

# **THE INEVITABILITY OF CHANGE**

**AND THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS WITH  
ENGINEERING BACKGROUNDS INTO THE ONTARIO ENGINEERING  
WORKPLACE AND ECONOMY**



***THE FIRST MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE  
UNDER THE ENGINEERING ACCESS PROJECT***

**of**

**COUNCIL FOR ACCESS TO THE PROFESSION OF ENGINEERING (CAPE)**

# THE COUNCIL FOR ACCESS TO THE PROFESSION OF ENGINEERING

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The Council for access to the Profession of Engineering CAPE Aims to become an Independent Ontario based membership Association for Immigrants with Engineering Backgrounds



It Strives to enable immigrant access to the engineering profession across Ontario



The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) is the trustee for CAPE

# THE ENGINEERING ACCESS PROJECT

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- Engineering Access is a community research action project funded by Canadian Heritage and HRSDC and being undertaken by CAPE
- Three components
  - *Documentation of employer needs and barriers facing immigrants with engineering backgrounds and strategies for change*
  - *Building an effective and legitimate voice for immigrants with engineering backgrounds;*
  - *Developing labour market information and Tools to promote cross-cultural understanding within the engineering workplace in Ontario*

# APPROACH

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- The systematic, integrated and strategic (SISA) action research approach adopted involves:
  - Consultative meetings and strategic planning meetings to define approach and vision
  - Focus groups for employer and immigrant outreach
  - Leadership training to build a coalition and effective voice
  - Multi-stakeholder roundtables to develop strategy to integrate immigrants with engineering backgrounds into the Ontario workplace and economy
  - Multi-stakeholder forums to disseminate information about the purpose, approach and findings of this project.

## ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

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- Since June 2003 under the 'Engineering Access' and through CAPE the following have been achieved:
  - Built a coalition of 20 associations serving immigrants with engineering backgrounds (estimated membership over 12,000)
  - On-going survey and database of over 800 immigrants with engineering backgrounds
  - Partnered with on-going initiatives TRIEC, CCPE, PROMPT
  - Initiated dialogue where no initiatives are underway - PEO
  - Built a working relationship with over 15 service providers across Ontario
  - Voiced concerns of immigrants with engineering backgrounds through relevant submissions
  - Carried out a pilot employer survey
  - Currently carrying out a survey of newcomer services and outcomes.

## CURRENT SCENARIO

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- Out of a representative sample of 826 immigrants with engineering backgrounds from over 60 countries:
  - Only 16% are in engineering jobs, 29% are in non engineering jobs and 55% are not working
  - Nearly 60% have been in Canada for over 2 years
  - 95% hold a bachelors degree and nearly 29% hold a masters or higher degree
  - 96% identify themselves as belonging to civil, electrical and electronic, mechanical, engineering management and industrial engineering disciplines.

# THE CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

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- CAPE identified Constructive Engagement as the primary tool to engage stakeholders
- The CAPE launch on 16 October 2004 was the first step in this engagement process and established the issues, constraints and opportunities that form the basis for an overall understanding of the stake-holding affecting employment access of immigrants with engineering backgrounds
- The expectation is that this understanding will evolve into a unified multi-stakeholder strategy for integrating immigrants into the engineering workplace and economy of Ontario through a series of six multi-stakeholder roundtables which will be held over the next eighteen months

# THE FIRST MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE

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- Kits forwarded earlier and provided include:
  - *Proceedings of the constructive engagement launch of 16 October 2004*
  - *Detailed survey report*
  - *Support documentation – submissions, abstracts of some articles, list of participants*
- DVD of the launch for clarification
- Detailed program and agenda
- Will be moderated by Nikhat Rasheed



## THE APPROACH: MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE

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- Roundtable sessions to facilitate discussions
- Focus on deliverables: steps towards solutions to achieving employment for immigrants with engineering backgrounds
- Issues well established in prior sessions need not be revisited
- Two break out-sessions to last 30 minutes with session reports delivered (2:30-3:00pm)
- Panel Discussion on Governance, Options and Opportunities (3:45-4:45pm)
- Next Steps (4:45-5:30pm)
- Concluding remarks and schedule of roundtables (5:30-6:00pm)

# SHIFTING SOCIAL PARADIGMS

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- Demographic change within Canada
- Canada's positioning on the global stage vis-à-vis
  - *De-legitimization of credentials*
  - *Deskilling of immigrants*
  - *Dissipation of financial resources*
- Citizenship Gap

## CHANGING WORKPLACE

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- Canada's shift from the information based to knowledge based economy
- Canada's positioning on the global stage vis-à-vis
  - *Increasing diversity in the workplace and provision of services for newcomers*
  - *Increasing specificity in the marketplace and utilization of immigrant experience towards competitiveness*
  - *Assurance of social equity*

## GOVERNANCE

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- Acknowledgement of international norms versus evaluation of Canadian norms
- Standards versus. labor market demands
- Protection of capital vs. protection of human well-being

## **DISCUSSION RULES**

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- 1. Recognize and respect that every stakeholder has a legitimate interest in seeking better access for the immigrant with an engineering background to the engineering workforce in Ontario**
- 2. Focus on identifying which issues, constraints and opportunities are being addressed already**
- 3. Focus on evaluating the actual as well as expected outcomes of these ongoing initiatives**
- 4. Focus on identifying the issues, constraints and opportunities that are not being addressed**
- 5. Aim at developing a framework of action around item 2- 4 above**
- 6. Aim at identifying next steps against the understanding that there will be five more roundtables over the next eighteen months.**
- 7. Above all attempt to work towards a unified approach and focus on common denominators for positive change**
- 8. Remember that we are all in the business of building a better Ontario and Canada**

## NEXT STEPS

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- Establish a unified approach and identify strategies to integrate immigrants with engineering backgrounds into the Ontario Economy and workplace
- Establish plan of action and proposals
- Address how can we sustain stakeholder engagement?
- Address how do we sustain interest and timeliness in the roundtables?
- Time frame: Six roundtables over the next 18 months
- Schedule of roundtables to be established

## FOR MORE INFORMATION & CONTACT :

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