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 CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF LATIN AMERICAN PROFESSIONALS, TECHNICIANS AND ENTREPRENEURS (CALAPTE) AND STREAMLINING OF OBJECTIVES FOR SERVING INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED ENGINEERING GRADUATES

10th May, 2004
ROOMS 308/309, METRO HALL, 55 JOHN STREET, TORONTO, ONTARIO

INTRODUCTION

This leadership training session, which brought together 15 ITEG's at CALAPTE had a twofold purpose:

1. To identify:

   - Obstacles to Employment facing Latin American 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 CALAPTE 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 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 CALAPTE 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.

PRE 1960 Cluster	POST 1990 Cluster
Place of Origin, Culture, Religion connect	Place of Origin, Culture, Religion disconnect
High technical skills	High technological skills
Total Language disconnect	Partial language disconnect
Lacked newcomer assistance Worked with PEO to establish an accreditation process to integrate diversity Community-based language learning Economic Boom times Experience requirements unknown	Newcomer assistance including Credential assessment, Employment Preparation and language training Uncertain economic and development paradigms Canadian Experience requirements High technological skills perceived to be required for shift to service/knowledge based economy.

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*.

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:

- Misinformation as regards over and under qualification for employment in the Immigration policy.
- The group identified the lack of language skills were in the process of upgrading their language and communication skills through English (ESL) and Link classes
- On the subject of work experience the group was of the opinion that the experience recognized in the Immigration policy through the point system was not recognized in the profession once in the country.
- The question was also raised as to why the employers require Canadian experience

Group 2

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

- They had qualified for the points for immigration based on their qualifications and credentials, which had been evaluated by CCPE.
- Some had trade certificates, at the pre-immigration stage
- They informed that they were in the process of upgrading their language skills through English (ESL) and Link classes
- They arrived with international engineering experience
- On arrival they are working as volunteers or in survival jobs but were still looking for engineering jobs at the end of the first year

- They had not heard of CAPE

Group 3

Group 3 in its presentation on "What support the Canadian System provided" said:

- There was no significant support at the pre-immigration stage as regards qualification
- Employers only showed interest in Canadian experience and did not recognise the international experience gained by the ITEG's
- They felt underutilized and felt totally disconnected with the mainstream
- The group felt the language support by the Canadian system to be particularly useful.
- The group felt the need for language courses relating to engineering terminology.
- On the information side there was misleading information and no significant support at the pre-immigration point
- ITEGs felt there was no information on what to expect and were mislead with high hope through the web
- 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:

- At the pre-immigration the point system recognizes 16 yrs of schooling including 4 year accredited university degrees
- Upon arrival the system suddenly becomes blind to this.
- They requested the help of CAPE in assistance to removal of barriers, coordination with federal, provincial and other stake holders on the subject of employment, accreditation and licensing.
- In terms of Language training they wanted CAPE to assist with developing their presentation skills
- CAPE should also assist in creating the awareness of the issue of ITEG integration into the professional workplace among all stakeholders
- On the subject of language the ELTs be the standard for proficiency of language
- They also requested CAPE support in removing barriers, evaluation of individual work experience, and teaming up with other organizations to open up any access to employment.

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

- CALAPTE Identified well with the objectives and aims of CAPE as regards addressing of the recognition of international experience and building a collective voice for ITEGs
- Both CALAPTE and CAPE agreed that it is a good idea to partner to build a collective voice for ITEGs

- CALAPTE Agreed to an information exchange as well as linking of databases with CAPE
- CALAPTE 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
- CALAPTE and CAPE agreed to share websites
- CALAPTE also strongly endorsed the skill set and employer database to be set up by CAPE

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF CALAPTE

First Name	Last Name
1. Felix	Barraza
2. Julio	Triana
3. Elberth	Ardila
4. Ricardo	Cadena
5. Francisco	Blanco
6. Oscar	Ayala
7. Dante	Figueroa
8. Leonor	Leo
9. Gloria	Villafau
10. Jose	Gonzalez
11. Wilmen	Solorzzano
12. Armando	Moralez
13. Chunji	Zhong

14. Orlando	Vargas
15. Lizet	Ovieac