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# Providing a Way Station: A Study of the Joint Apna Ghar -The Enterprising Kitchen Program to Provide Employment Services to Immigrant Women Victimes of Domestic Violence

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PROVIDING A WAY STATION  
A STUDY OF THE JOINT APNA  
GHAR AND THE ENTERPRISING  
KITCHEN PROGRAM TO  
PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT  
SERVICES TO IMMIGRANT  
WOMEN VICTIMS OF  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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## INTRODUCTION

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This report examines an innovative partnership designed to assist the employment needs of immigrant women who are survivors of domestic violence. In late 1999 a partnership was formed between The Enterprising Kitchen (TEK) and Apna Ghar, two organizations that are located in Chicago's Uptown community. Apna Ghar, which provides services including shelter and counseling to South Asian immigrant women, sought client assistance from TEK, an intensive employment training program for women who are very marginal to the labor force. This report examines the first eighteen months of the partnership in which Apna Ghar referred twelve women to TEK's training slots. It looks at how the TEK model served the needs of both the immigrant women referred by Apna Ghar and the general TEK population, which is primarily composed of African American women.

This report demonstrates the effectiveness of a small, focused and personalized work preparation program that provides a "way station" for learning new habits and skills that address the needs of both sets of women.

The program assisted a majority of the Joint Apna Ghar-TEK Program participants in becoming self-effective and in attaining, or making significant steps toward, employment. The women in these programs faced significant challenges in preparing themselves to secure stable employment with a livable wage. The immigrant women faced a series of inter-related challenges. The domestic violence itself affected their sense of efficacy and self-confidence. Many did not have the necessary immigration status to work in the United States. The legal issues related to the domestic violence they experienced and their immigration status were complex and often impacted their work and training schedules. In addition, their unfamiliarity with American culture and language and their traditional family roles and responsibilities made it difficult for them to move out of the immigrant community to find employment.

The other TEK women also had a complex series of factors and life events that impacted their ability to gain stable employment. These issues included a history of substance abuse, poor physical or mental health, family violence, prolonged periods of unemployment, lack of education,

homelessness, young dependent children, and criminal records. These factors were prevalent in large numbers among many of the women. Forty-nine percent of the women had two or three of the issues and thirty-four percent had four or more of these issues.

The challenges that confront these women point to the need for additional programmatic features and public policy changes, in particular for the immigrant women in the Joint Program. These include more transitional and subsidized housing options, longer tenure at TEK for the immigrant women, more systematic follow-up and supportive services for all TEK graduates, availability of public assistance to recently immigrated women who are victims of domestic violence, and an expedited immigration procedure for this immigrant population.

The two organizations requested that the Loyola University Chicago's Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) conduct a study of their Joint Program. The Center for Urban Research and Learning has a long history of working with community-based organizations, city organizations, social service agencies, health care providers, and government officials. By fostering a collaborative relationship with organizations outside the university, CURL recognizes the importance of working with communities in seeking new solutions to pressing urban issues. Collaborative research and teaching that promotes social equity are the centerpiece of CURL.

The research project centers on two research concerns. First, the Joint Program focuses on providing a concentrated number of services to a small group of women. This is a very expensive employment model. The collaborating organizations wanted to demonstrate the complex needs of both the women who were part of the collaboration and the general TEK population to illustrate that such an employment training model is necessary for women who, for a variety of reasons, are extremely marginal in the American workforce. Second, the Apna Ghar staff wanted to examine in detail issues faced by their clients during their transition to work in order to better understand the employment problems faced by immigrant women survivors of domestic violence.

The Joint Program provides an opportunity to examine these issues and to provide both programmatic and policy recommendations to better address the needs of this population.

In this report, the reader is first introduced to the Joint Program and the methodology that was used in this study. Then, the report describes the

women who participated in TEK and compares and contrasts those referred by Apna Ghar to those referred by other organizations. Next, the report examines the interactions between the program and the participants, analyzing how well the various components of the program address the employment and training needs of both sets of participants. Finally, the report proposes programmatic and policy changes.

### Background

Apna Ghar and TEK are both situated in the Uptown area in the northside of Chicago and both serve women from the larger Chicago metropolitan area.

- TEK

TEK was started in 1996 by two women who wanted to build a self-sustaining employment and training experience for women who had profound problems in finding and sustaining employment. TEK operates a small soap-making factory on the second floor of a building on a main thoroughfare. It makes soaps that are wrapped, packed, and shipped to customers and shops around the country. From eight to sixteen women are employed at any given time for periods typically running between six to twelve months. The soap business was created to compliment TEK's social mission which is to provide transitional employment and life-skills training to help women "create a future." At TEK, women with little experience in the conventional labor market are able to develop job skills, build a resume, and generally gain additional support in their transition to employment. That additional support might come in the form of English language or GED classes, seminars concerned with domestic violence and other life issues, computer workshops, or job referrals.

- Apna Ghar

Apna Ghar was founded in 1990 by five women committed to serving South Asian immigrant women facing issues of domestic violence and abuse. Apna Ghar takes its name from a Hindi-Urdu phrase meaning "our home." Apna Ghar runs a 24-hour hot line and its own shelter which can accommodate up to twelve women and children at a time. In addition, staff provide counseling and link women to legal advocates to assist them with orders of protection, child custody and support, divorce or separation, and immigration issues. Apna Ghar also provides



advocacy for social services such as public aid, childcare, job training and housing. In order to assist the women, most staff members are themselves South Asian, speaking the languages of Hindi and Urdu.

- *The Joint Program*

In late 1999, TEK and Apna Ghar secured funding for a Joint Program that built on the referral relationship that had grown between the two agencies. They both recognized that the employment needs of the immigrant women referred by Apna Ghar to TEK could not be addressed by a simple referral arrangement. First, many of the women referred to TEK by Apna Ghar had problematic immigrant work status. Second, the issues related to the women's transition to a new culture and language suggested a need for a much closer collaboration between the two agencies. So, a partnership was born. TEK provides job training and Apna Ghar provides shelter, counseling and legal advocacy to the domestic abuse survivors. An important feature of the program is the provision of short-term cash assistance. Many of the immigrant women are not eligible for any social welfare programs, such as Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), that are available to survivors of domestic violence who are citizens of the United States. Those whose immigrant status is in question cannot earn wages that they sorely need. Through the Joint Program the women are provided with an internship scholarship and awarded a cash stipend as part of the terms of the scholarship. Also, every client of Apna Ghar who successfully completes the three-month program receives a \$150 bonus that is intended to assist her move into stable housing.

The Joint Program provides a place to learn about American work culture. Apna Ghar refers clients who are the most recent immigrants to TEK. In particular, Apna Ghar refers women who have some, but limited, ability to speak and understand English, have little or no employment history, and yet are motivated to enter the work force. Apna Ghar continues to provide assistance in addressing needs that are specifically related to moving them towards stabilization, such as safe and affordable housing, assistance in finding technical or educational opportunities that will enhance their probability of economic self-sufficiency, and help within the legal system.

- *The Service Delivery Model*

TEK conducts an intake interview to set specific and manageable goals and objectives for each participant's tenure in the program. Each participant's progress is checked periodically while in the program. The women learn the basics of being in the workforce - getting to work on time, managing workplace situations including resolving conflicts, phone literacy, basic computer skills, and managing finances. One major practical benefit and outcome of the TEK program is the creation of an employment history for the participant which facilitates other job opportunities.

The immigrant women work Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. During this time they take part in TEK's core curriculum that includes literacy, computer training, and one-on-one work with a financial planner. In preparation for future employment each woman receives individualized staff support services in areas such as resume writing and employment assistance.

The TEK experience is the same for the Apna Ghar women except in four areas. First, as mentioned earlier, due to the immigrant status of some of the TEK women, they are provided with a training stipend rather than receiving an hourly wage. Secondly, the Joint Program is designed so that the tenure of each woman in the program is expected to be three months, to parallel to the time usually allotted in Apna Ghar's emergency housing program. Third, the \$150 housing bonus is only available to women in the joint program. Finally, the daily work hours are usually shorter in duration (14 hours a week as opposed to 25 hours).

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## METHOD

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A key aspect of this study is its participatory and collaborative nature. Leading staff from TEK and Apna Ghar participated both in the design of the study and in the analysis of the data. Data was gathered from interviews, focus groups, participant observations, and a review of all TEK and selected Apna Ghar case records.

- *Staff Interviews*

Five staff were interviewed by CURL. The participating staff members included three from Apna Ghar and two from TEK. All of the participants were women. Each woman was asked about her observations concerning the program and her observations about the interactions of the clients with the program (see Appendix 1 for interview instrument). The Apna Ghar staff interviewed included the executive director, the program director, and a counselor. At TEK the staff interviewed included the executive director and the associate director.

- *Participant Interviews*

There were a total of 14 interviews with women who had previously worked for TEK at some time between 1996 and the end of 2000<sup>1</sup>. One was still currently employed at TEK.

Five of these interviews were with women referred to TEK by Apna Ghar. (In total, 12 women from Apna Ghar had participated in the TEK program at the time of the study.) Attempts were made to contact all of these women by Apna Ghar staff and CURL researchers. Of the 12 who agreed to be interviewed, five women eventually kept their interview appointment.

We found that this sample of interviewed women was skewed toward more recent participants in the Joint Program or women still accessing Apna Ghar services. Women who had completed using the services of Apna Ghar were less likely to agree to be interviewed. Apna Ghar has found that women who have completed using their services are often not inclined to continue having any connection with the agency. They

surmise that these women want to put the painful circumstances of their family crisis and their chagrin at having utilized social services behind them.

Nine of the 45 women who had participated in TEK by referral from other agencies were also interviewed. Researchers aimed at interviewing two to three women from each year the program had been in operation. Some of the women were difficult to reach. They had changed their addresses, moved outside the city, and/or did not call back to express an interest in being interviewed. However, researchers conducted interviews with two women from 1996, two women from 1997, three women from 1999, and two women from 2000. The interview was composed of open-ended questions (See Appendix 2) and took between 30 to 60 minutes.

There was a slight difference between the interview questions posed to the two groups of women because of their diverse histories (see Appendix 2 for TEK interview questions and Appendix 3 for Joint Program interview questions). The women who worked at TEK in previous years and were accepted into the study were offered a \$10 gift certificate from TEK as an incentive for participating in the interviews. With the exception of one phone-interview, all the interviews were conducted in person. The interviews with the women referred from Apna Ghar took place at the Apna Ghar office. Two of these interviews were conducted with the assistance of a translator. The interviews with individuals from the non-immigrant group took place outside the TEK workplace, at a site of mutual choice such as a coffee shop or a restaurant. The interviews that took place at Apna Ghar offices were taped and subsequently transcribed for analysis. In addition, each interviewer also took field notes.

- Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted with eight women who were working at TEK at the time of the research (see Appendix 4 for focus group discussion questions). All women at TEK were given the opportunity to participate during work hours. The purpose of the focus groups was to get an overview of how employees perceive the TEK experience and to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of working at TEK.

At the time the focus groups were conducted, 12 women in total worked at TEK. Eight women participated in the two focus groups. Three women were absent on the days scheduled for the focus groups and one

declined to participate. The first focus group was conducted with five participants and included women referred to TEK by both Apna Ghar and other referring agencies. In the second focus group there were three participants. The three participants of this second group were all graduates from TEK who were currently working as supervisors at TEK.

- Participant Observation

One member of the CURL research team, a sociology graduate student, volunteered to work at TEK on the TEK floor and participated in all aspects of the soap making and packaging process. The observation was conducted once a week for three hours over a period of four months. The student collected extensive field notes. All her co-workers at TEK were aware of her membership on the CURL research team and agreed to her inclusion in their daily work routine.

### Data Analysis

- Analysis of Interviews, Focus Groups, and Field Notes

The CURL researchers identified and coded common themes from the interviews, the focus group transcripts, and the field notes. The researchers and the staff of Apna Ghar and TEK discussed the preliminary findings in two meetings. These meeting proceedings were then transcribed and coded. Staff members of these organizations have intensive day-to-day interactions with program participants. Their knowledge and understanding of the program and their clients is not easily captured. This reflexive process was especially important for capturing the depth of knowledge of the staff that is often not recorded or verbalized.

- Analysis of Case Record Data

The researchers reviewed the TEK case records and were able to supplement the information of the women in the Joint Program with Apna Ghar administrative data. From these records, researchers were able to construct a database that identified demographic and other information on all the TEK participants including their age, race/ethnicity, number and age of children, family living circumstances, housing, receipt of public assistance, criminal record, date of last

employment, reason for termination of employment, educational level, history of substance abuse, health status, and their history of family violence. In addition, there was information about their current TEK status, whether they were still working, had graduated from the program, or had been terminated. While this information was very useful, it had serious limitations. First, the demographic information was initially gathered during the intake interview. Recipients were not pressed to fill in all data, and the staff did not always subsequently fill in the missing information as they became aware of it during the course of their

interactions with the participants. Given the small number of participants, the intimacy of the program, and the pressing time demands on the small TEK staff (at the time of the research, there were only two full time staff), staff relied on their memories, and information was not always captured on paper. Therefore, there is at least one empty data field in every case.

Another problem with the database is the lack of follow-up information on their subsequent employment history. There is little time for staff to maintain contact with graduates of the program. Although many former participants kept in touch, there was little record-keeping related to their subsequent employment. However, even with these limitations, a review of this data gives us some understanding of the prevalence and patterns of issues that the women confront.

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## FINDINGS

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### The Women: A Group Snapshot

Sixty-two women participated in TEK at the time of the study. Of those, twelve participated through the joint Apna Ghar-TEK program started in late 1999.

Table One: TEK Participants

		Status chart			
Women referred to TEK by other agencies:	Total #	Graduated	Terminated	Still at TEK	Missing
1996	8	5	1		2
1997	8	4	3		1
1998	12	7	4	1	
1999	9	6	1	2	
2000	10	4	3	2	1
2001	3			3	
<b>SUM</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>
Women referred to TEK by Apna Ghar:	Total #	Graduated	Terminated	Still working	
1999	2	1	1		
2000	9	5	3	1	
2001	1	1			
<b>SUM</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	

- *Ethnicity.*

All but one of the women (a Latina) in the Joint Program were either Asian or Middle Eastern immigrants. Except for one South Asian woman from India, all the TEK participants referred by other organizations were African-American (79%), White (13%), or Latina (6%).

- Age and Parental Status

The women in the Joint Program were younger than the other TEK women. The plurality of the Joint Program women were in their 20's, while the plurality of the other women were in their 40's. Three out of four TEK participants have had children. Except for one woman with five children, the mothers in the Joint Program had either one or two children (averaging 1.5 children). The other TEK participants' family sizes were much more variable, with one third of the women having three or more children (averaging two children). This difference in family size could be reflective of the differences in age between the two groups of women. The Joint Program women who are younger are more likely to have younger children and to have their children living with them than the older TEK women.

- Economic Assistance

Because of their immigrant status, very few of the Joint Program women were eligible for public assistance. Two received food stamps and two received TANF. The public assistance receipt of the women not in the Joint Program was much higher. Over 75 percent received some form of public assistance.

- Educational Status

The educational achievement among the TEK participants ranged from the functionally illiterate to high school dropouts to university graduates. The women in the Joint Program had completed more education than the other TEK women. Fifty-nine percent of the Joint Program women completed either a two-year college or four-year university program. Only three had not finished high school.

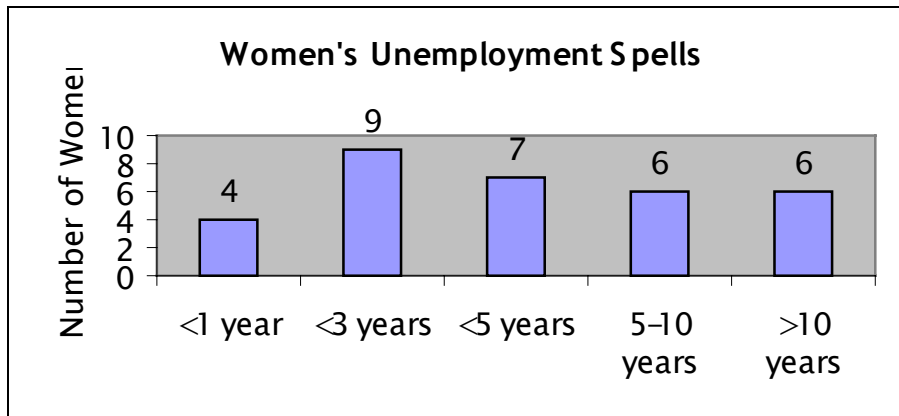
Twenty percent of the other TEK women had completed a two-year college or four-year university program. Thirty-two percent graduated from high school, 15 percent had a GED and 31 percent had not completed high school.



- Previous Work Experience

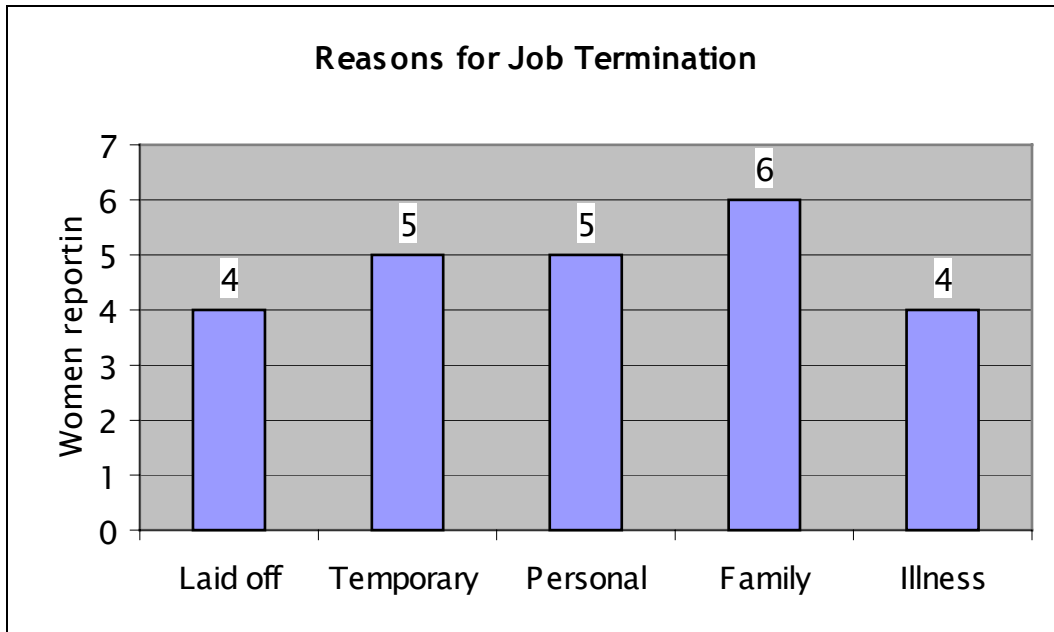
Just over half of the women at TEK reported having some work experience. All of the women with previous work experience, with one exception, were not in the Joint Program. As the following chart shows (Chart 1), most women with work experience were in the midst of a long spell of unemployment.

Chart 1



These spells of unemployment were precipitated by reasons that were less likely to be attributed to the employment itself (layoffs, temporary work) and more likely to be attributed to the women's lives (personal, family, and illness) (Chart 2).<sup>2</sup>

Chart 1



- Substance Abuse

A substantial number of women in the TEK program were recovering from either drug or alcohol abuse. (None were in the Joint Program.) Of the 46 TEK women for whom we have information and who were not a part of the Joint Program, 20 reported having had a past addiction to either alcohol or drugs. (In order to participate in TEK candidates must participate in a recovery program)

- Health

A number of TEK participants reported physical and mental health challenges. Twelve of the 40 women (30 percent) for whom we have information reported having physical health problems. Participants with physical and mental health problems were more likely to be referred to TEK by organizations other than Apna Ghar and therefore were not part of the Joint Program. (Only two of the women in the Joint Program reported having any health problems.) The differences in health issues probably reflect the different routes to TEK of the two groups of women. The women who were referred by Apna Ghar were there because of their immigrant status and their issues of domestic violence. Any other issue

that these women faced were coincidental or secondary to these two issues. On the other hand, many of the other women at TEK have had a history of difficulty in adjusting to the work force primarily because of these health issues.

Of the 32 women for whom we have information, 18 reported having mental health problems. While none of the women in the Joint Program reported having any mental health problems, staff reported that at least 25 percent of the women in the Joint Program exhibit some symptoms of mental health issues including anxiety, depression, and other symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder.

### Participants' Challenges to Workforce Participation

Participants faced significant challenges in attaining stable employment that would provide them with sufficient income to stabilize their lives and meet their economic responsibilities. The nature of those challenges were different for the two groups of women. The immigrant women were confronted with two sets of inter-related challenges: the first due to domestic violence, the second due to their immigration status and their unfamiliarity with American society and the English language. The other TEK women's challenges were predominately tied to health and substance abuse issues.

### Work Transition Issues of the Immigrant Women

Some of the work transition issues of the Joint Program women are obvious from their profile above. For the 50 percent who were mothers with dependent children, childcare was a recurring issue. Since most were not eligible for welfare, subsidized childcare was not an option. Educational skills, per-se, were not an issue. Most of the Joint Program women were well educated. Seventy-seven percent had completed high school, and two-thirds of them had received either a two-year college or a university degree. Though the majority had some experience with higher education, most had little familiarity with working outside of home. Only two had any employment history. Few had facility with English<sup>3</sup>.

- Attitudinal Issues

Many of these women, coming out of an abusive relationship, found it emotionally difficult to cope and had little confidence in their ability to succeed. Apna Ghar staff described how many of the women, still deeply

embedded in their native cultures, were dealing with feelings of shame and guilt about failed marriages. Three of the five women interviewed reported that when they sought support from their families they were turned away and chastised. Apna Ghar staff reports that many women who seek their services encounter similar negative family responses.

TEK staff found that many of the Apna Ghar women come to them lacking confidence and self-efficacy, traits that are a pre-requisite to any sustained employment. Three of the interviewed women are examples of the stressful conditions that women find themselves in. Responding (through a translator) to a question about her state of mind when she first started participating at TEK, Reena<sup>4</sup> stated:

My husband had totally destroyed my self-confidence and [I thought that I] could never be able to do anything good or nice, I never thought that I would be able to work....

TEK staff reported that she was extremely shy and had serious problems with self-esteem when she first entered the program. She had a difficult time interacting with co-workers and seeing herself as possessing any positive attributes.

Another woman, Cruti<sup>4</sup>, found it difficult to cope with everyday life, despite being highly educated with a degree in engineering. She described that she was in a mental state that she "...cannot concentrate. There is a lot going on in my mind."

Another women, Usha<sup>4</sup>, followed her husband to this country after he kidnapped their children from Pakistan. Having won a court battle to regain custody, she found herself stranded in this country with no family support, little educational skills, and no confidence. She reported that she is on medication for depression.

- Expectations

Apna Ghar and TEK staff discussed at research meetings that the immigrant women often had a difficult time with identifying expectations and participating in the initial planning protocol at TEK. For example, a recent Joint Program participant had a difficult time understanding that TEK was a job *training* program and that one of her tasks was to develop an employment plan that would lead to self-sufficiency. According to reports by the TEK staff, when the woman was asked about her expectation for TEK or of her future she replied that she just wanted a

job where she didn't get tired.

The Apna Ghar staff felt that while this woman's example was extreme, her case pointed out that the immigrant women who have the most difficult time in establishing independent households have not been prepared by their cultural role in their country of origin to think about expectations of independence or of work outside of the home.

In addition, one of the Apna Ghar staff, herself South Asian, suggested that many of the South Asian women she sees have a sense of fatalism or feel that they have no control over their destiny and, therefore, do not understand why anyone would ask about their expectations.

- *Lack of Stable Housing*

Many of the Joint Program women, as a result of being victims of family violence or abandonment, lacked stable housing. Apna Ghar's shelter program can provide housing for three months, although they are sometimes able to extend this for another month or so. Even then, many of the women, lacking the legal status to be eligible for public assistance and not yet receiving assistance from their spouses or families, find it difficult to establish an independent household. For example, of the five women interviewed, none were living in a stable living situation. One had returned to an abusive husband because she felt that she had no other options. She reported that at any time she might have to leave again. Another, without legal status in the United States, deeply in debt, with a new infant and deserted by her husband, was living with another immigrant woman who befriended her. One was living in the Apna Ghar shelter. She was looking for an apartment and finding it difficult. "I can't even think of a studio or a room making four hundred dollars [a month]."<sup>5</sup> The fourth woman and her children were living with an aunt and looking for housing. The fifth had just left the Apna Ghar shelter at

the time of the interview. She had two children, a handicapped daughter and a seriously depressed teenage boy. She received \$300 a month in child support from her husband and had just started receiving food stamps and Medicaid.

This instability of housing creates a "catch-22" situation. On the one hand, the women participating in a program that will assist them in finding adequate employment that will allow them to support an independent household. On the other hand, the pressure to find housing often leads them to leave TEK for exploitative employment so as to have

some money to pay for housing once their Apna Ghar shelter eligibility has ended. Without legal status, most of these women do not have recourse to the public assistance that is available to victims of domestic violence. Because of this, the Joint Program women have a deadline of three or so months for successful work transition. This is often at odds with challenges that they have to address by way of the assistance of TEK and Apna Ghar before they can secure stable employment.

- Legal Tasks and Challenges

The Joint Program women had a number of legal issues to address both within the domestic court system and within the immigration service. These issues affected their ability to focus on work or employment training in a number of ways. First, court appearances often interrupted work schedules. For example, a Joint Program participant explained,

I am going through at least three things together...I have my police protection case...and so I am going to be off for two days...I came to Apna Ghar for legal assistance because my visa expired and I came on my fiancée's visa...I have to collect a lot of letters of support of evidence: my cohabitation, police clearance certificate, and reference letters.

The Apna Ghar program director observed that:

It is very hard to get women to focus on jobs. They are consumed with issues related to DV [domestic violence], going to court, meeting with attorneys, immigration issues. Perhaps the hardest is that often they let the moment define them-go[ing] with the flow, rather than organiz[ing] and be[ing] proactive.

Combined, these tasks can seem, and are, very overwhelming. As one of the women in the Joint Program noted, "You cannot put them together: work hard for a job, work hard for legal assistance, and look for the apartment. It's not possible sweetheart."

### Work Transition Issues of The Other TEK Women

The other TEK women also had a complex series of factors and life events that impacted on their ability to gain stable employment and support themselves and their families. Among the factors, in varying combinations, were a history of substance abuse, poor physical or

mental health, family violence, prolonged periods of unemployment, young dependent children, homelessness, and criminal records. While the circumstance of each woman was unique, they shared these complexities. For example, 34 percent of the women had at least four or more of these issues<sup>6</sup>, and 49 percent had at least two or three issues.

- History of Substance Abuse

The TEK staff reported that women who have had a history of substance abuse have the most difficult time in successfully participating in the program. These women are much more likely to be terminated from the program than other participants. While only 20 percent of the women with no indication of substance abuse problems were terminated from the program, 35 percent of the women with substance abuse problems were terminated.

The women with a history of substance abuse tended to be older (most are in their forties or fifties). These former substance abusers were very likely to have multiple issues (Table 2). Seventy-five percent had two or more issues, in addition to their history of substance abuse. Some of the issues were likely to be related to the substance abuse such as criminal records, poor mental and physical health, and homelessness.

Perhaps reflecting their age, or again problems associated with substance abuse, women with a history of substance abuse had long durations of unemployment. In addition, although some are college graduates, more than half had not graduated from high school.

Table 2	
Comparing Women with a history of substance abuse to other TEK women not in Joint Program	
Women with History (n=20) <sup>7</sup>	
Other women (n=27)	
Average number of issues	
3.5	
1.3	
Average number of years unemployed	
7.6	
5.6	

Percent not completing high school 65% 28%
--

Adding to the challenges, TEK staff reported that some women often relapse into drug or alcohol use. As soon as this relapse is evident, the woman is suspended from the program. She is eligible for reinstatement after successfully completing treatment and remaining clean for three months. These cases are often the most frustrating. According to staff, the relapses often occur after the woman has made significant progress. TEK staff also reported that the “re-entry” of negative significant others are a common occurrence. For example, one woman relapsed after her boyfriend, a fellow substance abuser, had been released from jail.

- Criminal Record

Six women reported having criminal records. Of these six, five also reported having had substance abuse and/or mental health problems.

- Health Issues

Health issues were a factor in the lives of many of the women. Twenty-five women had some history of physical or mental health issues in their case report. Half were currently receiving disability assistance (all but one of those are receiving disability for mental health reasons). Others had lost jobs because of poor health or reported physical or mental health problems to TEK. Almost all had some work history, but the majority had been unemployed for more than five years.

While some women had very serious health problems (as indicated by their receipt of disability), most of those whose health problems were not compounded by substance abuse seemed to be most serious about their participation in TEK. Only 20 percent of the women with health problems had been terminated from the program (all had a history of substance abuse). The remaining women graduated or were still working at TEK at the time of the study.



- Family Violence

In addition to the women in the Joint Program, four other women at TEK reported being victims of domestic violence. TEK staff felt that this issue is often under-reported and that other TEK women are vulnerable to violence from a family member or boyfriend. All of these women had to confront other issues as well. Of the four TEK women interviewed, all were unemployed, half had young dependents, half had poor education skills, and half had a history of substance abuse.

- The Complications of Life

For nine of the women studied, there were no easily definable patterns of issues to explain their workforce marginality. They ranged in age from their 20s to 60s. They had fewer issues: no substance abuse, health or family violence. Somehow something in their personal lives derailed their work lives. Only one was laid off from her last position. The rest left their employment for family or personal reasons. They had been out of work from three to seven years. They varied in educational levels. Most lived in single resident occupancy (SRO) housing. Three had dependent children. Most have been among the most successful at TEK, with only two (22 percent) having been terminated. (Four had graduated and three are still working at TEK.)

- Employability Issues

While 80 percent of the women had worked in the paid labor force at some point in their lives, most were unemployable when they entered the TEK program. Long stretches of unemployment, lack of good references from former employers, and the complicating issues discussed above all made them unattractive candidates for employment.

According to staff estimates, two-thirds of the women at TEK were very passive and did not easily take advantage of job opportunities without a great deal of support and prodding. Many of the women reported having problems with self-esteem. Ninety percent of the women interviewed or participating in focus groups pointed to their lack of confidence as a key factor that held them back from succeeding in a job search.

In recent months TEK has started serving younger clients who are transitioning out of foster care or group homes. One of these young women was working at TEK at the time of the focus group sessions; more have been referred since the research. TEK staff reported that the need

to build self-confidence and efficacy was especially important with these young women. They often have few interactive social skills and are very withdrawn, nervous, and quiet when they first come to TEK.

- *Economic Support and Housing*

Unlike the women in the Joint Program, most of the TEK women had more economic resources, primarily through their ability to access public assistance. Even so, many had precarious living situations. Half were referred to TEK as part of a plan to transition from their transitional or emergency shelter to more permanent housing. Unlike the immigrant women though, none had pressing time constraints to find employment and to support the establishment of a new household.

### Interaction between the TEK Program and the Participants

The diversity and the depth of issues faced by both sets of TEK participants point to the importance of the personalized service “way station” model of TEK. The women participants in both interviews and focus groups described TEK as a supportive work environment with plenty of one-on-one personal interactions that focus on building personal skills and good work habits.

Women reported coming to TEK with many agendas and goals. All the women had been referred to TEK by either a shelter, a social service agency, or a public assistance agency. In interviews some were able to articulate reasons for being at TEK, other just said they were “referred.” Reasons ranged from: “I needed the money “ to “I wanted to get out [of] my depression...[and] organize my time.” While they have been derailed by life circumstances, often physical or mental illness or substance abuse, some clearly articulated where they want to be. They want to get a positive employment record in order to get a job or to be eligible for a skilled training program. Some, especially the women in the Joint Program, saw TEK as a form of employment and evaluated the experience by the pay they received. Regardless of their expectations though, most women reported finding TEK as a valuable way station--a place to learn important life and work skills, to gain confidence, to network, and to be supported.

- Skills Building: “Learning The Things I Need To Know About Work”

The women identified a number of different kinds of skills that they gained from their experience at TEK. They learned, in the words of one woman, “the things I needed to know about work.” Some of the things they learned were very basic such as learning the culture of work. Others included the attainment of specific skills. Life skills were mentioned as often as specific work related skills.

Among the very basic, but key items, were such skills as how to talk to a supervisor or fellow worker, how to call in if you were sick, and how to punch a time card. The women’s deficiencies in knowing these basic work patterns cannot be underestimated. These skills were among the first volunteered as important by the women in their interviews. A telling example of this is a focus group discussion generated by the questions posed by a woman who was attempting to transition from disability. Sophia<sup>4</sup> had worked at TEK for about two months. A very poised articulate woman, she was confused about what area of her career she should focus on. Was she supposed to become the best soap-maker possible or was she supposed to put most of her effort into devising her personal employment goals and preparing to look for a job? In the discussion that ensued one thing was clear, this woman had no idea how to approach her supervisors to discuss this. She made statements such as, “I would just be bothering them,” and “Maybe I should wait until they say something.” Other women who had been at TEK longer urged her to talk to the TEK director to figure things out. “Are you sure [that] would be all right?” she kept asking.

In another example, one of the interviewees discussed how she learned to “communicate to resolve problems” at work rather than walking off or quitting in a huff. She stated, “I learned how to deal with other people and accept constructive criticism from others...to work with a boss and do whatever she asked me to do.” Another woman talked about how she learned to “get softer with [fellow workers] and feel with them.” Another pointed to how she learned to separate her personal life from her work life. Learning the boundaries and the rules of the road, how to figure out what is ‘all right’ and not ‘all right’, is an important lesson that women learn at TEK.

The women also enumerated a number of concrete skills that they had attained. Ninety percent of the interviewed women emphasized the importance of this skills building. They valued the computer classes and

the typing classes. Others pointed to the importance of learning how to fill out forms properly. Almost every woman mentioned the value of learning how to write a resume, how to find other jobs, and how to get into another training or educational program. In addition to learning specific skills, a number of women echoed the words of one interviewee who stated, “ I learned what skills I needed.”

The women also valued attaining skills, reflecting the TEK curriculum, that went beyond specific work-related skills. Life skills training were mentioned by most of the women. Women talked about learning how to “figure out a life plan,” “set goals,” and “learn the steps I needed to take.” A number of women talked about learning how to manage time better. One woman said: “I learned how to value and respect time.” Of course, these life skills and work skills are inter-related. As Sue<sup>4</sup> articulated, “I learned how to get organized—personally and at work. I learned systems.”

- Supportive Environment

The participants consistently mentioned the supportive environment of TEK. This again reflects a goal of TEK staff: to provide an environment where participants can find both informal supportive interactions and more therapeutic interventions. As illustrated in the comments in the preceding section *Skills*, many of the women learned to handle emotions

and attitudes that had become barriers to their finding employment and having satisfactory interactions with family and peers.

Participants found a caring atmosphere. One woman described how TEK helped her persist in finding the right medication for her depression as well as finding permanent housing. Another described how staff patiently worked with her to control her outbursts of rage and to help her understand her emotions. Another found it a place with “less pressure, I could handle it.” Participants mentioned the two full time TEK staff with a great deal of affection and praise.

Participants understood that this environment was not typical. In the “TEK environment,” one woman explained, we are treated “as family members, [it is] not the typical working place.” In interviews and in focus groups, many stated they wished to prolong the TEK experience and wished it could become their permanent work place. They had made friends through TEK and felt safe.

This perhaps explains why half of the interviewed women who had graduated from TEK reported often returning for visits or “just to check in with Joan (one of the TEK founders and executive director).”

The importance of the support and individual attention of the staff is perhaps best emphasized by a staffing challenge referenced throughout staff and participant interviews and focus groups. When TEK was established, the work volume was limited and staff (the director and associate director) spent a great deal of individual time with participants. This included both time at the TEK work site and at non-work activities, such as picnics and visiting museums. As TEK grew, the organizational work of the staff grew and this limited the personal time that the directors spent with participants.

TEK has begun to address this issue. Beginning in early 2001, TEK hired three supervisors who had graduated from the TEK program. Later that year, TEK was able to utilize a Public Ally intern, a program of Americorp, to develop a social service referral and support system. It is now investigating hiring a chief operating officer so that the executive director has the time to return to a more personal and programmatic focus with the participants.

- *A “Way Station” for Growth and Preparation*

Most women saw TEK as a way station, a safe place to learn the personal skills, work skills, and attitudes needed to move on to another stage of their lives. These were women in transition and they knew it. “This is a place to get back into the swim,” one woman noted. Another said, “I am

figuring out my plan.” While she came to TEK with a “dream” (to start her own restaurant, ed.) she had learned to identify the steps she needed to take and “what I need to do [about] me.” A third woman pointed to the satisfaction she had gotten from having a job at TEK and how she is now “working on getting started in the workforce.”

Women grew during their time at TEK. One woman said, “My experience at TEK made me believe in myself. Now I have choices in life.” A woman who was given supervisory responsibilities said, “I felt that Joan depended on me. This feeling was very [helpful]...it gave me confidence.”

- *Measuring Success*

Graduation from the training program was one indication of success. Fifty-six percent of the women who joined TEK graduated from the

program during the period studied. Staff emphasized that graduation in itself is not the key measurement, but rather it is an indication of qualities that can predict success. These include the very things that the participants value about TEK: increased self-awareness, healthier coping skills, the ability to connect to consequences, increased self-worth, and the ability to empathize with others.

- Employment After TEK

Because TEK is unable to follow up with its graduates there are no complete records of how women fared once they graduated from TEK. However, the women interviewed, especially from the TEK general program, have been fairly successful in building work careers.

Of the 14 women interviewed (five from the Joint Program and nine from the general TEK population) seven were currently working. Only one of these was from the Joint Program<sup>8</sup>. These women worked hard at staying employed. Three of them reported going to AA five days a week to maintain sobriety.

All but one also moved through a number of jobs (usually two or three) before they landed their present position. Often the first job they landed did not have benefits and/or was part-time. They kept looking, often using networks and support from TEK until they found a better job. At the time of the interview, except for one woman who worked part-time, all those employed had full time jobs with benefits.

### Participants In The Joint Program

On the whole, there was no difference between the women in the Joint Program and other TEK participants in their finding TEK as a valuable way station--a place to learn important life and work skills, to gain confidence, to network, and to be supported. However, their immigration status, housing status, cultural differences, and childcare issues made it more difficult for the immigrant women we interviewed to readily take advantage of all of the Joint Programs supports and services to transition to employment. At the same time, TEK was especially valuable in assisting women in the Joint Program to increase their "cultural

proficiency,” a needed skill as they transitioned to the American workforce.

- *A First Experience in the American Public Sphere*

For most of the immigrant women, TEK was their first experience with American people and an American work environment. Moving on in their lives and being independent was a terrifying idea for most. Both TEK and Apna Ghar staff observed that the younger immigrant women tended to be more accepting about moving on with their lives and were able to benefit from the experience at TEK better than the older immigrant women.

- *Finding Employment*

As mentioned above, only one of the women interviewed in the Joint Program found permanent full-time employment. Another was just recently completing the TEK program and was in the midst of a job search. Looking at the situations of the three other women is instructive. One who had successfully completed a bank teller training was unable to take any of the positions offered because she was unable to find childcare to meet the time slots and travel times and she cannot drive. Another had not yet attained legal immigrant status and had only intermittent employment “off the records.” Abandoned by her husband, she had also recently given birth to their child. A third woman had a disabled child and her present situation had led her into a deep depression.

- *Money, Not Training*

The women expressed an initial impatience with the Joint Program. Part of this impatience was probably driven by their living situation. They were either living in the Apna Ghar shelter, still in their troubled homes, or living in temporary housing with a friend or relative. Unlike women in the general program, they were in a more “acute” situation economically

and needed immediate financial support through employment in order to transition to some degree of security and independence.

For these women, TEK was a resource to earn some income to pay for daily expenses. They did not view TEK as a place to develop personal goals, instead it was valued as an opportunity to earn money and to

improve English skills. They did not readily understand the training or the orientation aspects of the program, although they noted in hindsight that the experience and support were valuable. For the majority, the concept of “job training” was unfamiliar and unclear. Accordingly, they did not know what to expect.

- Passivity in Seeking Support

The Joint Program women did not seek support and counseling as readily as other TEK participants according to TEK staff. In part, this is explained by the fact that Apna Ghar staffers, with whom they already had relationships, provided career and personal counseling. However, TEK staff and Apna Ghar staff both also observed that the Joint Program women did not know “how” to approach TEK staff (or any social service provider) for support. They did not feel comfortable in initiating contact and were passive, waiting instead for someone to approach them and to offer assistance.

- Interaction Between Immigrant and Non-Immigrant Women

Peer support is a critical feature of the TEK program. The interactions between the immigrant and non-immigrant women are a learning experience for both.

Staff reports and participant observations reported that work relationships between American co-workers and Joint Program participants were limited because of the language and cultural barriers. Often they could not understand each other. Yet relationships were built, and the women learned to communicate with each other, often around food and casual conversation motivated by each side’s curiosity.

When it comes to the interactions between immigrants and non-immigrants, the relationships were less open from the side of immigrant women. Immigrant women were less self-disclosing about their personal traumas and life than non-immigrant women. For many of the immigrant women, the topics that were discussed at the workplace were unfamiliar or shocking. They were unaccustomed to certain cultural topics--primarily drugs and alcohol. Yet the role of TEK is, in part, to help them develop “cultural proficiency” by exposing them to a work environment and to other women. The Joint Program women were reported as much more confident with staff and other participants toward the end of their tenure at TEK.





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## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

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The research project centered on two concerns. First, the Joint Apna Ghar-TEK Program is based on the TEK employment-training model, which provides a concentrated number of services to a small group of women. This is a very expensive employment model. The collaborating organizations wanted to demonstrate that this model fit with, and its expense was justified by, the complex needs of the women that it focused on serving. Second, the Apna Ghar staff wanted to examine in some detail the work transition issues faced by their clients to better understand the employment issues faced by immigrant women survivors of domestic violence.

### An Effective Model

The report demonstrates that the complex needs and multiple challenges of the program's participants necessitate the personalized and focused services that the TEK model provides. The women at TEK need assistance especially in learning new habits and skills and in developing more effective attitudes with which to manage their personal and work lives. The program provides an effective "way station" for learning these new habits and skills. In the words of one woman, participants learned "the things I needed to know about work." These included learning about the process and culture of work, the attainment of specific skills--general life and coping. The participants learned how to talk to a supervisor and fellow workers, how to call in when sick, and how to punch a time card. Among the specific skills they learned are word-processing and other computer programs, typing, filling out forms, and resume writing. Participants reported learning how to manage time, set and carry out goals, and "how to get organized." Participants also report that TEK allowed them to develop work and personal skills in a safe and supportive environment. Participants valued the personalized interactions and attention from staff. Staff helped participants in a wide array of ways including helping a depressed participant persist with her physician to find effective medication, teaching anger control, and finding permanent housing.

The tightly focused program has been able to assist participants in becoming self-effective and in attaining, or making significant steps toward, employment. Of the women who joined TEK, 56 percent successfully graduated from the program. Although post graduation

records are not maintained on TEK participants, we have some indication that participants are able to successfully incorporate the skills and lessons they learn at TEK to develop more stable, economically independent lives. Of the nine women from earlier TEK cohorts who were interviewed, seven were employed for one or more years after graduating from TEK.

### Improving the TEK Program

We have three recommendations in regards to the operations program design of TEK.

- *Increase the availability of senior TEK staff to participants.*  
The personal support and interactions with the executive director and associate director are highly valued by the participants. At the time this research was conducted, both staff members had a number of responsibilities related to the administration of the growing business. That curtailed interaction with participants to some extent. Currently, TEK is identifying structural changes to ameliorate this problem. We recommend that this organizational restructuring be a high priority of the organization.
- *Continue “way station” support to TEK alumnae.*  
On an informal and ad-hoc basis, many TEK alumnae continue to use TEK resources. They seek support and advice from TEK staff and use TEK office fax, computers, and other resources in job searches. The TEK alumnae that were interviewed describe their post-TEK job experiences as full of volatile transitions and issues that would benefit from a more formal support system. We suggest that TEK investigate, formalize, and seek support for the provision of alumnae support and services.
- *Develop a tracking system.*  
Data collection on outcomes is very spotty. We suggest that TEK follow up with both their graduates and non-graduates at designated intervals of six months, one year and two years after they leave TEK. We suggest that this follow-up be part of the programmatic development of an alumnae program.

### Work Transition Issues Faced by Apna Ghar Clients

The Apna Ghar women in the Joint Program faced a series of challenges related to their status as immigrants and as survivors of domestic violence. First, like many victims of domestic violence, a majority of the women in the Joint Program were mothers of young children. For any mothers of young dependent children seeking employment, childcare is a

recurring challenge. For many of these women, the challenge is compounded by their inability to take advantage of public assistance due to their immigrant status. Not all can turn to their families for support in childcare or other issues. Three of the five women interviewed reported that they were rejected and chastised when they turned to their family for assistance. Apna Ghar staff report that this is not unusual experience for South Asian domestic violence victims.

Second, the Apna Ghar clients need sufficient time and support to negotiate all the legal and bureaucratic procedures related to their immigration status and family turmoil. Many do not have the necessary immigrant status to work in the United States. At the same time, they are addressing legal issues related to the domestic violence.

Third, while educational skills and good work habits are not an issue, few of the immigrant women had any familiarity with working outside of the home and/or of working in the United States. They need to develop the “timing” skills necessary to handle these demands along with familial and training demands. They also need to learn how to navigate American culture, especially the culture of the workplace. Finally, the ability to develop a myriad of skills, such as driving, speaking English, and promoting themselves in the workplace is necessary for their employment success.

Fourth, many of the women, coming out of an abusive relationship, found it emotionally difficult to cope and had little confidence in their ability to succeed.

Finally, the women were hard pressed to secure stable housing within the three month emergency-housing period. Because most of the women reported being ineligible for TANF and other public assistance due to their recent immigrant status, Apna Ghar staff reported that many were forced in sub-standard employment and/or returned to a violent family

situation.

### Recommendations Regarding Immigrant Women in the Joint Program

The expected tenure for women in the Joint Program is currently three months. This time reflects the current three-month maximum of emergency housing funding allowable in domestic violence policy. This is an insufficient transition time for many of the women. While the stipend and bonus in the Joint Program are helpful, they are not sufficient for

women who need to find stable housing, especially women with dependent children. Because of recent immigrant status, most of the women with children are not eligible for TANF, an alternative that is available to other domestic violence survivors with dependent children. Therefore, we recommend that the two organizations pursue the following strategies to extend the time that women are supported in their transition to permanent employment.

- Apna Ghar and TEK advocate for a modification in emergency housing policy to be able to extend housing to six months or longer for women not eligible for TANF.
- Apna Ghar seek support for the development of culturally appropriate, supportive transitional housing to compliment the Joint Program.
- The development of a transitional housing stipend fund within the Joint Program to provide for stable housing until graduation.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> One of the Apna Ghar women was just ending her stay at TEK and had not yet graduated.

<sup>2</sup> Twenty-five of the 32 women who reported an employment history gave reasons for leaving their jobs in their TEK in take interviews.

<sup>3</sup> This is to be expected with this group, since poor English language skills were one of the factors that led Apna Ghar to refer women to TEK.

<sup>4</sup> “Reena” and the names of other participants in this report are pseudonyms.

<sup>5</sup> According to Universal Living Wage Organization, the average monthly rent for a studio in Chicago for the year 2001 is \$623 a month and the average for a one-bedroom is \$747 a month.

<sup>6</sup> Due to the substantial missing information in the intake records (see methodology section) for many cases, it is likely that this is an under-estimation of the number of significant issues in the lives of the women. Significant issues were defined as being a custodial parent of children under 10, lack of stable housing, less than a high school education, a criminal record, a mental or physical disability (or a chronic physical or mental health problem), a victim of domestic violence, no employment for 5 or more years, or a history of substance abuse.

<sup>7</sup> The “n” varies by issue, since for each computation only cases with information on both variables are included in the computation. We are able to use all the cases for the computation of “issues.” We are missing information for 1/3 of the “other women” for education. The missing information is most problematic for employment history. Here we only have both variables for 60% of women with a history of substance abuse and 44% of the other women.

<sup>8</sup> In this discussion, it must be considered that the women we interviewed in the Joint Program had much more recent tenure at TEK than the women we interviewed from the general TEK population. This is likely to have “skewed” results, as the latter group of women had more time to develop employment patterns than the former group.

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**APNA GHAR STAFF QUESTIONS**

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*The questions are presented more as discussion issues (open ended) than as question/answer.*

- Do you refer women to any other work programs other than TEK?
- What is the range of services for women at Apna Ghar?
- What is the process to referring people to Enterprising Kitchen (acceptance criteria)?
- What are the challenges that women face working in this project?
- What are your challenges working with these women?
- How do you view the Joint Project between AG/TEK?
- What would you like to add or change in the Joint Project?
- Do you have any suggestions concerning interviewing the women?
- Any issues you want to add?

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**THE ENTERPRISING KITCHEN STAFF QUESTIONS**

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*The questions are presented more as discussion issues (open ended) than as question/answer.*

- What is the process of accepting people from Apna Ghar or other agencies (acceptance criteria)?
- What are the challenges that women face working in this project?
- What are your challenges working with these women?

- What are your criteria in referring the women to another jobs?

Appendix 1 (continued)

- How do you view the Joint Program between AG/TEK?
- What would you like to add or change in the Joint Program?
- Do you have any suggestions concerning interviewing the women?
- Any issues you want to add?



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**THE ENTERPRISING KITCHEN GRADUATES QUESTIONS**

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EXPERIENCE AT TEK

- How did you hear about TEK? Why did you decide to go there?
- For how long have you worked at TEK?
- What was your first impression of TEK?
- Tell me about your work experience at TEK.
- How has your experience at TEK changed over time?
- What do you like most about TEK? Least about TEK?
- What has been most helpful about TEK?
- What did you learn from working at TEK?
- Did the extra classes at TEK help you to develop your skills? How?
- After TEK, where did you work until current time?
- How do you feel that the TEK training program helped you as an individual?
- What are the problems that you faced through completing the training program?
- What do you think is missing in the training program and has to be included?
- Did TEK help you find a job?
- How has TEK helped you achieve your goals? In what ways?

- What things/people/resources/etc. were necessary for you to achieve your goals?

Appendix 2 (continued)

- What are the biggest challenges in maintaining employment?
- You have been hired to help another group in the city to put together an employment program – what things from TEK would you keep, what new things would you add, what things from TEK would you change?

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**APNA GHAR GRADUATES QUESTIONS**

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CURRENT JOB

- What are you doing now?
- For how long have you been in this job?
- What kind of job do you have?
- What skills do you need in your job?
- How did you know about your job? How were you referred?
- Is the current job difficult for you? Are there any challenges you faced either in the beginning or now?
- How is your current job connected with your experience at TEK?

EXPERIENCE AT AG

- Tell me about your experience at AG?
- Walk me through the process of how you were referred to AG and TEK?
- How has AG helped you achieve your goals?

## EXPERIENCE AT TEK

- Tell me about your experience at TEK? (open question)

### Appendix 3 (continued)

- How has your personal life affected your experience at TEK?
- Did you feel that there were any cultural differences in working at TEK that presented a challenge for you? What was TEK role?
- What skills did you learn from the TEK program that helped you enter the job market and do your current job?
- What was TEK's role in helping you find a job?
- What do you feel that was missing in the program that you needed in your current job?
- In general, how do you think that your experience at TEK and AG changed your life?

## FUTURE

- What do you think we should add to the TEK program to make it more effective for women?
- How could we change or add to the project between AG and TEK to improve it?
- If you were to help design a similar training program, what are the things you would change, add, focus on, or take out from the current project?

## **FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

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### LEARNING AS AN INDIVIDUAL

- What did you get from the TEK training program?
- From whom do you learn the most?
- How do you feel that this training program will help you as an individual?
- What are the problems that you are facing through following the training program?
- What works best in the training program? What does not?

### AS A NEW EMPLOYEE

- Suppose you are going to plan an orientation for new employees, what would you tell a new participant to this program?
- What are the most important things that women have to have in place in order to “advance” through this program?
- Looking at your own experiences and the experiences of your fellow participants, what do you think are some of the hardest things for new participants to handle in the program?

### EXTRA CLASSES

- How important are the counseling and extra groups (GED, computer, etc.)?

Appendix 4 (continued)

GOALS AND GRADUATION

- Looking at women who have graduated from the program, what are the challenges that you think you will have to deal with in graduating and going on to another job?
- How have your ideas about what you are going to do next in your life been changed by the program?
- How do you feel that such a training program will help you achieve your goals?
- What new ideas about work possibilities or other parts of your life have you learned in this program?
- What do you think is missing in the training program and has to be included?
- You have been hired to help another group in the city to put together an employment program– what things from TEK would you keep, what new things would you add, what things from TEK would you change?

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