



**National Union
Advisory Committee on
Women's Issues**

2001

FIGHT BACK!

*First they came for people on welfare, and
I did not speak out because I was not poor;*

*Then they came for employment equity,
and I did not speak out because I was not a
member of a minority;*

*Then they came for health care,
and I did not speak out because
I was not sick;*

*Then they came for education,
and I did not speak out because
I did not have children;*

*Then they came for pensions,
and I did not speak out because
I was still young;*

*Then they came for my union contract, and
I did not speak out because I didn't think
that I needed my union;*

*Finally they came for me, and there was
no one left to speak out.*

*So speak out
Before it's too late!*

FORWARD

WOMEN'S ISSUES ARE UNION ISSUES...



...Union issues are women's issues. Union women have always seen to that. But the last ten years have been something special.

Over the last decade women have seen to it that gender-equality issues in work and society are permanently on the public agenda.

We have seen and experienced women gaining confidence and a new significance inside the labour movement; and using that confidence to bring a new intensity to public issues outside our movement.

This energy and effort spurred the National Union and its components to adopt many important measures aimed at enhancing and promoting the rights of women in society and their participation in all trade union activities. **Keep Your Crumbs. We Want The Whole Loaf** is just one of the concrete results of that activity.

What is ground-breaking about **Keep Your Crumbs. We Want The Whole Loaf**, is that it deals with such a wide variety of women's struggles and women's lives in the labour movement. It speaks of the need to be vigilant and not allow equality issues to be pushed to the background, as both levels of government remain firmly planted in the need to be competitive, drastically reduce taxes and fight deficits. The material also speaks of our Union's victories in the areas of collective bargaining, organizing, and broader public policy issues.

Nevertheless, these are still tough times for women. They are dealt crumbs from both levels of government. But there is nothing to indicate that the women of our union will allow back-peddalling. Tough times like these make it all the more clear that economic issues are women's issues. That's why our union stands forcefully for government action

“It speaks of the need to be vigilant and not allow equality issues to be pushed to the background, as both levels of government remain firmly planted in the need to be competitive, drastically reduce taxes and fight deficits.”



on job creation, quality public services and calculating unpaid work for women. It is also crucial for us to organize women into the National Union. In the health and social services sector, we are seeing unionized well-paid jobs being downgraded, contracted out to low bidders, or wiped out altogether in a so-called de-institutionalization that simply transfers responsibility back to the family (that means women).

We are tremendously optimistic about the future for women within the labour movement. We are, however, also constantly aware that the day-to-day struggle is difficult and painful and that women still make incredible sacrifices in their own workplaces and homes. The balancing act women face is difficult.

As we go marching towards the year 2010, women will continue to march towards equality—towards “the whole loaf.” Unions are powerful tools for change. Every step has been heartfelt and hard won. In this era of restructuring and growing inequalities, there is anxiety, but there is also a sense of hope, determination and activism.

I thank the National Union’s Advisory Committee on Women’s Issues for their work on the **Keep Your Crumbs. We Want The Whole Loaf** campaign and publication. I thank the elected officers and staff for their leadership in the victories. We stand shoulder to shoulder.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "James Clancy". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

James Clancy

National President

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INTRODUCTION



WOMEN ALWAYS GET STUCK WITH A CRUMMY DEAL.

When times are good it's crummy.

When times are bad it's crummy.

This is no accident.

Keep Your Crumbs, We Want the Whole Loaf explains why.

Better yet, it sets out ways women can work together to get a lot more than crumbs.

Decades of union organizing efforts turned the public sector into a bright spot for women. It was one of the few places women could get work that gave us decent pay and real opportunities for personal achievement and growth. It's no accident that women make up two-thirds of the unionized workforce in the public sector.

All that changed in the 1990's when we were all forced to march to the beat of the deficit drummer. Governments were determined to cut, hack and slash their way to balanced budgets. Women paid the greatest price—as usual.

Privatization became the name of the game. The federal government gave us the Canada Health and Social Transfer. Provincial governments enacted wage freezes, compulsory days off without pay, contracting-out and mass lay-offs.

The latest figures from Statistics Canada show that in the period from 1990 to 1995, full-time women workers in the public sector declined by 4% in Canada. The sharpest drop was in the female-dominated clerical occupational group.

Worse still, it is women of colour, Aboriginal women and women with disabilities — those who barely got “a foot in the door”—who are now being callously squeezed out.

But the unkindest cut of all is that it is women who will have to shoulder the new burdens created by all the cuts. It is women who will be left with no choice but to take up the role of caregiver, as government cuts force more and more hospital closings and reductions in home-care services, child-care resources and public school programs.

Keep Your Crumbs, We Want The Whole Loaf examines all that.

The first part of our loaf puts the issues on the table—slice by slice. Much of the data was compiled from research done by Statistics Canada.

The second section pays tribute to the women of the National Union who have confronted the restructuring and have achieved important victories for all women.

The third section of our loaf talks about the importance of unions to women workers and examines strategies on how union women can continue successful fight back campaigns.

The fourth section sets out the benefits for working women organized with the National Union.

Governments want us to believe the economic well-being of our families is dependent on cutbacks in programs for people and job opportunities in the public service. They want us to reduce our expectations, to be content with the crumbs.

We are tired and fed up with the crumbs. We want what we have worked hard for and what we deserve. Women want to be paid what we are worth. We want opportunities to pursue our careers, to work full-time with pensions and live free of violence.

Our message is loud and proud: **Keep your crumbs. We want the whole loaf.**

In solidarity,

Sister Linda Anweiler

Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union

Sister Catherine Bell

B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union

Sister Martha Brown

Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union

Sister Cynthia Burke

Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees

Sister Teresa Davey

Ontario Liquor Board Employees' Union

Sister Marg Ducie

Brewery, General and Professional Workers Union

Sister Lynne Gingras

Alberta Union of Public Employees

Sister Marsha Halsall

Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees

Sister Brenda Hildahl

National Union of Public and General Employees

Sister Gayle Hofmeister

Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union

Sister Lydia Jaillet

New Brunswick Public Employees Association

Sister Carol Meyer

National Union of Public and General Employees

Sister Helen Riehl

Ontario Public Service Employees Union

Sister Maureen Ross

Health Sciences Association of B.C.

SECTION I

THE IMPACT OF RESTRUCTURING

A Portrait of
Women in
Canada 2001



Liberation Comes

liberation comes slowly
sometimes

a burglar in your sleep
a crack
doubt
an affirmation
peek on possibilities
and answers will come barefoot

and
naked
prop on your doorstep
and beat at your door
if you open to peek

it rushes in
like a flood

down a laneway
can't just ignore it like a beggar
when you go by

by Lillian Allen

Slice #1

Workers' Rights are Women's Rights



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

In a world in which more women are entering the paid workforce, women's rights go hand-in-hand with core workers' rights. You can't have one without the other. The International Labour Organization, made up of representatives of government, business and labour from 174 countries, has defined core workers' rights as:

- equal pay and an end to discrimination;
- freedom of association and the right to organize;
- the right to bargain collectively;
- no slave labour; and
- no child labour.

Throughout the world, more and more women are taking their future into their own hands. They have joined unions, advocacy groups and women's organizations to fight repressive laws and raise standards for women workers.

Through organizing, bargaining and legislative and political activism, unions help to fight for equal pay, paid family leave, job security and good health care benefits. Unions in Canada support working women's rights by demanding that corporations, the Canadian government and international financial institutions adopt and enforce core workers' rights.

FACTS & ISSUES



How do women workers fare globally?

- Women make up 45% of the world's workforce. Yet women account for 70% of the world's population living in poverty.
- Women in developing countries work an average of 60 – 90 hours per week.
- Worldwide, women earn an average of 75% of men's pay in non-agricultural work.
- 90% of the 27 million workers in export processing zones are women, most of them between the ages of 16 and 25. Export Processing Zones are tax-free industrial areas for foreign companies in which labour laws are often suspended and workers unprotected.
- When working women in Canada try to gain a voice at work by forming a union, in half the cases the employers threatened to close the business.
- Some 4,010 trade unionists throughout the world were tortured or jailed last year for fighting for workers' rights. Three hundred were murdered.
- Around the world, some 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 go to work, half of them full-time.

"I started working at Global Fashion when I was 13 years old. We were forced to work, almost every day, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sometimes they kept us all night long, working until 6:30 a.m. Working all these hours, I made 240 lempiras a week, which is about \$2.61 U.S. No one can survive on these wages. The plant is like an oven. They keep the bathroom locked and you need permission – and you can only use it twice a day. Most of the girls are afraid. The company fired a number of workers and said they would fire all of us if we tried to organize." - Wendy Diaz, Honduran textile worker

Working women pay high price for low-road economy.

- The global economy isn't working for millions of working women around the world. In Canada, women are working longer hours to make ends meet. Wealth inequality has reached levels not seen since the 1930s – and women workers are worried about their future.
- Corporations are turning to women – and girls – like Wendy Diaz to cut their labour costs and increase their profits. Like Wendy in Honduras, most women throughout the world are relegated to low-skilled, low-wage jobs. Their work often is dangerous. Women are likely to face such threats on the job as discrimination, sexual harassment, physical abuse and pregnancy exams.
- The global economy makes it possible for corporations to chase the lowest wages and highest profits, regardless of the consequences to people and communities. Without rules to protect basic rights – such as the freedom of association and an end to discrimination and child labour – working women are denied the opportunity to feed their families and contribute to their communities.
- In 10 years, 80% of all women in industrialized countries and 70% of all women globally will work outside of the home. We need rules for the global economy that work for working women and working families.

Slice #2

Around the World, Women Earn Less



"As a woman I have no country. As a woman my country is the whole world." - Virginia Woolf

FACTS & ISSUES

On every continent, more women are working for pay than ever before.

- In 1990, women were at least one-third of the workforce in most countries. Experts predict that by the end of the year 2001, as many women will be working as men. In industrial countries, more women are working for pay than ever before. In 1980, 53% of women of working age were in the workforce. By 1990, 60% were.

But on every continent, women's pay lags well behind men's pay.

- Worldwide, women earn an average of 75% of men's pay. Asia, for example, women in Bangladesh earn as little as 42% of what men earn. Women in the Syrian Arab Republic earn only 60% of what men earn and in South America, Chile's women earn 61% of what men earn.
- Much of women's work worldwide – for example, caring for children and the elderly or doing agricultural work – is unpaid. In fact, worldwide, women receive no wages for 66% of the work they do.

Women hold jobs at the bottom of the pay scale.

- Worldwide, women are more likely than men to hold low-paying jobs:
 - In Japan, about 37% of working women hold low-wage jobs – compared with 6% of men.
 - In the United States, about 33% of working women hold low-wage jobs – compared with 20% of men.

Slice #2



- In the United Kingdom, about 31% of working women hold low-wage jobs – compared with 13% of men.
- In France, 25% of working women hold low-wage jobs compared with 8% of men.
- Worldwide, women hold only 14% of managerial jobs and less than 6% of senior management jobs.

One key result? Worldwide more women than men live in poverty.

- Women account for 70% of the more than 1 billion people who live in poverty worldwide.

Slice #3

Poverty

"That seems to be the haunting fear of mankind – that the advancement of women will sometime, someday, interfere with some man's comfort." - Nellie McClung



A newborn child, just because she happens to be born female, is more likely to grow up to be poor as an adult. Women form the majority of the poor in Canada. One in five Canadian women live in poverty – that's 2.8 million women!

FACTS & ISSUES

Women at particular risk of poverty.

- **Women raising families by themselves:** 56% of single parent families headed by women are poor, compared with 23% of those headed by men. Many of these families who have financial support agreements with the non-custodial parent (usually the father), are either not in place or in arrears.
- **Senior women:** Almost half (49%) of single, widowed and divorced women over 65 are poor.
- **Other women on their own:** 41% of single women under 65 live in poverty.
 - women make 73% of what men earn for annual full-time work.
 - women earn less than men even if they work in the same sectors or the same jobs: there are no occupations in which women's average earnings exceed men's – not even in female-dominated areas such as clerical work and teaching.
 - Canada has the 5th largest wage gap between women and men full-time workers in the world's 29 most developed countries.
- **Women with disabilities** living independently, rather than in an institution, and who were between the ages of 35 – 54, had an average income of \$17,000. This represents 55% of the income earned by men in the same situation.
- **Aboriginal women:** the average annual income of Aboriginal women is \$11,900, compared to \$17,400 for Aboriginal men, and \$17,600 for all Canadian women. 44% of the Aboriginal population living off reserves live in poverty. Conditions on the reserve are worse with 47% of Aboriginal persons having an annual income of less than \$10,000.



- **Visible minority women:** 28% of visible minority women are low income, compared to 20% of all women. The average annual income for a visible minority woman in Canada is \$13,800. This is almost \$9,000 less than visible minority men (\$22,600).

What effect does the poverty of women have on society and women?

- **Child poverty:** children are poor because their parents (mainly mothers) are poor. By keeping women poor, we are also keeping children poor, making them sick, sabotaging their future, contributing to crime, and perpetuating the cycle of poverty.
- **High health care and income security costs:** There is clearly a link between low income and poor health. Poverty increases reliance on health care services, that in turn drive up health care costs.
- **Democracy eroded:** women cannot become involved in decision-making structures in equal proportions to men when they remain primarily responsible for child-rearing, when they are economically disadvantaged, and when they have fewer economic resources to run for office. An important perspective is lost, that may affect the direction and priorities of the country as a whole.
- **Acute and chronic ill health:** susceptibility to infectious and other disease, arthritis, increased risk of heart disease, stomach ulcers, migraines, stress and nervous breakdowns.
- **Violence and abuse:** increased vulnerability to violence and abuse, as poverty traps women and limits their choices.

Women are key to development of society.

- International development agencies have learned the hard way, after many failed projects aimed only at men, that the education and income security of women is the key to children's health and well-being, as well as the social and economic development of society as a whole.
- Women play a central role in shaping future generations, physiologically, emotionally, morally, spiritually and intellectually. When women are poor, they are not free. Their choices are limited. Children are poor because their mothers are poor. Women are poor because our governments and many of our citizens don't care enough about them to do anything. They simply rely on them for unpaid and underpaid labour.

Slice #4

Health Care

"Could anything be more natural and reasonable than that women whose special business has always been to minister to humanity as mothers, nurses or teachers should share the work of reconstructing society on a safer and saner basis?" - Sophia Dixon



When the health care system is cut back, women get hit with a triple whammy. First, women overwhelmingly tend to be the health care workers who are losing their jobs or are being run off their feet because of understaffing. Secondly, women and their children tend to use the health care system more often. Finally, women pick up the slack when the government no longer funds health care services.

FACTS & ISSUES

Women are the majority in the business of caring.

- Women are the majority of health care receivers and providers in Canada. Approximately 80% of paid health care workers are women. Women also provide most of the unpaid health care within the home.
- During the past decade, federal and provincial governments introduced major changes to the health care system. Restructuring has taken the form of privatization; outsourcing; de-institutionalization through hospital closures; faster turnover of acute care patients, downsizing and bed closures, and keeping minimal levels of staff at the expense of the quality of care.

Restructuring health care effects women more than men.

- Both women and men are affected by government cutbacks and rising health care expenditures, but women and men do not have the same financial resources to cope with these changes. Women, on average, earn less than men, have lower incomes and are more likely to live in poverty. Women are less likely to have supplementary health insurance coverage through their paid employment. As a result, women face greater financial barriers when health care costs are privatized.



- Most governments looking for ways to reduce public spending are considering new forms or levels of private payment for health care. Private payment schemes limit access to those who can afford to pay, and would further disadvantage women.

Women face unfair burden.

- As more of the caring work is dumped back into our homes, women will once again be expected to do all the work—without pay. As people are discharged quicker and sicker, women will be expected to take care of them. As baby boomers begin to turn 65, this issue will affect virtually every Canadian family.
- The transition from institutional to community care (home-based care) is perilous. For one thing, hospital stays are covered by medical insurance. Funding for community care is piecemeal and uneven and comes from a variety of private, public, nonprofit and charitable sources. Doctors' visits may be covered by a provincial health-care plan, but a visiting homemaker might not be.
- According to Statistics Canada, more than 1.6 million women provide assistance to a relative, friend or acquaintance that has a long-term health problem. Half say caregiving has affected their hours of paid employment and social life, and involved out-of-pocket expenses. About one quarter say their own health and sleep patterns have been affected by their responsibilities.

Privatization: Women workers get squeezed.

- There is a shift in who provides services in the public sector. Many services are increasingly contracted-out to for-profit corporations. Housekeeping, cafeteria, and even management services are being taken over by private corporations. With these grand schemes of privatization, it is the women who are overworked or squeezed out. Health care is one of the most highly unionized sectors for women, it has provided women with some of their best jobs. Privatization is eroding better paid women's employment.
- Many provinces are undertaking a process of regionalization for the delivery of health care services. The result has meant more job loss through the merger and amalgamation of hospital services and administrations. Regionalization has claimed a disproportionately higher number of women casualties; cuts to hospital budgets have resulted in the lay-off of thousands of health care workers.
- In the name of reducing costs, health care administrators have raised patient/staff ratios, reorganized health services, shifted personnel, reassigned duties to less-skilled workers, and increased the use of casual workers. These changes have often been introduced without consultation with front line healthcare workers. Healthcare workers for the last decade have repeatedly raised concerns about understaffing, heavier workloads, and increased levels of stress and injury in the workplace.

Slice #5

Home Care

"For what is done or learned by one class of women becomes, by virtue of their common womanhood, the property of all women."

- Elizabeth Blackwell

Women form the majority of home care recipients, home care personnel and persons responsible for the care of elderly, disabled or ill family members. The extreme gender imbalance in every aspect of home care means that home care policies and practices have a significant and varied impact on women's lives.

FACTS & ISSUES

Results of recent home care study bad news for women.

A recent study done by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women found the following:

- Women family members were expected to supplement home care services without pay and at great personal expense in terms of their own health, incomes, career development and pension accumulation, whereas men were not under as much pressure to do so.
- Home care services suffer from inadequate public funding, which leads to barriers in access to subsidized care due to eligibility requirements, inadequate hours of home care being assessed for some clients, limits on hours of care and types of services. This results in recipients sometimes receiving fewer hours of care than needed or than their doctors recommend. The majority of those not receiving the care were women.
- Low wages, irregular hours, inadequate training and high turnover of home care workers resulted in the lack of continuity of care, staff shortages, waiting lists, health risks to both workers and recipients, and impoverishment. Some home care workers have had to work several jobs to make ends meet. Others were living below the poverty line; the vast majority were women.



Slice #5



- The “de-professionalization” of home care is a problem. Duties that would be performed in a hospital at one wage and by one type of worker are often performed in the home setting at less than half the wage. The move from institutional care to home care is transforming an overworked and underpaid, mainly female, labour force into an even more underpaid and isolated female labour force. Another aspect of de-professionalization is that the medical and personal care which family members (mainly women) sometimes provide, without medical or attendant care training, causes stress and the possibility of mistakes and even injury on the part of the caregiver.
- The absence of professional associations and unions for some home care workers had a direct negative impact on wages.
- The financial costs associated with home care were picked up by recipients, their families or home care workers . Many of these costs would be absorbed by the government if the recipient were in hospital – things such as medical equipment, special meals, renovations to accommodate disabilities, repairs and maintenance of the care setting, in some instances prescription and non-prescription drugs. The amount paid publicly varies by jurisdiction.
- Access to home care depends on where you live in Canada. In rural areas and remote communities there is poor or no service. Access to publicly funded service has decreased in most provinces – eligibility requirements have become strict, hours of service have been reduced and the amount the recipient is required to pay has increased.
- Inadequate income support programs keep single women over 65 and women with disabilities in poverty. These are the two largest home care user groups and least able to pay for private care and other associated costs.
- Services were not culturally sensitive, leading to under use of services among urban Aboriginal peoples and some ethnic, racial and linguistic minority communities. Women in these communities frequently *are* the home care system.
- Recipients and unpaid caregivers reported a lack of control and choices, sometimes even a basic lack of information and communication among agencies, assessment coordinators and recipients.

Slice #6

Education & Training

"Far too many Canadian women graduate from college & university only to be asked in job interviews, "But can you type?" ...For many women who gain entrance to college & university the future is only slightly less dismal than for their less educated sisters."

- Jill McCalla Vickers

Governments are increasingly under pressure by Big Business to reform public education. Big Business has created a myth that Canadian students are poorly educated. With this in mind, restructuring education has become the provincial governments' latest target. Big Business is all too ready to fill in the gaps.

The whole process of education from delivery to administration of elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education is under attack. Many provincial governments have amalgamated school boards and cut initiatives that enrich the learning environment such as: breakfast programs, music programs, support for children with special needs and English as a Second Language (ESL) training.

The Canada Health and Social Transfer meant drastic funding cuts to education. Under the CHST, the nature of federal transfers has changed to virtually eliminate the possibility of new and better national standards. Provinces have been left on their own to finance post-secondary education and training. At the provincial level, the picture is one of cuts, restructuring, rationalization, and loss of programs.

FACTS & ISSUES

Education barely reduces wage gap for Women.

Women make 73% of what men earn for annual full-time work. Sadly, education barely reduces the wage gap:

- In 1997, women with university degrees, employed annually full-time earned 75% of men with university degrees.
- In 1993, a man employed annually full-time with less than a Grade 9 education earned an average of \$29,127. Whereas, a woman with a post-secondary certificate or diploma earned less for annual full-time work: \$28,183.





Women under represented in trades training.

- Women are more likely than men to be high school graduates, but are less likely to have either a trades certificate or diploma or to have completed some other form of non-university training.
- Women make up the majority of full-time students in most university departments. Unfortunately, they remain concentrated in the humanities and social sciences – fields with weaker labour market outcomes.
- Just 1.6% of apprentices registered in 15 predominant trades in 1997 were women.

Federal cuts equal less access, lower quality and higher debt.

- Federal cash transfers for post-secondary education have fallen to their lowest point in 30 years, forcing tuition to an average of \$3,378.
- In the last seven years the federal government cut \$5.2 billion from post-secondary education in Canada. During this period, student debt has doubled. The average student debt in 1993 was \$13,000. Now, it's \$25,000. Staggering debts leave women unable to adequately support themselves and their families.
- The federal government has decided to end its purchase of training seats from provincial community colleges, costing provinces further, adding to the instability of the colleges and exacerbating the trend to privatization of training with its “luck of the draw” standards.
- The visibility of corporations, their philosophies and their products in Canada’s classrooms are, in large part, the result of relentless pressure on education budgets. Big Business is not prepared to stop at providing classroom materials and cultivating loyalty; they are aggressively demanding more say in program characteristics and school curriculum.

Government attacks on teachers mean attacks on women.

- During the last few years, teachers’ salaries have directly subsidized education budgets. Governments have sensed that unionized teachers would be a safe or even popular target. Across Canada, governments have ripped up teachers’ collective agreements and imposed wage cuts, breaking the basic rule of collective bargaining. The relative decline in teacher salaries compared to the average industrial wage began in 1987 and has continued.
- Driven by the obsessive need for cost cutting, de-skilling of jobs in the education sector is occurring from peer teaching replacing teachers to the use of support staff to monitor and evaluate student progress.

Slice #7

Social Services

“Disturbers are never popular. Nobody really loved an alarm clock in action, no matter how grateful they may have been afterwards for its kind services.” - Nellie McClung

Several trends have emerged in recent years as social services across the country are restructured. Underlying these trends is a powerful theme of fostering individual responsibility and control. This trend has become known as Individualized Funding. In the abstract, this is a compelling ideal where all persons regardless of circumstances—economic, physical, social or otherwise have the right to self-determination. In reality, this ideal is distorted and used as the rationale for undermining a whole host of social supports from income support to specialized services.

Child Protection Services in Canada are at a crisis point. Severe government cuts both in funding and other social services have resulted in unmanageable workloads for child protection workers. Impossible workloads are shortchanging the most vulnerable in Canadian society – children.

Making children a top priority means providing adequate resources. Resources that go to the front-lines – the workers. But with governments obsessed with tax cuts and debt reduction, it is doubtful we will see an influx of money without a struggle.

FACTS & ISSUES

Erosion of public social services hurting women and children.

- Support services, where they continue to be provided, such as to persons with disabilities or mental illness, are increasingly taking the form of individual allocations of set funding amounts.
- Individualized funding replaces the public provision of the services and goes hand-in-hand with the trend introducing market forces into the delivery of social services.
- The allocation of funding is based on an individual needs assessment. What constitutes a need is narrowing as dollars are cut. This allocation is then provided to the individual to spend wherever and however she/he determines. Services are purchased from a wide variety of providers, both public and private.



Slice #7



- Appearing on the horizon are “brokers” or “brokering” agencies which will assist in the search for the necessary combination of services from among the possible providers.
- In the abstract and ideal, these agents could be the source of a valuable matching of needs to services, doing away with the rigidities sometimes imposed by having to come under the restrictive model of a single agency or program. In reality, however, there is considerable room for abuse as these agents will charge a fee and direct individuals to services with whom they maintain a relationship and who may be in a position to make a profit from skimping on the actual quality and quantity of services provided.
- Cases of child abuse and neglect, which are reported to child welfare agencies, are rising in all provinces. The growing number of children under the care of child welfare agencies indicates that more families are having difficulty caring for their children. In all provinces, case loads have increased anywhere from 25% to 55%.
- The social and economic stresses that undermine parents’ abilities to care for their children must be addressed.

Slice #8

Unemployment Insurance

"My address is like my shoes. It travels with me. I abide where there is a fight against wrong." - Mary "Mother" Jones



Unemployment insurance is not a government handout. It's insurance that most people have paid into substantially for many years. Despite this, the federal government has continued to decrease and deny benefits for the majority of unemployed people – especially unemployed women. In fact, the current federal government cut unemployment insurance more than any other government in Canadian history. They reduced benefits. They made it harder to qualify.

FACTS & ISSUES

Women lose big time in UI benefit cuts

- Recent data from Statistics Canada show that UI coverage for unemployed women is still close to 30%. Just ten years ago, coverage for women was 70%. Over the same period, coverage for men fell from 77% to 42%.
- Compared to ten years ago, close to 300,000 women who lose their jobs will not get the insurance protection. The average individual loss, at current benefit levels, is over \$6,000.
- The gap in UI coverage between men and women has widened even more because of the 1997 Employment Insurance Act changes. The portion of women now getting UI is 10% lower than men.
- UI coverage for all of the unemployed is stuck below 40%. A decade ago, 74% of the unemployed received insurance.
- By every measure, women under age 45 have lost heavily. Only 28% of women under the age of 45 are covered.



UI changes ignore nature of women's work.

- None of the UI changes in the 1990s reflect labour market changes that particularly affect women, such as the growth in part-time work and part-year employment contracts. The reforms completely ignored issues related to child bearing and family responsibilities (i.e. interruption or absence from the workplace).
- The entrant and re-entrant rules affect women more than men. Regardless of the reason for temporary withdrawal or leave, a worker's employment history is erased and the individual must start over as a new entrant to the labour force if the absence is longer than 12 months.
- Instead of dropping this new entrant and re-entrant rule in 1996, the EI Act increased the minimum hours from 300 hours to 910 aggravating what already is a discriminatory rule – which particularly affects women.
- 30% of women are entrants or re-entrants compared to 22% for men. One quarter of women were “housekeeping” before joining or rejoining the workforce.
- Another huge hurdle for women is the number of minimum hours – over 500 – in most parts of Canada. Only one fifth of women have enough hours to qualify as full year hours.
- For the 32% of unemployed women who receive their insurance – but who have weeks with no work or weeks with wages below their normal earnings – the benefit cheque is less than 55% of their usual weekly earnings. Even weeks not worked are counted in calculating the weekly earnings for benefit payment purposes. This rule is called the “divisor.”

Slice #9

Part-time, Temporary and Casual Work



"People think at the end of the day that a man is the only answer to fulfillment. Actually a full-time job is better for me." - Princess Diana

For women, the chances of landing a full-time, full-year job are shrinking. The number of women working in non-standard arrangements, including part-time workers, temporary employees, self-employed persons without paid help, and multiple job holders, has grown over the past decade.

The results of this trend are as expected. Women are increasingly working more than one job to make ends meet. While part-time work remains a voluntary choice for a significant percentage of women workers, the proportion of involuntary part-time employment among women is increasing. It also remains an open question of how "voluntary" a choice it is for many women – given the absence of full-time work, and the lack of child care and support for sick and elderly family members who increasingly rely on women relatives for care. Also, in Canada and in the United States temporary employment is one of the fastest growing segments of the labour force.

FACTS & ISSUES

More non-standard work for women.

- In 1999, 41% of employed women aged 15-64 had a non-standard employment arrangement, compared with 35% in 1989. Although the percentage of men with non-standard work has also increased, women were still more likely than men to have this kind of employment relationship in 1999: 41% versus 29%.

More women workers have part-time jobs.

- Part-time employment is the most common form of non-standard work arrangement for women. In 1999, 28% of all employed women worked less than 30 hours per week, compared with just 10% of employed men. In fact, women hold the large majority of all part-time jobs. Since the mid-1970s, women have consistently accounted for about 7 in 10 of all part-time employees.

Slice #9



- Young women are more likely than other women to work part-time. In 1999, over half (52%) of employed women aged 15-24 worked part-time, compared with 22% of those between the ages of 25 and 54 and 31% of those aged 55-64.
- Women in all age groups, and especially those over age 25, however, were far more likely than their male counterparts to work part-time. In 1999, for example, 22% of women in both the 25-44 and 45-54 age ranges worked part-time, versus less than 5% of men in each of these groups.
- Some women choose part-time work because they do not want full-time employment. Many women, however, work part-time because of child care or other responsibilities. In 1999, 1 in 5 female part-time employees said they worked part-time because of personal or family responsibilities: 16% said they did not work full-time because they were caring for children, while 5% reported other family or personal responsibilities. In sharp contrast, only 2% of male part-time workers cited these reasons.
- In addition, a substantial number of women work part-time because they cannot find full-time work. In 1999, 25% of all female part-time employees indicated that they wanted full-time employment, but could only find part-time work.

Self-employment amongst women workers on the rise.

- The likelihood of women being self-employed has grown considerably over the past 20 years. In 1999, 13% of employed women were self-employed, up from 9% in 1976. Women, though, are still less likely than men to be self-employed. However, in the past two decades, and especially in the 1990s, self-employment has grown faster for women than for men. As a result, women accounted for 35% of all self-employed workers in 1999, up from 31% in 1990 and 26% in 1976.

Women more likely to have temporary work.

- Women are slightly more likely than men to have temporary work; that is, employment with a predetermined end date. In 1999, 13% of female employees, compared to 12% of male employees, had a temporary work arrangement.
- Women aged 15-24 are more likely than older workers to have temporary jobs. In 1999, 29% of these young female employees had temporary work, compared with just 10% of employed women aged 25-44 and 8% of those aged 45 and over.

Growing number of women hold more than one job.

- A small, but growing, share of employed women in Canada hold more than one job. In 1999, 6% of employed women were multiple jobholders, up from 4% in 1987. As well, women were slightly more likely to be multiple jobholders than men: 6% versus 4%. Overall, women accounted for about half (52%) of all multiple jobholders that year, up from 42% in 1987. Once again, young women are especially likely to hold more than one job. In 1999, 8% of employed women aged 15-24 were multiple jobholders, compared with 6% of women aged 25-44 and 4% of those aged 45 and over.

Slice #10

Occupational Distribution

"We've won the right to vote so we have our political rights, but working women are still discriminated against. The economic rights of women are what we must fight for now." - Bessy Long

The majority of women continue to work in occupations in which women have traditionally been concentrated.

FACTS & ISSUES

Most women still work in traditionally female-dominated jobs.

- In 1999, 70% of all employed women were working in teaching, nursing and related health occupations, clerical or other administrative positions, and sales and service occupations. This compared with just 29% of employed men.
- Women account for large shares of total employment in each of the traditionally female-dominated occupational groups. In 1999, 87% of nurses and health-related therapists, 75% of clerks and other administrators, 62% of teachers, and 59% of sales and service personnel were women.
- However, the total number of women employed in traditionally female-dominated jobs has slowly declined over the past decade. In 1999, 70% of employed women were working in one of these areas, down from 74% in 1987. This drop can be accounted for by significant job losses in the clerical and administrative jobs.

Clerical workers face leaner and meaner workplaces.

- The clerical occupation is one of the largest in Canada and it has been undergoing profound changes. These workers have been subject to the reorganization of work processes, which have been taking place in offices across the country.
- The largest cluster of clerical workers are data entry clerks. They are employed in largest numbers in retail and wholesale trades, finance/insurance/real estate, and government services, all of which have experienced the highest job loss.





- Workplace reorganization, the redesign of work processes, and computer technology has contributed to these significant levels of job loss. Job loss in the clerical occupational sector wasn't a simple reaction to the recession, however, but was a permanent restructuring.
- The division of labour in offices has changed: managers and professionals are now handling much of their own text processing. At the same time, many clerical information workers are doing more complex tasks, a wider range of tasks and some of the tasks that used to be done by managers and professionals. However, they are not being recognized or paid for these increased responsibilities.
- As more data entry, payroll and other office work are contracted-out or downsized, fewer clerical workers are employed in core, full-time jobs and more clerical workers are employed in non-standard work situations. Entry level jobs become even more difficult to access.
- There is a lack of government intervention and support in the form of labour adjustment assistance for displaced workers in this sector. If a similar number of job losses had taken place in a male-dominated industrial sector, federal and provincial governments' responses would have been quite different.

Women are majority in low paying service sector jobs in Canada.

- In contrast, the share of women working in sales and service jobs has actually risen slightly in the same period.
- The vast majority of employed women work in the service sector of the economy. In 1999, 86% of all employed women held jobs in this sector, compared with 63% of employed men. In fact, women made up the majority (54%) of all service-sector workers in Canada that year.
- The service sector, including work in retail, hospitality, tourism, liquor industry, entertainment and personal services, has grown over the last three decades in terms of the share of the total labour force employed. The majority of clerical women hold sales and service jobs in this sector.
- The growth in part-time, casual, just-in-time work has been more pronounced in the service sector than anywhere else. This sector is under-unionized: only 7% of women employed in services (excluding education, health, or social services) are union members.
- Efforts to privatize provincial liquor stores threaten to move good paying jobs with benefits to a sector with low paying jobs and no benefits.
- Several components of the National Union have been active and successful in organizing in the service sector over the last several years. Perhaps the most significant reason why components of the National Union are organizing in the expanding sector is current and past government policy. In the last decade, all governments in Canada have been trying to curtail the growth of their work force. They have done this through a variety of initiatives: restructuring, downsizing, eliminating, contracting out, and/or privatizing of government services. These initiatives have shifted the responsibility for providing important public programs and services away from governments to the expanding service sector.



Women increasing representation in professional fields.

- At the same time, though, women have increased their representation in several professional fields in recent years. For example, in 1999, women made up 49% of business and financial professionals, up from 41% in 1987.
- There has also been substantial growth in the number of women employed in diagnostic and treating positions in medicine and related health professions.
- In fact, women made up almost half (47%) of all doctors and dentists in 1999, up from 44% in 1987. Similarly, 58% of professionals employed in social sciences or religion in 1999 were women, compared with 48% in 1987.

More women in managerial positions.

- Women have also increased their share of total employment in managerial positions. In 1999, 35% of those employed in managerial positions were women, up from 29% in 1987. Among managers, however, women are better represented among lower-level managers as opposed to those at the senior levels. In 1999, women made up only 27% of senior managers, compared with 36% of managers at other levels.

Women still minority in sciences, engineering and mathematics.

- Women also continue to remain largely a minority among professionals employed in the natural sciences, engineering, and mathematics. In 1999, just 20% of professionals in these occupations were women, a figure that has changed very little since 1987 (17%).
- In addition, it's unlikely that female representation in these occupations will increase in the near future, because, as reported in Slice #6, women continue to account for relatively small shares of total university enrolments in these fields.

Few women work in goods-producing occupations.

- There are also relatively few women employed in most goods-producing occupations in which fewer women have traditionally worked. In 1999, 30% of workers in manufacturing were women, as were 22% of those in primary industries and just 6% of those in transportation, trades, and construction work. The representation of women in the latter two categories, however, has grown somewhat since the late 1980s, while that in manufacturing was about the same in 1999 as it was in 1987.

Slice #11

Increase in the load of Unpaid Work



"When I hear men talk about woman being the angel of the home I always shrug my shoulders in doubt. I do not want to be the angel of any home. I want for myself what I want for other women, absolute equality. After that is secured then men and women can take turns at being angels." - Agnes Macphail

The impact of privatization and reduced public services weighs heavily on the shoulders of women. They are the majority of those employed in health care, receiving services and providing care in the home. Women are losing good paying jobs that provide valuable human care services while those services are increasingly being delivered, unpaid, by women. Women are losing access to care while being pressured to take on the extra load of caring for those released from hospitals and other institutions.

FACTS & ISSUES

Most work done by women remains unpaid.

- When it comes to paid versus unpaid work, there is a distinct division of labour between men and women in Canada. For example, in 1998, women spent an average of 2.8 hours daily on paid work and 4.4 hours on unpaid work, where as the situation for men was the reverse; they spent 4.5 hours on paid work and 2.7 hours on unpaid work.
- There's no doubt about it: women undertake the larger share of unpaid work, an estimated 65% of all hours spent on these activities in 1992. Overall, this unpaid work done by women represented between 32% and 54% of Gross Domestic Product at market prices that year. As well, despite the increased participation of women in the labour market, women's share of unpaid work hours has remained quite stable since the early 1960s, at about two-thirds of the total.
- The presence of children has a large effect on the way women spend their time. Mothers employed full-time with a spouse spend more time on unpaid work, have less leisure time, and cut back their hours of paid work as compared to their counterparts without children. For example, in 1998, women employed full-time with children spent 1.7 more hours on unpaid work than women without children, while they spent 0.7 fewer hours per day on both paid work and leisure activities.

Slice #12

Overworked and Overstressed

“Any woman who chooses to behave like a full human being should be warned that the armies of the status quo will treat her as something of a dirty joke. That’s their natural and first weapon. She will need her sisterhood.” - Gloria Steinem

Increased “role complexity”, or the number of duties an individual has to undertake, leads many women to experience higher levels of severe time stress.

FACTS & ISSUES

Most women face severe time stress.

- Not surprisingly, levels of severe time stress are high for married parents aged 25-44 who are employed full-time. In 1998, more than 1 in 3 (38%) women in this group reported they were time-stressed, compared with just over one-quarter (26%) of married men.
- Of course, the presence of children has a particularly strong effect on women’s time stress. Compared to their counterparts without children at home, married mothers with full-time jobs were almost twice as likely to be severely time-stressed (38% versus 20%). In contrast, there was no difference in the incidence of severe time stress for employed married men with or without children.
- Many women participate in their communities through formal volunteer activities. In 1997, over 4 million Canadian women aged 15 and over, 33% of the total, participated in these kind of activities. This was higher than the 29% of men aged 15 and over who volunteered. Even greater numbers of women participate in informal volunteer activities outside their homes. In 1997, 75% of all women aged 15 and over participated in such endeavours, compared with 71% of men.



Occupational health & safety studies ignore nature of women's lives.



- Not enough occupational health and safety studies have integrated a gender impact analysis. Studies do not take into account the double or endless work day for women. Health and safety studies are not generally done on smaller workplaces that have predominantly women workers or, in predominantly female occupations such as the health care and service sectors.

Slice #13

The Sandwich Generation

"A word after a word after a word is power."

- Margaret Atwood

As Canadian society ages, an emerging issue is the so-called "sandwich generation." That is, parents who are looking after their own children and also caring for their own aging parents.

It is estimated that today's women will spend 17 years of adult life as a mother of a dependent child and 18 years more as daughter of an elderly parent. The "sandwich generation" often feels stretched beyond their limit, caught between responsibilities to their loved ones. Once again, the burden falls mainly to the women in these families.

FACTS & ISSUES

Women do majority of caring for kids and elderly parents.

- In 1996, almost 1 million Canadian women between the ages of 25 and 54, 15% of all women in this age range, provided both unpaid child care and care or assistance to a senior. In comparison, this was the case for only 9% of men in this range.
- Women spend about twice as much time caring for elderly relatives as men do. One in five women had thought about quitting work entirely due to their care-giving responsibilities. One in three caregivers in the home had either quit or adjusted their jobs to fit with their responsibilities for older family members.
- In 1999, women working full-time lost 7 days on average to attend to personal or family responsibilities up from around 4 days per year in the mid-1980s and 2 days in the late 1970s. Employed men, on the other hand, missed only 1 day of work in 1999 because of personal or family responsibilities, a figure which has increased only marginally since 1980.





Downsizing and cutbacks put the squeeze on women.

- Downsizing and government cutbacks on services have particularly severe impacts on parents with children with special needs. Fragile community-based resources are decreasing. Services such as the availability of respite care, funding and support for day care, educational assistants in schools, access to therapy and assessments, medications and supportive devices are all being eroded or are constantly under the threat of cutbacks. These services are provided by mostly women workers, home care workers, day care workers, and community living workers and student assistants.

Slice #14

Home Work

Home-based work becomes the common practice in more traditional labour intensive production and assembly of goods, such as the garment industry and food preparation and packaging. Many public-sector workers are tele-working – some choose to do so while others are forced to tele-work.

There are many workers who consider home work because of their family responsibilities, lack of alternative work arrangements, and/or a general interest in work flexibility and the reduction of commuting time. On first thought, workers may see home work as an opportunity to combine child care responsibilities with paid work.



FACTS & ISSUES

Homeworkers – women – being used by employers as just-in-time workers in a just-in-time pyramid scheme.

- Many homeworkers are not covered by basic employment standards and Occupational Health and Safety legislation.
- Most homeworkers work extremely long hours with no overtime pay.
- Homeworkers are isolated and the farthest removed from the core, completely invisible to the decision-makers in the organization.

Homeworking used as a strategy to weaken unions.

- Homeworking also weakens unions. The garment sector has lost union membership at an unprecedented rate and felt a downward push on wages. In the public sector, contracting-out of federal and provincial work (i.e. court reporters) to unorganized, external workers removes both members and jobs from bargaining units.

Unions need to bargain proper homeworking arrangements.

- For some workers with employment choice, homework has a decided advantage and where the decision to participate is voluntarily based on a full realistic consideration of its downside, it is in the interest of the worker and her/his union to negotiate working conditions and benefits associated to home-work.

Slice #14



- Unions should consider the following collective agreement arrangements when looking at the issue of home work:
 - management rights – constraint on the right to make an agreement with a worker without union acceptance or involvement;
 - definition of employee – which clearly defines a dependent contractor as an employee in the bargaining unit;
 - moonlighting – whether workers can perform bargaining unit work at home as an independent contractor after regular work hours;
 - contracting out;
 - membership in the bargaining unit despite location of work whether at home, satellite office, or community facility;
 - definition of work place, on and off premises;
 - definition of on-duty, off-duty, standby pay, overtime;
 - discipline and constraints on electronic monitoring and surprise visits to home; and
 - health and safety issues must be considered i.e. appropriate work station.
- A requirement for homeworkers should be included in the collective agreement to allow workers to work at the office for a set period of time.
- Changes must be made to include home workers in Labour Law and Health and Safety Law.
- Working at home cannot and should not be treated as a regular solution to child-care problems.
- The Employer must purchase all equipment for home use.

YOUNG WOMEN'S BILL OF RIGHTS

Young women have a right to be themselves - people first and females second - and to resist pressure to behave in sex-stereotyped ways.

• • •

Young women have a right to express themselves with originality and enthusiasm.

• • •

Young women have a right to take risks, to strive freely and to take pride in success.

• • •

Young women have a right to accept and enjoy the bodies they were born with and not to feel pressured to compromise their health in order to satisfy the dictates of an “ideal” physical image.

• • •

Young women have a right to be free of vulnerability and self-doubt and to develop as mentally and emotionally sound individuals.

• • •

Young women have a right to prepare for interesting work and economic independence.

Slice #15

Young Women

"Women have been taught that, for us, the earth is flat, and that if we venture out, we will fall off the edge. Some of us ventured out nevertheless, and so far we have not fallen off. It is my faith, that we will not."

- Andrea Dworkin

Young women face more difficulties than other women when looking for a job. They are more likely to have temporary jobs or work part-time. They often have multiple jobs.

FACTS & ISSUES

Prospects of finding full-filling jobs bleak for young women.

- Young women are considerably more likely than other women to be unemployed. In 1999, 12.6% of female labour force participants aged 15-24 were unemployed compared with just 6.6% of those aged 25-44 and 5.4% of those aged 45-64.
- Young women are more likely than other women to work part-time. In 1999, over half (52%) of employed women aged 15-24 worked part-time, compared with 22% of those between the ages of 25 and 54 and 31% of those aged 55-64.
- Women aged 15-24 are more likely than older workers to have temporary jobs. In 1999, 29% of these young female employees had temporary work, compared with just 10% of employed women aged 25-44 and 8% of those aged 45 and over. Trends were similar for men, but figures were slightly higher for women in all age ranges.
- Young women are especially likely to hold more than one job. In 1999, 8% of employed women aged 15-24 were multiple jobholders, compared with 6% of women aged 25-44 and 4% of those aged 45 and over. Employed women aged 15-24 were also more likely than their male contemporaries to have more than one job: 8% versus 5%.



Slice #16

Senior Women

“Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and try to follow where they lead.”

– Louisa May Alcott

Women aged 65 and over constitute one of the fastest growing segments of the female population in Canada.

Government policies which cut back on funding for health care, home care, and public pensions disproportionately have serious negative consequences for senior women in Canada.

After years of working for a living (paid and unpaid work), senior women in Canada should be able to look forward to a secure retirement in relative comfort, dignity and health. That’s why a strong public health care and pension plan is essential.

FACTS & ISSUES

A rapidly growing population.

- In 1999, there were an estimated 2.2 million senior women, up 60% from 1.4 million in 1981. In contrast, the number of women in age ranges under 65 grew by only 20% in the same period.
- As a result of these trends, the share of the overall female population accounted for by senior women has risen sharply in the last several decades. In 1999, women aged 65 and over made up 14% of the total female population, up from 9% in 1971 and just 5% in 1921.

Most senior women live in a private household.

- The vast majority of senior women live at home in a private household. In 1996, 91% of all women aged 65 and over lived in a private household.
- While most senior women live in a private household, a substantial number live in an institution. In 1996, almost 200,000 women aged 65 and over, 9% of all senior women in Canada, lived in an institution.





- In 1996, 60% of all women aged 65 and over lived with family members, 43% were living with their husband or wife. In addition, close to 200,000 senior women, 10% of the total, lived with members of their extended family.

Senior women with chronic health conditions.

- Most senior women living at home described their general health in positive terms. In 1997, 78% said their health was good, very good or excellent, while 16% reported their health was fair and only 5% described it as poor.
- While most senior women living at home report their overall health as relatively good, many have a chronic condition as diagnosed by a health professional. In 1997, 85% of these women had such a problem, compared with 78% of senior men.
- Not surprisingly, most senior women living in an institution have health problems. In 1997, 97% of these women had a chronic condition as diagnosed by a health professional.

Many senior women never part of paid workforce.

- A substantial proportion of senior women have never been part of the paid workforce. As of 1999, 22% of all women aged 65 and over, compared with just 3% of men in this range, had never worked outside the home. This raises serious questions about retirement income, such as pension plans, for senior women.

Senior women still doing the housework.

- Senior women also still devote considerable time to household chores. In 1998, 95% of all women aged 65 and over spent at least some time every week on these activities. That year, senior women averaged 3.8 hours per day doing unpaid household work, almost a full hour more than senior men (3.0). As well, as with those in younger age groups, senior women spend considerably more time than their male counterparts doing housework chores such as cooking, cleaning, and the laundry.

Senior women rely on public pensions to live.

- Old Age Security benefits make up a particularly large share of the incomes of senior women. In 1997, 38% of all income of women aged 65 and over came from this program, compared with 21% of that of their male counterparts.
- In contrast, private employment-related retirement pensions provide a relatively small share of the income of senior women. In 1997, 13% of the income of women aged 65 and over came from these plans, only about half the figure for senior men (27%).

Senior women have low incomes.

- Senior women have the highest incidence of low income of any age group in Canada. In 1997, close to half a million senior women, 24% of the total female population aged 65 and over, lived in a low-income situation. This compared with 12% of senior men.

Slice #17

Elderly Women and Pensions

"The connections between & among women are the most feared, the most problematic, and the most potentially transforming force on the planet." - Adrienne Rich

Canada is growing older and most older Canadians are women. Because women are living longer than men, the health, economic and social challenges of the elderly are more often the challenges of women.

Older women on their own have one of the highest rates of poverty of any group of women in Canada. In the past few years, the government has proposed changes to the public pension system that would almost certainly have resulted in an even greater number of women spending their final years in poverty. The fact that policy-makers could have overlooked such a potentially devastating impact on women is evidence that poverty among women is not even a consideration in policy development.

FACTS & ISSUES

Still the same. Nothing has changed. What a shame.

- When the Royal Commission on the Status of Women issued its report, some 30 years ago, it said that about half of all women aged 65 or older who were on their own were living on low incomes. Thirty years later, the percentage remains the same: 49% of single women aged 65 or older have low incomes.

Federal government ignores impact of pension changes on women.

- In the February 1996 Information Paper that served as the basis for consultation on changes to the Canada Pension Plan, the federal government's proposals included cutting benefits for surviving spouses; changing the structure of the child-rearing drop-out; limiting inflation indexing; increasing the age of eligibility for retirement pensions; and eliminating the year's basic exemption so that even low-income workers would be required to contribute to the CPP from the first dollar of their earnings.





- All of these changes would have had a greater impact on women than on men – but that was nowhere acknowledged. In fact, the government did not even bother to do a gender analysis of its proposals, even though it has made a formal commitment to undertake such an analysis of any policy proposals it makes.
- There was no attempt to assess the impact the proposed changes might have had on the incomes of older women in the future. Nor was there any consideration of the potential for the proposed changes to increase the future rate of poverty among older women.
- Fortunately, these proposals were not adopted. But there is nothing to prevent them from being raised again when the operation of the CPP is reviewed every three years, as the legislation requires.

Private pension proposals seriously disadvantage women.

- The federal government is also under pressure to abolish the CPP and replace it with a system of mandatory savings accounts; or to allow people to opt out of the plan and have their contributions directed to private savings accounts instead.
- With their lower earnings, greater incidence of insecure paid employment, and their need to combine paid and unpaid work, women would be seriously disadvantaged by such proposals for privatization. If these policies were to be adopted, they could also lead to higher rates of poverty among older women in the future.

Union jobs provide women with a pension.

- It's important to note that union jobs are three times more likely to provide a pension: 3 out of 4 union jobs provide a pension. In other words, the best chance for women to have a pension is to have worked in a unionized job.

Pension policies must respect women's autonomy.

- Pension policies that assume women can avoid poverty in old age by attachment to a man do not respect women's economic autonomy. As a guiding principle, in the development of pension policies to address the poverty of older women, women's economic autonomy must be respected. It's the basis of equality for women.

Four key considerations for pension policy makers.

- To achieve greater equity and social justice, there are four key considerations that policy makers must bear in mind when changes to the retirement income system are under considerations:
 - 1. Women in the paid work force continue to have low earnings:** This situation will likely continue into the future for some time. Women are, therefore, less able to participate in private savings schemes and less able to accumulate their own savings for retirement.
 - 2. Women in the paid work force are more likely to be employed in part-time and non-standard jobs:** Women are less likely to be covered by workplace pension plans, their paid employment may be less secure. Retirement income policies that focus on workplace pension plans or private savings are likely to do little to help women in these jobs. Pension policies should specifically address the needs of non-standard workers.

- 3. Women have different lifetime patterns of paid and unpaid work:** Paid employment may be interrupted by family responsibilities, including both child care and elder care. Government policies that deliberately transfer social services from the public sector to the “voluntary sector” will increase women’s unpaid care-giving activities and have a detrimental impact on their incomes in old age. These issues must be addressed as specific pension policies are developed.
 - 4. Women live longer:** On average, women retire earlier and live longer than men. Not only do they need adequate income in old age to prevent poverty, but they need income for more years. Measures to limit inflation indexing of pensions, for example, have a major negative impact on women.
- Expectations that women can save adequate amounts to fund their own retirement, when wages are lower and retirement lasts longer, are clearly unrealistic.



Slice #18

Women Need Pay Equity

“The time will come, we hope, when women will be economically free. When women will receive equal pay for equal work and have all avenues of activity open to them.” - Grace Hartman

Over the last two decades women have been fighting to entrench the concept of equal pay for work of equal value into Canadian law. This idea was seen as a way to recognize the value of traditionally underpaid female work—such as child care, health care, secretarial, cleaning or clerical work. The concept recognizes that such work is undervalued because it is women who perform the work, not because of the intrinsic value of the work itself.

Equal pay for work of equal value, or pay equity, is an important part of efforts to guarantee women – and men working in female-dominated jobs – a fair deal. It is now policy not only in the federal sector but also in eight of Canada’s provinces and the Yukon Territory.

In Canada, many jurisdictions have been pressured to introduce pro-active pay equity legislation. Those provincial governments which still refuse to enact a pro-active approach are failing to recognize that women’s economic inequality is historically based and systemic. A pro-active approach recognizes that action on a collective level is required; that individuals should not be required to shoulder the burden of complaining about individual conditions.

FACTS & ISSUES

Why pay equity?

- Pay equity is a human right and it is the law. Human rights are about respect for the equality and dignity of all people. They require that we treat others fairly and avoid actions which disadvantage people because of personal characteristics such as their sex, age, colour, disability, or religion.





- When the value of work done mainly by women is not appropriately recognized, the people (mainly women) performing it are not paid and treated equitably. This is a form of sex discrimination. If your income is low because you are in a job performed mostly by women, your fundamental rights to equality and dignity are not being respected. Pay equity is a way of identifying and eliminating such discrimination.
- This principle of non-discrimination in wages is well-established in international human rights law and is enshrined in several human rights treaties to which Canada is a signatory, including ILO Resolution #100, known as the *Equal Remuneration Convention*, the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Affairs*, and the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. Section 11 of the *Canadian Human Rights Code* also embodies this principle.

When does 72 cents equal 1 dollar?

- Equal pay law was introduced because of the large differences between the earnings of men and women. The salaries paid to employees in areas dominated by women – such as clerical work, nursing and retail sales – are often low.
- In Canada today, women working full-time still make an average of only 72 cents for every dollar earned by men, and this wage gap has narrowed by just eight percentage points since the late 1960s.
- The persistence of this wage gap is more than just an interesting statistical footnote. The underpayment of women workers has a direct and tangible effect on the financial well-being of many Canadian women and their families.

Pay equity works!

- Pay equity works. Since it became federal law in 1978, approximately 70,000 employees have received equal pay increases as a result of cases involving the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Equal pay has been achieved between librarians and historical researchers, kitchen workers and janitors, and nurses and paramedics, to name just a few.
- As a result of pay equity programs in community social services, the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union has been able to bargain increases for residential care workers, for example, that increased these salaries by \$4,600 per year. According to the BCGEU, the results of pay equity are clear. BCGEU members know pay equity has increased their wages by eliminating the gender-based discrimination built into wage schedules.

Current system of pay equity needs to be updated.

- There are several guiding principles which should be used to update the current system of pay equity:
 - ensure that pay equity continues to be upheld as a human right through legislation in every province in Canada, administered by a clearly mandated, independent oversight agency with sufficient resources and expertise to over see the implementation of pay equity. This responsibility would also include receiving information from employers on actions taken to achieve pay equity, and auditing compliance.
 - Ensure employees and their bargaining agents are involved in the pay equity process, to make it a collaborative undertaking based on a shared commitment to eliminating wage discrimination.

Slice #18



- Require information and training programs by the oversight agency and organizations covered by the law, to help demystify pay equity and smooth the implementation process.
- Provisions must be enacted in all pay equity legislation which guarantee that those who file complaints are not dismissed, disciplined or discriminated against. Similar provisions are contained in the Labour Code to prohibit such actions during a certification drive.

Justice is long overdue. The time to act is now.

- Updating pay equity legislation in this way will contribute significantly to removing gender bias in compensation, and to treating people doing typically “female” work fairly. It will also reduce the economic inequalities that continue to exist in Canada. Canadian women and the many families affected by wage discrimination, deserve no less.

Slice #19

Employment Equity

"We've chosen the path to equality, don't let them turn us around." - Geraldine Ferraro

The undervaluing of women's work and discrimination in employment practices has been on the Canadian public-policy agenda for decades. Employment equity seeks to redress discriminatory employment practices, especially in hiring, promotion and retention. Target groups for employment equity purposes are people of colour, Aboriginal people, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, persons with disabilities and women.

The right-wing parties – particularly the Canadian Alliance Party nationally and the Ontario and Alberta Conservatives – have used employment equity initiatives to whip up a storm of controversy and racist attacks against minority workers. These parties have deliberately distorted the intention of employment equity. They have created a climate in which it is extremely difficult to discuss the issues because of the level of misunderstanding created.

The only advance in employment equity legislation in the last few years has been some minor improvements in the federal employment equity legislation. Unions who represent workers in this jurisdiction will use the legislation to their advantage, but regrettably the vast majority of the workforce remains untouched.

FACTS & ISSUES

Women & visible minorities undervalued, face negative attitudes & stereotyping.

- Visible minorities are under-represented in the public service as a whole. In 1999 the public service-wide population of visible minorities was 5.9% of all employees, well short of the labour market availability of 8.7% (based on 1996 census data) for the entire public service.
- Women in the public service have faced negative attitudes and stereotyping and have been consistently undervalued. Visible minority women face "double jeopardy." Accordingly, there must be equal emphasis on cultural and gender sensitivities in efforts to improve the representation of women and the climate of the workplace. Among women in the public service, 5.8% are visible minorities. Visible minority women have the furthest to catch up in executive ranks: of 3,421 executives in the federal public service in 1999, 1919 were women, of whom 23 were visible minority women.





Unionization key to reducing wage gap.

- Unionization is key in reducing the wage gap between women and men. Non-union women workers earn about \$3.00 an hour less than non-unionized men workers, while unionized women workers earn \$2.18 an hour less than unionized men workers.
- On average, people belonging to equity seeking groups earn less than other workers - \$1.75 per hour or 12% less for members of racial minority groups, \$0.84 or 5.8% less for workers with disabilities, and \$1.92 per hour or 13.3% less for Aboriginal workers. The higher concentration of employment equity groups in lower-paid job ghettos offers one explanation. The reality of systemic discrimination in employment, in both unionized and non-unionized workplaces, is reflected in salaries and pay scale.
- Unionized equity seeking groups have better wages. Among women, unionized racial minority workers earn 32.7% more than comparable non-unionized workers. The difference is 45% in the case of women workers with disabilities and 69.4% for Aboriginal women workers. In addition to the gains from collective bargaining, many unionized workplaces have also negotiated pay equity payments for women members. This may also account for some of the gap.
- Among women, one cannot help but notice the drastic wage gap between the non-unionized equity seeking group women workers and other unionized women workers. For Aboriginal women, the difference is \$7.21 or 56% of the hourly rate of unionized non-equity seeking group women workers. The differences are \$6.15 per hour, for women with disabilities and \$6.03 per hour for women of colour.

Some women face double discrimination.

- Women of colour, Aboriginal women and women with disabilities face double discrimination. The inequalities based on race, gender and ability become even more apparent in this shrinking job market.

Unions must make employment equity subject of negotiations.

- Working people who have been traditionally marginalized, end up as the ones who are most dispensable in the current exercises of downsizing and restructuring. Usually the target groups are the last hired which means the first to be laid-off. This speaks to the necessity that if we are to achieve Employment Equity in the workplace, then Employment Equity must be the subject of negotiations. Unions must be involved at every level of the process from planning to evaluation.
- Restructuring, specifically its focus on downsizing, has an adverse impact on employment equity groups. Downsizing in the public sector is happening at a faster rate in administrative support work and this effects mainly women.

Slice #20

Child Care

"It is not so much a woman's duty to bring children into the world, as to see what sort of a world she is bringing them into, and what their contribution will be to it." - Nellie McClung

As noted by the 1984 Royal Commission on Equality of Employment, "child care is the ramp that provides equal access to the work force for mothers." Child care is essential for women in their role as mothers to assist them to obtain economic equality and to support them in their role as parents. At the same time, child care is also a major source of employment for women. Women make up 97% of child care providers. Government policies of downsizing and deregulation have had an enormous impact on women as parents, workers in the child care field and on women's equality of access to child care.



FACTS & ISSUES

Government child care policies really hurting women.

- The reduction in the affordability and availability of child care over the last few years has:
 - reduced women's choices in regard to participation in the paid work force;
 - decreased support for mothers not in the paid work force;
 - resulted in increased job insecurity and deteriorating working conditions for child care providers; and
 - diminished women's access to educational opportunities.

Restructuring means less access to affordable, quality child care.

- In Canada there are only enough regulated subsidized child care spaces to serve 1 out of every 10 children under the age of 12. Less than 1 in 3 of the children using regulated child care has a fee subsidy. The rest are taken care of in for-profit, private centres and family homes.
- Fees for child care increased in all provinces and in the Yukon between 1989 and 1993. They increased again between 1993 and 1995 in five provinces and both territories. Adding insult to injury is the fact that the number of child care fee subsidies far from meets the need. The proportion of children in regulated child care receiving subsidies went down from 36% in 1992 to 31% in 1998, suggesting that access to child care services had become even more limited for low income families.



- The availability of regulated child care spaces has decreased in tandem with the decreased affordability. This is a result of programs closing or insufficient staffing spaces because they cannot cover their operating costs due to public funding cuts. Child care providers are experiencing stress associated with funding cut backs and the need to assume additional tasks. Many have lost their jobs.
- In addition to high costs and lack of spaces, the existing licensed care does not address the necessity of child care services for children of parents who work other than 9-5 shifts. The needs of rural families and children with disabilities receive little or no attention. There is also little consideration given to children's language requirements.

Women child care workers paid low wages and denied benefits.

- According to census data, in 1991 there were 181,830 women providing child care. Most child care workers, the majority women, are paid wages well below the average industrial wage, and are denied the job security, benefits, career development opportunities, and the respect they deserve. They have been forced to subsidize a grossly under-funded service.

Federal government breaks child care promise.

- The federal Liberals promised to create 150,000 new child care spaces. They reneged on this promise. Instead, they introduced the Child Tax Benefit which did not create a single child care space. The amount of the Child Tax Benefit is insufficient to provide a comprehensive program and leaves too many children in need.

The impacts of restructuring on women as parents:

- The decrease in government funds for child care is:
 - reducing women's choices regarding participation in the paid work force;
 - reducing women's choices regarding the type of child care they use;
 - decreasing support for mothers who are neither engaged in the paid work force nor students; and
 - increasing the likelihood of stress among mothers.

The impact on women as workers:

- As a result of federal funding reductions and devolution to provinces, women as workers are experiencing:
 - job insecurity;
 - deterioration in their working conditions;
 - increased workplace stress; and
 - diminished access to educational opportunities.

Slice #21

Child Poverty

"Why don't the poor elect different governments? Because most of them are not old enough to vote." - Carolyn Jack

Children live in poverty because women live in poverty – poor children have poor mothers. Women's poverty has been increasing, with the result that one in five children are poor in Canada. A million and a half Canadian kids are in crisis today. They are poor. Many need food banks to eat. They are missing school classes. If child poverty does not become a federal government priority, we can expect to reap what we sow: a lost generation with no skills. No jobs. No hope.



FACTS & ISSUES

1 in 5 Canadian kids live in poverty.

- In 1989, 936,000 Canadian children, or about 1 out of 7, were poor. By 1998, 1,338,000 children, or 1 out of 5, Canadian children, were poor. That's 400,000 more than in 1989, the year MPs pledged unanimously to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000.

Since 1989, the number of:

- poor children increased 43%;
- children in working poor families increased 55%;
- children in families with income less than \$20,000 (in constant 1989 dollars) increased 27%;
- children in families receiving social assistance increased 18%;
- poor children in 2-parent families increased 35%; and
- poor children in lone parent families increased 49%.

And, the rate of:

- low birth weight babies (1989-1996) increased 5%; and
- infant mortality (1991-1997) increased 14%.



Canada has shameful record on poverty & homelessness.

- The UN Poverty Index ranks Canada only 10th among industrialized countries. In addition, the UN's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recently issued a harsh indictment of Canada's record on poverty and homelessness: "The Committee is gravely concerned that such a wealthy country as Canada has allowed the problems of poverty and homelessness to grow to such proportions," said the 1999 report.

Adequate income and decent health care are the key.

- Researchers agree that adequate income and a healthy start in life have a long term impact on the well-being of children. Low income children are:
 - more than twice as likely to have low levels of vision, hearing, speech, mobility, dexterity, cognition and emotion;
 - less likely to have an annual visit to the dentist; and
 - more likely to be exposed to environmental contaminants.

Abandoning the CAP meant abandoning women and children.

- The federal government relinquished its role in shaping family/child policy with the 1995 demise of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP). Subsequently, provinces tightened eligibility for social assistance, often the last resort for lone mothers, and decreased social assistance rates. At the same time, provinces designed policies that channel female lone parents into the labour market, but without the necessary supports such as training, affordable quality child care and access to transportation.
- As a result, many lone mothers moved from social assistance poverty to labour market poverty. The number of children living in families led by lone mothers who worked full time for the full year, but were still poor increased 61% from 1996 to 1998.
- 37% of lone mothers in the labour force earn less than \$10 per hour; in contrast, 26.5% of all employees earn less than \$10 (annual income of \$18,000 for a 35 hour work week).

Government policies failing Canadian children.

- Canada is failing in its commitment to children. Public opinion polls throughout 1999 reinforce Canadians' concern about child poverty and their view that addressing it must be a government priority. Despite growing economic prosperity, the child poverty rate remains at the same level as during the recession.

Slice #22

Child Labour

"I am going out with you to rouse the women so they will see there can be no real change until they take a part in bringing that change."

- Louise Lucas

As much as you might want to believe that child labour does not concern you, the fact is no one is removed from this issue. Your morning tea, for example could have been handpicked by children from countries such as India and China.

Today, an estimated 250 million children under the age of 14 are engaged in child labour. If you include the "invisible" domestic workers, the number climbs as high as 400 million. While most of these children hail from developing countries, a good number prevail in developed nations such as the United States.

Employers who want to make higher profits or compete for a contract from a multinational corporation, instead of hiring adults at minimum wages, will hire children often resulting in the children supporting their entire families.

FACTS & ISSUES

Did you know that:

- In the developing world, 1 out of every 4 children between the ages of 10 and 14 is forced to work for a living.
- In the United States, 5.5 million 12 to 17 year old children work for a living. There are 44 million children working in India, 12 million in Nigeria, 8 million in Pakistan and 7 million in Brazil. Approximately 10 to 15 million children in India work as bonded labour in agriculture to pay off their parents' debts.
- In Nepal, 12% of tea production is carried out by under-age children.
- 82% of the 6.1 million of the child workers in Bangladesh work in agriculture.
- Children make up 58% of the work force during the coffee harvest in Kenya.
- Approximately 3 million children aged 10 to 14 work in agriculture in Brazil.
- An estimated 7.5 million children under the age of 15 work in agriculture in Peru.
- 80% of all working children in some developing countries work in agricultural labour.
- An estimated one million children are exploited in the global, multi-billion dollar illegal sex trade.





- 350,000 girls under the age of 18 are trafficked internationally across borders and sold into prostitution every year.
- In the United States, between 100,000 and 300,000 under-age children are exploited in prostitution and pornography.

Hidden, uncounted, unpaid, unseen: the invisible nature of girls work.

- Most of the work that girls perform is under or unpaid labour; such as in their own homes. It is often considered a family responsibility.
- In some countries, girls are sold or contracted out as bonded labour and trafficked as child prostitutes or domestic servants. They must repay their families debt with abusive and intolerable labour for which they are not free to leave.
- Because this labour is illegal, unpaid and not considered work, the burdensome labour of girls is rarely counted in the national census or GNP of most – if not all – countries.

Girls carry a heavy and uneven load.

- Within their own families, most girls are expected to contribute to the maintenance of the household assisting or replacing their mothers in a variety of tasks. In many cases the demands placed on girls far exceed their physical and emotional resources.
- NGOs working in rural areas have also pointed out the widespread myth that agricultural work is performed primarily by boys. Up to 75% of family-based farming, they report, is done by women and girls. Where there are no machines, every inch of land, according to some NGOs, is cultivated by hand by girls and women.
- There is no better example of the unequal load carried by girls combined with the value of their work than child marriage. An NGO report from Nepal found that no matter what the caste or ethnic group, a daughter-in-law was viewed as having the heaviest burden in the household. According to the report, some even admitted that the only reason for marriage was the labour of the child wife.

Poverty and low status of girls and women: a vicious cycle.

- The arduous labour endured by girls, its invisibility and primary setting in the domestic sphere, mirrors and anticipates the low social and economic status of women. Born to be married, girls are viewed as members of their birth family for only a few short years and as economic liabilities. Valued little as human beings with rights, they are often treated as an object, a body to be used – whether for sex or domestic labour.

Slice #22

Violence Against Women – There Is No Excuse!



"The surest guide to the correctness of the path that women take is joy in the struggle. Revolution is the festival of the oppressed." - Germaine Greer

Many women and children in Canada today live in fear. There's good reason. In any given year, hundreds of women in Canada will be murdered by their husbands, partners or somebody they know. Thousands more will be battered and abused. Many women will continue to live in dangerous situations because there is no help and no place to go.

Violence against women is about control and coercion of women. It is a significant problem in Canada and around the world.

FACTS & ISSUES

What is violence against women?

- Violence can be physical: such as punching, kicking, choking, stabbing, mutilation, disabling and murder. It can be sexual: such as rape, unwanted touching, acts of a sexual nature or forced prostitution. It can be verbal and psychological: such as threats to harm the children, destruction of favourite clothes or photographs, repeated insults meant to demean self-esteem and forced isolation from friends and relatives. It can be financial: such as taking away a woman's wages or other income and limiting or forbidding access to the family income. It can also be other forms of control and abuse of power.

Some unbelievable statistics:

- One Half of Canadian women have survived at least one incident of sexual or physical abuse.
- Over one quarter (29%) of Canadian women have been assaulted by a spouse. Forty-five percent of women, assaulted by a male partner, suffered physical injury.

Slice #23



- In Canada, 4 out of 5 people murdered by their spouses are women. In 1998, 67 women were killed by a current or ex-spouse, boyfriend or ex-boyfriend. That is 1 to 2 women per week. In 6 out of 10 spousal murders, police were already aware that violence characterized the relationship.
- Girls are targets of abuse within the family more often than are boys. 4 out of 5 victims of family-related sexual assaults (79%) are girls, and 55% of physical assaults of children by family members are against girls. In 1997, fathers accounted for 97% of sexual assaults and 71% of physical assaults of children by parents.
- Only 10% of sexual assaults on women are reported to the police. Extrapolating from this data, there are 509,860 reported and unreported sexual assaults in Canada per year. That is 1,397 per day; which means that every minute of every day, a woman or child in Canada is being sexually assaulted.
- 43% of women in one study reported at least one incident of unwanted sexual touching, forced or attempted sexual intercourse, or being forced to perform other acts of a sexual nature *before the age of 16*.
- Sexual assaults often occur in contexts in which the abuser is in a position of trust; such as a husband, father, relative, coach, doctor, religious advisor, teacher, friend, employer or date.
- Wife battering carries on into old age. Spousal homicide accounts for one third (30%) of murders of women over 65.
- Fear of violence also limits many women's lives. Forty two percent of women compared with 10% of men feel "totally unsafe" walking in their own neighbourhood after dark. Over a third (37%) of women, compared with one in ten men, are worried about being in their own home alone in the evening or night.
- In 1999/2000, 448 shelters for abused women in Canada reported that they had given temporary accommodation to 96,359 women and dependent children. 8 out of 10 women and 9 out of 10 children were in shelters to escape abuse, including psychological abuse, physical abuse, threats and sexual abuse.

Who is most likely to be abused?

All women are vulnerable to violence, but some are more vulnerable than others:

- Around the world, as many as one woman in every four is physically or sexually abused **during pregnancy**. In Canada, 21% of women abused by a partner were assaulted during pregnancy and 40% reported that the abuse began during pregnancy.
- Young women and female children are highly vulnerable to sexual assault. In 1997, persons under 18 were 24% of the population but represented 60% of all sexual assault victims and one fifth (19%) of physical assault victims.
- A DisAbled Women's Network survey found that 40% of **women with disabilities** have been raped, abused or assaulted, More than half (53%) of women who have been disabled since birth or early childhood had been abused.
- Research repeatedly shows that a vast majority of Aboriginal women have been assaulted. Aboriginal women also experience racially-motivated attacks and are harassed by the public and police more often than non-Aboriginal women.

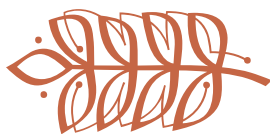
- Violence against women crosses socioeconomic lines. However, low-income women may be more often trapped in abusive relationships because they lack the financial resources for housing and income support.
- Women working in certain occupations are also more vulnerable to violence. For example, foreign domestic workers who work for low wages are isolated in private homes and are vulnerable to threats of deportation if they complain of sexual or physical abuse. Other occupations in which women are very vulnerable to workplace violence are health care workers and women in the military. Women in subordinate positions are vulnerable to sexual harassment in the workplace and women in male-dominated occupations may be subject to workplaces that are hostile towards women.



What consequences does violence against women have on women and society?

- The physical and sexual abuse of girls and women costs the Canadian economy \$4.2 billion dollars each year, factoring into account social services, criminal justice, lost employment days and health care interventions.
- Children who witness violence against their mothers are more likely to develop aggressive behaviour.
- Death: Worldwide, an estimated 40% to over 70% of homicides of women are committed by intimate partners.
- Injury / permanent disability: Violence is a major cause of injury to women. In Canada, 43% of women injured by their partners had to receive medical care.
- Women who have experienced physical or sexual abuse are at a greater risk of long-term health problems.
- Unwanted pregnancy/abortion; HIV/AIDS; Emotional Trauma and Suicide.

Just as this era of restructuring has been a period of turmoil, it has also been a period of renewed labour-community militancy. It's been rough—but we've been strong. The National Union of Public and General Employees led the way in challenging governments at every turn—particularly when their restructuring was solely in the pursuit of deficit reduction, or their blind drive to commercialize and privatize our public sector. The following are but some examples of our finest moments of organizing, coalition building and above all, fighting back.



SECTION I I

Victories





BCGEU

There are over 38,000 women members in the BCGEU – 64% or nearly two-thirds of the total membership. BCGEU women work in a wide range of jobs in both the public and private sectors, in traditional and non-traditional fields. Over the past few years, the union has successfully organized thousands of new members – mostly women – in the community health and social services sectors, financial industry and service sector.

Women in the BCGEU hold elected positions at every level – from steward and local officer to the Provincial Executive, including two Provincial Vice-Presidents and the Secretary-Treasurer (which is one of the two full-time elected positions in the union).

The BCGEU has a staff Employment Equity Officer whose work includes issues of relevance and concern to women in the workplace. In addition, BCGEU policies encourage participation of women at every level of our union. We have adopted the following policies:

- on-site child care or reimbursement for dependent/family care for members to attend union meetings, conferences, conventions and other union activities;
- wage replacement for participating in negotiations, attending union meetings and training courses or other union business; and
- strict anti-harassment language and complaint procedures for members at union-sponsored activities.

In addition, two of the four Provincial Vice-Presidents are designated for women – ensuring the inclusion of women in the union's Table Officers. The union is in the forefront of fights for improved benefits, safer workplaces, child care and other issues important to women.

Landmark victories in the workplace. In 1997, a BCGEU member made history as a result of a long and difficult but determined arbitration struggle that established the rights of lesbians and gay men to parental leave on an equal basis with heterosexuals.

Another BCGEU member won her long fight for the right to breastfeed her child at work, a victory that will force employers to provide reasonable accommodations to enable mothers to breastfeed their children in the workplace.

In September 1999, Tawney Meiorin, a BCGEU member and forest fighter, won her lengthy sex discrimination case against the government of B.C. The Supreme Court of Canada ruling has had a tremendous impact for all women, especially those in non-traditional jobs, and re-wrote the law on discrimination.

Continued gains at the bargaining table. Through collective bargaining, the BCGEU has made significant gains for women in areas such as child/dependant care, family illness, harassment, violence in the workplace, health and safety, pay equity, employment equity and wages and benefits.

The BCGEU was the first union in Canada to negotiate protection from video display terminals (VDT's), including the right for pregnant women to refuse to work at VDT's.

Important provisions have been negotiated that recognize the additional needs of women with families. Many BCGEU contracts include: union meetings on the employer's time, child care at the worksite, continued accrual of seniority during

maternity and adoption leave, bridging of service for members who take time off to raise their families and paid leave for members to care for a sick family member.

Recent pay equity agreements in the community health and social services sectors go a long way towards ending the systemic wage discrimination in that sector which is comprised mainly of women. The BCGEU has also negotiated important benefits for women in joint pension trusteeship agreements.

Victories



HSA of B.C.

Health Sciences Association of British Columbia represents workers in health and social services. The membership is 87% women. In 1971 the membership numbered a few hundred members. Currently HSA represents over 10,000 members and is the tenth largest affiliate in British Columbia.

• **Seniority Equals Equity**

Seniority is the cornerstone of the trade labour movement. Since the beginning, HSA's master contract has recognized the importance of accruing seniority, particularly for the members that aspire to senior or specialized positions. There can be hurdles accessing the career ladder when time is taken off to raise a family. Seniority is accrued from date of hire whether you are full-time or part-time. This has allowed many women to balance the role of being a working parent and accrue the seniority to compete for senior positions later in their working career.

• **Strong Contract Language on Parental Benefits**

HSA was successful in negotiating 30 weeks of Maternity leave including employer paid premiums for benefits along with full accrual of vacation, stats, sick and special leave.

In 1992, HSA negotiated a maternity supplementary unemployment benefit plan, better known as a SUB plan, which provided a top up of 85% of normal earnings during the 17 weeks of Employment Insurance eligibility. Recognizing the importance for members to have a choice whether to stay home and raise their children, HSA has negotiated "bridging" language. With this language, members can remain at home for up to 3 years to be with their children.

• **HSA Supports Women Activists**

HSA has developed progressive internal policies (child and dependent care) to support activists in their union work. Not only does HSA support members who have child care responsibilities; they support members who are responsible for other dependents such as elderly parents or other family members.

• **HSA Addressing Inequities Between Health and Social Services Sector**

Since organizing a number of workers in community social services agencies, HSA has been working to address wage and benefit inequities between the health care and social services sectors. A number of successes have been achieved through collective bargaining and work continues to achieve parity between these two important sectors.



AUPE

Community Health Service Workers demanded a stop to further cuts from their Employer, the Westview Regional Health Authority. Over 90% of these workers are women and were at the lowest end of the Westview pay scale. In 1994, these workers took a 5% wage cut. They wanted it back. Westview Regional Health Authority covers one of the richest areas in the province, from Stoney Plain to Jasper. In addition, Ralph Klein had just handed over millions in extra funding to the Region.

AUPE Local 058 began bargaining their first collective agreement in June 1997. During the negotiations, the Employer wanted more severe concessions, but the members were strong and voted 93% in favour of strike and believed they would be out for a long time. The Employer was ready to listen.

At the last hour before a strike was to commence, a collective agreement was reached. Improvements were made in working conditions including a weekend premium, vacations, statutory holidays and wages. Each worker will receive a minimum of 5% increase in pay. These women showed courage in stopping an Employer bent on cuts.

SGEU

SGEU women have been in the forefront of a struggle for fair wages and benefits for community service workers. These employees provide valuable services to children, people with disabilities, families in crisis and women fleeing violent relationships. Yet they are among the lowest paid workers in our province. Not surprisingly, most community service workers are women.

In the Fall of 2000, SGEU, along with CUPE and SEIU, launched a high profile campaign called: *We're Worth More!* On October 24, hundreds of community service workers took to the streets to demand fair wages. The day was an unprecedented success. Workers in nine agencies walked off the job for all or most of the day. We picketed ten MLA and Minister's offices. Workers and supporters gathered for rallies and marches in ten communities across the province. Dozens of newspapers and radio and television stations covered our actions and issues.

In February 2001, a unique Premier Express courier van traveled the province collecting messages from community service workers to deliver to the Premier of Saskatchewan. Creative media events were held in ten communities. The final stop was a meeting with Premier Lorne Calvert, where the government committed to providing wage enhancements and more money for operating costs in the 2001/2002 budget.

Several major pay equity initiatives have been completed or are underway. This is thanks in large part to the lobbying by SGEU women. While we have yet to achieve pay equity legislation covering all workplaces, many public sector employees have collectively bargained pay equity programs. An Equal Pay For Work of Equal Value / Pay Equity job evaluation was done in the public service. This has resulted in about \$17 million in wage adjustments. Many Crown corporations have completed or are involved in pay equity initiatives as well as some post-secondary institutions. Pay

equity is underway in health sector workplaces – a result of a series of job actions in 1999.

SGEU women have helped shape one of the labour movements most unique learning experiences – the Prairie School for Union Women. Every year union sisters come together to share their experiences, develop personal and leadership skills and build solidarity among women workers. SGEU has participated in the planning of the school, has provided facilitators and sponsored both seasoned activists and relative newcomers to attend. The Prairie School for Union Women has helped our sisters acquire the skills, support and confidence to take more active roles in their workplaces and in their union locals and sectors.

We raised our voices and took to the streets in support of the World March of Women 2000. The SGEU Women's Committee sponsored a coalition of union and women's groups in Moose Jaw who organized a highly successful local march event. Women and members of equity-seeking groups marched in Prince Albert. The SGEU members from all over the province contributed to a quilt that Saskatchewan union women created in honour of the World March.

Victories



MGEU

Since the mid-1990s, the MGEU has increasingly become a dominant voice for Manitoba's working women. In 1996, MGEU Home Care Workers, 98% of whom are women, came together in a five week strike to rally client and public support and defeat the Filmon Government's plans for privatizing the home care system. As a result of the strike, the MGEU was able to successfully launch an organizing drive for Manitoba's Home Support Workers, bringing over 600 new female members into the bargaining unit. The following year, the support staff of ten health care facilities spent ten weeks on the picket line over pay equity, eventually forcing the government to honour its commitment to them.

Today, almost sixty-five percent of MGEU members are women. More and more, the MGEU is building on its track record of success and focusing our organizing drives on female-dominated fields within the health care and social services sectors.

In the summer of 1999, for example, the MGEU organized Home Visitors within the government's newly-established *Baby First* program, designed to assist high-risk new mothers within their own homes. After months of negotiations, the Home Visitors achieved a comprehensive benefits package, and an eighteen percent increase in the first year of their contract.

At the same time, the MGEU began working with Manitoba's under-paid and under-valued early childhood educators to develop strategies for change. For the last year, the union has been meeting with stakeholders throughout the child care system, including the provincial government, to promote a "common table" strategy where those caring for our children would negotiate directly with government funders for appropriate compensation.

Strides have been made within the language of existing contracts. Adoptive parents working at Manitoba's Community College and Winnipeg Art Gallery now have additional parenting leave options, which include an employer-paid salary top-up. In the last round of bargaining with the Doer NDP Government, civil service employees achieved the inclusion of paid family leave in the province's Master Agreement.

Victories



The union has also been striving to foster female leadership within its own ranks. In June of 2001, for instance, the MGEU Women's Committee held a highly successful two-day conference called, "MGEU-Grown: Planting the Seeds for Women's Activism." Well over eight percent of the participants, most of whom had never attended a union event, said they were interested in getting more involved as a result. Currently, the Committee is developing a women's mentorship program that would link experienced union activists with those looking to develop their labour knowledge and leadership skills.

OLBEU

Premier Mike Harris promised in his "Common Sense Revolution" a savings plan to sell off government assets which included the Liquor Control Board. The Ontario Liquor Board Employees' Union ran a very successful media campaign against the threat of privatization. After mounting public support, the threat of privatization diminished.

However, the LCBO has not been honest with the Union about future plans, such as modernization of the LCBO, which is just another word for privatization. The government plans to close stores located in small communities across the province. These are predominantly women's jobs. About 1,500 workers may be without a job as a result. OLBEU is not backing down, given that the LCBO is raking in huge profits and smuggling is down. It will be up to the employer to avoid a major conflict.

OLBEU organized women workers employed at a private-for profit American owned duty-free store at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor. The employer, Maddy Maroon, owns stores on both sides of the river.

The employer had negotiated a public/private partnership scam with the University of Windsor. He promised he would throw some profits their way if the University provided cheap labour, ie: women were paid \$7.75 an hour.

These women workers were fed up with the abuse. Their first collective agreement provides job security and wage increases.

OPSEU

Members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) continue to do battle with the Mike Harris led Progressive Conservative government, now firmly installed in its second term in office.

The impact of its reign on ordinary people and women in particular has been devastating, from health care to social services, to road maintenance and water quality.

Some important gains, stemming from the 5-week strike in 1995, have been made. As agencies and programs are divested to the private sector, many OPSEU members have been able to maintain their wages, seniority and working conditions. The job security language bargained at that time is, in essence, slowing down the government's privatization agenda.

In these difficult times, OPSEU women have been on the move. Our union has organized more than 3000 new members, the largest proportion of whom are women working in home care and other social service agencies.

The Provincial Women's Committee ran its bi-ennial women's conference in 1999. The conference was called: *Setting the Table for Bargaining*. Almost two hundred women members debated issues close to their hearts, such as: family responsibilities, opportunities for training, health and safety, technological change and harassment. In workshops and plenary, they established bargaining objectives to feed into our next round of negotiations with Ontario employers. The need for leave for elder care and assisting ill family members continues to be voiced by our members.

The Provincial Women's Committee is also actively engaged in building solidarity with the International Trade Union women's movement. In October 2000, many OPSEU sisters participated in the October 2000 World March of Women in Ottawa and New York. In addition, in May 2000, over 20 OPSEU women joined other Canadian union sisters at a conference in Cuba called: *Women and Unionism*.

With bargaining conferences and a new sectoral approach to our negotiations on the near horizon, OPSEU women are poised to play a key role. As in 1999, OPSEU's clerical unit in the public service will be looking for significant improvements. Plans are currently underway to mobilize all members toward that end.



PEIUPSE

PEIUPSE has achieved small and large victories over the past few years.

Some of these victories include:

- Expansion of maternity / parental leave under the Employment Standards Act.
- Maternity / parental leave included as credited service for increments in our Civil Service Agreement.
- Participation in the CBC campaign to prevent closing of the PEI local news show.
- Led a campaign to stop the privatization of liquor stores.
- Participation in a joint labour / management initiative to promote diversity in the workplace.
- Organized a new bargaining unit, Community Inclusions. Workers in this new bargaining unit are predominantly female. This unit provides services to mentally and physically challenged individuals.
- There have been various initiatives in the health care bargaining unit – study sessions, cross-province tours, work site negotiations, updates – all efforts to pressure Members of the Legislature to provide better funding for health care.
- Group insurance plans amended to include provision for coverage of same sex spouses. Several collective agreements now include same sex spouses on the same basis as common law spouses as a definition for purposes of family illness, bereavement and other benefits.

NBPEA

During the Summer of 2001, NBPEA has been in a bargaining position with 4800 of its 6300 members from three of its bargaining groups: ParaMed, Specialized Health Care Professionals and the Administrative Support Group. These groups are predominantly women workers with the percentages being 84%,

Victories



89%, and 92% respectively. In essence, all groups have completed the non-monetary issues and now are entering into direct negotiations for their wage packages. The administrative support negotiations have broken up and it's anticipated that there will be three days to meet with the conciliator in mid-September. The other two groups in health care anticipate that a fair settlement will not come easy. We are prepared to do whatever it takes to win a significant victory for women in these negotiations.

This victory, however, will not come easy. In March, 2001 Premier Bernard Lord and his Cabinet passed Bill 30 which took away the right of many hospital workers to strike and mandated what the terms and conditions of their employment would be. The public sector unions met recently and took the position that if the government attempts this move again, it will be met with a mass retaliation by women workers.

At our Board of Director's and President's Strategic Planning Session last fall, a motion was passed to look into the possibility of modifying our dues structure from a flat rate to a percentage basis. The amount of union dues paid should depend on the level of annual income. This move is fairer and more equitable for women workers who on average earn less than men.

The Board of Directors has approved a motion requesting that an Ad hoc Women's Committee be established to investigate the needs/issues of women within the NBPEA membership. We will then be submitting a proposal to establish a Standing Committee for Women's Issues.

NSGEU

At the May 1999 Convention, Sister Joan Jessome was elected as the first Woman President of NSGEU. At the same convention, Sister Martha Brown was elected as 3rd Vice-President. This was the first time that there was both a balance of gender and of workers of colour on the NSGEU Executive. At the May 2001 Convention, Joan was re-elected as President and Martha was elected as 2nd Vice-President. Shannon McGrath was elected as 3rd Vice-President and Diane Smith was elected as Secretary-Treasurer. This means that for the first time in the history of our union, eighty percent (80%) that is, all but one of the Executive members are women and for the first time, our Secretary-Treasurer is a woman. Joan has worked as a secretary, Martha is a registered nurse, Shannon is a Home Support Worker and Diane is a school board secretary.

Seventy-one percent (71%) of the NSGEU membership are women and many of them have played leading roles in the continuing struggles of the Union against increasing threats to downsize, restructure and privatize the workplace. Besides leadership in individual Locals, women play a major role in the many committees and groups within the Union such as the Nurses Council and the Home Support Workers' Council.

In health care, women have been active in building the various bargaining units that have recently come together to negotiate new collective agreements with the new District Health Authorities. They were very vocal in changing the Hamm government's Health Authorities legislation in April 2000. That legislation had threatened to take away the negotiated rights and benefits of health care workers at the QEII Health Sciences Centre, the Nova Scotia Hospital and the former Central Regional Health Board.



Women in nursing and other health care professions played a crucial role in fighting the Hamm government's Bill 68 or its so-called "Healthcare Services Continuation Act." Through their defiant and vigorous efforts in the workplace, at the Legislature, on the streets and in the community, they forced the government to back down in June and July of 2001 on the possibility of imposing the terms of agreements on not only our members but on health care workers across the province. In a stunning reversal of their earlier position, the government agreed not to implement Bill 68 and to take all outstanding issues to a form of arbitration called Final Offer Selection.

Members of the Nurses' Council have been very vocal in calling on the government to take seriously the nursing shortage in Nova Scotia and to take concrete measures to end the continuing casualization of nursing. Members of the Home Support Workers' Council have been working hard towards province-wide bargaining and a provincial contract. A 25-year employee of the Nova Scotia Hospital was willing to go public in December 2000 and challenge the government's cost-cutting agenda to so-called non-essential services such as her invaluable beautician services to mentally challenged persons.

In the civil service, women have contributed to the extensive preparations for a new round of bargaining in 2000 and 2001 concerning the important issue of decent wage increases combined with job security. Women have also been instrumental in challenging the government to implement and enforce its own Affirmative Action Program within the civil service.

Women who work for income assistance, child protection and care coordination have helped the Union launch a major initiative in 2001. This initiative will involve members who work for the Department of Community Services to receive government attention on developing reasonable caseloads and workloads.

In education, women who work as support staff with the regional school boards have brought forward detailed examples of how government school board funding cuts have hurt public education and how support services must be considered as essential services to students. A major rally of school board support staff with three unions, including NSGEU, was held in February 2001. NSGEU women members are working hard to help put pressure on all the school board members to oppose any additional cuts to support services or major reductions in rights and benefits in new collective agreements.

Women in all sectors of the Union played a key role in implementing the NSGEU's "What Will You Lose?" public campaign against massive cuts and restructuring by the Hamm government in 2000. This campaign consisted of a series of TV ads, a mail-out to all households in the province, a toll-free number for any Nova Scotian to call about the possible impact of cutbacks, a speaking tour by our President and meetings and contact by members with Cabinet Ministers and all other MLAs. Member support was crucial in convincing the government to reconsider earlier plans.

The NSGEU was also one of the first organizations last year to pressure the Hamm government to bring provincial parental leave benefits in the *Labour Standards Code* in line with the extended Employment Insurance parental benefits and the amended job protection period in the *Canada Labour Code*. As a result, Nova Scotia was one of the first provinces to make its legislation consistent with the federal changes.

NSGEU women members convinced the Union to conduct its own internal equity survey in 1998 and in holding NSGEU's first women's conference in March 1999. We applaud the support given to us by our union brothers in all our victories.



• Health Care

In the past two years, NAPE has faced massive health care restructuring. Regionalization has resulted in a number of job losses through the mergers and amalgamations of hospital services and administration. Over 75% of health care workers are women. Many job casualties, primarily in dietary, housekeeping and administration were women. NAPE was relentless in its “Fightback Campaign” against planned hospital closures. As a result, the government has since changed its’ plan to move sick children to an expanded space at the Health Sciences Center, an overburdened facility in itself. A separate but adjoining building has now been constructed to house the children of the now closed Charles R. Janeway Hospital. The Janeway Hospital was the only children’s hospital in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 1996, NAPE became the Union of choice in two intermingling votes involving a number of health care facilities. NAPE’s victories demonstrate the strength of its’ membership and reflects NAPE’s leadership in the fight for health care workers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 1998, NAPE was successful at the collective bargaining table in gaining a number of benefits for temporary workers. The agreement identifies specific time off for those who work a number of consecutive shifts, premium compensation for those who work beyond consecutive shifts and consideration by the employer to include temporary workers into the Group Insurance Plan. The employer has also agreed to a Task Force on the utilization of temporary employees taking into account such issues as the quality of work life. This is a major win for temporary health care workers, 73% of whom are women, who, through downsizing and restructuring, have had no other choice but to accept temporary work in the absence of permanent employment.

• Home Support Workers

On June 17, 1996 after months of bargaining, 125 southern Shore home support workers went on strike. These workers, 100% women, were employees of the privately-run, non-profit Southern Shore Home Support Agency. This Agency was contracted to provide personal home care services to the sick, the elderly and the disabled in some 40 homes on the Southern Shore. Despite funding to the agency, the provincial government refused to get involved in the dispute. Main issues in the strike centered on the value of care of senior citizens and the value of women’s work.

On April 2, 1997, the Provincial Government budgeted \$ 4 million – \$1 million to provide for Workers’ Compensation and \$3 million for more than 4000 full-time equivalent home support workers. While this 10% wage increase is a breakthrough for home support workers, the struggle continues. Many home support workers remain unorganized. These 125 brave women of the Southern Shore have persevered in standing together to bring about fairness for themselves and the clients they serve.

• Service Sector

In October 1997, fifty-two striking workers at Purity Factories in St. John’s returned to work after a two-month strike. The workers produce products such as hard bread, drink syrup, cookies and candies. This bargaining unit, made up of 63% women, had their wages frozen for several years while the company endured some tough times. Wages were the main issue in this dispute. The workers

received untold support from workers at plants in London, Ontario and Montreal, Quebec. They immediately stopped operations and refused to produce any products once they were advised by NAPE that they were producing for Purity Factories. The new agreement includes a no contracting out clause, benefits for temporary employees and provides a total wage increase of \$1.05 per hour over the life of the three-year agreement.

• **Pay Equity**

The Newfoundland Association of Public Employees has long been in the forefront in the fight for pay equity throughout the country. The general government pay equity study reached conclusion in November 1996 resulting in approximately 75 female dominated classifications receiving wage adjustments of \$4 million. The Pay Equity Steering Committee was co-chaired by NAPE activist Sister Carol Furlong whose extensive knowledge in Pay Equity and commitment to the women of NAPE was instrumental in achieving this agreement. Thanks also goes to Sister Sharon Power, General Vice President, who also served with Sister Furlong as a representative of NAPE. By the year 2000, it is estimated that 11,000 public sector workers will receive \$28.5 million per year as a result of this negotiated pay equity agreement.

After agreeing to the Health Care Pay Equity Agreement, the government has legislated away the health care workers' entitlement to retroactivity. The workers are entitled to \$80 million. The struggle continues in the courts.

• **Women of NAPE**

In November 1995, **Sister Elaine Price**, Employee Relations Officer with the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees became the first woman President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour. In February 1997, Sister Elaine became the first full-time paid President. Sister Elaine has been in the forefront fighting workers issues and has become an inspiration for all women in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

At the 1989 NAPE convention, constitutional amendments were passed to include seven affirmative action positions to the Board of Directors.

The women of NAPE continue to struggle with issues facing women. There is much more work to be done.



SECTION III

Importance of Unions to Working Women & Successful Fight-Back Strategies





Importance of Unions to Working Women

"The state of the world today demands that women become less modest and dream / plan / act on a larger scale."

- Charlotte Bunch

By organizing into unions, working people have made enormous progress in wages, working conditions, benefits, job security and human rights. If working women are to gain equality, they must get organized and work through their unions.

FACTS & ISSUES

- One in three working women belongs to a union.
- The benefits of unionization are considerable. Unionized workers make more than non-union workers in the same jobs; unionized women workers make 33% more than non-union women workers; unionized temporary workers earn \$4.80/hour more than non-union temporary workers.
- Workers in unions have more job protection than workers without unions.
- Union workers have better health and welfare benefits, pensions, paid maternity leave, sick leave, parental leave, flexible work time, dental care, workplace child care, access to benefits for lesbians and gays - to mention a few.
- Unions provide protection against arbitrary management decisions – rules and procedures for assigning hours, transfers between jobs and for promotions are written down in collective agreements.
- Unions support workers against unfair or discriminatory employer practices – unions will process grievances and help with human rights complaints.
- Unions negotiate pay and employment equity plans to improve wages and access to jobs for women and equity group members.
- Unions can provide support and counseling services for their members.
- Unions negotiate protection against discrimination and harassment of employees on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability.
- Unions provide educational and training opportunities for their members.
- Unions provide collective security and the opportunity for collective action.

Successful Fight-Back Strategies



Encourage more women to participate in union activities. Seek out and encourage women to run for elected positions in your Local. Additional barriers to getting involved are faced by women of colour, Aboriginal women, lesbians, those with family responsibilities and those with disabilities.

What Your Women's Committee Can Do

- Examine your wage structure and/or classification system to see if it is based on pay equity. Discuss your findings with your committee and prepare recommendations to your executive or bargaining committee.
- Examine the health care benefits in your contract to see if they discriminate against women, and recommend to the local various methods to equalize benefits in the next contract.
- Conduct a study into childcare arrangements made by the working parents in your workplace. Could these parents be better served if the union worked for childcare, especially for shift workers, financial subsidies for child care in non-profit, regulated spaces?
- Discuss maternity/parental leave provisions to see if they adequately protect the income, seniority and well-being of parents.
- Identify and inform your members of community resources for women such as rape crisis centres, child care referrals and women's support groups.

What the Local Can Do

- Cooperate with the Health and Safety Committee to study your workplace for health and safety hazards for women. Carry out research into the health problems of women workers to see if there is a pattern, which could indicate a hidden health hazard.
- Encourage women workers to speak out about sexual harassment on the job. Through the local union, ask the employer to issue a memorandum to supervisory staff condemning sexual harassment. Work for protection against sexual coercion in the next contract.
- Set up special sessions to listen to the problems faced by women in your workplace.

What the Union Can Do

- Propose an employment equity program to end discrimination in hiring and promotions, and open doors to non-traditional occupations for women.
- Study the position of part-time women in other workplaces or occupations to organize, and support workers striking or picketing over issues of special concern to women.
- Develop ways to address elder care needs and family leave through collective bargaining. Unions continue to be at the forefront in negotiating leave language in contracts to help workers to balance their work and family needs.
- Raise awareness about child labour through leaflets, letters to the editor, talking with politicians and pressuring manufacturers and retailers.

SECTION I V

Benefits to Women Organized with the National Union





We are pressing government action

The erosion of decent jobs has had a particularly detrimental impact on women. The trickle down economy does not work. Instead, we see a race to the bottom at the expense of the most vulnerable and marginalized working people.

Canadian governments at the federal and provincial levels are rapidly abandoning their role in the development and advancement of social rights. Canadian values of sharing and caring are constantly being eroded by right-wing politicians, corporate spokespeople, and the conservative media.

The labour movement and other justice seeking organizations must continue to demand that our governments provide leadership on the development of social policy initiatives. We must demand that governments continue to provide quality public education, health care, pensions, and income security through an enhanced unemployment insurance system and through improved social assistance. We need quality public services and collective responsibility for our environment.

We are lobbying for quality public service jobs

Many of the best jobs women have had access to over the last two decades have been in the public sector. Women's work in the public sector has been to provide the kind of services which Canadians value about our society – universal health care, public education, social services, child care, libraries and elder care.

The erosion of public-sector employment means a decline in the real standard of living for all who live in this country. It also means the elimination of relatively well paid, stable, unionized work for women. Public-sector unions have made significant breakthroughs in negotiating rights and benefits for women. Paid maternity leave, same sex benefits and parental leave for lesbian workers and the right to refuse work because of sexual or racial harassment are some of the areas where women public-sector unionists led the way.

Maintaining and expanding our system of public caring services is an issue for all women, whether employed in the public service or not. If these services are not provided by women employed by the public sector, they will be provided by women unpaid, in the home.

We are supporting the counting of women's unpaid work

With the dismantling of social programs and health care, we are witnessing the shift of care responsibilities, be it child care, health care or elderly care onto the shoulders of women.

This cheap wage labour strategy has a gender, domino effect. With the shrinking of decent paid jobs, men are accepting lower paid full-time jobs which have been traditionally held by women. Women are displaced; returning to the home which potentially can displace another group of marginalized women, the domestic migrant workers.

It is important for the Canadian labour movement as a whole to continue to formulate unifying and progressive positions on women's unpaid work.

We are campaigning on many public policy issues

The National Union is involved in a wide range of special projects and activities to promote the general welfare and rights of its members, both as citizens and workers. We recognize valuable gains can be made on behalf of our members at the bargaining table. We are also fully aware of the far-reaching impact that public policy can have on the lives of our members and their families. That is why the National Union has taken a strong leadership role in many of those public policy issues. The National Union continues to campaign on Breast Cancer, Violence Against Women, Child Labour and the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services).

Benefits



What your National Union Advisory Committee on Women's Issues can do

NUPGE and the Advisory Committee on Women's Issues will continue to fight against further cuts to public-sector services and for an expansion of such services. The role of the public sector in providing good jobs for women and good services to the public will continue to be highlighted.

NUPGE and the Advisory Committee on Women's Issues can provide information flow to members on all forms of job loss, privatization and our fightback campaigns through NUPGE's Web site.

The National Union Advisory Committee on Women's Issues will actively promote NUPGE's "Power Tools" so that members have the facts they need to organize and mobilize members and the community against privatization and job loss.

NUPGE will continue to do research on private for-profit companies and to assist NUPGE components in convincing our public sector employers not to go down the road towards privatization.

NUPGE will continue to expose the anti-women, racist and discriminatory character of the attack on the public sector by corporations and right-wing governments. This includes providing members and the public with a gender and racial analysis of privatization and government cutbacks through our campaigns and in our publications and materials. It includes taking action against the assault on our members from an equality perspective.

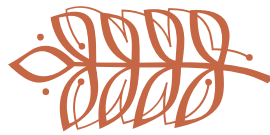
The National Union Advisory Committee on Women's Issues will take up the challenge of formulating a progressive position on counting women's unpaid work and its increasing load.

The National Union's Advisory Committee on Women's Issues will organize and mobilize the campaign to recognize women's unpaid work.

**THE GOAL of the National Union is
to build a collective community that embraces
the principles of workers' justice and equality,
that celebrates the strength of our organizing
and that transforms rage into action.**

**In this era of restructuring and growing inequalities,
there is anxiety, but there is also a sense of hope,
determination and activism.**

**To a renewed community of labour,
we stand shoulder to shoulder.**



Appendix 1

Members of the Advisory Committee on Women's Issues

Sister Linda Anweiler
(SGEU)

Sister Marg Ducie
(BGPWU)

Sister Lydia Jaillet
(NBPEA)

Sister Catherine Bell
(BCGEU)

Sister Lynne Gingras
(AUPE)

Sister Carol Meyer
(NUPGE)

Sister Martha Brown
(NSGEU)

Sister Marsha Halsall
(PEIUPSE)

Sister Helen Riehl
(OPSEU)

Sister Cynthia Burke
(NAPE)

Sister Gayle Hofmeister
(MGEU)

Sister Maureen Ross
(HSA of BC)

Sister Teresa Davey
(OLBEU)

Appendix II

National Union Components

B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union

Health Sciences Association of British Columbia

Alberta Union of Provincial Employees

Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union

Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union

Ontario Liquor Board Employees' Union

Ontario Public Service Employees Union

Brewery, General and Professional Workers Union

Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers

New Brunswick Government Employees Union

New Brunswick Public Employees Association

Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union

PEI Union of Public Sector Employees

Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees

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