

Overview of Equity in Apprenticeship – downloaded from the www. 19 February, 2003 after discovering that the site had been changed and I still had the old bookmark on my webpage.

## Under-represented Groups

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## Overview of Equity in Apprenticeship

A paper prepared for the ITAC Interim Standing Committee on Under-represented Groups

**Draft 2 - September 1997**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview synthesis of equity in apprenticeship for the Interim Standing Committee on Under-represented Group of the Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission (ITAC). The paper provides a brief context and background regarding the topic; describes the key steps in achieving journey-level status in a trade; reviews the types of barriers faced by equity groups in accessing apprenticeship training; outlines the major types of initiatives that have been used to promote the participation of equity group members across the country and specifically within British Columbia.

The Interim Standing Committee on Under-represented groups has four charges:

Provide and ensure input regarding under-represented groups into the strategic plan and budgets to ensure the Commission mandate on under-represented groups is met.

Review outstanding Provincial Apprenticeship Board equity issues and provide recommendations to the Committee.

Make recommendations to the Commission about the integration of equity goals into programs and policies.

Make recommendations to the Commission regarding the future of a Committee on under-represented groups.

The new Industry Training and Apprenticeship Act, expected to be proclaimed in October, 1997, states that one of the mandates of the Commission is to increase the participation of under-represented groups in the industry training and apprenticeship system. Under-represented groups are defined as Aboriginal people, older workers, people with disabilities, visible minorities, women and youth. Individuals between 16 and 24 years of age are considered youth; older workers are defined as people over the age of 45.

The idea of targeting under-represented groups versus equity groups in apprenticeship is a recent trend in Canada. The majority of jurisdictions have concentrated their efforts on increasing the involvement of the traditional equity groups: Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, visible minority people, and women. As a result, there is limited information available about youth and older workers in apprenticeship. The major emphasis has been on women in the trades.

It should also be noted that while ITAC is mandated to increase the participation of under-represented groups in the industry training and apprenticeship system, this paper refers to representation in the apprenticeship system where a significant amount of research has been undertaken over the last ten years. Entry-level trades training and other forms of industry training needs to be examined in relation to representation of the under-represented groups; however, ITAC does not currently have this data. Self-

reported data from student application forms is available in aggregate from the Center for Educational Information Standards and Services (CEISS) for a fee.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

Since the mid 1980's much effort has gone into studying the lack of equity representation in apprenticeship across Canada. Almost one hundred reports have been written during this time by the key players: community organizations and advocacy groups such as Women in Trades and Technology (WITT) and the Women's Employment and Training Coalition (WETC); trade associations and councils; national groups such as the Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB), the Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Center (CLMPC), the Canadian Vocational Association and the Canadian Guidance and Counseling Foundation; provincial-territorial and federal governments: provincial ministries responsible for education, skills development and training, labour market and the status of women, and Human Resources Development Canada (formerly Employment and Immigration Canada); apprenticeship boards; and provincial labour force development boards.

These studies reflect common themes and issues, one often building on the other. The primary focus is on the low levels of participation of women and other equity groups in apprenticeship; barriers to obtaining access to apprenticeship for equity groups; methods of overcoming and/or eliminating these barriers; surveys of other jurisdictions in Canada; and recommendations. Recommendations from one report to another resemble each other despite the year of the report. Some of these recommendations have been implemented and are discussed in detail in Section VI, Initiatives to Promote the Participation of Equity Groups.

One common denominator of these studies is that many of the recommendations are not implemented or operationalized. These recommendations appear over and over but with little mention of why they have not been actioned or why progress has been so slow to occur. One key question that needs to be answered is why is this the case.

This picture may lead one to believe that little substantive progress has been made, and this is true if one looks only to the participation rate of equity group members in apprenticeship. Equity is squarely on the agenda in the 1990s, unlike twenty years ago. It would be easy to overlook the very real progress that has been made and the very real challenges that exist for one to access apprenticeable trades.

## **III. APPRENTICEABLE TRADES**

Apprenticeship is a learning system as well as a set of programs and is unlike most other post-secondary training. The learning in the apprenticeship system takes place primarily in the workplace and focuses on learning by doing. In addition, apprenticeship is based on industry driven demand and not supply driven which often makes participating in the apprenticeship system more difficult.

The 1995 *Equity in Apprenticeship* discussion paper prepared by the Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB) National Apprenticeship Committee described the many steps that are required to achieving journey-level status in a trade. The paper indicated that individuals must:

Perceive the trades as an appropriate and realistic career choice.

Be knowledgeable about the skilled trades and understand that entry to them is through apprenticeship training.

Determine the educational qualifications necessary to enter training and how to acquire them if they do not have the entrance requirements.

Know where to apply to enter apprenticeship, who hires apprentices and in which trades.

Be hired into a job for apprenticeship training and become registered as an apprentice with the provincial government.

Fulfill all the training requirements and pass the final examination to obtain certification.

The nature of the apprenticeship system makes access to it even more difficult for equity group members.

#### **IV. DEMOGRAPHICS**

The labour force profiles of designated groups show many similarities, but also demonstrate a number of differences. Population, employment and income characteristics of equity groups from 1991 Census data demonstrate that Aboriginal people, people with disabilities and visible minorities experience higher than average rates of unemployment; all equity groups experience lower average income than the total population, and these groups are over represented in low paying and low skilled occupations. Further, in terms of educational distribution, a higher proportion of visible minorities have university degrees, while Aboriginal people are well below the total population; women make up over half of post-secondary students in BC, but they are substantially under-represented in mathematics, engineering, applied sciences and physical sciences.

Although these groups make up a substantial proportion of the population, they are under-represented in the apprenticeship system.

Apprenticeable trades will soon face a shortage of skilled workers as increasing numbers of the current workforce retire, traditional sources of recruitment from Europe decline, and the population of young males in the population shrinks. Historically, trades people have been white men from a European background. This is still largely true as few members of under-represented groups have been able to overcome the barriers associated with obtaining trades qualifications. Unfortunately, the exact rate of participation of the majority of the under-represented groups is unknown as this data is not collected during the apprenticeship registration phase. Gender is the only data that is currently collected.

In Canada, women make up between 44 per cent to 47 per cent of the labour force but represent only 4 to 6 per cent of the registered apprentices. Participation of women in trades and technology has been historically very low with participation in all apprenticeable trades and occupations in BC never reaching above 6.3 per cent (1987). The national participation rate has not increased above 5 per cent in the last 10 years. Overall participation rates of women are even lower once the figures are adjusted to eliminate baking, cooking, hairdressing, barbering and food and beverage server.

<b>RECENT PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN BC APPRENTICESHIPS</b>			
	December 1995	May 1996	September 1997
PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN APPRENTICES	4.9%	4.9%	5.6%
EXCLUDING BAKING, BARBERING, COOKING and HAIRDRESSING	2.1%	3.9%	2.7%

\* Please note this data includes all women in registered apprenticeships. The majority of women who start apprentices in certain trades do not finish the apprenticeship.

According to the 1991 Census, visible minority people, people with disabilities and Aboriginal people combine to make up over 26% of the total population in BC

<i>Equity Group</i>	<i>Total BC Population (%)</i>
ABORIGINAL PEOPLE	5.3%
PEOPLE with DISABILITIES	6.6%
VISIBLE MINORITY PEOPLE	14.2%

## **V. BARRIERS TO GAINING ACCESS TO APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING**

While many members of the designated groups are subject to barriers in obtaining any type of training and/or employment, these barriers are even more pronounced in the apprenticeship training system where employment and training are combined.

### ***GENERAL BARRIERS***

Equity group members are more likely to face a variety of systemic and personal barriers that obstruct access to the apprenticeship training system. These barriers are categorized by job barriers, skill barriers, support barriers, structural barriers, and attitudinal barriers and may include:

#### Job Barriers

Non bona-fide job qualifications

Hiring practices such as union seniority and word-of-mouth;

#### Skills Barriers

Low educational attainment or low levels of literacy

Inadequate career counseling

Psychological and physical limitations

Little or no exposure to technology or trades

Language barriers

Lack of employment experience

Lack of recognition of foreign credentials

### Support Barriers

Inadequate supports to help people become and remain employed, e.g. affordable and accessible child care, technical and other assistance for persons with disabilities

### Structural Barriers

Lack of coordination among programs and services designed to help people make transitions

### Attitudinal Barriers

Negative societal attitudes and perceptions

Stereotyping and incorrect assumptions

Different learning styles

Lack of funding for adult training courses

### ***EQUITY GROUP SPECIFIC BARRIERS***

Despite equity and human rights legislation, under-represented groups in Canada face barriers and stereotypes which are unrelated to their individual skills, characteristics or attributes. The following is a sampling of the specific issues by equity group:

#### Aboriginal People

May be perceived by some segments of society as less able and willing to adapt to a work environment created by non-Aboriginal people

Few employment and training opportunities on reserves

Reserves may be in remote regions of the province

Mainstream programs may not be relevant to the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people

Education and training needs to be tied local opportunities, including traditional economic activities

### Older Workers

Some employers may see older workers as less open to new ideas and less able to update their skills

Long term unemployed older workers may be discouraged from seeking employment because of their age

May have low levels of educational attainment and have experience in declining industries, e.g. resource-based industries

### Persons with Disabilities

Inadequate home and community supports

Lack of coordination between policies and programs across the range of services that are required

Restrictive screening criteria which limit opportunities to employment and education

Inadequate training and awareness by employers, service providers, educators, and the public regarding people with disabilities

Social programs designed as a "payer of last resort" result in perpetuating poverty for people with disabilities and act as disincentives to employment for people with disabilities

For those with physical disabilities, access to buildings, schools, transportation

Different learning styles

Lack knowledge of trades and have no network to link to the apprenticeship system

### Visible Minority People

May experience discrimination at work due to their racial or ethnic background

May be perceived to have lower educational and skill qualifications

May be perceived by some as taking jobs away from Canadians

May lack the necessary English language skills and relevant occupational terminology

May be cultural barriers and difficulties in the recognition of foreign credentials

### Women

May be seen as not suited for non-traditional occupations

Lack work experience in trades and technology and or lack of technical training

Systemic barriers in hiring practices, such as some employers biases towards women's abilities

Single parent women may be seen as less reliable because of child care responsibilities

Funding sources for adult training courses eliminates many women

### Youth

May be seen to have unrealistic salary expectations

May have little understanding of work place ethics and culture

May be seen to be inexperienced and unreliable

There is a need to recognize the diversity and complexity of issues from within and across the different equity groups and how the needs and barriers of individuals vary based on their individual circumstances.

## **VI. INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION OF EQUITY GROUPS**

Initiatives aimed at increasing participation of equity groups in apprenticeship have been in place since the mid-1980s. However, few initiatives that have been undertaken in Canada have targeted more than one group. Approximately 70 per cent of all initiatives are targeted towards women as women have historically made up less than 6 per cent of the total apprenticeships in BC, and in Canada. After 1989, other groups that have been targeted include: visible minorities, Aboriginal people and youth.

In June, 1994, the Federal/Provincial-Territorial Forum of Labour Market Ministers released a comprehensive report, *What Works? Increasing Equity in Apprenticeship: A Review of Initiatives, Models and Programs in Canada which Promote and Facilitate Apprenticeship Employment for Members of Designated Group*. The report observed that the majority of apprenticeship equity initiatives are aimed at promoting apprenticeship/employment equity for women; have a "front-end emphasis" (promotion and awareness, exploratory and pre-apprenticeship orientation); and have relied on ad hoc short term funding from both levels of governments which has limited the ability organizations to do long term planning and or evaluations of the programs. Only a few programs are targeted to persons with disabilities and visible minorities and only few provide continuing support during the apprenticeship stage to ensure retention through to eventual certification.

It goes on to state that in the past, an individual-driven approach was used to increase equity representation in apprenticeship, i.e. strategies or interventions targeted solely at the individual. Instead, this study outlined an intervention framework that is system-based and which places ownership for action with all of the labour market partners. This system-based typology identifies a range of interventions that can be used to increase equity group participation and includes: pre-employment initiatives; apprenticeship initiatives; workplace initiatives; designated group/advocacy group initiatives; and statutory/regulatory approaches.

### ***PRE-EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES (aimed at access issues)***

**General Promotion/Awareness:** A wide variety of promotional activities have been undertaken to make equity groups and the general public more aware of and knowledgeable about apprenticeship. Such campaigns generally fall under the following categories:



Society: Social values have never placed a high priority on the trades which has led to an image problem for apprenticeship. In addition, parents are not encouraging their children to pursue technology and trades despite the challenging work and often high wages offered in apprenticeable trades. Through campaigns that are educational and encouraging, youth as young as 12 are exposed to the trades and the apprenticeship system as a viable career option.

Education/Career Counselors: Awareness campaigns are focused on counselors to encourage all students, particularly equity group members, to consider technology and trades as a career option rather than automatically streamlining students into post-secondary institutions.

Industry: Public awareness campaigns focus the importance of apprenticeship, and equity hires in particular. The "good corporate citizen" approach is often used with Crown corporations.

Trades: Actively promote new trades to equity groups, e.g. trades in the film industry are often more inviting to youth.

### **Preparation and Bridging Programs**

Influenced by socialization and different life experiences, under-represented groups often are, or are perceived, or perceive themselves to be ill prepared to enter trade and technology fields. To ensure fair access to trades programs, special bridging, upgrading and exploratory programs have been developed.

Bridging programs assist people who are entering or re-entering the labour force to develop life skills, career planning and job search skills necessary for the smooth transition to employment. Academic upgrading is sometimes included.

Upgrading programs are offered before or during pre-apprenticeship programs. While many of these programs are designed to provide a fundamental math and science foundation necessary for the trades, other programs focus on basic English language skills and occupation relevant English skills.

Exploratory Programs (WITT) provide life planning skills, communication skills and employment orientation training that focus on technology and trades. Introduction to technical training, safety skills and tools skills are also included. Some programs offer a hands-on work experience placement; other programs are designed to provide trades training for women already working within a company.

### ***APPRENTICESHIP INITIATIVES (initiatives to support completion)***

#### **Modified Apprenticeship Programs**

The manner of delivery of the in-school portion of apprenticeship training and prerequisites can often be a barrier to designated groups. To remove these barriers the training model is modified to better meet the needs of the apprentices from under-represented groups. Sub-trades can also be created to reflect the nature of work on reserves for example.

Computer-based training is often used to bring the classroom component of training closer to home for some participants in remote locations.

Upgrading programs that allow for an apprentice to start their apprenticeship without the prerequisite academic standing as long as the apprentice meets the requirements prior to the first module. This allows

the apprentice to better understand the need for upgrading in a practical sense prior to undergoing the upgrading.

Indentureship to a Board or Committee allows apprenticeship programs to continue even if there are layoffs or seasonal work in the region.

Limited trade qualification for people with disabilities, particularly people with mobility issues or mentally challenged, allows them to complete their apprenticeship training and gain skills for specific areas that are within their abilities, e.g. cook's helper program for mentally challenged people.

### **Subsidies or Tax Incentives to Employers**

To encourage employers to take on apprentices, particularly members of the under-represented groups provincial governments have taken the following approaches:

Wage subsidies for employers of apprentices from the under-represented groups. This type of funding has been used by the federal and provincial-territorial governments at one time during the past decade. The wage subsidy can be as high as \$7.50 an hour to a maximum of \$300 per week (NWT).

Training Tax Credits are used in Quebec to encourage the employment of apprentices. Employers with a payroll of more than \$250,000 must train employees to the equivalent of one percent of the payroll or pay tax.

### **Employer Partnerships and Programs**

Partnership programs are deemed to be essential for the inclusion of under-represented groups in industry. Industry involvement and ownership is necessary to ensure that there are placements for apprentices and that the employer fosters a suitable environment for learning and working. The majority of partnership programs have taken place in Ontario where Employment Equity legislation was introduced during 1994. This legislation has since been revoked and when BC staff in the Apprenticeship Initiatives Branch conducted a survey in March 1996, Ontario reported to have no remaining employer or equity incentive programs.

Employer partnerships have been successfully used to increase the number of designated groups in apprenticeships particularly in the public sector or within crown corporations. With employer partnerships, the government is able to negotiate with the employer for equity provisions in the hiring process.

Community based partnerships allow the community groups to work with the government to provide training for under-represented groups to best meet their needs.

Very few workplace-based initiatives or interventions originating with employers exist which are specifically designed to attract and retain members of designated groups; however, there are some employers who offer assistance to designated group employees through their internal employment equity programs and human resources development policies. Very few statutory or regulatory initiatives are aimed at increasing equity representation in apprenticeship.

### **"Best Practices"**

The "What Works? Increasing Equity in Apprenticeship" report also identified "best practices" as those interventions that are successful in encouraging an ongoing attachment to apprenticeship programs for designated group members and include the following characteristics:

Target one or more of the designated groups

Provide a bridge between pre-employment training and apprenticeship employment

Target participants who are most likely to pursue an apprenticeship program beyond the initial training or apprenticeship employment period

Take into account unique academic differences, cultural differences and trades employment requirements of Aboriginal communities, and permit Aboriginal people to focus on employment projects which are meaningful to them

Recognize the unique academic and cultural differences of women and visible minorities

Focus in the early pre-employment stages on basic academic upgrading, orientation to construction occupations and life skills training

Improve awareness of careers and employment in apprenticeship

Other reports have made the following additional recommendations to increase access to and completion of apprenticeship training by equity groups:

Access to apprenticeship and job openings information should be a part of the federal government's labour market information services

Labour market partners should encourage the participation in and development of support networks

Industry should provide sensitivity training for those teaching and working with apprentices and ensure that work place supports exist

The Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship should establish a "best practices" award to recognize innovative equity in apprenticeship initiatives

All examinations (provincial trade and interprovincial standards) should be screened to ensure language is neutral in terms of gender, race, ethnicity

Federal-provincial-territorial governments should promote the regular collection, analysis and publication of accurate and comprehensive statistics of their participation and experiences, e.g. rates of completion and non-completion

## **VII. EQUITY IN APPRENTICESHIP ACTIVITIES IN BC**

In 1994/95, there were a number of significant policy initiatives which have had a positive impact on equity initiatives broadly. During that time, one of the provincial government's strategic objectives included the promotion of equity and fairness for all British Columbians. Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Skills Now! were initiatives which supported the participation in education and training programs for

Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, visible minorities and women. College boards and the Provincial Apprenticeship Board were required to reflect diversity in the appointments to their boards. The Office for Disability Issues, an innovative pilot project for the management of disability public policy, was introduced. This context is a necessary to demonstrate that some progress has been made albeit to little, too slowly, even though specific interventions have been unable to substantively improve access to and participation in the apprenticeship system.

BC has taken an approach to equity in apprenticeship that is similar to other jurisdictions in Canada and has consequently invested much time in developing recommendations and approaches to the lack of equity representation. BC has produced a wide range of reports and committees focusing on increasing equity but the results have been similar to the rest of the country: While some of the recommendations have been acted upon many are not implemented and are restated in subsequent reports.

The most recent BC-specific policy and program initiatives are highlighted below.

### ***1997/98 EQUITY BUDGET***

The budget specifically marked for equity initiatives in BC apprenticeship has been relatively small in comparison to provinces like Ontario where annual budgets have been in the millions of dollars. In BC, the 1997/98 budget for equity initiatives targeting the traditional four equity groups was \$300,000. Proposed expenditures include: diversity training module for ITAC staff, Aboriginal trades training initiatives, youth orientation to apprenticeship and a bursary program.

### ***REVITALIZING APPRENTICESHIP - November 1996***

One of the goals of the strategy to revitalize the apprenticeship program in BC was to make apprenticeship training more responsible and accessible to designated equity group members. The strategy developed included:

Develop guidelines and policies for addressing barriers to apprenticeship for members of designated equity groups.

Develop an Equity in Apprenticeship Plan and prepare annual reports to assess progress in removing barriers and increasing participation rates of the designated group members. Focus the plan on shifting attitudes and behaviors so that equity considerations can become a basic tenet of the apprenticeship training program.

Develop and implement a Crown Corporation Apprenticeship Strategy to expand apprenticeship opportunities in the public sector with a focus on equity hires.

Develop a training module addressing diversity in the workplace and include it as a training component for apprenticeable trades and journey person upgrading.

Develop a staffing strategy so that apprenticeship staff become, over time, more reflective of the diversity in the labour force. Deliver diversity training to apprenticeship staff and develop action oriented performance outcomes for increasing equity participation in apprenticeship.

Develop and implement effective equity data collection and analysis mechanisms within the apprenticeship management information systems.

Making apprenticeship training more accessible and encouraging to youth was a separate goal of this revitalization strategy. Currently, the average age of apprentices is 28 and in some cases closer to 45 years while seventy-five percent of youth enter the workforce without any formal vocational or post-secondary training. A projected shortage of qualified trades workers will result if the number of new young apprentices does not increase. The strategy to meet this goal includes:

Undertake marketing and awareness campaign targeting local employers in both emerging and traditional sectors, students, parents, school/career counselors, college and institutes, to promote the benefits of apprenticeship training and the Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA) program. Plan to include focus on students in grades 7-9.

Establish stronger linkages between employers, apprenticeship staff, local steering committees, colleges and institutes to identify new apprenticeship berths for SSA participants.

Work with steering committees, school districts, colleges and institutes to develop a fully coordinated transition process from school to work to post secondary technical training.

Develop flexible apprenticeship agreements which enable employers to hire young apprentices without compromising principles in the collective agreement.

No action on these strategies has taken place to date due to the organizational changeover; however, these recommendations will be referred to ITAC.

### ***INTERMINISTRY COMMITTEE ON EQUITY IN APPRENTICESHIP (ICEA) - 1995***

In 1995, an Interministry Committee on Equity in Apprenticeship (ICEA) was formed. The committee included representatives from the ministries of Labour, Women's Equality, Education, Skills and Training, Attorney General and the Office of Disability Issues. ICEA was responsible for coordinating, managing, and addressing equity issues within the BC Apprenticeship system. This included 1) serving as a review committee in the development of proposals to raise awareness and promote apprenticeship, and 2) serving as the advisory group in the development of public policy alternatives for increasing participation rates among designated equity groups.

### ***ELIZABETH CARRIERE GENDER EQUITY REPORT - 1995***

In August of 1995, Elizabeth Carriere, seconded from the Ministry of Women's Equality to the former Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour, completed a Gender Equity Framework Project Report for SKILLS NOW! Initiatives.

The framework made forty-six equity and gender recommendations in the broad areas of: partnerships approaches between the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour, Education, Employment and Investment and Women's Equality; priorities within the Apprenticeship system; involvement of the Provincial Apprenticeship Board (PAB) and the PAB Equity Sub-Committee; and the roles and responsibilities for the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour. Specific recommendations related to apprenticeship focused on:

a strategic approach to ensuring equity in the Secondary School Apprenticeship Program;

development and/or review of informational or promotional materials to ensure they are "equity sensitive";

development and implementation of an equity in apprenticeship data collection and analysis system; and

development of a staffing strategy and training for delivery staff to support the promotion and placement of equity apprentices.

Many of the report's recommendations were contingent on the formation of a Ministry Equity Resource Group (ERG), which would provide a coordinated, corporate approach to equity initiatives and be the catalyst for ensuring the implementation of the Framework's recommendations.

In November of 1995, the Gender Equity Framework Project was tabled at the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour's Policy Committee and the establishment of an ERG was discussed. Due to competing priorities, a cross-ministry response to the Framework was not completed. Only one recommendation was acted upon: an Equity in Apprenticeship Resource Kit for apprenticeship counselors. This 200+ page document which includes over 120 pages of resource referrals has not been distributed or marketed to date.

### ***PROVINCIAL APPRENTICESHIP BOARD (PAB)) SUB-COMMITTEE ON EQUITY - 1987-1997***

The PAB Sub-Committee on Equity was established in 1987 and included representatives of the PAB and Ministry of Labour staff. The focus of this committee was to advocate for increased representation of equity groups in apprenticeship; ensure integration of equity concerns in PAB decision-making process; review all promotional materials to ensure they incorporate equity and to make recommendations to the Ministry of Labour regarding all internal activities. Specific recommendations include:

A public information strategy on government's commitment to increasing access to apprenticeship for members of designated equity groups;

Initiatives to increase apprenticeship opportunities in both the public and private sectors;

Staffing and training strategies for Ministry apprenticeship staff;

Equity representation (through employer and employee members) on Trade Advisory Committees;

Use of inclusive and gender neutral language in promotional and program materials; and

Changes in the education/training system to make it more inclusive and welcoming.

In all, the Committee made 51 recommendations to the PAB: only two were completed and another two had some work done when the Committee was disbanded in 1997. The Committee moved to forward all outstanding recommendations to ITAC. The majority of these recommendations are contained within the Revitalizing Apprenticeship document referenced earlier. A log of issues from the PAB will be compiled that outlines the issues, recommendations and status.

### ***BC OFFICIALS EQUITY IN APPRENTICESHIP STUDY TOUR - 1993***

In April, 1993, members of the Equity Subcommittee of the Provincial Apprenticeship Board and senior officials of the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology went on a fact-finding mission to Ontario to learn about proactive strategies to promote diversity within apprenticeship. The tour acknowledged that little had been achieved in terms of achieving greater participation of equity groups in the BC apprenticeship system over the previous five years and that it was time to deliver on previous commitments.

Like other reports before it, it noted that: the province needed to sensitize ministry staff, apprenticeship boards and committees, college staff and employers as to the need for a workforce and training environment that reflects the reality of the labour force; an awareness campaign be designed and implemented which promotes the participation of designated groups in apprenticeship; preparatory or bridging programs should be available to all interested applicants, not just those who are receiving benefits such as then unemployment insurance and social assistance. The report went on to recommend that:

Governments should become involved in training apprentices within their own organizations, and set an example of equity participation;

Diversity should be reflected on Trade Advisory Committees;

Industrial adjustment services could include the requirement for equity considerations;

There should be an aggressive placement and follow-up by apprenticeship counselors including counseling resources aimed at accommodating the special needs of the designated groups and ensuring retention;

Job creation activities should be linked to apprenticeship employment strategies; and,

Staff within the Apprenticeship Branch be dedicated to moving this issue forward and to making a difference within a set time frame.

Few initiatives targeting the under-represented groups in apprenticeship have been carried out on a long standing basis with the exception of the Secondary School Apprenticeship Program which began in 1995. Most initiatives in BC have been ad hoc pilot projects. The following is an illustrative list of equity in apprenticeship initiatives in BC.

## **VIII. BC EQUITY IN APPRENTICESHIP INITIATIVES**

WITT Exploratory courses

Girls Exploring Trades and Technology (GETT) Camps: GETT Camps introduce girls in grades 7-9 to trades and technology through a one-week day camp. The girls use tools and drafting equipment to design, cut-out and assemble a manual go-kart. Exposure to industrial sites is also included.

Blade Runners: Blade Runners places street involved youth in construction sites. Participants have the opportunity to enter apprenticeship programs in construction trades. Participants are first expected to take pre-employment training to prepare themselves for the workplace.

Aboriginal Trade Boards: Aboriginal Trades Training Board for the Shuswap Nation in conjunction with the Secwepemc Educational Institute promotes apprenticeship training to its 17 Native Bands. The Board also delivers programs of instruction in conjunction with UCC, adult basic education level courses and a Journeyman upgrade course. Information packages and curricula have also been developed.

Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA) Program: Allows high school students to spend part of their school time in the workplace as registered apprentice in one of the designated trades. Students receive credits toward their high school diploma and their apprenticeship. At the current time 54 of 75 School Districts are participating in Secondary School Apprenticeship. There are 302 registered apprentices of which 219 are indentured to employers and 29 are female. Most female apprentices are indentured in cooking or hairdressing and only two percent of all registered apprenticeships in other trades are female. There are no equity initiatives in SSA.

Secondary School Apprenticeship Bursary Program: Provides a \$1000 bursary to SSA students that are indentured, work a minimum of 960 hours, maintain a minimum of a C+ average and are continuing on in the trades. Currently this bursary is cost shared on a 50:50 basis with the federal government.

Highway Projects: A labour model used for the Island Highway Project that encourages the hiring of equity group members. This model was adopted for all highway projects over \$50 million by the Ministry of Transportation and Highways.

HOMES BC: The BCHMC Apprenticeship Program initiative was to maximize apprenticeship training on HOMES BC sites while stimulating employers to hire 24 prospective apprentices from under-represented groups.

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

This paper has reviewed a number of equity in apprenticeship publications; briefly described the inherent challenges in accessing the apprenticeship system; outlined the general and specific barriers that exist for equity groups; and described the range of policy and program initiatives which have been undertaken in BC to promote the participation of equity group members in apprenticeship. There remain many questions to answer to work toward resolving the issues associated with increasing the participation of under-represented groups in industry and apprenticeship training.

The following is a sample of the types of questions that could be asked of Commissioner and other key contacts:

Why is it that so little substantive progress has been made increasing the representation of equity group members in apprenticeship?

What are the barriers to data collection? Do you have a sense of readiness or willingness by the stakeholders to collect and individuals to provide the requisite data?

What are reasonable targets to set for increasing the participation of under-represented groups in industry and apprenticeship training?

With respect to the budget, is there willingness to allocate a specific amount to equity focused initiatives?



What are your views on opening the doors to more apprenticeable trades? Would there be support for targeting new occupations to under-represented groups?

This paper is a starting point, meant to provide a common baseline of information for Commission members and the Interim Standing Committee on Under-Represented Groups before they proceed with identifying issues and goals to be reflected in the Commission's strategic planning session in October. Also, a soon to be hired Advisor, Under-Represented Groups will play an important role in the strategic planning process involving under-represented groups.

*Document source: Overview of Equity in Apprenticeship, Draft 2 - September 25, 1997*

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