



**PARTICIPANT
MATERIALS**
for
Saturday workshops

OPSEU Women's Conference

Workshop: Starting with Women's Lives

Saturday November 8

Workshop Goals

1. Develop a shared analysis of issues and impacts facing diverse women in OPSEU
2. Draft key elements of a Provincial Women's Committee agenda which advances equity in OPSEU

Workshop Agenda

- 9:00 * Introductions
- 9:30 * Changes to jobs and social programs
* Impact of the changes on women's lives in the home, community, workplace and union.
* Where we get our support; what's missing that the union could provide.
- 10:45 BREAK
- 11:00 * The work women do
* Why women's work is underpaid, unpaid and undervalued
* Naming our Power
- 12:30 LUNCH
- 1:30 * Taking Action: Building our Power
 - Practice advocating for diverse women's rights
 - Develop recommendations to the Provincial Women's Committee to advance equity in OPSEU
- 3:15 BREAK
- 3:30 * Presentation and discussion of Recommendations
- 4:30 * Preparation for the Sunday plenary
* Evaluation and Closure
- 5:00 DINNER BREAK

WOMEN'S SOLIDARITY BINGO

Rules of the Game

- the object is to fill as many squares as possible in the time you have.
- each participant can only sign your card twice.
- to get a signature, you must approach a woman with a square in mind. If she doesn't fit that square, you have a second chance to pose another question. If you strike out twice, share hands and move on to the next person.

B I N G O

Has been laid off in the last 5 years	Born and raised on a farm.	Has an accent different from yours	Speaks more than one language	Looks after an aging parent
Has grandchildren	Lived in more than one Canadian province.	Lived in more than one country.	Born in a different decade from you.	Filed a grievance in the previous year
Can do three things at once (name them)	Born in a country other than Canada.	Is an OPSEU member.	Has walked a picket line	Has children
Is a member of an OPSEU women's committee	Can tell you what 'patriarchy' means	Can sing the chorus of Solidarity Forever.	Does volunteer work in the community	Writes with a different hand (left/right) than you.
Has been paid less than a man for doing the same job	Has experienced racial harassment.	Can name the three sectors in OPSEU	Lost time from work due to injury.	Can name the president of OPSEU

Gender Analysis seeks to...

- Make diverse women's experience visible
- Look at both paid and unpaid women's work
- Recognize women's work is often undervalued, invisible and underpaid
- Explore differences between men and women
- Recognize differences in power and privilege among diverse women
- Affirm the power and leadership of diverse women

Task Sheet #1: Changes to Jobs and Social Programs

- Work with your partner to review the list of changes below.
- Put a check beside the changes to jobs or social programs you have seen over the past 10 years.
- Add to the list other key changes you have experienced.

You have five minutes

Changes to Jobs	Changes to Social Programs
Public sector jobs moved to private sector	Cuts to publicly funded health care
Increase in self-employment and homeworking (informal sector)	Cuts to education and daycare
Less job security	Cuts to community organizations and women's programs
Increased workload	Housing cost increased: less affordable housing
More part-time and contract work	Fewer employment insurance (EI) benefits
No employment equity	Privatization of public services (water, electricity etc.)
New jobs highly skilled or low paying	User fees (e.g. public swimming pools, community centres etc.)
Weakened health and safety legislation	
<u>Other changes:</u>	<u>Other changes:</u>

Task sheet #2: Impact on Women's Lives

1. Spend 15 minutes discussing how changes to jobs and social programs are affecting you or women you know, in the area of your life you are discussing (home, community, workplace or union).
2. From your discussion, identify four key effects these changes have had on you or women you know.
3. Headline each of your points on a separate paper stone (using very few words).
4. Assign two people to report back.

Women's Work Statistics -1

Unpaid

- Women do two-thirds of all unpaid work in Canada;
- Equal sharing of housework occurs in only ten percent of two-earner, heterosexual couples in Canada.
- Women do \$11 trillion of unpaid work globally each year.

Underpaid

- Women still earn on average 79 cents for every dollar men earn in Canada.
- Most women workers have fewer benefits than men (health plans, pensions, sick days, vacation days etc.)
- More women than men are moving into the informal sector (e.g. homeworking) or into part-time jobs where they have no security or benefits.
- Globally, women contribute 66 percent of the hours worked each day, earn only ten percent of the world's income and own only one percent of the world's property.

Undervalued

- Women legislators on national level comprise 9% of the seats in Latin America and the Caribbean, 12% in Canada, 26% in Vietnam.
- Worldwide women hold only 14% of the administrative and managerial positions, and less than 6% of senior management positions.

Women's Work Statistics - 2

Who is affected most?

Women living in poverty

- 36 percent of people of colour live in poverty compared to 20 percent in the general population;
- 44 percent of Aboriginal people living off reserves live in poverty;
- More than half of all women aged 65 and over live in poverty;
- Over 57 percent of single parent families led by women with children under 18 live in poverty.

Visible minority women, Aboriginal women and women with disabilities

- Employment equity has been slowly closing the wage gap between men and white women. However, the wage gap is widening for visible minority women, Aboriginal women and women with disabilities compared with men in these groups.
- Women with disabilities, visible minority women and Aboriginal women experience a higher rate of job loss as jobs are cut in both public and private sectors.
- The unemployment rate for persons with disabilities and Aboriginal persons is twice the overall Canadian rate.

Young women

- 25 percent of people under 25 are unemployed or underemployed

The Big Human Picture

If the world were just 100 people, it would look like this:

- 57 would be Asians
21 Europeans
14 from the Western Hemisphere
8 from Africa
- 52 would be females
48 males
- 70 would be non-white
- 11 would be gay or lesbian
- 6 would possess 60% of the total wealth
- 80 would live in substandard housing
70 would not be able to read
50 would suffer from malnutrition
- 1 would have a university degree
- 1 would have a computer

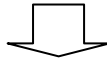
Source: Canadian Labour Congress

ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION

Free trade is a strategy used by large transnational corporations to remove or reduce trade rules that limit or control their activities

Canada is involved in :

- the FTA (Canada- US)
- the NAFTA (Canada-US-Mexico)
- the FTAA (proposed throughout the Americas)



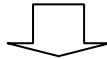
Trade agreements let corporations invest (or de-invest) anywhere



So, corporations move to countries with:

- lowest taxes; lowest wages;
- lowest labour and environmental standards.

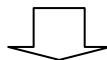
Free Trade agreements (like NAFTA) also give corporations the right to sue governments for passing laws to protect their citizens if those laws might limit corporate profits.



In order to compete in international trade, governments :

lower wages, labour and
environmental standards
to attract business

lower taxes (especially
corporate)
cut social programs and
privatize services



Through free trade, corporations also want to deliver PUBLIC SERVICES now controlled by government to expand profits. They also want it called 'unfair competition' for governments to control these services, which include: health, education, water and electricity.

The bottom line

Decisions that affect our lives are increasingly being made by corporations who are not accountable to us.

Three Kinds of Power

Power - over

Position Power - one person or group has power because of their position in an organization, in society

Social Power - one person or group has power over another person or group because of her social identity (racism, sexism, etc.)

Power - within

Our inner strength, self-confidence, sense of determination or a spiritual source.

Power - with

Collective power - solidarity, sisterhood, community. We increase our power as we join with others.

Viola Desmond - Defining Canadian History

It was November 8th, 1946, the wind was howling and Viola Desmond squinted to see through the early snow on her windshield. She worked in a beauty parlour and taught at the local beautician school. She lived in Halifax but was on her way to Sydney, Nova Scotia. Right now she was passing through New Glasgow. Except her car started to sputter. She cocked her head to the right and listened to the clunking sound coming from her motor. She lurched back and forward with the car as it started to stall. She put on her turn signal and turned the wheel hard to the left as the car rolled into a gas station. She turned the key in the ignition to off and wrapped her coat around her as she got out of the car.

She stamped her feet in the cold to keep warm as the mechanic told her the car couldn't be fixed until the next day. She walked up the street, carrying her overnight bag over her shoulder. After finding a place to stay for the night, she decided to pass the time with a movie at the local theatre.

She walked up the street to the Roseland Theatre. She opened the front doors, shuddered from the cold and brushed the snow from her shoulders. She walked up to the ticket counter and asked for a ticket for house seats. The teller sold her a ticket for the balcony. See, in 1946, in Canada there was racial segregation in many public places, like churches, restaurants, schools and movie theatres.

Viola walked into the theatre, looked for a good seat and sat down in the house. The usher came and said, Ayou can=t sit here.@ Viola said, Abut I bought a ticket here. A The usher said, ANo you have a ticket for the balcony.@ Viola couldn't= believe it. She was angry and she walked back to the ticket window and said, AI want a ticket for the house.@ They said, Awe=re not allowed to sell you people tickets to the house. You people are to sit in the balcony.@

Viola was so angry, there were tears in her eyes. She walked purposely back into the theatre, back in the house seats section, and sat down. The manager came over and ordered her out. Viola shook her head slowly. The manager called the police and when the police came, they picked her up and carried her out of the theatre

Viola was arrested and she sat all night on a hard bench in a jail cell. She was charged with attempting to defraud the federal government. You see, retail sales tax was calculated on the base price of the seat ticket. The ticket clerk had sold Viola a balcony seat but she had sat in a more expensive seat, which meant that she was 1 cent short on the tax.

She stood for sentencing. The judge fined her \$20 and told her she must spend 30 days in prison for tax evasion. She wondered why no one, not the judge, the lawyers, the police had admitted that she was a person of colour or that the theatre was using a racist seating

policy. Instead, everyone was proceeding as though this tax evasion charge had nothing to do with race.

Viola stood tall and proud in her fight. The NSAACP ⁽¹⁾ helped pay her fine and legal fees. Viola was also joined by another strong activist, Carrie Best⁽²⁾. Carrie Best published Viola=s story in The Clarion, a community newspaper she had started for people of colour in New Glasgow.

Even though all appeals to have the conviction overturned at higher levels of the Court failed, the case was used to build community activism to fight against racial segregation in Canada. We gain strength from activists like Viola Desmond and Carrie Best. Through their stories we learn that we can all take action against something we believe strongly in.

Let=s applaud Viola Desmond and all the social justice activists that came before and after her.

Notes

1. NSAACP (Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People)
2. Carrie Best was the founder of Nova Scotia=s first newspaper for People of Colour. After publishing Viola=s story, Carrie organized community activists to lobby the Nova Scotia government, which finally repealed the laws on segregation in 1954.
3. Viola Desmond=s action against racial segregation took place in New Glasgow, Canada nine years before Rosa Parks sat in the white section of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in an action that was a key part of the U.S. civil rights movement.

Task Sheet #3

Building our collective power: Advocating for the rights of diverse women in OPSEU

In your groups, you will carry on three conversations, with each person taking a turn as:

- **The Activist** (doing the lobbying),
- **The Listener** (the person being lobbied),
- **The Observer**.

Step one

The **Activist** will advocate on the first issue with the **Listener** responding as realistically as possible in the situation. You have three minutes to make your arguments.

The **Observer** will listen and take notes, using the *Observer Sheet*

Step two

When the facilitator signals that the time is up, each group will give feedback:

- the listener will say how she felt it went;
- the activist will say how she felt it went;
- the observer will report what she observed.

Repeat for the other case situations

When the facilitator signals that the feedback time is up, change roles and repeat twice more so that everyone has a turn in each of the three roles.

OBSERVER SHEET

Advocating for the rights of diverse women in OPSEU

Your role is to observe the conversation and be prepared to provide supportive feedback to the activist after the conversation.

For example:

1. How did the activist get the conversation going?
2. How did the activist respond to any concerns raised, while maintaining the relationship with the other person?
3. How did the activist link this issue to the union's agenda?
4. How did the activist use her social identities (race, sexual orientation etc.) effectively to advocate on this issue?
5. What in her approach was most and least helpful?

Task Sheet #4

Develop proposals to the Provincial Women's Committee for an agenda which advances equity in OPSEU

1. Briefly review the day's work and list the changes we've identified which are needed to improve the working lives of diverse OPSEU women. List the changes needed here:

2. Mark which of these changes could be made best through the strategy your group has chosen (one of the following):
 - a) new OPSEU policy or provincial legislation
 - b) new/better language in our collective agreements
 - c) more organizing/mobilizing of diverse OPSEU women inside the union\
 - d) more connections/joint work with community, immigrant and refugee, advocacy organizations
 - e) more leadership development for diverse OPSEU women

3. Develop a proposal or two to the OSEU Provincial Women's Committee on the strategy you have chosen. For each suggestion, identify:
 - a) specific action(s) the Women's Committee could take
 - b) how the Women's Committee can make use of the expertise and contacts of diverse women in the union
 - c) how the Women's Committee might involve diverse women in their decision-making
 - d) how the Women's Committee could encourage ongoing communication with diverse women

Write your proposals clearly on flipchart paper so they can be shared with other women.