

Working Options for Women Final Report

Final Report

The Greater Trail Community Skills Centre

ABSTRACT

Working Options for Women was a six month project, designed to develop opportunities to support women to be more successful securing and retaining employment in jobs that pay at the Living Wage or better. The project was also intended to help address the worker shortages in the resource and industrial construction sectors, which are major drivers of our local economy.

Project goals included: gathering information based on a review of best practices that support the recruitment and retention of women working in construction or resource related workplaces; engaging local employers, labour organizations and women who have worked in these types of jobs to help us find solutions. The final goal was to identify and develop a preliminary design of a program or resource that will improve the recruitment and retention of women employed in these non-traditional roles.

Acknowledgements

The Greater Trail Community Skills Centre (The Skills Centre) and the Management Team of the Working Options for Women project (Michele Cherot, Tara Howse and Jan Morton) wish to thank the BC Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation for their support and funding of this project. We also want to acknowledge and thank our lead project partner, Skills Source (formerly the Resource Training Organization) as well as the Status of Women Canada which contributed to the project through its three year funding of the Women Creating Change project that supported our community to address economic opportunity for women in rural and remote communities.

Working Options for Women was guided by an Advisory Committee, which was comprised of a variety of representatives from the resource and industrial construction sectors. We wish to express our gratitude to Advisory Committee members for their participation in meetings, focus groups, and the survey.

Advisory Committee members:

- Mark Miller, Construction Maintenance and Allied Workers, Local 2300
- Leigh-Ann Marshall, Columbia Hydro Contractors
- Audrey Repin, Columbia Power Corporation
- Kathy Bruce, Retrieval Technologies
- Kate Pelletier, Selkirk College
- Sheryl Ang, Teck Metals Ltd.
- Mark Cecchini, Teck Metals Ltd.
- Carol Vanelli-Worosz, Teck Metals Ltd.
- Gord Menelaws, United Steelworkers, Local 480
- Laura-Jane Livingstone, United Steelworkers, Women of Steel
- John Lake, XL Industrial Services
- Dean Gaudry, Zellstoff Celgar
- Ronni Walker, Chinook Scaffold

In addition, the identification of next steps in the form of program and resource design (including the crafting of a strategic plan) could not have been accomplished without the input and hard work of the Design Team which, in addition to the project's Management Team, consisted of:

- Jaime Malcolm, Skills Centre
- Marla Smiley, Skills Centre
- Kate Pelletier, Selkirk College
- Victoria Pazukha, Skills Source
- Sue Bock, Bock and Associates

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Introduction

Working Options for Women was a seven month project that took place from August 2014 through to March 2015. The objective of the project was to identify solutions that would support women to be more successful securing and retaining employment in jobs that pay at the Living Wage¹ or better. The geographical scope included the communities of Greater Trail (also known locally as the Lower Columbia Region) as well as Castlegar and District in B.C.'s West Kootenay Valley. The project was also intended to help address the worker shortages in the resource and industrial construction sectors, which are major drivers of the local economy.

The project goal was to identify and develop a preliminary design of a program model or resource that will improve the recruitment and retention of women in non-traditional roles.

The project process included:

- gathering information based on a review of best practices that support the recruitment and retention of women working in industrial construction or resource sector related workplaces;
- engaging local employers, labour organizations and women who have worked in these types of jobs to learn about their experiences and hear their suggestions for solutions;
- present the research to a Design Team whose role was to undertake the preliminary design of a program model or resource to improve the recruitment and/or retention of women; and
- present the Design Team's model to the Advisory Committee for their review and feedback.

Throughout the research, it became clear that recruitment and retention are components that are interconnected. It is difficult to isolate the barriers to women into the separate categories of recruitment and retention, as any one barrier typically affected both recruitment and retention. Policies, for instance, can be seen as both an enticement for women to apply and provide them a reason to stay; conversely, the absence of policies may inhibit women from applying and, consequently, staying.

¹ The Living Wage is an internationally recognized standard that tallies basic living expenses, incorporates transfers and deductions, and establishes an hourly and annual income which is community specific. The wage is based on 2 adults working 35 hours per week with a family of 2 children, ages 4 and 7. For the Lower Columbia Region, the Living Wage is \$18.15/hour for each adult (or a net income of just under \$61,000/year).

About Working Options for Women and Women Creating Change

Working Options for Women (WOW) was funded by the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation with in-kind contributions and support from *Women Creating Change: Working Together for Economic Opportunity*², a project funded by the Status of Women Canada.

The WOW project emerged out of the research and planning undertaken by Women Creating Change (WCC), a 3 year project designed to investigate and understand the barriers facing women's economic security and stability in rural areas. The foundational piece of research, conducted by WCC, was the *Gender-based Analysis of Economic Opportunity in the Lower Columbia Region*. This research is the most extensive available on the topic of women in the region and provided the basis for understanding the various inequities and common barriers that exist for women.

Some key highlights of the research included the difference in occupations, income, and education:

- 86% of women are employed in traditional employment, such as retail trade, health and social services, and education;
- Less than 50% of women are earning over \$24,000/year (compared to 75% of men);
- 16% of women are earning over \$50,000/year (as compared to 43% of men); and
- Women completing trades training have more difficulty than men getting into the trade but once employed had a very high rate of employment compared to many other occupations.

The research was the primary basis on which the WCC Advisory committee developed a strategic plan entitled "*A 20/20 Vision for 2020*" in which the overarching goal is stated as follows:

In 2020, equitable economic opportunities are available for all women in the Lower Columbia Region.

The three broad pillars of the 2020 Plan are: Equitable Employment, Sustaining Family and Community Infrastructure. Through collaboration with a variety of organizations and stakeholders, WCC encouraged and supported groups to implement policies or programs that can positively impact the 20/20 Vision. Drawing on the existing work and partnerships of the Skills Centre, WCC has focused on the Equitable Employment pillar of the plan, and the WOW project was

² Women Creating Change: Working Together for Economic Opportunity is a partnership between the Greater Trail Community Skills Centre and the Trail Family and Individual Resource Society and was funded by the Status of Women Canada. More information can be found at www.womencreatingchange.org.

designed to allow us to particularly focus on the priority of *sustainable non-traditional employment* for women.

Defining the Issue

A non-traditional occupation is defined as any occupation in which a particular population (such as women or men) comprise less than 25% of that occupation's workforce. Within the trades, women make up 10% of the workforce, but once trades that more traditionally employ women (such as hairdressers or cooks) are taken out from the equation, the proportion of women in the trades is actually only 3%³.

The low proportion of women in trades, and many other resource and industrial construction sector occupations, should be coupled with labour market data showing an anticipated labour market shortage projecting up to 1.1 million job openings by 2020. Many of those jobs are in the resource and industrial construction sectors. Conservative estimates for jobs in Canada in the next ten years indicate the need for:

- 16,700 workers within the mining and mineral exploration sector;
- 60,000 workers for the forestry sector; and
- 65,000 workers for LNG facilities.

Within the Mining, Forestry, LNG, and Oil and Gas sectors, the majority of the occupations are considered non-traditional for women. These include: heavy equipment operators, welders, gas fitters, heavy duty equipment mechanics, operators and labourers. And yet, very few women are applying for these positions and fewer still are remaining in these roles for more than two years. Within the Exploration and Mining sector in B.C., women presently make up only 16% of the workforce and within the fastest growing occupations (Heavy Equipment Operators, Tradespersons, and Labourers), women make up less than 5% of those occupations⁴.

Locally, our labour market consists of many industrial construction and resource sector occupations that are already experiencing labour shortages due to an aging workforce. We also know that:

- Women comprise only 5% of the architecture and engineering workforce; and
- Women comprise only 10% of the construction workforce.⁵

³ Kate Braid, Women in Trades: Veterans say changes need to boost numbers.

⁴ Women: An Unmined Resource. A Report on Female Participation within BC's Mineral Exploration and Mining Industry.

⁵Gold Island Consulting and Helen Lutz Consulting, Gender-based Analysis of Economic Opportunity.

With many non-traditional occupations paying at or above the Living Wage, WOW is interested in understanding why more women are not represented within these occupations. Recognizing that these types of jobs offer excellent pay, benefits, job security and an exciting work environment, the focus of the WOW project was to better understand why women either do not enter or choose to leave these well-paying jobs and what can be done to reverse this trend.

Methodology

The objectives of the Working Options for Women project were to:

- identify and scan key literature;
- determine barriers to attracting and retaining women in non-traditional roles;
- determine effective programs and practices that support the recruitment and retention of women in non-traditional roles; and
- determine key action items that will help reduce barriers to attracting and retaining women in non-traditional roles.

The goals of the project were met through:

1. Secondary research to identify current literature related to the attraction and retention of women in non-traditional occupations (research papers, labour market reports, case studies, employer practices, other);
2. Primary research – Employer interviews, focus groups and field study to identify current barriers related to attracting and retaining women in non-traditional roles and best practices that help reduce and/or eliminate these barriers; and
3. Program design: a Design Team was convened to identify and begin the preliminary design of at least one program or resource which would contribute to the increased recruitment and/or retention of women in non-traditional employment.

About Literature Reviews

The secondary research was conducted by scanning literature containing best practices on the recruitment and retention of women in non-traditional occupations. With a priority given to Canadian content, 25 documents or web sites were identified with the assistance of WOW's lead partner, Skills Source. The resources were reviewed to provide the project's Management Team an understanding of common themes related to the barriers encountered in the recruitment and retention of women together with best practices and recommendations for potential interventions which could be developed locally. These findings have been summarized and organized within this report. A list of the literature can be found under Attachment A.

Focus Groups

Focus Groups were conducted with employers and representatives of organized labour as well as with women who have had experience working in non-traditional fields related to the two sectors under study. The focus groups allowed us to compare and contrast local experience against trends identified in the best practices review. These findings have been summarized and organized within this report. Summary results found under Attachment B.

Survey

As a means of beginning to develop some baseline data on the employment of women in non-traditional roles in the local resource and industrial construction sectors, a survey was sent to all of those who participated in the focus groups. The survey results provided us with some high level data on participation rates as well as hiring preferences and requirements of employers and reasons for career choices from the women with experience in non-traditional work. Findings of the survey have been organized in Attachment C.

Field Study

The WOW Management Team visited the nationally recognized organization, Women Building Futures based in Edmonton. The team was joined on the tour by Kate Pelletier, the Dean responsible for the trades at Selkirk College. This field study provided detailed insight on the tremendous success of this program. Further information can be found under the *Field Study: Women Building Futures* section of this report and the notes from the study under Attachment D.

Design Team

The Design Team consisted of members of the project's Management Team, two members of the Skills Centre's Employment Services staff, a staff member from Skills Source, the Dean responsible for the trades from Selkirk College and a consultant with considerable experience working with some the region's largest employers. As noted earlier, the focus of the Design Team was to assess the information gathered through the research phase and identify at least one program or resource for further development and future implementation.

Reflections on Project Process and Implementation

Although the project has resulted in some very encouraging outcomes that will guide next steps for implementation in our region, there were a number of factors that had an impact on aspects of the project implementation.

Key factors included the timeframe as well as timing. Not only was the project designed to be completed in seven months, due to the prolonged application and negotiation process, it ended up starting in the middle of the summer when many of

those with whom we needed to be in contact were on vacation. In addition, over the fall months there was a major two month maintenance shut down by the region's largest employer which had an impact on the availability and capacity of employers and women with experience in non-traditional employment to participate in the project. While the larger employers did participate, it was harder for the smaller industrial service providers and their female employees to participate, given many of them were contracted to provide services for the shut-down.

There was a lower than expected participation rate from employers beyond those on the Advisory Committee. Initial invitations were distributed via the Advisory Committee and the Skills Centre's local network. After a poor response rate, additional efforts were put towards contacting the small businesses in the region by individual emails or phone calls to provide a personal invitation. Although the timing of the Focus Groups during a major shutdown was identified as a significant barrier, a number of smaller business owners did not view women working in non-traditional work as an issue or an issue of concern to them.

A survey was developed and managed by our lead project partner, Skills Source. The project team made the decision to distribute the survey only to focus group participants. The relatively low numbers resulted in incomplete data giving us a limited snapshot of why women choose to enter non-traditional fields of work and employer hiring preferences. Although 7 participants are recorded as completing the employer survey, many questions were skipped by participants resulting in a range of 1-6 for known individual responses.

In retrospect, it would have been better to send the survey to the larger network of employers in the hope that although they could not attend a focus group, they may have taken the time to respond to a brief on-line questionnaire. Nonetheless, the input received from those who did respond to the survey generally correlated well with the themes that emerged from the best practices literature review, giving us confidence our research as a whole has captured the key issues and opportunities.

Barriers to Recruitment and Retention

Through a study of the best practices literature, six key themes emerged. These, in turn, were divided into two categories: *On the Job* and *Beyond the Job*.

Beyond the Job barriers:

- Lack of education and career awareness
- Lack of role models
- Family responsibilities

On the Job barriers:

- The industrial workplace – image and reality
- Improvements to employer policies
- Discrimination and harassment

Beyond the Job Barriers

The number one barrier reported consistently throughout the survey responses and other research was the lack of education and awareness on the part of women of non-traditional careers that exist or what those careers offer. This lack of awareness can be found amongst women themselves as well as school personnel (career advisors, school counselors and teachers) and family members, all of whom have significant influence over career choices made by girls and women. In general, there is a lack awareness of the benefits non-traditional work can offer girls and women, including: wages, health and other benefits, long-term career opportunities and exciting work.

Linked to the lack of awareness for women of non-traditional work is a lack of role models available to girls and women. With very few women working in these jobs, there are even fewer in a position of power or influence. Noted by many employers and women, there is a significant lack of role models or social networks that exist for women in securing or retaining employment, as opposed to their male counterparts who regularly use their formal or informal networks to gain employment or advance their careers. Secondly, with fewer women in senior management roles, the notion that women are not valued or seen as equal within a company is continually perpetuated.

The last major barrier experienced by women beyond the job is that of family responsibilities. This theme can take many forms ranging from childcare to elder care to single parenting.

These factors particularly impact women who are lone parents. In the Lower Columbia Region, for every lone-male household, there are 3 lone-female households. There is also the recognition that women tend to shoulder the bulk of responsibility for unpaid work at home, such as childcare and household upkeep⁶.

There are also the practical implications of pregnancy and maternity leave, which can cause difficulties for women as they often feel a need to choose between family and work. There is the reality that a fly-in camp is not a suitable (or even legal) option for a breastfeeding mother. These various family responsibilities will often either prevent a woman from entering a non-traditional field due to her perceptions of the job or they may affect her remaining in the work (such as choosing to not return after a maternity leave).

On the Job Barriers:

Connected to the general lack of education about non-traditional career opportunities is an understanding of the realities of the industrial or construction

⁶ Gold Island Consulting and Helen Lutz Consulting, Gender-based Analysis of Economic Opportunity

workplaces. Depending on a woman's experience and point of view, the reality of working in the industrial environment that is male dominated and often physically demanding and dirty can be both enticing and intimidating. There is a need to educate women on what they can expect to experience and this experience may intrigue some and may turn away others. Using carpentry as an example, there is a vast difference in experience between working in a large, industrial setting compared to that of a small, residential builder. Understanding what the differences are between the various occupations – such as working in a laboratory versus working on a shop floor – will support the recruitment of the right type of woman who is truly interested in working in these settings.

Although women have a responsibility to learn about the environment in which they may work, employers also have a responsibility to improve their policies related to recruitment and retention. Employers must show that their workplace is open and accepting of women at all levels of work, including the opportunity to promote women to higher levels of management and roles of influence, authority and expertise.

In addition to having policies on the books, employers must also act upon incidents of discrimination and harassment experienced by some women. Although overt discrimination and harassment appear to be on the decline, there are still examples of hiring policies and floor practices that do discriminate against women. When these complaints come forward, employers must be willing to take them seriously and act both to alleviate the grievance and prevent its reoccurrence.

Elements/Themes of Success

A variety of programs, including employer campaigns, non-profit organizations programs and school offerings, were reviewed and five common themes supporting the successful recruitment and retention of women were identified:

- partnerships;
- training;
- workplace communication;
- workplace practices; and
- financial management skills.

At least one of these core elements was evident in the case studies that were reviewed and the most successful programs combined 2 or more of these elements.

Partnerships

In order for a program to be successful or for a business to see positive results attracting or retaining women, partnerships have to be developed. Common partnerships included schools (from elementary to post-secondary), employers, and labour. The partnerships came in the form of funding opportunities, program development support, site visits, work experience placements, and workshops

designed for girls. Generally, the greater the involvement of employers in the various educational or career programs, the greater the success experienced with recruitment and retention.

Training

When a program was designed targeting women to enter non-traditional fields (commonly related to trades training), this training had similar core components that revolved around introducing women to tools and to understanding the work environment. Typically, workshops or training programs included workplace safety, first aid, tool handling, academic upgrading, and fitness assessment. Consequently, when the training was completed, women were seen as desirable candidates for hire due to the training they had taken.

Workplace Communication

Communication skills were highlighted throughout the best practices reviewed. These communication skills tended to focus on conflict resolution and how to deal with the differences in communication styles between men and women. They also involved teaching women how to be assertive in their career planning. Although not as strong a focus, there was recognition that employers and management had a greater rate of success when they also learned and practiced good communication skills.

Workplace Practices

There are two components to the Workplace Practices theme. The first is related to the women who are working or interested in working in the non-traditional fields. They have a responsibility, whether through formal training programs or their own research, to truly understand the workplace environment. This includes understanding the realities of the workplace including lifestyle and fitness requirements, workplace culture, and potential barriers they may experience. This is not to say that discrimination and harassment should be tolerated but an awareness of the environment they are entering, and an understanding of how their behaviours can either elicit respect or discrimination, can make a significant difference to success in the workplace. Ideally, site visits and work experience can be arranged to allow women the opportunity to experience the environment before they actually enter the job.

The second Workplace Practices theme is related to employers who implemented practices and policies that supported women. Those employers had significantly greater success increasing the diversity of their workplace. These policies included equity hiring policies, procedures to promote women to positions of influence, family friendly policies, and implementing opportunities for constructive criticism through performance reviews.

Financial Management Skills

Specifically related to program delivery for women in trades or other non-traditional training was the topic of financial management and the importance of incorporating these skills into program delivery. Many participants in these programs have historically been low income, including a history of employment in minimum wage jobs, part-time hours and few or no benefits. After completion of training and successful employment, women will see a significant increase in their income. Learning how to manage that income (such as savings or debt management) was a core component of many programs. In addition, many women may find themselves employed in a cyclical occupation (by working at a fly-in camp or relying on major project construction) and learning how to manage those cycles is new for many.

Focus Group Results

Focus groups were held to gain an understanding the local context of women in non-traditional roles and to develop a better understanding of what employers are seeking in employees and issues with which they are dealing, particularly related to female employees. The focus groups provided the WOW project a source of local information and an opportunity to validate the themes that had emerged through the best practices review. An unanticipated result of the focus groups was the connection created amongst the participants who had the opportunity to share experiences and insights with other like-minded individuals in similar circumstances.

The questions asked at the Focus Groups were slightly modified between employers/labour representatives and the women who had experience in non-traditional work. The intention was to gather the various perspectives on barriers women are facing and to provide recommendations related to the recruitment and retention of women. (Recommendations for action can be found under *Focus Group Suggestions*).

Focus group notes can be found in Attachment B.

Employees/Women with Experience in Non-Traditional Work

Three Focus Groups were held with women who are or have been employed⁷ in non-traditional fields of work. There was a total of 14 participants (including two one-to-one interviews) who represented a broad range of ages, experiences, and occupations. They included women who were labourers, tradespersons, technicians, and engineers, as well as women who were students; women who were

⁷ An exception was allowed for one participant who was a former carpenter but quit that career because of barriers she had experienced. WOW felt her input was valuable in understanding her reasons for leaving the trade.

single or in a relationship, with or without children. An unexpected and consistent outcome came at the end of each Focus Group; without fail or prompting, the women exchanged email or contact information.

Although it was not a focus of the research, nor the result of a directed question, the themes of family and children regularly emerged. Of the 14 participants, only 2 reported having children. Of the women they knew (colleagues or friends) who are working in non-traditional roles, participants estimated only 5%-10% have children. This data should be used with caution but suggests a trend that would be worthy of further research and discussion.

Participants were asked to discuss and describe the various barriers they have experienced both on and off the job site. Similar to the best practices research, women reported a lack of awareness of non-traditional career options when they were making career decisions, feelings of isolation and feelings of inadequacy.

- The number one barrier all women reported was the concept of **having to “prove themselves.”** Every woman felt, on some level, she had to work harder, make fewer mistakes and was under constant scrutiny. Nobody wanted to be “that girl” who couldn’t perform her task. Women felt they were held to a different standard, had to ensure they showed up early to work instead of just on-time and had to prove they were qualified for work, as opposed to their male counterparts for whom it was generally assumed they knew their job.
- **Confidence and self-image** was seen as another key barrier, both during training and once hired. The women felt they had to have a “thick skin, be “willing to prove yourself,” not be “weak,” felt highly “scrutinized” and ended up being “an ambassador for all women.” Others felt their confidence undermined due to comments from supervisors or male co-workers such as “do you actually want to be here” and “Let me do it, I can do it faster.”
- **Lack of awareness** of both the benefits to business of having women in non-traditional roles or fields of work and of awareness by other women and girls about what non-traditional employment can provide.
 - All women reiterated the **need to target girls and introduce them to non-traditional work at an early age**, promoting the variety of jobs that exist and the potential career paths they could take.
 - Most of the participants **had a direct link to someone** who was working in a similar occupation, male or female.

The focus group questions then began to explore what was working or what other supports could have been in place to assist the women to address the barriers encountered. As was reflected in the best practices review, particular supports they would have liked to have had access included:

- **Finding supportive and encouraging networks** of both females and males, has been key for many of the women. In addition, the opportunity to discuss issues such as harassment and bullying, to debrief (complain) about co-workers or supervisors with others who understand and to have a strong role model has led to the success them of remaining in the field. **Issues of social exclusion/inclusion at work** were heard time and again.
- **Improving workplace culture through supportive upper managers who understand issues and concerns specific to women.**
 - **Increased communication** with supervisors or management was key, ranging from the practical (providing receptacles for used feminine/sanitary products), to the philosophical (addressing issues with light duty assignments and HR decisions based on the “squeaky wheel” or favouritism), to the need for positive feedback/constructive criticism during reviews.
 - Alongside improving workplace culture, there is the recognition that **women must understand the environment into which they are entering**. Industrial or construction settings may not appeal or be suitable to all women and there should be an awareness of what to expect prior to being hired.
 - Although most women did not consider health or safety issues when commencing their career, **concerns regarding exposure to chemicals and the impacts of the environment on pregnant women** were raised.

Employers

There were two employer focus groups plus an additional in-person interview and an email submission resulting in a total of nine local employers represented. This number includes the majority of the Advisory Committee members which consisted of a cross-section of large and small employers and labour organizations with individuals in a variety of roles, including management, human resources and community relations.

Amongst the first questions asked of the employer group were those related to the advantages of hiring women. Also asked was whether or not they had personally experienced having women on the job site and, if so, what those experiences were. Of the employers who did have experience employing women in non-traditional roles, the experience was overwhelmingly seen as having a positive impact on the workplace. From safety to cleanliness to the culture, women were viewed as a positive addition to the worksite.

- **Hiring women has a positive impact on the workplace.** Although it was noted that qualifications – not gender – were the primary criteria used for a

selection, employers indicated an overall positive impact on the workplace when women were hired. Specific positive impacts on the workplace included:

- **Improving the culture within the workplace.** “Strategy and collaboration increased” as a woman will provide a “right and left {brain} balance in the room” through social or inter-personal skills.
- **Creating a safer work environment.** Creative solutions were developed to address problems or issues (such as dealing with physical strength capacities) and more “care and caution” are used when doing their work.
- **Higher level of care** to details means better organization, greater attention to detail, and more care given to finishing, including with “finesse jobs” such as in welding.
- **Reduction in equipment costs** due to the care and safety the women tend to have for their equipment and gear.

When discussing the barriers, participants were quick to note the primary barrier they saw for women entering into non-traditional occupations was a lack of knowledge and awareness about those opportunities.

- **Awareness about the trades** and other non-traditional work is required.
 - Working with the schools at a younger age to encourage and educate girls about non-traditional work needs to occur as well as efforts made to reverse typical “gender socialization.”
 - Increasing the communication between industry and training so that there is a better understanding on the part of educators of both the realities of the work environment and culture and the potential career paths available.
- **Specific barriers do exist for women in non-traditional roles:**
 - **Women are isolated on the job** and need supports. They are “alone” and they “stick out” while everyone is watching and “listening” to them. There is a higher level of scrutiny in what they say and do.
 - **Women will be left out of the “whole plan”** or larger context within which their piece of work is situated and are also **given less desirable jobs.**
 - **Shift work and apprenticeship training is not family friendly.**
 - **The realities of the industrial environment** may appeal to some and not to others.
 - **There are few role models/women in higher positions** to encourage and support younger or newer recruits.

Survey

As a means of beginning to develop some baseline data on the employment of women in non-traditional roles in the local resource and industrial construction sectors, a survey was sent to all of those who participated in the focus groups, providing us with data on participation rates and other factors related to recruitment of women. Please note comments in the Methodology section about the limitations of these survey results.

The surveys were separated into two groups: an Employer Survey and an Employee Survey. Both had a focus on hiring preferences and requirements with added questions to the Employees related to reasons for choosing non-traditional work. A full breakdown of responses can be found in Attachment C.

Employer Survey Summary

Seven surveys were completed representing a diversity of perspective including: size, business, industry and labour. All respondents indicated they were expecting to hire within the next year, and hiring requirements were predominantly for a trade and/or specific certification. Although all employers were interested in hiring women, they were not necessarily interested in hiring them as a direct or targeted demographic at this time. None of the responding employers had specific tools or programs that focused on hiring and/or retaining women in non-traditional employment.

Employee survey

Twelve surveys were completed and a great variety of industries and occupations were represented in the employee survey. There was a full spectrum of work experience represented, from students to those with over 20 years' experience. Respondents were a highly educated group with almost 60% indicating they had a college or bachelor's degree.

The top factors that influenced their interest in non-traditional work were their immediate network and the community: they either grew up in a resource sector community or had a friend or family member who worked in industry. The top reasons for choosing their current employer and present place of work was the ability and opportunity to apply knowledge, the potential for career advancement, and benefits. They most likely found and applied for their job through the company website, an online industry specific job board, or a newspaper ad.

When asked about advice they would give to other women interested in working in a non-traditional field of work, they responded that women need: to personally learn about the job in which they are interested; to pursue an education in those fields in which they are interested; and to develop a strong sense of self and self-confidence.

Advice they wish to give to employers, past and present, included: improving workplace and HR policies that encourage and support women on the job; taking the training they need in order to get the tools that support retaining women; and supporting education and awareness in the community of non-traditional employment opportunities.

Field Study: Women Building Futures

Overview/About

Prior to applying for the funding for the project, members of the project's Management Team had learned about the Women Building Futures program in Edmonton and had built the opportunity for a site visit into the project plan. It was subsequently discovered that representatives of the larger employers on the Advisory Committee were already aware and enthusiastic about the program.

Women Building Futures (WBF) is a successful non-profit organization that has prided itself on creating and producing excellent female employees for many of the big oil and gas companies in Alberta. Based in Edmonton, they were established in 1998 by a small group of social workers who identified a need to create opportunities for greater economic prosperity for their female clients by supporting them to enter non-traditional careers.

Although they started out in an undeveloped rental space in the basement of an old building, they now currently boast a wholly owned facility in downtown Edmonton which features training and administrative space as well as 48 units of affordable housing (18 of which are dedicated to single moms). Beginning with a focus on supporting under-employed women, WBF has developed well-established and positive reputation with the major industries for providing a continuous supply of hard-working, pre-screened, and trained employees.

WBF is nationally recognized as a leader for training women to work in the trades. They offer four full programs with the following focuses: Journeywoman, Electrical, Welding, and Driver/Operator. It should be noted that these three month programs prepare the graduates for direct entry into their trade of choice as opposed to the six to nine month Entry Level Trades Training program model more common in B.C.

Their success can be seen through their graduation and employment rates:

- 96% of accepted applicants graduate;
- 90% employment rate upon graduation;
- Approximately 80% complete one year of employment⁸;

⁸ One year employment tracking has only recently been implemented, but their estimate is nearly 80%.

- 76% complete four years of employment⁹;
- Graduates see an average annual income increase of 227% on the first day of hire.

A key reason for their continued success is their business-oriented program delivery model. WBF recognized a market need (labour market shortage) and created a high value service to address that need (highly qualified workers). They have very high standards for acceptance into the program and have created a reputation for providing excellent workers. They receive significant funding from industry (such as Suncor, Finning, Mammoet, and Imperial Oil) for training and equipment, including direct seat purchases and customized program delivery. These revenue sources significantly decrease reliance on public funding.

Over the past 10 years, there has been a 62% increase in the number of women in the construction trades in Alberta, an increase due in no small part to the tremendous success of WBF. The combined notes of the members of the project team that participated in the site visit can be found in Attachment D.

WBF Application Process

The application process for Women Building Futures is extensive and rigorous. It begins with an Awareness Campaign. This campaign targets women aged 25-40 across Alberta. Visiting communities throughout the province, they offer information sessions that provide a high-level overview of the trades and what career and income opportunities they can offer. Using a base figure of 100 participants attending the information sessions, about 75% will continue to the next step.

Career Decision Workshops are the next step in the application process. Depending on the community, these workshops may last from a half day to five days. (The workshops held in small Aboriginal communities typically extend over five days whereas those held in the larger urban centres of Edmonton and Calgary are more likely to be delivered in tight half day sessions with greater expectation for self-directed work on the part of the participants outside the actual time allocated for the workshops.)

These workshops involve assessments of the individual and an understanding of challenges they are likely to encounter in the program and on the job. Women are warned that successful hiring will depend on drug and fitness tests, and if these are an issue, women are encouraged to delay their application until they have accessed supports that help them address these personal issues. Staff will help refer them to the supports they need.

⁹ Due to their post-graduation services, this number has been tracked and WBF confirms that 76% are still employed after four years.

Assessments also involve Math and English skills and, if needed, women are directed to upgrade their skills accordingly. At these workshops, the women must put in time to research and truly understand the trade in which each one is interested. Staff from WBF are present and work with the women but the responsibility is on each woman to be self-directed and self-motivated. During this stage, they will see an additional 50% drop out.

The final step is the woman's application to the program in which she is interested. At this stage, around 20-30% of the participants who attended the original information session are remaining. Once the initial paperwork is submitted, the women must also submit to rigorous drug testing which provides a lifestyle "snapshot." This snapshot is able to provide a picture of drug use, alcohol use, and activity level. Given that the women who reach this stage of the intake process are well aware of the rigors of the course, the expectations of the employer and the work environment, a very high percentage are accepted into the WBF program and go on to graduate.

Program

There are four full programs (Journeywoman, Electrical, Welding, Driver/Operator) each of which is comprised of six components. Throughout the full program and within each component, awareness of workplace safety is infused and regularly reiterated.

- **Component 1:** Workplace culture awareness explores the realities of the industry and environment associated with trades careers. This component also includes conflict resolution skills and how to work within a male dominated culture (without accepting harassment as the norm).
- **Component 2:** Academic review and upgrading, beyond the basic math and English which was completed during the application process.
- **Component 3:** Fitness is recognized as a necessary requirement of most trades occupations. Women are given a customized fitness program based on their trade of choice (with a typical focus on core and upper body strength). In addition to class activities, women are expected to regularly go to the gym and do the additional workouts.
- **Component 4:** Apprenticeship preparation helps them understand what to expect and how to create an apprenticeship plan outlining the skills they should be learning. This component includes a timeline to help keep them on track.
- **Component 5:** Due to the significant increase in earning power, money management skills are discussed.
- **Component 6:** The training facility allows for hands-on learning experience and customized skill training for the women's trade of choice (electrical, welding, etc.).

Throughout their course, the women will receive additional support by WBF staff. Once the women are employed, staff will spend a significant amount of time with employers to ensure the apprenticeship paperwork is completed and that apprenticeship plans are being developed and followed¹⁰. This work also includes instilling the confidence in the women to approach their employer to keep their apprenticeship and training plan on schedule and to address any concerns that may emerge with their apprenticeship plan.

Upon graduation, the women have access to a team of three counselors who provide wrap-around supports for the women for the next four years. This provides the women both a place and an opportunity to raise concerns, develop solutions and, sometimes, just vent about work or life. It creates a safe, social network for the women.

In addition to the full-time courses, WBF offers short-term workshops for women on Safety, Workplace Culture and Awareness, and Math Boot Camps as well as customized programs for specific employers. In 2015, their plan is to begin to significantly branch out into the delivery of on-line training.

WBF has also recognized the need for employers to understand the benefits to hiring and retaining women and also how employers can create women-friendly work environments. Their workshop, *She Works*, is targeted at employers, promoting effective hiring and retention practices.

Program Design and Strategic Plan

Informing the design phase of the project, the themes, trends and recommendations emerging from the research phase were reviewed and discussed. Summarized below are the key themes and topics.

As identified earlier in this document there are a number of motivations and benefits for an employer to hire women and to increase the diversity of their workplace. With input from the Focus Groups as well as the Advisory Committee, ideas for local solutions to improve the rate of recruitment and retention of women in non-traditional occupations were identified. In doing so, the Design Team recognized that solutions must involve employers, labour organizations, schools, counseling staff, and interested women working together to recognize and address the barriers women face. Multiple partners or stakeholders must work together to improve both recruitment and retention.

¹⁰ Executive Director, Judy Lynn, refers to it as WBF staff “calling and hounding the employers.”

Focus Group Suggestions

The participants were provided an opportunity to share and create ideas on what could be done locally to increase the presence of women in non-traditional occupations.

Both employers and employees stressed the importance of educating young girls about the benefits of non-traditional work *before* they enter high school. Through hands on experience, summer camps, job fairs, or site visits, there is a need to increase the awareness of girls at a young age and engage their interest in non-traditional opportunities. Also recognized was the importance of ensuring school counselors and career education teachers have the information about non-traditional opportunities, understand the value of these occupations and share the information with the students.

Connected to improving young girls' awareness is also the need to increase women's awareness of the benefits of working in the resource or industrial construction sectors. Common ideas heard from the women included the development of advertising campaigns specifically targeting women. Many employers noted that they were receiving very few applications or resumes from women, even for non-skilled non-traditional job opportunities.

Although the employers were open, willing, and in some cases, preferred the idea of having women in the workplace, there was hesitation about creating gender-specific campaigns and targeted advertising for women. Their concerns stemmed from perceptions of discrimination against men as well as labour agreements in which seniority is typically the predominant criterion for selection.

There was also a desire from both women and employers to provide opportunities to allow women to truly understand the "good and the bad" of non-traditional work environments through orientation workshops and job shadowing opportunities. Workshops can be modeled after current best practices, including introductions to the types of work available, the work environment and conflict resolution skills.

The women were also very keen to interact with other women, be it through formal mentorship or coaching programs or just simply having an opportunity to connect through a community network, such as Facebook or coffee dates. The desire to have someone else who understands them and their issues – even if just to vent – resulted in the women in their respective Focus Groups trading contact information. As coaching and mentorship was brought up at each of the Focus Groups and the interviews (both for employers/labour organizations and for the women), the idea of offering women the opportunity for a mentor generated enthusiasm. The vast majority of the participants in the women's focus groups said they would volunteer to be a coach or mentor.

Lastly, the women expressed the desire for better workplace policies and *implementation* of those policies. These policies and practices ranged from Family Friendly Workplace environments¹¹, to consistent follow-through on discrimination or harassment issues, to regular employee reviews that provide feedback on work performance and career advancement opportunities through to improved safety practices.

Design Team

For two full days in January, a Design Team met to review the information gathered and to identify and begin to design at least one program, initiative or resource that would contribute to the increased recruitment and retention of women in the resource and industrial construction sector in the project region. Following the in-person meeting, there was follow-up consultation with and further input provided by all the members of the Design Team.

The Design Team consisted of:

- Michele Cherot, Business Manager, Skills Centre
- Tara Howse, President and Owner, Howse Business Solutions
- Janet Morton, Executive Director, Skills Centre
- Victoria Pazukha, Manager Strategy and Business Development, Skills Source
- Jaime Malcolm, Employment Counselor, Skills Centre
- Marla Smiley, Employment Services Contractor Manager, Skills Centre
- Kate Pelletier, Dean of Instruction, Selkirk College
- Sue Bock, President and Owner, Bock and Associates

As the Design Team filtered through the themes and data from the best practices review, the focus groups, the survey and the Advisory Committee discussions, it became apparent that the selection of a specific project or resource had to occur in context with a larger picture of the various interventions needed to make a difference to the recruitment and retention of women.

The Design Team developed an overarching strategic plan that identified the key strands of activity that need to take place between now and 2020 if we are to see a significant and measureable increase in the awareness, participation rates and income of women in the West Kootenay in non-traditional work in the resource and industrial construction sectors. The plan was designed to parallel a similar but broader community plan developed for the *Women Creating Change* project called the *20/20 Vision for 2020*.

The WOW strategic plan (which can be found in full under Attachment E) begins with the following goal statement:

¹¹ Family Friendly Workplaces or Policies are practices that are embedded within the workplace to recognize and value the work-life balance.

In 2020, there will be a significant, measurable increase in the awareness, income, and participation rate of women in the West Kootenay in non-traditional work in the resource and industrial construction sectors.

Program Design

Guided by the strategic plan, The Skills Centre is committed to finding the means to develop and deliver programming in the following areas:

- Promotion and awareness opportunities for girls and women in non-traditional roles;
- Readiness for women to work in the resource and industrial construction sector; and
- Retention of women to work in non-traditional roles.

Promotion and Awareness

The primary focus of a promotion and awareness campaign should be focused on girls in the school system, ideally beginning in the middle school years (Grades 5-8). A campaign of this nature needs to not only seek to influence the attitudes of girls but also their parents and other adults who are in a position of significant influence, such as school counselors and teachers.

Although this project has not focused on the design of a specific program, several opportunities for program delivery have been identified, including the following:

- a. The *Pizza, Peers and Power Tools* program developed by Skills Source specifically targeted at students in the middle school years. Skills Source has provided the Skills Centre with a program outline and has offered to partner in the delivery of a program if sufficient funding can be secured.
- b. After school or summer camps designed to encourage girls to explore design, tools and technologies. One example would be a one week Girls into Trades and Technology (GETT) camp in which there are multiple hands-on activities designed to engage the curiosity and interest of girls in non-traditional activities.
- c. Promotion of guest speakers in schools and job shadowing or work experience opportunities that expose girls to non-traditional employment. One specific commitment made by the Skills Centre and Teck Metals Ltd. will take place at a Youth Empowerment Summit on April 29th. It will involve the delivery of a 35 minute workshop to four groups of secondary school girls on the topic of non-traditional careers opportunities in Teck Metals Ltd.

A secondary focus of a promotion and awareness campaign needs to be designed to influence general community opinion.

- a. Intended as a legacy project of the three year *Women Creating Change* project, the Skills Centre is in the midst of working with several

community partners to create a mural on a feature outdoor wall of a downtown Trail building. The two themes that will be incorporated into the design of the mural image will be a celebration of the contributions of women to the Lower Columbia Region and an inspiration to girls to be or do whatever they wish. In developing this mural, we are intending to create something different from the various murals already existing in the community, none of which feature women in prominent (let alone non-traditional) roles.

- b. Community education classes delivered by Selkirk College's Trail Campus that provide women with the opportunity to learn about trades related activities such as home carpentry, home plumbing and/or use of power tools.

Readiness for Women

In addition to supporting women to successfully remain and advance in non-traditional careers, employers have indicated there is a worrisome shortage of female applicants for non-traditional roles. There is a need to develop and deliver a program that supports women to explore and prepare for non-traditional roles, particularly in the resource and industrial construction sectors.

Informed by the success of the Women Building Futures program in Edmonton, key components of a program need to include the following:

- a. A rigorous selection process that provides an opportunity for interested women to research non-traditional career options as well gain an understanding of the requirements and challenges of the non-traditional workplace. Simply stated, it is neither fair for the women nor for the employers to set a woman up for failure by not ensuring she has a clear understanding of the requirements and culture of the work for which she is applying.
- b. A program that addresses the following key topics:
 - Workplace culture awareness
 - Physical fitness and health (including drug testing)
 - Essential skills review and upgrading (document use, numeracy, reading and computer skills)
 - Technical skills training (use of tools and shop equipment)
 - Preparation for apprenticeship or other professional or technical certification
 - Money management
- c. Job Search, Placement and Retention Support

The scope, breadth and depth of program delivery would be subject to funding available. Funding options, however, are limited and often restricted by target

population. For instance, there are funds available for time limited programming for highly vulnerable populations but the risk is that women meeting these criteria are likely to have barriers to successful employment that would seriously affect the likelihood of being accepted into non-traditional employment, let alone retaining that employment over time.

As we explore options for funding that would allow a more comprehensive approach to program delivery, the Skills Centre, through its Work BC Employment Services Centre, has committed to deliver a modified introduction for women into non-traditional occupations through its *180 Change Workshop* series. Open to women who are unemployed or employed less than 20 hours per week, the four week program will offer opportunities for career exploration, job search skills, essential skill assessment and development, workplace safety, communication skills and workplace culture awareness and fitness testing. An outline of this workshop can be found in Attachment F.

In addition, discussions are underway with Selkirk College about the delivery in Trail of a 12 week *Discovery to Trades* program for women. The Ministry of Advanced Education has approved funding for program delivery but it needs to be augmented by additional funds to support an appropriate application and intake process. As Selkirk College does not have shops classrooms on its Trail Campus, discussions will need to take place with local employers and/or the School District to provide access to a setting and equipment for the hands on skill training in power and related tools.

Placement and Retention

The Skills Centre is pleased to report that action has already begun on a significant initiative designed to address the retention and advancement of women in non-traditional employment.

In the spring of 2014, while still negotiating and finalizing the Working Options for Women project contract, The Skills Centre had the opportunity to respond to a Call for Proposals from the Status of Women Canada to develop and deliver a mentorship program to support the advancement of women in their careers. A project proposal was prepared in collaboration with Teck Metals Ltd., Bock and Associates and Gold Island Consulting and funding was approved in late 2014.

Mining and Refining for Women (MR4W), was launched in January 2015. It involves the design and delivery of a sustainable in-house mentorship program to be offered in two geographically distinct Teck Resources operations in the province. The goal is to significantly improve the retention and advancement of women in non-traditional roles, ranging from front line operations through to those in technical and professional roles.

Our intention is to initially implement this model with Teck Operations in Trail and then, once we have evidence of success, we will select a second Teck Resources site in the province to participate in the project. In doing so, we will be building a replication ready model that we are confident will be readily transferable to other resource sector operations.

The project design extends over 30 months and includes the development and delivery of a series of structured seven-month mentorship programs involving four cohorts of female employees and their mentors.

The first two cohort groups within Teck Metals Ltd. operations in Trail have been identified and confirmed as high priority by the Senior Human Resources staff. The first will be female Engineers and the second will be Production Operators (who have a variety of production related responsibilities in the various plants that make up Teck's Trail Operations). The make-up of the concurrently run third cohort within Trail operations and a fourth cohort in a Teck Resources mine site elsewhere in B.C., will be determined once an initial gender lens needs assessment has been completed and the model has been developed, tested and refined.

Designed to be integrated into a very busy 24/7 production environment with multiple shifts, a key priority will be the effective and efficient use of participant, mentor and project management time. For each cohort group, the mentorship program is anticipated to include:

- a. A full day launch, in which participants and their mentors will be provided with an overview of the program, overview of participant and mentor roles, and the development of personal goals for the participants.
- b. Two to four hours of coaching conversations per month for each female participant with her mentor. The conversations will be scheduled around respective work schedules and a busy 24/7 plant operation.
- c. Monthly group coaching sessions for the participants. Not only will these sessions allow for the effective identification of issues and strategy for action, they will also provide opportunities to develop peer or affinity group support which has been identified as a key feature of effective mentorship models in the research.
- d. Four, six-hour workshops for the participants. Although the specific topics will be selected based on the specific needs, professions and work environments of each cohort group, possible topics could be personal presentation and speaking skills on the plant floor, leadership education, managing difficult conversations and more.
- e. Monthly group coaching sessions for the mentors as well as some limited access to one-to-one coaching to develop the skills of the mentors. It is anticipated that the mentors will be in a supervisory or managerial role

within the company, thereby increasing the likelihood of positively addressing issues affecting the retention of women in the workplace.

Although this project model was conceived prior to approval of the WOW project funding, MR4W will greatly benefit from the knowledge acquired through the WOW project's research into best practices, the focus groups and Advisory Committee discussions.

Conclusions

In addressing the topic of improving the participation rate of women in non-traditional occupations, there are no simple, quick fix solutions. The answer lies in a long term, multi-faceted community based approach that capitalizes on the emerging skilled labour shortage and that includes developing and sustaining key partnerships, skill development for both employers and employees, and the promotion of policies and practices that support greater workplace diversity.

The business case for improving diversity in the workplace, including increased numbers of women in non-traditional roles, has been demonstrated in a number of studies. Simply put, workforce diversity has been shown to better the bottom line of businesses that embrace this kind of change.

The following are commonly and regularly documented improvements to businesses which have a commitment to workforce diversity:

- Diversity contributes to the development of positive work environments. Research shows that positive work environments have resulted in up to a 30% improvement in employee performance. This change in culture and performance translates differently in different businesses, but by creating a welcoming work culture, job satisfaction goes up, resulting in more productive employees.
- The reputation for having a welcoming work environment makes an employer a top choice for candidates, giving those employers a hiring edge and the opportunity to be more selective. Women rank a safe work environment as more important than wages when seeking employment.
- Higher retention rates mean lower turnover rates and costs associated with recruitment and on-boarding.
- Higher job satisfaction results in lower absenteeism.
- A diverse workforce provides opportunities for businesses to better understand and meet the various needs and demands of their clients. Female employees can provide an additional lens or angle that may have been overlooked by a workforce in which there are few or no women.
- Diversity leads to the opportunity to innovate and maintain a competitive edge. This innovation may come from senior managers in relation to the creation of a new product or process or from employees who identify better

- processes for getting work done. Taken together, diversity allows for a richer work environment.
- Inclusion of women in non-traditional roles can have a positive impact on safety in the workplace, improved cleanliness of the worksite and reduced operational cost due to better care of the equipment

In our local context, we learned that there is a need to create and improve partnerships amongst key players committed to long-term change. These partnerships need to focus on promoting non-traditional work opportunities to young girls through the local school system as well as through other community-based hands-on workshops, seminars, or events. In addition, the people in a position of influence on girls' decision making such as school counselors, teachers and administrators, employment centre counsellors, and parents, need to be educated about the options and benefits of non-traditional work for women.

We also learned that there is considerable diversity of opinion amongst local employers regarding the existence of barriers to women working in non-traditional fields of work. Some employers, such as those involved in the project's Advisory Committee, recognize the barriers that women face and also are aware of the benefits that women have brought to their workplace. There are other employers in the region, however, who do not recognize or see any particular issues facing women working in non-traditional roles. We also heard locally that although employers are interested in and open to hiring women in non-traditional roles, women are simply not applying for advertised positions, whether those be for skilled work or unskilled labour.

The absence of policies and practices that support the integration of women into non-traditional employment appears to be another issue. At the time of completing the survey, none of the respondents to the Employer Survey reported specific tools or programs focused on hiring and/or retaining women in non-traditional employment although the Mining and Refining for Women project described earlier in this report may help identify policies and processes that could be shared with other employers.

For the women who are presently working in non-traditional roles, the most frequently reported factors that influenced their choice of employment were the experience of having lived in a resource community and/or having friends or family members working in one of the industries. We heard a wide variety of stories ranging from outright harassment to complete support in a variety of types of workplaces. One common element that was heard from the women, however, was the need for skills and support on strategies for simply fitting in and being a part of their workplace community. The majority felt they "stuck out" and expressed the interest in having access to a network of other women with whom to talk (either at work or outside of the workplace).

When asked about what advice they would give to their employers, they suggested the adoption of workplace and human resource policies that specifically target the retention of women. They also suggested that employers and managers take training on the implementation of these policies and practices.

The women also recognized the value in taking time to support educational and awareness programs within the community that promote non-traditional opportunities to girls and women. They recommended that women take advantage of opportunities to learn about the various fields of non-traditional work available, that they pursue an education in those fields that interest them, and that they work on developing a strong sense of self and self-confidence.

As a result of the WOW project, our community now has a plan which reflects key themes gleaned from the research and which can guide a long-term commitment to the kinds of systemic changes needed to produce a change in the participation rate of women in non-traditional work. We recognize that by increasing the participation rate of women in resource and construction sector occupations to 10% from the current 3-5%, it would advance the community and our workplaces towards a critical tipping point in which subsequent leveling of gender within the labour market will happen more naturally and easily.

Combining the strategic plan with the efforts of motivated individuals, strong partnerships, well-designed programs, and shared workplace policies and practices, our region has the potential to make significant change for women seeking better livelihoods with which to support themselves and their families and for employers needing a good, reliable supply of skilled workers.

Attachment A: Web and Literature Resources

1. Women: An Unmined Resource. A Report on Female Participation within BC's Mineral Exploration and Mining Industry. 2011
<http://www.mihir.ca/en/publications/resources/Women-AnUnminedResource.AReportonFemaleParticipationwithinBCsMineralExplorationandMiningIndustry.pdf>
2. Women in Male Dominated Trades. Prepared for the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission
http://www.saskapprenticeship.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/women_in_the_trades_FINAL20081.pdf
3. Wider Opportunities for Women. Women and Non-traditional Work report. WOW, Washington DC.
<http://www.wowonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Women-and-Non-Traditional-Work-Fact-Sheet-2010.pdf>
4. Resource Guide. How to Recruit and Retain Women Workers in Non-Traditional Workplaces
<http://www.acareerinminingbc.ca/sites/default/files/resourceguide-recruitretainwomennt-e.pdf>
5. Women in Non-Traditional Occupations. Stories to Inspire. AB.
<http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/winto.pdf>
6. Consider a female apprentice.
http://apprenticeshippays.com/english/PDFeng/Toolkit_pdf_Section4.pdf
7. TradesWomen. Career Knowledge for Trades Women in BC – Online Guide and Resources
<http://tradeswomen.ca/>
8. ITA Women in Trades Training Program
<http://www.itabc.ca/corporate-reports/labour-market-agreement-report/category/women-in-trades-training/>
9. The State of Women in Construction in Canada. 2010. Report.
<http://www.buildforce.ca/en/products/state-women-construction-canada>
10. Article. Nunatsiaqonline.

- a. Article.
http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut_mine_brings_prosperity_affliction_to_inuit_women_report/
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http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674agnico_eagle_commits_to_review_its_employee_programs_in_wake_of_pauktu/
11. Women in Male-Dominated Industries and Occupations in U.S. and Canada. Catalyst. Knowledge Centre.
<http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-male-dominated-industries-and-occupations-us-and-canada>
 12. Report. 2003. Creating a Workplace Culture that Attracts, Retains and Promotes Women. The Centre of Excellence for Women's Advancement. The Conference Board of Canada
<http://www.gnb.ca/0037/report/WorkplacesthatWork-e.pdf>
 13. Book. Bitter choices: Blue-Collar Women in and out of Work (Women in Culture and Society) -
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0226726452/womeninconstru/002-2740601-1351450>
 14. Women in construction trades. A Strategic Plan to Promote Women. 2007
http://www.acareerinminingbc.ca/sites/default/files/women_in_construction_trades_women_in_leadership.pdf
 15. Article. More women in skilled trades is a win-win. *Marcia Smith is senior vice-president, sustainability and external affairs, with Teck Resources Ltd.*
http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/more-women-in-skilled-trades-is-a-win-win/article19608649/?cmpid=rss1&click=sf_globe
 16. Apprenticeship and Non Traditional Employment for Women. WA. Program
<http://anewaop.org/>
 17. NEW. Non-Traditonal Employment for Women. <http://www.new-nyc.org/pages/about.html>

18. <https://theminervafoundation.com/lead/minerva-helping-women-work/>
19. <http://www.tradeswomen.net/>
20. <http://www.stepbc.ca/about/programs/>
21. <http://www.tru.ca/trades/programs/women-in-trades.html>
22. <http://www.acareerinminingbc.ca/>
23. <http://www.chicagowomenintrades.org/index.shtml>
24. <http://www.wittnn.com/>
25. <http://www.tradeswomen.org/>

Attachment B: Focus Group Summary Notes

Employee Focus Groups

Three Focus Groups were held with women, with a total of 11 participants plus an additional two interviews were arranged to accommodate date conflicts; one interview was held with two participants and another with a single participant.

Minor adjustments were made to the questions through the process and this has resulted in slightly different questions being asked during different sessions, although all sets of questions have the same or similar intentions.

The raw notes that have been included do not represent verbatim comments. Every effort was made to record accurately, but no recording device was used and the emphasis was on capturing primary thoughts and themes. Although some editing was done both during the session and afterwards for clarity purposes, the notes are in point form in order to adequately capture many discussions happening at once. Highlighting and other emphasis on responses were added afterwards to bring attention to emerging and common themes. In addition, the author of the focus group notes did not attend the interview held with two participants and notes and interpretations have been added third hand, with a review for clarification and confirmation.

Of the 14 women who participated, the experience and occupations ranged from being a student within a trade, to labourers and operators, to engineers, and also one woman who left the field. Only two participants reported having children, all others volunteered the information that they did not have children, and also anecdotally confirmed that they knew very few (if any) women presently working that did have children. Best guesses for the percentages of women with children ranged around 5%-10%, although this was not a formal ask nor discussed amongst each focus group or interview and caution should be used when discussing this factor.

- **The number one common barrier all women reported** was the concept of **having to “prove themselves.”** Every woman felt she had, on some level, to work harder, make fewer mistakes, and was under constant scrutiny. Nobody wanted to be “that girl” who couldn’t perform her task. Women felt they are held to a different standard, had to ensure to show up early instead of just on-time, and prove they were qualified for work, **as opposed to their male counterparts where it was generally assumed they knew their job.**
- **Improving awareness:** of both the benefits to business of having women in non-traditional roles/fields and awareness to other women about what non-traditional fields can provide.

- All women reiterated the **need to target girls and introduce them to non-traditional work at an early age**, promoting the variety that exists and the potential career paths they could take.
- **Confidence and self-image** was seen as a regular barrier, both during training and once hired. The women felt they had to have “thick skin,” be “willing to prove yourself,” not be “weak,” felt highly “scrutinized” and end up being “an ambassador for all women.” Others felt confidence undermined due to comments from supervisors or male coworkers such as “do you actually want to be here” and “Let me do it, I can do it faster.”
- **Finding supportive and encouraging networks** (including both males and females, has been key for many of the women. The ability to discuss issues of harassment and bullying, debrief (complain) about co-workers or supervisors with others who understand, and having a strong role model has led to the success of staying in the field. **Social exclusion at work** was heard time and again.
- **Improving workplace culture through supportive upper management who understand specific women’s issues and concerns.**
 - **Increased communication** with supervisors or management was key and spanned the practical (providing receptacles for used feminine/sanitary products) to the philosophical (addressing issues with light duty assignments and HR decisions being based on the “squeaky wheel” or favouritism) to the need for positive feedback/constructive criticism during reviews.
 - Alongside improving workplace culture, there is the recognition that **women must understand the environment into which they are considering entry**. Industrial settings may not appeal or be suitable for all women and there should be an awareness of what to expect prior to being hired.
 - Although most women did not consider any health or safety issues when commencing their career, **exposure to chemicals and the impacts it would have on a pregnant women** were brought up.

Action Ideas:

- **Awareness:**
 - What employers want and their expectations
 - The realities of the environment
 - Why women would want to work in non-traditional field(s)
 - To attract young girls at an early age
- **Job Fair targeted at women – build a bridge between the traditional and non-traditional**, include employers from IHA, School District, Aesthetics, etc.
- **Paying for training** through bursaries or other programs.

- **Supporting women to increase confidence;** both during school and on the job; through coaching/mentoring, sharing success stories, and networking. **All women who attended the focus groups indicated they would volunteer to do this.**

Employer Focus Groups

Two Focus Groups were held with employers and representatives of organized labour and an additional two employers (at the management level) expressed an interest in providing information but were unable to attend the designated focus groups. An email submission was arranged for one employer and an in-person interview was conducted with the second.

The raw notes that have been included do not represent verbatim comments. Every effort was made to record accurately but no recording device was used and the emphasis was on capturing primary thoughts and themes. Although some editing was done both during the session and afterwards for clarity purposes, the notes are in point form in order to adequately capture many discussions happening at once. The email response has been presented as submitted and no editing has been done. Highlighting and other emphasis on responses were added afterwards to bring attention to emerging and common themes.

Between all participants – regardless of format - common themes emerged with regards to their experiences in working with women, hiring women, and retaining them. It should be noted there was a general belief that although numbers are still quite low, overt harassment or sexism is minimal today (although admittedly still exists). There was a marked emphasis on the theme that suitable people are hired, regardless of gender. It is about the best fit and the most qualified for the position.

When questions about hiring practices were asked, most employers noted that gender did not come into play simply because a person was hired through a union. Unions will negate the gender difference and men and women simply become a number to be hired based on seniority. The only exception to this is with projects in which there are specific equity hiring practices in which there can be specific request for a candidate meeting gender, heritage and other defined criteria.

Moving forward with actions, some participants indicated that creating a campaign based only for women may prove difficult due to equity laws. Campaigns would likely have to be general in nature and focus on the entire family, such as Family Friendly initiatives or workplaces.

The following common themes emerged from the Focus Groups:

- **Hiring women has a positive impact on the workplace.** Although it was noted that qualifications – not gender – is the primary criterion for hiring

someone, overall, employers indicated positive impacts on the workplace when women were hired. One participant indicated that, particularly in fly-in or remote camps, hiring a woman can be a distraction for the workplace by providing gossip fodder for men. Specific positive impacts on the workplace included:

- **Improving the culture within the workplace.** “Strategy and collaboration increased” as a woman will provide a “right and left {brain} balance in the room” through social or inter-personal skills.
- **Creating a safer work environment.** Creative solutions were developed to address problems or issues (such as dealing with physical strength capacities) and more “care and caution” are used when doing their work.
- **Higher level of care** in the details means more organization, greater attention to detail, and more care in finishing, and “finesse jobs”, such as in welding.
- **Reduction in equipment costs** due to the care and safety the women tend to have for their equipment and gear.
- **Awareness about the trades** and other non-traditional work is required.
 - Specifically, working with the schools at a younger age to encourage and educate girls about non-traditional work needs to be supported; a reversal in “gender socialization” needs to occur.
 - Increasing the communication between industry and training so that there is a better understanding of both the realities of the work environment and culture and the potential career paths available.
- **Specific barriers do exist for women in non-traditional roles:**
 - **Women are isolated on the job** and need supports. They are “alone” and they “stick out” while everyone is watching and “listening” to them. There is a higher level of scrutiny in what they say and do.
 - **Women will be left out of the “whole plan”** or given less desirable jobs
 - **Shift work and apprenticeship training is not family friendly**
 - **The realities of the industrial environment** may only appeal to a specific woman (or person); including concerns of strength.
 - **There are few role models/women in higher positions** to encourage and support younger or newer recruits.
- **Creating inclusive work environments that focus on being family friendly** needs to come from upper management.
 - **Very few women have children** within the industrial setting. Anecdotally, it would appear less than 10% - and likely less than 5% - of women within the industrial or other non-traditional roles have children.

Action Ideas:

- **Safety/Culture training** to staff and management for accident or injury prevention and creating a positive work environment

- **Awareness or Orientation workshop** designed to share what the industrial environment is like to prevent shock for new employees.
- **Increase and improve relationships with industry and schools** to facilitate tours, job fairs, or other discussions with youth.
- **Advertising campaign** –
 - Do people see trades as a career?
 - Specifically, targeting high school aged and younger to introduce them career opportunities
 - Making women aware of options
 - Promoting women in non-traditional roles
 - Promote the average wages and larger benefits of trades
- **Send students home with overview of trades training** at the beginning of the school year.
- **Miss Trail Alternative** that focuses on problem solving and/or building something. Potential for incorporating into school for credit program. Use a hard hat instead of a tiara.
- **Formal supports for women** that are presently in the field in order to retain them but unsure on what the women want or need.
- **Creation of “female liaison”** similar to the role of an Aboriginal liaison found in a number of workplaces.
- Due to low numbers of women within one business, **creating a network across all the employers and labour unions to share ideas and practices.**

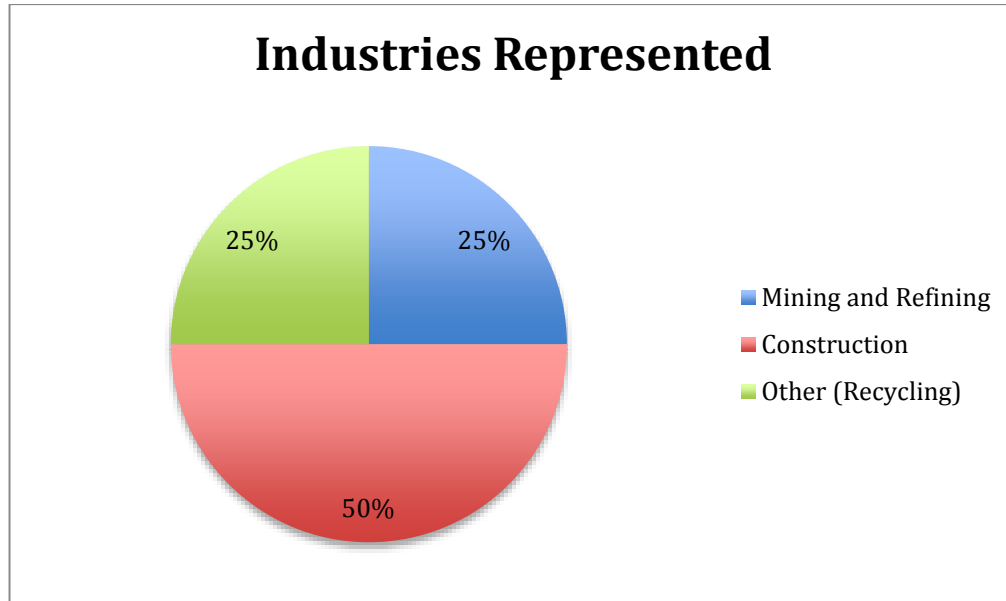
Attachment C: Survey Results

Employer Survey Results

Question 1:

Total Responses: 4

Of the following categories, which best describes your industry:



Question 2:

Total Responses: 4

If representing an employer, how many people does your company employ in West Kootenay/Trail region? If representing a union, how many members in your local?

The range of the workforce size was equally represented within the following categories (one response per category):

- 20-49 employees
- 100-299 employees
- 300-499 employees
- 500+ employees

Question 3:

Total Responses: 6

Are you planning on hiring in the next 6-12 months?

- Yes (4)
- No (0)
- Maybe (2)

Question 4:

Which of the following methods do you use in your hiring process? Select all that apply.

Hiring Method Used	Number	Percentage
Organization hires directly	6	24%
Newspaper ad/or radio ad (4, 16%)	4	16%
Advertise at Work BC employment centre	3	12%
Participation in job and career fairs	3	12%
Advertise on on-line general job boards	2	8%
Advertise on on-line industry specific job boards	2	8%
Other (Union dispatch)	2	8%
Third party staffing firm	2	8%
Employee referral program	1	4%
Advertise in social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter)	0	0%

Question 5

What are the required education and certifications for your workforces? Select all that apply.

Education or Certification	Number	Percentage
Trade certification	5	25%
Grade 12	3	15%
Safety certification	3	15%
Specific industry certification	2	10%
2 year college diploma	2	10%
4 year college/university degree	2	10%
Grade 10	1	5%
Post-Graduate college/university degree	1	5%
Other (apprenticeship)	1	5%

Question 6:

What type of non-traditional employment for women is available in your organization? Select all that apply.

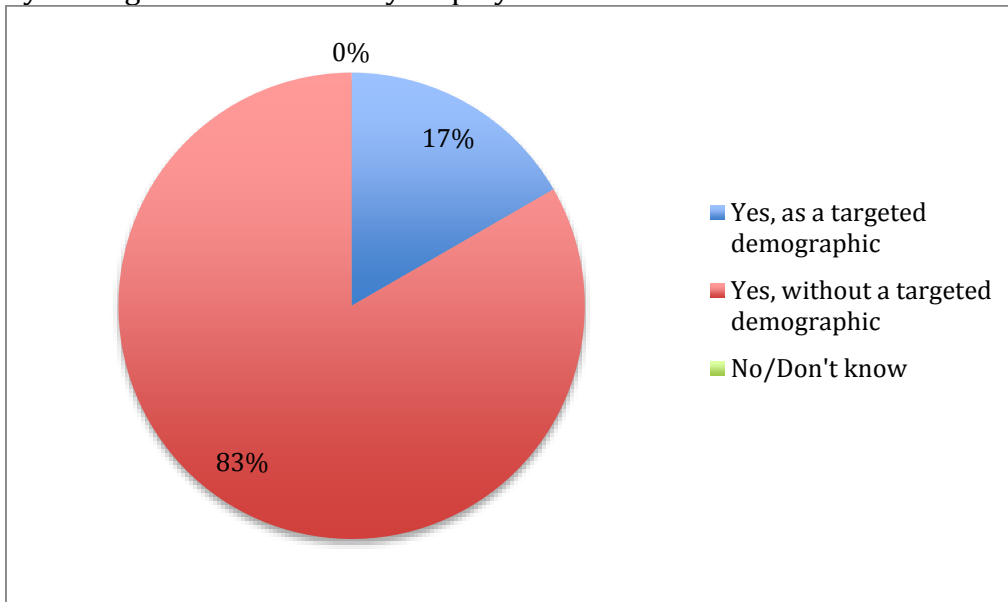
Employment Options for Women	Number	Percentage
Skilled Labour	4	17%
Operator	3	12%
Pipefitter	3	12%
Heavy Equipment Operator	2	8%
Welder	2	8%
Sheet Metal Worker	2	8%
Industrial Electrician	2	8%

Engineer	1	4%
Miner	1	4%
Technologist	1	4%
Other (Carpenter, Millwright)	1	4%

Question 7:

Total Responses: 6

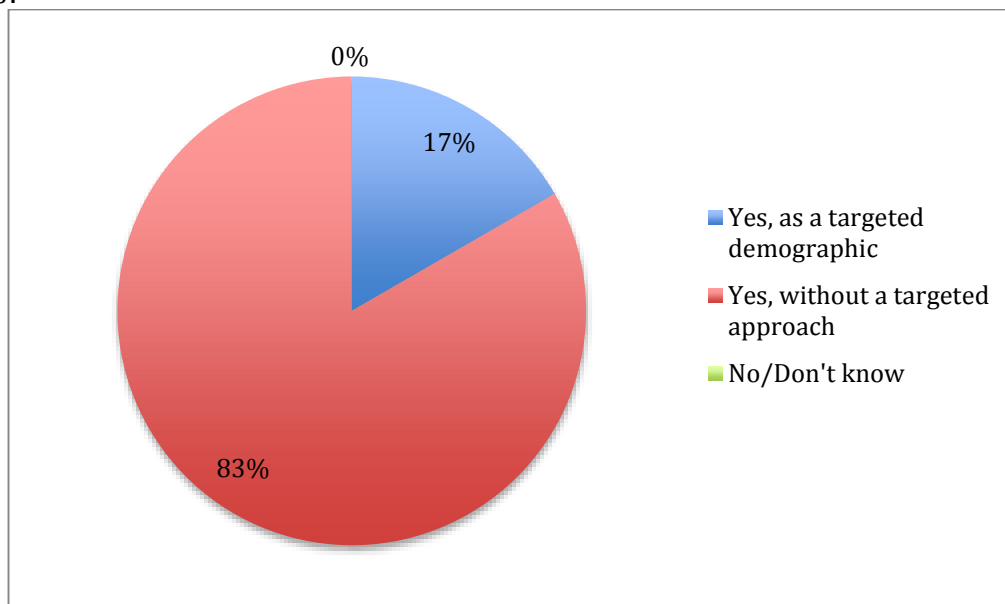
Does your organization currently employ women in non-traditional roles?



Question 8:

Total Responses: 6

Would you consider increasing hiring women in non-traditional roles in the next 2-5 years?



Question 9:

Total Responses: 2

Which of the following are some tools that helped your organization hire and retain women? Select all that apply.

Tools that helped	Number	Percentage
Other (No specific programs for the hiring of women, Very resilient personalities)	2	100%
Early Career education events (seminars, workshops, etc)	0	0%
Field trips for high school students	0	0%
Open House for high school students	0	0%
On-boarding program	0	0%
Mentorship program	0	0%
Employer based child care support	0	0%
Community based child care support	0	0%
Subsidized community programs	0	0%
Flexible work schedule	0	0%
On-the-job training	0	0%
Career development support	0	0%
Affordable housing	0	0%
Diversity in the workplace training	0	0%

Question 10:

Total Responses: 1

How can we collectively improve women's labour market participation in our region? Please share your thoughts and ideas in the box below.

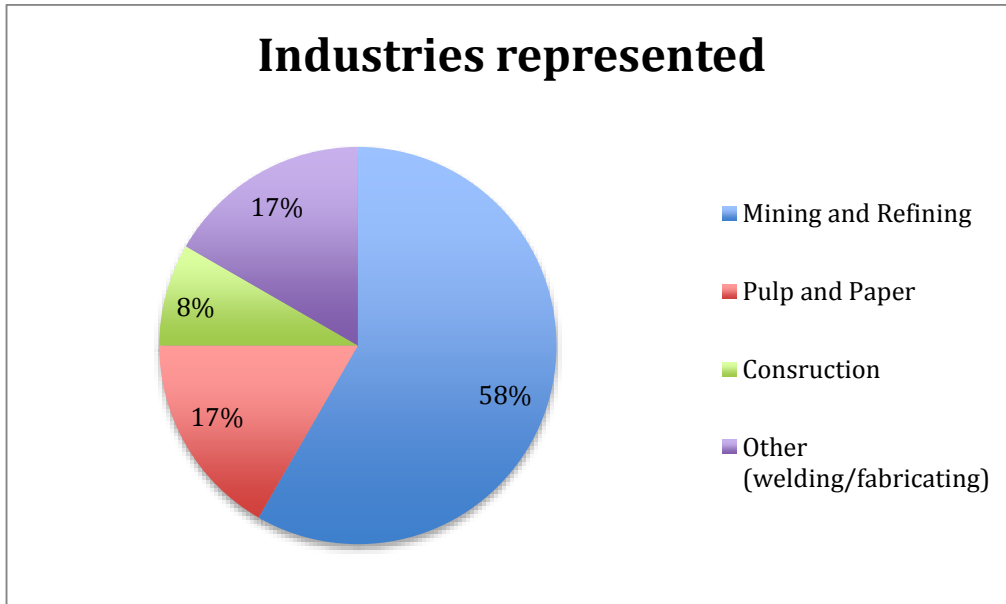
I think that with the low participation rate of women in the trades there is rarely more than one other woman on the job. If women in the trades had more and better access to other women experiencing the same issues, they might feel more supported and be more inclined to stick around. It is hard to stick out like a sore thumb all day every day and not have any other sore thumbs to commiserate with. I, however, have no answers as to how to create a better support system.

Employee Survey Results

Question 1:

Total Responses: 12

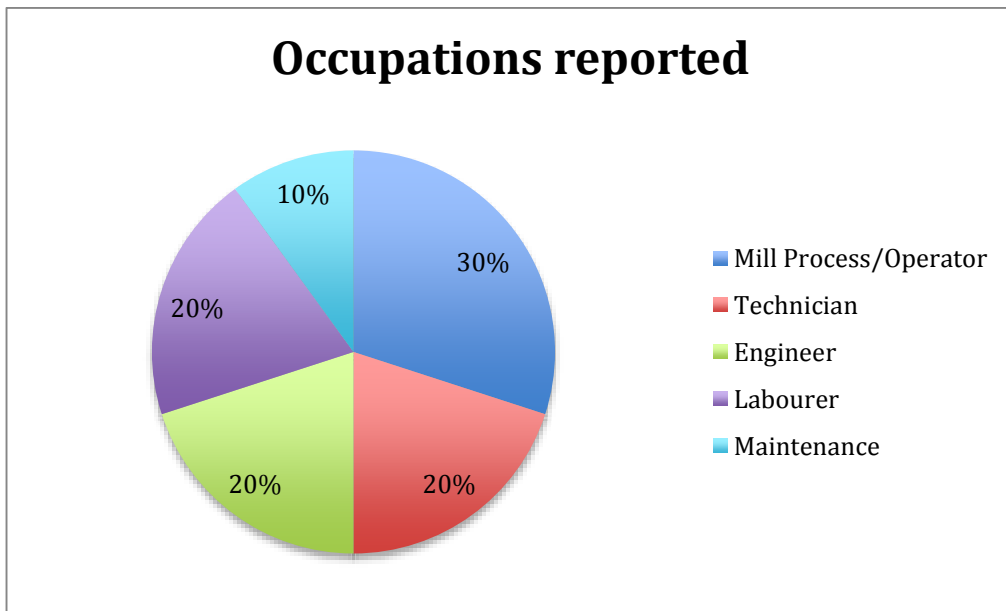
Of the following category, which best describes the industry you are working in?



Question 2:

Total Responses: 12

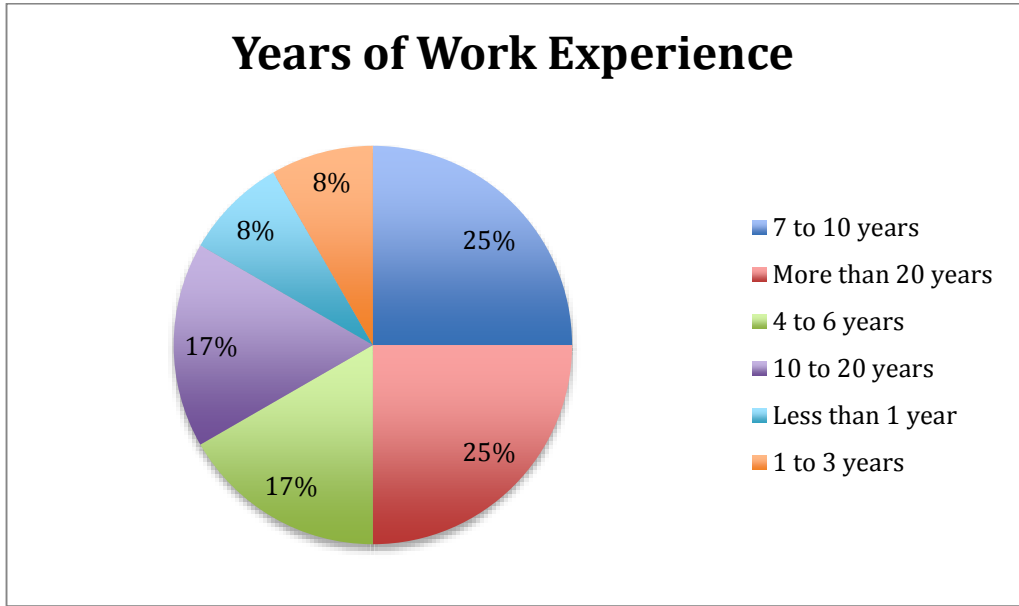
Of the following categories, which best describes your current occupation?



Question 3:

Total Responses: 12

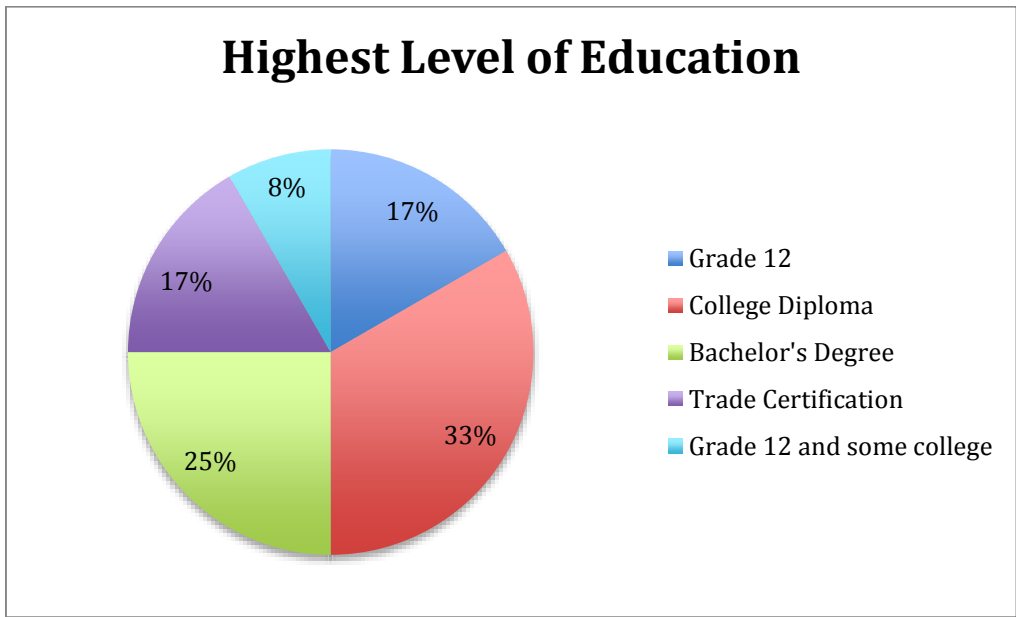
How many years of work experience do you have?



Question 4:

Total Responses: 12

What is the highest level of education you have achieved?



Question 5:

What were the factors that influence your decision to pursue a non-traditional career in the resource sector (Select all that apply)?

Factor	Number	Percentage
Grew up in a resource sector community	5	26%
Friend(s) employed in resource sector	5	26%
Family member employed in resource sector	4	21%
Other (The need to be self-sufficient to support my three kids without government subsidies, Favourite subject in high school was science, The resource sector is the best way I found to increase my skill level quickly and continues to be challenging)	3	16%
Worked in resource sector after high school	2	10%
Career events that promote resource sector careers	0	0%
Worked in resource sector as apprentice	0	0%
Worked in resource sector as co-op student	0	0%

Question 6:

What were the reasons that influenced your decision to join your current employer? Responses are presented in descending order of influence.

Influences on choice of employer
1. Ability to apply my skills and knowledge
2. Opportunity for career advancement
3. Benefits
4. Ability to build professional expertise
5. Ability to gain direct industry experience
6. Good fit between my job and desired lifestyle
7. Proximity of job to home
8. Training and professional development support
9. Compensation
10. Company culture
11. Company safety records
12. Friends/family members for this company
13. Flexible work hours
14. Apprenticeship support
15. Child care support

Question 7:

Of the following job search methods, which method would you likely use or recommend to use?

Responses presented in descending order of most likely to use.

Most likely used job search methods
1. Company website
2. On-line industry specific job board
3. Newspaper ads
4. On-line general job board
5. WorkBC Employment Centre
6. Employee referrals (friends and family)
7. Career and job fairs
8. Union job board
9. Social media
10. Staffing agency

Question 8:

Total Responses: 11

What would be your advice to women who want to pursue a non-traditional career?

Responses to this question were grouped into themes by the researchers.

Learning about the job/opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out what you need to do to get hired where you want to work then fill the requirements. • Try to be prepared for the career that you choose. • Get the proper education • Educate yourself as much as possible about the environment you're working in before you get there or before you decide what kind of environment you want to work in. • learn about all the different kinds of opportunities that exist in the resource fields.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have to go into the job willing to learn and know that you will always learn new things no matter how long you have been doing the job. • You have more transferable skills then you realize.
Confidence/Inner Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never let thinking it's a "man's" job stop you from at least trying. • Prove yourself to be self-sufficient and adequate for the job. Have thick skin. • Perseverance and believe in yourself. • Pull your weight...don't take things personally.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your best
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go for it. More women are now employed in this sector so we are more easily accepted. • Apply to the jobs you want. • Don't give up applying, Make safety a priority. • It's very rewarding and it will change your view of the world entirely. • Take on the challenge of entering into fields that pay well • Work hard • Don't let men get in your way

Question 9:

What would be your advice to employers that want to hire more women in non-traditional jobs?

The qualitative responses this question were grouped into themes by the researchers.

Improve workplace and HR policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise for women specifically, make women in trades a priority. • Be flexible. • Better sick/family days (with pay)
Employer training (how to work with women, diversity training, understanding benefits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop putting women stereotypical roles. • Be encouraging, tell the women they don't have to be better than the men at the same job. • Watch the TED talk by Sheryl Sandberg "Lean In" and be more aware of how women tend to behave (and doubt themselves). It is a big shift compared to the ultra-aggressive, confident male counterparts. • You need to give women a chance, some of the best trades people are women. • That women sometimes take more pride and ownership of their job and equipment. They can be very reliable.
Awareness and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer job training and education bursaries to women that may not have the financial means to get through the education or training on their own. • Educate girls in high school about options in trades and trade school.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire the person who has the skill set for the job. • Complete a job specific physical analysis.

Attachment D:

Women Building Future Site Visit Notes

Overview

- The program is based in Edmonton although recruitment takes place in communities throughout Alberta – with a particular focus on the Calgary and Edmonton areas where transportation to northern oil and gas camps is the easiest
- Supporting the direct entry of women into the trades (with a focus on – but not limited to the trades associated with construction)
- The current Labour Market focus of the program is support under-employed women to enter the non-traditional workforce, taking advantage of the relatively short term window (upcoming 4-5 years) in order to learn from the seasoned workers before they retire (knowledge transfer). Once into the construction related trades and projects, the women will be well positioned for the more stable on-going operations and maintenance roles anticipated after the coming 10 year horizon.
 - As of today, there is \$1 trillion in confirmed construction or building contracts in Canada over the next 10 years
- The series of trades orientation programs are typically 3 months in length and are intended to support the direct entry of women into apprenticeships (as opposed to the 7-10 month Entry Level Trades Training (ELTT) programs taught in many post-secondary institutions. The women are actively supported to secure an apprenticeship and employers strongly urged to send the women to the first level of technical training (typically 8 weeks) within the first four months of employment.
- Complete wrap-around support is provided until the women secure journeyman status (which includes “hounding” employers as required to get the women sent to the various levels of technical training and to track apprenticeship hours).

Success indicators and targets

- The goal of WBF is to support women to achieve economic prosperity (note difference in standard from WCC’s goal to achieve a “living wage income”). It was noted WBF works with women who are financially at risk and not those with addictions and other unaddressed personal issues.
- The goal of the WBF program is to provide a consistent high quality standard of workers to employers of trades’ people.
- On average the annual income of the women increases 127% from entry into the WBF entry level program to the first day of employment. (In the Heavy

Equipment Operator program, the increase of annual income on first day of hire is typically 160%).

- Although increased income levels are significant, more notable is the **increased level of self-confidence** on the part of program graduates, including skills, lifestyle and capacity to work in a team.
- WBF has seen a 62% increase of women coming into the construction trades in the past 10 years. This can be attributed to their image promotion campaign they have been running which promotes the trades as a conscious career and lifestyle choice.
- In the coming 10 years, the WBF goal is to attract 6,600 women into the trades (representing 1% of the 660,000 unemployed women in Alberta.) Although the goal is 1%, it would appear that they see closer to 3%, of whom 30% are aboriginal women.
- Tracking data:
 - 96% of the women accepted into the program graduate
 - 90% of those who graduate secure employment in a trade within 3 months
 - Within 4 months of hire the participants are moved into technical training.
 - Estimated that 80% (compared to 47%) make it past one year
 - 76% complete 4 years
- Maintenance work is considered the most attractive line of work for the women as it's consistent, on-going, not cyclical, and typically in one place.

Entry process and standards

- Although originally conceived by a group of social workers and the current CEO, JudyLynn Archer, the program is no longer open to women currently at risk (i.e. drug and alcohol use, relationship abuse, etc.).
- It has been essential for WBF to develop credibility and confidence with employers which means the women being sent to them can meet their rigorous recruitment requirements
 - Including drug and alcohol checks that can capture drug use up to 6 months prior to testing.
 - This testing (Sure Hire) also provides a 'snapshot' of the woman's lifestyle
 - The assessment helps women understand the realities of what to expect and can be very empowering.
- The screening process is intense and those who disclose risky lifestyle issues are supported to access external supports and encouraged to re-apply once the risky behaviours are addressed.
- It is a huge confidence builder for the women who are successful getting through the rigorous screening

Recruitment and screening process:

- Step 1: An awareness campaign (\$500,000) using radio and information session in up to approximately 35 communities per year across Alberta. The target is women aged 24-44, including 30% aboriginal women. The information sessions highlight opportunities for women entering the trades. (25% drop out at this stage)
- Step 2: Career Decision Making (further 50% drop out at this stage)
 - In Edmonton, these sessions are typically ½ day
 - In some of the aboriginal communities, these sessions may be up to 5 days
 - Includes up-front personal assessment of self and an understanding of the challenges a woman is likely to experience in these kind of work settings
 - Lots of LMI research
 - Heavy emphasis on getting to know the women and what their challenges are, looking at their life, what they want, and why they are presently underemployed.
 - There is a lot of research and paperwork to do by the women which allows the women to really understand the industry and expectations along with allowing WBF to really get to know the women.
- Step 3: application process and testing for a specific trades program
 - Typically left with between 20-30 women at this stage
 - Additional paperwork, interview, fitness level, Sure Hire testing
 - At this stage, very few women fail and most complete training
- Step 4 – Start a WBF program

Program and curriculum design:

- 6 component parts with awareness of safety infused throughout the program:
 - Workplace culture awareness
 - Academic review and upgrading
 - Fitness
 - Apprenticeship preparation
 - Money management (crucial given significant increase in earning power and lifestyle conditions in the camps)
 - Customized skill training

Placement Support

- WBF and the women themselves place a lot of time and energy on following up with employers to sign paperwork and develop apprenticeship plans.
- Upon placement in a job and an apprenticeship, the women and the employer have a placement plan (e.g. 1 week, shop clean up; 1 week, a specific tool, etc). This plan makes it easier for the employer to use and support an apprentice.

This process includes WBF staff calling and hounding the employers to maintain the apprenticeship plan.

- A team of 3 women provide wrap-around support for up to 4 years after placement
- Deliver a best practices module for employers that is customized to need. These modules are developed and delivered for front line supervisors as well as HR professionals

Customized Programs:

- Developed in response to the recruitment needs of specific employers.
- Funded by the employers on a per participant basis. (The employers may not hire all of the graduates but typically those not picked up by the funding employer will be quickly placed with another, smaller employer).
- Examples:
 - Heavy Equipment Operator – Imperial Oil contracts with WBF to do the recruitment and pre-trades training. This program includes extensive donation of equipment by a range of companies as well as donation of land and real-life work projects.
 - Welding – supported by a smaller employment who is tired of the poaching by larger employers. WBF involves the big players in the conversation on the importance of all levels of business do apprenticeship training.

History and Development of Program and Resources

- Began in 1998 with a group of 6 social workers wanting to develop employment options for low income, at risk women. It has taken 10 years of concentrated effort to attain credibility with construction and trades employers.
- In 1998, rented the first basement space (which, at the outset, had only 1 overhead light)
- In 2005, secured funding and financing to purchase and renovate their current downtown building. The initial budget was \$8 million which ballooned to \$12 million in the pre-2008 construction boom
- Renovations included:
 - 3 floors (48 suites) of affordable housing for the women. The suites include fully furnished studios, 1 bedrooms and 2 bedrooms). 18 units are for single moms. The suites are in a highly secure area. Security includes steel doors on each apartment, 3 inspections per night with security and dog team to ensure the living area is drug, crime and violence free and an extensive screening process for potential tenants.
 - 2 floors (including basement) for WBF classrooms, shops and administrative space

- Suncor paid off the outstanding mortgage so that the building is now owned free and clear by WBF. They also hire graduates of the WBF program.
- Upcoming renovation plan to expand the current building into the adjacent parking lot
- Longer term facility plan includes sale of existing building and development of a new facility close to NAIT
- Significant growth planned for the coming 5 years as a result of the development of a range of e-learning options (intended to use gaming as the basis of design). Women will be able to take individual learning modules as interested or become WBF graduates, having successfully completed the intake process and all required learning modules. Will include 24 short courses & individuals will be able to pick and choose what they need to do.
- In addition to extensive donations by employers as well as direct seat purchases, WBF accesses a variety of government funding. It has also benefitted greatly from the LIFT Philanthropy Partners, a venture capital group supporting social ventures by providing extensive levels of technical advice and support.
- One of the next goals is to give the industry/trades a very different public image.

Training

Key Elements:

- 1) Safety – students are awarded 7 certificates related to safety. Also included in this section is they develop an understanding of their own personal tolerance for risk.
- 2) Workplace Culture:
 - a. Develop an awareness of how to thrive in a male dominated work environment
 - b. Pick a trade that will suit your lifestyle.
 - c. Aboriginal women in the trades need to be superwomen
- 3) Academic Review – 4 weeks improve math and literary skills. Also provide a 2 week ‘Math Boot Camp’.
- 4) Fitness Training – need to be better than the men to be as good as.
- 5) Apprenticeship Prep – identify what trade she wants to be in – do all the research re: what this trade is about. She controls her destiny – this is built on the onboarding program. Participants are required to lay out and plan the full process and the burden is on them to get it done.
- 6) Money Management – Help women to invest in themselves and manage their money.
- 7) Customized Skills Training – e.g. hands on heavy equipment operator, welding training. Big paying job but also high risk – safety, damage, work experience essential. WBF receives sponsorships from companies for the use of equipment, land and real life work experiences.

- 8) Coaching Team – this is maintained through the entire process, the coaches work the individuals until they are not needed anymore – they help the participants prepare, support, best practices address all the issues that come up: financial, family, isolation on the job, deal with the challenges + save face, how to become assertive.
- 9) Best Practices for Hiring & Training – there are 2 workshops. 1) Working on the front-line, the guys, journeyman, and supervisors. 2) Human Resources department.

Additional Notes:

- Careers the Next Generation – is a provincial program that targets high school students to get interested in the trades. They start promoting the trades in the schools at the grade 4 level.
- WBF does not work with housing construction or road building industries. Consider these to be high risk trades – not well-suited for women.
- Partnerships with industry are invaluable. WBF looks for partners who have the long-term commitment of seeing success with the participants.
- WBF's #1 goal – deliver a product that people need. Through the on-boarding program the average is that they accept 1 in 10 applicants.
 - Outcomes they see: The body language and self-confidence of the women change significantly.

Marketing Campaigns:

- Separate campaign for employers
- Separate campaign for aboriginals
- Use social media and radio ads to recruit staff and students.
- Use broader campaigns for brand promotions.

Tuition fees for 2013 = \$1.5m

Grants: \$860,000

Fee for service: \$500,000

Attachment E: Working Options for Women Strategic Plan

WORKING OPTIONS FOR WOMEN: STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2020, there will be a significant, measurable change in the awareness, income and participation rate of women in the West Kootenay in non-traditional work in the resource and industrial construction sectors.

Promotion and Awareness	Readiness for Women	Readiness for Employers	Placement and Retention
<p><i>Girls are supported to explore non-traditional work and career opportunities.</i></p> <p>Awareness campaigns and education programs include the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotional campaigns that increase awareness and bust common myths. • Activities that promote the awareness of parents and others who influence of girls' decision-making. • A community mural with women in non-traditional roles • School/employer partnerships that offer site visits, job shadowing and work experience. • Career exploration courses and trade fairs that encourage awareness of non-traditional work options • Camps and programs that offer non-traditional, hands-on activities for girls 	<p><i>Women have access to programs and services that support their readiness to enter non-traditional roles in the workplace.</i></p> <p>Programs supporting women to successfully enter non-traditional roles include the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career decision making that promotes awareness of the non-traditional work environment and its suitability or fit for each woman. • Effective communication and problem solving skills, including self-awareness and self-image. • Basic job skills including safety, and essential skills. • An assessment of the personal circumstances of each woman and the supports needed to be successful • Physical and mental fitness • Financial management 	<p><i>Employers have systems in place that support the recruitment and retention of women in non-traditional roles.</i></p> <p>Workplace resources and systems include the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site readiness (e.g. change rooms, washrooms, worksite clothing) • Workplace education such as the respectful workplace, diversity in the workplace, changing workplace culture. • Recruitment and hiring practices that attract women • Employee supports, including buddies, mentors and sponsors • HR policies and applicable system that are woman and family friendly. • Career management systems that support performance skill development, workplace systems awareness and career development 	<p><i>Resources, attitudes and skills exist that support the long-term retention of women in non-traditional roles in the workplace.</i></p> <p>Community and workplace resources and systems include the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job search and placement support • Structured opportunities for peer, mentor and sponsor support • Systems in place that support successful on-boarding of women into the non-traditional work environment. • Systems in place that help employers and women recognize and address emergent barriers to retention • Career management systems that support performance improvement, skill development, career advancement and increase retention of women. • Access to community supports such as child care

Priorities for Action

In 2015, the Skills Centre will focus on working with employers and other partners to:

- 1. Develop a program for women to support their readiness for work in the resource and industrial construction sectors.**
 - Identify one or more suitable funding source to begin delivering a readiness for non-traditional work program for women. (Possibilities include internal use of EPBC contract workshop billings, Project-Based Labour Market Training, Canada BC Job Grant (that employers would access) and/or other Canada-BC Job Fund related Calls for Proposals.)
 - Design, develop and deliver a demonstration project to one small cohort of women.
 - Evaluate the demonstration program and use the results to support further program delivery

- 2. Support the retention of women employed in non-traditional roles by Teck Metals Ltd.**
 - Support the successful deliver of the 30 months Mining and Refining for Women (MR4W) program, funded by the Status of Women Canada.

- 3. Support the delivery of hands-on awareness opportunities for girls and women.**
 - Work with community partners to offer a hands-on non-traditional career awareness day for girls.
 - Support community partners to offer a variety of awareness building activities and programs. (Examples include Selkirk College offering a Girls Exploring Trades and Technology (GETT) camp and community education courses for women such as carpentry and/or power tools for women and CBAL and KAST working together to offer after school programs that would encourage girls to explore activities associated with non-traditional work.)
 - Create a community mural depicting women in non-traditional/leadership roles

Attachment F: 180 Change for Women Program Outline

"Your life does not get better by chance, it gets better by change."

Jim Rohn

How will this workshop series work?

- **Workshop hours: 3 days per week for 4 weeks**

Each day:

- 9:00 – 12:00 – workshop topics and activities
- 12:00 – 12:30 – lunch
- 1:00 – 3:00 – workshop topics and activities

Note: Some sessions are optional and some days will end earlier than 3:00

- Short Term Certificate Training (STOC) to take place during completion of workshop (optional):
 - WHMIS
 - CSTS
- Short Term Certificate Training to take place after completion of workshop (optional):
 - OFA Level 1
 - Other industry specific short courses (e.g. HS2 Alive, OSSA, Confined Space, etc.)

What will I get out of it?

The goal of this workshop series is to leave you with the following:

- A path towards well paid employment in a non-traditional occupation;
- A renewed sense of confidence;
- New skills/certifications to apply to your next job;
- A fabulous resume and cover letter;
- Strong job interview skills;
- A clear understanding of what employers want/need;
- And more!

*"Nobody can go back and start a new beginning,
but anyone can start today and make a new ending."*

Maria Robinson

***Week 1 Focus:* Career decision making that promotes awareness of the non-traditional work environment and its suitability or fit for each woman.**

Day 1: Introduction and Career Exploration

Morning Session:

- **Introductions** - getting to know one another and an introduction to the 180 workshops.
- **Goal setting** – A goal-setting exercise where participants will set work-related goals and troubleshoot any apparent obstacles, as well as learn about and set SMART goals.
- **Career Assessments** – Participants will complete a Career Cruising assessment and explore the non-traditional jobs that are suggested.

Afternoon Session:

- **Useful Websites** - Introduction to and exploration of a variety of websites that offer more information and resources on women in the trades and other non-traditional jobs (ITA Women in the Trades, Tradeswomen.ca, and Alberta Government online publication: Women in Non-traditional Occupations).
- **Working Environments** - A discussion of a variety of working environments and the realities of each including sound levels, physical requirements, safety hazards, physical work environment, and “a day in the life.” (This information can be accessed by exploring a specific career on the Career Cruising website.)
- **Personality** - Discussion and personal reflection of which non-traditional occupation suits each participant’s personality– optional online personality assessment.
- **Labour Market** - Discussion and exploration on matching skills, personality and affinities to the local labour market.

Day 2: Computer Use and Resume/Cover Letter Writing

Morning Session:

- **Introduction to Word workshop** - The aim is for participants to become self-sufficient with Microsoft Word so they are able to work on and target their own resume and cover letter for specific jobs.

Afternoon Session:

- **Resume and Cover Letter workshop** - with a focus on writing resumes for the trades and non-traditional occupations for women. General resume tips and instruction will be given as well as articles and instruction on writing a resume for the trades using the Red Seal Recruiting website.

<i>Day 3: Targeted Resume/Cover Letter Writing and Speaker Panel (Women in Non-traditional Occupations)</i>
<p>Morning Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resume and Cover Letter writing – time will be spent working on and targeting resumes and cover letters for specific jobs. Each participant will work on writing her own resume/cover letter or tweaking and targeting her existing resume/cover letter for a specific job. Facilitator will spend one-on-one time assisting each woman.
<p>Afternoon Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker Panel: Women Working in Non-traditional Occupations – we will aim to fill a panel with at least three women from the following employers, organizations, or occupations: Teck, various trades, Women of Steel, local trades/building union, RCMP, Border Security, commercial driving.

<i>Week Two Focus: Basic job skills including safety and Essential Skills.</i>
<i>Day 4: Essential Skills and Transferable Skills</i>
<p>Morning Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential Skills and Transferable Skills – exploring the Essential Skills job profiles and identifying transferable skills. • Exploring the whether a training program is needed to gain the skills for a desired job. • ITA Essential Skills online tool (or Measure Up website for those not interested in a specific trade) – This tool and the Measure Up website can be used to gauge whether participants have the Essential Skill levels they need in reading, document use and numeracy for a specific job.
<p>Afternoon Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential Skills workshop – document use decoding, skimming and scanning, snap the question, answer zone strategies. Strategies for answering Essential Skills style questions and instruction on increasing Essential Skills will be offered. • Essential Skills practice in reading, document use and numeracy.
<i>Day 5: Essential Skills Testing, Speaker from ITA, and Myths & Realities</i>
<p>Morning Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write the TOWES (optional but recommended) – The TOWES (The Test of Workplace Essential Skills) is a formal way to learn test writers’ Essential Skill levels in reading, document use and numeracy. This is a pen and paper test that takes approximately two and a half hours to complete.

<p>Afternoon Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker: Apprentice Advisor for ITA - Marlin Ratch • Myths and Realities - Exploring the myths and realities of women working in non-traditional occupations. We will explore some of the preconceived notions held by the participants around women in non-traditional occupations, and we will also use the Tradeswomen.ca website section “Debunking the Myths” as well as articles from the Alberta Government and Skills Canada to uncover some of the myths and realities of women in the trades or non-traditional roles.
<p><i>Day 6: Speaker - Safety on the Job, Working with Others, First Day of Work, WHMIS</i></p>
<p>Morning Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker: Safety on the Job – Occupational Safety Officer from Teck or Celgar • Job Search Strategies – We will explore a variety of job search strategies including accessing the hidden job market, applying online, applying for jobs in the oil and gas industry and applying with some of our larger employers in the region such as Teck and Celgar. • Working With Others – We will complete an Essential Skills Working with Others Self-assessment and discuss the Working with Others tip sheet as well as discuss how this skill might be used by women in non-traditional occupations. • First Day and Beyond – Tips will be given on reducing anxiety for the first day on the job and navigating a new work culture.
<p>Afternoon Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STOC Training (optional) - WHMIS

<p><u>Week 3:</u> Effective communication and problem solving skills, including self-awareness and self-image.</p>
<p><i>Day 7: Communication, problem-solving, Speaker from STEPS, Self-image and Confidence-building</i></p>
<p>Morning Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication in the Non-traditional Workplace – We will discuss some of the communication difficulties faced by women working in non-traditional occupations as well as complete some exercises/role plays on effective communication. • Problem-solving in the Non-traditional Workplace – Using Essential Skills problem solving booklets with problem examples from non-traditional occupations/situations, we will practice a variety of problem-solving techniques.

<p>Afternoon Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker: STEP (Skilled Trades Employment Program) - Allan Pusey • Self-awareness and Self-image workshop – We will read some articles on building confidence and practice some confidence-building exercises. We will also discuss self-image and how it can affect and/or enhance workplace performance. • Provide and debrief TOWES Results
<p><i>Day 8: Physical Confidence-building, Physical Fitness Testing Practice</i></p>
<p>Morning Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Confidence-building & Active Women - Tara Howse or a contributor to her Active Women website will come to discuss the benefits of getting active and trying new activities. ○ Health and Wellness - A health and Wellness speaker will come to discuss the importance of taking care of yourself both physically and mentally (exercise, nutrition, emotional wellness, etc.) and the positive benefits this has on life and work.
<p>Afternoon Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Fitness Tests – look into what kinds of tests are required and do some practice tests (Jaime’s note: where would we do this? Are there liability issues?)
<p><i>Day 9: Employers’ Panel, Essential Skills Practice</i></p>
<p>Morning Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker panel: Employers panel– What Do Employers Want? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We aim to fill this panel with at least three speakers from the following employers: Teck, Construction companies, plumbing/heating companies, ATCO, Celgar, other non-traditional employers for women. ○ The speakers will answer a set of questions regarding what they are looking for when they hire, as well as regarding women working in non-traditional roles within their companies/organizations. Participants can then ask any additional questions they may have.
<p>Afternoon Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional Essential Skills Upskilling workshop - This workshop will be set up for the participants who achieved less than a level 3 in reading, document use, and/or numeracy when they wrote the TOWES (or Measure Up/ITA Essential Skills tool). We will revisit the answer zone strategies and do more practice questions.

<p><i>Week 4: An assessment of the personal circumstances of each woman and the supports needed to be successful; Financial management.</i></p>
<p><i>Day 10: Personal Circumstances and Financial Savvy</i></p>
<p>Morning Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing Your Personal Circumstances workshop - Consideration and discussion of drug testing, mental health and wellness, substance abuse and assessing individual circumstances and levels of readiness including living and family situation, childcare obstacles and financial state. (Jaime’s note: Perhaps we could get a registered clinical counselor to do this workshop?)
<p>Afternoon Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgeting and Financial Management workshop - including creating a personal and household budget, assessing living expenses, debt repayment, saving for retirement, saving for children’s education, emergency savings, dealing with a large increase in salary.
<p><i>Day 11:</i></p>
<p>Morning Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview Skills workshop – This workshop will cover interview types, practice questions, personal presentation, dress for success, post-interview follow-up, body language and interview preparation.
<p>Afternoon Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STOC Training (optional) – CSTS
<p><i>Day 12:</i></p>
<p>Morning Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mock Interviews – The women will participate in mock interviews with Skills Centre staff members in order to practice their interview skills and receive some feedback on interview performance.