

## IMPLEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR IMMIGRANT LANGUAGE TRAINING

**Appreciation:** Witnesses before the Committee frequently expressed their appreciation for the efforts which have been made to date by all levels of government as well as the voluntary sector.

**Basic to Success:** Given that language is the key to success for refugees and immigrants in their new country, it is essential that they are given adequate language training upon their arrival in Canada.

But this is not the case. A number of briefs indicated:

- Basic courses are inadequate for some groups just for survival street English.
- With six months or even one year of language training, the students are barely able to conduct a conversation. How can they understand the laws of the country and other aspects of society?
- Program content is questionable.
- Current programs work against women, as only heads of households are eligible for financial assistance and language training.
- There are not enough programs to cover illiterates, professionals and other special learning needs.
- Training programs for citizenship purposes exclude those who still may need training or those who have become citizens.

**Joint Venture:** English in the workplace programs have existed for some time and were reported to the Committee from several areas, including Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Kitimat. The Aluminium Company of Canada (Alcan) program in Kitimat, British Columbia, was established in 1976. When the company set up a system for advancement, it was apparent that those workers without English would remain in entry-level jobs. The program was a joint company-union venture and was offered to workers and their families. It was a course with an emphasis on practical content. Alcan ran the program for four years and then turned all the material over to North West Community College. Alcan workers and their extended families can still take advantage of the course and Alcan pays their tuitions at an approximate cost of \$10,000 a year.

**British Model:** Another example brought to the attention of the Committee is the Industrial Language Training Service in Great Britain. Training is held in the workplace, and the program has employer cross-cultural training as an essential pre-condition to implementation of the training program.

**Materials:** Briefs to the Committee did not differ significantly in their requests for improvement in the format, duration and funding of language training. The development of materials continues to originate from several sources, including community organizations, while instruction ranges from the regular classroom to bilingual teaching and an innovative telephone tutoring program currently being used in Toronto for Spanish-speaking people, and which will soon be expanded to the Chinese community.

## RECOMMENDATION

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