



NEWCOMER WOMEN'S  
SERVICES TORONTO

*Strong Women Build Strong Communities*

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2009 - 2010

## Chair and Executive Director's Message

Expansion and service delivery innovation have been the hallmark of our 26th year at Newcomer Women's Services Toronto (NEW).

In the past 12 months, we have expanded our office space and have recently acquired store-front premises on Pape and Danforth. Our staff compliment has also increased to include a team of community animators who will extend the delivery of NEW's services and programs to newcomer women within priority neighbourhoods in the east end of Toronto.

NEW utilizes an evidence-informed, integrated and innovative approach to create multiple settlement and integration pathways for newcomer women. NEW initiated a program for seniors started in the St. James Town and Teesdale neighbourhoods. Due to the success of this program, in the last year, NEW initiated an in-house LINC program for seniors. This class is aptly named the 'Beautiful Ladies' class by the participants and the agency is enriched by their presence. NEW's women senior-specific LINC class is a first in Toronto!

At NEW, we view language proficiency as a catalyst for newcomer women to thrive in Canada. We have successfully added a suite of value added programs and services to our LINC program: In 2009-2010, NEW forged a partnership with Ryerson University and successfully supported 11 LINC participants and newcomer women to obtain a university level credit whilst attending daily LINC classes. We will continue to offer support to these clients to pursue secondary education.

We attribute these rapid and far-reaching developments to our staff team and we thank them for their commitment and dedication to excellence. An organization is only as strong as its staff – and NEW staff are the foundation for ensuring that newcomer women receive excellent services and participate in innovative programming.

This past year, our dedicated staff have served over 3,000 newcomer women to hone their skills, find work, support their families, attend university and integrate into Canadian society. Whilst mothers are engaged in the programs, parallel learning opportunities are provided for the participants' children by staff and volunteers. NEW volunteers bolster the capacity of our staff team and have contributed to these achievements. We extend our thanks and appreciation to each volunteer and we commend them for their spirit of civic engagement.

The achievements and innovation at NEW over the past 12 months are also due, in large measure, to the dedication and tireless work of the Board of Directors. Their evenings and week-ends spent on ensuring good governance are 'behind the scenes' and entirely voluntary. However, their efforts have been the bedrock of NEW's expansion and success.

Similarly, we wish to thank our partner agencies for the strong partnerships that we enjoy and which strengthen our respective programs and the sector as a whole.

We invite you to join us in celebrating 26 years of success, to invest in newcomer women and their families and to jointly chart the challenges that lie ahead.

*Thriving newcomer women = strong newcomer communities.*



Maya Roy  
Executive Director



Amanda Barnes  
Chair, Board of Directors

# A thank you and acknowledgement of our funders

## Federal Grants:

Citizenship and Immigration Canada



Citizenship and Immigration Canada      Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada



Human Resources and Skills Development Canada      Ressources humaines et Développement des compétences Canada

## Provincial Grants

Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration



MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities



MINISTRY OF TRAINING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

## Municipal Grants

City of Toronto



Investing in Neighbourhoods

## Non-Government Funders

The CHUM Foundation



Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada



The United Way of Greater Toronto



United Way Greater Toronto

St. Andrews Society of Toronto



## Our Partners

At NEW we believe that collaboration with partner agencies is essential to providing high-quality and integrated services to our clients and newcomers. We are proud of the partnerships that have been forged:

Albert Campbell Library

Beyond the Lyrics

Centre for Community Learning and Development

Council of Agencies Serving South Asians

East Scarborough Storefront

Europa Bakery

Frontier College

Growing Together

JUMP Math

JVS Toronto

Kids Up Front

Management Advisory Services

New Circles Community Services

Project Building Blocks

Riverdale Immigrant Women's Center

Ryerson University - Spanning the Gaps Program

Sherbourne Community Health Centre

Social Planning Toronto

South Asian Legal Clinic

South Riverdale Community Health Centre

Toronto Public Health

St. Andrew's Society of Toronto

Toronto Public Library (Pape/Danforth Branch)

University of Toronto Immigrant Support and Awareness (UTISA)

Wen-Do Women's Self-Defense

Windfall Clothing Services

Women's Health in Women's Hands

World Education Services

## NEW Staff and Board

### Our Board of Directors

Amanda Barnes, *Chair*

Riti Mandal, *Vice Chair*

Sheila Berzitis, *Treasurer*

Arjuna Thaskaran, *Communications Officer*

Derek Powers

*Chair, Governance and Human Resources Committee*

Dorene Weston

*Member, Governance and Human Resources Committee*

Kala Gnanapandithen,

*Chair of Audit Committee*

Dave Messam, *Director*

Nasreen Merali, *Director*

*A special thank you to volunteer committee members of the Governance and Human Resources Committee: Sarah Valair and Karyn Swaffield.*

### Our Staff

*Executive Director*

Maya Roy

#### **Finance Team:**

Kira Tokarev, *Finance Manager*

Guyzyal Khismatova, *Program Assistant*

#### **Employment Team:**

Patty Mars, *Manager Employment Programs*

Angela Byam, *Employment Consultant*

Selvina Williams, *Employment Consultant*

Janice Babcock, *Workforce Specialist/Job Coach*

Ingrid Watts, *NEST Administration*

Shaliza Mendes, *Program Assistant*

Samiera Zafar, *Program Assistant*

#### **LINC Team:**

Cynthia Ding, *LINC Coordinator*

Jayahmani Balasingam, *Instructor Level 1 & 2*

Dhuruta Sinani, *Instructor Level 3 & 4*

Astrid Foster, *Instructor Level 5 & 6*

Olga Khellebust, *Instructor Seniors' Class*

#### **LINC Childminding Team:**

Megumi Lau, *Supervising Childminder*

Edlira Pepraj, *Supervising Childminder*

Maria Alegre, *Childminding Assistant*

Jane Liu, *Childminding Assistant*

#### **Settlement Team:**

Natasa Boskovic, *Settlement Coordinator*

Najma Jabeen, *Program Coordinator*

Shatha Almbark, *Childminder*

Ruth Castellanos, *Childminder*

*Our thanks and best wishes to staff that have left:*

Anita Merl Samuels

Jeyarajah Roshani

## NEW's Women-centered Approach

In 2008, 51% of newcomers with permanent residence status were women and approximately 128,627 newcomer women arrived on Canadian soil in a single year. Despite the mammoth and sustained federal and provincial efforts at settlement initiatives; a 2010 study recorded unemployment figures for immigrant women at 16.5% in the principal applicant and skilled immigrant class and 21% for immigrant women in the family class. This contrasts sharply with the 7% average unemployment rate amongst Canadian-born women of similar educational background.

Newcomer Women's Services Toronto (NEW) invests in these newcomer women and their families, in particular, those who settle in Toronto's east-end priority neighbourhoods. NEW utilizes an evidence-informed, integrated and innovative approach to deliver key federal and provincial settlement programs and services. We believe that the impact of our programs and services facilitate newcomer women to contribute to social, economic and political life in Canada; to build strong families and to integrate newcomer communities into Canadian society.

NEW offers a continuum of services and supports which we believe are required not only for successful settlement but for successful integration of newcomers. Our language and skills development programs intersect with employment and social supports to create multiple settlement and integration pathways. This approach is underscored by recent research which has emphasized the need to link employment and language supports programmatically for successful settlement outcomes for newcomers.

Our location at the Pape and Danforth intersection are steps away from the TTC subway, provides NEW with an opportunity to deliver responsive, place-based interventions for newcomer women and seniors in Toronto's east end.

### Our Clients

For over 25 years NEW's services and programs have supported approximately 11,500 newcomer women from Toronto's east end, with the requisite language, workplace skills and social networks for successful integration into the Canadian economy and Canadian society. Since 2008, NEW has served approximately 2,900 newcomer women through the LINC program, employment services and other programs.

NEW's catchment area extends from O'Connor Drive/Eglinton Avenue in the North to Gerrard Street in the South and from Warden in the East to Don Valley in the West. Our client profile reflects the shifting demographics of the east end, such as the Crescent Town and Teesdale priority neighbourhoods from where NEW draws a significant number of clients. A needs assessment study conducted in the 2009-2010 financial year noted that the local neighbourhood has two mosques and<sup>2</sup> rapidly growing Somali, Turkish, Ethiopian and Bangladeshi communities. In the nearby priority neighbourhood, Bengali is the most common language spoken.

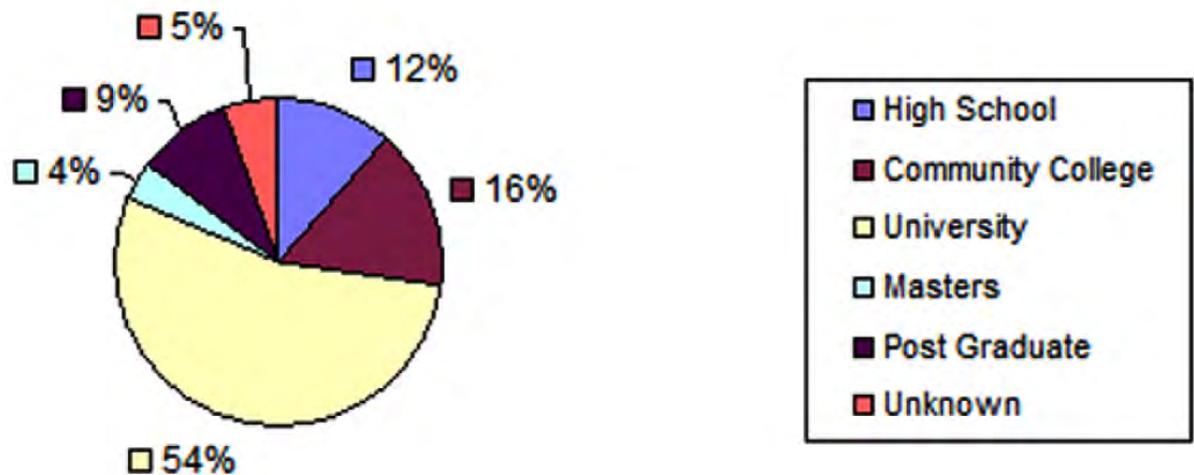
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Tsang, F.P. (2009). Newcomer Women's Services Environmental Scan and Service Delivery Gaps. NEW Toronto

Top 5 Visible Minorities amongst NEW LINC Clients in 2009 - 2010	Top 5 Visible Minorities in 2006 Census Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South Asian (Bengali/Urdu/Gujarati)</li> <li>• Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese)</li> <li>• West Asian (Arabic, French)</li> <li>• Eastern Europe (Russian, Serbian)</li> <li>• South America (Spanish, Portuguese)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South Asian 39%</li> <li>• Chinese 21%</li> <li>• Blacks 16%</li> <li>• Filipino 12%</li> <li>• West Asian 4%</li> </ul> <p><b>Non-official languages spoken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chinese 19%</li> <li>• Bengali 14%</li> <li>• Urdu 8%</li> </ul>

### Profile of NEW Client Education 2009 - 2010



# Language Learning and Skills Development

The LINC Program at NEW provides women with the requisite support and the tools needed to develop their language skills through daily LINC classes from levels 1 to 6. The rigorous LINC curriculum, skills workshops, guest speakers, field trips and LINC enhancement programs at NEW provide an opportunity for newcomer women to progress through LINC levels 1-6 and acquire 'survival' or 'functional' English in tailored classes. In the last five years, 900 students have enrolled in NEW's LINC program.

Our LINC program boasts:

- 2 fully equipped language computer labs
- An up-to-date ESL resource centre
- 4 classrooms dedicated exclusively to language development
- LINC instructors with combined experience of over 60 years
- 2600 sq.ft. child-minding facility with exemplary standards that has passed annual inspections
- Strong outreach strategies with newcomer women learning about NEW through information at the airport and through positive word-of-mouth advocacy by clients

The 2009-2010 LINC clients' statistics:

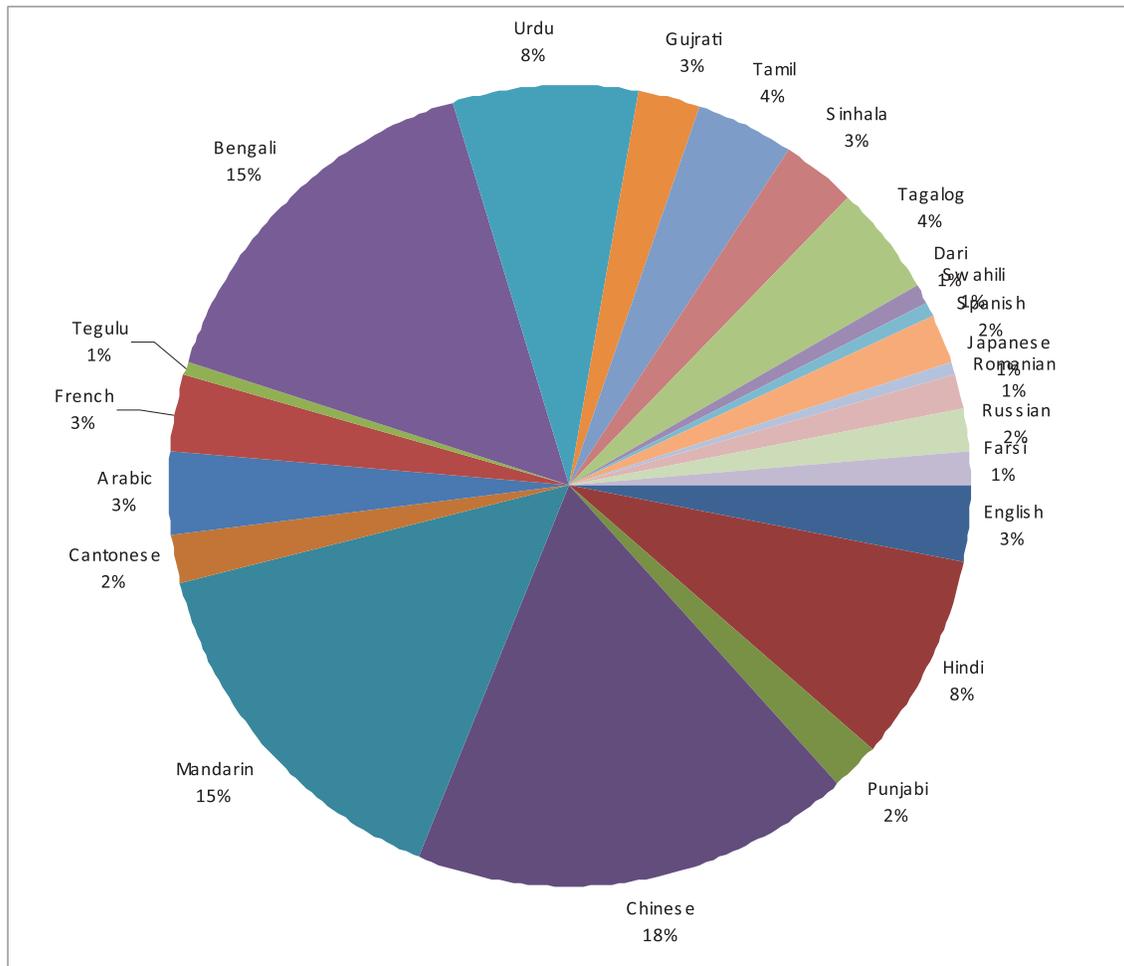
- 110 % enrolment for LINC levels 1-6
- 108% average attendance for LINC levels 1-6
- 42% promotion rates

The activities in the LINC classes are delivered through interactive methodologies that actively engage newcomer women as presenters and contributors, thus building self-esteem, self-confidence and communication skills. The interaction between newcomer women at these networking sessions also addresses the social isolation that many newcomer women experience.

## **LINC program enhancements included:**

- 45 life skills workshops were offered to support the emotional well-being and mental health of LINC participants. The workshops addressed topics such as parenting and family violence.
- Additional resources and workshops were offered by partner agencies including the Toronto Public Library, Volunteer Toronto and Ontario Works.
- As part of a Weekend Conversation and Creative Writing Program, 6 three-hour long sessions were delivered by Ryerson University for approximately 30 LINC participants. This program was funded by the City of Toronto.

- On-site word-processing and computer skills are held immediately after LINC classes through a partnership with the Toronto Public library.
- Individual tutoring and conversation practice are facilitated by local volunteers



## NEW Child-minding

As part of the LINC programs, we offer on-site child-care facilities. On a daily basis, approximately 16 toddlers and pre-school aged children are provided with a quality early childhood development program on NEW's premises.

Our programming is complemented by storytelling and puppetry provided by the Toronto Public Library – Pape Branch. In 2009, NEW invested in a dual language library so mother’s can read to their children in their mother tongue and English. Over 50 books of children’s classics such as “Brown Bear”, and “Wheels of the School Bus” are available in Spanish, Mandarin, Bengali, Farsi, Turkish, French, Arabic and Urdu for their lunchtime reading pleasure.



## Language Learning for Seniors

Approximately 20% of NEW clientele are seniors. In 2009-2010, NEW initiated a LINC class for 10 senior newcomer women that enhanced on NEW’s senior’s programs in St. James Town and Teesdale.

The class is unique as it is the first LINC senior-specific class in Toronto:

- LINC senior’s curriculum integrates senior specific issues of elder abuse, home care, how to utilize 911 preventative healthcare and nutrition, etc.
- Teaching methods facilitate language needs for seniors (many of whom do not have mother-tongue literacy)
- Small class size of 10 to facilitate confidence and learning
- Responsive to needs of seniors through individual case management
- Social support and intergenerational art activities with children

## The Beautiful Ladies Class – LINC Learning After 60

TORONTO, ON— At 55, Linda knows how to speak her mind – in Mandarin and English. This summer Newcomer Women’s Services Toronto (NEW) launched a Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) class for seniors. It is the first women only senior-specific LINC class in Toronto and builds on NEW’s seniors programs in St. James Town and Teesdale.

“I want to become a role model for my family because I want them to know that one can learn throughout one’s life,” Linda says proudly.

Each of the eight women attend the program for a different reason, but they all enjoy the conversation and sense of community that they’ve found in class. The class fulfills an urgent need for the rapidly growing population of immigrant seniors in the east end of Toronto. Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, LINC classes provide recently arrived seniors with a comfortable environment where they can share their experiences, talk to women at a similar stage in life, and improve their language skills.



*“I feel like I can make progress here. I ask the doctor, ‘you understand me?’ He says, ‘yeah, I understand,’” said Gladys.*

Though all of the women are over 55, they say they are “twenty-five at heart, like the sun that is always rising”. Sitting down with the self-proclaimed ‘Beautiful Ladies Class’, it’s very easy to see why.

Linda explains, “Beautiful is not just the face, but knowledge and belief in yourself”. They are a fun-loving group and they had plenty of jokes for us while we were there. Teacher Olga Khellebust notes, “If you hear laughter, it’s probably my class!”

After only three months together they are a tight knit family. Some of the women cried as they shared the hardships they faced as newcomers and their stories of isolation in Canada. Chang, an immigrant from China, credits their teacher for her support. Daily lessons include heated discussions about elder abuse, healthcare resources, and information about Canadian culture. However, Ms. Khellebust insists that she learns a lot about life, international cuisine, and other cultures from her students.

Gladys, a Colombian mother of two, said that when she arrived in Canada, she couldn’t speak English, but now she can communicate with her children’s teacher and her doctor. Gladys said, “I feel like I can make progress HERE.” “I asked the doctor, do you understand me?” He said, “Yeah, I understand”.

NEW runs women-only LINC language classes daily from 9:00 am – 2:30 pm at Pape & Danforth. For more information please contact Cynthia Ding at 416-469-0196.

By **Aisha Wilks**, NEW summer staff

## LINC + Post Secondary Education

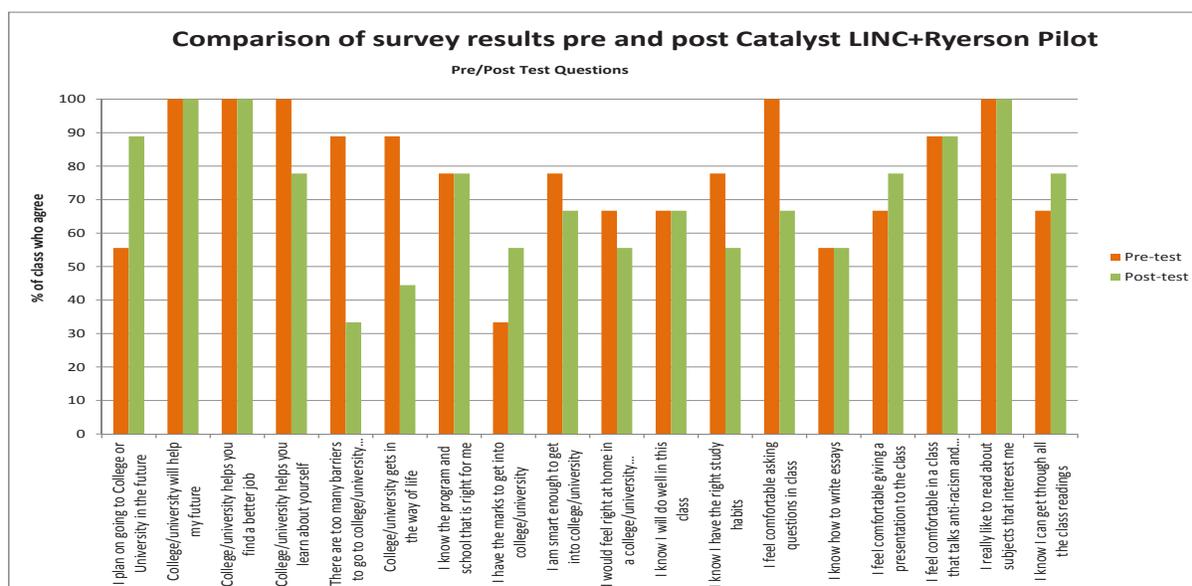
In 2010, NEW initiated a partnership with Ryerson University's Chang School of Continuing Education and began another unique program that provided 25 LINC students with the opportunity to enrol for a first year sociology credit taught by Ryerson. The course was delivered over 16 consecutive weeks.

The project was incredibly successful:

- 14 women successfully audited the course
- 11 women obtained the credit and are continuing their post-secondary education

The program was unique, as it was streamlined with the LINC classes to provide educational continuity and support:

- Lectures were held after LINC classes at NEW premises between 3.00- 6.00 p.m.
- Extended child-minding was provided throughout the day until 6 p.m.
- LINC instructors were present at lectures
- Staff at the Pape Branch of the Toronto Public Library offered homework help and study skills at our LINC computer lab
- Ryerson University designated case management staff to offer individual case management counselling to support and motivate students to achieve their full potential.



The agency conducted a pre and post test evaluation to assess the level of LINC clients' confidence and skills enhancement, having attended post-secondary education. Some of the key changes in perception by the participants towards accessing post-secondary education were noted as follows:

- The post-test results noted a 35% increase in plans to continue to participate in secondary education as opposed to the pre-test
- 50% of the women felt there were fewer barriers to accessing post-secondary education as a result of the pilot, in the post-test, as opposed to 80% in the pre test.
- However, the pre-test and post –test results indicate that the women still felt uncomfortable asking questions in class. This points to the need for continued support to newcomer women to build their confidence and support in an English-speaking university environment.

## Employment Programs

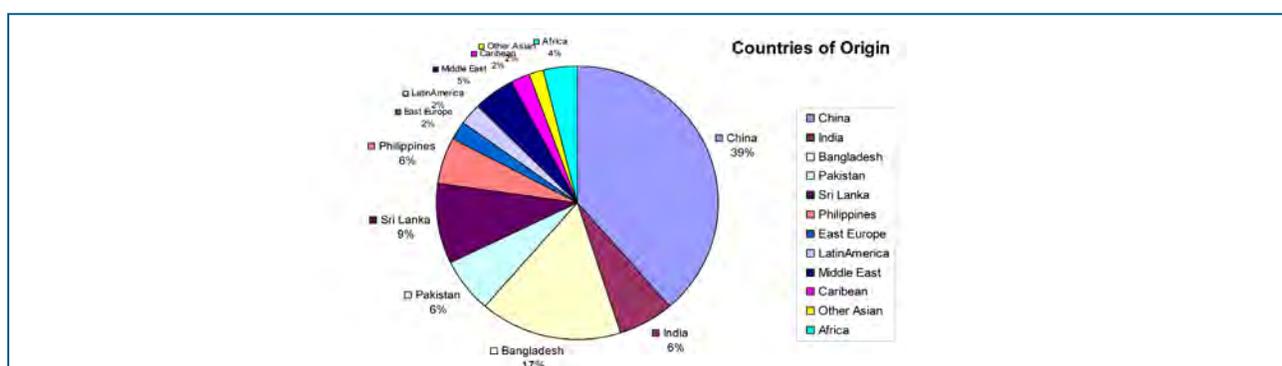
This is the first additional activity stream that is accessible to LINC clients. At NEW, 63% of the LINC students are accessing Employment Ontario services after LINC classes. This program provides assistance to newcomer women on ways to access the labour market in regulated professions, information on licensing procedures, Canadian workplace culture, labour market standards, career-specific requirements, skills upgrading training and community-employment assistance. Newcomer women are supported in finding meaningful work and to become involved in, and informed about volunteer placements as an opportunity to gain Canadian work experience.

Staff at NEW have over 10 years of experience delivering employment programs, facilitating job search workshops and have compiled comprehensive curricula, which adhere with CIC, Service Canada and Employment Ontario (Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities) standards.

Even with the current down-turn in the economy, NEW job developers are able to secure employment for women using innovative strategies, skills based training in cash register and sales techniques, family-run businesses and newcomer run companies.

- 63 individuals found employment in the retail, banking and manufacturing sectors from a group of 78 job-ready clients at the height of the recession
- From among those accessing services, 54% are university educated while 16 % completed college

Employment Summary	Actual	Target	Percent Outcomes
# of clients who graduated from 6 week training	88		
No clients employed	63	78	81
Outreach with partner agencies	801	620	129
Business outreach	316	330	95
No of clients' workshops	31	10	310
No of staff in-house training	9	4	225
No of staff off-site workshops	7	2	350
No of telephone calls	1043	710	147
No of neighbourhoods reached	17	5	340
No of volunteer hours	850		



## Newcomer Women's Network (NWN)

Every Saturday morning from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon, 50 women meet for English conversation sessions as part of the Newcomer Women's Network. The program includes arts and crafts sessions, field trips, healthy cooking classes and storytelling. In addition to the social and emotional benefits of this program, there are workshops that provide valuable information about education, employment, health awareness and parenting, among other things. This program gives women the opportunity to share their experiences

with one another and escape the stress and pressure of settlement for a few hours each week.



Our clients are involved in the development and design of the Saturday programs. Thus, they engage fully in the activities and develop both their language skills and self-confidence in the process. Through these activities, our clients become more connected to the wider community. The women learn more about themselves, one other, and the diverse communities that are represented.



## Reading Circles and Math are Fun on Saturday Mornings

Mothers are assured that children who accompany them are also learning and having fun at NEW. Through a partnership with JUMP Math, children are encouraged to learn mathematics. The JUMP Math program has been extended to support mothers to confidently assist their children with math homework. The latter was prompted by a need articulated by our clients to be better able to support their children develop numeracy and literacy skills.



Frontier College provided both books and training for NEW youth volunteers to facilitate a Reading Circle. The Reading Circle encourages young children to develop a love for reading whilst playing and having fun. As part of the program, children are encouraged to read, write down their thoughts and ideas, use their imagination, utilize problem-solving skills, speak with confidence and work in teams. All of these activities happen in the safety of the children's play-area across from where moms are also having fun. Mothers are supported to extend this activity into a Family Reading Circle and are provided with reading material both in English and in their mother-tongue to set-up family reading circles.

The Saturday programs run smoothly with the assistance of our volunteers who are integral to the success of the Newcomer Women's Network.



## Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP)

Subsequently, women and their families have up-to-date and accurate information necessary to make informed settlement decisions.

Our newcomer support programs are designed to help clients to participate in and integrate into the wider Toronto community and the various facets of Canadian life. These services assist clients in dealing with settlement-related issues; increasing assertiveness and confidence; reducing isolation and advancing clients' familiarity and comfort with Canadian workplace protocols; all of which will lead to economic and social well-being. The Newcomer Settlement Program is provided as confidential settlement counselling delivered through one-to-one support in a sensitive and empathetic manner and through workshops. Workshops include topics such as conflict resolution and family violence awareness.

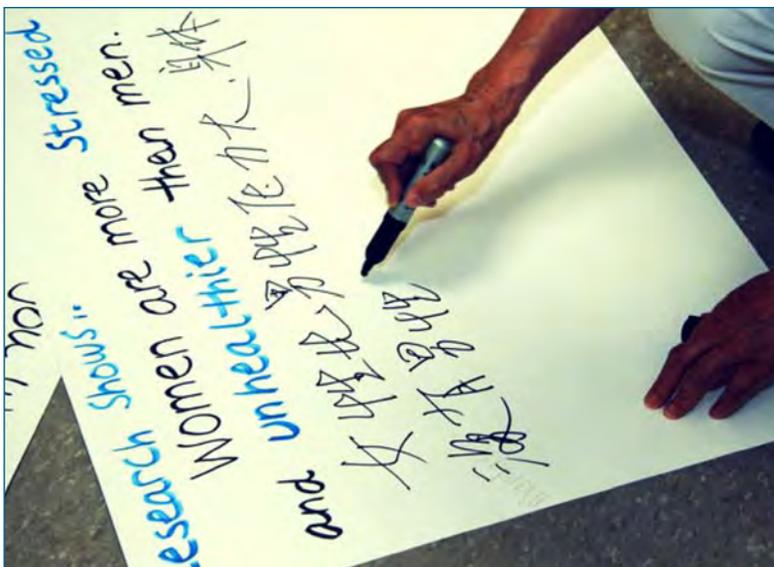
With immediate support and assistance, the agency prides itself on its ability to help women with urgent questions. Clients can walk into our offices or call and have their questions answered by informed staffs at NEW.

In 2009-2010:

- 1,078 new clients/individual assisted
- 700 referrals were made to external agencies
- 100 workshops/group sessions held

## Special Feature: *MOSAICS Project*

### MOSAICS: Health Activism by Women ... for Women



When newcomers first come to Canada, they are, on average, healthier than most Canadians. However, research evidence indicates that over a period of time settlement stressors such as racialized poverty, unemployment, isolation, language barriers and inaccessible services result in a deterioration of newcomer health. This has been referred to as the "healthy immigrant effect". Currently, there is little attention to the role of newcomer parents in health promotion for their children, and an absence of policies to support newcomers develop healthier lifestyles.

In response to this, Newcomer Women’s Services has partnered with Women’s Health in Women’s Hands Community Health Centre, DECNET, Toronto Public Health, and the City of Toronto Parks, Forestry, and Recreation to address these gaps and launched:

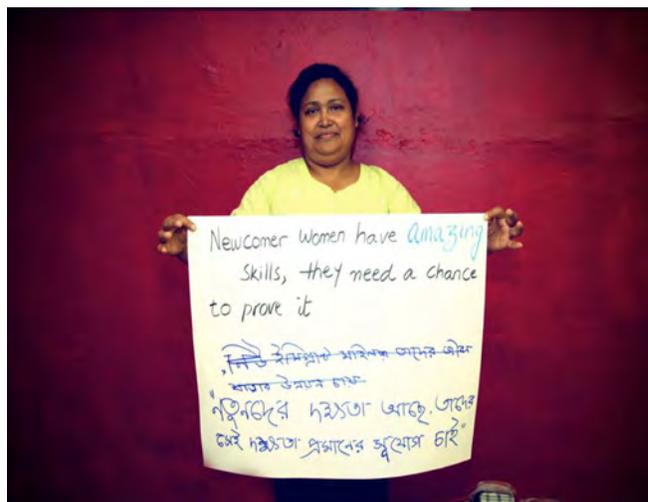
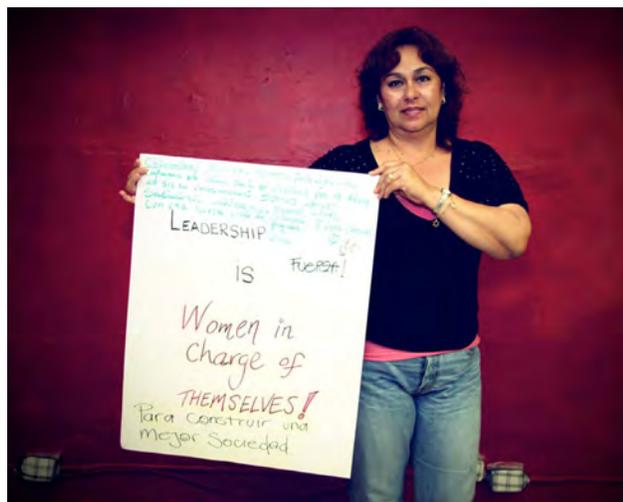
### MOSAICS: A Roundtable for Newcomer Heart-Healthy Parenting

Funding for this pilot project was received through a generous grant from the Heart and Stroke Foundation’s Spark Community Advocacy Development grant.

The objective of this pilot project was to empower newcomer women to build healthier families and to advocate for accessible heart healthy nutrition and recreational services on behalf of their communities with policy-makers.

The MOSAICS Project aimed to provide leadership training to 15 newcomer women. We received an overwhelming response: 50 women participated in an intensive and fun-filled training program. The training included topics such as Canadian social policy; Canadian public policy; chronic disease risk factors for obesity; diabetes; civic engagement; public speaking and effective communication. Fifteen participants were selected to develop and design needs assessments in their communities. These women will serve as ambassadors for their communities and present their research projects to policy-makers at a policy round-table.

The MOSAICS portrait series captures the voices of newcomer women around health and food security.





NEWCOMER WOMEN'S  
SERVICES TORONTO

## Support Newcomer Women's Services Toronto

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Tax receipts will be issued for any contribution of \$10 or more

### Newcomer Women's Services Toronto

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