ON THE FRONT LINES
OF TORONTO'S COMMUNITY SERVICE SECTOR
IMPROVING WORKING CONDITIONS AND ENSURING QUALITY SERVICES

A Report of the On the Front Lines Project

Community Social Planning Council of Toronto
Family Service Association of Toronto

July 2006

ON THE FRONT LINES OF TORONTO'S COMMUNITY SERVICE SECTOR: IMPROVING WORKING CONDITIONS AND ENSURING QUALITY SERVICES

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Community Social Planning Council of Toronto (CSPC-T) is a non-profit community agency committed to building a civic society in which diversity, equity, social and economic justice, interdependence and active civic participation are central. CSPC-T engages in policy research and analysis, community capacity building, community education and advocacy, and social reporting with an aim of improving the quality of life of all Toronto residents.

Family Service Association of Toronto (FSA) helps people dealing with a wide variety of life challenges. For 90 years, FSA has been assisting families and individuals through counselling, community development, advocacy and public education programs.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For many thousands of Toronto residents, the services provided by community-based non-profit organizations are life-changing, life-affirming, even life-saving. These organizations provide such services as home care for the sick and elderly, shelter for victims of abuse and homeless people, settlement assistance for immigrants and refugees, training and other employment supports for the jobless, and a variety of other services for vulnerable groups.

The people who work on the front lines are committed to meeting the needs of their clients, providing high quality services and building stronger communities. They believe in what they do and they go the extra mile on behalf of individuals and groups who are often marginalized from mainstream society. But the conditions in which they work are becoming increasingly difficult.

> Some of them, for example, are given notice of possible layoff *every year* because of the insecurity of funding for their agency.

> To make a living in a low-wage sector, some travel long distances, at their own expense, to work for two or more agencies.

> Many smaller agencies can't afford to pay benefits or provide pension plans. There is often little prospect of training or advancement.

> Some workers don't have adequate space or privacy to meet with clients.

> Wages are not competitive with municipal, education and health workers. Wages are stagnating, while workloads are growing and inflation is rising.

Lack of pay equity among workers doing similar work is an issue, as is discrimination against workers from racialized groups within the sector.

Client waiting lists are growing longer and needs are becoming more complex, causing tension and staff burnout.

This is what life on the front lines of the community service sector looks like, according to research conducted by the Family Service Association of Toronto and the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto.

On the Front Lines of Toronto's Community Service Sector: Improving Working Conditions and Ensuring Quality Services describes the challenges of the sector from the perspective of agencies and workers on the ground. A companion *On the Front Lines* report focuses specifically on organizations serving immigrants and refugees. The United Way of Greater Toronto funded this research project through its Social Research Grants Initiative.

The Front Lines project concludes that deteriorating conditions - created largely by government underfunding of the core capacity of organizations to provide adequate pay, benefits and working conditions for their staff - are putting the quality and availability of services at risk and undermining the efforts of the sector to build strong, inclusive communities.

Building on the work of a City of Toronto 2003 study which identified 1,342 community-based human service organizations, the researchers zeroed in on parts of the sector about which least is known. There was no comprehensive, reliable database on working conditions in the sector available at the local level for analysis.

The project's conclusions and recommendations are based on information gathered from:

- seven focus groups with 59 front-line and managerial staff, drawn from five sub-sectors: large Toronto-wide agencies, smaller neighbourhood centres, immigrant settlement services, home support services and employment and training services;

- two roundtable discussions with key stakeholders, including funders, community sector organizations, government officials, union representatives, and researchers;

- a review of collective agreements in the sector;

- two online surveys of 321 staff in 61 organizations serving immigrants and refugees.

The conclusions are also backed up by a review of research on the non-profit/voluntary sector.

The challenges documented by this study are not unique to the community service sector in Toronto. Other research has shown that cutbacks and changes in funding practices by governments have had a negative impact on the capacity and stability of non-profit/voluntary sector organizations across Canada.

One of the key changes in government funding practices is the move away from core funding for organizations to project/program funding. Core funding allows for organizational development, provides the basis for better salaries and benefits to staff, and better infrastructure for client services. Project funding tends to be short-term and tied to delivery of a specific program, which may or may not meet the needs of the community. It usually requires extensive reporting to funders, which takes away time from other functions, like staff development and client service. It is destabilizing for both staff and clients.

This report on human service delivery in Toronto makes seven recommendations for improving a) funding practices in the sector; b) relevance of data about the sector; c) development and use of human resources in the sector; and d) awareness of the effectiveness of the sector.

The *On the Front Lines* report recommends:

1. **Increased government funding** (from all levels of government, but particularly the senior levels) is **long over-due** for the non-profit community sector. It is vital for the retention of staffing and quality client services, both of which are increasingly jeopardized.

   Chronic under-funding and short-term program funding by governments negatively affect working conditions in the community service sector. More significantly, these funding practices result in erosion in the quality of care and service provided by vital community-based organizations.

2. **Stability of funding needs to be enhanced** in order to support the capacity of the community-based sector and its contribution to the development of liveable communities. A substantial body of research clearly documents the **negative impact of the move to short-term project funding** on the community sector, leading to the inferior working conditions illustrated throughout this report.

3. **Funding practices must be made more consistent with funders' stated goals and understanding of the role of the sector**. Funding practices must acknowledge the critical necessity of funding supervision, administration, volunteer and governance support as an integral aspect of program delivery.

   The **recent changes** to the way in which **Service Canada** funds community-based employment and training programs, developed in active consultation with the community sector, could serve as a **"best practice"** model for other government departments that fund programs through the community sector. These changes include a significant reduction in administrative burden, establishing a fixed percentage for administrative costs, movement toward multi-year funding, and a reduction in overlapping audit requirements. The changes were also implemented through joint training of both Service Canada and community sector staff.

   The *Federal Government* should respect the Code of Good Funding Practice outlined in the Voluntary Sector Accord, which promotes the stability and capacity of the community sector.

   The *Provincial Government* should develop a similar "code" in consultation with the non-profit community sector, to ensure that provincially-funded programs also promote the stability and capacity of the sector. This should be a key aspect of the development of a provincial policy which recognizes the importance of the non-profit community sector as an employer, an engine of economic growth, and a key contributor to the maintenance of the social fabric of the province.

   The *City of Toronto* is called on to collaborate with non-profit community organizations to advocate with the other levels of government to improve their funding practices, and ensure that its own funding mechanisms are "leading by example" as outlined in the report of the City/Community Workgroup on Core Funding, adopted by City Council in 2005.

4. **Changes in data collection** must promote better information and understanding of this vital sector. These changes can be facilitated by **better collaboration and communication** between Statistics Canada, the City of Toronto, and community-based organizations such as the CSPC-T and the United Way in the types of information being sought and disseminated.

   One of the challenges in conducting this research and similar comparative analyses was the lack of available statistical data, particularly at the sub-national level. Generally, there is insufficient information and emphasis on salary and benefit differentials among the community non-profit, MUSH (Municipalities, Universities, Schools, and Hospitals) and public sectors. This gap in understanding impedes the development of good human resource practice throughout all sectors.

5. **New settings for consultation and collaboration** among agencies, trade unions, and funders could help identify improved human resource strategies in a "without prejudice" environment. This is increasingly urgent in an era that faces difficulties in retaining qualified personnel, a problem that will grow with the approaching wave of retirements.

   This study is one of many that document the positive impact of unionization on salaries and working conditions in the sector.

   Adoption of management and funder policies that create a positive environment for collective bargaining across the community sector will support further progress in this area, especially among the smaller organizations that make up the majority of the non-profit community-based sector. Collective bargaining has been a time-tested mechanism to address the shortfalls in health and safety measures identified in the report.

6. **Show-casing and expanding the use of "best practices"** in the sector is critical. Funders already recognize the importance of **professional development, supervision, and addressing health and safety issues** in their own workplaces. It is time for them to recognize the importance of these tools for the agencies they fund, and reflect this understanding through their funding mechanisms.

   Organizational policies and practices that promote an informed, engaged staff, and that encourage the building of internal capacity through professional development, mentoring, and supervision should be encouraged. This takes time, and such time is rarely funded. Existing networks can be the mechanisms for proliferating best practices among their agency membership. CSPC-T and FSA will offer an initial presentation on the best practices outlined in this report.

7. **Better recognition of the work of this sector** needs to be done by the community sector as well. Community development through the provision of human services is not just another business.

   We recommend that **the community service sector**, through its existing networks and organizations (e.g. United Way, OCASI, Toronto Neighbourhood Centres, Social Planning Councils) **develop an information and advocacy campaign** to articulate the value of the community sector, in collaboration with other social justice organizations and organized labour, with a view to improving conditions in the community sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

On the Front Lines is a joint research initiative of the Family Service Association of Toronto (FSA) and the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto (CSPC-T), funded by the United Way of Greater Toronto's Social Research Grants Initiative. This project builds on the 2004 findings of the *Prospects for Young Families* study (CSPC-T/FSA Toronto Status of Young Families report, 2004), which identified Toronto's community service sector as a segment of the labour market offering highly valued but often poorly paid, short-term and unstable employment.

Toronto's community service agencies are vital in supporting families and vulnerable individuals, building skills and community capacity and improving the quality of life of community members. Despite limited resources, the sector is responsive to the changing needs of its diverse and growing communities. To understand how capacity issues in the community service sector affect the delivery of services and the development of stronger communities, this project examined the human resource issues and challenges that the sector is facing in its efforts to ensure the delivery of high quality services to Toronto's diverse and under-resourced communities and neighbourhoods.

The Front Lines project was created to:

- Examine working conditions, experiences and perspectives of Toronto's community service sector employees, using qualitative and quantitative data;

- Identify and build support for organizational practices and social policy responses which would improve working conditions and sector capacity; and

- Engage key decision-makers to build support for the recommendations flowing from this research.

Toronto is a diverse and rapidly changing Canadian city with significant and complex social needs. Individuals and groups are supported by Toronto's non-profit community service organizations in many ways, including the delivery of accessible community services (such as child care, after-school care, literacy including English as a Second Language instruction, settlement and employment programs) and social supports (such as drop-ins or support groups for socially isolated adults, homeless people, seniors, lone parents and educational and civic engagement initiatives). Our society's social and economic well-being is nurtured by this sector's support networks, program interventions and mechanisms for civic engagement.

For the better part of two decades, community service agencies have experienced funding cuts and changes to funding practices that have affected the capacity of organizations to provide quality client services and retain skilled workers (Eakin, 2004). Both the level of funding and the way in which funding is provided (particularly whether it is short-term program- or project-based funding or multi-year organization-based funding) influence the sector's capacity to maintain a healthy workplace for workers and provide quality services that are crucial for building stronger communities. Given this context, *On the Front Lines* explores factors to improve working conditions in community agencies in Toronto and to support workers and agencies to address these challenges and ensure quality services.

This report examines working conditions in non-profit community-based human service agencies in Toronto and demonstrates how relevant issues such as capacity of agencies and quality of services depend on funding practices. Based on a review of related literature and policy documents, we have defined working conditions to include the following criteria: the hours worked - standard and overtime; full-time/part-time work; permanent/temporary contract job status; wages and benefits; defined job descriptions and workload; family-friendly policies such as flex time, child care/elder care assistance, family leave, sick leave for family reasons, opportunities for extended leave etc.; personnel policies; existence of a collective bargaining unit or union or workers' association; opportunities for training and advancement; opportunities to contribute to the overall planning and/or operation of the organization; and workplace safety.

Section 2 of this report begins with a short review of literature examining some of the issues in the non-profit voluntary sector in Canada, and links funding issues with working conditions and the quality of client service. This section also outlines how Toronto's non-profit sector is responding to funding shortages and addressing client issues within its constrained capacity. Section 3 outlines the research methodology, section 4 provides a profile of focus group participants and section 5 outlines findings from the focus groups. Section 6 describes some of the best practices from sector agencies that are unionized. Section 7 gives quantitative information on Toronto's immigrant- and refugee-serving sector and supports the recommendations in the report on areas in need of improvement.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations to assist policy-makers, funders, sector stakeholders and agencies in improving working conditions for workers. Implementing these recommendations is crucial to enable agencies and staff to provide quality client service and build stronger communities in Toronto.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

The Non-Profit Sector at Risk

The non-profit community service agencies serving Torontonians are part of the larger non-profit or voluntary sector in Canada, which has been characterized as the third pillar of society alongside government and the private sector. Non-profit and voluntary organizations play a key role in enriching the lives of Canadians by delivering countless programs and services, including home care for the sick and elderly, shelter for victims of abuse, recreational programs for children and youth, settlement assistance for immigrants and services for many vulnerable groups.

The contribution of the sector to the vibrancy and social inclusion of Canadian communities is generally held in high regard. The economic contribution of the sector is less well recognized. The economic contribution of the non-profit sector in Canada is larger than many major industries, including motor vehicle manufacturing, agriculture, mining/oil/gas extraction, and retail. Between 1997 and 1999, the sector accounted for about 6.8% (or $61.8 billion) of the nation's total economy (Hamdad, Joyal and Rompaey, 2004). With the value of volunteer work incorporated, it contributes 8.5% of the GDP (Imagine Canada, 2005).

The non-profit sector is human resource intensive and its human capital is viewed as being the "greatest strength" of non-profit organizations. Voluntary/non-profit sector organizations have a total of approximately 1.2 million paid employees - about 7.2% of the country's total labour force (Ministry of Industry, 2005). This sector represents the combined effort of paid staff and volunteers in large and small, urban, rural and remote communities throughout the country with 161,000 organizations, more than half (56%) of them registered charities (ibid.).

Despite its social and economic contributions, this sector is known to pay low wages and benefits to workers. Any organization with consistently low wages runs the risk of losing its human capital to other organizations with higher wages. This is also true at the sectoral level. Statistics Canada's 1999 Workplace and Employee Survey (WES) indicates that wage rates in the non-profit sector are significantly lower than other sectors. Many front-line workers consider moving to private and government sectors for better salary and benefits. As a result, small non-profit organizations across the country are suffering a brain drain and are unable to compete for essential workers (Immen, 2003, October 15). Only a third of the employees of Canadian non-profit organizations have access to retirement benefit plans, disability and extended health coverage or dental plans (ibid.). Increased staff turnover and reduced job security affect the consistency and quality of services of non-profit community agencies.

In the past decade, many government services have been downloaded to the non-profit sector without making funding available for the services. Operational costs have increased significantly in recent years, but key provincial departments and ministries that fund the operations of non-profit social service agencies have only increased their support of agencies' administrative and core-cost expenditure by 1% in total for the period of 1993-2003 (CUPE, 2004). Most government grant programs have provided no administrative increases for the period of 1998-2003 (Howarth, 2003). Given inflation increases of 18% between 1995- 2003[1], this represents a significant reduction in operating income for agencies. To cover operation costs, non-profit agencies are forced to divert their attention from client service to fundraising activities.

In addition to funding shortages, this sector is affected by a certain negative image that devalues the contribution of the sector. *The Capacity to Serve* (2004) report identifies the voluntary sector as suffering from a negative public perception of being 'inefficient' or 'second rate'. This identification affects the sector's capacity to attract funding from various sources and, consequently, makes agencies subject to tougher accountability measures (2004:17). This sector deserves recognition from funders for the way it accommodates a wide variety of needs of various groups that are not always available through government services.

Funding Plays a Major Role in Working Conditions and Quality of Client Service

Funding shortages cause job precariousness in the non-profit sector, as well as relatively poor salaries and employment benefits to workers. While arrangements such as flexible work hours or part-time work options are available for workers, these may not offset the disadvantages of poorer compensation, and may accentuate job precariousness. Saunders (2004) identified in the report, *Passion and Commitment Under Stress*, that there is a gap between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for workers in the non-profit sector. Due to inadequate funding, workers are unable to receive salaries comparable to other sectors; they also receive weaker 'extrinsic' rewards in the form of non-wage compensations. In terms of entitlement and stability, most jobs in the non-profit sector can be easily termed as precarious. In this context, extrinsic reward is exclusively based on workers' motivation to serve clients better, a potent driver for many who choose to work in this sector, but not generally sustainable on its own merits.

In addition to funding levels, the ways in which government and most funding agencies fund programs in non-profit agencies have a large impact on working conditions in the sector. The nature of funding also shapes organizational development and sustainability. Funding of non-profit and voluntary organizations falls into two categories: core funding and project/program funding.

Core funding allows organizations the ability to plan and pay for the cost of operating the organization. Project or program funding is typically restricted to payment for specific programmatic purposes, which limits the ability of organizations to apply this revenue to ongoing administrative or operating costs.

The 2003 report, *Funding Matters: The Impact of Canada's New Funding Regime on Non-Profit and Voluntary Organizations*, prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development, documented how the current trend to program or project funding causes instability and increases stress among agencies to find funds to cover other ongoing operational costs (Scott, 2003). As documented by the City of Toronto (2004) in the *Cracks in the Foundation* report, agencies are reporting high levels of program fluctuation, difficulty in training and supporting staff and volunteers, and high levels of staff turnover and burnout, due to the heightened emphasis on project funding.

Research shows that organizations that operate largely with project funding have less autonomy and independence. They need to continually search for new project money to ensure their existence. They have challenges recruiting and retaining staff, and find it difficult to engage in long-term planning (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2003). The nature of funding thus impacts on both working conditions and the scope and quality of client services.

Quality of service is assessed primarily by client satisfaction, which in turn is partly derived from the capacity of agencies to provide clients with appropriate choices.

This funding modality also affects worker morale. Research shows that project funding contributes to the incidence of contingent staff positions, lack of supervision, low salaries, inadequate resources, uncompensated overtime hours, stress and job insecurity in the sector. According to Baines (2004), "workers recognize that their anger and frustration on the job has little to do with their bosses, but rather with government bodies whose political philosophies such as neo-liberalism contributes to the oppression in the sector".

Chronic underfunding forces community agencies to spend more time on tasks not related to direct service, client support or day-to-day operations of the organization. Additional time is required to fundraise, track clients, and meet reporting guidelines. Diverting increasing amounts of staff time to deal with these issues results in more paperwork and stressful relationships between workers and clients. The combination of insufficient funding and increased workload has been noted to lead to increased workplace injuries and many other negative health effects for workers. It can also contribute to increased conflict and confrontations with clients (Baines et al., 2002). Sector workers who do not have the protection of a union or cannot rely on the enforcement of government legislation are even more vulnerable.

In some sectors of human service provision, such as caregivers or home care, workers receive low income, poor benefits, and are not paid for travel time - even though their job descriptions require travelling from one client's home to another. There are few mechanisms to regulate staff/client ratios. There is little development of personnel or organizational attention paid to ensure these workers can achieve "income stabilization, access to social benefits, and the possibility of greater personal support" (Status of Women Canada, 2005:1).

Building Stronger Communities in Toronto

Over time, growing numbers of individuals and families in Toronto have become vulnerable due to a lack of affordable housing, secure income and subsidized child care. Toronto's non-profit agencies are increasingly responding to conditions intensified by these socio-economic disadvantages experienced by Torontonians. In particular, major cuts to welfare, social housing, child care, health and education programs have increased the demand for services from families and individuals (CUPE, 2004). Along with increased demand for service, agencies find themselves spending more time on crisis intervention services. This erodes the time available for their traditional community development initiatives.

Toronto's non-profit agencies are essential in nurturing the social and economic well-being of our society. They strengthen primary support networks through services that can help promote social cohesion and civic participation. But the sector's capacity is fragmented, and it is increasingly unable to advocate for the growth of services that can improve the quality of life for disadvantaged communities. Instead, agencies are scrambling to respond to a growth in demand for service caused by the crumbling social safety net. They are too frequently left unable to offer preventative services to improve people's quality of life. In *Community Capacity Draining*, Eakin (2004) points out that underfunding is draining community organizations of their capacity to remain active in their communities, even reducing organizational capacity to the extent that client support is increasingly inadequate.

Community service agencies need sufficient resources to offer programs that can respond to the changing needs of the community. Currently, available project funding supports activities and services that funders identify as priorities. As a result, client services are often tailored to fit the funders' mandate, which may not necessarily be the priority needs in the community. There is a danger of mission drift and increasing irrelevance. This compromises both the sector's ability to deliver essential community services and the long-term viability of community organizations on which we rely for the delivery of vital social services. Government departments increasingly turn to this sector to carry out their policy objectives. Without adequate and appropriate resources, it is impossible to keep services accessible, accountable and sensitive to the evolving needs of multi-cultural communities, many of which are home to large numbers of recent immigrants. Such services, delivered in the main by non-profit agencies, are essential to building stronger communities and to ensuring quality client services, particularly in large, diverse Canadian cities like Toronto.

3. METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

In our analysis of working conditions in Toronto's community service sector, the research team's initial intention was to utilize both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data was to be drawn from focus groups, the quantitative data from existing data sets. However, due to a lack of existing quantitative data at the local level, changes were made to the initial methodology as described below.

There is a broad spectrum of non-profit and voluntary service providers in Toronto. The City of Toronto's 2003 community agency survey identified 1,342 community-based human services agencies in Toronto, excluding those providing arts and culture, recreation and child care services. This project also excluded these agencies from our target list for focus groups since arts and culture and recreation are not predominantly human services, and child care has a different funding base than other community-based human services. The research team adopted the City of Toronto's human services classification scheme as used in the 2003 survey. These service categories include: information/referral services; food and clothing; counselling/crisis intervention; health, rehabilitation and home care; education; outreach; settlement, language and literacy; drop-ins; general community services; housing access, eviction prevention; employment, skills training; homeless services; community and economic development; supportive housing; adult day services; early childhood education; legal aid; other early years services; emergency shelter; social housing; long term care (City of Toronto, 2004).

There are few reliable data sources that enable analysis of working conditions in the community-based human services sector in Toronto. At the national level, Statistics Canada's Workplace and Employee Survey (WES) provides some data on the non-profit sector, but reliable data were not available at the local level. This presented a methodological challenge, and the project proceeded with a heightened emphasis on qualitative research through the selection of focus groups. Though a fruitful and rich exercise, this reliance on focus groups represented an unforeseen limitation on the anticipated reach of this study of the sector, given funding and resource constraints that conditioned the scale of such qualitative research.

It was determined that the best use of research resources would be to tease out information from parts of the community-based human services sector that we knew least about. These sub-sectors were underrepresented in the City of Toronto's 2003 survey and are described below.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted with front-line workers and management staff drawn from five targeted sub-sectors of the Toronto community service sector: large Toronto-wide agencies, smaller neighbourhood centres, agencies offering immigrant settlement services, agencies offering employment and training services, and agencies offering home support services. The three latter sub-sectors were underrepresented in the City of Toronto survey. The first two groups were included to provide a basis for comparison of working conditions within Toronto's varied community service sector.

The MUSH[2] sector (Municipalities, Universities, School Boards and Hospitals) and community health centres were excluded from our target group since they have more reliable access to ongoing funding and are generally able to provide better working conditions and salaries than other smaller community-based agencies. That said, it must be pointed out that funding in the MUSH sector and among community health centres has also been heavily constrained in the past decade. Functionally speaking, the three main service sectors under examination were agencies providing training, immigrant/refugee and home support services.

Experts who worked in and were knowledgeable about each sub-sector were invited to assist the researchers in the identification of agencies in each sub-sector. Agencies were chosen using the following criteria in order to get an optimal mix of participants: large and small (less than 10 staff); established and new agencies (less than five years old); wide geographic distribution (both suburbs and downtown); those with stable funding; and those with project funding.

Despite an attempt to include workers within smaller agencies, the majority of respondents came from larger organizations. It was common for smaller agencies to report being too busy to spare staff time to participate in the process.

Seven focus groups were held across Toronto during the summer and fall of 2005. Focus group participants were asked a series of questions relating to working conditions. The total number of participants (59) included Executive Directors, front-line workers, and middle/human resource managers. We did not mix Executive Directors or managers with front-line workers in the same focus group in order to ensure confidentiality of both groups of workers. Representatives from both unionized and non-unionized workplaces were included in the sample.

A written survey was also used to capture demographic and quantitative information of focus group participants. These surveys were completely confidential, with no identifier associated with the survey form.

Roundtable Discussions

Two roundtable discussion groups were held with key stakeholders, including funders, community sector Executive Directors, front-line staff, government officials, union representatives, and researchers. The purpose of these roundtables was to discuss major issues that affect the working conditions of the community sector and develop recommendations for change. At the roundtable discussions, preliminary results from the focus groups were presented along with findings from related literature.

Analysis of focus group information, roundtable discussions and a review of the literature led to the development of draft recommendations. Draft recommendations were reviewed by the Project Advisory Committee, as well as a cross-section of Executive Directors from the community sector.

Survey of Toronto's Immigrant- and Refugee-Serving Sector

The immigrant- and refugee-serving sub-sector was identified early in the process, by sector experts, as needing the most support in terms of funding and capacity building. To create a profile of this sub-sector, we administered two online surveys to agencies whose focus is serving immigrant and refugee populations. An organizational survey and a staff survey were used to capture general information about participating agencies and individual responses of sector staff.

Toronto-based members of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) were invited to take part in the survey. We selected OCASI as the mechanism for identifying the appropriate survey base as it is the provincial umbrella group representing immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies. Large multi-service agencies that did not include a primary focus on immigrant and refugee services were excluded because it was believed that the working conditions in these agencies would be categorically different, due to significant differences in funding levels and stability.

Executive Directors were invited to participate in the organizational and staff survey and asked to distribute invitations to all of their paid staff. Invitation letters included a description of the project, its objectives and benefits of participation, as well as instructions and project contact information. Considerable follow-up work was conducted to encourage broad participation. Of the 91 Toronto-based OCASI member agencies invited to participate, 61 took part in the online surveys, including 321 workers.

Participating agencies provided organizational information such as, type of agency (direct service and umbrella groups), number and type of paid positions, number of volunteers, size of annual operating budget, levels of various types of funding, unionized workforce, years in operation, and communities and groups served. Staff provided basic demographic information, information about their work and working conditions, and recommendations to improve working conditions in the sector.

A separate report, *On the Front Lines of Toronto's Immigrant- and Refugee-Serving Sector*, provides a profile of the sector and identifies issues affecting sector staff.

Review of Best Practices

The project set out to identify examples of "best practices" among agencies in the community service sector. Since some of the best practices identified in the focus groups were from the unionized work environment, a review of collective agreements became part of the project.

Many stakeholders pointed out in the roundtables that unionization is not the sole answer to better working conditions. However, the unionized working environment showcases some of the sector strengths that are being practised at the organizational level.

It should be noted that the roundtable discussions not only assisted the process of framing recommendations for diverse stakeholders, but also identified ways to disseminate the report and implement the recommendations.

Limitations of Methodology

We found a lack of existing quantitative data on working conditions in the community service sector at the local level. Labour Force Survey data, while available at the local level, do not distinguish among the private, MUSH and community sectors. The Workplace and Employee Survey provides a unique portrait of the non-profit sector at the national level, but sample size issues do not allow for an analysis at a provincial or local level.

The focus groups were used to illustrate issues affecting working conditions in the sector, with a particular emphasis on sub-sectors that were underrepresented in related literature. The research team's goal was to include a diversity of staff working in the sector including Executive Directors, middle and human resource managers and front-line staff. Due to limited resources, it was not possible to conduct a random selection of community sector staff nor to host as many focus groups as would be required to produce results that could be generalized to the entire community service sector.

Despite attempts to engage staff from smaller agencies, most participants were employed at larger organizations.

This reflects our finding that smaller agencies are stretched to the limit with current demands on their time, given available resources. Due to the lack of staff participation from smaller and less well-funded agencies, focus group findings are likely to provide a more optimistic view of working conditions within the sector.

Despite the limited scope of the current work, we are confident that we are enhancing our understanding of the sector by adding new information to the foundation of existing knowledge established by the City of Toronto survey.

One of the limitations of the survey of Toronto's immigrant- and refugee-serving sector was that it was restricted to OCASI member agencies. While it is widely assumed that OCASI represents the core of the immigrant- and refugee-serving sector, this cannot be definitively confirmed because there is no unequivocal and commonly accepted definition of the sector. It is difficult to draw the line around what agencies should be included in or excluded from the sector in large and diverse cities, like Toronto, where most agencies provide services to immigrants and refugees, but are not necessarily dedicated to the service of these populations. OCASI member agencies were seen as a reputable and robust proxy for a representative sample, and the response rate in this pool of agencies was high (67%).

4. PROFILE OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Participants in seven focus groups held in the summer and fall of 2005 were asked to complete a survey about themselves, their families and their work. The tables below provide a profile of the focus group participants.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE (N=59)

Gender:
- Female: 78.0%
- Male: 22.0%

Age:
- 21-35 Years: 25.4%
- 36-50 Years: 44.1%
- 51-65 Years: 30.5%

Participants with Children 18 and Under: 27.1%

Among Participants with Children 18 and Under:
- 33.3% Lone Parent Families
- 66.7% Two-Parent Families

Participants Living with Dependent Adults: 10.2%

Member of Racialized Group: 45.8%

Participants who are Immigrants: 45.8%

Year of Immigration:
- Since 2000: 0%
- 1995-1999: 14.3%
- 1990-1994: 14.3%
- Prior to 1990: 71.4%

Participants Who Speak Languages Other than English: 49.2%

Languages:
- Arabic, American Sign Language, Bengali, Bosnian, Cantonese, Croatian, Dari, Farsi, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese, Punjabi, Serbian, Sinhala, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu

Education Levels:
- High School: 1.7%
- Some College/University: 10.2%
- College/University Graduate: 66.1%
- Professional/Masters/Doctorate Degree: 22.0%

Where Participants Live:
- Central Toronto 40.7%
- East York 7.4%
- Etobicoke 9.3%
- North York 13.0%
- Scarborough 14.8%
- York 7.4%
- GTA Outside Toronto 7.4%

Where Participants Work:
- Central Toronto 51.9%
- East York 3.7%
- Etobicoke 3.7%
- North York 13.0%
- Scarborough 20.4%
- York 0%
- Multiple locations throughout Toronto 7.4%

Time Working in the Community Sector:
- Less than 1 Year: 3.4%
- 1-5 Years: 15.3%
- 5.1-10 Years: 25.4%
- 10.1-20 Years: 33.9%
- Over 20 Years: 22.0%

AGENCY PROFILE

(describes the percentage of agencies offering a variety of services)

Information and Referral:	54.2%	Adult Day Services:	23.7%
Counselling and Crisis Intervention:	49.2%	Housing Stability:	22.0%
Education and Employment Training:	45.8%	Health:	18.6%
Immigration and Settlement:	44.1%	Child Care:	18.6%
Children and Youth Services:	39.0%	Other*:	16.9%
Community Development and Planning:	33.9%	Food and Clothing:	13.6%
Supportive Housing:	32.2%	Legal:	10.2%
Homeless Services:	28.8%	Long Term Care:	8.5%
Home Support:	27.1%	Abused Women's Shelter:	5.1%

* (includes some multi-service agencies, conflict resolution, developmental services, emergency disaster response, residential care and transportation)

WORK PROFILE

Focus group participants consisted of front-line workers, human resources management and Executive Directors from the Toronto community service sector.

Participants working in a unionized environment: 25.4%
Participants with more than one job: 20.4%
Participants in a temporary work position: 6.9%
Participants working 30 hours or more (weekly): 92.6%
Participants who regularly work overtime: 82.4%
Among participants who regularly work overtime:
- 42.9% Unpaid O/T
- 54.8% Compensated in Lieu of O/T
- 2.4% Paid O/T

Hourly Wage:
- Ranged from $15-$50 (many participants did not report an hourly wage)

Participant Annual Income Levels: (note: approximately 31% of participants were Executive Directors)
- Less than $40,000: 34.5%
- $40,000-$59,999: 34.5%
- $60,000-$79,999: 16.4%
- $80,000 or More: 14.6%

Participants that Receive:
Non-Wage Benefits from Employers: 91.5%
Pension/RRSP Contributions: 66.1%
Dental: 86.4%
Health Care: 89.8%
Life Insurance: 69.5%

JOB QUALITY

Focus group participants also responded to survey questions about the quality of their jobs. The findings show a high degree of job satisfaction. It is important to note that the survey findings reflect the views of focus group participants and cannot be generalized to the community service sector. Participants who responded "agree" or "strongly agree" to the following statements:

- I know exactly what is expected of me in my job: 85.7%
- There are clear goals and objectives for my job: 80.8%
- I get the training I need to do my job effectively: 64.3%
- There is adequate staff to manage the workload: 19.7%
- I have opportunities for advancement in my job: 35.1%
- I have opportunities to offer suggestions to my superiors in areas of work that may need improvement: 87.7%
- In general, I am satisfied with my job: 83.0%

- My job requires me to learn new things: 90.4%
- My job requires a high level of skill: 90.2%
- My job allows me freedom to decide how I do my job: 75.4%
- I am free from conflicting demands that others make: 20.8%
- I have a lot to say about what happens in my job: 66.0%

- My job requires that I do the same things over and over: 38.5%
- My job is very hectic: 86.8%
- My job requires a lot of physical movement: 34.6%
- I am exposed to hostility or conflict from the people I work with: 37.7%
  (**Note:** It is not clear whether responses are in reference to co-workers or clients.)

58.6% of the participants have considered leaving their organization for various reasons which are listed below. Among those participants, 88.2% would choose to work in the community service sector again.

- To earn a higher salary: 61.8%
- To engage in more interesting or challenging work: 44.1%
- Because there are greater opportunities for career advancement elsewhere: 41.2%
- Because I am frustrated by my working conditions: 35.3%
- Because I lack a sense of recognition for what I do: 29.4%
- Because work expectations are unrealistic: 23.5%
- Other reasons (new challenge, safety issues, career change, different kind of work, retirement, job security, funding inadequacy, stress): 20.6%
- Because my work environment is not supportive of me as an individual: 17.6%
- To spend less travel time: 17.6%
- To get more time to spend on personal/family activities: 14.7%
- Because of personality conflicts with coworkers and/or manager: 14.7%
- Because my values and those of the organization are not the same: 11.8%
- To move closer to family members: 8.8%
- To have more flexible hours elsewhere: 8.8%

5. FINDINGS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS

A 'Helping' Sector with Meaningful Work and Personal Satisfaction

The research undertaken by this project illuminated one of the widely-agreed upon strengths of jobs in the community service sector in Toronto: this type of work offers people an opportunity to achieve a high degree of personal satisfaction by serving communities in need. The sector, which is generally known as the 'helping sector', offers a wide range of services. These agencies place a high value on social justice, and share a goal of improving the lives of the most vulnerable in our communities.

Often agencies in this sector are mission driven, permitting workers to find a close alignment between their personal values and the values of the organizations in which they work.

"The work we do in this sector helps Canada to live up to its values."
"Our work in the community service sector reflects the values we believe in."
"In our work we're living out our values."

Sector workers can often see the difference their work makes, and see how it directly benefits people's lives. Especially for front-line workers, it is a fulfilling experience to be part of a process that brings together people who are willing to help out and, at the same time be acknowledged by service users.

Although focus group sessions made it clear that jobs in the sector are low-paid, it was recognized that they offer other advantages. Flex time was seen as one such advantage of work in this sector. Workers appreciated the fact that there was often flexibility in working hours with time in lieu of over-time pay available. With a predominance of women working in the sector, part-time work was seen as an important option for workers seeking to better balance jobs and family life. Participants also identified the presence of understanding and sympathetic managers as an important support.

The very nature of the sector promotes a culture of collaboration within organizations and among agencies, through an emphasis on workplace ethics and teamwork.

Participants described their co-workers as very dedicated people who are working for a cause and who are equally motivated to help clients and co-workers. Highly respectful attitudes and spirits give many workplaces an energy boost. It is highly satisfying to work with others who share the same values.

People also appreciated the diversity of their co-workers and the richness in experience and perspective they bring to the sector. There is a feeling of community among workers in small agencies, as opposed to the apathy that can accompany working in a large, centralized organization. Many small agencies are rooted in the local community and staff enjoy working or being part of that community, and the sense of collaboration it offers.

The sector offers opportunities for embarking on new projects, challenges and tasks, partly due to changing funding criteria, and partly due to changing needs in the community. The work environment is very dynamic and evolves as a result of ongoing client interaction, new initiatives and challenges. Senior sector managers spoke specifically about the flexibility, creativity and autonomy in their jobs. They enjoy a high degree of

"There are phenomenal people who work in this sector - there is a richness to them. Many have overcome personal obstacles and have great strength of character. That is why I enjoy working in this sector and will stay."

latitude to prioritize and shape the direction of their work. Front-line workers also enjoy the dynamism and the opportunity to embrace new challenges and constantly solve problems. From what we heard, the community service sector is a source of gratification for workers at both the personal and organizational levels.

"We're not making widgets. Working in this sector offers the opportunity to be creative and to problem-solve very challenging issues."

Negative Aspects of Working on the Front Lines: The Other Side of the Picture

The very notion of the 'helping' sector also gives rise to many expectations about service that become problematic for sector staff. Focus group participants related how they are 'expected' to serve clients irrespective of their workload or capacity. Front-line workers are often over-worked and under-resourced but are expected to 'go the extra mile' for their clients regardless.

> "It's a challenge to manage the stress of competing demands and then being able to put it aside during one's personal life. It's hard to say 'I've done enough for now.'"

Work-life balance and worker self-care do not factor into these pressure-cooker working environments.

There is a dual and contradictory image of the sector that focus group participants addressed in the research. On the one hand, it is known as a helping sector, but on the other, it is stigmatized for being a service sector for 'unwanted' clientele.

The participants identified a stigma attached to the community service sector and its underprivileged clients. Focus group participants felt that this perception is prevalent among funders, who tend to devalue their work and the sector as a whole. Such perception does not exist for the health care and the educa-tion sectors, which receive recognition as being 'important and essential' from the public. Hospitals and schools receive regular grants for infrastructure development and their workers receive higher salaries and benefits. It was perceived that the community service sector does not receive recognition as being 'essential' and as a result is deprived of similar salary levels, increases in salaries or adequate capital investments. Some of the agencies received funds for rent, but no long-term investment is available for office and program space or technologies and training that could enhance day-to-day operations.

> "As an Executive Director, there isn't the luxury to take the weekend off. When help is needed you're expected to provide it because you work in the community services sector."

Health and safety risks are contributing to deteriorating working conditions in the sector. It is a major issue especially in the home care sector (e.g. requiring heavy physical labour or lifting seniors) or positions requiring home visits (e.g. going to apartment buildings and feeling unsafe in elevators and hallways).

> "I'm leaving my client's home and swatting the bed bugs off my legs."

Some physical work environments are not healthy - one worker spoke of serving clients in cramped spaces and rat-infested buildings. Heavy workloads combined with insecure environments leads to more burnout among workers.

A McMaster University study titled, *Improving Work Organization to Reduce Injury and Illness* (2002), documented how workloads and health risks have increased dramatically in this sector as a direct result of reduced funding. Overwork and burnout have become common occurrences.

Although there was much opportunity for personal gratification, many sector workers expressed that their over-riding sense of dissatisfaction came as a result of funding shortages and subsequent lack of capacity to provide high quality, appropriate care. Workers indicated that some managers seemed only interested in the numbers of clients served, which may be the result of current funding regimes. Managers are often pressured to provide numbers to prove that they have reached their targets, targets that are frequently contractual requirements for funding. Some workers raised concerns about a lack of communication and support from their managers to reach these targets. They also raised concerns about how prioritizing quantity of clients served affected the quality of client services.

Many front-line workers identified the need for managers with an understanding of the pressures of front-line work. Without such empathy, co-workers reported that they rely on each other for support. In some cases, managers may listen and be sympathetic, but take no action on concerns raised by workers. They either do not have time or resources to support their workers.

Funding Cuts and Changes: The Impact on Community Agencies

The funding shift to provide project funding rather than core funding has created significant uncertainty for workers throughout the sector. Project workers are hired for short periods of time and are always under stress of losing their jobs if the funding is not extended or continued. For agency management, project funding means less time spent on staff supervision and support as more time becomes devoted to renewing funding or seeking new sources of funds.

> "Our funding is provided on a year-to-year basis - this means that every February we receive a letter notifying us that we might be laid off."

Funding cuts over the past few years have been a significant source of stress for sector agencies. These funding cuts have resulted in fierce competition among agencies for remaining funding sources.

One of the responses to funding pressures is for agencies to convert full-time employment positions to part-time, casual or contract positions. This can have a destabilizing effect on workers and services. The increased casualization of community sector labour markets compromises the ability of agencies to provide consistent, high quality services.

> "Funders are breeding agency competitiveness in the sector - it's not the agencies themselves."

Low wages and lack of benefits contribute to deteriorating working conditions in the sector. Front-line workers in particular indicated that their salaries were inconsistent with the rising cost of living in Toronto. Focus group participants pointed out that inflation rates have ranged from 1-3% annually over the past ten years, but wage rates have not kept up with inflation. Focus group findings reiterated what other research had found about low-paid jobs in the sector. For example, CPRN researchers McMullen and Schellenberg pointed out in *Mapping the Non-Profit Sector* (McMullen and Schellenberg, 2002) that non-profit organizations tend to pay lower wages than their counterparts in other sectors and are unable to offer attractive compensation packages to potential recruits or current employees.

Low wages are a particularly persistent issue in non-unionized agencies in Toronto, but low wages are not exclusively a non-union issue. Managers noted that funding constraints meant that they could not improve pay equity and benefits for workers even though they wanted to do so in both unionized and non-union environments. External funding constraints often severely limit the capacity of agencies to increase staff salaries and benefits. Low wages discourage individuals from entering and continuing to work in the sector, even when they are passionate and committed people who want to continue such work. This is particularly acute in the home care sector as indicated by many participants.

> "Whenever I think of leaving my job, it's because of the wages."

Among the focus group participants, 3.8% had too few working hours. This concern is most acute in the home care sector, where personal care workers are not earning enough due to their casual status.

It is particularly hard to attract and maintain personal care workers. The CCAC Procurement Review Committee (2005) in *Realizing the Potential of Home Care, Competing for Excellence by Rewarding Results* confirms this finding and calls for protection and enhancement of workers' rights with part-time and casual home care workers requiring protection under the Employment Standards Act.

Project funding contributes to inconsistency in salaries across the sector. It leads to different salary ranges for people doing similar jobs in the same agency. Staff within the same organization may receive significantly different salaries despite having the same qualifications and credentials. This creates conflict and pay inequities within an organization. Agencies are challenged to increase salaries to ensure pay equity and thus must devote more time to fundraising.

> "In home care, some workers have only two hours work allocated to them one day, then six hours the next. So the worker has to work at eight different agencies to get enough hours to earn enough to live on. And they have to travel all over Toronto visiting their clients."

Such funding pressures erode the goodwill between staff and management. Inadequate funding means, for many non-unionized agencies, that they cannot offer pensions or retirement benefits for workers. Some of the focus group participants feared that they were at the risk of becoming service users in their own sector as a result of these realities.

> "I will become a service user myself when I am older. I cannot afford enough to save for a RRSP."

Some participants linked changes in funding criteria and focus to greater stress on the job and questioned the rationale for these changes. The impact of public funding upon the community service sector is substantial, given that government funding accounts for 72% of its revenue (City of Toronto, 2004). When funders change their focus or funding criteria, important services can be discontinued. In such cases, workers have to explain to dissatisfied clients why a certain service was dropped or seek an alternative way of accommodating client needs by finding volunteers to run the program that lost funding. Discontinuity of services tends to erode staff morale, given the impact on clients.

> "HRSDC arbitrarily totally changed a program overnight without consultation with service delivery staff. There was a big learning curve for staff to modify the program to fit the new criteria."

In other cases, funding determines who is eligible for a service and to what extent. Since most changes in the past two decades have led to tightened eligibility rules for access to service, these changes also negatively affect client-worker relations.

> "I no longer have an office. It's demoralizing to do informal counselling and be sensitive to clients when there isn't appropriate space or privacy."

Funding cuts and the need to re-apply for funding on an annual basis increases insecurity among agencies and workers, and the instability of services. There is a constant level of background anxiety among sector workers. Some people are working multiple jobs to make ends meet. Lack of office space and privacy affects client service adding more stress on front-line workers.

Redefined Administration and Accountability Measures

The increased focus of funders on accountability measures has resulted in more administrative work for sector workers without a corresponding increase in the resources required to do it. The notion of accountability and evaluation are used interchangeably in this section to denote certain administrative tasks that are used to determine the success of a program. There are numerous evaluation methods required by funders for accountability purposes with which agencies need to comply. Focus group participants expressed concerns with evaluation methods required by funders that favour quantity over quality of service.

> "I had a client who re-learned how to walk - an amazing feat - but there was no category on the reporting form to report on that accomplishment."

Many workers struggle with constant pressure to meet targets of the number of clients being served, for monitoring and evaluation purposes, without similar attention being paid to ensure quality service or appropriate attention to client care.

> "Funders emphasize reporting client numbers as opposed to quality of service… yet if your numbers are on target, it can lead to reduced funding or higher targets for next year."

In this regard, Eakin and Richmond (2005) suggest that new funding regimes with appropriate resources are needed to support these accountability requirements. As well, they identify the need for more discussion around administrative accountability, program evaluation and public accountability.

The existing trend of project funding puts constant pressure on agencies to seek multiple funding sources. A great deal of time is spent on fundraising and grant application writing as a result, taking time away from service delivery, staff

supervision and organizational development. Funding criteria have become increasingly rigid with little or no funding provided to cover administrative costs, salary cost of living increases or benefits.

> "We spent five full days with three senior staff members to define and negotiate 'administration' with HRSDC. There is no time allowed for administration so we had to redefine that in order to secure funding. Our time and energy were spent defining something that should be funded."

Participants identified the need for a redefinition of accountability measures, greater dialogue between funders and agencies to ensure that funders have an accurate understanding of the issues facing agencies, and collaboration in the setting of service targets.

The needs of diverse communities in Toronto have changed over the years. Reporting requirements should reflect these changes. For instance, new immigrants from different parts of the world come with different needs and require different services and modes of service delivery. There is a need for greater understanding between funders and agencies regarding the changing needs of city residents. As well, front-line workers should be consulted when designing new program initiatives or determining program outcome measures.

> "My funding criteria allow me to spend only 45 minutes with a client. But my clients who are abused women need much longer than that."

Front-line workers also raised concerns regarding the time-limited nature of some programs that don't meet the needs of all clients. There should be openness about the extent of client support to be provided by the workers. Due to the limited availability of support services and growing complexity of client issues, many workers expressed the need to spend more time with clients, both in terms of duration and frequency.

> "We are expected to serve more and more clients, yet have received the same amount of funding for the past 12 years."

Professional Development is Crucial for the Sector

Focus group participants strongly advocated for professional training. Professional training would enable them to improve their skills, keep up with new developments in the field and create opportunities for advancement, thus making better working conditions a reality not only for themselves, but also for the sector. Some of the participants reported receiving some training in the past 12 months, but this training did not necessarily meet their specific professional needs. They were concerned about the limited training and professional development opportunities available in the sector due to lack of funding.

> "Professional development is on the chopping block because funders won't pay for it."

Other research, such as that of McMullen and Schellenberg (2003a), also identified that there is lack of training opportunities in the non-profit sector. This impedes advancement in service provision and career development. Participants in the current study voiced similar concern that a 'culture of learning' was largely absent from the workplace, causing frustrations over career expectations in Toronto's community service sector.

Impact on Client Service

Focus group participants were concerned that Toronto's community service sector is failing to attract and retain qualified staff to ensure high quality client service. Agencies lose staff because there are fewer permanent jobs and more contract positions, and for the most part, wages remain stagnant and low[3].

There is brain drain from the sector to jobs in government offices, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), United Way and foundations where jobs are more likely to be permanent with better pay and benefits. Community agencies find it difficult to attract and retain experienced and trained staff to continue to deliver quality client services.

Staff turnover affects the quality of programming. For example, clients such as children, youth and seniors need consistency in services. Participants mentioned that many front-line workers are looking for and/or leaving for better-

"We can no longer offer competitive salaries so cannot attract MSW level staff. If I left, my agency probably could not handle these complex cases because they couldn't afford to replace me with someone with the same skill and experience level."

paid jobs, which causes instability in client service. In many cases, long-term clients do not feel comfortable disclosing sensitive issues or personal problems to new/interim staff. It also takes a new staff person a significant amount of time to understand the nature of support required by a long-term client or build a functioning relationship with a new client who requires special attention. Retention of experienced staff is critical in this sector for the provision of quality care, especially for clients who require interaction over the longer-term. Staff loss is leading, in some cases, to an over-reliance on volunteers, causing some agencies to be in a state of near collapse.

Participants were concerned that they were spending more time on paperwork than serving clients. By spending more time on administrative work, front-line workers either have to cut short their time with clients or work without pay. Therefore, waiting lists are getting longer. There was also concern that

"We have a total of 10 volunteer receptionists during the week - there is no consistency of service this way."

funders, seeking greater financial accountability, are expecting more quantitative statistics without concern for the quality of service provided to the community. Such funding requirements affect the capacity of agencies to respond to clients' and community needs.

The rigidity of funding specifications has led to situations where agencies must turn away clients who do not fit the program criteria, even if they desperately need assistance. Some agencies have had to stop offering a needed community service because funding is no longer available.

Due to funding constraints, front-line workers often have limited time to spend with each client, regardless of individual client needs. As well, funding criteria can limit who has access to specific services, despite individual needs for service. These realities have a demoralizing effect on front-line workers who find themselves unable to provide needed services to community members.

Funders often promote partnerships among agencies in the sector. A partnership with other agencies might not be the most appropriate way to deliver certain client services. Smaller agencies can be swallowed up by larger interests in that process and become less responsive to community needs. Further, organizational collaboration is a time-consuming process for workers, and requires specific human resource and organizational skills. Staff at these agencies may or

"Funders should also ask for non-success stories to learn what did not work and why."

may not have these skills, and there is no training or professional development available to develop them. Success of partnership initiatives depends on the performance of each partner. If one partner runs into difficulties, this will have an adverse effect on all parties. These issues of organizational context affect client service. The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's (2003) *The Capacity to Serve* study reported similar findings regarding the pitfalls of forced partnerships.

The move by some government funders to encourage competitive bidding among non-profit agencies and for-profit private companies is detrimental, particularly in those sectors of service that focus on clients and communities who are most in need. When for-profit corporate entities win a contract, the tendency is for them to seek out the easiest-to-serve clients for quick and favourable results, and ignore the most vulnerable or hard-to-serve clients, who require more staff time and face greater challenges. The old saying "time is money" is the key to this approach: every dollar "lost" to service provision is a dollar unavailable for profits and shareholders' dividends. Corporate priorities of realizing a target profit margin erode the possibility of delivering high quality services, particularly for the most marginalized.

Given these considerations, the results of competitive bidding processes should be monitored with respect to their impact on service delivery and effects on clients and workers. There should be a particular focus on monitoring how access to service is impacted. The concern is that competitive bidding practices risk jeopardizing the most vulnerable clients and those hardest to serve in the sector.

> "Government is like an unfaithful lover - they change their funding focus from something that is working in the community, and then we have to compete with other bidders for the contract."

Discrimination against Racialized Workers Erodes Working Conditions and Client Services

Toronto's community sector serves a wide range of diverse groups where services are developed based on the special needs of ethno-specific groups. There is a great need for trained and experienced workers with specific ethnocultural backgrounds who are a good fit to serve diverse communities.

However, many participants from ethno-specific agencies pointed out that discrimination and racism affect upward mobility of many workers. It is difficult to move from small ethno-cultural agencies to larger mainstream agencies. Most ethno-specific agencies try to employ workers with foreign qualifications and experience for many reasons. First, it allows workers with foreign credentials to gain Canadian work experience. Second, it allows agencies to provide effective service to groups needing culturally-appropriate services.

The transition to mainstream social service agencies is impeded by what many workers in ethno-specific agencies feel is a lack of respect and a general devaluing of their credentials and experience. As well, many workers within small ethno-specific agencies lack access to resources and training that would increase their opportunities for employment within mainstream organizations. As a result, workers in ethno-specific agencies feel isolated, and subject to discrimination.

6. EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES FROM THE SECTOR

Toronto has a long labour movement history that has helped to build support for workers' rights. Labour has advocated for better working conditions in different sectors, including the community service sector. Some of the achievements of the union movement in the past demonstrated the union's role as effective in establishing better working conditions in many parts of Canada, including Toronto. During the course of this research, we have identified some of the best organizational practices from agencies in the sector. These agencies tended to be large, well-established, with a unionized workforce. While a combination of factors contributed to the establishment of best practices, unions certainly played an important role. Some of these best practices can be adopted in non-unionized agencies.

To identify best practices, we have reviewed 18 collective agreements[4] from the sector agencies that contribute to better working conditions. Unions or workers' associations are not the sole answer to good working conditions since they alone cannot adequately address the issues created by underfunding in the sector. But they allow workers to address some of the systemic barriers and discrimination in the workforce.

Many front-line workers described how unions contribute to good working conditions. Examples of good practices include:

- Specification of terms of employment for members in the bargaining unit through union contracts. The grievance process specified in the contract provides a system to deal with workers' issues.

- Development of a job evaluation system in conjunction with the agency management, with defined job specifications, qualifications required for the position, and salary range. This helps to ensure consistency so that similar job classifications are not being paid differently.

- Promotion of workplace health and wellness by having a staff person or committee assigned the responsibility of overseeing the issue.

- Establishment of policies that support work-life balance such as: paid time off for medical appointments; allowing staff to use their sick days to care for sick children; flexible work hours; paid time off for family responsibilities; and leaves of absence.

- Extension of benefits to part-time workers; for example, increase vacation allotment and provide paid sick days for part-time workers.

- Provision of long-term disability benefits.

- Secure pension plans for all workers in the agency.

- Training workshops, such as anti-oppression or sensitivity.

- Implementation of appropriate performance appraisal systems.

- Staff satisfaction/dissatisfaction surveys with the results shared among staff and agency commitment to work on areas of dissatisfaction.

- Client satisfaction/dissatisfaction surveys shared with staff and implementation of a client complaint policy.

From our list of 18 collective agreements (Appendix B), almost all agencies offer benefits, such as pension, dental care, disability, extended health care, and group life insurance in some form. With one exception, all agencies offer maternity leave. All had adopted some sort of anti-discrimination/anti-harassment policy to establish equal rights for workers. Some of these agencies offer opportunity for professional development, as well as types of sick leave/vacation for their workers. In some of these agencies, travel expenses for agency business are paid or reimbursed.[5]

7. WORKING CONDITIONS IN TORONTO'S IMMIGRANT- AND REFUGEE-SERVING SECTOR

This section presents selected highlights from the survey of Toronto's immigrant- and refugee-serving sector conducted in January - March 2006.   For detailed information and analysis, please see the companion Front Lines report entitled, *On the Front Lines of Toronto's Immigrant- and Refugee-Serving Sector*.

Organizational Profile

In total, 61 out of 91 agencies responded to our invitation to take part in the survey, resulting in a participation rate of 67%. Participating agencies were geographically diverse, including organizations in the suburbs and downtown. They work with a variety of ethno-specific communities, and communities and groups sharing a common bond or experience, and provide a wide range of community services.

All participating agencies had been in operation for at least 12 years, suggesting that results are less reflective of the realities of new emerging organizations.

Annual Operating Budgets
- 12% with a budget below $100,000
- 24% with a budget of $100,000 - $499,999
- 24% with a budget of $500,000 - $999,999
- 41% with a budget of $1,000,000 or more

Number of Paid Staff
- 34% with less than 10 staff
- 25% with 10-25 staff
- 17% with 26-50 staff
- 17% with 51-75 staff
- 7% with 76 or more staff

Staff Positions
- 92% with permanent staff
- 67% with contract staff
- 96% with full-time staff
- 88% with part-time staff

Unionized Workplaces
- 29% were unionized

Agencies reported a strong reliance on volunteers.

Staff Profile

In total, 321 staff from participating agencies took part in the survey. Participants were predominantly women (86%), immigrants (75%) and members of racialized groups (63%). Age ranges varied with almost half between 36-50 years of age. Among immigrants, 12% had immigrated to Canada since 2001. Participants resided throughout Toronto and other parts of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Participants had high levels of formal education, with 86% having completed college, university or an advanced degree. Many were parents with children under 18 or cared for dependent adults.

Management (17%), front-line (69%) and administrative support and maintenance (14%) staff took part in the survey. Part-time (23%), full-time (77%), permanent (76%) and temporary (24%) workers participated, as well as, multiple job holders (21%). Over one-third of participants were members of a union. Participants reported varying lengths of time working in the community sector, including both workers new to the sector and those with more than 20 years of experience.

Annual Employment Income

- 69% of all participants, including full- and part-time staff, reported incomes of less than $40,000

- 66% of full-time staff reported incomes of less than $40,000

(To provide a comparison, $50,522 is the average employment income for all Toronto workers in full-time, full-year positions[6].)

Benefits

- 52% have pensions or RRSPs that are contributed to by their employers

- 70% have dental benefits

- 74% have health benefits

- 49% have life insurance

- 11% have other benefits, such as parental leave top-up, yoga classes, good vacation packages

Working Hours

- Over 80% are satisfied with their hours

- Almost 10% have too few hours

- Almost 8% have too many hours

- 55% regularly work overtime

- 30% are not paid for their overtime

- 4% are paid overtime

- 66% are provided with time off in lieu of overtime pay

Job Satisfaction: the Good News and the Bad News

Workers comments on job satisfaction reflect the conundrum that many face. Many staff reported high job satisfaction, with almost 80% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement: "In general, I am satisfied with my job." At the same time, nearly 44% had considered leaving their jobs in the past year. Of these respondents, almost three-quarters had considered leaving to get a higher salary.

A large majority of participants reported knowing what was expected of them on the job, using a high level of skill, learning new things, having clear goals, having opportunities to suggest improvements in the workplace and the freedom to decide how to do their jobs.

Limited opportunities for advancement, the hectic nature of the job and inadequate staff for the workload emerged as some key problem areas for many workers.

Despite the commitment and engagement of workers in Toronto's immigrant- and refugee-serving sector, which likely contributed to the high overall job satisfaction ratings, poor working conditions with respect to wages, access to benefits and workload issues are forcing workers to consider leaving their jobs. The already crucial role of this sector will only increase in importance with anticipated growth in newcomers to Canada.[7] The sector must be able to attract and retain skilled and experienced staff to fulfill this important mission in the years to come.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Toronto's non-profit community agencies are more than a collection of services for different communities. They are a source of social support, building blocks of our civil society and foundations for social cohesion. This sector's community capacity building has been severely affected by shifts in government funding that have resulted in the loss or reduction of financial support for the core operating functions of non-profit agencies. Reinvestment in Toronto's non-profit human services organizations will allow its committed workforce to serve its diverse clients better, particularly those with complex needs.

Front-line workers are the driving force of Toronto's non-profit agencies in building an inclusive society and responding effectively to community needs. Despite many challenges, front-line workers respond to clients' multiple needs and take pride in making a positive contribution to the building of stronger communities. Funding cuts and lack of capacity have resulted in the following deteriorating working conditions in Toronto's non-profit sector:

- The jobs in the sector offer lower wages and less benefits for workers than comparable positions in the MUSH (Municipalities, Universities, Schools, and Hospitals) and government sectors.

- Jobs are often unstable and precarious in nature.

- Workers are often overworked and are not consistently paid for overtime or work-related travel time.

- There is no pay equity for similar jobs in the sector and many skilled workers are interested in moving to better paid jobs with better benefits offered in the government or MUSH sectors.

- Lack of office space and program space is a challenge to ensure quality client services.

- There are growing numbers of clients with complex needs seeking help from Toronto's non-profit community services, due to a weakened social safety net, putting more pressure on workers.

- Many workers from racialized communities feel marginalized within the sector and subject to discrimination within the sector.

Current funding regimes have a major influence on many organizational practices in Toronto's non-profit community service sector. It is currently very difficult for agencies to secure core funding. Core funding would allow for organizational development, provide the basis for better salaries and benefits to staff and improved infrastructure for client services. By contrast, project funding has de-stabilizing effects on working conditions that lead to higher rates of turnover. As well, project funding can interrupt the availability of client services.

The impacts of the current funding regime on Toronto's agencies are:

- Project funding does not support administration costs and organizational growth.

- Project funding does not allow staff training and development.

- Project funding sets a limited timeframe for client services and is a constraint on the continuation of services.

- Project funding requires extensive administrative reporting, which can leave less time for staff supervision and client service.

- Project funding promotes partnerships without taking into consideration the complex agency relationships between partners.

- Project funding is often tied to a specific program focus which may not reflect the needs in the community.

Toronto's community service agencies are continually faced with new challenges due to complex needs from diverse client groups. Solid investments are needed to address these changing client needs and support organizational infrastructure to maintain quality services.

The following points summarize some of the constraints that affect workers in the non-profit sector in Toronto:

- Current funding regimes and lack of investment have led to negative impacts on client service and staff burnout.

- Funding requirements force front-line workers to spend substantial amounts of time on administrative work, with less time to serve clients.

- Client waiting lists are growing longer, causing tension and stress.

- Funding criteria limits the time front-line workers can spend with clients and can prevent serving clients who do not fit into the criteria.

- Front-line workers are facing more complexity in caseloads.

- In some cases, workers are having to rely on volunteers to continue a service that lost funding, or workers are working unpaid hours to meet clients' needs.

- Dependence on volunteers can compromise the quality and consistency of client services.

- Workers are increasingly pressured to concentrate on tracking the number of clients served, in addition to providing appropriate support to their clients.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVING FUNDING LEVELS, STABILITY AND PRACTICES

① **Increased government funding** (from all levels of government, but particularly the senior levels) is **long over-due** for the non-profit community sector. It is vital for the retention of staffing and quality client services, both of which are increasingly jeopardized.

Chronic under-funding and short-term program funding by governments negatively affect working conditions in the community service sector. More significantly, these funding practices result in erosion in the quality of care and service provided by vital community-based organizations.

② **Stability of funding needs to be enhanced** in order to support the capacity of the community-based sector and its contribution to the development of liveable communities. A substantial body of research clearly documents the **negative impact of the move to short-term project funding** on the community sector, leading to the inferior working conditions illustrated throughout this report.

③ **Funding practices must be made more consistent with funders' stated goals and understanding of the role of the sector**. Funding practices must acknowledge the critical necessity of funding supervision, administration, volunteer and governance support as an integral aspect of program delivery.

The **recent changes** to the way in which **Service Canada** funds community-based employment and training programs,

developed in active consultation with the community sector, could serve as a **"best practice"** model for other government departments that fund programs through the community sector. These changes include a significant reduction in administrative burden, establishing a fixed percentage for administrative costs, movement toward multi-year funding, and a reduction in overlapping audit requirements. The changes were also implemented through joint training of both Service Canada and community sector staff.

The *Federal Government* should respect the Code of Good Funding Practice outlined in the Voluntary Sector Accord, which promotes the stability and capacity of the community sector.

The *Provincial Government* should develop a similar "code" in consultation with the non-profit community sector, to ensure that provincially-funded programs also promote the stability and capacity of the sector. This should be a key aspect of the development of a provincial policy which recognizes the importance of the non-profit community sector as an employer, an engine of economic growth, and a key contributor to the maintenance of the social fabric of the province.

The *City of Toronto* is called on to collaborate with non-profit community organizations to advocate with the other levels of government to improve their funding practices, and ensure that its own funding mechanisms are "leading by example" as outlined in the report of the City/Community Workgroup on Core Funding, adopted by City Council in 2005.

IMPROVING THE RELEVANCE OF DATA

④ **Changes in data collection** must promote better information and understanding of this vital sector. These changes can be facilitated by **better collaboration and communication** between Statistics Canada, the City of Toronto, and community-based organizations such as the CSPC-T and the United Way in the types of information being sought and disseminated.

One of the challenges in conducting this research and similar comparative analyses was the lack of available statistical data, particularly at the sub-national level. Generally, there is insufficient information and emphasis on salary and benefit differentials among the community non-profit, MUSH (Municipalities, Universities, Schools, and Hospitals) and public sectors. This gap in understanding impedes the development of good human resource practice throughout all sectors.

MAKING PROGRESS ON BETTER HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGIES

⑤ **New settings for consultation and collaboration** among agencies, trade unions, and funders could help identify improved human resource strategies in a "without prejudice" environment. This is increasingly urgent in an era that faces difficulties in retaining qualified personnel, a problem that will grow with the approaching wave of retirements.

This study is one of many that document the positive impact of unionization on salaries and working conditions in the sector.

Adoption of management and funder policies that create a positive environment for collective bargaining across the community sector will support further progress in this area, especially among the smaller organizations that make up the majority of the non-profit community-based sector. Collective bargaining has been a time-tested mechanism to address the shortfalls in health and safety measures identified in the report.

⑥ **Show-casing and expanding the use of "best practices"** in the sector is critical. Funders already recognize the importance of **professional development, supervision, and addressing health and safety issues** in their own workplaces. It is time for them to recognize the importance of these tools for the agencies they fund, and reflect this understanding through their funding mechanisms.

Organizational policies and practices that promote an informed, engaged staff, and that encourage the building of internal capacity through professional development, mentoring, and supervision should be encouraged. This takes time, and such time is rarely funded. Existing networks can be the mechanisms for proliferating best practices among their agency membership. CSPC-T and FSA will offer an initial presentation on the best practices outlined in this report.

GETTING THE ADVOCATES TO ADVOCATE MORE EFFECTIVELY

⑦ **Better recognition of the work of this sector** needs to be done by the community sector as well. Community development through the provision of human services is not just another business.

We recommend that the **community service sector**, through its existing networks and organizations (e.g. United Way, OCASI, Toronto Neighbourhood Centres, Social Planning Councils) **develop an information and advocacy campaign** to articulate the value of the community sector, in collaboration with other social justice organizations and organized labour, with a view to improving conditions in the community sector.

Endnotes

1. Calculation based on Canada-wide increases in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from the Bank of Canada Inflation Calculator
http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/rates/inflation_calc.html

2. Municipalities, universities, school boards, and hospitals are commonly known as the MUSH sector

3. Many Executive Directors and managers were very concerned about not being able to retain experienced staff due to these factors.

4. These collective agreements were collected from the Ministry of Labour. Please note that some agreements used in the analysis may not have been the most recent ratified versions.

5. Note that this analysis is based on collective agreements only. Agencies may also have policies separate from their collective agreements.

6. Based on 2001 Census: Statistics Canada (2001). *2001 Census of Population.* Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada. Data extracted from Pcensus DBx: Pointfile Generator (CSPC-T License).

7. Statistics Canada estimates that immigrants will increase from 5.4 million people in 2001 to between 7 million and 9.3 million people by 2017. Statistics Canada (2005). *Population Projections of Visible Minority Groups, Canada, Provinces and Regions: 2001-2017.* Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

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APPENDIX B: REVIEW OF COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS*

Organization	Benefits	Maternity/ Parental/ Family Leave	Professional Development	Sick Leave/Vacation	Non-Discrimination/ Anti-Harassment Policy	Other Benefits/ Entitlements
Community Social Planning Council of Toronto	Pension, Dental, Disability, Extended Health Care, Group Life	Yes	Yes "on the job" training	• 1.5 sick days/month • Vacation days based on length of employment	Non-Discrimination policy exists	Yes Expenses reimbursed
Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre	Extended Health Care, Dental, Group Life, Disability	Yes	Yes Education & Training Programs	• 1.5 sick days/month F/T • Alternative rules for P/T • Vacation pay allotted after probation period	Non-Discrimination & Harassment Policy exist	No
Times Change Women's Employment Centre	Provides 100% coverage. Health Tax, Disability, Health Care, Dental, Disability, Life Insurance	Yes	No	• 1-1/4 sick days/month • Vacation w/pay at rate of 1-2/3 days/month		Covered expenses (mileage, Transport. Fare, minimal child care costs)
Youth Link	Semi Private Hospital Care, Extended Health Care, Dental, Group Life Insurance, Vision Care Coverage	Also includes adoption leave	Attendance at training workshops will be considered paid work time	• 1-1/2 days/month for F/T • Alternative rules for P/T • Vacation w/pay for F/T maximum of 20 days/year • Alternative rules for P/T	Non-Discrimination policy exists	Premiums given to employers who transport clients
Canadian Council on Social Development	Once employed, eligible for CPP, E.I. After 6 month's eligible for Life Insurance, Disability, Health Care, Dental. After 1 year, eligible for RRSP.	Yes	Yes	• Yes	Non-Discrimination & Anti Sexual & Personal Harassment policy exist	Yes Employer will cover professional fees/licenses
United Way of Greater Toronto	Extended Health Care, Life Insurance, Dental, Disability, Vision Care	Yes	Yes Reimburse for courses that help enhance workers skills	• Yes	Non-Discrimination policy exists	No
Dixon Hall	Private hospital accommodation, Health/Vision Care, Life Insurance, Disability, Vision Care and RRSP	Yes	Yes Annual Budget set aside for training/education	• Sick leave with pay for period of 8 days • Vacation w/pay based on length of Employment	Non-Discrimination and Anti Harassment policy exist	Yes Covered expenses
Canadian Hearing Society	Yes Life Insurance, Disability, Dental, Canada Savings Bonds, Extended Health Plan	Yes	Yes	• F/T get 1-1/2 days/month of sick leave with pay • P/T have alternative rules • Vacation pay	Non-Discrimination policy exists	Yes Reimbursed for legal/ professional fees, travel

NORTH YORK'S WOMEN'S SHELTER	Yes RRSP, Health Care Premiums	Yes	Yes Up to $250 allotted for F/T staff education programs	• A maximum of 28 hours/year of sick leave with pay • Vacation credits accumulate at the rate of 1.25 days/month	Non-Discrimination policy exists	Yes Covered expenses
LABOUR COMMUNITY SERVICES OF PEEL INC.	Yes Pension plan, W.S.I.B Coverage, auto insurance for authorized use of personal vehicle	Yes	No	• 1/2 days/month of sick leave • Vacation pay allotted based on length of employment	Non-Discrimination policy exists	No
COSTI	Yes Life Insurance, Dental, Extended Health Care, Pension Plan	Yes Includes adoption leave	No	• All employees receive 1-1/2 sick days/month • Vacation pay based on employment	Non-Discrimination policy exists	Yes Covered expenses
CANADIAN NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND	Yes National Income Security Plan, Short term Disability, Extended Health Care, option to join pension plan	No	No	• No Sick leave • Yes Vacation	Non-Discrimination policy exists	Yes Supplies staff with clothing for work
YORKTOWN SHELTER FOR WOMEN	Yes	Yes Follow Employment Standard Act	No	• All employees get 1-2/3 days/month for sick leave • F/T granted 4 weeks vacation/yr if work 35 hrs or more	Anti-Harassment policy exists	Employee protection fees, covered expense for courses related to work
WOODGREEN COMMUNITY SERVICES	Yes Benefits allotted differently for F/T, P/T and home support workers	Yes	Yes	• F/T staff get 1.5 sick days/month • Vacations allotted based on length of employment	Non-Discrimination or Harassment policy exists	Yes Covered expenses
ST. STEPHEN'S COMMUNITY HOUSE	Extended Health Care, Life Insurance, Medical Benefits Plan, Dental, Long-term Disability, RRSP (length of employment)	Yes	Yes	• 5 days/month for sick leave • Vacation allotted based on length of employment	Non-Discrimination policy exists	Yes Covered expenses
JEWISH VOCATIONAL SERVICES	Employer pays 50% of premium costs for dental, vision care; weekly indemnity insurance, long term income protection; 100% extended health care	Yes Includes adoption	No	• F/T gets 1.5 days/month of sick leave • P/T has alternative rules • Vacations allotted based on length of employment	Non-Discrimination policy exists	Yes Covered expenses
519 CHURCH	Yes Extended Health Care, Dental, Group Life, Disability	Yes	Yes Education & Training Programs	• 1.5 sick days/month F/T • Alternative rules for P/T • Vacation pay allotted after probation period	Non-Discrimination & Harassment Policy exist	No
FAMILY SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO	Yes Medical, Group Life Insurance, Pension, Dental, Vision Care, Long term Disability	Yes Includes adoption	Yes FSA allots 5 days/year & $100 for career training	• Sick leave on the basis of hours worked (6 days/year to take care of ill family member). • Vacation periods based on length of employment	Non-Harassment/ non-Discrimination policy exists	Yes Transport. Expenses covered

* These collective agreements were collected from the Ministry of Labour in January 2006. Some agreements may not be the most recently ratified versions. Please note that agencies may also have policies that are independent of and in addition to their collective agreements that are not included in this appendix.

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT SURVEY

"On the Front Lines: Improving Sector Working Conditions, Ensuring Quality Community Services"

Research Survey by Family Service Association of Toronto & Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, Summer 2005

Please check off the appropriate box. Your responses will be anonymous. Be assured that your responses will be held in strict confidence.

(A) GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

1. Gender:
    [   ] Male
    [   ] Female
    [   ] Trans

2. What is your age group?
    [   ] Under 21
    [   ] 21-35
    [   ] 36-50
    [   ] 51-65
    [   ] Over 65

3. Did you immigrate to Canada?
    [   ] Yes   [   ] No

    If so, what year? _____

4. Please select which racial or cultural group/groups you belong to (check all that apply)
    [   ] Aboriginal
    [   ] Arab
    [   ] Black
    [   ] Chinese
    [   ] Filipino
    [   ] Japanese
    [   ] Korean
    [   ] Latin American
    [   ] South Asian (East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
    [   ] Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese, etc.)
    [   ] West Asian (Afghan, Iranian, etc.)
    [   ] White
    [   ] Other (specify)

5. Please list the languages you speak other than English

6. Is your household:
    [   ] Lone parent family
    [   ] Two parent family
    [   ] No children

7. How many dependents in the following age categories live with you some or all of the time:
    _____ Child/ren under 6 years old
    _____ Child/ren aged 6-12 years
    _____ Youth aged 12-18 years
    _____ Dependent adult
    _____ Not applicable

8. What is your highest completed level of education?
    [   ] Some high school (not graduate)
    [   ] High school graduate
    [   ] Some college/university
    [   ] Diploma or certificate from community college, CEGEP, business college or trade school
    [   ] University bachelor's degree
    [   ] Masters degree or professional degree above bachelor's
    [   ] Doctorate degree

9. Are you currently enrolled in a college or university course?
    [   ] Yes   [   ] No

(B) INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

10. Type of agency that you work in (check all that apply)
    [   ] Abused women's shelter
    [   ] Adult day services
    [   ] Child care
    [   ] Children & Youth Services
    [   ] Community Development & planning
    [   ] Counselling & crisis intervention
    [   ] Education & Employment training
    [   ] Food & clothing
    [   ] Health
    [   ] Homeless services
    [   ] Housing Stability
    [   ] Home Support
    [   ] Immigration & settlement services
    [   ] Information & referral
    [   ] Legal
    [   ] Long term care
    [   ] Supportive Housing
    [   ] Other _____

11. Type of service that your agency provides (check all that apply)
   [ ] Adult day services
   [ ] Community and economic development
   [ ] Counselling/crisis intervention
   [ ] Drop-ins
   [ ] Early learning and child care services
   [ ] Education
   [ ] Emergency shelter
   [ ] Employment/skills training
   [ ] Food and clothing
   [ ] General community services
   [ ] Health, rehab and homecare
   [ ] Homeless services
   [ ] Housing access/eviction prevention
   [ ] Information/referral/hotline services
   [ ] Legal aid
   [ ] Long term care
   [ ] Other early years services (e.g. drop in)
   [ ] Outreach
   [ ] Recreation
   [ ] Settlement, language and literacy
   [ ] Social housing
   [ ] Supportive housing
   [ ] Other (please specify)

12. Type of job that you have:
   [ ] Management
   [ ] Direct service delivery
   [ ] Administrative support/maintenance
   [ ] Other

13. How long have you worked in the community services sector?
   [ ] Less than 1 year
   [ ] 1-5 years
   [ ] 5.1-10 years
   [ ] 10.1-20 years
   [ ] Over 20 years

14. How long have you worked in your current job?
   [ ] Less than 1 year
   [ ] 1-5 years
   [ ] 5.1-10 years
   [ ] 10.1-20 years
   [ ] Over 20 years

15. How many paid jobs do you have currently?
   [ ] 1
   [ ] 2
   [ ] More than 2

16. Is your current primary job in the community services sector?
   [ ] Permanent (i.e. it has no predetermined end date)
   [ ] Temporary (i.e. it has a predetermined end date)

17. What is the number of regularly scheduled hours you work per week?

   What is the number of overtime hours you work in an average week?

   Are you compensated for overtime?
   [ ] No, it is unpaid
   [ ] Yes, overtime is paid
   [ ] Yes, compensated with time in lieu of payment

18. Are you satisfied with your hours of work?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No, too few hours
   [ ] No, too many hours

19. Does your employer provide you with any non-wage benefits (e.g. pension plan, life insurance or dental plan)?
   [ ] Yes   [ ] No

20. If yes, which benefits does your employer provide [check all that apply]
   [ ] Pension plan
   [ ] Dental benefits
   [ ] Health benefits
   [ ] Life insurance

21. In your current job, are you a member of a union or covered by a collective agreement?
   [ ] Yes   [ ] No

22. Where do you live?
   [ ] Central Toronto
   [ ] East York
   [ ] Etobicoke
   [ ] North York
   [ ] Scarborough
   [ ] York
   [ ] Other _____

23. Where do you work?
   [ ] Central Toronto
   [ ] East York
   [ ] Etobicoke
   [ ] North York
   [ ] Scarborough
   [ ] York
   [ ] Other _____

24. In the past 12 months, has your employer provided you with any formal training (at your workplace or elsewhere) relevant to your job? (e.g. conferences, workshops, classes)
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

25. If you are paid by the hour, what is your hourly rate of pay?

26. In the past 12 months, how many weeks were you employed, including vacation time?

27. Over the past 12 months, what were your approximate annual employment earnings before tax?

[　] $0 - $9,999   [　] $60,000 - $69,999
[　] $10,000 - $19,999   [　] $70,000 - $79,999
[　] $20,000 - $29,999   [　] $80,000 - $89,999
[　] $30,000 - $39,999   [　] $90,000 - $99,999
[　] $40,000 - $49,999   [　] Over $100,000
[　] $50,000 - $59,999

28. Over the past 12 months what was your approximate household income before tax (including yourself)?

[　] $0 - $9,999   [　] $60,000 - $69,999
[　] $10,000 - $19,999   [　] $70,000 - $79,999
[　] $20,000 - $29,999   [　] $80,000 - $89,999
[　] $30,000 - $39,999   [　] $90,000 - $99,999
[　] $40,000 - $49,999   [　] Over $100,000
[　] $50,000 - $59,999

(C) INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR WORKING CONDITIONS AND JOB SATISFACTION

29. Please indicate with an "X" the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your job:

- I know exactly what is expected of me in my job.
- There are clear goals and objectives for my job.
- I get the training I need to do my job effectively.
- There is adequate staff to manage the workload.
- I have opportunities for advancement in my job.
- I have opportunities to offer suggestions to my superiors in areas of work that may need improvement.
- In general, I am satisfied with my job.

  Strongly Disagree
  Disagree
  Neutral
  Agree
  Strongly Agree

30. Please indicate with an "X" the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your job:

- My job requires me to learn new things.
- My job requires a high level of skill.
- My job allows me freedom to decide how I do my job.
- My job requires that I do the same things over and over.
- My job is very hectic.

- I am free from conflicting demands that others make.
- I have a lot to say about what happens in my job.
- My job requires a lot of physical movement.
- I am exposed to hostility or conflict from the people I work with.

  Strongly Disagree
  Disagree
  Neutral
  Agree
  Strongly Agree

31. During the past year, have you considered leaving your organization?

[　] Yes　[　] No

32. If you have thought about leaving your organization in the past year, please indicate all of the reasons why:

- To earn a higher salary
- To engage in more interesting or challenging work
- Because work expectations are unrealistic.
- Because I lack a sense of recognition for what I do.
- Because my work environment is not supportive of me as an individual
- Because there are greater opportunities for career advancement elsewhere
- Because I am frustrated by the working conditions
- To get more time to spend on personal/family activities
- Because of personality conflicts with coworkers and/or manager.
- Because my values and those of the organization are not the same
- To move closer to family members.
- To have more flexible hours elsewhere
- To spend less travel time
- Other _____

33. Thinking about your experience working in the community services sector, would you choose to work in this sector again?

[　] Yes　[　] No

34. Is there anything else you want to share with us about your experience of working in the Toronto community services sector?

APPENDIX D: IMMIGRANT- AND REFUGEE-SERVING SECTOR STAFF SURVEY

I. ABOUT YOU

1. Organizational ID Number (included in your survey invitation):

2. Gender:

   [   ] Male
   [   ] Female
   [   ] Trans

3. What is your age group?

   [   ] Under 21
   [   ] 21-35
   [   ] 36-50
   [   ] 51-65
   [   ] Over 65

4. Did you immigrate to Canada?

   [   ] Yes   [   ] No → (go to question 5)

4.1 What year did you immigrate to Canada?

5. Where do you live?

   [   ] Central Toronto
   [   ] East York
   [   ] Etobicoke
   [   ] North York
   [   ] Scarborough
   [   ] York
   [   ] Other (please specify)

6. Please indicate which racial or cultural group(s) you belong to (check all that apply)

   [   ] Aboriginal
   [   ] Arab
   [   ] Black
   [   ] Chinese
   [   ] Filipino
   [   ] Japanese
   [   ] Korean
   [   ] Latin American
   [   ] South Asian (East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
   [   ] Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese, etc.)
   [   ] West Asian (Afghan, Iranian, etc.)
   [   ] White
   [   ] Other (please specify)

7. Please list the languages you speak other than English

8. Is your household:

   [   ] Lone parent (with children under 19)
   [   ] Two parent (with children under 19)
   [   ] No children under 19

9. How many dependents in the following age categories live with you some or all of the time:

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS
Children under 6 years of age	
Children aged 6-12 years of age	
Youth aged 13-18	
Dependent adults	

10. What is your highest completed level of education?

   [   ] Some high school (not graduate)
   [   ] High school graduate
   [   ] Some college/university
   [   ] Diploma or certificate from community college, CEGEP, business college or trade school
   [   ] University bachelor's degree
   [   ] Masters degree or professional degree above bachelor's
   [   ] Doctorate degree

11. Are you currently enrolled in a college or university course?

   [   ] Yes
   [   ] No

II. YOUR WORK

12. Type of service(s) that your agency provides (check all that apply)

   [   ] Adult day services
   [   ] Community and economic development
   [   ] Counselling/crisis intervention
   [   ] Drop-ins
   [   ] Early learning and child care services
   [   ] Education
   [   ] Emergency shelter
   [   ] Employment/skills training
   [   ] Food and clothing
   [   ] General community services
   [   ] Health, rehab and homecare
   [   ] Homeless services
   [   ] Housing access/eviction prevention
   [   ] Information/referral/hotline services
   [   ] Legal aid
   [   ] Long term care
   [   ] Other early years services (e.g. drop in)
   [   ] Outreach
   [   ] Recreation
   [   ] Settlement, language and literacy
   [   ] Social housing
   [   ] Supportive housing
   [   ] Other (please specify)

13. Total number of paid staff working in your agency (count all paid staff including part-time, full-time, contract, permanent, etc.):

14. Type of job that you have:

   [   ] Management
   [   ] Direct service (i.e. front line)
   [   ] Administrative support/maintenance
   [   ] Other (please specify)

15. How long have you worked in the community services sector?

   [   ] Less than 1 year
   [   ] 1-5 years
   [   ] 5.1-10 years
   [   ] 10.1-20 years
   [   ] Over 20 years

16. How long have you worked in your current job?

   [   ] Less than 1 year
   [   ] 1-5 years
   [   ] 5.1-10 years
   [   ] 10.1-20 years
   [   ] Over 20 years

17. How many paid jobs do you have currently?

18. Is your current primary job in the community services sector?

   [   ] Permanent (i.e. it has no predetermined end date)
   [   ] Temporary (i.e. it has a predetermined end date)

19. What is the number of regularly scheduled hours you work per week?

20. What is the number of overtime hours you work in an average week?

21. Are you compensated for overtime?

   [   ] No, it is unpaid
   [   ] Yes, overtime is paid
   [   ] Yes, compensated with time in lieu of payment

22. Are you satisfied with your hours of work?

   [   ] Yes
   [   ] No, too few hours
   [   ] No, too many hours

23. Does your employer provide you with any non-wage benefits (e.g. pension plan, RRSP, dental benefits, health benefits, life insurance)?

   [   ] Yes   [   ] No → (go to question 24)

23.1 Which benefits does your employer provide (check all that apply)?

   [   ] Pension plan
   [   ] RRSP contribution
   [   ] Dental benefits
   [   ] Health benefits
   [   ] Life insurance
   [   ] Other (please specify)

24. In your current job, are you a member of a union or covered by a collective agreement?

   [   ] Yes   [   ] No

25. Where do you work?

   [   ] Central Toronto
   [   ] East York
   [   ] Etobicoke
   [   ] North York
   [   ] Scarborough
   [   ] York
   [   ] Other (please specify)

26. In the past 12 months, has your employer provided you with any formal training (at your workplace or elsewhere) relevant to your job? (e.g. conferences, workshops, classes)

    [   ] Yes   [   ] No

27. If you are paid by the hour, what is your hourly rate of pay?

28. In the past 12 months, how many weeks were you employed, including vacation time?

29. Over the past 12 months, what were your approximate annual employment earnings before tax?

    [   ] $0 - $9,999   [   ] $60,000 - $69,999
    [   ] $10,000 - $19,999   [   ] $70,000 - $79,999
    [   ] $20,000 - $29,999   [   ] $80,000 - $89,999
    [   ] $30,000 - $39,999   [   ] $90,000 - $99,999
    [   ] $40,000 - $49,999   [   ] $100,000 or more
    [   ] $50,000 - $59,999

III. WORKING CONDITIONS AND JOB SATISFACTION

30. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your job:

- I know exactly what is expected of me in my job.
- There are clear goals and objectives for my job.
- I get the training I need to do my job effectively.
- There is adequate staff to manage the workload.
- I have opportunities for advancement in my job.
- I have opportunities to offer suggestions to my superiors in areas of work that may need improvement.
- In general, I am satisfied with my job.

    Strongly Disagree
    Disagree
    Neutral
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
    Not Applicable

31. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your job:

- My job requires me to learn new things.
- My job requires a high level of skill.
- My job allows me freedom to decide how I do my job.
- My job requires that I do the same things over and over.
- My job is very hectic.
- I am free from conflicting demands that others make.
- I have a lot to say about what happens in my job.

- My job requires a lot of physical movement.
- I am exposed to hostility or conflict from the people I work with (other staff).
- I am exposed to hostility or conflict from the people I work with (clients).

    Strongly Disagree
    Disagree
    Neutral
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
    Not Applicable

32. During the past year, have you considered leaving your organization?

    [   ] Yes   [   ] No

33. If you have ever thought about leaving your organization, please indicate all of the reasons why:

    [   ] To earn a higher salary
    [   ] To engage in more interesting or challenging work
    [   ] Because work expectations are unrealistic
    [   ] Because I lack a sense of recognition for what I do
    [   ] Because my work environment is not supportive of me as an individual
    [   ] Because there are greater opportunities for career advancement elsewhere
    [   ] Because I am frustrated by my working conditions
    [   ] To get more time to spend on personal/family activities
    [   ] Because of personality conflicts with coworkers and/or manager
    [   ] Because my values and those of the organization are not the same
    [   ] Because I am concerned about my safety on the job
    [   ] To move closer to family members
    [   ] To have more flexible hours elsewhere
    [   ] To spend less travel time
    [   ] Other (please specify)

34. Thinking about your experience working in the community sector, would you choose to work in this sector again?

    [   ] Yes   [   ] No

35. What, if anything, needs to change to improve the quality of working conditions in the community sector?

36. Is there anything else you want to share about your experience of working in the community sector?

APPENDIX E: IMMIGRANT- AND REFUGEE-SERVING SECTOR ORGANIZATIONAL SURVEY

1. Agency Name and Contact Information

    Agency Name: _____

    Contact Person: _____

    Telephone: _____

    Email: _____

2. Type of Agency (please select all that apply)

    [   ] Provides Services Directly to New Immigrants
    [   ] Represents and Provides Services to Other Agencies
        (which provide services directly to new immigrants)
    [   ] Other (please specify)

3. Please indicate the number of paid staff (including yourself) currently employed by your agency for each of the following categories:

EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY	CURRENT NUMBER OF STAFF
Full-Time, Permanent	
Full-Time, Contract	
Part-Time, Permanent	
Part-Time, Contract	
Other, please specify:	

4. How many people currently volunteer with your agency?

5. What is the size of your most recent annual operating budget?

    [   ] Below $100,000
    [   ] $100,000-$499,999
    [   ] $500,000-$999,999
    [   ] $1,000,000 or more

6. Approximately what percentage of your budget comes from the following revenue sources? (please make sure that your figures total 100%)

REVENUE SOURCE	PERCENTAGE
Core funding (i.e. stable, predictable source of government/foundation income)[10]	
Project funding (i.e. RFPs, short-term or one-time project)	
Fundraising activities/donations	
Membership fees	
Other, please specify:	
Total	= 100%

7. Is your organization unionized?   [   ] Yes   [   ] No

8. How many years has your agency been in operation? _____ Years

9. Please specify which communities/population groups that your agency serves. (e.g., catchment areas, specific ethnoracial, national, cultural, religious, linguistic groups, groups defined by gender, age, disability status, sexual orientation)

10. After the research is complete, we will release a final report at a press conference. Would you be interested in attending this event and/or possibly speaking to the media about the needs of settlement agencies?

    [   ] Yes
    [   ] No
    [   ] Maybe