

DIVERSITY, EDUCATION HIGHLIGHT REPORT

More York Region women earning university degrees than men

BY TERESA LATCHFORD
Staff Writer

Females in York Region are obtaining a higher level of education than males, according to Statistics Canada.

The 2006 Census showed a much higher percentage of women 25 to 34 have earned a university degree than men. In York Region, 46 per cent of women have obtained a university degree compared to 36 per cent of men.

'More and more women are recognizing the economic benefit of earning a degree.'

"I'm not at all surprised with the trend," said University of Toronto lecturer Paula Bourne, who is an expert on gender inclusivity at the post-secondary level.

"More and more women are recognizing the economic benefit of earning a degree."

The number of women graduating with a degree has largely increased over the years due to changes in society, she

added.

Females are much more career driven, there are fewer house wives and more women looking to provide or contribute to the household income.

"Females are now staying in school longer and in larger numbers," she explained.

"They know they need to have a degree to be competitive and make a decent wage, it gives them an edge over their male counterparts."

With the Census showing a decline in the number of individuals graduating with a skilled trade certificate or enrolled in an apprenticeship program, one could ask where all the boys have gone.

"Well, there are just more opportunities for males graduating from high school to enter the work force without formal education than there are for women," she replied.

For males, the manufacturing and information technology don't require a university degree but for women with only a high school education, really the only choice is a low income career in retail, she explained.

"Either that or there is a high unemployment rate among males," said Mrs. Bourne.

By the numbers

- **709,550:** Total population 15 years and over in York Region in 2006.
- **19:** Percentage of those with no certificate, diploma or degree.
- **26:** Percentage of those with a high school diploma or equivalent.
- **6:** Percentage of those with an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma.
- **17:** Percentage of those with a college, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma.
- **6:** Percentage of those earning a university diploma below the bachelor level.
- **26:** Percentage of those with a university certificate, diploma or degree.

What's your language?

Language statistics of 887,345 surveyed York residents

Mother tongue

- **English only:** 472,905
- **French only:** 7,700
- **Other languages:** 405,615

Knowledge of official languages

- **English only:** 787,000
- **French only:** 575
- **English and French:** 64,000
- **Neither English nor French:** 35,300

Newcomers prefer to work in native languages

BY CHRIS TRABER
Staff Writer

Newcomers to Canada increasingly work in their native language rather than one of our official languages, confirmed Statistics Canada census data released Tuesday.

In Ontario, about 21 per cent of new arrivals use a language other than English or French where they work.

In York Region, more than 45 per cent of residents' mother tongue is neither official language. Of them, 17,800 use their native tongue at work.

While immigration and citizenship doesn't require speaking an official language, the lack of one often has an influence on where you work, York Region newcomers and community service professionals said.

Wen Zhen Jiang, 19, who arrived from China in 2007, can attest to how language can be a formidable barrier.

"I've been studying for one year and there's improvement," she said through an interpreter at Catholic Community Services of York Region. "I know I have to finish high school first and learn English before I work. There have been problems, but I manage."

Ms Jiang, a Milliken Mills High School English as a Second Language student, said she has received interpretation help through the agency.

Some of the more than 9,000 clients the agency helps annually aren't as fortunate,

said immigrant settlement and adaptation program co-ordinator Catherine MacKeil.

"Their biggest needs are English training and employment," Ms MacKeil said. "If they don't adapt, or because of personal situations, some people must get into survival jobs. They need to put food on the table and pay rent."

Many new immigrants hold professional and post-graduate designations. Getting Canadian accreditation and learning the language forces highly skilled workers to take lower paying, non-language reliant positions. It's not unrealistic to have a Ph.D. working as a warehouse worker.

Ethnic communities often absorb newcomers, offering jobs that don't require English, she said.

"The bigger the ethnic community, the bigger the temptation," she said. "It's not they don't want to learn English, it's just they have to survive."

"Our goal is to help return clients to qualified jobs within two years."

To alert newcomers cloistered in their cultural communities to the agency's services, the agency buys ads in the ethnic print media.

Counsellors also use network contacts to encourage newcomers to approach the agency.

Being a stranger in a strange land with no communication ability can lead to loneliness, she said.

"It does limit people professionally and within the whole community package,"

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