

# Participating for change

Prepared for:  
WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COALITION

by:  
Priti Shah  
Drishti Consulting Services  
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## ***INTRODUCTION***

What is the Women's Employment and Training Coalition (WETC)?

WETC is a Coalition of individuals and groups in the Lower Mainland and BC involved in women's employment and training issues. Formed in 1985. Membership is open to all women and groups concerned with women's employment and training issues and who support the equality rights of women. Meetings have been held regularly at Douglas college Women's Centre. Recently due to space shortage at Douglas college, WETC will be temporarily housed at YWCA.

In the past members would meet once a month at Douglas College for a meeting. Here members would share information, determine what course of action needs to be taken and plan strategies. In the present times as women's work conditions have changes to meet once a month seems impossible, this concern will be further explored as part of the research project.

## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

### **Project Goals :**

- 1. A Herstory of WETC based on interviews and past reports. A short report and flyer to be produced for future reference and as information and educational tools.**
- 2. Through consultation with community groups, government, institutions, etc. establish the relevance or not of WETC and consider a possible framework for this.**
- 3. Based upon a positive outcome explore and develop an action plan related to the rebuilding of WETC.**

## **PHASE 1: Foundation Work**

### **A. WETC 's Herstory**

Rationale : WETC has advocated for Women's employment and training issues for last 15 years, it is important to document the achievement, failures, struggles and process involving volunteer women from various diverse groups and organization for future reference. This information can be useful to inform and educate others about women's advocacy, organizing and survival without core funding or a legal structure. It will also serve as a marketing tool and for advocacy groups to learn from WETC past work.

Areas covered in the questionnaire will be WETC accomplishments, membership, conception, short term projects and outcomes, personal and professional outcomes for members, solidarity and struggles of women working together, what helped women to participate, motivators and supports, the next century, do we need WETC?, how can we survive and use technology when there are growing demands on women's work and personal lives etc.

The approach used in collecting and documenting this information will be:

1. Developing a questionnaire (see attached) and interviewing 4 to 5 WETC members.
2. Conduct interviews with selected WETC members either over the phone or in person to gather information on the Herstory.
3. Review written material and past reports if available.
4. Review Lucy Anderson's paper on WETC (UBC)
5. Write a short report on WETC Herstory, background and its current purpose.
6. Design a flyer for WETC

**Outcomes:** A document to be used as a educational tool for women's advocacy groups. And a short flyer that can be used to promote WETC and to use for information prior to meetings with community and government groups.

B. Establishing relevance of WETC present goals and issues through consultation with community groups , federal and provincial government etc.

**Rationale:** During the past 15 years, WETC's membership, through its lobbying efforts, has made an impact on policies and programs concerning women's employment and training issues. In the current climate of change and devolution, it appears emerging policies and programs are having a negative impact on the community and women.

**A) Government**

**Approach:**

1. Contact, key Prov. Govt. and federal government officials and various Ministries eg. Multi BC. Women's Equality, MAETT, Employment Investment.
2. Follow up WEAC and find out its present situation.
3. Contact and follow up ITAC
4. Is the Employment Strategy paper part of the current discussion and how can it be used to influence decision making concerning women's employment and training issues.
5. A framework to create a Provincial WEAC, whether it is doable or not.

**Outcomes:**

1. Assess and document the potential for future of WEAC (provincial and federal ).
2. Set up a meeting with HRDC and the Steering Committee if possible.

**B) Community**

**Approach:**

1. Interviewing key organizations, women and grassroots community members to update on the current issues concerning women 's access to employment and training .
2. Consultation with community groups to identify the issues they are facing.
3. Planning and organizing focus group meeting (if required) for establishing current priority issues and plan next steps or strategies.

4. Examine the ways in which a Provincial government would be helpful.
5. What ways' previous reference groups work effectively and what was the problem.

#### **Outcomes:**

1. Document the current concerns in the community.
2. Analyse findings and explore options.
3. Develop a list of potential "allies".
4. Establish relevance of WETC current role and mandate and prioritize current issues of employment and training for women in the present and how to impact them .

#### **Explore funding options**

#### **Final Report and Next steps :**

#### **Phase 2:**

#### **Continuing exploring funding options**

**Establish a new way of doing business for eg. Using technology to meet women's needs around meetings, information etc.**

**Rebuilding WETC (membership drive and visioning the future)**

#### **Phase 3: Transfer of skills to carry on WETC**

#### **HERSTORY "From then to Now"**

**WETC** is an important advocacy organization for women in British Columbia. The organization is almost 15 years old and has evolved from a Lower Mainland organization serving small sector of women's concerns to a provincial structure with new mechanisms to include a greater diversity in women's voices and experience. No written history or evaluation of the organization exists to date, although the work of the organization is evident in the extensive minutes, briefs

and conference reports. The purpose of this her story is to:

- 1 Describe and document briefly Accomplishments of WETC
- 2 Reflect on the efforts and achievements of WETC members
- 3 To better understand the issues for advocacy work in an organization which has no legal status, any funding or a formalized structure yet has survived for the last 13 years.

The report begins with a brief history of WETC including the policy context surrounding its inception in 1985. It is a story and reflection on women's work to create positive change for women's training and employment opportunities.

***Approach:***

Reviewed all WETC minutes, briefs to policy-makers, agendas, funding proposals and information sheets. Five interviews were conducted with women who have played active roles in WETC. They include two community representatives and two from college and University. They were asked to reflect on the positive contributions made by WETC, as well as the limitations of the organization and its advocacy efforts.(With the help of a questionnaire).

This entire section is taken from Lucy Alderson's paper July 1994. it describes WETC's mandate membership and begins with a brief outline of the context for WETC's Inception.

Canada Jobs Strategy: The Context for WETC

WETC was formed at a time when the Conservative federal government began to tie labour market training to its economic strategy (Witter, 1991). The Parliamentary Task Force on Employment Opportunities for the 1980's focussed ten out of its sixteen recommendations on education and training (Selman, 1991, p. 284). Many groups were concerned about this direction. Colleges and vocational institutes believed their role in training was being usurped. Equity groups were worried that programs would focus on critical market shortages and not on essential language training and adult basic education. Labour was concerned that determining training needs was not going to be successful in a shifting economy. Butterwick (1993, p.iii). Women's needs were interpreted within a dominant policy framework which focussed on reducing spending, matching workers to the market and privatizing training programs. Programs for women were developed based upon a "thin" understanding of women's needs — one which focussed on women's lack of training and job experience and ignored the structural inequalities of the labour market and women's different racial and class struggles."

Given these factors, women in many organizations were becoming more vocal about the inappropriate match between employment and training programs and the reality of women's lives.

***The Emergence of Women's Employment & Training Coalition (WETC)***

In 1985, a broad coalition of women's organizations in the Lower Mainland of BC formed the Women's Employment and Training Coalition formed to "present issues and concerns about the training and employment of women" to Flora MacDonald, then Minister of Employment and Immigration. Since that time, WETC has broadened its mandate and also build provincial links with organization.

In the past, WETC proposed five reasons for groups and individuals to get involved with the organization (WETC, 1994):

- X To communicate and build networks with other interested groups and individuals on issues affecting women's employment and training regardless of physical disability, race, class, age, or sexual orientation.
- X To create and support a BC Women's agenda on employment and training.
- X To ensure women receive their fair share of federal and provincial training dollars.
- X To monitor government proposals, policies, and programs and assess their impact on women.
- X To develop strategies in response to public and private proposals, policies, and programs that affect women

Over the years, participants have come from many sources to attend WETC's meetings.. Members have included women's organizations (mainstream, immigrant and visible minority organizations, first Nations employment and training organizations, disabled women's groups, and women's centres), college and university representatives, private trainers, women and trades and technology organizations, union and government representatives. The coalition has represented many different kinds of training delivery, from non-profit to for profit courses.

### ***The Development of Women's Employment Advisory Committee (WEAC)***

One of the first initiatives taken by members of WETC was to build a consultative dialogue with BC and Yukon regional representatives of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC, now renamed Human Resources Development. In 1989, the informal and ad hoc meetings became formalized into the Women's Employment and Advisory Council (WEAC), with regular quarterly meetings and its own Terms of Reference. For WETC, the WEAC represented a direct line to policy and program development. For regional CEIC leadership, WEAC represented a useful opportunity to consult with a broad range of women's groups. The Terms of Reference for the Committee reflect the mutual concerns and interest of the two parties (WEAC, 1986)

During the first five years of WEAC's formal life, WETC members have raised issues about women's trades and technical training, equity targets within program areas, and uneven implementation of programs throughout the region. At WEAC meetings, WETC members have consistently pushed for access to educational opportunities through appropriate bridging programs for women (WETC, 1989— 1994). CEIC has also provided WETC with more in-depth rationale for its policies and information about new program developments.

WEAC has assisted women within the federal government to make change from within their department. One equity coordinator for Human Resources Development noted that WETC's clear and substantiated information made it easier for her to get a voice for women into the policy development process in the regional office (Rasmussen, 1994).

The WEAC discussions have not always provided positive results. The removal of the Women's Employment Counselling Unit in Vancouver and the introduction of the Language Instruction for

Newcomers to Canada (LINC) were both decisions implemented without any consultation with WETC. Subsequent discussions have not produced significant change.

WETC's experience with the WEAC also raised internal questions for the organization. The issue of representation and inclusivity became a concern as WETC reviewed its geographic and interest group diversity. These questions were very much part of the discussions that lead to the province-wide consultation for the development of the BCLFDB.

Many concerns raised by participants in training programs have been brought to WETC meetings where people "process, brainstorm and do something" about these issues

More pressing considerations for WETC have been their geographical representation and their ability to consistently represent the interests of First Nations women, the range of immigrant and visible minority women's concerns, and the experiences of disabled women. The provincial network building project was initiated to deal with this gap in representation.

The closed loop has provided feedback and recommendations to the Human Resource Development department about the limitations of their programs. In addition, background information provided by federal representatives on HRDC programs have assisted women to advocate for the full intent of the program at the local level. For instance, training for women in trades and technology has had a broad implementation history in Canada. Discussions at WEAC and information-sharing through WETC and Women in Trades and Technology have assisted many organizations to provide a range of trades and technical training for women in BC (WETC, 1989 - 1994).

WETC has also had a strong commitment to spreading information to individuals and organizations who do not attend meetings regularly, but are interested in women's employment training issues. The support of the Douglas College Women's Centre has been essential for administrative support.

WETC has also been a forum for sharing information related to program development. Exchanging successful funding proposals and adapting curriculum designs has saved many organizations from "re-inventing the wheel" and expending valuable resources unnecessarily. WETC has developed a successful strategy for recruiting women into trades and technology job training seats which they have shared with other equity groups (WEAC, 1989-1994). This willingness to share work and information reveals a strong philosophical basis towards cooperation and provides an alternative to the competitive nature of privatization within the federal and provincial training environment.

#### **INTERVIEWS:**

##### ***Personal comments of how women got involved:***

"I wanted to know more about Training programs for women especially Bridging programs and met two women who connected me with WETC because they were on the board of Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) which is a national advocacy group. Was useful to tap into the grassroots training programs and government policies?"

"I developed workplace and transition seminars and in 1983, I developed a Women in Trades program at Selkirk College. I was concerned about women's participation in the trades and Technology program, this concern leads me to WETC."

“Through Surrey Delta Immigrant Services I got involved, we (staff) had concerns around eligibility criteria of immigrant women which we lobbied through WETC and got some results.

“My work at Douglas college and CLOW of which I was BC Director made it possible for me to participate at WETC”

“Personally interested in this work as it coincided with what I was doing at the graduate school. From the feminist perspectives women were coming together and working on influencing the policies. Exciting times, energy around the issues and we were recognized groups by the federal and provincial government.”

“I was a client in the program and did not agree to some of the teachings in the program this led me to seek WETC where I received support to change the situation at the implementation level.

“As an immigrant woman I had no voice, I was seeking recognition for the struggles I was going through but the government system seemed too complex and intimidating. I could never have learnt about Canadian politics and the women’s struggles in any better or quicker way, this helped me to integrate in this society.

### ***What motivated women to volunteer their time and keep coming back?***

(In their own words )

- X Even though what I was learning was not directly related to my work. I stayed involved as the work and women involved were very interesting. I realized that organizing for women’s voice at the advocacy level was important.
- X In part guilt, the need for this work being carried on was very critical, the policy makers do what they want but women’s voice has to be carried on. To be involved with women who were passionate about these issues. Met great people through the group.
- X Learnt a great deal about policies and personal and experience at all levels.
- X It played a very significant role in my intellectual and personal development.
- X Issues were related to everyday concerns for the clients, focussed on employment and training. Concerns were addressed.

In retrospect I think it would have been better if we had worked on race issues initially because this would have saved the struggle and pain we faced latter.

### ***Supports needed to attend the meeting:***

Job allowed flexibility and the location was very convenient.

Had access to child Care

Work of WETC was part of my job / mandate

### ***Community Advocacy and networking:***

On going support for Women’s training programs and also provided support, information, networking opportunities to women working in this field.

- X Providing a supportive environment for women to learn and practice advocacy skills.

- X Creating opportunities for women to come together which might not have happened.
- X Influenced the policy making process and the direction it was going.
- X Helped people to focus on specific issues and shifted the criteria for the funding which was provided.
- X We did not change the ideology of funders and policy makers but closed the gap between policy makers and people who did the work eg. LINC
- X Supported women's employees inside the government and advocated for them from outside.
- X Kept members up-to-date on policies and information.
- X Kept government cognitive of the fact that there is other point of view. WETC was able to influence things which got modified for eg. BCTAB we took lead role on having a very grassroots and representative process in selecting a representative for the board.
- X Formed allies in the government and the community.
- X Needs of women were represented in training and the program curriculum etc.

Women participation grew to be more diverse as time went on. Initially WETC was dominated by white working middle class women, slowly others started to participate. WETC's reputation in the community grew.

### ***Time for Change:***

In Mid 1990's women of colour and white women members went through a struggle of sharing equal voice and power . After some extremely difficult discussions and workshops women came to an understanding of respect for each other and managing to work in a more equitable manner. During this process many women who felt they were not heard left WETC at that point. It was difficult for them to work in this environment. We still do not have all the answers but consistently try to share power and voice. This is a evolving way of work but the important elements are to continue respecting each other, listening and operating in a inclusive manner.

WETC's advocacy work did lose momentum and very few members had to take on the work and keep it alive.

### ***Major accomplishments of WETC:***

#### ***WEAC (Women's Employment Advisory Committee):***

In 1985, the informal and ad hoc meeting which had begun with Human Resource Development of Canada (HRDC) continued. Women's Employment Advisory Committee (WEAC) met every three months at the HRDC regional offices. The meetings lasted for 3 hours and prior to that WETC members met for an hour to review the agenda and discuss strategies. A conscious effort was made by WETC members to share equal air time. WEAC represented a direct line to policy and program. And for both organizations involved HRDC, and WEAC represented a useful opportunity to consult and advise on a wide range of women's employment and training concerns and issues.

Recently in September of 1998 WETC was informed by HRDC by a letter that WEAC will be

on hold until further notice. This sudden closure was due to the implications of (Labour Market development Agreement (LMDA) which was still in negotiation. On the other hand WETC had difficulties maintaining communication between members as we had lost the administrative and in kind supports from Douglas college. So when WEAC was kept on hold, WETC members realized that this meant the closure of WETC itself as this was our main link to policy information and advocacy. But WETC did not take no for an answer. Members decided to give it one last try to get WEAC going and we took upon ourselves to have a face to face meeting with Charles Perrin(Regional Director) which led to first consultation meeting of revisiting WEAC's role in the current times. After some advocacy work and two meetings, we convinced HRDC, the importance of keeping WEAC alive. Collaboration was sought to broaden the mandate of the present WEAC and continue its role of advocacy. Provincial Representatives and Status of Women will be members of WEAC.

Till further development we will have a co-federal /provincial WEAC Model.

### ***British Columbia Labour Force Development Board (BCLFDB):***

WETC led the way to establish a equitable and fair process to select the representatives for all the designated groups on the BCLFDB. It also organized a provincial consultation and selection process to select the women's representative for the Board.(Please refer to Lucy Alderson's paper for more details)

Advocated to establish National Training Standards in collaboration with Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB).

### ***Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission: (ITAC)***

WETC organized a provincial campaign which resulted in legislation being passed to increase the representation of under represented groups in designated trades' occupations within the mandate of ITAC. (See attached letters to the Ministers)

### ***Language Instructions for Newcomers(LINC ):***

Raised the concern and changed the profile of this policy at National level. Some of the eligibility criteria and other issues were addressed.

### ***Building a Provincial Coalition:***

- X Developed a Provincial Women's Employment and Training Coalition
- X Produced a BC Women's Agenda on Training
- X Build links with aboriginal, disabled, and women of colour groups.
- X The outcome being that Aboriginal women established their own WETC .
- X Women of Colour decided to continue working with WETC.

### ***Coalition for Principals of Equity Consultation(CPEC)***

A process was established to form a community consultation inclusive of equity groups and lower mainland HRCC's

Developed recommendations regarding the process and community's requirements for participation in an informed community consultation.

Produced a "How to Manual" that promote workable representation of community groups and details the formation and on-going maintenance of the community consultation committee.

### ***Federal Advisory Committee***

In 1986, legislation for employment equity was put in place. And a order of council was placed to legislate the legislation, WEAC challenged the government at an equal level of power and Designated Group Policy (DGP) was seconded . The policy was there but no training was given to staff to implement it. Dorothy Riddele was hired to evaluate the policy.

### ***Reasons for women to stop participating at WETC:***

- X Advocacy work did not produce concrete results. It was difficult to visualize or measure change. Even paid work had similar process and outcomes which made it hard to volunteer where any measurable outcomes were not felt.
- X Most of the work is hard to measure and so could not see tangible products and this was difficult, as members wanted to see direct results of the hard work they had put in.
- X Struggles around who we represented ? race and class issues.
- X Administrative support and a paid individual is required to coordinate the membership meetings and Mallotus.
- X Mechanisms in place to invite new women to participate and carry on. At times in the end felt we were not meeting a need because women were not coming. Remaining members did not have time to reflect on issues and carry on the daily advocacy work at the same time.
- X Fear of becoming insular, not letting that happen and concentrating on the advocacy issues.

### ***Personal leanings:***

- X Learnt about working with women and diverse women through experience so have gained knowledge and respect for different perspectives. I am aware of my privilege and want to make the most of it so I can contribute in making the community a better place.
- X Gave a sisterhood connection to others who were looking at similar issues and faced challenges which I could not find living in the rural community. "I am an advocate, it gave me a forum in which to advocate with people who were colleagues." It broadened my social cultural views, gave me a place to practice what my belief system says is appropriate, to work with diverse women which ultimately both prepared me and allowed one to return to work more effectively as a National Women in Trades and Technology (WITT) coordinator.
- X Personal issues of Surrey Delta Immigrant Services (SDIS) in Surrey were addressed at WEAC, empowerment to go and advocate at WEAC, to the correct information and lobby effectively for change at the local HRCC level.
- X Seeing dynamics between cultures and how different level of understanding raises conflicts.

### ***Professional Learning:***

In lives of women who have participated in WEAC and WETC, it has provided a supportive atmosphere for women to learn and use advocacy skills. The other natural outcome of this work has been leadership skills, public speaking skills, learning to be change agents, preparing briefs, gathering information and research, networking, sense of self satisfaction, thinking innovative ways to create change and working in teams. This has helped women to develop vast experience and a through knowledge of the political systems.

At a macro level it gave each women a voice and base to speak on. To work at provincial and national level for creating opportunities for women. Women went on to make impact on the policies from a place of working with grass roots.

Some examples of Individual women success stories:

1. Three women were chosen from BC to sit on a National Task Force for CLOW
2. Two women were selected to participate on the National Women's Reference Group.
3. One women was selected to participate on the national LINC policy Task Force.
4. One member went on to become the National Coordinator for WITT
5. One member went on to become President of Community College.
6. One member was selected to represent education and community based training on British Columbia Labour Force Development Board.

Women went to higher positions and better parties to make an impact on policy. One of the key elements of success was that women had access to information.

### ***WETC future:***

1. Need advocacy voice but not in the same way. Need to advocate in the current areas of devolution of training from feds to province, who gets access? How and what programs are designed?. Research the current issues in the community.
2. There is a need for women to take action around issues of welfare, educational opportunity, poverty, changes to immigration ? Women's programs are eroded. Designated Group Policy does not exist anymore. Provincial government needs to be lobbied.
3. Other reality is women's working life has changed. Insecurity of work, more demands on time and less pay. So the old way of working, and meeting once a month is not possible.
4. In the past middle class white women worked in their familiar way , the old structure and style of working might have to change as the women have changed. In the current times, in most groups and collectives the white women are abandoning and leaving the women of colour to do the work without any resources.
5. Need to recruit new membership.
6. Issue of Federal and Provincial(WEAC) and what happens next ?
7. Need new structure and electronics communication network, to ensure access to all women.
8. WETC needs core funding to continue doing advocacy work.

There is a concern around WETC future because there is anti-feminist backlash, period of time where women are coming to power positions with no real understanding for ground work on which they are standing. Background of anti-feminist thought needs some re-education of gender-based analysis of work they are doing, rationale for women's only programming at the introductory level.

Using the DGP as the tombstone, we may change, persist or resist. There is a real resistance around doing any work and education inside the EI legislation (HRDC). WETC and WEAC have been working persistently, we do not want DGP to die because it might get included in the Federal/Provincial negotiations policy.

"Principles of equity will be respected" It is a Morpheus, it gives us a place to stand and demand accountability. We need a forum for women to come together, not just to talk about it but to take issues at a higher level of bureaucracy. Government needs to learn how to walk the talk. They should be supporting and paying community groups for consultation and advocacy.

### ***Suggestions for new structure for WETC:***

- X Can advocacy be done electronically, the 3 hour meetings face to face is not working?
- X Coordination of different ways of meeting like using the conference call , access through the telephone, need core funding for a paid structure, for a short time.
- X WETC cannot stay just a lobbying group, it needs to get some funding or be a information resource centre which can sustain the lobby work. A place where there is regularity and where more women can participate.

### ***Recommendations for WETC Role in the future:***

Would like to see visible profile for WETC? Even though the work done through WEAC and WETC has been felt at the agency level.

WETC should continue, there is a real need to do more lobby work.

More research on the changing needs which women are going through.

### ***Direct and indirect benefits from WETC / WEAC advocacy work:***

It helps to educate the frontline staff about the advocacy and policy work as well as helps to inform senior level policy makers about client concerns.

Advocacy for clients is interwoven in our everyday programs, access , eligibility criteria etc.

ITAC would benefit in future from WETC work and can work in partnership in future.

### ***Communication and meeting strategies:***

Need to meet face to face , maybe have discussions circle 4 times a year.

Work alternately on conference calls and through web site.

Use Email for distributing minutes and information

Coordination and distribution of information

Use web sites for updates and news flash on policies and issues.

### ***Conclusion:***

WETC has demonstrated that in past without any core funding it has achieved some unmeasurable results through the efforts of women's volunteer time and commitment. In the current times when work lives have become so demanding, WETC has to learn to survive with less resources and volunteer time. Which means using the electronic media to continue its much needed work.

If the government realizes the value of WETC's role and the meaningful contribution it makes, it would provide basic funding for its sustenance. As Douglas college cannot provide this support any longer.

The next critical step for this project is to hold a forum with all the women and organizations that participated in this research. And finalize WETC future role, new working committee and new structure of communication. This forum will determine WETC and WEAC continuity and existence.

## **COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

### ***The Role of Steering Committee Members:***

From the inception of the project to the conclusion, the members were involved in meeting either via teleconference call or face to face to discuss project priorities .

Initially when the project started, one of the goals was to find out the status of the paper "Women's Employment Strategy" Options for Initiatives. But in our discussion we found that the critical issues we were hearing in the community were a backlash of the E I Legislation and the impact of the LMDA agreement . This agreement had become a obstacle and its implication a concern in itself. WEAC had been struggling with the LMDA agreement for the last few months. In a letter from Regional Director HRDC we were notified that WEAC will not be meeting till further notice. It had been suspended by the federal government. This sudden closure of WEAC as well as the reference in the LMDA agreement referring to "equity principals with respect to the members of under represented groups will be respected in the design and delivery of programs and services," but failing to apply (Gender-based analysis) GBA on the implementation of these services and programs. These concerns and events led us to focus the research on the above-mentioned goals. This was ironic as WEAC, Status of Women GBA document and National Women's reference group had information and resources that could have benefited the LMDA agreement.

### ***Methodology:***

Right from its inception it has been a participatory and action research project . The project started slow as community groups though interested did not have time to participate because they were struggling with major issues like funding cutbacks, staff change, burnout etc. As information started spreading and project picked up momentum . Individual staff and agencies realized that the WETC's lobbying work will strengthen their own lobbying efforts around issues of access for women in the current climate and LMDA agreement . This sparked keen interest.

When I approached the staff in various agencies there was a wide gap in understanding LMDA agreement. Few had no knowledge and the others were very up-to-date on the implementation and its consequences.

One of the key outcomes for this project was to document the current issues concerning women's access to employment and training. The approach used to determine the objective was to interview key organizations, grassroots community members and women in the government-funded training and employment programs.

Various methods were used to conduct the research:

- X A questionnaire was developed to use in the face to face and over the phone interviews.
- X Interviews via teleconference calls to groups of individual representing the government.
- X Finding out other relevant research documents that have been done.
- X For including regional issues and concerns 8 Women's Centre's were contacted.(see appendix)

Similarly when I met clients and women in a focus group setting, education became a big part of the focus group objectives. I learnt a lot in addition to what I went out to study.

The following points were used to communicate with the women and have them participate in the research.

1. Engaging women to participate in the research and helping them to understand their rights, information and asking questions leading them to the subject, and getting them to think in a different way.
2. Advocacy was a difficult term to explain especially for women with English as a second language. As the language diversity was vast, I used different examples in simple English to explain the terms.
3. Communicating concepts with relevant examples that relate to women's daily life, this helped to engage them more in the subject.
4. Present information that is of benefit to them at that moment. For eg. Who to talk to for their financial problems, negotiating with the financial Aid worker, and if they are convinced about their decision, asking questions is their right.
5. Helping them to understand and obtain information on their rights as citizens and/or landed immigrants.

As the process moved on, the women realized that they live with these struggles every day and

the anger or discrimination they occasionally felt was justified and they could use this energy to do something concrete and they became more interested in coming to a WETC final forum.

Some women want to come to the forum but everyday reality, make participation really difficult. One of the outcomes of the focus group that always fascinated me was there were usually 2 to 3 women in any groups who were born advocates. They understood the policies and how they played out in the grassroots community. They knew they were marginalised and also knew the historical oppression and politics behind it. And their response was simple until racism and oppression of the poor does not become a priority nothing can change. Their conviction and confidence of their reality were astounding and the motivation to make a change in their personal lives. The other process that occurred was the bringing individual to consciousness in a socio political context.

## ***COMMUNITY:***

### ***Contextual overviews:***

As free access to training is eliminated due to the reduced eligibility for both federal employment insurance and provincial income assistance, one of the most critical issues in the community at the current time is ACCESS which directly affects poor women.

### ***Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA):***

There has been gradual devolution of responsibility for training from the federal government to the provinces since 1996. Many women are caught without access to training opportunities in this shuffle while shifting the responsibility from one level of government too other.

### ***Changes to (Employment Insurance) EI Legislation:***

The EI Act replaced the UI Act in 1996 which reduced eligibility for training for women. As funding opportunities available for community-based training for women dropped dramatically, more and more training became privatized. These have dramatic effect on women's access to employment equity.

The federal policy only protects the individuals that work full time, they are eligible for training. Women with no skills, or skills that are not recognized in the labour market, end up doing illegal work in unsafe working environment. 35% women who never had a job continue being in a ghettoised situation. There is increased no of single women living in poverty Financial contribution being a requirement, or contribution in kind, has a severe impact on women living in poverty who cannot imagine them taking on a level of debt that is required to access training. Women live on savings, have no access to training, a huge sector of women falls in this situation.

Poor Women have been out of work so long that they need to have resources and supports to be successful.

In a recent study based on Statistics Canada figures, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) reports that 70 percent of unemployed women were covered by government insurance in 1989, but only 31 percent were covered in 1997.

There is reality in the community that only the privileged can access better employment and training opportunities. Or people who can get a loan, child care, transportation, speaks English are in a situation to get training but the less privileged fall through the cracks.

### ***Profiles of Community Agencies who participated in the research:***

Immigrant Services Society (ISS), Mosaic, SUCCESS, Surrey Delta Immigrant Services . These agencies are non profit, community-based agencies. Established a quarter century ago, each provides the full range of settlement, integration and employment training services for immigrants and refugees.

YWCA Focus, Crabtree, Aware are non profit agencies which provide services in the area of Job search and employment. These services are designed for Women.

( some phone interviews were also conducted)

### ***Profiles of Individuals:***

The individuals interviewed in the community are women who have delivered training and employment programs for last 6 to 15 years. They have worked as Employment Counsellors, Coordinators, Managers, Directors and Advocates. The individuals interviewed have a vast and thorough knowledge of their clientele needs, language, cultural and systematic barriers they face.

Due to their vast experience working in this field they also have the history of social policy and programming background. This helps them to understand the current climate and its impact on the clients. These women have also had experience directly or indirectly working with WETC's advocacy work. As part of the agency, staff has attended WETC at different times .Most of the times to get information, advocate on some certain issues pertaining to the agency/client.

### ***The Profile of Clients in different programs:***

Most of the clients have been women who are either on Social Assistance or EI . Some of them have vast experience and skills from their past. Especially immigrant women had prior experience as professionals and yet had to start from the very bottom of the most entry level jobs, there are no laddering systems for language upgrading or professional and technical upgrading. Women raised the following barriers which they were facing with workers and program policies:

- X Women need better financial assistance as what they are receiving is not enough to pay for child care, living, and school expenses.
- X Getting information was difficult and understanding it was complex. Most workers do not have time to answer their questions.

- X If you take a loan you were cut off from assistance and this issue had played out differently with different women clients and their level of assertiveness.
- X You did not receive any training or upgrading till you had your landed immigrant papers in hand.
- X You had to be 10 months on assistance before you can be eligible for training or upgrading. This wait led to depression, isolation and other long term consequence.
- X It seemed if you were poor you were further penalized and had to pay your way to school. Whether you choose upgrading or not you still remained financially in a condition of poverty.

***Profiles of Regional Women Centres:***

Eight Women's Centre's were contacted via phone and email to hear about their programs and initiative in the area of Women's access to employment and training. The centre's were very diverse in their services, they delivered services in the area of literacy, employment, violence, youth and school age programs, economic development initiatives, senior women, social programs and advocacy work.

These are the Centre's which are currently involved in projects which are related to employment equity:

1. West Kootenay Women's Association, is involved in a project "The Columbia Basin Hydro" which represents a significant economic development opportunity in the region. As well as major opportunities for trades and technical employment. They are also advocating for a long term Employment Equity Coordinator position within the Columbia power Corporation.
2. Howesound Women Centre is involved in doing a research project called "Women LED" Leadership, literacy and Economic development. The goal of the project is to find out information which leads to delivering Women cooperative programs.
3. Penticton & Area's Women Centre has conducted a project on the Labour Market Development Agreement. And has presented their concerns to the Hon. Pierre. S. Pettigrew (Minister of human Resources).
4. Sunshine Coast Women Centre, lost all of the funding for the employment programs and now are delivering programs via a private organization.

***They raised the following critical concerns:***

- X Most urban policy makers and committees do not hear rural issues.
- X Their issues range from lack of public transportation to few employment and educational opportunities available in the regions.
- X Women targeted programs are no longer existing.
- X Trades and technical training programs are disappearing as they are not supported and found to be expensive.
- X No regional community consultation about the LMDA.

***Women Unemployed and not on any assistance:***

Unemployed or underemployed women have no access to education or training. Previously Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) funds allowed opportunity to get out of this ghettoised situation But in the current economy where there is a high demand for skilled workers. These women who have been discouraged and marginalised for so long, do not have the ability to access further training without financial supports.

To determine the issues women are facing in the community focus groups were organized in four agencies. And the participants in the focus group meeting were clients from the following program  
(Appendix; Focus group questionnaires).

Immigrant Services Society: Stepping Up Program for Women

Program Length and type : 20 weeks. Preemployment program for immigrant women who are survivors of abuse.

Number of Women: 12 women were present

YWCA Focus

Program Length and type: 5 weeks program and additional 5 weeks added for single mothers.  
Number of women and type of program: 8 women were present and it was a Job search program funded by federal government.

SUCCESS: Staff of various Employment and Training programs, Counsellors, Coordinators etc.  
No. of Staff: 16 men and women.

AD HOC WOMEN'S GROUP: 10 women

**The following issues concerning women were raised in the focus groups and face to face interviews.**

***Issues concerning policies and programs:***

- X Programs for women were cut back about 4 years ago and time and time again it has been proved that these programs eventually help women to get back to decent paying work.
- X Long term, skill-based programs have been eroded.
- X To assist women and single mothers to become self sufficient.
- X Workplaces are not supportive of child care costs.
- X Sexual harassment is a major concern at the workplace.
- X Concerned about issues of early years of socialization of girls, more preventative and educational work needs to be done. Decline in the % of female apprenticeship is due to misconceptions, like to improve the numbers. At present it is 6% . Information should be accessible and provided to all who need it. Immigrants should be able to access information.
- X Literacy issues especially for English as a second language not given priority.

- X First Nations women have high rate of literacy and poverty. One of the reasons is in 1960 women in grade 8 dropped out of school as they lost their status, and could not return to school. The other issues are discrimination, addiction etc.

***Issues impacting clients:***

- X Workers in the provincial offices do not treat First nations and racially different women with respect.
- X Lack of support for transportation and day care.
- X Increased financial debts for clients.
- X Lack of good quality child care at reasonable rates. Infant toddler care is not available.
- X Affordable housing as 56% of dispensable income goes in the rent.
- X Employment and jobs are in high skilled sectors, and clients do not have access to this training.
- X Lack of recognition by employers and professional bodies to recognize prior experience and education.
- X EI is redistributing income from marginal part-time workers to full time workers between jobs.

***Issues impacting non profit agencies:***

- X More coordinated efforts should be put in the internal and external referrals.
- X Agency Staffs have a vast knowledge and experience of clients background and barriers they face . That knowledge and expertise will be a loss to the community and government.
- X Staff and clients undergoing stress and mental health issues.
- X Lack of follow-up with clients. Group work format is available for counselling, so individuals who need one to one service, do not have access and do not do well in a group situation.
- X The administrative and documentation process to get into training is very extensive.
- X Emphasis on short-term quick fix planning which saves dollars for the government and is viewed as performance measure.
- X Lack of recognition of foreign credentials and prior leanings, no coordinated services are available in this area.
- X The approval process to go through the government hoops have increased the processing time for clients to get into the training programs by 8 to12 weeks. For eg. If 35 clients are referred to TAC (assessment body) on an average only 3 were approved over a couple of months of wait. This is an average example for most agencies these days. There is a great time and effort spent by the agencies to select the right clients yet the government worker only partially accepts about 2% of the clients.
- X The government-funding no more covers the cost of transportation, food, so some agencies get food vouchers from Health Canada or agencies like YWCA will provide their own.
- X Cutbacks on agencies have been so intensive for eg. From 19 Employment and Training programs only 4 have been left.

***Marginalised and Unrecognized Sectors***

***Critical Issues affecting domestic and migrant workers:***

(A high percentage are Filipino women) (This information is taken from the report “The Filipino - Canadian Women’s National Consultative Forum” Towards Filipino Women’s Equality.)

Though these women have contributed much to the Canadian economy, they remain on the fringes of the Canadian society, taking jobs that others are not willing to take. The Canadian government acknowledges that these women are one of the most highly educated of all immigrant groups, but remains one of the lowest paid. Though most of these thousands of women are professionals, the anti woman and racist “Live in Caregiver Program (LCP)” of the federal government recruits them as temporary contract workers. Their contract requires that they live and work for 24 months within a 3-year period within their employers homes. They are the only workers in Canada forced to do so. This live in requirements provides the structural context for their vulnerability as foreigners and women. They are forced to pay the 975\$ head tax and other immigration fees, yet are not even recognized as a “worker” under employment standards law. There is also an increase in trafficking Filipino women into Canada through the “mail order brides” (MOB). Often trapped in isolated areas these women are susceptible to extreme form of physical and emotional abuse.

***Critical issues affecting pieceworkers and industrial garment home workers:***

According to the Industrial Home workers report (1994) 97 % of industrial Garment home and factory machine operators are visible minority women, targeted by employers in low wage work. Majority of these women do piece work from their homes where an average work day is 12 to 16 hours and pay can be as low as \$ 3.00 an hour. Since then there has been growth in the area of home based employment like assembling computer pieces, leather articles etc. This promotes both gender and employment inequity. Neither legislated employment standards nor garment industry standards for conditions of employment and pay was found to apply to this sector of women.

***Collective lobbying efforts to influence and change the policy and its impact on the clients - from the non profit community agencies and associations:***

**Background:**

Agency staffs are lobbying individually and through Association for Service Providers and Employability and Career Training (ASPECT) and (Association of Multicultural Services and AMSAA) to influence changes to the current policies. They have been able to have a dialogue on the table with feds as well as the provincial people at the local level. Agencies have also spent money on doing financial analysis and documentation on the current changes .Advocacy strategies employed by the agencies are data collection and Analytical information to convince the funders and policy makers about the success and need of the programs .

They also lobby through the project officers and the proposals they put forward. Federal government has been supportive in hearing the issues.

***Outcome:***

Collaborating with groups like AMSSA, ASPECT, BCCCA to meet and organize a forum called “Analyzing the impact and Challenging the Assumptions”, A Multi sectoral response to the Operationalization of the EI Legislation. This meeting was very well attended approximately 16 representatives from the following government organization ( HRDC, Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Immigration, MAETT-Skills Division, MAETT- Lower mainland and Fraser Valley regions) and about 17 members from various non profit organizations and associations were at the meeting.

Outcome : The meeting closed by creating an on going mechanism to address the issues. It was agreed that the working group meets to develop terms of reference. It will be important for WETC to have a regular communication with this group.

### ***WETC’s current lobbying strategy in response to the community needs:***

WETC steering committee in the midst of the project decided that it was critical to do a letter campaign to all the relevant Ministers on the impact of EI changes and LMDA in collaboration with ASPECT. A letter was drafted outlining the concerns and mailed to 10 Ministers (Appendix )

and copy of the letter (Appendix ).

Outcome : As per date we have received a reply from Ron Stewart, Director General(labour Market Directorate and Human Resources Investment Branch).

### ***Recommendations: From the client and agency perspectives.***

- X Training has to be more flexible , open , inclusive, include more mentoring for all ages.
- X The rate of success is higher when women can learn in groups that understand their culture, history and needs.
- X Need career exploration programs for women and skill-based training programs?
- X There is no longer a framework available on how you become a private trainer.
- X Gender-based programs should be developed and implemented.
- X Programs for women should be holistic in their approach and counselling, child care, supports should be part of delivery, this is essential to see any positive outcomes.
- X Provide training for individuals who are not employable and need the supports.
- X Share information and data between advocacy groups, agencies and clients.
- X Reporting systems should be simple and less time consuming.
- X Include grassroots communities in the decision making process
- X Form a advocacy group for women at the provincial level.
- X Women who have access to solid support / networks make it to the labour market
- X Programs that are holistic and build on the history of the individuals, culture and spirituality can find the strength to make it to the next steps. And eventually pursue further education or employment.
- X Some of the skill shortages in the Trades and Technology fields should be addressed by providing women training in the required fields.

- X Women Apprentices are paid on the training, these opportunities should be encouraged from the Ministries and Agencies.

***Recommendations for the LMDA agreement and Policy:***

1. Principals of equity are integrated in the LMDA agreement and protected by the national standards so when the full devolution of training from the federal to province happens these principals of equity are not eroded.
2. In the revised delivery and implementation of employment and training programs, accessibility and equality (as defined in the Principals ) are constantly tested and accounted for.
3. A provincial WEAC should be formed to assess all policies and strategies with a gender-based lens. This work should be supported by WETC members, Status of women, Ministry of Women's Equality.

***GOVERNMENT :***

***Background:***

Since April 1997, BC and Canada have had a co-management style Labour Market Development agreement whereby both parties cooperate in the planning, priority setting and design of EI Labour Market Development Programs(referred to as employment benefits and support measures).

The LMDA is a two-phase initiative with co-management being the first phase. The second phase currently being negotiated, could result in the Province having full delivery responsibility for EI labour market programs. This transfer of responsibility includes a transfer of approximately 375 federal staff. The value of a transfer of program resources is approximately \$766M over the next three years. Canada has not confirmed program allocations beyond 2001. Currently six other jurisdictions, including Quebec, have provincial delivery agreements and Ontario is in Provincial delivery negotiations.

A provincial Delivery Agreement would support the development of a coordinated and integrated Provincial Labour Market development system, that meets the needs of unemployed British Columbians, assist communities in transition and supports' Provincial priorities and directions. Human Resources Development Canada will remain the delivery agent for EI programs until an agreement is reached and an implementation date is set.

***Contextual Overview:***

Changes to women's training must be seen in the context of broader socio-economic change . There has already been a net decrease in women eligible for and using training ( from Voices from the Field)

As WETC started to work out a research plan, we found out that the most critical issue in the community affecting women was the LMDA agreement and its effects.

- X Women who are not eligible for EI Benefits or Income Assistance (IA) make up the group that is least likely to have access to employment or training programs.
- X Recent changes to the EI Act have dramatically impacted on women's ability to access

programs and services. The most recent EI Monitoring and Assessment Report (released March 1999) states that the number of women getting EI Benefits has dropped by 20% since 1996. (An interview with Gail Thomas.)

***Profiles of interviewees:***

The Ministries and their department involved in the research project were as follows: Human Resources Centre of Canada (HRCC), Human Resources Development of Canada (HRDC), Minister of Human Resources (MHR), Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT), (Skills division and Policy Service Division). The Ministry of Women's Equality (MWE), Industrial Training and Adjustment Commission (ITAC). Individuals in different positions were contacted and interviewed by phone.

***PROVINCIAL RESPONSE:***

MAETT'S goals (1999-2000 Business Plan) are to;

- \* ensure equitable access to advanced education and training for British Columbians.
- \* enhance the relevance and quality of advanced education and training.
- \* enhance employment opportunities for British Columbians.
- \* encourage flexibility within the advanced education system.
- \* govern the advanced education system and the training system in a responsible and responsive manner.
- \* develop and support Ministry of Human resources.

The Post secondary Education Division has a number of specific initiatives and programs relevant to women's employment and training issues.

Safer Campuses Initiative.  
Improved Access to child Care Initiatives.  
Charting a new Course.

A number of curriculum projects are being carried out including, Inclusive Curriculum, Gender and Diversity Orientation to Trades and Technology and Refitting the Classroom, Working with Diversity.

Other Programs:

Prior Learning Assessment  
Adult Basic Education  
Open University Degrees  
Provincial Learning Network

***Industrial Training Adjustment Commission (ITAC) Current Status:***

- X Working on seamless transition from K to 12 to post secondary entry level trades training, sectoral etc.

- X Interest in forging links between students and trades related occupations.
- X Future opportunities for GETT camps for girls.
- X Encouraging Industry and Community based pilot projects
- X Currently delivering a (Trades Program) Exploratory at North Island College
- X Supporting First nations women's construction project
- X Working on partnering with Federal government and other colleges, NGO
- X Encouraging women to participate in high tech occupations working with PLAR at present, organising National Forum-PLAR '99, continuing to work on projects for immigrants
- X Interested in partnership with WETC in future.
- X Concerned about issues around early stages of socialization of girls, more preventative work, education and awareness needs' to be done.
- X Issues of gender and race a priority.

***Important current issue's for women's employment and training:***

- \* Access or entry issues, which may include, funding information, removal of physical barriers for persons with disabilities, eligibility and language.
- \* Financial and other supports, which may include child care, transportation, emotional, moral, and practical support.
- X Quality and Usefulness of the Program, including the extent of coordination, the absence of sexism, racism and discrimination within the training environment, the flexibility of curriculum and program, and the availability of personal and professional development (i.e. life skills)

***Areas of concerns:***

- X Interventions and supports for under represented labour groups can be scaled back during difficult economic times.
- X Women who are first nations, women of colour, immigrants and/or women with a disability, face multiple barriers to employment and training.
- X Employment disadvantages for women are reflected substantially in the occupations they work in and in their employment income.
- X Labour force participation is generally lower for women than men between the ages of 20 - 24 years.
- X In the lowest paying trade of barbering/hairdressing/beauticians, women represented 83 % of all apprentices. Wages in this trade are close to a minimum wage. In the highest paying trade (An Industrial instrument mechanic/millwright/boiler maker women make up only 1% of apprentices ).
- X Women have lower distribution than the total population in management positions.
- X Decline of pay in some sectors and lack of benefits.
- X Changing patterns of work and working hours.
- X Move away from programming from targeting special needs groups except youth at risk.
- X Shift from type of programming.

***Some of the obstacles for women accessing training and jobs:***

- X Many households are reliant on the contribution of women's income, making it difficult for mothers to leave a job for further education.
- X Quality, affordable child care is a key support to ensuring healthy child development and workforce participation for parents. It must be an integral part of planning, development and implementation of programs for women and their families.
- X Women are not a homogenous group. Programs must be sensitive to the social, cultural and linguistic diversity of women, and other attitudinal barriers that women face.
- X While the number of women in math and applied science is increasing, they still remain quite low. The myth that women are not good at science and Maths still persists.

***Recommendations for WETC:***

- X WETC has an important role in the dialogue between Labour market partners as the advanced education and training system devolves and re-evolves, providing insight and feed back on the issues affecting women accessing, or trying to access, advanced education, training and employment.
- X WETC can help to build collaborative partnerships that address the needs of women in employment and training programs.
- X Develop supporting models such as mentoring programs that provide women with employment, educational opportunities, and role models for female learners.
- X Develop and implement initiatives that specifically target women that face multiple barriers such as women with disabilities, First Nations women, women of colour, immigrants, women of low socio-economic status and single mothers.
- X WETC has done tremendous work in the past, there is strong need for it to continue and persist the issues and move the agenda forward.

***FEDERAL RESPONSE:***

Goal: To assess and document the potential for future of WEAC.

A decision was made by the steering committee to interview Linda Charles (past HRCC Burnaby and follow up with the Grte Rasmussen who had replaced Yasmin Jamal (Equity Coordinator ). To find out the status of WEAC and find out why was WEAC put on hold without any justified cause. The decision to interview Linda Charles was because of her seniority and long years of work with WEAC .

The outcome was to have a face to face meeting with Charles Perrin (HRDC Regional Director) and Cathie Cookson (WETC Chairperson ) to WEAC .

**Summary of the Meeting:**

Some of the current issues from the research were presented to Charles Perrin. These were discussed in relevance to the LMDA agreement and the EI legislation.

HRDC response to the discussion included the following:

- X Decentralization and local flexibility is the new way of doing business.
- X Client contribution means financial contribution and contribution in kind is really

emphasised.

- X Still the process of devolution is pending and the next phase of the transfer does not seem clear.
- X Regions are involved in policy making.

Some of the issues that will become important are client eligibility, preoccupation with IA clients, and low income means no access.

HRDC current changes involve coping with new roles like including child care, Poverty and literacy, lifelong learning, social policy issues.

Regional Management Board: Directors would join with different portfolios. It is a form to bring something to the table but it will not be a forum to process everything.

### ***Suggestions for future direction for WEAC:***

WEAC's role has been important to HRDC to get the sense of what is happening in the community. It can be compared with the Committee on Disability which has played an advisory role for many years. Concern was raised as to what role would WEAC play in the new era (namely advisory, advocating or a combination). In the past WEAC has been both an advisor as well as strong advocate. A lot of focuses were put on the term advocate and the fine line between the two roles. But the outcome was important which was working on the solutions which work for HRDC and WETC.

Next steps were to organize a meeting with senior officials of federal and provincial government and a few WETC/WEAC members to look at terms of reference.

### ***CONCLUSION:***

It is clear that the EI reforms and LMDA agreement have had a dramatic effect on women lives and the community-based organizations. In conclusion the following critical concerns impacting women's access to employment and training are being experienced in the community.

- X Reduced access for women to employment and training .
- X Training is most accessible to individuals who are skilled, recently out of the workforce and can make financial contribution.
- X Equity Principals are not built into the LMDA agreement to ensure women have equitable access to training and employment.
- X Decentralization of decision making, has lead to extremely uneven decisions, made by individual workers, which are inconsistent and not equitable for clients.
- X Short term Quick fix planning, 82 % of skill-based programs are gone and are replaced by short term programs and interventions which do not include skill training, child care supports, life - skills which historically have proved to be important milestones in preparing women to successfully enter the labour market.
- X Natures of Non profit organizations are changing, threatened to survive more of these organisations is becoming privatized and looking for income sources and opportunities to survive.
- X Individuals and community organizations expertise and knowledge to serve women is

being eroded. This creates a gap in the community and women struggling through this maze of information and changes have no place to turn in need.

- X Statistical information regarding women with multiple barriers is not available which does not help in delivering programs which are meaningful and makes a difference.

***Next Steps:***

WETC is organizing a final forum which will bring women from lower Mainland and other regions to come together and discuss the issues and plan the next advocacy strategies .

As well as recruit new members for the WETC and WEAC working group. It is very important that the new membership take over the roles from some of the senior members and carry the torch forward.

This forum will determine the future of WETC and its continuity.

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1. Analysing the Impact and Challenging the Assumptions: A Multi-Sectoral response to the Operationalization of the EI Legislation by Association for Service Providers for Employability and Career training (ASPECT). June 1999.
1. Voices From the Field: Impacts of the Changing Federal Funding Context on Women's Access to Training. November 1998.
1. The Women's Employment and Training Coalition - Advocating for Equity in Adult Education by Lucy Alderson. July 1994.

***APPENDICES:***

Appendix # 1	Interview Questionnaire
Appendix # 2	List of Regional Women Centre's.
Appendix # 3	Letter to the Ministers
Appendix # 4	WETC Flyer

Fax # 1 (250) 387 1193

Final Forum (women interested in attending) :

1. Betty Ann Miller.
2. ITAC

Focus group questionnaires: Please see attached

Ruth Blasner (Secondary School Apprenticeship) MAETT

Phyllis Godfrey (MRMI) Senior Policy Advisor Ph # 1(250) 356 0683

Fax # 1(250) 356 5316

E-mail [phyllis.godfrey@ag.gov.bc.ca](mailto:phyllis.godfrey@ag.gov.bc.ca)

Erma Mohammed (BC FEDS) Union

Janice Jones (SchoolDistrict)