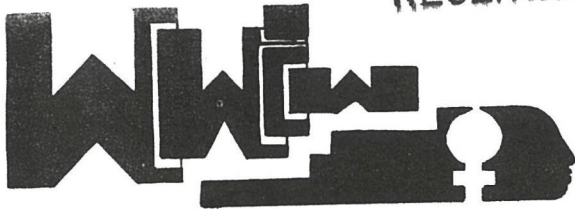


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NEWSLETTER

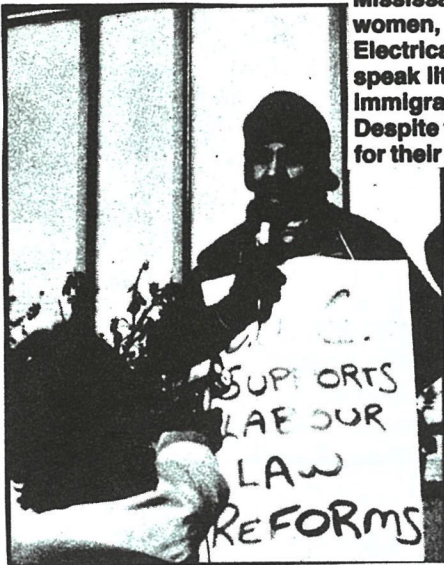
Women Working with Immigrant Women

SUMMER 1986

CLOW/CCPEF

47 Main Street
Toronto, Ontario
M4E 2V3

Striking workers at Superplastics Limited in Mississauga, mostly Punjabi-speaking men and women, are members of the Communications and Electrical Workers of Canada — Local 535. They speak little or no English. Some of the workers are immigrants and refugees who are on work permits. Despite these obstacles, the workers are struggling for their right to unionize.



The workers are striking for
• A First Contract
Their union was certified on March 8, 1985. The owner has refused to recognize the union.

• Health and Safety Procedures
The workers make plastic garden hoses and carpet runners. The plastic contains *vinyl chloride*. The workers are not informed of the proper procedures for the handling of cancer-causing materials.

SUPER PLASTICS STRIKE

The workers are fighting *against*

- Super Seniority for Scabs
- Low Wages
Some workers make \$5.00/hour. The average wage is \$6.28/hr. There are no benefits.
- Unpaid Overtime
The workers work a 44 hour work week with no overtime pay.

CHALLENGING RACISM

WOMEN SAY NO TO RACISM FROM TORONTO TO SOUTH AFRICA was the theme for International Women's Day, 1986. WWIW was involved in the coalition, and also sponsored a cultural/political evening featuring Lillian Allen. Historically IWD had been organized around a number of themes each year. It was therefore politically significant that the women's movement decided to chose racism as its single theme, and make such a strong public statement about the need to fight apartheid in South Africa but also racism at home.

The following was the analysis put forward in the leaflet: "We do not believe that racism is merely a misunderstanding among people, a question of interpersonal relations or an unchanging part of human nature. It is, like sexism, an integral part of the political and economic system under which we live. This system uses racism and sexism to divide us and to exploit our labour for super profits. We are shaped by racism. It gives some of us privelege and we reproduce what it teaches us. This has to be fought in our daily lives. But we canot just educate racism away. Even legal reforms are not enough. We must take racism to its material roots and change the economic and material structures which maintain it."

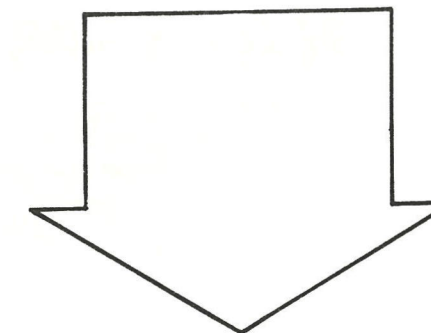
WWIW has stated for a long time that the women's movement needs the active participation of more immigrant women and women of colour. This involvement has been increasing since the late seventies and hopefully will continue. Understanding that oppression takes different forms in women's lives and that this determines priorities of struggle, is key to both continued involvement, and the breaking down of barriers among women of different races and ethnic backgrounds. WWIW is committed to this goal, and will continue to work with other women's groups around issues of shared concern.

It is also important to note that this year's focus didn't come out of the blue. Years of work led up to it. The proposal to focus on racism was put forward by a group of women of colour, immigrant women, and white women, who either as individuals or through their organizations had worked in past coalitions. These included women from WWIW, the Coalition of Visible Minority Women, the OFL Human Rights Committee and the Communication Workers, the Latin American Women's Collective, the Africa-Ethiopia Anti-Hunger Committee, the Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship, the South Asian Women's Group, the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics and the International Women's Day Committee. This group recognized that although the Coalition usually included the issues of immigrant women and women of colour, for example the deportation of Jamaican mothers was a major focus, but not in an integrated way. Women such as Sherona Hall, Pauline Harper and Gladys Klestorny were main speakers at past rallies, and women were active in the organizing but an anti-racist feminism had not developed. It was seen as one issue among many, and usually lost to the media and the community at large. This year there was a much more integrated approach, and a much larger participation.

Diversity in the women's movement is its strength, but it can divide us if we don't deal with it thoughtfully. The variations in oppressions suffered by women must be taken seriously. The divisions, resentments, fears and patterns of behavior that have developed due to class oppression, racism, nationalism, as with sexism are very deep. We can not just wish them away. There are many different forms that domination takes, and while recognizing the specificity of each, we must approach them as parts of the same system, rather than as separate, totally independent pieces.

Part of the problem has been the notion that each of these are separate issues to be fought by separate movements with very little integration or interaction. Recognizing the analytical and strategic importance of autonomous organizing; racism, sexism and class oppression are very much connected and maintained by the same structures. We have to look at how they interact in women's lives. Any individual is not oppressed by them separately, most women experience a combination of different forms. Women of colour and immigrant women being among the most oppressed.

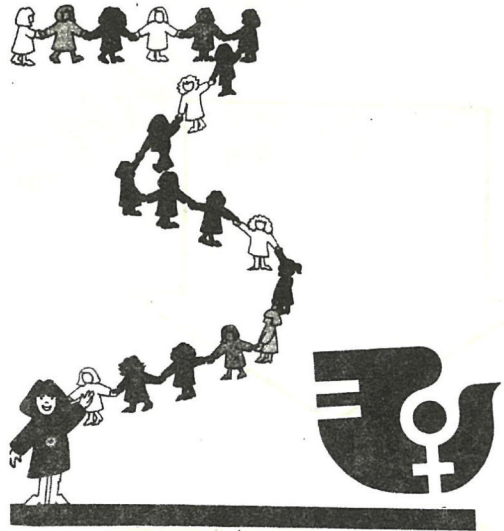
WWIW is committed to working to break down the barriers that divide us, most of us are immigrant to this country but we are from many different nationalities and races. We must recognize our differences and struggle to build the unity that is necessary to overcome the integrated oppressions that we suffer.



WE MOVED

**555 BLOOR ST.W.
TORONTO, ONT.,
M5S 1Y6
TEL. 531 2059**

HONOURING MARCH 8TH



By Lyba Spring.

In March, W.W.I.W. honoured International Women's Day with a cultural evening against racism. As we did last year, we opened the evening with a young person, who performed a miracle of movement from South India. Paromita Bhattacharya, 12, from Bengal initiated us into a marvellous and complex tradition. Interspersed throughout the evening were accounts of personal humiliations, and reflections on racism. We also viewed a section of the film "A Time to Rise," which portrayed the daily lives of South Asian farm workers in British Columbia, and the organization of their fledgling union.

The evening ended with readings of dub poetry by Lillian Allen. Backed by Riddim Traxs, well-known Toronto Musicians from Parachute Club and Compress, Lillian rocked the house with her feisty verse.

We felt very welcome in the Native Canadian Centre, where the event was held. It was fitting environment for an evening to express our determination to shout down, sing down and dance down racism.

WE THANK:

Marilyn Fennell. Marilyn is a teacher at Regal Road School. She is leaving the staff this year and has requested a donation be given to Women Working With Immigrant Women in lieu of a gift. Marilyn has worked with a number of women's organizations through the Toronto Board of Education.

Objectives of WWIW

To provide a forum whereby women and agencies working with Immigrant women exchange ideas, share information, develop a support network and promote the development of new skills.

To collectively identify the needs of immigrant women and work towards the development of programs to respond to these needs.

To engage in social action related to the needs of immigrant women.

Membership

Membership in WWIW is open to all individual women and non-governmental agencies that work with immigrant women and share in our organizational objectives.

The work and activities of WWIW are carried out by committees which focus on specific issues related to

Health
Education
Labour
Outreach and advocacy

Summer Project

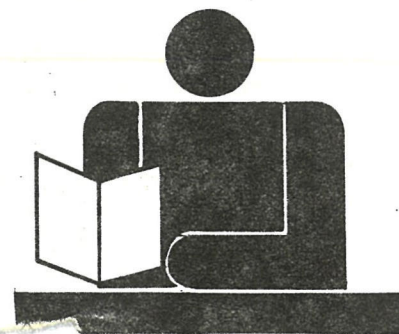
WWIW undertook research to identify changes that have occurred in the Immigration Act and its Regulations from 1976 to present. The objective of the research is to examine the consequences of these changes for Immigrant Women who enter the country under a sponsorship agreement, or as refugee, as well as the consequences of the changes on family reunification.

The primary step in the research will be a data collection of available resources on the issue, and it will be followed by interviews of community workers and lawyers, to examine the consequences of the changes.

The findings of the research will be presented to community organizations which will analyze the consequences in the different areas of immigrant women's lives.

The end result will be the production of a brief which will be available to community organizations and other interested parties, to use as an educational and informational tool as well as a lobbying tool.

Niki Kelly has been hired through the Women's Directorate Summer project to conduct the research. People who have relevant information and wish to contribute to the project can call Niki at the WWIW's office.



OIWN - AGM

ONTARIO IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S NETWORK AG MEETING.

The OIWN held its 1986 Annual General Meeting on May 9, 10 and 11th in Kingston, Ontario. The 50 women in attendance came from Windsor, Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, London, Hamilton, Toronto, Peterborough, Kingston and Sudbury.

The three days of discussion, information sharing and having fun resulted in a very productive meeting.

An Interim Steering Committee was elected at the AGM and the committee's mandate for the next 2 months is to:

- * finalize the organization's constitution
- * look at funding possibilities
- * conduct a membership drive
- * and hold regional elections.

The Second National Conference for Immigrant-Visible Minority women was discussed and a letter was to be sent to the planning committee on Ontario's position around the issues of delegates election and the status of the NAC immigrant women's committee and the NIWFC after the Second National Conference.

OIWN also discussed the affiliation of the OIWN to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

If you would like to become a member of the OIWN contact your Toronto representatives: Monica Riutort at 533-0082 or Daniela Szado at 534-8437.



REINFORCING THE MYTH.....

Many of you may have noticed an article in the Globe and Mail on March 7, 1986, entitled "Multiculturalism Policy Switches Focus to Business".

In that article, the Honourable Otto Jelinek, Minister of Multiculturalism, spoke about the "redirection of existing funds" and "some organizations being cut out". He also added that organizations who apply for funding are going to have to show that the grants sought "are an investment in Canada". Soon after, a very costly conference organized on April 11th called "Multiculturalism Means Business", and there was a grant of \$ 52,000 given to the Chamber of Commerce. Meanwhile community organizations were told about fund cutbacks. It was apparent to many that this new policy shift would take place at the expense of community organizations and services provided by non-profit community organizations.

Community organizations were alarmed. We called a meeting of several community groups to discuss the matter and to take action jointly. An ad hoc coalition concerned about multiculturalism policy was formed.

The new policy shift as it is being expressed is based on several inaccurate assumptions.

* Firstly, there is no recognition of the cost-effective contributions of community organizations. Instead there is a drive towards financing the private, profit-making sector out of the Multiculturalism program which has less than 0.8% of the Secretary of State budget.

* Secondly, there is no recognition of the vital role played by community organizations in the economic integration of immigrants by providing a range of services including language classes, job skills training

and more important the undertaking of public education programs on racism.

* Thirdly it is assumed that so far community groups have only been involved in cultural "retention" as opposed to "integration". This is far from the truth. We, in community groups working with women, immigrants and minority groups have always been aware of the critical importance of economic issues and the need to eliminate discriminatory barriers that prevent economic integration.

Finally, there is an assumption that immigrants so far have not contributed to the Canadian economy and that we have been liabilities. This is completely baseless. Many reports have shown that in fact immigrants have brought in Canada much needed financial and human resources and have stimulated the economy.

The Coalition Concerned About Multiculturalism Policy called a press conference on April 11th to express many of these concerns. The press conference received coverage by CBC radio and TV, the Globe and Mail and other community papers. Soon after a letter was drafted by the coalition to the Minister reiterating community sentiments and asking for a meeting to further discuss them with him. The letter was endorsed by 46 community organizations.

On June 3rd, an open community meeting was called by the coalition to discuss with the community the activities undertaken so far and to generate ideas for future action. The meeting was attended by people from many different cities in Ontario. It was resolved that the coalition would focus on the recently released Study Team Report to the Task Force on Program Review, more

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popularly known as the Neilson Report. This refocussing was a logical activity for the coalition to undertake given that the same unfounded and inaccurate assumptions regarding immigrants which had been present in the Minister's statement in March were echoed in the Neilson Report. It was also learned that in Ottawa a group called Canadians against the Neilson Report in Immigration was studying the report and had called a press conference to release a brief based on it. In Edmonton another group also held a simultaneous press conference and people in other cities took various actions to register their concerns over the report. The Toronto coalition decided that a simultaneous press conference would be effective in drawing attention to the community concerns with regard to the Neilson Report.

At the press conference on June 17th speakers pointed out the anti-immigrant and racist underpinning of the report. The report asserts that:

* Many family-sponsored and assisted immigrant from non-English speaking countries are a major source of dependency of welfare.

* These immigrants are increasingly inappropriate for Canada's technological society.

* The majority of immigrants accepted for social and humanitarian reasons do not make a real contribution to our economic and social development.

The report alleges that ready availability of welfare will serve to attract illegal immigrants, and conveys the impression that illegal immigrants are rampant. It projects a somewhat higher level of immigration with its recommendations, which consistently call for more stringent

eligibility criteria and preclude the majority of applicants - those from third world countries. One part of the report concludes that the programs for women are much needed and well received by immigrant and native women and disputes the claim in another part that the programs are directed at middle class professional women. Notwithstanding its self-contradictory conclusions and despite the government's commitments to women's programs, it recommends a funding cut of \$ 10 million from the current \$ 14.4 million for these programs.

The report recommends a federal, private-sector partnership of sharing refugee settlement cost, projecting that the number of private sponsored refugees would increase by 50-80% and that the private sector would contribute (and the governments would save) \$ 60 million by 1987. It has no idea of the size of the volunteer effort required and is not concerned whether the voluntary groups are equipped to handle all refugee settlement needs - in a partnership where the private sector will do the work and the government would call the shot. It also recommends that the designated class be restricted to only East European countries and that refugee claims will be accepted from refugees who come on a hot flight only.

Some of the recommendations have been implemented already and the community loudly and clearly has to state its alarm and opposition for this new ideology and reinforcement of myths about immigrants to prevent racist implications.

For information on the coalition call Salome at 531 2059 or Brian at 657 8777.

lobbying.... lobbying....

Representatives from WWIW met with policy directors from the Ministries of Health, Labour, Education, Skill Development, Citizenship and Cultural, Industry Trade and Technology and Treasurer and Economy.

The meeting was organized by the Women's Directorate as a follow-up of the meeting between WWIW and H. Ian Scott, which was held on February 20th, 1986.

Among the issues brought forward were the consequences of sponsorship immigration status and family reunification. Another area was the funding of immigrant women's programs and the community's concerns of the growing trend towards the privatization of Immigrant women's programs i.e. directing government funds towards private research companies, consultancy on the expense of community groups which over the past decade developed considerable expertise in community development work which goes unrecognized.

Employment issues highlighted, were the Employment Equity and it was recommended that provincial legislation on E.E. must incorporate among other points that employers should prepare goals and timetables that are accessible to the public, that an enforcement agency must be named in the legislation with the mandate to monitor and address systemic discrimination, contract compliance must be covered in the legislation and that legislation should be extended to government's own departments, agencies and small crown corporation.

We inticated WWIW's support for an increase in the minimum wage, support for a first contract legislation and support for the cleaners fight for successors rights legis-

ation.

In the area of Education needs concerns and recommendations were in the areas of skill training programs and we addressed the effects of the Canadian Job Strategy on Immigrant women and Refugee women who are excluded from the programs because they do not meet eligibility criteria due to their immigration status or they are underemployed.

Also WWIW expressed our concern about the Toronto's Board of Education decision to fire some of the School Community Relation Department's staff.

WWIW will do follow up with the different ministries.



REPORTS

HEALTH COMMITTEE.

The committee has printed 1,000 copies each of the two pamphlets enclosed in this newsletter. We have sent it out to over twenty-five labour organizations, community agencies and newspapers. We are currently attempting to get it translated into a number of languages and are hopeful it will be reprinted in other languages before the end of 1986.

Research on the film on the stresses in immigrant women's lives and their methods of organizing for change to deal with them is progressing rapidly. Laura Sky, our filmmaker, has visited a dozen community and labour organizations which are helping her sort out the issues. She hopes shooting will take place this summer, with a release in early winter. It's been a very productive time for the committee.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

Since September, the committee have been planning workshops. The workshop topics came from the evaluation of last August's forum. Three workshops have been held: long-term planning of programs and evaluation, basic accounting, and conflict resolution and working collectively. Four workshops will be held next fall and winter. Topics will include: information systems, identifying funding sources, writing funding proposals, group facilitation and the dynamics of power. The committee received a grant from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture- Newcomer Integration Program- to assist in this series of workshops. A resource book will also be produced. The committee have also been involved in meetings with Ian Scott - Attorney General, the Ontario Women's Directorate and various government policy advisors.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

In March, 1986, Women Working With Immigrant Women applied to the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto under the Social Services Grants Program. In the application financial assistance was sought for: a series of workshops, newsletter, the film, and health and labour fact sheets. Although our contribution was clearly recognized WWIW was not recommended for funding as the organization does not "provide direct social services to individuals". It is clear that without umbrella organizations such as WWIW, community groups and their workers would be working in extreme isolation with no opportunities to share and facilitate the exchange of information. Our organization's work in the immigrant women's community has been instrumental in setting up programs such as the Shirley Samaroo House (a shelter with specialized services for immigrant women and their children) and skill training programs such as the Immigrant Women Into Electronics program. Is clear to the community but not to funders that our work is essential and we urge funding sources, to consider making funds available to organizations such as WWIW.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING.

WWIW's General Membership meeting took place on May 26th, 1986. For those of you who couldn't come here is what was all about. There were reports on Provincial and National developments in the Im. Women's organizations and WWIW's participation in these developments. As members of the OIWN we work at the regional level to organize our members to participate in the Second National Conference for Immigrant-Visible Minority Women. There were reports and evaluation of WWIW's participation in conferences and workshops and briefs presented by WWIW were made avail-

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able. Also policies of WWIW around issues were presented to the members.

There was a discussion about the newly emerged "Coalition Concern about Multiculturalism Policy" of which WWIW is part and there were committees' reports. An information sharing session followed and members found out about new programs in the agencies.

The "Yes we Can" Skyworks film was shown and the film followed a consultation with Laura Sky regarding the production of the film "Immigrant Women and Stress".

Sorry you missed the meeting. See you at the next meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

At last it's here. The Toronto Immigrant Services Directory 1986, Published by the CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION CENTRE. In this year's directory, 25 "co-ordinating bodies and agencies" are listed in addition to the 214 organizations listed that provide direct services to immigrants in the Metropolitan Toronto area. To receive this invaluable up-to-date reference tool call C.C.C.C. at 530 4117. The cost: \$9.00 per copy plus 15% for postage and handling.

APPEAL TO THE WOMEN OF THE WORLD. The Congress of Canadian Women, La Ligue Des Femmes Du Quebec and the Women's International Democratic Federation (an NGO with a status B in the United Nations) issued an appeal to the women of the world, to work towards protecting the life and future of humanity from the threat of a nuclear war. To contribute effectively to the attainment of this

aim the W.I.D.F. has convened a world Congress of women to be held in Moscow in June 1987, under the slogan TOWARDS 2000 WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS, PEACE, EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT.

Canadian women's groups are invited to give their ideas and express support for proposals that provide the possibility of peacefully and constructively solving of the political economic and military problems of the world.

For more Information call C.C.W. at 654-3835.

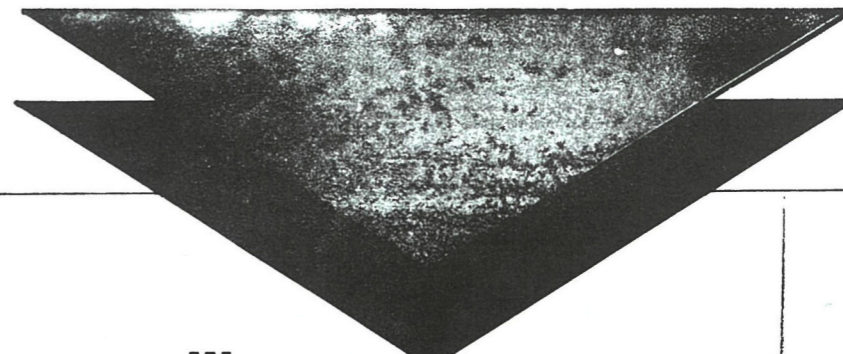
JOB OPENINGS.

The Latin American Working Group would like to inform you that it has a job opening for the first of September for the position of FUNDRAISING ADMINISTRATOR. If you need further details about this position call Caese Levo at 533-4221.

Education Wife Assault is accepting applications for the full-time, one year contract position of Executive Director. A political and social understanding of the issue of wife assault is important. Deadline for applications July 25, 1986. Call 968-3422.

The Rexdale Women's Centre is looking for an outreach worker. The position is for 4 months and includes qualifications such as familiarity understanding and sensitivity to the needs and concerns of immigrant women.

The Rexdale Women's Centre is also looking for a group leader for a weekly orientation/support group for immigrant women. Call 745-0062.



LABOUR
LABOUR
LABOUR

Women Working with Immigrant Women along with the South Asian Women's Group and the International Women's Day Committee have been doing support work for the striking workers at Superplastics. On May 7th a solidarity picket was organized with the Communications Workers, and 150 people attended. Most of the members of CWC local 535 are Punjabi speaking women and men. They have been on strike for ten months fighting for a first contract. The demands are basic-- increased wages, seniority rights, overtime pay, health and safety language in the contract. They have maintained a solid strike. Not one has crossed the picket line. The plant is operating with scab labour, and management has just applied for decertification. We have been going out to the plant every Friday morning to walk the picket line. Negotiations are starting again on July 7. This strike needs your support.

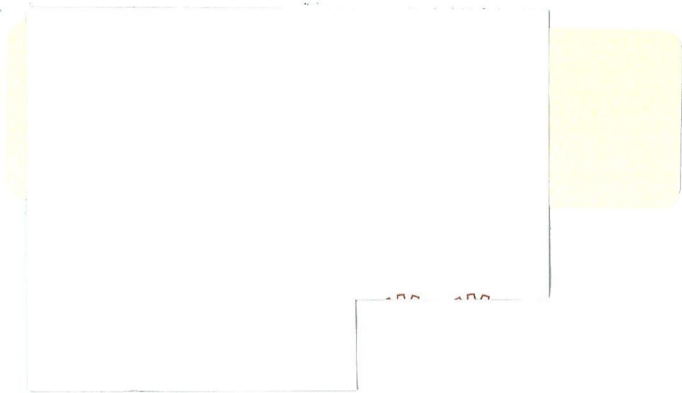
--attend future rallies such as the one sponsored by the ONDP Women's Committee at 7am July 4th at Matheson and Maingate (Matheson runs off Dixie Road, 2 blocks South of the 401 Highway) buses are leaving at 6:30 sharp from the Eglinton West Subway on the Spadina line)

--join us every Friday morning at 7am
--don't buy Super Plastics Garden Hoses and carpet runners under the names "Mastercraft, Riviera and Everflex"
--tell the Minister of Labour that we need strong first contract legislation without the bad faith bargaining clause NOW!!!

ORGANIZE
ORGANIZE



WOMEN WORKING WITH IMMIGRANT WOMEN
555 BLOOR STREET WEST
TORONTO, ONTARIO
M5S 1Y6
TEL. 531 2059



Application for membership in Women Working with Immigrant Women

Name Address

Organizational affiliation if any

Phone No. B H

Membership Fees: Individual \$10.00 Enclosed
Organizations \$15.00

Volunteer (for those who cannot afford membership fee but would like to give time)

I would like to participate in the:
Health Cttee Education Cttee Labour Cttee
Outreach and Advocacy Ctte Newsletter Cttee