

Final Project Report
Responding to the formation of the new Industrial Training and Apprenticeship
Commission Legislation and training negotiations.

Kootenay WITT
October 1997

PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

The funding for the ITAC and Designated Group Policy project began on May 9, 1997, three months after the actual work on this issue was undertaken. The purpose of the project was to Promote the inclusion of equity initiatives in the ITAC legislation/Commission and related training negotiations. This was to be done by informing women and women's organizations and involving those who expressed a concern to develop and implement strategies for addressing those issues.

1. Project Activities

- Identify women's groups and individuals around the province who have an interest in women's employment and training issues, particularly those that focus on issues of women in trades and technology, industry training or apprenticeship.

We developed a list of 270 organizations using WETC, WITT, Kootenay WITT and Kootenay WETC mailing lists.

- Through a written report and follow-up meetings (telephone or in-person), inform these women and groups about the Industry Training and Apprenticeship legislation/commission and related training negotiations and the potential impact of each of these on women.

Immediately upon commencement of the Speak Up and Speak Out project, approximately 278 packages were mailed out to WETC's larger provincial mailing list, Kootenay WETC, WITT's mailing list and the Women's Ad Hoc Committee on the Columbia Basin Trust. The packages contained copies of the Minister's Committee on Governance Report, copies of some of the correspondence to date, and a letter on WETC letterhead describing the issues and suggesting that people respond with their concerns. As well, a date was set for a meeting in Vancouver, and though funds were limited, a request to let us know if there was interest in attending. Feedback and reinforcement of the need for changing the legislation before it went forward was received, and travel, accommodation and meeting spaces were arranged.

- From interested women and women's organizations, identify representatives from across the province to attend strategy and working group meeting(s). Provide financial support for travel and accommodation, as necessary to facilitate their participation;

Dates were set for meetings in Vancouver, and though funds were limited, a request to let us know if there was interest in attending. Feedback and reinforcement of the need for changing the legislation before it went forward was received, and travel, accommodation and meeting spaces were arranged.

- Organize and facilitate provincial strategy and/or working group meeting(s) to:

develop strategies for addressing women's concerns about this legislation
review the legislation, identify desirable changes and agree to minimum acceptable outcomes
initiate a group letter writing campaign
identify needed reports or briefs and confirm how they will be produced
develop a plan for contacting politicians and ministers
establish a plan for communication among women working on the issues
establish a plan for follow-up, monitoring, evaluation and revision of strategies as required

Strategic Planning meetings took place by conference call and face-to-face with WETC, and with individual members of WITT both in-person and on the phone. At those meetings, it was decided to nominate me as an interim ITAC Commissioner while we took the time to go through a more democratic nomination process for the long term. We decided to move forward on four issues with the ITAC process:

- 1) There is no mention of equity in the mandate and responsibilities of this commission, responsible for entry level training, apprenticeship and industrial training.
- 2) There is no equity representation specified, nor is there specification for representation from groups advocating for equity group issues. (The only mention of equity in the document came after my initial letters to the Ministers)
- 3) There is no Equity Committee mentioned in the standing and ad hoc committees. (There has been a Standing Committee on Equity that has made a number of recommendations that were passed by the Provincial Apprenticeship Board, and have still, several years later, never been acted upon.)
- 4) There is a need to incorporate the Designated Group Policy in both Federal and Provincial training policies and practices, and the Federal/Provincial Training Agreement seems like a good place to start.

It was decided that I would maintain the lead, but that each group or individual would write to the governments urging them to move on the issues we have identified, and that we would keep each other informed about the progress being made and the responses received. We would proceed as needed to make sure the changes we wanted were incorporated.

➔ Co-ordinate implementation of the strategies developed in the provincial meeting(s).

Correspondence was received from the Deputy Minister of Labour that indicated the need to influence the process rather quickly. The letter, addressed to Journeywomen Ventures Ltd, (the position from which I sit on the PAB), that the "Minister's Committee" discussed the issue of equity representation at some length" and decided against equity advocacy representation, and to "compel key partners to appoint representatives that reflect the demographic face and address equity as key objectives of the commission". I responded strongly and clearly, as an advocate from Kootenay WITT, "twelve white men and one white woman discussing the issue of equity representation at some length' does not leave me with a good deal of confidence in your process"; that there was nothing about equity in the Mandate, and leaving it in the hands of business, labour, education and government to consult would result in a continued status quo.

A copy of both letters, as well as other correspondence was sent to the Premier, with a request that

he assist in resolving the problem.

Strategy sessions were also held at WETC's June 18th meeting by speakerphone; June 21st at Douglas College in New Westminster with 11 women present from around the province (others wanted to be there but couldn't on that date); and June 27th with WEAC. These were both information and strategy sessions, with the details of activities discussed and confirmed and outlined in our minutes. The subjects were ITAC, the Designated Group Policy, and the Federal/Provincial Training Agreement. Very specific strategies around initiatives ITAC could be undertaking were discussed at the same time as framing the process to move these issues forward. Additional to that were specifics such as WITT exploratory courses, and the 51 recommendations from the PAB Equity Committee that had received so little action from the Ministry, and the potential for collaboration around the Fed/Prov Agreement.

Information was shared and ongoing priorities and strategies were developed to move us forward from what we had already achieved. (See Minutes). Almost all those at the meetings took it upon themselves to write letters in aid of this.. In the weeks following, individually written letters went out, documenting the participants concerns in their own words.

- ➔ Evaluate the effectiveness of strategies, and adapt strategies and approaches as needed.

Letters also went to Ministers Cashore and Ramsey from a number of Task Force members. When it became clear that the tabling of the legislation was imminent, and that no changes had yet been made, we involved the Press (who produced a superb article, clearly documenting the concerns), met with local supportive MLAs, and sent a strong message to Minister Ramsey that what was going on was not OK. (We had given up on Minister Cashore because his Deputy Minister had strongly stated that it was too late to do anything about the legislation.) This resulted in excellent action on Minister Ramsey's part, setting up a briefing meeting with his MA, who then acted to bring all the government players (Ministers and Bureaucrats) to the same table to negotiate on the issues we had identified.

Lionel Yipp (Ramsey's MA) called one week later with the news that Women's Equality had, that afternoon, been at the table with Labour and MOEST at the Minister and DM level, and they had "resolved most of the issues WITT had identified." "Can I see it in writing?" I asked. "Well, you didn't get absolutely everything you asked for...but...." It was a mark of his good character that he had called, that he had worked to bring that meeting to pass, and that they had achieved as much as they did:

- ✓ increasing the participation of underrepresented groups in designated trades and designated occupations - built into the Mandate of the Commission
- ✓ appointments of business, labour and education would reflect designated group members but no seat for equity advocacy except a government seat for the Ministry of Women's Equality

Lionel suggested that it would require:

- ✓ include measurable goals and objectives for the Commission respecting under-represented groups and diversity
- ✓ be held accountable through an annual reporting process that will have budgeting

consequences.

(These last two points have since been confirmed in letters from the Premier, Minister Ramsey and Minister Cashore. See enclosed)

The Legislation was tabled with equity as part of the Mandate on June 23, 1997.

At his request, I met with the newly appointed CEO of ITAC, and provided a briefing on all of the elements the women had identified in their strategy sessions that needed the attention of ITAC. Part of the briefing I gave him included the Elizabeth Carriere material that was part of the 51 Equity in Apprenticeship recommendations, and a description of the important role that she played. I had already discussed with Lionel the role Elizabeth Carriere had played as Equity Advisor and was grateful that consideration was being given to this position. He indicated that he was interested in hiring an interim Equity Advisor to assist the Commission to get a good start on the issue. He said that an out-of-service posting would take a long time and they will need an interim person.

→ Maintain contact with women and women's organizations who are participating in the campaign.

See above report. Also, a conference call was held with the Task Force members on August 6th, with representation from Lower Mainland WITT, Interior WITT, Kootenay WITT, South Island WITT, First Nations WETC, WETC, and Okanagan PeopleWorks where people were updated, informed of the Equity Advisor Position, and discussed the Designated Group Policy and Federal Provincial Training Agreement issues. It was decided, because several people were going to be in Vancouver or Victoria on August 18th, that we try to get a meeting with the Bureaucrats who will be moving the issues forward from here, now that the legislation was passed. I agreed to set up separate meetings with Val Mitchell, DM - Women's Equality, who had been named to the Commission as a voting member; Kerry Jothen, CEO - ITAC, and Gail Thomas, Director of Federal/Provincial relations and member of the Co-Management Team working with the Feds on the Training Agreement. We would also ultimately need to speak to a number of the new Commissioners.

People also agreed to send letters to Pierre Pettigrew, Federal Minister of HRD regarding the Designated Group Policy, recognizing that it was EIC policy, and our hope that the policy would be reframed as other policies were being reframed, within the context of the HRDC environment and language, and that we would like confirmation that this was in fact the basis for the "equity principles" in the Fed/Prov Agreement.

We did achieve our meeting on August 18th, with both Kerry Jothen and Valerie Mitchell coming in to meet with us (at a Boardroom provided for the day by MWE) while on their annual leaves. Valerie Mitchell had indicated she was most interested in meeting with us so that she might have the opportunity to bring the issues forward to the Commission in the most constructive manner. She asked for, received and read prior to the meeting, a set of briefing materials on our Task Force, the issues of concern and our suggested avenues of resolution, making our time together most productive.

Kerry Jothen tabled the list of Commissioners and the job description of the Equity Advisor position with the groups and asked for feedback on both the posting, and the method of distribution. We took time at the end of our day to collectively go over the material and make suggestions for

adjustment. While everyone felt that it was a job I could walk into without any learning curve, and a fulfilment of much of the work I had been doing for many years, we decided to get as many good people as possible to send in resumès, to let them know the kind of expertise that exists in the community.

- ➔ Evaluate the effectiveness of the collective process and the extent to which the project achieved the outcomes identified in the application and during the strategy meeting(s).

This project is a textbook example of the need for the Speak Up and Speak Out grants from the Ministry of Women's Equality, who cannot be in all places at all times on all issues. It is also textbook example of the process by which change can take place when being advocated for from outside of government. This is a clear demonstration of the patience, tact and tenacity required to ask for what you want, persist in the face of resistance, not take no for an answer, and conduct a many pronged approach, while continuing to build alliances inside government and with community advocacy organizations and using those to develop the strategies needed to succeed. It is also a good example of community groups working with internal government advisors and bureaucrats, sometimes more successfully than at others.

The collective participation of diverse and dispersed groups worked well, because telephone and written communication were well maintained, and the group had the opportunity to meet together in various configurations face-to-face. Many members of the Task Force acted independently to write articulate letters from their own experience. Participation in meetings with senior level bureaucrats provided role modelling and mentoring activities, and strategic planning practice.

2. Project Outcomes

- ➔ A written summary articulating the strategy developed in the provincial meeting(s) is provided to meeting participants and the Ministry of Women's Equality within 15 days of the meeting(s).

The Ministry has received copies of all minutes and follow up letters that have gone out, documenting strategies, activities and results as they have emerged.

- ➔ Women and women's organizations with an interest in employment and training issues throughout the province are informed of the Industry Training and Apprenticeship legislation/commission and training negotiations and the potential impact on women.

This has been well accomplished, some through their participation after initial information, others only as recipients of full information packages.

A final package has gone out to the larger WITT and WETC mailing lists documenting the elements that have been achieved, and sharing information about the August 18th meetings, the federal/provincial training agreement, including the minutes of the meeting with Gail Thomas, which were amended and approved by her.

- ➔ Women and women's organizations with an interest in employment and training issues throughout the province have an opportunity to participate in the development, implementation and on-going evaluation of strategies for addressing women's concerns about the legislation/commission and training negotiations.

We have had the opportunity to see the results as those strategies were put into practice. The role modelling and mentoring impact may well be felt in the future.

- Women's perspective on the Industry Training and Apprenticeship legislation/commission and training negotiations is articulated to decision makers.

I believe this has been achieved, and the results speak for themselves:

The Industrial Training and Apprenticeship Commission (ITAC) legislation was passed June 23, 1997. #4 out of 12 items in the Mandate of the Commission reads "to increase the proportion of members of under-represented groups in designated trades and designated occupations." While we did not achieve everything we were asking for, I do believe that judging from the Premier's letter to me and the letter Minister Paul Ramsey sent to Cathie Cookson we can consider the work that we have done here a success.

The 24 Commissioners have been appointed, and they are approximately half women. It is not yet clear what the representation is of other designated groups. An equity standing committee has been established, with Commissioners Susan Witter, President of Douglas College, and Val Mitchell, Deputy Minister of Women's Equality as Co-Chairs. An interim Equity Advisor position, has been established and is in the final stages of being filled, while the Commission engages in developing an out-of-service posting for a permanent position. Both Ministers responsible (Cashore [Labour] and Ramsey [Education, Skills and Training]) and the Premier have stated that measurable goals and objectives must be set, a monitoring process put in place and that the Commission will be held accountable in an annual reporting process.

As well, on August 18th, six members of the Task Force met separately with Valerie Mitchell, Kerry Jothen and Gail Thomas (Director of Fed/Prov Relations for MOEST), to brief them on our concerns, exchange information, and set things in motion to address our concerns re: equity activities of the Commission and the Designated Group Policy implementation.

The WITT and WETC women around the table were extremely effective in framing the issues.

In order to accommodate this meeting, the three sets of contracts had to be rewritten and re-signed twice, going to Victoria for approval, to enable moving \$1200 around to different categories in the \$10,000 budget, and extend the deadline for the projects end beyond August 15th, a date set when the tabling of the legislation was imminent last April. This was a cumbersome process for a very small amount of money being spent on a project where flexibility in responding to emergent situations is a key.

I also received a call in early September from Susan Witter, ITAC Commissioner and President of Douglas College, saying that she had been appointed co-chair, with Valerie Mitchell, of the Equity Committee, and asking for a briefing on the issues. As it seemed self-defeating to say that our funding ran out on August 30th, I photocopied a great deal of material for her and phoned her to follow up with her questions. Briefing packages were also sent out to 4 other Commissioners.

- Women and women's organizations interested in employment and training issues have plans for ongoing communication and post-project follow-up on activities related to the Industry Training and

Apprenticeship legislation/ commission and training negotiations.

Briefing materials were sent to a number of the ITAC Commissioners after the end date of the project. The fact is that this project was labour intensive, with the project coordinator (myself) putting in 1/2 to 3/4 time for 5 months for \$3600 in total, an unacceptably low wage. This precluded spending any time planning for ongoing or post-project activities for women and women's organizations. This would need to be undertaken within the context of an additional contract with more money.

- A final report which documents the project activity, includes copies of written reports, evaluates the process for collective participation and the project's success in meeting specified outcomes.

I believe we have proven, throughout the life of this project, (whether it fell within the framework of the time allotted by the granting process of MWE) that with incredible tenacity and perseverance, women can have an impact on the outcomes of policy decisions and legislation. As well, in the process, they can, with grace and candour, demonstrate the propriety and necessity of including a feminist analysis prepared by those who are affected by the potential changes. I feel strongly that we have provided a service to the government that will be felt for years to come. I appreciate that the government chose to listen, though, I regret, not to everything. I still strongly believe that even though it is in the Mandate in the legislation, and there is currently the political will to have a standing committee on equity to fulfill that mandate, the fact that equity advocacy groups were not given a place at the table leaves us vulnerable to the whims of the political masters of the moment.

Two final reports have been written and submitted. Recommendations follow:

Recommendations:

- ✓ I would strongly recommend that the Speak Up and Speak Out program be increased, that the amount of money available to do the work be increased, and that the red tape be modified to accommodate the flexibility needed to be successful without undue hardship on the sponsoring organization, often organizations without core funding who do very important education and advocacy work in communities.
- ✓ I would also strongly suggest that the amount of detail required both in the initial proposal and in the reporting requirements are onerous and far too stringent for the small amount of money that is being distributed. It took several revisions of the initial proposal (time that was desperately needed to respond to the problems being created by the issue at hand) to satisfy the detail of activities being required while at the same time trying to leave some flexibility to respond effectively to moving targets which required immediate changes in strategies and activities, flexibility that was difficult to obtain within the confines of a project that was supposed to be dealing with "emergent issues". This is a most needed fund of money,
- ✓ For a project funded to deal with imminent legislation, the inordinate amount of time taken to "fast track" funding approval put the initiative at risk of failure, and severely challenged individuals and an organization with few resources. This is not a great way to treat your fellow humans. Some change is necessary in this needed program so that it may truly assist community organizations to deal effectively with "emergent issues" that are time sensitive.

I have, over the past ten years managed millions of dollars in Federal and Provincial Grants and Contracts, as well as a significant amount of private sector contributions. Never, in all of those grants and contracts was I required to supply this level of detail in either proposals or reports. All this detail for the small amount of \$10,000. It was ineffective and cumbersome. A different system needs to be put in place. This raises even more questions if the Province is going to take responsibility for training contracts in 1998.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Braundy
VP - Kootenay WITT