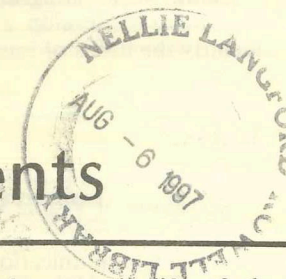


Ontario Region

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Events



Employment Equity

The Coalition of Visible Minority Women (CVMW) held a forum on employment equity. Resource persons were women from the Congress of Black Women, Japanese-Canadian Association and the Disabled Women's Network (DAWN). The forum which was the first of a series of educational for members has led to greater understanding of the issue. The women of CVMW belong to the Arab, Black, Central American, Chinese, Filipino, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Native, Vietnamese, and South Asian communities. The aims of CVMW include the building of unity among visible minority women through open discussion of common experiences, self-education and common action; acknowledging and affirming the position of native women as members of the indigenous peoples in this country and actively supporting the issues and concerns unique to them; and building support system for visible minority women in the fight against racism and sexism.

The CVMW, with a grant from the Ontario Women's Directorate, is developing a program for its project, Employment Equity: Learning more about it and together working for it. Workshops and house-meetings will be held among various communities.

The Alliance for Employment Equity has been formed in Toronto. This Alliance is cored by the members of the Coalition for Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities. Its membership includes the Black Community Coalition on Employment Equity, the Coalition of Visible Minority Women, International Women's Day Committee, the Ontario region of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada and others.

Health

The Multicultural Women's Association, Ottawa, a volunteer group of interested women from a variety of cultural backgrounds is running a series of health workshops for immigrant women. With the theme "Being Well", workshop topics include the following: health hazards at home and at work; giving birth; mothers sharing common teen-age problems; stress associated with immigration; women and the use of tranquilizers; bringing up your children in a new culture; services provided by the health department; parenting and discipline.

An exciting and an important aspect of this project is the manner it is being done. The initial workshop encouraged and led to some of the participants coordinating and facilitating the subsequent workshops.

The Multicultural Women's Association provides a forum for cultural exchanges as a means of publicizing individual heritages while learning about others. It also promotes intercultural understanding among the communities in the Ottawa-Carleton area. The association aims to sensitize mainstream Canadian institutions and agencies to the problems and concerns of immigrant ethnic minority women and to their strengths, skills and contribu-

tion to the cultural, social and economic life of the community. It serves as a link between disadvantaged ethnic women and existing services; it aims to facilitate access to services, to disseminate information and to encourage participation.

The Immigrant Women's Centre (IWC), the only women's health agency for immigrant women in Toronto came under attack when the Provincial Health Minister refused funding its Mobile Health Unit. Support from communities for IWC was overwhelming. IWC has been in existence for the past 11 years. It is an agency that does family planning and family planning related counselling to women from Italian, West Indian, Portuguese, Hispanic, Chinese and Vietnamese Canadian communities. Counseling services are available in six different languages. Some 3,000 women are counselled yearly.

The IWC's unique health-on-wheels project - the Mobile Health Unit - was launched in 1984 as a three-year demonstration project by the federal health and welfare department. It has been operating on a catch-as-catch-can basis in the year when the federal funding expired. The City of Toronto has bailed it out twice with emergency funding on an interim basis. Health and Welfare Canada gave an extra \$10,000. However, the Ontario Health Ministry did not want to give the \$50,000 needed to finance the Mobile Health Unit for a year. \$50,000 represents only .0055% of the increase in revenue of \$900-million of the Ontario government. The health ministry only funded the rent money needed by the Centre.

The City of Toronto through its City Council gave the funds needed to operate the Mobile Health Unit for a year. It is hoped that the City Council will lobby the provincial government, on behalf of the Centre, in the future.

Immigration

Immigrant associations, immigrant service agencies, refugee associations, refugee service agencies, religious organizations, lawyers, human rights organizations, solidarity groups, unions, women's groups and other concerned groups have joined together to demand justice in the government's immigration and refugee policy. The Coalition for a Just Refugee and Immigration Policy is committed to working together to insist that the government keep our doors open to refugees coming to Canada for protection; that the government enact a new refugee determination procedure that provides for a fair and expeditious oral hearing with the right to an appeal for every person coming to Canada seeking protection; that the government expand the definition of family to include all children and siblings, and facilitate prompt family reunification in Canada; and that the government maintain special procedures to protect persons who are fleeing from natural or man-made disasters in their country of origin.

Women Working with Immigrant Women (WWIW) a member of the planning and coordinating committee states that what the government is doing is "pitting immigrants against refugees when both groups are united in their

demands for fair immigration reforms and expeditious processing of applications". WWIW is an umbrella organization made up of agencies and individuals. Its objectives are to provide a forum whereby women and agencies working with immigrant women exchange ideas, share information, develop a support network; to collectively identify the needs of immigrant women and work towards the development of programs and social actions to respond to these needs.

Racism

On the occasion of International Women's Day 1987, the Coalition of Visible Minority Women together with the Ad-Hoc Committee on Wei-Fu's Complaint, the Cross Cultural Communications Centre and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists held a forum/workshop on March 8, 1987. Speakers were Josie Makotoko, a South African black woman; Mubarak Alam, South Asian; Mrs. Cheng, Chinese. All are victims of racism in the workplace.

Endorsed by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), the purpose of the forum was to share experiences among communities and to be able to work collectively for changes and reforms in the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Ontario Human Rights Code. Following this March 8 event and a series of planning meetings, the Coalition Against Racism was formed. With the long term goal of fighting racism, the Coalition focuses on making changes in the OHRC and the Code. The Coalition will work and coordinate with various groups and organizations.

Meetings/Consultations with Government

* The Scarborough chapter of the Congress of Black Women met with leaders of the three political parties to discuss the parties' histories, programs and plans that impact on Black women.

* The director of the policy and research branch of the Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD) and her staff met with the members of the steering committee of the Coalition of Visible Minority Women to discuss plan of action with regards to the recommendations from the 1983 conference on Visible Minority Woman: A Conference on Racism, Sexism and Work.

* The OWD director also met with the steering committee of the Ontario Immigrant Women's Network (OIWN). OIWN is an umbrella organization of individuals and organizations. Its goals is to enhance the status of immigrant women of Ontario by improving their social, economic, cultural and educational opportunities.

* The Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues met with visible minority women as a follow up to a series of meeting held after the 1983 conference. The Council advises the Government, through the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, on all matters pertaining to women. It also monitors and evaluates existing legislation, submits briefs and holds consultations with women's groups across the province.

* The Ontario Women's Directorate is holding consultation meetings with various immigrant and visible minority women's groups across the province.

Conferences

Women and the State: A conference for feminist activists was held in Toronto, Feb. 6-8, 1987. The conference was intended to bring together feminist activists to reflect collectively on their experiences with the state and to develop political strategies for progressive change for women.

A National Training Workshop for Immigrant and Visible Minority Women on how to organize for change was held in Toronto on March 27-29, 1987. Funded by the Secretary of State through Women's Programs and

Multiculturalism, this national workshop was sponsored by Intercede. Intercede (International Coalition to End Domestic Exploitation) is a lobby and advocacy group for domestic workers' rights.

Celebrations

February was Black History month. A focus of discussion was the black family. Young black students also discussed homosexuality. The various chapters of the Congress of Black Women participated in the month's events.

A rally to celebrate International Women's Day was held March 7. This year's theme "Fighting Racism and Sexism Together" focussed on the issues of Native Self-Determination, Choice, Affirmative Action and Adequate Housing. A march followed the rally and workshops and entertainment were scheduled.

New Groups and Networks

* Focus for Ethnic Women (FEW). Its thrust is to deal with skills training for visible minority women. A pre-employment study is being done to develop a program for visible minority women. FEW was formed by women in the Kitchener-Waterloo (Southwest Region) of Ontario.

* The Northeastern Ontario Visible Minority Network was formed. Headed by women, the network aims to involve itself in lobby, advocacy and decision making. It also seeks educational changes through acquiring and sharing of skills. The network seeks unity through combined efforts of various groups.

* The Northeastern Ontario Immigrant Women's Network was formed on January 31, 1987. One of its aims is to reach out to immigrant women in the northeastern part of the province.

* Network of Filipino-Canadian Women (NFCW), in coordination with the Women's Issues Committee of the Kababayan Community Centre is having workshops and information sharing sessions on employment equity, issues of mental health and mail-order brides. The plight of mail-order brides sparked a heated controversy in the Filipino-Canadian community in Toronto.

Publications:

* "Learning from our History, Community Development by Immigrant Women in Ontario (1958-1986), a Tool for Action," written by Tania Das Gupta. Published by Cross Cultural Communications Centre, 965 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario.

* "Making Changes, Employment Orientation for Immigrant Women". Published by Cross Cultural Communications Centre.

* "Pay Equity: Its potential impact on . . . its relevance to . . . Visible Minority and Immigrant Women". Prepared by the Coalition of Visible Minority Women with the assistance of Women Working with Immigrant Women. This document is translated in Chinese, Spanish, Punjabi, Hindi and Vietnamese. For copies, please write Coalition of Visible Minority Women, c/o P.O. Box 1307, Sta. "A" Toronto, Ontario M5W 167.

* "Project Report (1985-1986), prepared by the Korean-Canadian Women's Association. For more information, contact the Coalition of Visible Minority Women.

For more information on the National Organization and for more copies of this newsletter, please write: National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada, Ontario Region, 777 Lansdowne Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6H 3Z1.

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