

SHARON X

X X Street, X BC

Phone: X Email: X

FORMAL EDUCATION

B.A. in Adult Education (ADED) at University of Fraser Valley, Abbotsford, BC

- Enrolled in ADED program in January 2012 and have continued to study part-time. Projected completion in Winter 2015.

Refugee Sponsorship Training Program – Catholic Cross-cultural Services - December 2011

***Learning:** During this 10 week online course I acquired theoretical and background knowledge of the international situation of refugees worldwide, Canada's role as a leader in the protection of refugees, the different ways refugees come to Canada, detailed training on the process of private sponsorship of refugees to Canada and sponsors' legal obligations after arrival and for the first few years of the refugees' settlement in Canada*

“Welcome to Canada: Working Effectively with Newcomers” - Justice Institute of B.C. 2010

***Learning:** Introductory course on working cross-culturally and understanding the process of culture shock in newcomers*

Certificate in Financial Management, Professional Accounting Option – British Columbia Institute of Technology - 2007

***Learning:** Part-time studies in Financial Management including Cost Accounting, Taxation Accounting, Computerized Business Applications, Website Development, Organizational Behavior and Conflict Resolution. Though the focus of this program was accounting, I gained valuable knowledge in the culture of organizations, how to work towards a harmonious and efficient workforce, how appropriate tools (software, websites) can play an important role in the functioning and performance of an organization, and methods to implement changes in an organization with a diverse workforce*

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Refugee Outreach Worker - X Community Services Society, Early Years Refugee Project

April 2010 to present

- Locate and establish relationships with newcomer refugee families in X with children between 0 – 6 years old
- Use family assessment tools and determine appropriate services and referrals for each family
- Prioritize and oversee appointment schedule, interpreter bookings and health screenings so as best to utilize staff and resources and ensure refugee families are receiving needed services and are encouraged to transition to independence
- Liaise with other community service providers and partners through presentations and committee meetings, establishing relationships with them. These relationships allow collaborating for common goals, building capacity in service providers and in the community at large
- Presentations in the community - advocating for the refugee population, providing insight into culture and challenges
- Strategize with coworkers to develop transition plans and plans for families to reach program goals
- Continuously learn and research solutions to barriers for the refugee population (i.e. housing, language services, employment barriers, etc.)
- Participate in the development of a Health Passport and Maternity Passport to assist refugee families and their health practitioners communicate better
- Participate and produce DVD in “Healthy Living” video series (in Karen language) for Fraser Health and Canadian Diabetes Association
- Set up and maintain records of all progress and activities in Case Management software under guidelines of COA (Council on Accreditation)

Key Learning:

- *Through this informal teaching of adults in the community I learned to prepare and give presentations to various public service providers (R.C.M.P., Aldergrove Neighbourhood Services, Best Babies, Addictions' counselors, Board members, Work BC (employment agencies), and Fraser Health public health nurses and maternity ward staff). Learned to understand my audience and then how to adapt each presentation to their specific service and their interactions with refugee newcomers*

- *Learned to balance the requirements of the outcomes and goals of a Public Health Agency funding proposal with the needs and learning styles of newcomer refugee adults through developing “Healthy Living” videos. This project was a grassroots project where a refugee focus group helped shape the educational material we developed from mainstream resources to make it relevant and useful for the refugee population*
- *Informal teaching of adults from a different culture, learning and respecting the history and background of another culture and learning not to judge it – but dig in and understand “why” and “where they are coming from.” Learned the meaning of “frame of reference” and “building capacity”*
- *Use of different forms of information technologies – producing DVD’s (visual and storytelling) because written material is not useful for illiterate people and using PowerPoint for presentations to service providers (professionals)*
- *Leadership and sharing of expertise –being on committees of community stakeholders and collaborating together*
- *Had to deal with ethical dilemmas several times and resolved them professionally and with empathy*
- *Ongoing self and professional development through learning and researching about refugees, settlement and vulnerable people*

Life Skills and Nutrition Coordinator - X Community Services Society, Early Years Refugee Project

May 2009 – April 2010

- Assessed needs and lack of life skills of newly arrived refugee parents through home visits, group meetings and one-on-one interactions, and then developed training sessions to address the needs
- Researched, planned and coordinated guest speakers, topics and training material for all life skill or nutrition classes
- Planned and maintained community gardens for two growing seasons
- Provided input and shared experiences with refugee settlement with coworkers and program manager in order to provide insight into understanding the culture of the refugees in our community, and build capacity in our program

Key Learning:

- *Learned to adapt teaching materials to needs of the learners – newly arrived refugees are not receptive students. I adapted all lessons to basic life skills first. Some lessons were pictures only with very little text as many students were illiterate or had not yet learned to read English. Took mainstream materials and drew out key points only as they could only absorb a little bit at a time*
- *My students were all parents of young children, adjusting to a new and modern country after living in limbo in a refugee camp in the jungle for 15 years. Once the initial effects of culture shock wore off I could gradually change the focus of life skills classes*
- *Learned about the importance of diversity and putting value on ideas and lifestyles that are different than those found in typical Canadian culture. Had to find ways not to make refugees feel their way was the “wrong” way and Canadian was the “right” way by learning about their culture and their assets and building on them. Learned to keep my judgments to myself and be more open-minded. Learned to be more compassionate and empathetic*

Transition Consultant – X Works/X Industries, X Falls, X

March 2008 – February 2009

- Worked under contract to integrate manufacturing process data and procedures to their existing company
- Assisted in developing their business model and in hiring new staff as the plant expanded and staffing increased
- Provided training and support to all staff - onsite and remotely.

Key Learning:

- *The setting of this project was X in a farming community – very “redneck” and different type of professionalism (very established and “old school”) but trying to adapt to a very modern software program. Had to find a common ground and build relationship and then provide instruction in a way that fit their style*
- *Used negotiation skills in bringing the way they “had always done things” and “why we were changing” to the forefront. I built a trusting and friendly environment by asking about their families and their careers. This gave me the background to figure out how to work with them. Some long-time employees could not adapt and I had to use diplomatic skills with their manager to explain how they would hinder the progress of the transformation of their company if they remained in those positions*
- *I had to be very patient as learners attempted to work with new systems – showed them end results and then step-by-step how to get there, walked through every step of the way and explained as we went so they could connect what each step did. Learned that people need to understand where they are going so they can understand “why” of all the new things*
- *I was often called to head office for updates and had to prepare reports of every trip – reflecting on the changes and progress of staff – including ones that could not adapt after many attempts and approaches*

- *When we realized the software system used in X could not link to the enterprise software they were using in X I had to take a course in X for a different software package that would link to what they were using across their 10 locations and then replicate the same processes in that environment. The trainers had never done anything like it so I ended up having to learn on my own by researching online*

Manager of Finance & Administration - X Ltd., X, B. C.

September 1991 – March 2008

- Responsible for all aspects of finance, including accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll, banking, human resources, financial statements, cash flow projections, and manufacturing cost reporting in a \$10 million company
- Prepared monthly statements and variance reports for Board of Directors and department managers, attended board meetings and contributed key ideas toward direction of company
- Researched and prepared proposals for financing, grants, etc. and then represented the company at meetings with government agencies, banking professionals and other similar agencies
- Oversaw office staff of up to 12 persons and was liaison between all departments
- Researched and implemented a basic manufacturing software system as the company grew in 1999 and then a full ERP system in 2006
- Technical support and trainer for all employees in ERP systems
- Participated in union negotiations, WCB focus groups and compliance projects, development of Employee Handbook, development of Health & Safety manuals
- Annual review and preparation of budget, price pages and company business plan
- During the last 6 months of the company responsible for daily production planning and scheduling with ERP system
- Played a key role in the sale of this company to X Works, including involvement in negotiations, preparation of sale information, winding down of operations and then transitioning to new company.

Key Learning:

- *Learned to make executive decisions based on cost vs. benefit analysis, bearing in mind the abilities of the staff that would be using the new package vs. the capabilities of this very powerful software package*
- *Learned to develop training for each department and consider the needs of each department to use the software to their benefit but also to benefit the entire company as a whole. I had to consider the background, attitudes and abilities of each person*
- *Learned to make assessments as I acted as technical support during software implementation, working through all the bugs and glitches, and determining if the software had a bug or the user needed more training. Then had to learn to be diplomatic*
- *Some employees were older and very set in their ways. Others could not see the benefit to the company beyond how it affected their own department. I had to work hard to get everyone to see “the big picture” and have a positive attitude*
- *Learned about management and leadership through all the committees and projects and reporting I was responsible for. I developed my own skills and abilities through all the training I received, research I did and problems I solved*
- *Learned to develop training material and reference material for the entire company. My motto was that, should anyone be “hit by a Coke truck” we should have the structure in place that a new person could step into their shoes easily*
- *In dealing with banking managers, bankruptcy consultants, union reps, Worksafe inspectors, etc. I learned about professionalism and collaboration. I learned about respect, speaking up and being firm when I needed to be and being quiet at other times. I learned to listen, I learned how to use conflict resolution procedures and I learned to receive criticism and use it to improve my own behaviours or habits*
- *I learned to be highly organized and honed my administrative skills*
- *This position pushed me to continually improve myself through courses at B.C.I.T. and mentorship and training with consultants and a great role model. My long range goal at this point was to become a Certified Management Accountant and I strived towards that with accounting courses and leadership development*

Bookkeeping – home based business

1991 – 1996 and resumed in 2009 part-time

- Home-based business doing bookkeeping and payroll for small companies such as construction, flower wholesale, church, greenhouse, machining

Key Learning:

This work from my home with various small-business owners allowed me to develop tools and reports specific to each type of product or business to help the owners understand the finances of their business. This knowledge helped them make plans and decisions for the future of their companies.

INFORMAL EDUCATION

Canada and Refugee Resettlement Conference – 2012

Learning: how Canada is a leader in the support of refugees worldwide, learned about the direction Canada is taking in its federal policies and how the decisions for change are made through various research projects that were presented

Compassion Fatigue workshop – 2011

Learning: when working with vulnerable and traumatized people you build relationships and learn their stories. Compassion can be stressful when there is no break. I learned the importance of setting boundaries and to give myself a chance to unwind so that I don't become fatigued through the stress

Strong Roots and Bright Futures workshop – 2011

Learning: learned about the unique needs of refugee youth in order to adapt and integrate into a new society

Faces of Resiliency workshop with Michael Unger – 2011

Learning: learned to not look at what a vulnerable person “does not” have but instead find what they “do have” and build on those assets to increase their resiliency and ability to cope

Poverty Revolution Boot camp – weekend workshop based on the book “When Helping Hurts”

Learning: looking at poverty in a new way. Instead of “how can we help them” we need to look at the root cause of the poverty and find ways to create situations that will allow poor people to “help themselves”

BC Housing – workshop on subsidized housing program - 2010

Learning: learned about different types of housing strategies in British Columbia and how they are managed

Refugee Services of New Zealand - 2009

Learning: Training sessions and one-on-one mentorship in successful refugee settlement strategies that are used in New Zealand. Reviewed models and programs that could be adapted to be used in our community in the future

Essentials of Refugee Volunteerism workshops – 2009

Learning: learned how to be an effective volunteer with refugees, “being with” instead of “doing for.” In later sessions was a table discussion facilitator where we discussed volunteer guidelines that had been developed in our community

Safe Harbour workshop – 2009

Learning: learned about the program ‘Respect for All’ and demonstrating leadership in understanding the importance and benefits of diversity in the workplace and in the community

Microsoft Navision version 4.0 - 2008

Learning: one-on-one tutoring of all the functions of this comprehensive accounting software, how to develop production scheduling and purchase add-ons that would complement the program and provide useful tools for the manufacturing environment

Mapics Syteline ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) version 7.4 - 2007

Learning: one-on-one tutoring of all the functions of this comprehensive manufacturing and scheduling software, including accounting, production, engineering, purchasing and sales modules and their relationships

Microsoft Office Suite - 1998

Learning: how to use the basics of Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING

X Program – 2009 to current

Volunteer twice weekly in X, occasional chaperone to sporting events related to the refugee youth in X and involved in creating promotional video presentations for fundraising events

***Learning:** ongoing witness to the difficulties faced by refugee youth related to performing well in school, adapting to a new language, a new culture and struggling with integration. Learned useful strategies in communication and for homework assistance*

X Evangelical Free Church – 2009-2010

Project Manager and Chairperson of the Steering Committee for the “CARL Project” (Community Activities and Recreation Liaison). This was funding granted to assist refugee youth in their integration to Canada through sports and community activities. I chaired the meetings with settlement workers, X School Board, PuCKS, BC Healthy Living Alliance and community partners and prepared all reporting and feedback to government funders.

***Learning:** I learned strategies from other committee members on how to work with refugee youth and understand their particular challenges. I learned to look at my own prejudices and misconceptions about other cultures and learned to listen and observe more before making judgments. I quickly saw how most people in my community were also uninformed and very unsympathetic to the challenges faced by the refugee youth, but I learned to find ways to share their stories in a non-confrontational way, usually bringing about great interest and a change in attitude. I learned about grant and proposal writing and how to provide appropriate feedback and results to funders.*

X Evangelical Free Church Home Group – 2007 to 2010

Participated as a volunteer in a Home Group initiative to join other churches in the community to help receive and settle newly arrived refugee families in our community. Assisted several refugee families with initial settlement, community orientation, and medical appointments, and provided friendship. Later, contacted a local charity and acquired 20 used home computers and distributed the computers and held informal basic computer and internet training in their homes.

***Learning:** this was my first experience with teaching refugee learners. They had no previous experience in living in an urban setting, very little English language, very little educational background and very little previous computer experience. I learned how to communicate with pictures, demonstrations and laughter.*

X Evangelical Free Church – 2006 – present

Regularly prepare and participate in media presentations (video, projections, etc.) during regular services. Have also trained refugee leaders to be able to prepare and project media in the Karen language during the Karen Church services.

***Learning:** I have learned about making presentations clear and simple, regardless of the tendency of many to add a lot of distracting transitions and embellishments. I have learned to use different software packages that are used in projections and video presentations. When teaching refugee leaders I learned that hands-on experience and picture instructions are effective instead of verbal instruction.*