

President's Report

Once again, we have had an incredible and fast-paced year at WSC and I am very pleased to provide this report of the organization's progress since our last Annual General Meeting. Not only have we continued our standing legacy of excellence for our students and the community-at-large, but we have now moved the agency into the most stable financial position it has had in many years. This huge accomplishment positions WSC for continued success.

The staff of WSC have shown exceptional forward thinking, passion, and the ability to adapt to their modern operating environment. We have come a long way since our move from Queens Quay and since we were selected as a provider of choice for training services for the City of Toronto through the Toronto Employment & Social Services (TESS) program. This year we have been able to settle into our new location and strategically focus our energy to deliver value to our stakeholders and students.

This year we executed a strong strategic plan that focused on: strengthening our organizational capacity and effectiveness; building our financial stability; engaging in proactive business planning; exceeding the targets of our stakeholders; and, developing our fundraising capacity. We have made steady progress on all fronts and I am pleased with our accomplishments during trying economic times. I attribute our success to the steadfast dedication, enthusiasm, and hard work from our Executive Director, Honey Crossley, and the team at WSC.

Some notable accomplishments from the past year include:

- The successful implementation and second year of the TESS funding for Skills Training, including a \$45,000 increase over last year.
- Receiving a Trillium Capital Grant of \$149,600.
- The first net operating surplus in five years.
- A renewal of our contract and increase in funding to the Practice Firm.
- The creation of strategic partnerships in the private sector that have assisted with fundraising and meeting job placement objectives.
- Recruiting a seasoned team of Board Members to carry forward the work of WSC as several veteran Directors retire.

As we continue to operate in uncertain economic times, what we see in the community reinforces the necessity of organizations like WSC. As always, there is much work to be done but I feel especially confident coming out of this past year that WSC is equipped to face all obstacles and will continue to meet its organizational goals so that it can continue to make a significant and positive impact in our community.

*Matt Rempel, Acting President
September 2011*

WSC met all strategic objectives in 2010-11

Annually, WSC Directors working with management and other stakeholders set strategic directions for the organization at a planning day in January:

#1 Strengthen WSC's financial position

Expenses were held to within 2.5% of revenue, in fact we completed the year with a small operating surplus. Throughout the year the ED worked with the Financial Manager to produce monthly reports for the Finance and Audit Committee. All reports were accurate and were presented in a timely fashion. Work on contribution margins and cash flow forecasting was completed. Financial reporting on multi-year contracts were met and the Practice Firm contract was extended.

#2 Review and assess WSC's organizational capacity to meet the needs of our stakeholders

A variety of pro bono consultants were engaged to provide information to the Board and help assess organizational capacity. HR and financial needs were addressed using small grants and donations as well as volunteers.

#3 Engage in comprehensive targeted marketing

While project intake numbers are being consistently met, the desire to grow the skill training business is still a work in progress. In the future we hope to implement a more consistent part-time course schedule, design marketing strategies using social media and redesigning our web presence, with program specific web sites for A.C.E.S. and the Practice Firm.

#4 Create job opportunities for graduates

- The Practice Firm is consistently meeting outcome (employment) results and satisfaction outcomes.
- Settlement services are consistently meeting satisfaction result and referring to other agencies
- Better tracking and improved outcomes are needed in the STDLE employment outcomes. This is part of the 2011 strategic plan.

#5 Develop and implement a formal curriculum development and review process

In order to keep current with labour market trends and in order to procure sufficient skills training diploma business, WSC must continually explore new course options. A process for course development was approved by the Board:

- knowledge of labour market statistics and related career competencies through employer dialogue and review of job postings
- conducting an environmental scan to determine pricing,
- field testing curriculum as career packages,
- submitting course modules to the Ministry and a 3rd party assessor, and
- developing sector and course specific marketing materials, placement opportunities, and a database of successful graduates, testimonials, and employer feedback.

Treasurer's Report

Financial information has been extracted from the Audited Financial Statements as @ March 31, 2011 (David Burkes, C.A.)

Assets & Liabilities

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Cash and Short Term Investment	\$ 44,525	\$ 29,551
Accounts Receivable	12,222	90,131
Grant Contributions Receivable	31,729	75,094
GST / HST Receivable	6,203	24,972
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	<u>12,110</u>	<u>11,953</u>
	106,789	231,701
Equipment/Capital Assets	<u>194,374</u>	<u>282,250</u>
	<u>\$ 301,163</u>	<u>\$ 513,951</u>
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>		
Bank Indebtedness	\$ 5,000	\$ 70,000
A/P & Accrued Liabilities	75,847	97,138
Deferred Revenue & Contributions	7,446	15,219
Deferred Operating Grants	6,277	24,690
Deferred Contribution for Computers	<u>101,720</u>	<u>201,047</u>
	<u>\$ 196,290</u>	<u>\$ 408,769</u>
Unrestricted Net Assets	<u>104,873</u>	<u>105,182</u>
Financial Position	<u>\$ 301,163</u>	<u>\$ 513,951</u>

Statement of Operations

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
<u>REVENUE</u>		
Government/Foundation Contributions	\$ 751,162	\$ 799,909
WSC Direct Marketing	90,347	
TESS Skills Training Contract	8,432	304,547
Skills Training Diploma Programs	180,688	37,919
Skills Training Career Packages	90,200	28,518
Social Enterprise (WSC staffing Services)	22,575	59,524
Donations-in-Kind – Equipment		8,390
Donations & Other Income	<u>30,386</u>	<u>27,175</u>
	<u>\$ 1,165,358</u>	<u>\$ 1,265,082</u>
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Capital Expenditures	24,286	51,173
Salaries	687,808	728,330
Employee Benefits	67,163	69,386
Occupancy Costs	139,992	151,291
Outreach/Marketing	30,597	30,990
Bad Debts	3,008	4,129
Bank Charges & Interest	4,552	7,387
Computer Software & Supplies	17,305	23,097
Equipment Leasing/Maintenance	28,157	34,183
Donations-in-Kind – Equipment		8,390
Insurance	11,589	11,258
Office Supplies	33,496	27,405
Professional Fees and Fundraising Expenses	30,577	51,733
Program Resource Materials	35,126	32,977
Telephone	13,214	12,415
Travel & Participant TTC	<u>9,152</u>	<u>9,403</u>
	<u>\$ 1,136,022</u>	<u>\$ 1,253,547</u>
Revenue over Expenses Operations:	29,336	12,435
Amortization	(37,175)	(12,126)
Net Expenses Over Revenue	<u>\$ (7,839)</u>	<u>\$ 309</u>

A copy of the complete 2010-2011 Audited Financial Statements are available by contacting:

Honey Crossley, Executive Director

Working Skills Centre

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Executive Director's Report

This year has been one of substantive progress for our organization. We completed work on another major capital expansion with funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, solidified our current skills training options, explored new areas for work experience at the Practice Firm, and survived major changes in our sector. We have forged ahead through economic uncertainty and emerged with a strong cash balance, well-positioned to address significant technical, program and policy issues that face us.

While we still have many significant issues concerning future funding, course content development, and essential programming tasks, WSC's administrative and financial position continues to improve. Even though the organization is at a crossroads concerning what path it wishes to take as it enters a period of intense downsizing in the social service sector, our two greatest assets – our unique mix of programs and our diverse staff and the clients they serve – will remain our most important strengths as we move forward and, under the new Board's governance, make critical decisions.

At the end of fiscal year 2011, we were fully immersed in implementing a fund raising strategy to attract corporate donations to the WSC Scholarship and Bursary Fund, including changing our banking relationship and building a relationship with the RBC Foundation resulting in WSC being named the recipient of a RBC Charity Golf Tournament, building a relationship with Toronto CREW, and hosting the first of what we hope will become an annual event, the Immigrant Women's Journeys 2011. To date these activities have raised just shy of \$50,000 for activities in our current fiscal year. Other strategies this year will include our annual Achilles Walk, which last year netted \$7,815.

Under the careful tutorage of Susana Parise, Ansuya Chetty and Hana Kova, the recruitment and screening process for Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment (STDLE) resulted in streamlined procedures and better identification of candidates, some of whom are already successfully obtaining employment after just graduating in August. Identifying candidates most likely to succeed in training now includes a standardized personal interview establishing clear career action plans, a more inclusive technical skills assessment, ensuring that all work permits and other documents are in place, and only accepting individuals who meet criteria in all aspects. For those who need extra academic preparation, remedial programs continue to be offered as a separate service. The new Graduate Services Team has also made a significant difference in the success recent graduates are experiencing obtaining employment.

Under the leadership of Christina Chu and Hale Soyjugil, WSC Practice Firm brought in expertise so that SAP implementation became a part of the operation offering participants a real

advantage as they hit the job market. The new WSC-PF web site is almost ready to launch and striking, new advertising was developed. Creatively using the resources to hire sector-specific staff and ensure that each participant receives mentorship in their area, is another strategy which will continue to make WSC-PF stand out.



A review of our Skills Training social enterprise, Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.) suggested that we needed to re-vamp our marketing, look at new course options, offer more evening and weekend training opportunities, and attract a different clientele. To this end we re-structured the Skills Training Team and set new goals, hiring a Skills Training and Marketing Manager. A new A.C.E.S. website is underway and a full schedule of short, sector-specific courses was designed for September. The departure of Rafath Ali-Khan from the previous overwhelming combined position of Settlement and Skills Training Manager in February was felt by all who had worked with her. Settlement management, and service delivery to meet the needs presented last year during 3,534 client visits, is now a separate portfolio.

None of our programs would be possible without the dedicated staff and volunteers who carry out the routine tasks and face the daily challenges. My sincere appreciation for the professionalism, competence and stamina shown by everyone day-to-day. We also acknowledge our funders, Employment Ontario, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, City of Toronto, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Service Canada, Toronto Community Foundation, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and our many community partners and corporate sponsors.

Thanks to Vice President Matthew Rempel who stepped in when our President Alyssa Brierley decided to throw her hat in the ring in the recent Federal election and to Past President Mandy Thomson, whose veteran counsel during the last 10 years continued to be unwavering. Also appreciation to Ron Foreman, our past Treasurer, who continues to be a member of the Finance Committee and to Hugh Hasan our Treasurer during the 2010-11 fiscal year for exemplary leadership. Together the WSC Board and staff continue to work tirelessly to keep us focused on the practical and enduring mission of building inclusive communities by attending to the interests and needs of unemployed and underemployed individuals, especially immigrant women, empowering them to create sustainable futures for themselves and their families.

*Honey Crossley, Executive Director
September 2011*

Building HR Capacity

Investing in Neighbourhoods

WSC has a multi-year contract with Toronto Employment & Social Services to hire four individuals (who are Ontario Works recipients) in positions that provide capacity to the organization and on-the-job training to the employee. Current positions are: Employment Specialist, Placement Coordinator, Skills Training Assistant, and Project Management Officer. Financially, the value of this contract is over \$80,000 per year, but the greater significance is the expertise and dedication the individuals in the positions, several of whom are WSC graduates, bring to the organization.

Summer Students

Each year, WSC receives funding from Human Resources & Skills Development Canada, through the Canadian Job Strategy to hire students who are returning to school in the fall. These young people provide value and refreshing energy completing much needed tasks for the organization. This year they joined co-op students from University of Toronto to coordinate the event management of Immigrant Women's Journeys 2011, especially the multicultural fashion show.



Practicums and Co-op Placements

WSC is pleased to provide work placements for students from George Brown College, University of Toronto, Ryerson University, and Seneca College. These individuals provide added HR capacity while learning about the operation of a multi-service community agency and completing specific projects. This year the George Brown candidates have assisted in setting up the new Employment Resource Centre, while Ryerson Students conducted Information Sessions for newcomers and coordinated the collection of data for the CURA study.

Volunteers

There is no way to put a monetary value on the work done by individuals throughout the year, some students and graduates, some individuals interested in giving back in the community, and most notably our 13 Directors, who give their wisdom and expertise in insightful, supportive and pragmatic ways. Day-to-day volunteer complete data entry tasks, assist with IT upgrades, help with resumes, conduct conversation circles to help clients improve their English, and staff our reception desk.



Community Partnerships

WSC partners with other agencies and volunteers from corporations to ensure that clients have access to services along the "Track to Employment" especially where we do not have the HR resources to provide required services; for example:

Social Capital Partners and TD Bank: Special sessions offered 2-3 times per year allow individuals to meet with TD managers and talk about potential employment. This is a great example of a corporate partner providing a networking experience not otherwise provided to clients. Feedback on resumes and presentations skills is available to date two graduates have been hired by TD.

COSTI – provides an itinerant facilitator who delivers workshops at our location on "Assertiveness," "Understanding Cultural Differences in the Workplace," and "Personality Dimensions." The facilitator is paid by COSTI and WSC provides the space and recruits clients to attend the workshops where newcomers enhance their understanding of Canadian culture.

Toronto Workers' Health and Safety Legal Clinic – provides a facilitator who delivers workshops annually on "Employees' Rights" as part of the clinic's commitment to community education. A WSC Employment Counsellor is also involved in the presentations where clients can ask questions and gain an understanding of their rights as employees.

Deloitte Impact Day – An annual event where Deloitte Consulting gives back to the community; consultants from Deloitte make presentations to WSC clients on "The Labour Market" and "Communicating in the Workplace" and hold mock interviews with clients to provide feedback on how they can best meet Canadian employers' expectations. This is a great opportunity for clients to interact with people working in a corporate environment.



People and Organizations in North Toronto (POINT) – WSC provides free space used by POINT on Saturday afternoons to operate a social group for live-in caregivers. POINT is a community-based agency promoting social and health services in the community. This is an opportunity for isolated women to interact socially; workshops during these sessions provide information on banking, community programs, employment standards, and career planning.

Dixon Hall Employment Services and ACCES Employment Services – These partnerships enable clients attending programs at WSC to get additional job search support from a full-suite employment service provider. WSC counsellors regularly organize "field trips" to these partner agencies.

Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment & Training Services



Miziwe Biik is committed to assisting all persons of native ancestry in the GTA to attain a better quality of life. Two employees (our HR & Volunteer Coordinator and our Admin Assistant) are examples of both agencies' commitment to strengthening the community through partnerships promoting equality and self-reliance.

World Service Cargo - Practice Firm

2010-11 was WSC Practice Firm's (WSC-PF) 5th year in operation; 1017 immigrants who came to Canada within the last 10 years applied to this program. 85% of our participants reside in Toronto, North York and Scarborough and the rest come from as far away as Ajax, Brampton, Hamilton, Markham and Richmond Hill.

We benefitted from previous years' work, as some of the investments and improvements we made are bearing fruit:

1. **Focus on Supply Chain:** We continued our expansion to include more positions and functions in the supply chain sector. We started the firm in 2005 with logistics business and continue to host positions related to freight movement, but in 2010, opportunities were created in demand/ supply planning and inventory coordination. This year Supply Chain applications were the most frequent of the seven departments hosting 33% of our clients, with graduates successfully entering or re-entering the Canadian labour market the fastest.
2. **SAP Implementation:** SAP (Systems Applications and Products), or ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) solution, provides customers with the ability to interact with a common corporate database for a comprehensive range of applications. Thousands of mid-size to large companies worldwide use SAP software to run the majority of their day-to-day business transactions and processes. Many participants from the Supply Chain, Accounting and Administration departments are obtaining jobs because of their competency using SAP tools.
3. **HR Tools:** We updated recruitment assessment tests for Administration, Marketing, and Supply Chain resulting in finding very qualified candidates and applicants appreciating and better understanding, any skills gaps they may have.
4. **Intake Criteria:** In 2008, after negotiating with staff at Employment Ontario, we changed the intake criteria from only immigrant women in Canada for less than five years to immigrant men and women in Canada for up to 10 years.



"As a newcomer to Canada facing many employment challenges, World Service Cargo was a great starting point for my professional career. Working in WSC gave me a great boost in confidence because I have studied marketing and I was able to

apply my skills, plus the chance to use up-to-date technology to produce marketing materials. All these helped me find my present job in the field that I have passion and experience for."

Valerija Labas Karam, Marketing Coordinator and International Travel and Tourism Consultant

In 2010-2011, 51% of our clients were female and 49% male; however the majority were still recent immigrants with only 18% of the participants residing in Canada for more than five years.

Noticing that most of our applicants were "lost" in this labour market, failing to understand the protocols Canadian businesses follow, we made the following changes to our intake workshop with great success:

1. promoting understanding of values, norms and behaviours expected in Canadian workplaces;
2. explaining common communication gaps between cultures; and,
3. providing sector specific career directions.

From the satisfaction survey, we know that over 90% of workshop attendees found the information useful and had a better understanding about what to expect from



potential employers. Over 380 individuals, an increase of 13% from previous year, benefited from this extended group counselling. To some extent the need for initial career planning, reflected cutbacks to some employment services agencies which was the result of the Employment Ontario restructuring in August.

In the last fiscal year, 88 clients were accepted into the program; 81% found employment, although 9% of those who found employment took more than three months to do so. This was an increase of 19% from the year before, when graduates faced a job market affected by economic recession. While these figures are encouraging, still many well educated immigrants, eager and prepared to work, take longer than three months to find employment compatible with their skills and experience. The program enabled eligible participants to develop better knowledge of the job search process, while providing the chance to demonstrate competencies in their particular professions.



"WSC Practice Firm provided me with excellent opportunity to apply my work skills and knowledge in a practical way. I've gained (relevant) work experience in recruitment, team-building, time management, project coordination and administrative tasks (in a Canadian

setting). The program boosted my self-confidence and further developed my professionalism which made a positive impact on my job search."

Liubov Lukova, Former WSC Human Resource Staff now working as Diversity Associate in a bank



Other important outcomes of the WSC-PF program for a newcomer were obtaining invaluable Canadian references, expanding networking opportunity, and the chance to explore how their occupation is practiced in Canada. Analysis of client exit surveys shows satisfaction continues to be very positive with overall rating ranging from “very good” to “excellent”.

In 2010-11, organized weekly workshops provide networking opportunities, where invited sector-specific professional experts share their knowledge and insider perspective on industry practices. These efforts helped deliver relevant programs and respond to the changing needs of clients. Computers and network infrastructure, such as Cisco high port density switches, were upgraded. Redesign of the current website is well underway; the goal being improved messaging, a streamlined intake process, release of valuable staff resource eliminating some administrative tasks, and improved business reporting.

The 13th Canadian Practice Firm Network Trade Fair was successfully held on October 20 – 21, 2010 in Quebec City generating a 10% increase from the previous year’s gross sales. The success was the result of solid teamwork and the fact that Sunquest Vacations and Witty Accessories pledged their support as sponsors.

Moving forward, WSC-PF is headed into another fiscal year with enthusiasm and new projects for continuous improvement, such as developing new procedures for warehousing and distribution, implementing a SAP Production Planning module, and setting up of a Project Management Office. There is renewed focus to reach out to, and stay connected with, former participants and community agencies, strengthen relationships with local employers, and engage private and social sector decision-makers who understand the value of workforce integration of high-skilled professional immigrants.

WSC
PRACTICE FIRM

Are you...

- A professional immigrant actively looking for a job in your field?
- Having unsuccessful interviews and a growing period of unemployment?
- In need of relevant Canadian work experience while gaining knowledge of industry trends and terminology?
- Requiring a better understanding of Canadian workplace communication and culture?

Practice positions are available in:

- Supply Chain
- Information Technology
- Marketing and Sales
- SAP Projects
- Business Intelligence Projects
- Accounting and Finance
- Human Resources
- Office Administration

Apply now and call us at
647-258-0388
Or email us your resume at
career@worldservicecargo.com
55 Eglinton Avenue East Suite 208, Toronto, ON M4P 1G8

EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

World Service Cargo is an initiative of Working Skills Centre (WSC)
WSC's Practice Firm is funded in part by EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

WSC is proud of its efforts thus far and recognizes the invaluable contribution of both its past and present participants, volunteers, staff and external community partners. Special thanks go to the WSC-PF alumni for giving back and offering ways to reach out to participants – acting as a mentor, serving as a resource person, or simply passing on job and internship opportunities. Their accomplishments inspire new job seekers and allow WSC -PF to prove the impact it is making through its program and continue helping others.



Long time WSC staff and Directors were saddened this year by the untimely death of **Brian McInnis**. Brian was instrumental in assisting WSC during the 2004 funding crisis and the birth of the Practice Firm as a new WSC program. Brian’s joyful embrace of life, enormous capacity for friendship and passionate commitment to a better world was an inspiration to all. The work of the Practice Firm is, in part, a credit to this man’s audacity and strength as a community activist. We will miss him.

Skills Training at the Academy of Computer & Employment Skills

Diploma Programs

In 2008 in response to new legislation and community demand, the skills training programs at WSC were formalized and the Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.) was registered as a career college under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005. This meant a lot of changes to how we did business, new compliance issues, changes in course content and student evaluation methods, new links to employers to ensure training was relevant and increased instructor qualifications. There was considerable debate and discussion to ensure we could remain a charity and meet our social mission while operating a career college; a social enterprise was the answer.

The efforts to have a relaxed, friendly, atmosphere that promotes skills acquisition while simultaneously improving self-



confidence has been achieved; by selecting instructors who meet the Ministry requirements but also understand the special needs of our client group we have created a unique continuum of service.

Registered with two Diploma programs, Computerized Accounting and Computerized Office Administration, in 2010 four new Diplomas courses were approved as vocational programs:

- Supply Chain Clerk/Analyst
- Medical Receptionist
- Office Clerk, and
- Administrative Assistant with Desktop Publishing.

During the latter part of 2010 the first course catalogue was developed with over 50 individual course modules, several career packages and the six Diploma options.

The first year as a college was a struggle, providing training to marginalized individuals, primarily immigrant women. This is our mandate, but meant that we provided services at reduced fees and at times not meeting our costs. By contrast, the contract from the City of Toronto combined with individual course purchases, is now allowing A.C.E.S. to move towards becoming a thriving business which we hope to see grow in the up-coming year.

Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment

WSC has always been a primary source of training for individuals on Ontario Works since the early 1980's. In January, 2010, WSC was named an official provider of skills training by Toronto Employment & Social Services, City of Toronto (a 5-year contract).

In 2010, training was provided to 84 individuals in the six Diploma areas. WSC had an overwhelming response from Ontario Works clients applying to STDLE. Since we could provide only a limited number of training seats, we were not able to accept some clients who were assessed as suitable for the program.

During the fiscal year 2010-2011, 126 clients attended full-time programs with 94 clients earning Diplomas. In addition 135 clients attended part-time programs, taking one or more modules and earning a certificate of achievement. An additional 60 students were enrolled in January and continue to be part of our student body along with 40 students who enrolled in July, 2011.



Graduate Services Team

While WSC has always made an attempt to assist graduates with their job search, the efforts have been inconsistent, dependent on funding of specific projects which had employment preparation components. Striving to maintain our published 70% success rate for graduates obtaining employment has been frustrating. With the contract for STDLE this changed, as the City of Toronto provides an incentive plan: for each individual who is employed we receive funding when they get a job and at 3-months and 6-months if they stay in the job. These extra funds have allowed us to hire a Graduate Services Manager. Graduates spend as much time as needed in the job search program and also receive support once hired if they need further advice on dealing with specific workplace related issues.



The Manager leads a team consisting of an Employment Counsellor, funded partly from Settlement funds and partly from the incentives, and two Job Developers funded through Investing in Neighbourhoods. This team has been successful in contacting new employers, reviving relationships with prior employers, and matching clients to placement opportunities. The 6-week placement is part of the STDLE program and allows our graduates to practice the skills they have just acquired in a real work setting and lets employers get a feel for the candidate and in many cases a job match is made. Even if the employer is not able to hire the placement student, a letter of reference goes a long way to support the individual's job search.

Employment Resource Centre (ERC)



To meet the needs of over 100 graduates each year, WSC has set up a mini ERC with five workstations, each complete with computer and phone, two job Boards with sector specific listings of job openings and job fairs, and a library of job search resources. Job Developers, with offices in the ERC, are on hand to assist with resume preparation, researching companies and job openings, preparing for interviews, and work on overcoming any personal barriers to employment.

The Job Developers not only make contact with employers on behalf of graduates, they also hold workshops and discussion groups and schedule job search refreshers and networking time, so that participants have on-going support through this challenging time.



Settlement Support for Skills Training Candidates

WSC continued to provide settlement and integration services funded by the Newcomer Settlement Program from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. Although very limited resources are available, a Settlement Counsellor delivers Information Sessions weekly, as well as arranging specific Orientation to the Canadian Workplace, Business English, and Workplace Communication modules in all skills training programs. These courses ensure that newcomers and recent immigrants have the skills needed in today's competitive job market. The Settlement Counsellor is also available to students to resolve any issues related to immigration status, housing, health insurance, legal issues, and mental health issues that arise following situations from home countries.

“Thank you for taking the time to listen to my whole story. I've been to other places, but they don't take the time to listen to you properly.”

*Verbal comment by Gert Frank (September 7, 2011)
a client who has been unemployed for over a year*

Research shows that newcomers are hardest hit in a recession and extra skills are needed for immigrants to successfully obtain jobs even when they have the same technical skills as Canadian-born job seekers. Our Settlement and Employment Counsellors are available to assist with all aspects of job search, creating workshops that specifically respond to newcomer issues.

Skills Training Team Re-structured

A review of our skills training social enterprise, Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.) suggested that we needed to re-vamp our marketing, look at new course options, offer more evening and weekend training opportunities, and attract a different clientele. To this end we re-structured the Skills Training Team and set new goals, hiring a Skills Training and Marketing Manager. Design of a new A.C.E.S. website is underway and a full schedule of short, sector-specific courses was designed for September, 2011.



New courses for part-time and corporate training

For the fall 2011 we will be launching a series of new courses catering to the developing market of graphic and website design. To correspond with the needs of the job markets, we will offer classes in the Adobe Suite which includes classes in Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign as well as separate classes in website design and maintenance.

In addition to these courses a new series of Customer Service workshops are being developed to accommodate employees and employers who wish to re-fresh or gain new insight on quality customer service and trends.

New Marketing Strategies for A.C.E.S.

The Skills Training Team has been working over time the last couple of months to develop and launch a new website for A.C.E.S. This initiative has allowed WSC to showcase the career college as an entity of its own and bring more attention to the current and new courses that will be running come the fall. The new Web address will be:

www.acescareertraining.com

The marketing strategy also include outreach to new client markets which include those who are currently employed and are looking for courses to upgrade their skills; subsequently employers who would like to send their employees for training, and those in career transition will be targeted. Strategies, including the new website, using social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), an e-marketing campaign that targets employers, recruiting and temp agencies, and newspaper advertisements will help grow this business.

We are consistently looking at the job markets to see where we can find opportunities to develop new courses and hope to expand our offerings further into the New Year.

New Lab Opened, Summer 2010

In July 2010, WSC received a capital grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for \$149,600 to take on space adjacent to its current premises and both renovate and purchase equipment for another computer lab. The impact was better Health and Safety for current students and the ability to provide training to an additional class of 24 students.

Our training facility now boasts three labs each with 24 workstations with state-of-the art computer equipment. New computer desks and ergonomically designed chairs have made the sometimes long learning day more comfortable for our students.



Mouse pads with our logo keep the organization in the forefront as student progress through acquisition of technical skills.

Social Enterprise Development

WSC's first social enterprise was developed from the mail room program, established in the agency's early years to assist immigrant women with limited English language skills to enter the workforce. This business, WSC Direct Marketing, was sold to two former participants in 2009, but WSC has stayed involved with the social enterprise community and is currently exploring how to best develop this resource. Since 2008, our skills training programs have been licensed as a career college, but this business has yet to develop its true potential. WSC is also part of a community collaboration to develop a program called TechDotOrg, a social enterprise that will provide IT and social media marketing consulting and services to non-profit agencies and SMEs.

Social Purpose Enterprise Network (SPEN)-Toronto



social purpose
ENTERPRISE NETWORK

WSC has been a member of the SPEN Steering Committee, actively working to ensure social enterprises in the GTA have the support needed to operate successfully. The group is working on increasing membership, supporting new social ventures, and developing a catalogue of services to encourage corporate responsibility by providing information that will let companies choose to spend their dollar with a business that has a social purpose as well as a great product.

Canadian University Research Alliance (CURA)



WSC is part of a 5-year CURA coordinated by University of Toronto, utilizing the

research capacity of six universities. WSC will benefit as we expect evidence to show that our social enterprise, A.C.E.S., makes a difference in immigrant's lives.



We are partnered with a research team from University of Pennsylvania including a tenured professor and two doctoral candidates. In year one, the team identified self-sufficiency indicators, such as housing, stability of relationships, income, employment, and self-confidence and developed a study using questions that had been well validated in prior research.



The first group of clients have voluntarily completed the survey between January and April 2011 and initial data analysis has

already shown some difference between those who select training and those who chose other paths. This initial data will be compared to results from a parallel survey completed when clients complete the program (6-8 months later) and at follow-up (12-month later). A control group of clients who did not enter training will also be contacted at 6-12 months.

In June 2011, WSC's Executive Director joined the research team to make a well-received presentation at the ANSER Conference in New Brunswick. The initial findings were shared with academics from across the country.

WSC Staffing Services

Late in 2009 WSC revived a former social enterprise called WSC Staffing Services. This is a program that allows us to arrange work opportunities for graduates. On behalf of the employer, WSC interviews and matches an employee, hiring the individual and taking on responsibility for payroll, benefits, and WSIB coverage. Weekly time sheets and on-going communication with the employer let us know how the individual is doing. WSC then invoices the employer monthly to cover costs plus a small administration fee.



Social Enterprises list improved "quality of life" as a priority stating that for 'at risk' populations a simple focus on employment is not enough to produce long-term change in people's lives. Social Enterprise businesses support a holistic, asset development approach that uses employment in an accommodating way as an entry point to stabilize people, to improve their quality of life, and, ultimately to build sustainable livelihoods. Thus, in addition to employment, these enterprises seek to leverage a range of interconnected livelihood-building outcomes. Further, social purpose enterprises seek to promote economic and social inclusion while also working towards a vision of a more egalitarian society and workplace.

A social purpose enterprise is a business venture established by a not-for-profit organization that creates both community connections and real economic opportunities for at-risk populations by developing businesses that balance both revenue generation and a social mission – the "double-bottom line".

Fundraising Events and Corporate Support

TEAM WSC! Raised over \$7,800 in March 2011

Once again, Team WSC! participated in a 5km walk called the Achilles St. Patrick's Day Race. A sunny but cold day greeted the 14-person team who ran, walked or cheered. Supported by both staff and Board members who collected funds to support the team, we were able to raise \$7,815. This annual event is part of the agency's on-going resource development plan.

Fund Raising Lunches

Periodically, a student committee organizes and implements a Fund Raising Luncheon at WSC. Sometimes a pot luck event and sometimes working with restaurants or grocery stores for donations of food, volunteers supervised by Silva Mardrossian learned about event planning and event management as part of their office administration curriculum. Each event nets approximately \$500, providing extra revenue for special needs. Each event had an Emcee, a raffle, entertainment by current students, and special prizes.

Business Consulting – Pro Bono

WSC received business and strategic planning advice from **Sam Jama**, a MBA Candidate at Royal Roads; his report provided an analysis of WSC identifying operational, management, business planning, human resourcing, organizational development, marketing and finance challenges and achievements.

Andrea Griggs, President of **Catalyst Communication Inc.** selected WSC as a non-profit organization to receive \$6,500 of consulting, pro bono, to strengthen the WSC Management Team. Catalyst Communication recognizes that in non-profit organizations, there is often so much emphasis on helping clients that the organization fails to spend the necessary time on leadership development. Catalyst Communication continues to provide job coaching to the Management Team members and will be conducting a communication workshop with the entire WSC staff in October 2011.

Pro Bono Legal Advice from **McCarthy Tétrault** assisted WSC to finalize a revision of its Personnel and its Workplace Non-Discrimination, Violence and Harassment Policies. McCarthy Tétrault notes that diversity ensures that we are truly connected to the needs of the clients and community we serve and contribute richer ideas from our diversified environment. Diversity is a value that binds all of our people and inspires us to continuously improve who we are as an organization.

A previous association with **Endeavour Volunteer Consulting**, connected us to a team of MBA candidates from **Schulich School of Business** at York University. Recognizing that today's organizations, whether for-profit or non-profit, need to respond to constantly changing external and internal environments and that changing individual employee behaviour is central to organizational change, the team assisted WSC to design a more structured performance management system.

Corporate Sponsors

Once again, this year WSC's work was supported by Toronto's corporate community. We gratefully acknowledge:

RBC Foundation and RBC Commercial Financial Services, GTA



WSC relocated its banking services late in the fiscal year as part of a strategy to build a relationship with RBC. This move bore fruit in June 2011 with a significant donation to the WSC Scholarship and Bursary Fund. WSC selected RBC because its policies of inclusion and diversity are closely aligned with those of the organization.

Diversity for growth and innovation is one of RBC's Values and part of its business strategy. Diversity is about tapping into all the perspectives, experiences, lifestyles and cultures that we collectively possess; and at RBC, it's about valuing, respecting and supporting our differences to help break new ground and deliver valued solutions and services.

RBC Foundation is committed to making a lasting social impact through inspired, responsible giving and by building strong partnerships with the charitable sector. RBC empowers organizations to make a difference and inspire others; WSC was honoured to be the recipient of \$24,395 from this year's Charity Golf Tournament.

Toronto Commercial Real Estate Women



Established in 1996, Toronto CREW has grown to 181 members who are key decision makers from some of the most influential corporations in Canada. With a focus on empowering women, WSC program were seen as fit for this group that focuses on advancing women in commercial real estate and is the professional association of choice for the most successful women in this industry.

Selected as the recipient of \$18,000, part of the funds raised at the 2010 Charity Golf Event, WSC attended this year's event linking WSC to 36 new corporate contacts and providing an opportunity to network with women from different disciplines in commercial real estate. All of the contacts and the funds will help support the skills training and employment preparation programs for women.

Immigrant Women's Journey 2011

The fundraising gala on June 22, 2011, held at the St. Lawrence Hall, enjoyed corporate and community support without which the event would not have been possible. Once again the City of Toronto donated the use of the Hall and the funds raised that evening will be contributed to the WSC Scholarship and Bursary Fund. Significant contributions were made by: ACCES Employment, CIBC, HR Solutions, Miller Thomson LLP, Nesbitt Burns, RBC Foundation, Sears, Starbucks, Toronto Workforce Innovation Group, Towne Catering, Tropicana Orchestra, Vechter Communications, and many individuals.

History and Mandate

Working Skills Centre (WSC) was established in 1978, incorporated on May 1, 1980, and received charitable status in March 2003. Originally mandated to serve immigrant women from Spanish and Portuguese speaking communities, the organization quickly expanded to serve immigrant women from any country of origin. The Letters Patent were revised in 2005 to expand the mandate to serve individuals, primarily immigrants, who are unemployed or underemployed, and to assist them to obtain skills needed to become self-sufficient. While mandated to serve a broader clientele throughout the Greater Toronto Area, the Mission Statement reflects the emphasis on programs for immigrant women:

Working Skills Centre (WSC) is an innovative, community-based, non-profit, charitable organization that empowers immigrants, primarily women. Our purpose is to prepare our clients to fully participate in Canadian society by providing education, work experience, and settlement services that ultimately lead to employment.

Location and Contact Information

Working Skills Centre (WSC), located just one block east of the Yonge-Eglinton subway station, easily accessible by TTC; it is a busy neighbourhood with an international flavour and a multitude of everyday services. The agency has established a business environment which provides employment readiness and upgrading at WSC Skills Training Programs (Suite 703) and Canadian workplace experience at the World Service Cargo – Practice Firm (Suite 208). The Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (Suite 703) provides six diploma programs approved as vocational programs by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005.

Location

Address: 55 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite 703,
Toronto, ON M4P 1G8
Phone: (416) 703-7770
Fax: (416) 703-1610
Website: www.workingskillscentre.com

2010-2011 Directors & Officers

Matt Rempel, Acting President	Carole Piovesan
Hugh Hasan, Treasurer	*Juliette Ntege
Diana Fridlyand, Secretary	*Megan Sandiford
Wei Wu, Executive at Large	Kristen Sam
Alyssa Brierley, Executive at Large	*Moustafa Abdelrahman
Amanda Thomson, Past President	Shamima Adam

** indicates WSC graduates*

Acknowledgements Working Skills Centre (WSC) would like to acknowledge our 2010-2011 funders and partners.

Grants and Contributions were received from:

- City of Toronto
 - Toronto Employment and Social Services
 - Investing in Neighbourhoods
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Service Canada, Canada Summer Jobs Strategy
- Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
 - Newcomer Settlement Program
- Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
 - Employment Ontario
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Toronto Community Foundation
 - Vital Programs Award

The umbrella groups who provide valuable information and lobby for systemic change on behalf of our clients:

- ONESTEP
- Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
- Social Planning Toronto
- Social Purpose Enterprise Network - Toronto
- Toronto Workforce Innovation Group

Service Delivery Partners

- ACCES Employment Services
- A-Way Courier Service
- Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council
- COSTI Immigrant Services
- Dixon Hall Employment Services
- MotherCraft
- Learning Enrichment Foundation
- JobStart
- Ontario Council of Alternative Businesses
- Pathways (London, ON)
- Polycultural Immigrant Services
- Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre
- Scadding Court Community Centre
- Toronto Health & Safety Legal Clinic
- Toronto District School Board
- Working Women Community Centre
- YMCA
- YWCA

And the many employers who provided work experience for our graduates, especially those who hired a graduate.

All donations are recognized with an official receipt; WSC's charitable # is: 10822-1946-RR0001

CES Suite #703

Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.) offers Diplomas in Office Administration, Supply Chain, Medical Reception, and Accounting. These community-based learning opportunities are approved as vocational programs under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. WSC also offers a host of modular certificate training part-time, evenings and weekends.



Suite #208

World Service Cargo provides internationally trained, skilled immigrants with an opportunity to practice their skills in a simulated work environment and obtain Canadian work experience in Finance, Supply Chain, IT, Sales and Marketing, SAP, HR and Admin.

EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO Funded in part by the government of Canada