

## 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

*A review of activities from the 2007-2008 fiscal year*

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[www.workingskillscentre.com](http://www.workingskillscentre.com)

## President's Report, *Amanda L. Thomson*

It was a challenging, busy and productive year for Working Skills Centre as the Board established four major goals for 2007-2008.

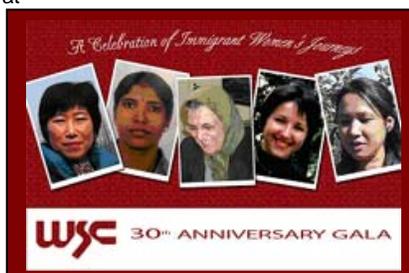
First, to continue to build our internal capacity we launched new initiatives which added HR resources including a Job Creation Partnership project that brought several talented individuals to work at WSC, the Job Search Resource Circle which saw Humber College, Job Start, YWCA, ACCES, Toronto District School Board, and Pivotal seconding staff to WSC to provide additional services for our clients, summer students, multi-cultural interns and placement students from George Brown, and 17 dedicated volunteers. Capital Funding from MCI and a wonderful boost from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, a capital grant of \$145,400, helped to build structural capacity.

To meet our second goal of ensuring more secure funding Board and senior management have worked together to develop targets and improve accountability to make our well established service culture more attractive to government and private funders. As a result the direct marketing business is profitable and our practice firm is achieving targets which made the difference as we successfully re-negotiated funding for that program. We will focus next year on increasing productivity in our skills training, based on our new status as a career college and a potential for itinerant training with community partners.

Increasing our Board governance capacity has been an important focus. Members attended workshops, we updated our policies and polished our Director's Manual, and we are embarking on our own evaluation. During 2007-2008, we made serious moves to attract young multicultural talent and expertise to our Board. Unfortunately a number are moving on to new locations or assignments. We thank them for their contributions: Soban Pasha for his work with our Direct Marketing business, Geetika Bhardwaj and Tamara Massey who will

continue to work for us for our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and our Treasurer Serge LeVert Chiasson who tirelessly analyzed our financial positions while masterfully assisting with the revamping of accounting procedures and reporting formats.

Our final goal was to build a memorable 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and we're well on our way to that happening in just over a month.



WSC's 30th Anniversary Gala, "A Celebration of Immigrant Women's Journeys" will be on **Tuesday October 28 at the St. Lawrence Hall.**

The event will include entertainment, live and silent auctions, food and wine from around the world, and an exhibit displaying immigrant women's achievements, all hosted by MC Suhana Meharchand (CBC Anchor) and Honourary

Chair Jan Wong (author and journalist).

WSC is very excited about the line up of entertainers and speakers including Nandita Dias and her band, pianist Eve Egoyan, and singer and song writer Anahit. The entertainers will be interspersed with short stories from notable personalities who immigrated to Canada, such as, MP Olivia Chow, Maryam Sanati (Editor of Chatelaine Magazine), the Hourourable Madame Justice Wilan Low, first Chinese woman on the Superior Court of Ontario and the powerhouse advertising duo of Marvi Yap and Anna Maraba. The agency hopes to raise at least \$25,000 at this event which will launch the WSC Women's Scholarship Program.

Finally I wish to thank Honey Crossley, our Executive Director, and all the WSC staff who continue their tireless dedication to give their all to help our students become successfully employed and self-sufficient.

## Treasurer's Report (Financial information has been extracted from the audited financial statement as of March 31, 2008 (David Burkes, C.A.))

<b>ASSETS &amp; LIABILITIES</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b> (Restated)
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Accounts Receivable	\$ 69,755	\$ 39,003
Grant Contributions Receivable	107,102	131,823
GST Receivable	5,727	5,997
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	21,695	19,177
	<u>204,279</u>	<u>196,000</u>
Equipment	69,793	85,951
	<u>\$ 274,072</u>	<u>\$ 281,951</u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Bank Indebtedness	\$ 60,314	\$ 25,289
A/P & Accrued Liabilities	66,376	17,682
Deferred Revenue & Contributions	15,837	21,934
Loan Payable	12,344	38,404
	<u>154,871</u>	<u>113,309</u>
<b>Restricted Contingencies</b>		\$ 16,636
<b>Unrestricted net assets</b>	<u>119,201</u>	<u>152,007</u>
	<u>119,201</u>	<u>168,643</u>
<b>FINANCIAL POSITION</b>	<b><u>\$274,072</u></b>	<b><u>\$281,952</u></b>

<b>STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b> (Restated)
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Government/Foundation Contributions	\$ 680,160	\$ 769,273
WSC Direct Marketing	118,329	134,043
Skills Training Programs	211,666	140,962
Donations & Other Income	33,946	16,858
	<u>1,044,101</u>	<u>1,061,136</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Capital Expenditures	16,410	16,342
Salaries	656,147	623,576
Employee Benefits	59,549	48,082
Occupancy Costs	196,388	197,580
Outreach/ Marketing	20,486	16,477
Bad Debts	1,679	4,768
Bank Charges & Interest	10,257	6,833
DM Materials & Delivery	20,709	20,667
Equipment Leasing/Maintenance	28,138	30,299
Insurance	14,067	13,767
Office Supplies	8,123	18,496
Professional Fees	7,711	19,964
IT Costs		1,851
Program Resource Materials	21,917	19,110
Telephone	10,992	10,329
Travel & Participant TTC	4,812	10,832
	<u>1,077,385</u>	<u>1,058,973</u>
<b>Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue over Expenses from Operations</b>	(33,284)	2,163
<b>Amortization</b>	(16,158)	(28,046)
<b>Transfer of Restricted Contingencies</b>	16,636	-
<b>NET EXPENSES OVER REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ (32,806)</b>	<b>\$ (25,883)</b>

A copy of the complete 2007-2008 Audited Financial Statement is available by contacting:

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Working Skills Centre  
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Phone: (416) 703-7770 ext. 516  
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# 2007-2008 Activity Report

Honey Crossley, Executive Director

2007-2008 was a year for growth and changes at WSC. Funding remains an issue but by using a series of small grants and obtaining individual and corporate donations, the agency has enhanced organizational capacity and continued to provide a continuum of the traditional settlement, training and bridge-to-work interventions.

The "Track to Employment" was created following discussions at a Social Marketing Course provided by Maytree Foundation. The picture is a clear representation of the continuum of service we provide, the full suite required by immigrants, especially women, leading to social, economic, and political participation in Canadian society.

## SETTLEMENT SERVICES

With funds from the Newcomer Settlement Program, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), settlement workers at WSC provided information and referral and solution-focused counselling services to 3,726 clients, with slightly more than 830 attending ½ day information sessions. A new direction for the settlement programs included a focus on employment related counselling and fit well with WSC's mandate to assist immigrants, primarily women, to access skills training, job search support and Canadian work experience. Group sessions including "Understanding the Canadian Workplace", "Personality Dimensions and Cross Cultural Communication", and "Employee Rights" were provided for 841 clients.

## PHOTOS FROM HOME

The Photos from Home project is an exciting new initiative made possible through a grant from MCI's Ontario Community Builders Program. The photos provide a pictorial review describing the journeys which many immigrant women have taken to live life in Canada; beginning with visual and written descriptions of their lives in their home country and tracing their paths to Canada with photographs and captions submitted from the women themselves, the compelling images and touching stories have resulted in 12 canvas storyboards to be debuted at WSC's 30th Anniversary Gala.

This initiative was the first project coordinated by the WSC Alumni Club. WSC graduates network regularly, acting as mentors to current students and participants, supporting each other in job search efforts and sharing job retention strategies.

## SKILLS TRAINING

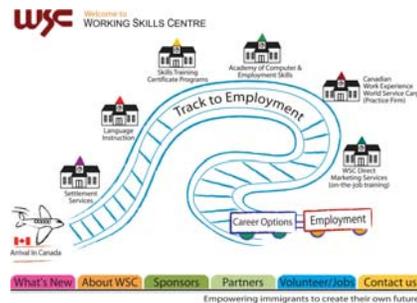
As a result of the Private Career College Act, 2005, it was necessary for WSC to divide skills training into two separate initiatives – Certificate Courses and Diploma Programs. **Certificate** Courses, ranging from two to 12 weeks, provide skills training in specific computer software related to office, accounting, medical reception, logistics and lettershop work. These programs continue to be offered part-time during the day, evenings or Saturdays. 242 clients benefited from these programs in 2007-2008, enhancing their job opportunities with new competencies.

A new initiative called "Graduates on the Go" is in the planning stage. WSC will work with agencies and community centres to provide itinerant training at easily accessible locations. Using laptop computers purchased with funds from Trillium Foundation, courses can be set up almost anywhere. And graduates will be hired to work as tutors, creating an opportunity for marginalized women to gain confidence and acquire presentation skills which will better prepare them for the Canadian workplace.

**Diploma** Programs were approved by the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities in March, 2008 in conjunction with WSC being registered as a private career college. The application process was long and many negotiations took place to ensure that WSC retained its ability to serve immigrants in a way that was flexible and reflected newcomer needs. Computerized Accounting and Computerized Office Administration, both contain modules designed specifically to assist immigrants to succeed in the Canadian workplace. In this way the programs is distinct from programs at other career or community colleges which focus almost entirely on the technical skills. 107 clients attended 21-week programs and earned Diplomas in 2007-2008.

## Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.)

In June, the business license for the **Academy of Computer & Employment Skills** (A.C.E.S.) was granted and the launch of the Academy will take place in September 2008. A significant grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation was received in June and all computer equipment has been updated and the computer labs and classrooms refurbished in preparation for the opening of the career college. Two additional diploma programs are planned: Real Estate Administration and Medical Receptionist.



## WORLD SERVICE CARGO (a practice firm)

World Service Cargo is a virtual logistics company which operates at our downtown location creating Canadian work for individuals who are job ready in their chosen careers and have experience from their home countries. To replicate a typical Canadian company, the practice firm has six departments: Marketing and Sales, Information Technology, Finance and Accounting, HR, Admin and Supply Chain which includes Warehousing, Inventory, and Logistics. WSC expresses great appreciation to both Exquisite Dreams and KTS Logistics, for their continuing sponsorship of this exciting and successful venture.

132 clients participated in this intervention (2006-2008) and all reported that this is a perfect model to help them re-establish their careers in Canada. Being involved in practical work projects while looking for employment increases their confidence and understanding of the Canadian workplace. WSC has received an extension for this project's funding from Employment Ontario through August 2009. This program provides a full suite of employment readiness services to immigrants.

## WSC DIRECT MARKETING (a social enterprise)

Direct Marketing Services was the first business established by WSC and now operates as a social enterprise. When government funding related to the program's training component was terminated in 1998, WSC redesigned the initiative. With assistance from Trillium Foundation, a solid business plan for this venture was put into place to develop new revenue streams as the original bulk mail business declined. The new fulfillment business is ensuring that this enterprise can meet a double bottom line: creating revenue to cover DM expenses and successful meeting a social benefits goal - hiring graduates and providing practical on-the-job training for newcomers.

A gift (donation) from the Rotary Club of Toronto was used to purchase a forklift, essential to our business. Over 50 customers remain loyal to this venture and use the service regularly.

## WSC COMMUNITY NETWORK STRATEGY

WSC Community Network Strategy, a Job Creation Partnership project, was made possible through Employment Ontario. The primary focus is to help participants to gain meaningful work experience while assessing the effectiveness of the Practice Firm and launching Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.). Five positions were created for EI recipients: HR/Volunteer Coordinator, IT Officer, Communications Officer, Marketing Officer, and Practice Firm Researcher. The project continued until February, 2009.

## TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

Training for the Future project (TFP), funded in part by Status of Women Canada, explored ways to encourage women to enter training sooner in their settlement process and how needed skills training can be funded. TFP Advisory Group produced two brochures and has applied for further funding from SWC to more fully explore how micro-financing can be arranged in combination with financial literacy instruction and pre-post loan support for immigrant women. Social & Enterprise Development Innovations (SEDI) is a formal partner in this venture.

## STUDENTS AND INTERNS

Multicultural Youth Internships, hosted by COSTI, and Canada Summer Jobs grants, allowed WSC to hire interns and summer students, respectively. WSC also hosted GBC students from the Career Counselling course who acquired practical skills working with clients to enhance their job search success and presenting related workshops.

In May 2008 we received a grant from the Cultural Human Resource Council to hire an Artist in Residence; this very creative and talented young woman has completed the storyboards for Photos from Home, been the event assistant planning the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and is developing digital stories for our website and that of a partner agency.

## History and Mandate

Working Skills Centre (WSC) was established in 1978 and incorporated as a charitable organization on May 1, 1980. 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 a community-based, enterprising, non-profit organization that supports immigrant women. Through services, training, and business activities we recognize and promote the skills, capacity and wisdom of our diverse community. Our purpose is to encourage economic self-sufficiency and the successful integration of immigrant women into Canadian society.*

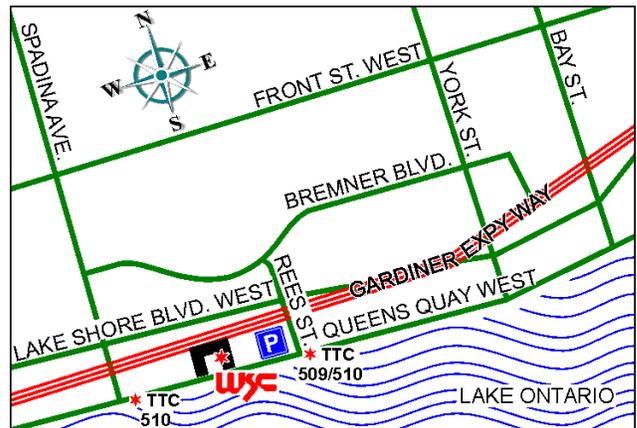
## Location and Contact Information

Working Skills Centre (WSC), located just one block east of Spadina, is easily accessible by TTC from the 590 or 510 street cars. The agency has established a business environment which provides immigrants with Canadian workplace experience at WSC Skills Training Programs (Suite 204), the World Service Cargo – Practice Firm (Suite 204A) and the Direct Marketing Services (Suite 100).

Address: 350 Queens Quay West, Suite 204  
Toronto, ON M5V 3A7  
Phone: (416) 703-7770 Fax: (416) 703-1610  
Website: [www.workingskillscentre.com](http://www.workingskillscentre.com)

### 2007-2008 Directors

President: Amanda L. Thomson  
Vice-President: Lynne Hindle  
Treasurer: Serge LeVert-Chiasson  
Secretary: Alyssa Brierley  
Members at Large:  
Ayesha Basit  
Geetika Bhardwaj  
Pulsara (Kulaweera) Batra  
Tamara Massey  
Jacqueline Mundangepfupfu  
Soban Pasha  
Lorna Semple  
Wei Wu  
Komal Bhasin (retired November 2007)



## Acknowledgements

Working Skills Centre (WSC) would like to acknowledge our 2007-2008 funders and partners. Special thanks to our committed Direct Marketing customers and all employers who played an instrumental role by providing Canadian work experience for our trainees and graduates.

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- City of Toronto
- Cultural Human Resource Council
- Employment Ontario (MTCU)
- Heritage Canada
- Industry Canada
- Maytree Foundation
- Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
- Ontario Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Rotary Club of Toronto
- Service Canada, Canada Summer Jobs Strategy
- Status of Women Canada
- 42 individuals who supported "TEAM WSC!" at the Achilles Race in March 2007
- ACCES
- Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council
- Career Foundation
- COSTI Immigrant Services
- Humber College
- JobStart
- Newcomer Women's Services of Toronto
- PIVOTAL Integrated HR Solutions
- Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre
- Scadding Court
- SEDI (Social and Enterprise Development Innovations)
- Toronto Health & Safety Legal Clinic
- Toronto District School Board
- YWCA

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