

# ENGINEERING ACCESS

*Integrating Internationally Educated Engineers into the Ontario  
Professional Workforce*

*A project of*

## CAPE

*THE COUNCIL FOR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING*

# PROCEEDINGS

*LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE  
ASSOCIATION OF BANGLADESHI ENGINEERS OF ONTARIO  
(ABEO) AND STREAMLINING OF OBJECTIVES FOR SERVING  
INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED ENGINEERING GRADUATES*

20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2004  
ROOMS 308/309, METRO HALL, 55 JOHN STREET, TORONTO,  
ONTARIO

## INTRODUCTION

This leadership training session, which brought together 90 members of ABEO including their present President had a twofold purpose:

1. To identify:
  - Obstacles to Employment facing Bangladeshi engineering graduates
  - Support available to them from the Canadian System
  - Expectation of support/changes from the system
  - Commonality of issues with other Internationally trained engineering graduates (ITEGs)
2. To bring together CAPE and ABEO to build synergy towards the common goal of integrating ITEGs into the Ontario professional workforce.

These proceedings aim to record and capture the discussions and outcome of this group meeting which has opened up several windows of opportunity to work together in the future.

### **PRESENTATION ONE: ASSOCIATION OF BANGLADESHI ENGINEERS, ONTARIO** *By Dr Mozammel H. Khan, President ABEO*

Dr Mozammel Khan introduced ABEO using a power point presentation. A summary of this is produced below. The actual power-point presentation will be available on our website: [www.capeinfo.ca](http://www.capeinfo.ca) shortly.

Starting with the history, structure, objectives, constraints and needs of ABEO, Dr Khan explained that ABEO started in June 1996 and was registered On July 7, 1997 with the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations as a Non Profit Professional Organization. A Written Approval was taken from Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) to use 'Engineers' in the name of ABEO

ABEO was established with the following objectives:

- To help newly arrived engineers and architects with the following:
  - a. Newcomer Support
  - b. Career guidance
  - c. Soft skills training
  - d. Job search
- To help the members upgrade their professional skills on continuous basis
- To provide professional support for obtaining P. Eng. Status in Ontario
- To organize seminars and workshops on current topics of interest
- To arrange networking events
- To create technical cooperation with similar organization for the benefits of the members
- To organize events for recreation and social interactions among the members and their families
- To create fellowship among the members

Its membership included Any Engineer or Architect of Bangladeshi origin with at least a Bachelors Degree from a Recognized University.

The activities ABEO has undertaken over the years include technical seminars, information sessions on PEO membership, annual picnics, annual banquets (eid reunion), prokoushali milon mela (engineers' family day and hosting the ABEO web-site: [www.bangladeshi-engineers-association-ontario.com](http://www.bangladeshi-engineers-association-ontario.com)). It also published a Membership Directory, annually and currently has a list of the E-mail addresses for around 500 engineers and architects

Unfortunately ABEO is stretched for resources and still needs to rent an office, acquire some hardware to provide training on on-going basis or hold more frequent seminars, provide newcomer services, networking events and information sessions on matters of interest

Unless more tangible benefits can be offered to our membership fees cannot be increased and more engineers will become members if they can foresee the tangible and intangible returns.

**PRESENTATION TWO: RESEARCH PRESENTATION**  
*By Gurmeet Bambrah, Project Coordinator, CAPE*

Dr Gurmeet Bambrah in her presentation on the Canadian Economic 'Experiment' in diversity traced the trends in immigration to the origins of migration to the present day and its relationship to the Engineering Profession. She explained how CAPE had held a focus group of ethno-cultural organizations similar to ABEO in October 2003 which led to this research. The focus group identified two distinct clusters of such organizations - the Pre 1960 and the Post 1990 clusters having the characteristics shown in Table 1 below.

<b>PRE 1960 Cluster</b>	<b>POST 1990 Cluster</b>
Place of Origin, Culture, Religion connect	Place of Origin, Culture, Religion disconnect
High technical skills	High technological skills
Total Language disconnect	Partial language disconnect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacked newcomer assistance</li> <li>• Worked with PEO to establish an accreditation process to integrate diversity</li> <li>• Community-based language learning</li> <li>• Economic Boom times</li> <li>• Experience requirements unknown</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newcomer assistance including Credential assessment, Employment Preparation and language training</li> <li>• Uncertain economic and development paradigms</li> <li>• Canadian Experience requirements-</li> <li>• High technological skills perceived to be required for shift to service/knowledge based economy.</li> </ul>

Based on the hypothesis of inter-connection between Ethnicity, Economic Development, Regulation and Integration of ITEGs and other Professionals (IEPs) into the Ontario workforce, a research was carried out. This revealed that at present ITEGs and IEPs are facing:

- Higher unemployment rates
- Less the 25% work in exact field of specialization
- 46.8% doing something irrelevant to their field
- More likely to have University Education
- Lack of Canadian experience as the most common barrier to employment
- Assessment of language skills rather than language learning.

In conclusion her research the findings were:

- Immigration tends to be based on economics/displacement factors
- Rate of diversity has increased rapidly after the Second World War leading to serious questions about the Canadian system's capacity to absorb this diversity.

- Diversity has three clearly identifiable ethnicity components – place of origin, race or visibility and religion which need further investigation
- Immigrant links to mainstream are very important for integration
- The perceived shift to service and knowledge-based economies was inadequately defined – was this perception realistically developed given that the system is unable to assimilate the knowledge base of the ITEGs.
- Regulation of engineers has been amended regularly –however there is insufficient information at present to analyze completely:
  - The accreditation capacity
  - The basis upon which experience requirements are set - when for instance was Canadian Experience introduced into these requirements and how and what are the skills/knowledge acquired through this Canadian experience?

Based on this research, CAPE has set out the following as its objectives:

- To mobilize funding and resources based on ITEGs population ratio, for training opportunities focussing on bridging the cultural disconnect between ITEGs and the mainstream engineering fraternity;
- To facilitate effective dialogue between all stakeholders of the engineering community, including employers, educational institutions, professional associations, advocacy groups and ITEGs to create a process and methodology for better recognition of international engineering experience.
- To become a collective voice and the premium engineering resource organization for ITEGs and the engineering industry in Ontario.

She also explained that CAPE started out in 1990 when a number of independent associations serving internationally trained engineers got together and the history of CAPE is available on their website [www.capeinfo.ca](http://www.capeinfo.ca).

Currently CAPE is undertaking the Engineering Access Project funded jointly by Canadian Heritage and Human Resources Development, Canada under the trusteeship of the Council of Agencies serving South Asians (CASSA). Gurmeet explained that Engineering Access is a three year Ontario wide project that will seek to:

- Build a collective voice for IEs
- Engage employers in increasing IE access to the engineering workplace
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder consultation through a Roundtable
- Create an extensive searchable database of IEs, employers and relevant labour market trends.

## **SESSION TWO**

The session two was devoted to building partnership through group discussion in identifying obstacles, self-help, and support available/required in respect of Qualification, Language, Work Experience, Information and other barriers which have already been identified. Breaking into four groups did this and each group presented their views at which time the commonality of issues were tabulated. The groups and the issues they discussed were:

Group 1 - Obstacles to employment

Group 2 – What have the ITEGs done to overcome the obstacles?

Group 3 – What support the Canadian System provided

Group 4 – What Support/Changes ITEGs expect from the system

## **Group 1**

Group one in its presentation of obstacles to employment, expressed that there was:

- Although they were led to believe that no obstacles to qualifications, experience and language existed at the pre-immigration point as they had carried out the CCPE evaluation, it was a different story upon arrival.
- As for language they felt that there was only the need to upgrade to standard Canadian English involving terminology and polishing up their accent.
- The group felt their work experience recognized in the Immigration policy through the point system was considered completely irrelevant in the profession once in the country and that there was no support structure to help with the recognition or upgrading of their experience
- On the subject of Information the group pointed out that there was a big disconnect between federal and provincial levels of information and also a mismatch between pre and post immigration information made available to immigrants. They also pointed out that there is lack of Information and guidance on when and where licensing is required and which province and regions have opportunities.
- The participants also pointed out that most of the jobs available are found in the hidden job market existing within the mainstream. Unfortunately the new immigrant finds himself/herself increasingly disconnected from the mainstream as all the support made available to the new immigrant through frontline settlement services using tools such as employment preparation, cold calling, volunteering, co-op placements or networking events tend to be located within the immigrant community.

## **Group 2**

Group 2 in its presentation on 'What ITEGs have done to overcome Obstacles to employment' stated that

- They had all fulfilled the points requirements for immigration based on their qualifications and credentials, and had been evaluated by CCPE before migrating
- On arrival many had upgraded their English and Soft skills through short courses, employment preparation classes, presentation upgrading by joining Toastmasters etc.
- They had high quality international experience and had attempted to translate this into Canadian terminology for facilitating understanding of this by employers and recruiters.
- On arrival they acquired Canadian experience often as volunteers or in under-employed survival jobs but were still looking for engineering jobs at the end of the first year.
- They would now like to see a policy change to remove the obstacles to ITEG employment.
- They said that they searched for employment information at pre-immigration stages and found this to be inadequate information in the light of their subsequent experience.
- They used HRDC, Library, News Papers, Employment Magazines on arrival and started networking and learning about getting a job and at the end of one year were into information research and increased networking and felt that the local job market was hidden from immigrants. They felt that they were missing mainstream connection
- They had not heard of CAPE

## **Group 3**

Group 3 in its presentation on support the Canadian System was providing to help them said:

- Employment evaluation support at the pre-immigration stage consisted only of CIC labor market information links and CCPE evaluation. The latter was not recognized for employment or licensing upon arrival in Canada.
- On arrival they were directed and had a WES or University of Toronto evaluation done, which also had no use for licensing or employment processes in Ontario.
- The group felt the Canadian system could help them through improved services too upgrade their communication skills.
- On the subject of work experience there was no significant support. In particular there is a strong need for a mechanism to access the Canadian experience through some sort of co-op placement to integrate the ITEGs into mainstream engineering in Canada
- The group felt the need for Cross communication for a collective voice as well as facilitate accurate information dissemination through the CAPE Platform

#### **Group 4**

Group 4 in its presentation on 'What Support/Changes ITEGs expect from the system' stated:

- The Group felt that the licensing body should assess the Qualification at the pre-immigration point and the selection for immigration should be prioritized on actual job demand basis.
- The group said that upon arrival the system should focus on Co-op placement, Volunteering, on the job training, and government should encourage employers to hire immigrants through support of subsidy or incentive.
- ABEO should also help to provide support for networking and making contacts, Job postings and information and guidance on resumes, work experience and presentation skill, evaluation process and P.Eng registration
- In terms of Language they felt the need for on-the- job language training
- They requested the help of CAPE in creating a common platform with Government, Employers and ITEGs regarding assistance to removal of barriers on the subject of experience, employment, accreditation and licensing

#### **PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION**

- ABEO identified well with the objectives and aims of CAPE as regards addressing of the cultural disconnect, recognition of international experience and building a collective voice for ITEGs
- Both ABEO and CAPE agreed that it is a good idea to partner to build a collective voice for ITEGs
- ABEO asked for CAPE to support the creation of a database for their association and agreed to cross-links between the websites of ABEO and CAPE as well as the creation of a listserv.
- ABEO supports the CAPE idea of Appropriate Labour Market Information for ITEGs, developing cross cultural tools for employment and promoting fair Regulation & Licensing practices in Canada
- ABEO also strongly endorsed the skill set and employer database to be set up by CAPE
- CAPE supported the strengthening of ABEO to include Job Search Resources and volunteering information and promotion of this and other timely information to new immigrants

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF ABEO**

	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>
1	Abdul Karim	Miah
2	Abdur Rahim	Mirdha
3	Abu	Shamsuddoha
4	Abu	Siddiqui
5	Abul	Hossain
6	Abul	Razzaque
7	Akm Harun.r	Rashid
8	Alauddin	Chowdhury
9	Ali	Ahmed
10	Anwar	Hossain
11	Atiqur	Rahman
12	Azizul	Bhuiyan
13	Dr. Engr.	Bashar
14	Farooq	Ahmed
15	Golam	Farooq
16	Golam	Siddique
17	Haider	Choudhury
18	Hamid	Ahmrd
19	Hari	Sarker
20	Harun-Ur	Rashid
21	Hazun	Hazun
22	Homayun	Khandker
23	Iftekhar	Ahmed
24	Iqbal	Hossain
25	Karim Dewan	Masud
26	Khaled	Ferdaus
27	Khaled	Shahriar
28	khaliquur	Rahma
29	Khan	Moudud
30	Lajal	Islam
31	Lisa	Kaida
32	M.	Aniszzanan
33	Mafizur	Rahman
34	Mahmud	Hassan
35	Mainuddin	Ahmed
36	Masudul	Alam
37	Md.	Moniruzzaman
38	MD. Alful	Hussain
39	Md. Aminur	Rahman
40	Md. Jahangir	Toimon
41	Md. Mahebur	Rahman

42	Md. Mokarram	Hossain
43	Md. Nazrnal	Alam
44	Md. Nurul	Haque
45	Md. Shamsul	Alam
46	Md. Yousuf	Bhuiyan
47	Mizamal	Khan
48	Mohamed Ahsan	Habib
49	Mohamed Shamin	Hasan
50	Mohammad	Bari
51	Mohammad	Jahangir
52	Mohammad	Rahman
53	Mohammad	Rashid
54	Mohammad	Salam
55	Mohammed	Nuruzzaman
56	Mohammed Hedayet	Hossain
57	Monirul	Mirza
58	Mozammel	Hossain
59	Mozibul	Haque
60	Muckbul	Hossain
61	Muhammad A.	Sani
62	Mustafiz	Rahman
63	Nazmul	Islam
64	Poritosh	Mazumder
65	Qamrul	Hasan
66	Quazi	Saifuddin
67	Reazul	Hasan
68	Reza Shamsul	Alam
69	Rezaul	Karim
70	Safiqul	Manir
71	Saif	Alam
72	Salah	Uddin
73	Shafiul	Islam
74	Shah G.	Mohiuddin
75	Shaikh	Ali
76	Shamsul	Azizi
77	Shariful	Islam
78	Sheikh Monzur	Murshed
79	Siddiqur	Rahman
80	Snehasis	Chandra
81	Soharab	Bhuiyan
82	Syed Masud	Ali
83	Taherul I.	Jinnah
84	Tariqul	Islam
85	Zahurul	Hoque



