for work practicums through advertising brochures and packages produced by organizations such as Women's Business Networks and Chambers
- establish advisory groups of employers to share information
- look at and treat employees as assets, not commodities
- hold business forums for job seekers
- financial incentives to employers who implement onsite daycare/fitness
- partner with other businesses to create onsite facilities
- co-op programs with home-based businesses
- connect with social sector
- business owners participate in cultural sensitivity training
- secure loans/underwrite/provide loan guarantees for other women's organizations
- adhere to Employment Standards and Human Rights Acts
- provide profit sharing for all employees, provide information on the benefits (e.g. less absenteeism, more productive, less theft, etc. = more profits for all)
- provide more opportunity for employee input into decision making, operate more cooperatively
- participate in benefit plans through economic sectors (i.e. retail, manufacturing, food, Chambers, etc.) coming together to finance

Flexibility
- participate in work experience, mentorships, job shadowing, information interviews
- be open to and support new services and industries
- decrease the work week and hire more people
- allow job sharing
- get rid of the notion that employees come from two-parent families, understand that families need a variety of kinds of support, be "pro" any type of family
- allow work at home, support technological hook-ups
- when downsizing, consider the family as the economic unit (i.e. worker is part of a larger economic unit, family is self-defined)
- provide benefits packages to employees regardless of # of hours worked weekly

Summary of Strategies for Action - Labour

Equity/Glass Ceiling
- support equity clauses
- enhance human resource policy to address equity
- hire women for higher management within the union
- encourage participation of women in union/labour conference seminars, negotiating teams, workshops, task forces before a crisis is identified ; don't wait till a crisis occurs; be proactive, take preventive action
- represent all members

Skills/Training
- build collaborative and co-operative working relationship with educational system
- support work experience and mentorship programs for women
- expand the definition of trades into new areas
- get more women involved in career days
- be more flexible on open learning and knowledge, make knowledge re worker rights, etc. more accessible

General
- reduce structure and rigid parameters; take "no walls" approach
- educate around "poverty is bad for business"
- evolve, create new partnerships, be less protectionistic, create a new way
- be more entrepreneurial
- become leaders for positive change
- as employees, be more proactive; express our needs
- identify daycare as a bargaining issue
- reach out and unionize large retail outlets
- reach out to non-union, underpaid, non-unionized workers
- hire locally

Supports
- reinforce flexibility and options to reflect changing labour climate and market
- support zero tolerance around sexual harassment in the workplace
- eliminate stereotypes within unions
- hold a media campaign to actively promote women in non-traditional jobs
- educate the labour force (re women's and equity issues)
- communicate with management re equity issues/ideas
- understand that treating women and men the same does not necessarily result in equal impact on women
- consider the needs of individuals when negotiating; create options (e.g. flexible work hours, worksharing)

- support women in home work
- support more flexibility in the labour code
- review benefit package, share cost with government to prevent short-term employment/layoff

<u>Network/Partnerships</u>
- invite women's groups in to address membership on women's issues/needs
- partner with business in developing and supporting work experience placements
- form corporate/labour partnerships to support equity programs, provide support for women employees and training initiatives

Summary of Strategies for Action - Schools

Skills/Training
- make life-skills interpersonal training more effective (i.e. communication skills, goal setting, entrepreneurial training)
- provide employability training (e.g. resume writing, job search skills, interview skills, entrepreneurship, appropriate workplace behaviour/skills)
- broaden programming to include entrepreneurial options
- include reality-based (i.e. practical application) education/training in the system
- expand work experience to include a broader range of businesses; run cooperative programs that link schools with equity-based businesses, schools, colleges and non-profit organizations
- starting in grade 6, provide for practical post-degree job-related skill development (i.e. portable skills and/or technical skills such as life skills - conflict resolution, negotiating and budgeting, presentation skills, selling skills, etc.)
- provide mentors for girls and young women, bring the community into the schools
- provide opportunities for hands-on experience
- provide more exposure to real life mentoring programs
- bridge technology
- arrange for on-line mentors for students

Awareness/Attitude
- information/visibility in schools about employment opportunities for young women (e.g. career days, educational planners, labour representatives, community role models): use career and personal planning to help students integrate learning; operate career and personal planning courses, involve parents and community, do career prep from the start, help create attitudes that support dreams and visionary thinking
- integrate practical application in the teaching/learning process; present scenarios and explicit examples that are relevant
- establish focused strategies that encourage girls and young women into sciences
- educate the educators re women's issues; open up, become part of the community re-train teachers to give up their territory, e.g., multi-use of classrooms
- eliminate stereotypes about trades and technology
- run programs to help families and students with shifting values
- build self esteem in girls, change teaching philosophy to ensure this occurs
- teach girls and boys consistently against traditional role-modelling
- help young people understand that there is life after grade school
- educate re alternatives to "competitive model"
- eliminate gender segregation in programs
- address gender equity issues in curriculums, ensure programs address equality

Supports
- provide on-site daycare facilities for students and staff
- hold mandatory workshops on sexual harassment in the workplace and at school for staff and students; make zero tolerance of discrimination and harassment of all kinds the goal
- recognize and use a variety of learning styles
- target individual needs
- broaden programming to include entrepreneurial options
- recognize that learning doesn't end at 3:00 p.m., occurs in all parts of a student's life
- value and offer alternatives to university (e.g. trades, apprenticeships, self-employment. small business)
- support Parents Advisory Councils; ensure they have a voice in the system
- provide mediation, peer counselling and training in conflict resolution
- get and communicate labour market trend data (i.e. local, provincial and national)
- with other training institutions and with the community, conduct a needs assessment of the labour market
- have students evaluate the programs and follow up to determine results
- recognize learning outside the formal system
- update career counselling information and practice; make it more practical: not all kids go to university

Partnerships
- connect with the community
- value industry teachers. partner with business and industry to teach in classrooms, pay them
- partner with other parts of the community. become a community learning centre

Miscellaneous
- decertify teachers union
- strengthen unions, make them more accessible
- provide technical and financial education
- increase decentralized decision-making

Summary of Strategies for Action - Community Colleges/Universities/Post Secondary

Economy/Labour Market
- link curriculum more directly to job market demands; be more market-driven
- ensure career counsellors are informed with knowledge of future trends
- deliver programs in the context of the community plan, be proactive in developing training for upcoming economic development

Regional Issues
- expand access to training/education in the rural areas; keep a regional, market-driven focus in meeting training needs

Skills/Training
- establish pre-apprenticeship programs to explore trades and technology
- train for the development of employment opportunities (e.g. environment, retrain forest workers). take a regional approach in doing this
- incorporate employability skills in all programming
- provide real training for real jobs
- target individual needs
- broaden programming to include entrepreneurial options
- move toward life-long learning (every person has something to offer)
- provide more co-ops placement programs
- provide life skills training

Glass Ceiling
- implement exploratory courses for women
- encourage attendance in non-traditional occupations
- have feminist advisors
- offer courses that focus on women and their contribution
- train women to be bosses not service workers
- provide trades training for women
- build transition courses in math and science for women to get into technical fields
- run leadership development programs for women
- ensure equity plans (annual and semi-annual) are in place for employment and all programs of study
- with cutbacks, make sure equity is prioritized and continues to be a focus, don't cut programs so as to undermine women's participation in the labour force
- pay equity for women
- eliminate sexism
- place women in senior positions

- run communication awareness courses re how women and men communicate
- work with government as advocates for equity and in dealing with problems

Supports
- provide on-site daycare; daycare accessibility for under 3's and over 5
- support prior learning assessment which respects informal life experiences
- provide more and disseminate more effectively information on what exists and how to access it; use telecommunications support
- establish ongoing monitoring and tracking mechanisms for clients active in programs
- be more flexible and responsive; support long-term programming for women that is accessible: provide flexible programming that meet labour market needs; be accessible and flexible in programs and hours (e.g. time, location, 24 hour daycare, safety)
- ensure campuses are safe
- hold mandatory workshops on sexual harassment in the workplace and at school for staff and students
- provide career planning support
- honour life experience and skills
- expand advisory committee to represent the diversity of the community
- identify and deliver programs that will empower youth and women to higher achievements
- address gender equity issues in curriculums, ensure programs address equality
- be more accessible for adult learners
- have recruitment officers whose job is to communicate, liaise
- build ladders for women to advance: expand the ability to ladder traditional courses into higher paying, higher skilled positions
- access for students with disabilities
- improve distance learning
- recognize learning outside the formal system
- provide housing

Partnership
- work in partnership with businesses, schools of all kinds and other organizations to provide on-site training
- talk and work with business regarding training needs and getting real placement opportunities
- talk regularly to employers
- undertake joint ventures

Awareness/Attitude
- educate the public, staff and students, promote/create awareness of women's issues and accomplishments (e.g. role models, career days); do this regularly, not just once a year
- as part of the above, educate the educators

- build into curriculum K through university - respect for girls and women, do this all year round and integrate into every subject

Miscellaneous
- private colleges show the way (e.g. LETS system)
- encourage local expertise
- eliminate outdated programs
- spend $ on education as opposed to building, administration, duplication
- stop competing for university transfer with UNBC and offer the courses we need

Summary of Strategies for Action - Women's Organizations

General

- take positive approach, be solution-based rather than negative, victim-based
- lobby for support systems for women in educational and employment opportunities
- lobby for daycare and transportation issues, address anti-poverty issues
- continue to be prepared to volunteer
- lobby for funding for business incubation centre
- assist in starting daycares, coops, businesses
- establish a local women's organization/agency to lobby local business/employers/Chamber to develop an equity awareness program and adopt policy on equity in the workplace
- be proactive
- develop women's advocacy and lobby groups to prepare for upcoming municipal, provincial and federal elections, create a unified approach/platform to present to candidates to ensure support for women's issues and concerns
- be far more vigilant regarding the anti-female violence and stereotyping in movies, advertising and music targeted to the young; work with Media Watch and government to do this
- engage in organizational and Board development for the health of the organization
- involve young women: take daughters to community meetings and the workplace
- promote B.C. Access Service Centre
- incubate new initiatives, then transfer them to the community/individuals
- focus on the needs of the larger constituency of women
- promote the contribution of women, not just an awareness of the cost
- advocacy
- role models
- provide opportunities for young and mature women to be exposed to successful women
- generate/gain broad support (i.e. financial, philosophical, policy)
- provide counselling, support and information to individual women
- help set up benefit packages
- educate re barriers (i.e. racism, sexism, ageism, classism)
- research re women's issues, history, etc.
- value mothering
- organize and use the unions

Diversity

- ensure cross-sectoral representation of women within the organization, be inclusionary
- expand membership base, cross-sectorally

- encourage young women to join
- welcome men
- be more inclusive of diverse groups and needs of women (i.e. remove the boxes/categories)

Skill/Training
- foster entrepreneurial skills and self-responsibility
- provide more forum for labour market and employment information and training
- facilitate mentorships, etc.
- focus on/develop targeted relevant training with tangible outcomes
- establish mentoring circles, define mentoring, develop the role to ensure appropriateness and responsibility
- broaden scope and skills of the organization to include social, economic and business sectors, connect with political

Awareness/Attitude
- increase profile and awareness of the organization among the public
- model behaviours that are respected by others; image building
- promote feminist analysis
- promote positive images [of women and of the organization]
- promote women's success through celebrations, honouring women, press articles
- publish yearbooks highlighting women (e.g. Focus on Women annual calendar)

Network
- sit on various committees and decision-making bodies (e.g. Skill Centres, Columbia Basin Trust)
- build collaborative planning, link organizations within the community such as Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Commissions, schools, etc.
- support and encourage women to take small steps by providing small group "get-togethers" (WETC)
- hold large gatherings (e.g. conferences, workshops)
- create a directory of women's organizations, women in business, etc.
- do more outreach, go to the community
- connect with local women through a bulletin board to the Internet/World Wide Web
- provide access to information for women through the electronic highway
- partner with other organizations to establish a Women's Employment Centre
- provide information exchange, establish a centralized information system for women (e.g. Women's Enterprise Centre)
- make local government aware of our services
- hold more open houses, be more inviting to both women and men

Funding

- diversify funding base, build operational funding base rather than project focus
- improve financial support for women's centres, diversify funding (e.g. Women's Funding Coalition in Seattle)
- use resources where they are and build on them
- establish bursaries for entrepreneurs, not only for scholastic achievements
- help set up peer-assisted lending circles

Summary of Strategies for Action - Local Government

Equity/Glass Ceiling
- make a visible, tangible ongoing commitment to equity program/practice from development through implementation (e.g. strategy integrated with needs, in-kind support, work experience, funding)
- monitor and evaluate equity programs
- establish common local/regional equity goals and objectives
- partner with school boards, educators, community groups, to promote women's employment opportunities and women's participation in decision-making
- groom women for key positions (i.e. political, management, professional)
- lead by example; look at provincial policies and adopt similar equity guidelines which would impact local government, business, agencies, schools, chambers of commerce, etc.; establish a local task force to do this
- encourage more women to run for local council
- at UBCM, acknowledge, educate and support greater "real" opportunity for women in political positions and for women employees within local government
- value and credit life experience related to the tasks of the job in qualifications for positions

Supports
- acknowledge women's contribution (e.g. Awards)
- take an active role in developing promotions, campaigns, to educate in preventing violence against women, creating safe streets in communities
- become change agents: create new visions, new information
- support and participate in community initiatives
- support local awareness programs (e.g. Take Back the Night Walk, Girls Go to Work with Dads)
- learn to listen
- support women's initiatives in the community (e.g. subsidize daycare, family counselling, shelter, anti-violence, creating safe community)
- support other organizational models (e.g. aboriginal government, consensus decision-making)
- make services more easily accessible (e.g. transportation for those without cars)
- include women in problem-solving
- include women and women's organizations in long-term planning (e.g. transportation, daycare, economy)

Community Economic Development/Business

- focus on community economic development (e.g. women's business)
- amalgamate local areas for business requirements, services
- identify women's needs with regard to business and daycare and adjust bylaws and zoning accordingly
- joint ventures and shared use of space
- establish zoning regulations to stimulate affordable housing

Skills/Training

- establish work experience and mentorship programs
- establish student government for a day
- provide on-the-job training, co-op placements

General

- be action oriented
- model the way (e.g. on-site daycare)
- provide leadership in determining what people want
- monitor and evaluate activities, follow through
- eliminate waste

Awareness/Attitudes

- communicate more openly, support information outflow, let us in, share!
- create an awareness program through an advocacy role at council meetings, etc.
- hold various round table community meetings to address/include all levels of community diversity
- become educated about senior government initiatives that will enhance the community, disseminate information to community agencies and resources
- implement a "healthy community" policy
- understand other structures by which citizens are regulated (e.g. Bands, income assistance, etc.)
- have an open-door policy, (e.g. better communication with communities, encourage young women to come into government)

Summary of Strategies for Action - Aboriginal Communities

- Aboriginal women network (i.e., talk, present, share) with other Aboriginal women; use grassroots, word-of-mouth
- learn traditional ways and teach other women
- organize Aboriginal Women's Day
- recognize Aboriginal entrepreneurship and promote/create opportunities

Summary of Strategies for Action - Provincial Government

General, Coordination
- take integrated approach
- reduce duplication and overlap between government departments and in program areas
- don't reinvent the wheel
- improve inter-ministry communication, collaboration, planning and activity
- establish inter-ministry partnerships for large issues
- streamline/channel/focus inter-governmental communications and activities
- give staff the credit to do the job (i.e. authority with the responsibility
- promote a customer-service mentality across government, take leadership in this
- be more business-minded
- ask for community input and use it
- identify successful programs and communicate results
- diversify the distribution of existing funds to directly benefit a broader base of citizens (e.g. FRBC, Columbia Basin Trust) and cover the social issues generated by dependency on declining resource sectors
- develop regulations, policies and programs that will work on the ground and meet the diverse needs of women
- evaluate programs, use both qualitative and quantitative measures, get participant input
- develop and maintain a commitment to long-term planning that is consistent no matter who is in power, don't expect immediate results but make the process accountable for outcomes
- promote what is working/success stories from a variety of communities
- ensure that programs are sensitized to local needs, listen and respond to community feedback when programs don't work
- recognize and support community initiatives
- decentralize decision-making to local level including allocation of funds
- ensure that women's equality issues and strategies fit everywhere in government
- continue to have programs for women and minorities as a priority
- require support of women's issues for all programs initiated and funded by the province, ensure consistent accountability conducting equity audits
- preserve Ministry of Women's Equality
- create new approaches to targeting women to take advantage of existing programs
- focus on ACTION
- establish an employment equity department, establish employment equity "with teeth"

- eliminate barriers between federal and provincial programs
- have each government ministry establish permanent work placement positions
- quit changing policies (i.e. if it isn't broken, don't fix it)
- be more cognizant of women's issues and respond to real needs
- undertake regulatory reform to improve flexibility in existing programs
- form federal/provincial partnerships to support equity initiatives, employment equity strategies

Communication
- improve promotion of available resources
- educate and promote re what opportunities exist and what the province offers
- put a government resource catalogue on-line
- support image-building by women's organizations
- provide information inclusively, add community organizations /agencies to government mailing lists
- through all ministries, acknowledge women's contribution to society
- acknowledge women's contributions to society (e.g. awards), provide public information about and promote the economic and social contribution of women to the province
- promote benefits of working mothers, approach positively
- market non-traditional programs to women through the media, in schools and community colleges; use success stories

Financial
- compensate for Federal program cuts that affect women
- make "cutting" decisions so that women and others with less power don't become even poorer
- increase the dollars for women's equality
- tax on the basis of equity outcomes (i.e. municipal, provincial and federal)
- set up a comprehensive group with broad representation to do long-term social and economic planning
- provide benefits for working poor (e.g. funding for education, maternity leave, etc.)
- increase flexibility of welfare to allow people to get off and not be penalized for trying
- commit funding on advertising and education on discrimination and violence against women (i.e. to change police and court attitudes)

Public Sector Human Resources
- increase enforcement of pay equity and equity hiring plans, ensure implementation of equity policy across government
- establish employment equity "with teeth"
- hire more managers
- provide leadership within government ministries re employee relations and policy (e.g. paid maternity leave, job sharing, job transition) as an example for industry

Employment and Adjustment
- encourage industry, including Crown Corporations, to take a leadership role in training women
- provide accurate relevant labour market information within a global perspective
- engage in more initiatives like the Columbia Basin Trust
- produce a media campaign with positive role models showing women in variety of work situations
- discourage hiring of family members in large businesses (e.g. Crown Corporations and private industry)
- undertake more initiatives like the Women's Employment Strategy and these meetings
- support employment programs for aboriginal women that are created and run by aboriginal women
- promote benefits of working mothers, approach positively
- follow through with recommendations of this report, take concrete action and create new initiatives as soon as possible
- develop program with schools/industry to promote and develop opportunities for women
- establish job creation/development workshops
- build on and expand current matching programs with industry
- make employment equity an investment strategy
- establish a taskforce on equity in construction
- support daycare facilities jointly with business and schools
- provide additional support to enable immigrant women to develop their potential
- discourage hiring of family members in large businesses
- provide consistent, ongoing and repetitive training in employment equity for employers
- develop and implement universal policy re harassment in the workplace
- allow employment programs for aboriginal women to be created and run by aboriginal women
- implement legislation and/or a monitoring system to prevent exploitation of women from diverse cultural groups by local employment agencies partnering with foreign agencies
- hold a provincial conference on women and employment

Labour Market and Skills Training
- make funding for community colleges more open to flexible responses to changes in labour market demand (e.g. 3-year lead time for curriculum funding)
- support more distance learning/training in rural areas
- recognize life experience in assessing credentials
- consult with industry on labour market needs and communicate this information more effectively to the public

- use available information to develop training (i.e. labour market information and needs assessments already completed)
- provide accurate relevant labour market information within a global perspective
- commit funding for women's equity in apprenticeships in the trades and technical fields
- provide incentives for employers to take on apprentices and provide training (e.g. wage training subsidies, time incentives)
- be more open to reducing the number of proposals required for projects
- streamline funding processes
- come up with an alternative to the continual RFP process (i.e. reward excellence with longer term contracts)
- support women who have been marginalized with bridging financing, support individuals in developing self esteem, confidence and life skills as a first step
- get federal files concerning training programs to help with an effective transition of information
- hire more training consultants and field delivery staff so they have the time to consult with agencies/clients
- provide job-related language training and mentorships for new immigrants
- make labour regulations more flexible
- undertake regulatory reform to improve flexibility in existing programs
- implement equity policy and legislation through the Labour Standards Act to govern all employers and labour
- stimulate pilot projects and programs and services for all women (i.e. those who do not meet current criteria for programs)
- be more cognizant of women's issues and respond to real needs
- market non-traditional programs to women (and men) through the media. in schools and community colleges: use success stories
- in developing grants. don't put in so many "hoops" that make them impossible to fit in communities. respond to community feedback when programs don't work
- provide incentives for employers who provide workplace training, ensure criteria are in place and focus on end results
- change criteria so that access to student loans is not based on family income
- develop and implement universal policy re flexible work schedules, harassment and pay equity
- provide allowances for women taking time from employment to raise families so as not to lose positions or seniority
- provide incentives to employers to participate in co-op programs
- provide grants to small business for educational leave
- with labour market partners. establish a taskforce on equity in construction
- establish the 30-hour work week at the same salary
- establish a pool of funds for short-term training
- fund career planning programs for employed people changing careers
- support continuous learning
- eliminate barriers between federal and provincial programs

- provide accurate relevant labour market information within a global perspective
- promote and develop opportunities for women in the public and private sectors
- make telecommunications facilities more available to provide distance learning for rural women. review and change legislation limiting the use of technology (CRTC) in rural communities
- level costs across the province for use of the communication highway (Internet)
- provide additional support to enable immigrant women to develop their potential

School System
- support daycare facilities in the schools
- continue to support career planning and exploration in elementary and secondary schools
- market non-traditional programs to girls, use success stories and role models
- support continuous learning
- develop programs to promote and develop opportunities for girls and young women

Small Business Development
- support access to capital for women (e.g. loan guarantees, consulting for women entrepreneurs)
- make Kootenay Regional Economic Development Association (KREDA) more responsive to potential women entrepreneurs
- support women who have been marginalized with bridging financing, support individuals in developing self esteem, confidence and life skills as a first step
- support self-employment and alternative business forms (e.g. co-ops)
- continue with business development workshops for women
- provide grants to small businesses for educational leave
- provide funding for cottage industry and home-based businesses

Social Supports
- continue commitment to support women's support systems/organizations (e.g. childcare. women's centres)
- support daycare facilities jointly with businesses and schools
- provide childcare subsidies to all women who work in and out of home
- support employment programs for aboriginal women to be created and run by aboriginal women
- develop and implement universal policy on child care
- make Self Employment Assistance Program available for welfare recipients
- provide more MSS workers to meet the needs

Miscellaneous
- assist women's organizations in networking with other local organizations (e.g. EDC's, Community Futures, schools)
- seek out women candidates for provincial commissions and committees; strive for gender equity

Women's Employment Strategy
Regional Meetings - October 17 to November 28, 1995.

Summary of What's Working Now

What's Working Now- Comox/Courtenay
- VOICES/CHOICES, mothers and daughters working together to have strong, resonant, voice in Math, Science, communication (Judy)
- TRUE COLORS, self-esteeming, temperament typing, self-exploration (Judy, Cory)
- Women's Business Networks (Judy, Pauline)
- Financial Administration (Pauline)
- Management (Pauline)
- Bridges Programs (Pam)

What's Working Now - Kamloops
- All Nations Trust Company (Lorraine)
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (Lorraine)
- Employment programs at Kamloops Immigrant Services, because of ESL component, support services such as counselling interpreting, bi-cultural workers (Trudy)
- RISE, Bridges, COPE, CJS (Meghan and Linda)
- Community Futures Development Corps, small business as an alternative to employment
- Avanti (Val)
- Community developed and delivered programs (e.g. SEAP, RISE, etc.),
- SEA Revelstoke, 45% women, 30 contracts/year over 8 years

What's Working Now - Kelowna
- Business Skill Development Program for SAR's, 24 women in Vernon and Kelowna (Claudette/Wendy)
- Entrepreneurial Orientation Program, Penticton (Wendy)
- Business Success for Women Conference, professional development
- CHOICES, pre-employment training for women, Vernon and Armstrong (Claudette)
- Self Employment Assistance Program, Vernon, Kelowna and Penticton (Claudette)
- Herizons, pre-employment and training, Kelowna
- Women mentors
- Okanagan Peopleworks Ltd., Women Exploring Trades and Technology (Carola?)
- Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce
- School District # 23, Mother/Daughter Self Esteem Project for grade 5 girls

What's Working Now - Prince George
- Take Your Daughter to Work (Dawn)
- Loon Lake (Dawn)
- Success Teams (Dawn)
- CIMWA (?)
- CEC/Chamber/MSBTC small business partnership program in Ft. St. James (Charlotte)
- Return Project using narrative therapy (Andrea)
- Self Employment Assistance Program (Karin)
- Native Employment and Training Program (Karin)
- Aboriginal Lending Circles (Karin)

What's Working Now - Smithers
- Bridges Program for Women, includes new daycare facility
- Self-Employment Assistance Program for individuals on UI/SA
- Career Development Program (20-week career exploration program in the high schools, includes academic upgrading)
- growth of home-based businesses
- women's drop-in with childcare
- caregiver training/education, workshops through Child Care Support Program and Northwest Community College
- Parent education/career opportunities in home-based businesses
- presentations at local schools
- public economic development workshops
- high school work experience programs

What's Working Now - Vancouver
- Girls Exploring Trades and Technology (GETT) summer camps (Anabelle)
- Community-based agencies working in partnership to meet needs of professional immigrant women (Harpreet)
- Pre-Trades Exploratory Training for Aboriginal women, community-based with an institution (Christine)

What's Working Now - Victoria
- Techniques Employment Services 744-2205, free job search support to unemployed people in Saanich, workshops and individual employment counselling
- NEWA 715-0631, Youth Entrepreneurship Assistance Training Program, 7-month training program for youth starting their own businesses
- Ability Plus Employment Services for those over 40, counselling, workshops, printed resources, referrals, training information (Norrie)

Women's Employment Strategy
Regional Meeting

Participant List -- Terrace - October 17, 1995

Name	Company/Organization	Communities	Work Phone
Anna Beddie	Misty River Books	Terrace	635-4428
Marg Bogart	Northern Futures Consulting	Kitimat	632-5806
Diane Collins	Private Consultant	Terrace	635-7906
Carolyn Martin	Nisga'a Women's Association	Greenville	621-3351
Rhoda	Ksan House Society	Terrace	635-2373
Mildred Roberts	Kitsumkalum Band Council	Terrace	635-6177
Debbie Shaw	Northern Savings Credit Union	Prince Rupert	627-7571
Carol Sobo	Terrace Women's Resource Centre	Terrace	638-0228
Sandra Green	Regional Program Coordinator, MWE	Prince Rupert	624-7705
Susanne Stushnoff	North Coast Community Skills Centre	Prince Rupert	727-4900

Women's Employment Strategy
Regional Meeting

Participant List -- Castlegar - October 30, 1995

Name	Company/Organization	Communities	Work Phone
Karin Ballard	Ministry of Social Services	Nakusp	265-3723
Margaret Birch	Birchland Heights Enterprises	Castlegar	365-3189
Marcia Braundy	Kootenay WITT	Winlaw	226-7624
Michelle Daoust	Kootenay WETC and Nakusp Community Services	Nakusp	265-3674
Laurel Douglas	Nelson and District Women's Centre	Nelson	352-9916
Colleen Kendall	BC Hydro	Castlegar	365-2450
Marlene Krueckl	Castlegar Chamber of Commerce	Castlegar	365-6313
Joyce Mackie	Ainsworth Hot Springs Resort	Ainsworth Hot Springs	229-4212
Janet Morton	Continuing Education	Trail	368-8229
Wenda Plante	Canada Employment	Nelson	352-3155 Ext 123
Laurie Reed	Selkirk College	Nelson	352-6601
Holly Ridenour	West Kootenay Science Council	Castlegar	365-9525
Sandy Schilling	Boundary Women's Coalition	Grandforks	442-2704 (Selkirk College)
Sherri Slater	Trail and District Multicultural Society	Trail	364-0999
Susan Wallach	Business Partner	Nelson	352-3135

Women's Employment Strategy
Regional Meeting

Participant List -- Kamloops --November 7, 1995

Name	Company	Communities	Work Phone
Eleanor Brown	"Goal Getters"	Merritt	378-5915
Val Clemont	Kamloops Home Based Business Association	Kamloops	372-8983
Geri Collins	Central Interior First Nations Community Futures	Kamloops	828-9833
Shirley Culver	Thompson Area Community Futures, and City of Kamloops	Kamloops	828-8772
Trudy Dirk	Kamloops Immigrant Services	Kamloops	372-0855
Mary Anne Jensen	Women in Networking (WINK)	Kamloops	374-6641
Lorraine Moses	All Nations Trust	Kamloops	828-9770
Carol Palladino	Revelstoke Business Development Centre	Revelstoke	837-5345
Cindy Piva	Kamloops Business & Professional Women's Club	Kamloops	573-4164
Vlasta Dvsil	Science Council of British Columbia	Kamloops	371-5751
Linda Breault	Horizon Bridges	Kamloops	314-0037
Meghan Wade	RISE	Kamloops	376-9009

Women's Employment Strategy
Regional Meeting

Participant List -- Kelowna -- November 8, 1995

Name	Company/Organization	Communities	Work Phone
Debbie Kereluk	Kelowna Women's Centre (pre-employment program)	Kelowna	762-2355
Tracey Cochrane	Kelowna Chamber of Commerce	Kelowna	861-1515
Claudette Everitt	Everitt Consultants Inc.	Vernon	545-7217
Carola Fraser	WITT	Penticton	493-2372
Catharine Goheen	Dr. Spec's Optical	Kelowna	861-7731
Gay Jewitt	Lumby Community Services	Lumby	547-8866
Rocio Launier	Immigrant & Visible Minority Women Association	Kelowna	868-9464
Liz MacArthur	Vernon Women in Business/Advertising Works	Vernon	558-1434
Wendy McCulloch	Okanagan Business Development Bank of Canada	Kelowna	470-4812
Lorraine McGrath	Bank of Montreal	Kelowna	861-1609
Anita Olsen	Canada Employment	Penticton	493-6823
Mary Ann Podgorski	Central Okanagan Regional District	Kelowna	868-5280
Laurel Burnham	Penticton & Area Women's Centre	Penticton	493-6822
Sharon Strang	Kelowna Women's Network	Kelowna	860-4985
Christine Juba	Canada Employment Centre	Kelowna	762-3018
Gina Louis	First Nations Employment Services	Vernon	558-3345

Women's Employment Strategy
Regional Meeting

Participant List -- Victoria - November 10, 1995

Name	Company/Organization	Communities	Work Phone
Amarjit Bhalla	Inter-cultural Association	Victoria	388-4728
Eileen Gormley	Professional Secretares International	Victoria	388-5188
Charlene Hienz	Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour	Duncan	746-1492
Barb Johnson	Volume 1 Bookstore	Duncan	748-1533
Norrie Preston	Ability Employment Services Association	Victoria	385-5000
Monica Nygaard	Community Futures	Duncan	746-1004
Jasmine Hurson	Cowichan Valley Independent Living	Duncan	746-3930
Tania Strecheniuk	Techniques Employment Services	Saanich	744-2205
Fred George	Native Employment Centre	Duncan	746-0833
Michelle Williams	Hiiye-yu Lelum House of Friendship	Duncan	748-2242
Shannon Streit	c/o Craig Young, Community Futures	Duncan	746-1004
Suzanne Chan	c/o Craig Young, Community Futures	Duncan	746-1004
Jean Willow/ Sandra Jacobsen	Phase II Employment Support Program	Victoria	380-5173

Women's Employment Strategy
Regional Meeting

Participant List -- Courtenay - November 23, 1995

Name	Company/ Organization	Communities	Work Phone
Pamela Van Raes	Harbour City Trade School	Nanaimo	756-1156
Kerren Shalanski	North Island Women's Service Society	Courtenay	338-1133
Brenda Evans	Highway Constructors Ltd.	Nanaimo	754-1914
Katherine Robinson	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council	Port Alberni	724-3131
Laurel Laturnus	Opportunities Campbell River	Campbell River	286-3436
Mary Crowley	MSS/MSTL (Central North Vancouver Island)	Courtenay	286-7751
Liz Kellough	Career Link/WES	Powell River	485-7958
Pauline Stevenson	Comox Valley Business Women's Network	Courtenay	334-2452
Julie Foster	Mt. Waddington Community Futures	Port McNeil	956-5000
Catherine Hart	Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry	Courtenay	334-9591
Cecilia Chong	Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society	Nanaimo	753-6911
Elizabeth Rucki	Port Alberni Women's Centre	Port Alberni	724-7111
Judy Atkinson	North Island College	Comox	339-4477