SURVIVING AND THRIVING



Women in Trades & Technology and Employment Equity

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Employment Equity

Proceedings of a conference held
October 1-4, 1988 at Naramata, British Columbia

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Kootenay Women in Trades & Technology

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Preface

This book is the reflection of the knowledge and experience gained by Canadian women as they struggle to gain access to the world of trades and technical work. As well, it gathers the current efforts, initiatives and programs which have been developed to assist in that process. It is the first Canadian volume to address these issues in depth.

Kootenay WITT has been involved in furthering these aims since 1983, when we developed and produced the seminar ***The Workplace In Transition: Integrating Women Effectively***, and the A/V presentation *"What Happens To Women In Tradesland."* Since 1983 we have presented the seminar at technical schools throughout B.C. and to employers, managers and apprenticeship and employment counsellors. We have written and presented briefs on access to training and apprenticeships, and have sat on numerous committees to further the goal of opening the doors and easing the way for more women in trades and technology.

In 1988, Kootenay WITT organized **Surviving and Thriving – A Canadian Conference On Women In Trades and Technology.** The conference had three main themes. The first was the experience of women who had been training, working and searching for employment in these fields. The second was Employment Equity – its capability and actual initiatives being undertaken to enhance the experience of women. And the third was Women In Technology – their potential for showing us better ways to use technology and strategies for increasing their numbers.

The four-day conference was attended by tradeswomen and technologists, many of whom had been the first in their fields. They were joined on the second two days by employers, educators, union and government personnel. It provided a well-used opportunity to dispel some myths on all sides, and to share firsthand stories and information. The result was to encourage and assist us all to meet the goal of increasing women's participation in operational, professional, scientific and technical occupations.

This volume presents, in edited form, many of the workshops, presentations and discussions that took place at the conference. Workshops have been edited for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was the poor quality of some of the audiotapes. We regret any deletions, as most of the material was worthy of reproduction. Other deletions were made for reasons of brevity, duplication, and continuity. We have done our best to maintain the integrity of presenters' and participants' remarks and responses. We apologize for any oversights or errors in editing judgements.

Also available from Kootenay WITT is a 50-minute videotape, ***"Let's Go To The Shop"***. It was prepared by Joan Webb and Gillian Browning in conjunction with Shaw Cable 10, Nelson, and gives a useful overview of the issues addressed at the conference, with additional footage of women working in the field.

Hopefully, these resources will promote enlightenment in employment practices among employers and unions, encourage diligence on the part of government agencies and provide trades and technical women with a sense of support and a greater reflection of their own accomplishments.

Marcia Braundy
Coordinator
Kootenay WITT

Introduction

Women have been entering trades and technology, and operational, professional and technical kinds of work since World War II when they successfully performed the necessary manufacturing, construction and production tasks. It has recently come to light that many of the patented inventions which, through the years, were attributed to men were actually invented by women. Sybilla Master invented the first machine to be patented in North America, a corn cleaning machine, but it was patented in her husband's name. Her name is in small print at the bottom as the inventor. Somehow, these important pieces of our history have been overlooked, and women's success in these matters has been, if not denied, then at least ignored.

With the resurgence of feminism in the late 1960s and 1970s, women reviewed their occupational choices, and many women found them wanting. During the International Decade of Women, lobbying efforts succeeded in obtaining orientation courses in trades and technology (INTO, WITT, Pre-Trades Training, etc.) in several provinces to assist women to enter what had been identified as employment "non-traditional" for women. This was defined as those occupations where women's reperesentation was less than 33 percent (approximately 80 percent of all occupations). These courses were to provide a knowledge and experience base to enable the women to train on a more equal foundation with men in regular technical training courses.

Many women did this, as evidenced by the representative group that gathered at the first National Women In Trades Conference in Winnipeg in 1980. Others had gone directly into technical training and university courses. At that time, it was clear we were encountering some difficulties. Some of us were not sure whether it was because we were apprentices and students, or because we were women.

It was said that not as many women entered those courses as had been expected, and those who entered didn't always experience success in training or in finding a job. Government agencies and educational institutions began to ask why. They were told over and over again in evaluations and briefs from women's advocacy groups accross the country about the problems women were facing. About apprenticeship and employment counsellors who were not supportive and gave women inaccurate or incomplete information. About vocational and technical instructors who didn't know how to handle the difficulties that arose in their classrooms because they didn't think it was their responsibility to proscribe behaviour. About university professors who presented "scientific" evidence that we are the "weaker" gender. About employers who refused to hire women and gave irrational reasons. About sexual and gender harassment which was being ignored.

Despite all those difficulties, many of us persevered and became qualified, a large number at the top of our classes. Employment was often hard to find, and our daily struggles with employers and unions were sometimes heartening and often exhausting. And there were those of us that gave up, who are remembered by everyone for different reasons.

In the 1970s, the governments of the day put forth Equal Employment Opportunity legislation to address the inequities in the labour force. These programs were somewhat ineffective, as they saw their job as "opening the doors," and did not address the systemic barriers to the employment of women and minority groups, barriers inherent in the employment systems and practices that had evolved to that time.

Some provincial governments looked to the United States, for their initiatives in Affirmative Action. Some saw problems and balked at bringing them here; others saw potential, and modified versions of the American programs began to appear both federally and provincially here in Canada.

In 1980, pilot Affirmative Action programs were started in three federal government departments and in 1983 all federal government departments were required to analyze their workforces and develop an Affirmative Action Plan to create a workforce that more fairly represented the general population.

In 1984, Judge Rosalee Abella tabled her Royal Commission Report on Equality in Employment, in which she coined the phrase Employment Equity. She documented the discrimination in employment faced by women, aboriginal peoples, visible minorities, and people with disabilities, and she recommended legislation to address this problem. She also recommended enforcement mechanisms.

In 1986, legislation was enacted requiring crown corporations and federally regulated employers with 100 or more employees to report annually on the makeup of their workforce, starting in 1988. They must also develop and implement Employment Equity Plans to address their workforce inequities. It is hoped that public scrutiny of those reports will provide the pressure necessary to enforce implementation.

At the same time, Treasury Board decided upon a policy of contract compliance, whereby contractors who do business worth more than $200,000 with the federal government and who have more than 100 employees must also implement an Employment Equity Plan.

Employment Equity hiring, training and promotion targets are currently being set based on workforce requirements and the available designated group members who are qualified or ready to be qualified with some training. Somewhat inaccurate availability data is being developed by Statistics Canada, based on census data (which never asks what you may have trained for, only what you are currently doing) and college and university graduation information.

Orientation programs in trades and technology for women which would be feeder courses to those college and university programs have been severely cut back in every province, and yet most provinces are struggling to increase the numbers of girls who go into science and math so they can keep up with the changing technological trends.

Some employers have been very innovative in their approach to program and plan development, hiring and training. For the most part, these are employers who have been involved starting with Equal Employment Opportunities, and they have understanding and expertise to share. Others have started more recently, and with as much dedication and innovation.

Since 1980, women have been told that demographics indicated imminent skilled trades shortages. We have an aging trades and technical workforce, and the baby boomers have not gone into these fields in large numbers. Technological change is reducing the numbers of traditional women's jobs, the vast majority of new entrants to the labour force are women, and many areas of our country are experiencing skilled worker shortages. Some employers understand this and are planning with an eye to the future, where a diversified workforce will be a necessity to get the best employees.

Many employers are saying they can't find any qualified women (disabled, natives, visible minorities). More than a few Employment and Immigration officials have said that women aren't

interested and they can't fill their courses, but they won't advertise because they might create a need in the minds of impressionable women.

And women who have been struggling to find productive, satisfying, tangible and financially viable training and work continue to knock on the doors of the established order, often with the highest marks in their class. Still they are refused entrance or acceptance. The world is slow to engage the quality of human potential available. Women are just not being hired in numbers that reflect their availability, and their skills are not being recognized.

It was into this fray that Kootenay WITT stepped in 1988. With the assistance and financial support of employers and federal and provincial government departments, and with the participation of resource people; tradeswomen, technologists and scientists; employers; educators, government and union personnel, we presented four full days of learning and sharing. More than 60 workshops and events described women's experience, government programs, innovative employers' initiatives, and fascinating community-based projects which address these issues. Our goal was to facilitate a better understanding of the subject areas and the development of networks and strategies to help us all resolve some of these complex employment-related social and economic issues.

The dialogue was fruitful. Those in attendance came away wiser and richer in experience, and with many new friends and ideas. Clearly the networking was an important part, and the participant lists, recommendations, and keynote speeches that went out after the conference proved useful. We continue to hear of new activities and programs generated from energy that emerged from the conference.

This book is for the Advisory Committee who worked so hard and for the resource people and participants at the conference so we may all continue to enrich the process that was begun there: that of working together to explore and invent, construct, maintain, preserve, renovate, and communicate with, the world we live in.

With thanks,
Marcia Braundy
Conference Coordinator
Managing Editor
Kootenay WITT

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Women in Trades & Technology

CHAPTER 1

A journey of women: Beyond the non-traditional

Keynote speaker
Kate Braid

Kate Braid, journeywoman carpenter and writer, talks about who we are, what we're doing across the country, and where we're going.

First I would like to say it's great to be here. It's great to be among 250 women electricians, mechanics, electronic techs, ironworkers, carpenters, plumbers, painters, welders, printers and so on and on. What a *hit*, eh?

It's also a gift, from Marcia Braundy and Bonnie Evans and Penny Youngreen and Jill Curran and the other women who've organized this conference, to be able to talk to each other and perhaps organize future actions on a national basis.

There's an old reporter's trick that says every good story must start with who, what, where, when and why. Following that advice, perhaps I can take advantage of this opportunity by talking about my impressions of who we are, what we are doing across the country and where we are going.

But first you might ask, who is Kate Braid? I am a journeywoman carpenter, active in my trade since 1977 as a labourer, apprentice, contractor and foreman on residential jobs.

When union work is available, I work on commercial jobs – highrises, bridges and four-storey walkups – as a member of the Vancouver Carpenter's Union. I am also a founding member of Vancouver Women in Trades and have been meeting and talking with women in the trades and technologies since 1979, including attending the First Canadian Conference of Women in Trades in 1980.

However, twice I have taken time out. In 1979 I interviewed 22 women working in mines, pulp and paper mills, sawmills and on fishing boats in British Columbia. And this spring I had the privilege of travelling across Canada, from Halifax to Whitehorse, interviewing a further 35 women about their work.

In talking with these women, it is positively amazing how different women in different trades and technologies in widespread parts of Canada tell strikingly similar stories. What begins to emerge is a portrait of the kinds of women who do this work. For instance:

About sexual harassment we learned, the hard way... that we have to look the creeps and the jerks in the eye and talk back.

Most of us worked at one or several

traditional, so-called "women's" jobs before we found trades and technologies. Personally, I always planned to be a private secretary when I grew up. And I was. Most of us have been secretaries, waitresses, dental assistants, clerks, and certainly, mothers, before we got fed up with the work or the poor wages.

The women I met are also remarkable for tremendous perseverance. Call it endurance, call it stubbornness, call it hard to handle, (sometimes I used to wonder if I should call it just plain stupid), but we don't give up. As a plumber told me, "When someone says 'No' to me, it's like waving a red flag in front of a bull. Something in my eyes lights up and I go 'Oh, yeah?' "

With no encouragement and often with outright discouragement, we have managed to find out the secrets of when trades training courses are happening, how to get ourselves into those classes, and then how to get hired.

When we applied for our first hardhat jobs, a lot of us learned our first lesson, how to lie about our lack of experience. A lot of times even when we lied we didn't get hired.

But we persevered. In spite of being the only woman and intensely conspicuous on the job, in spite of getting less training than the men on the job, in spite of employers who said "Women aren't motivated," "Women won't last," (and who then did their best to make sure their own predictions came true), in spite of fellow workers who said "Women aren't strong enough," and "This is man's work," and "Women are only here for sexual partners" and then harassed us after we said "No"....

And in spite of no childcare or male partners who didn't approve of what we were doing....

In spite of all this we kept going. Do you see what I mean when I say we're a stubborn lot?

Women in trades and technologies are also noteworthy for how we relish a good challenge. Over and over women said, "I stick with it because I love the challenge."

When others try and belittle us by saying, "You're just doing this to try and prove something," we said, "You're damn right! We're trying to prove something to other people but mostly we're proving it to *ourselves!*" It's a challenge.

We also have courage.

Remember the first day of your very first job in a trade or technology? Looking back on it now, do you appreciate how much courage it took to talk onto that site, to approach the foreman, to start work with your very first partner? You can pat yourself on the back for that. We can all pat *each other* on the back for that!

Not only did we show courage then, but we kept going even when nobody had been there ahead of us or could tell us the rules or how to handle new situations. We made up the rules. We kept going.

When I asked women, "Who were your heroes, your role models?" almost everyone said either, "I had none," or named another tradeswoman. Perhaps because there is so little public information about women who did this work during the war, (a gap which Sara Diamond plans to fill with a forthcoming book called *Chambermaids and Whistlerpunks*), we are learning everything the hard way. But we are learning, and in the process we're going through some personal changes.

For example, about sexual harassment we learned, the hard way, that it's no good to be a nice girl and cast our eyes down, that we have to look the creeps and the jerks in the eye and talk back. We have learned it doesn't matter if you talk softly or you talk loud. But you talk.

We learned to laugh. To get used to the way the guys got along, joking, everything light and easy. But also when things were tense in certain situations, to make a joke, to keep going. It was Marcia who told me, "You can tell them anything as long as you keep smiling." A lot of us learned that when we worked with women it was different. That with women we could have longer conversations, deal more with process.

Some of us learned to like getting on with the job. My first woman partner and I, when things got emotionally messy at work, would say to each other, "Be a carpenter." And would get back to swinging hammers, feeling the satisfaction of accomplishment, but we would phone each other that night to talk and feel the satisfaction of *that* accomplishment, too. We began to learn to expand our skills beyond the merely traditional, beyond the craft.

Some of us also learned that it wasn't worth it. The personal cost was too high or there was not enough support, and they stopped. Those women are our foremothers too. Every one of them helped break ground, and we thank them.

We learned that making good money makes you feel good.

And, of course, we learned our trade. Most of us learned skills at which we eventually became very good, often from the same men who were also our greatest obstacle. Men were a contradiction for us.

Call it endurance, call it stubbornness, call it hard to handle ... but we don't give up.

Another outstanding characteristic of women in the trades and technologies is that we love our work with a passion and we love to learn. One of the things that keeps us going is the challenge of learning.

I often wished I had a camera rather than a tape recorder to record the way women answered the question, "Do you like your work?" Women who had just finished describing some difficult personal experience would suddenly sit up, their faces would soften and they would say, "I *love* my work!"

Danielle Ethier is a welder in Winnipeg. When she took up welding after eight years as an office clerk, she said, "I was so excited when I worked. Right from day one I knew I had a natural ability to be a welder, if you can imagine that. I loved going home and knowing I'd done something useful and it showed."

Sandra Nichols is a marine engineer in Halifax. About her jobs she says, "Learning about machinery has made me see the world differently. I never stopped to think 'How does an electric motor work?' Now I know how it works and to me it's magic! I really love the machinery. I love to see it function the way it's been designed to function."

Monique Charron is an electronics technician in Montreal. She told me, "What I like is having a problem, analyzing it from start to finish and coming up with solution. I like the work and I like the process of working. It's not so much physical as it is a question of concentration."

Heather Watt is a boilermaker who lives outside Vancouver. She builds and repairs boilers that can be several hundred feet square and 120 feet high. They provide the energy to run hydroelectric dams and pulp and paper plants. This is what Heather says about them.

"When you're inside the boiler, it's very female. It's totally laced with tubes and all you see are the half rounds of the insides of the tubes coming down and lacing around and folding over and under the openings for nozzles or viewing. It's completely smooth, symmetrical, beautiful. Because it's enclosed and it's made for fire and heat and all that good stuff, it's like a huge womb."

I'll bet in the history of boilermaking, no one has described a boiler quite like that!

So now we have a sense of *who* we are and *why*, let's take a closer look at *what* and *how* we are doing.

It would be nice at this point to give you statistics on how many of us there are. That information is not published anywhere on a regular basis. It would be wonderful if someone would do it. We do know that there are about 57 women with certified journey trade tickets in Manitoba, 208 in Ontario and an amazing 600 in B.C.

Keep in mind that we have only been permitted to enter the so-called "non-traditional" jobs since the mid-70's. Even during the war, women have never had this many skills, in such large numbers.

But the absolute numbers remain small. Our percentage in the national construction workforce, for example, is about three percent.

There are many reasons for this, including the ones I've mentioned already about difficulties in getting training and work, and the lack of support once we're on the job.

There is another very important reason.

A woman by the name of Rosabeth Moss Kanter has done an analysis of women in corporations that applies in some interesting ways to women in the trades and technologies, because she talks about small numbers of women who work with large numbers of men in situations where the men control the culture of the workplace.

She finds that as long as women are in the token position, in a ratio of say 85:15, then at least three things happen:

1. The women are highly conspicuous at work,

2. Their presence exaggerates men's awareness of what they have in common, and

3. The women will be treated as symbols of Womanhood rather than as individuals.

Sound familiar? Sure enough, women in trades and technologies talk of being highly conspicuous on the job, freaks, "a real sideshow." They say they work well with the men but, "Always somehow I feel like I'm on the outside," "They didn't want women around," "I wasn't really welcome," they said.

And they were told directly that they were guinea pigs, representatives of all womankind. "Do a good job," a pulp and paper operator was told, "or we'll never hire another woman again." Another woman said, "When they needed a scapegoat, I was it."

In other words, this is not the problem of the individual woman. It is a structural problem brought about by our token numbers. But we take it personally and begin to doubt our own perceptions. We consider quitting.

There's another way of putting it, and that's called a double bind. For example, if you go on a job as the first or only woman, you tend to work very hard because everyone is watching you and you want to do well. Then the men think you're showing them up. If you ask for help they think you're not carrying your weight. If you do it all by yourself they assume that "women get all the easy jobs."

What is happening is they resent it, or at least, are confused, when you prove you can do the job. If something genuinely hard comes up where you need help, they will get their revenge by taunting you as being weak. If they do not actually want you to fail, they at least expect it.

Another example. When you go on the job some of the guys stop swearing because there's a "lady" present. Then they resent that you made them stop swearing. If you swear they're offended. If you tell them you mind them swearing, you're a prig. If you tell them you don't, you're unladylike.

And *there* is another double bind. Everyone knows that women are "ladies." But this is "men's work." Therefore any woman who does it is "unladylike, unfeminine."

And, sure enough, women who work in the trades and technologies become physically strong, competent, mechanically skilled and confident. These are not considered "feminine" qualities in this culture and yet they are the qualities that make us successful in our chosen work.

As long as this society defines women as "feminine" and "feminine" as soft and passive and physically weak, we will be "non-traditional," unacceptable and often uncomfortable on the construction site and in the shop.

I would like to pause here and make it clear that not all men have made life difficult for

us. That some individuals have been supportive, even vital, to our surviving and flourishing on the job.

So, where are we now? In spite of all the difficulties, women are involved in an extremely broad range of trades and technologies.

In the last six months I have spoken to women who were machinists, electronic technicians, partspeople, piledrivers, electricians, painters, ship's stewards, drywallers, doing track maintenance for CN, marine engineers, carpenters, water treatment technicians, cabinetmakers, heavy equipment operators, shipwrights, mechanics, labourers, ironworkers, crane operators, welders, plumbers, boilermakers, tilesetters and avionics mechanics.

I think we should give ourselves full credit for the fact that we are, by any measure, enormously successful. For example, large numbers of women are now running their own trades and technology businesses. In Whitehorse, Betty Irwin runs her own business in electronics, Lynn Standing in electrical, and Jan Millar in machining. In Vancouver, Lori Longstaff runs a tile business and Jacqueline Frewin is a building contractor. In Winnipeg, women set up EMBLA Construction which has trained almost every journeywoman carpenter in Manitoba. In Saskatchewan, Linda Skomorowski has a plumbing, heating and air conditioning business. In Toronto women are working together in Kaya Construction, doing renovations. In Montreal, Marie Andree Courval runs her own cabinet shop, and in Nova Scotia, Sharon Macfarlane and Laila Lainio run their own painting and drywall bsuinesses, and Lorraine Deauville is an electrical contractor in Truro.

Women are also being promoted within the trades. In Ontario, Sue Kaakee is an electrical foreman and Pat Oakes is a Mohawk Indian ironworker foreman. Janet Pinder is Engineering Support Manager for Mobile Data International in Vancouver. Blanche Morrison has worked as a foreman on track maintenance crews in the Maritimes, Sherry Graham in Ontario and Mary Jane Vaughan in Halifax have both won positions as Safety Inspectors, and Diane Shewchuk is an Apprenticeship Counsellor for the province of Manitoba.

Women, including Judy Doll and Alice Macpherson and Marilyn Lance in Vancouver and Donna Allary, a Metis woman in Winnipeg, are teaching small engine repair and welding and industrial arts at trades training schools and high schools in B.C. and Manitoba, and these are only a few examples of where we've gone with our skills. And there is more, for everywhere, we are each of us educating every day simply by being seen and being known on the job. We all are teaching, for example, that women *can* do and are doing this work.

Women who had just finished describing some difficult personal experience would suddenly sit up, their faces would soften and they would say, "I love my work!"

Although we have made enormous strides in the past 10 years, we have a long way to go before our gains are solidified, before women stop being "non-traditional" in this work. It is therefore important for us to help each other to reinforce our strengths.

Across Canada when I asked women to name their chief sources of support, most of them named two groups. One was each other – individually and in Women in Trades organizations.

The other was their union. Although women had mixed experiences with union support, in general trade unions have been one of the few organizations that have had the power and the principles to consistently lobby for women's right to do what we choose and do it with fair pay and good working conditions.

Women told me of union dispatchers (often women) who gave them a fair chance at the next job, of union supervisors who spoke up for them when a promotion was due, of fellow

union members who encouraged them and voted for them when they ran for office.

Women in the trades and technologies have become presidents of their locals, shop stewards, safety officers and elected officials. It is now time to use our voice to raise our concerns with the union bureaucrats, not just the working members, and make the concerns of women in trades and technologies serious lobbying issues for the Canadian trade union movement.

I was recently at my brother's wedding where the minister was a woman. When I asked her if she thought the Roman Catholic church would ever accept women priests, she didn't hesitate. "Oh yes," she said, "It will take some time but we women always get our way – eventually."

It will take us some time, too, but with continued courage and mutual support, we will also get our way in the trades and technologies.

And that brings me to a final point, which is the term, "non-traditional."

If we are going to claim this work as our own, it cannot continue to be "non" anything for us.

I think it is clear that, with our magnificent record of performance over the past 10 years, women are still, although in small numbers, becoming integrated into the trade and technology workforce. We are, like the men before us, getting skills and tickets and being promoted, becoming, in our turn, teachers of those skills.

We have met the challenge. We have proven our jobs in the trades and technologies are no longer "non-traditional." They are ours.

One day you or your daughter or my niece will walk onto a new job and the foreman will say to the supervisor, "Who's that?" and he'll answer, "Just another carpenter." Or maybe that should be, "*She* will answer...."

I wish us all good speed and good working together on the long but enormously worthwhile journey toward that goal.

Kate Braid compiled her Masters thesis in Communications from Simon Fraser University on Women In Non-Traditional Occupations in B.C. She then apprenticed and became a journeywoman carpenter. She was the first woman elected to the executive council of Vancouver Local 452 of the Carpenters' Union. She recently took a sabbatical to research the current situation of tradeswomen and technologists in Canada for a pamphlet for Labour Canada and is using the material for a novel in progress. Since the conference, she has returned to work on construction at Vancouver General Hospital. Braid is a founding member of the Vancouver Women In Trades association.

CHAPTER 2

What happened once we got our tickets

This workshop was a roundtable discussion with tradeswomen from all over the country telling their stories. Here are some of them.

Just give me the chance

Jean: I am 28 years old, single parent, mother of two. I work in Halifax as a machinist apprentice. I have my third-year ticket. My hours are in, I'm working on my fourth. It's taking me a while, takes a while to get your papers. One of the first questions people ask is, "Why? Why did you ever get into this?" For me when I saw a machine shop, it was, "That's it, that's what I want to do." First time in my life I saw something I actually wanted to do. So I went out and got into the trade and started school. I got a job two months after I finished my schooling.

I work in private industry, there's no union, and if you want something you have to ask for it. For example, I do several bolts, and they figure, well, since she got good at bolts, maybe we'll let her do something else. Then they change their minds and put me back on bolts. It's very hard trying to get men to change their minds and their attitudes of what a woman can do. So, that's what I've been fighting for the last couple of years and it's still a battle for me. Hopefully there are many women out there that have got their ticket. Put their hours in and they're doing fine. You know there's a lot of men that will accept women. But I can also tell you that as many men who can accept you, there are just as many who won't and some of them let you know very clearly. But a lot of men will hide behind a brick wall, and fight you from behind. It's hard to get those men to confront you because once they do they look at you and say, "Well, gee, she's really not that bad." It changes their whole attitude and I don't think men like that. I don't think they like the idea that a woman is just as smart or we can work just like they can.

For me to gain my journeypapers was truly a sense of accomplishment.... I paid my dues in little dribs and dabs all the way along the way, from the first lumberyard I walked into and startled the men, to the first major job I estimated and handed in the contract for.

I have so many questions myself, about what happens after I get my ticket. Are the men going to change, at least a little bit? Will they accept me, just a little bit

more? Do I have to find a new job? You know, because once I get my ticket these men are going to say, "You've done nothing, you still haven't done any of the work that we've done." Hopefully when the time comes I'll be able to stand up and say, "Well, I can do it if you'll just give me the chance."

I work with about 30 men in my shop, they're pretty confused, and they're all different. Most of them have their tickets, most have been working at their trades for 25 years if not longer. We're independent, no government, no unions, no nothing. So these men I work with are about 45 to 50 years old, and when they see a woman, they say, "What's going on here? Let's treat her like a lady." In some cases it's nice to be known as a woman in a man's world, but then you also get so many people saying, "Since you are a woman we have to treat you totally different." In some respects, I think they do. Because you are not a man. I know I'm not, I don't want to be called a man by any man. They find that even harder to accept. I got in an awful big fight when I left to come to this conference. Heaven only knows if I'll have a job when I get back.

From machinist to carpenter

Allison: In Manitoba there are very few women machinists. I got my ticket in July of 1985. I did an apprenticeship at a small company where they do repair and overhaul of small airplane engines. It's an odd place to work, very paternalistic. It was a family business and was quite self-righteously non-union. Various attempts had been made to unionize the place, none of which succeeded.

When I started there, it was at the time the government had designated machining as one of the critical skill shortages. Which meant that out of my class, and there were four women in my pre-employment class, all of us got apprenticeships. In fact, everybody in that class who wanted an apprenticeship got one. That situation lasted, I believe, three years in Manitoba. Then the federal money dried up and apprenticeships dried up as well.

Machining is one of the trades in which Canada has a really poor record of training apprentices. They have traditionally taken journeypeople from Germany, from England, from Scotland, from other places. So most of the men in my shop who had tickets did not have Canadian tickets. There were a couple of men who had tickets through the Air Force or Air Canada, which had always trained apprentices.

At the time I was going through my apprenticeship, my company had its first batch of apprentices. They hired six out of my class. I was the only woman. At the same time there was a big push for all the men who had worked there for all those years to get Canadian tickets. It was a way the company used to pit people against each other and to do a number of quite nasty things. Being the only woman there was quite an experience, having been one of four in my pre-employment course. I was incredibly naive about what it was going to be like.

In class, we were all quite different, different ages, different backgrounds, different abilities, some had kids, some didn't. It meant they couldn't pigeonhole us. They weren't able to look at us and say, "You are woman." Being the only woman in a shop, you represent all women. That's hard to deal with and hard to break down. In a factory situation you work with the same men every day. It's not like being a carpenter where you work on different job sites and work with different crews. You work with the same men 40 hours a week, in the same place. Just surviving that for four years is something. By the time you have finally finished and gotten your ticket you know these guys. You know them better than they know you. The fact that you've hung in means that something has changed. It's a part of what the apprenticeship program always has been, in the sense of "paying your dues." That's what an apprentice does. One of the things we need to look at in apprenticeship programs is the way that apprenticeship has historically worked. Young men learned the trade, paid their dues, and then got to be journeymen so they could do the same nasty tricks to young men that were done to them. But it's quite different – I started my apprenticeship at twenty-eight – to have an adult woman go into a shop and be treated like a 16-year-old man.

There were four women in my class, plus there was one woman who had gone through the pre-employment course the year before. I took almost an extra year to get my ticket because I was pregnant with my son during my apprenticeship and was on maternity leave. So by rights I should have been the fifth woman in Manitoba to get a ticket. I was the first. Since then there has been one other woman in Manitoba get a ticket as a machinist. And that's it. You begin to feel like you're carrying all of that responsibility. It wasn't that any of them decided they didn't want to be a machinist. It was a whole gamut of reasons they didn't finish their apprenticeship, none of which had anything to do with their ability to do it or their desire to do it.

Being the only woman in a shop, you represent all women. That's hard to deal with and hard to break down.... You begin to feel like you're carrying all of that responsibility.

When I finally got my ticket, I think it was a major surprise to most of the men to realize I had been there that long and I actually had finished. Friends of mine had organized a party that a lot of shop people couldn't come to because of other commitments, so the shop then organized a party for me. That was the oddest party I had ever been at. I had spent four years working with these men, and I knew who their partners were and a fair amount about what their lives were like, but none of their partners knew me or really had anything to do with me. We had this party at my house. The men were all out in the front yard drinking beer. Most of their partners, their wives, their women friends, came very dressed up and stayed in the living room and talked to each other. I sort of wandered back and forth and wondered where I belonged.

Now I work as a carpenter. I don't have an apprenticeship but I would really like to. I'm self-employed. I do small renovations, cabinetwork, almost anything someone is willing to pay me to do. There's a lot of similarities between machining and carpentry. For people who don't know what a machinist does, I usually describe it as being like a carpenter only you work with metal. I loved machining. If I could be self-employed as a machinist, I'd do it. But I finally got to the point that I realized I was going to be the only woman in the shop for a considerable period of time. And that the comfort level I had achieved was also about as comfortable as it was going to get. It was okay. There were two or three men that I had gotten to know really well and were quite good. I gave them books and they read them and talked to me about them. People always wanted to know what I was reading, checking the books in my tool box.

But that company does a lot of work for the Air Force. And they work on parts that are taken off somebody's engine and then go back on. So there's considerable checks on things and every now and again they need a scapegoat for mistakes that have been made. I felt that was happening to me and I realized I didn't really want to be there anymore. I had other options. I had gotten my ticket. I was really happy about that. I was ready to do something else.

Another woman friend of mine, who had done part of her apprenticeship as a machinist, and I set up our own business which we called "Wood Women," to do carpentry. I still love the work. I like wood. I like metal too, but... wood's different. It's a lot more forgiving. You don't work to thousandths of an inch in wood. Which is sort of nice.

One of the things I would like people to think about is, what happened to the other women we started with and went through with? And what about the time it took us to get our tickets? It took me almost a year longer than average, and I have a sense that is normal for women. That it does take longer.

Paid my dues in dribs and dabs

Judy: I've been in carpentry for about 18 years. I worked in the trade for eight years and then wrote an exam in order to get my ticket. I did not have an official apprenticeship. I had the validated hours of experience. For

me to gain my journeypapers was truly a sense of accomplishment. I appreciate Allison's image of having paid your dues. I paid my dues in little dribs and dabs all the way along the way, from the first lumberyard I walked into and startled the men, to the first major job I estimated and handed in the contract for. Getting my papers validated who I was and what I was doing after quite a number of years of paying those kinds of dues. It also gave me credibility as a carpenter with other tradespeople. I worked on probably six crews during that time, I ran my own business and did my own contracting when I was not on crew.

I found with a ticket, with papers that said I had qualified, other tradespeople around me seem to respond: "Yes, I accept that you're a carpenter. The government has said you're a carpenter. The test has said you're a carpenter." Before I got my ticket I would be introduced as Judy and she does carpentry. After I got my ticket, friends of mine would say, "This is Judy and she's a journeywoman carpenter." Or a journeyed carpenter, or a journeyman, and I would look at them a little and think, "Journeywoman."

I felt a sense of acceptance or a sense of credibility came with having those papers that said, "Yes, you have met the criteria and achieved the goal." That was important for me, having been a woman who was brought up in the '50's – and for any of you who are at all familiar with that period, you know that women had a very, very definite place. I wanted to take auto mechanics in high school, but I was not allowed to. I went before the school board and they did not let me do it because I was female and I was categorically not supposed to be in that kind of an area.

I have held and carried with me that sense of not belonging all the way along. For all the work I ever did as a carpenter, I always had an underlying sense of not belonging there. But getting my ticket gave me a kind of basis for confidence. Somehow I had proved I could meet the requirements, that I did do the work acceptably. Personally, I need that outside reassurance, that outside sense that this is okay, because I had experienced so much of my life with the external world saying, "It's not okay." I suppose one of the reasons I stayed in the trades was because I liked defying the world that said, "It's not okay to be here." And I think most tradeswomen that hang in there have a certain element of defiance, and a sense of pleasure in taking on that challenge and proving the world wrong. It gave me the basis for the kind of confidence I did not have before.

So, the ticket was of great value to me and I used it to enhance my ability to do contracting work and run my own business. To be a journeywoman carpenter definitely gave me a bit of an advantage over women who were in carpentry but haven't passed the test. I got my ticket in July of '82, only six years ago. So I really only spent four years after having my ticket working in the trade. At that point I got arthritis and realized I was going to have to do something else with my life. Because the heavy, heavy work of carpentry – even though I prefer carpentry, I did a fair amount of heavy work like building decks, and redoing basements, and such things as that – was too much.

So, with a great deal of encouragement, in the fall of '86 I went to the UBC, BCIT Industrial Education Teacher Education program. And this has taken me two years to complete. The first year was a rather gruelling involvement in eight courses; I got 24 credits in that first year. I took a full course in woodworking and how to teach it. In metalworking, in power mechanics, in design, in drafting, electronics, and in material science. The point of this is to give you a broad enough base to teach. I thought I was going to die for six weeks, after being 20 years out of school. I would read my power mechanics, which I was fascinated with because it's what I always wanted to do, and two days later I would review it so I'd be prepared for class, and the only way I knew I'd read what was on that paper was I had written notes in my own hand. It just wouldn't hold. I sort of panicked until after my first power mechanics exam where I got an 80 percent and my teacher said, "If you keep this up you'll have a first-class in the course." That gave me the incentive I needed to really carry on. I was able to complete the entire requirements of this course by August of '88. I have now qualified for a full teaching

certificate in British Columbia in Industrial Education. Due to the fact that I have a bachelor's degree, it happens to be in music and voice, I could teach. They told me at UBC if I just wanted to teach music I could have taken only 15 credits. Since I wanted to teach Industrial Education, I had to take 45. But I have now gotten a job, half-time as an Industrial Education teacher with the Surrey School District, and I teach, would you believe, metalwork and power mechanics at a secondary school.

Now the advantage of my ticket at this point is that teachers in Surrey, according to their contract, are allowed years of experience at credit in terms of years of experience with trades experience. Before they give me full evaluation – and they are now in the process of accrediting me all that I deserve – I start out on sort of a zero level that for me is $22,000.00. I'm half-time, remember, I get half of this. But with my ticket, I get two years teaching experience credit for the ticket I have. That gives me $1,000 a year additional pay for every year of experience that they give me credit. I've got another two years possibly, so that's a potential of $4,000 a year more. They also give me credit for the degree I have. I don't have that all settled. It probably won't come until Christmas where they evaluate all my academic achievements, all my trades achievements, and all that, but it could be almost half again the salary I have. So having a trades ticket and the experience after that for what I'm doing, is really, really valuable, in real dollars and cents terms. I feel I have not really gone out of the non-traditional. I am in a traditional occupation, but I'm in a very non-traditional point in that occupation.

I have one girl in one power mechanics class because she couldn't get an elective anyplace else. I also teach one class of grade eights. These are kids that have to. It's called a Life Skills course. All male and female members of the grade eight class go through sewing, cooking, a bit of family studies, metalwork, woodwork, electronics and drafting. They shift around at 10-week periods, and this year I will teach four groups of grade eights that are totally mixed groups. So I will be a role model, and I will hopefully have a definite influence on how those girls see what they can do, where the options are, what they can do with their life. And to that end I feel like I'm still in a non-traditional role and I am able to play the kind of role that seems appropriate after what I've done with my life and I feel really, really good about it.

In some respects I feel more like I belong here where I am, than I did as a carpenter for 15 years. But one of the reasons I feel more like I belong is because I have been a carpenter. And I am just sort of rounding out all that portion of myself, and now I have the opportunity to offer it to the young people, hopefully at a place where it can make a definite difference in their attitudes.

The guys know I can do the job

Diane: I'm a heavy-duty mechanic. I am the first interprovincially certified heavy-duty mechanic in Canada. In 1979 I wrote the interprovincial exam; I had to wait six months and then I got my certification. I took a pre-employment course in Saskatoon and I had two jobs at the end of my course, after going through at least 100 applications. One was with a Caterpillar dealership. The other was with a mine.

[A] lot of men will hide behind a brick wall, and fight you from behind. It's hard to get those men to confront you because once they do they look at you and say, "Well, gee, she's really not that bad." It changes their whole attitude and I don't think men like that.

Now the mines offered $3.00 more an hour and the Caterpillar dealership just wanted me to go on fuel injection. At the mines I knew I was going to be able to do everything – and on 85-ton mining trucks, rock haulers. So I went up there. I stayed in camp, and at times

throughout the summer there were 300 men in camp. So I've gone through a lot of that harassment and everything. I've grown a hard shell. I stuck out my whole four-year apprenticeship program there.

My first and second year there... the second year another female came along working as an operator. We used to say, "She drove 'em and broke 'em, and I fixed 'em." But we stuck together through the whole thing. And we learned about life skills, everything together.

I had a boyfriend. I realized I had to have a boyfriend to keep the guys away. But I had my choice of most of them.

The way the mine was set up for the big rock-hauling trucks, there was a huge, wide-open area, and in the front people would walk through to go to catch the buses or scoop to work underground. A few miners walking by would throw comments at me and slang remarks. One time I knew they were coming out from underground, so I went to the tool crib and instead of using just a torque-wrench on the head-bolts on this 12-cylinder diesel engine, I went and got the one-and-a-half-inch drive impact and I'm gonna wing these things in and they'll torque them afterwards. So I got up there and I got prepared and I waited, and they all started coming up from underground. Then I started winging these things. And I knew they all had to hear me because I'm the only one still working. Everybody else is going home, it's time to go home, right? I stayed there. It was a few days later and you heard people talking in town, and saying they actually saw me doing something, right?

The guys I work with know I can do the job. It took them about a year before they realized it. And it was the older guys that helped me. The younger ones felt threatened by me. Even through my pre-employment course I asked stupid questions and the guys were laughing at me. I didn't realize till after I got on the job that they actually didn't know the answers either. But I was the one who asked the questions. So I was the one made to look the fool.

My supervisor started me on "oil changes" and "service maintenance." Grease jobs and all this. So you do that for a while till you feel really comfortable with this. Then you know it's time for a change, eh? Let's change. He's still giving you things like this, so you walk around and watch the other journeymen and what they're doing. Then when they ask, "You know how to do that?" "Yeah." My first chance. So I went and did it. That's the only way I got anywhere.

My supervisor didn't know what I could do and what I couldn't do. Although, in my mind he should have known what jobs I could do because he had given them to me, he knew what jobs I'd done. Even when I said yes I could do them, he should have known that I couldn't. But I did it with the help of the other journeymen in the shop who were Europeans, who had started their apprenticeship program at 16 years old. It's a lot different system than ours. We start after we finish our academic standings.

I got my certificate in the fall. The open-pit was closing in the north. At that time I was making $11.14. Finning Tractor in Vancouver was paying $15 and double-time overtime – not time-and-a-half. I got my bonus for staying till the end of September, and then flew out to Vancouver and applied for the job. So, I worked there.

My boyfriend was supposed to come out to B.C. with me and this was where we were going to raise some money to start ranching. We had bought a little farm in Manitoba. So we put all our stuff in there and then he didn't want to leave. So, I'm not playing these kinda games. So, I took off to Vancouver. I only stayed two months, and I had to come back and marry him. I was doing good in B.C., but I couldn't convince him that we had to have money to ranch.

Then I thought, well gee, we've got eight cows, no machinery, bush. What are these things gonna eat? His mom and dad have farm equipment – we can use their equipment, but we can't live on nothing. So I thought, "Well, I'll go and work. I'll go find a job." So I went to Dauphin. Seven bucks an hour for a journeyman heavy-duty mechanic. Rural Manitoba right? So, okay, I tried it. Our ranch was an hour out of Dauphin. It cost me more

money on gas... like it cost me money to work.

So, I said, "What the heck, I'll go down to Neepawa." I worked at a dealership there. Here I am going from off-road equipment, into mining equipment to agriculture. They were very impressed with me. They got me to help their mechanical supervisor open up a shop in another little town. So, we started the business there and got everything going. I worked there for about six months. It took a two-hour drive from home so I was staying there and going home on weekends. I thought to myself finally, "If I can do this for somebody else, I can do this for myself."

So I went home. Started my own business. I did on-the-farm service. A lot of the time if the farmer's equipment is broken down, he's got nothing to do. So, I'd get him to help me. This way it benefited him, too. He got to learn more about his machinery. How to maintain it. I would set up a log book for him, for his equipment. Some of the women, their husbands had passed away, and they kept on with the farm. They're trying to make a go of it. And they're not recognized too much. A lot of people around the area are trying to help them out.

I thought I was going to die for six weeks, after being 20 years out of school. I would read my power mechanics, which I was fascinated with because it's what I always wanted to do, and two days later I would review it so I'd be prepared for class, and the only way I knew I'd read what was on that paper was I had written notes in my own hand.

It went really good. I did that for three years. I had two reserves as well in my area. I was undercutting Dauphin. I was getting work. Then this job came along. The one I have now is an Apprenticeship Counsellor for the Province of Manitoba. For the Dauphin area, Parkland region. My husband says, "Ah, you'll never get that." Everybody told me I'd never get it. I applied, and quite a few people made application for that position. I won the competition for the job.

They called me at home. My husband and I were working on a tractor in the garage and I had a difficult time undoing, unteaching him the bad habits he had. For many years, he'd been helping me when we had stuff in the garage. We'd just finished having this huge argument over this tractor that we had in three pieces. So he had gone out to the garage, when they called and said I got the job if I wanted it. I said, "I wouldn't have made application if I didn't want it." I hollered out to my husband – so much for argument, we weren't mad at each other anymore.

I took the 10-month pre-employment course and the regular four-year apprenticeship program – which is about the norm for the males as well. Math and science, chemistry and physics, I was very interested in that but my grade 12 mark at Christmas time in physics was eight, so I dropped a whole grade 12. So I do have a complete grade 11. I'm an apprenticeship counsellor now.

I know I can do anything

Denise: I am from a small town of about 400 people, about three hours east of Saskatoon. I got my interprovincial papers in carpentry. I started in '76, going to school in Brandon. I took my level one and two pre-employment course.

What got me into that was living with my husband who was an engineer, and we lived out in the country and needed a lot of renovations. I majorily assumed that he had all the answers and he knew what to do, so we would discuss these things at night. He would go to work, I would stay at home and rip out walls and do this and that. And one day I asked one too many questions and he snapped at me and he never snapped at me before. So, that's it, I'm going to school, I'm going to

learn how to do this on my own. So that's what I did. I got my level one and two.

I've always been super self-sufficient. So, self-employment was the natural thing for me to do. I've never beaten my head against the wall in my entire life. I see a lot of experiences women have had working in situations with 40 men or... that's not been a part of my life, I have no interest in attempting it. I pick and choose the jobs I do. I ended up getting my ticket in '84. I finished off in Moose Jaw, through the encouragement of a man with the Department of Labour. In Saskatchewan, as a self-employed person, you can apprentice directly with the Department of Labour. What I had to do was, do general construction work and get signed affidavits. I still had to do the schooling. I finished, I got my time. Then I just kept sending in my hours. One day I got this certificate in the mail.

Carpentry is not the number-one thing in my life right now. I'm in business with a friend of mine. I got divorced. I had about 10 or 12,000 dollars that I didn't want to blow. I didn't want to live on it. I wanted to invest in something. I like earning money. I like having money in my hands every day. So, we bought a business where we're doing that. We have a grocery store – a liquor vendor and a bakery. Carpentry fits into that because I renovate, we make changes. We do some plumbing – which my friend Linda will probably tell me is all illegal. Just shit runs down hill, that's all you got to remember.

Getting my papers has given me the confidence.... Nobody has to tell me now that I can do anything. I know I can do anything. So when a fan motor burns out on a piece of refrigeration equipment I figure it out and I do it. It's given me that kind of confidence. I got some university. Math... in carpentry we were told that all you needed was grade six level. If you can figure out square root long hand, you can learn it in school. That's all you would need. Actually you don't need that. If you can read a rafter square, then you're okay.

Anybody got a permanent position?
Linda: I'm from Norquay, Saskatchewan. I am Canada's first interprovincial journeywoman plumber and commercial gasfitter. I started in 1972. I got my provincial in 1977. And thereafter my interprovincial.

I'm self-employed now with my husband. We have our own business at Norquay. When I went to college, they wouldn't accept me into plumbing when I first started out at university. I had to go to Human Rights, I had a court case in Winnipeg. They were sending me to different places of employment to see if they would hire a woman. Men didn't have to do this. But I had to go to 16 or 17 places to see if they would hire me and give me written affidavits. When I got enough of them I took them back, as Manpower [Employment and Immigration Canada] sponsored all the seats. When I had to go back into the office, they found a doctor who used to be a plumber for me to go have a medical. Every time I would go in to see him, he was in a rehab centre because he was quite old. So, finally I went to Human Rights. I had a letter from my own doctor saying, "If she's smart enough to go to university, you know, and most women pick up 50-pound toddlers and carry them around. There's no reason why she shouldn't be allowed to...." So then they put me on a waiting list.

Meanwhile, Brandon, Manitoba had heard about me and I applied there. They didn't want to go through all that, so they took me right away. But I was the only one paying their own way.

That's in Manitoba. That was in Winnipeg. Okay, that was the apprenticeship board.

Trade unions. They warned me that a woman had no place in Union Local 254 so you're out. You're never going to get into the union. I had problems. They kicked me right out of the union building. This was in '72, though. It's not like that now.

It's a little bit easier now. I can pick and choose now because it's a family business. It's very successful. We're very busy.

I'm also on the Saskatchewan Trade Advisory Board. On the Saskatchewan Curriculum Board. On the Department of Education. I'm here representing the Saskatchewan Equity Board. But I still can't get a permanent

position. Anybody got a permanent position? So I can branch off like you've branched off? No?

Taking time out to write

Kate: I'm a journey-carpenter. I got my ticket in '82. It took me four years. I did a pre-apprenticeship before that. I really loved math in high school and I did it extremely well, but in grade 11 a counsellor said I wouldn't need it so I dropped it. But I had enough to get into trade school. I was working in the union, in the Carpenter's Union in Vancouver when I got my ticket. They were extremely supportive of me and helpful in B.C. They passed a sexual harassment clause right after I and a couple of other women started. They put in a maternity leave clause. Changed the language of our contract and of our newspaper to be non-sexist. And sponsored conferences for women in the union several times so we could all get together. They were very supportive.

But the bottom dropped out of union work in British Columbia in 1981. So I began as a senior apprentice also to work with another woman, a journeywoman in Vancouver running a company, and I ran a construction company for four years until last year. Decided that I'd rather spend my time working, and contracting, as all of you know, takes enormous amounts of time. So, last year I started working for another woman as her foreman. That worked out really well for me, but I still didn't have enough time to write.

Now I'm writing. Taking a year off and writing about women, including a novel, *Women in the Trades*. But I plan... my money gives out in March, so in March I'll be going back to the trade.

A guinea pig for affirmative action

Gwen: I'm from Winnipeg. I started school in '77. Got my ticket in '82. Carpentry. So it took me five years to get my ticket. I was in a very, very fortunate situation and I understand it probably hasn't happened since. In '76 a company named EMBLA was founded. It was federal funding through a LEAP program. And during EMBLA's seven-year existence it produced six journeywomen carpenters. Most of the journeywomen carpenters in Manitoba come from that particular company. It is now no longer in existence. And apprenticeship is very, very difficult to get in Manitoba. I've heard through my apprenticeship of the hostilities within the Carpenter's Union. I guess none of us have broken down the doors to try and start making our way through that union. I've just met with a lot of hostility; if I were a man I wouldn't go near it if I valued my life.

I'm here partly funded by CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees], Local 500. I work for the City of Winnipeg at the moment as a seasonal employee. Since my apprenticeship I have been self-employed. Been a guinea pig in a number of affirmative action programs which I have very mixed feelings about. Some of the ways the process was actually handled through the officers, that's a whole issue in itself.

My academic background was Canadian grade 11, American grade 12. I didn't really have to do much in my final year as far as mathematics. So I didn't really have much of a background. Certainly was never encouraged to think it was going to be a useful thing to have in my future. So at the moment I am a part-time employee with the City of Winnipeg. The only reason I got in on an Affirmative Action program, the only reason I got on as an unskilled labourer was because I had my ticket. Those are the only women they are willing to take a chance on at the moment in the City of Winnipeg in that particular system. You can't even get unskilled labour which starts at $12.00 an hour, can't get in there without having your ticket. And it's just been this August that I've actually been elevated to a Maintenance 1. They consider that skilled labour. I am very happy to say that in two weeks I have an early layoff and for the winter season I'm going to be working as a stage carpenter for one of the theatres in Winnipeg.

That's something I'd like to say about carpentry: you might start out in the worst hellhole you can imagine, but it's not the end of the world, it's just the beginning. There are so many different things you can do as a carpenter, different forms and lines of work and things you could pursue without having to be where you started.

You'd mentioned something earlier this morning about being an apprentice and the situation it puts you in. You know, the patronizing and condescending. But it really does get better. They were there too and didn't know any more than you did at the time. It gets better from there.

Closer than I was

Linda: I'm from the Queen Charlotte Islands. I work for the Department of National Defense at the CSF Masset Base. My ticket is as a painter. Painting and decorating. I'm sponsored here by the Union of National Defense Employees – UNDE.

I started in '81 as a trades-helper. I was taken from the kitchen, where I had started in '79, and finally won a competition for this trades-helper. Just general, trades-helper, labour. The men in all the shops didn't want me; the labour shop, the general labour pool wouldn't accept my presence. I was lucky enough that there was a gentleman – the union president for our area, who was the master painter. He took me under his wing. And he showed me all the tricks of the trade.

In '84 I had three years under my belt painting but I didn't have any apprenticeship or anything. I went to the labour board and I asked them about an apprenticeship. So, they said, "Yeah, sure, we'll give you a year-and-a-half credit for the years you've already worked." So, I had to accept that. I did some more time in the paint shop there.

I moved down to Burnaby. Took my second and third year at the Pacific Vocational Institute. Wrote my exam and got my ticket. I had a year off and had a baby and all that good stuff.

Well, when I got my ticket, I couldn't work in the paint-shop anymore because I was a ticketed painter and they didn't want to pay me, so I was transferred to the labour pool. Where I was, they said, supposed to have been in the first place. Cutting grass and picking up garbage, using a jack-hammer, vibro-max and all that good stuff. So finally, I don't know how it happened, but about eight months ago I was taking an oil tank out of a basement and I was almost crushed by this oil tank. And the big boys upstairs heard about it and I was transferred back to the paint-shop with a promotion.

I'm not getting paid full painter's wages. I'm classified as a PCF 6. The two men that are professional painters there are classified as PCF 7. I'm closer than I was. And I'm still going after it.

My ticket works against me

Angie: I work for Manitoba Hydro as an industrial mechanic or a journeyman. My background in math and physics is like virtually nil. I took no physics in high school at all as I didn't think I was smart enough to do it. Math, I have grade 10 and 11 business math. I didn't even take math in grade 12. See, when I got hired with Manitoba Hydro all they wanted was grade 12. But the standards of hiring are higher now. You have to have Physics and Math 300. So I got in seven and a half years ago. I was lucky. But it doesn't matter because I went to my apprenticeship and I ended up getting the highest marks anyways. So what difference did it make?

I got the ticket in three years. Yeah, that's the interprovincial ticket in three years and then I had to do the Hydro books and Hydro exam in the fourth year. So, I did it like everybody else. Whether you're a woman or a man. I've had my ticket for over three years now. I've been working in the field ever since.

Someone was making a comment before about how her ticket helped her but in my situation it's working against me. When I was a trainee I was treated a lot better than I am now that I'm a journeyman because my boss figures, hey, well I should know everything all of a sudden.

Meanwhile, Manitoba Hydro, I'm not cutting them down, but they have to do a lot of work on their training program. They do not have the best training program. Like a lot of the time when I was a trainee, I was a "gofer." You were allowed to take things apart, but the boss wouldn't let you put them back together sort of thing. I worked a lot by myself without any guidance which gets a bit frustrating at times, when you don't have the answer to everything. And sometimes when you're asking

questions you get guys that say, "What the heck do you want to know that for? Like you don't really want to be here anyways." Or they just give you a hard time because that's the way some of them are. It's just been now since I've got my ticket that I'm really learning a lot. Right now I happen to be very lucky to be working with people who are quite knowledgable and are quite helpful in a lot of ways.

I still have a lot of trouble with my boss, but I just confronted him head on. I told him, "Look, what is it about me you don't like? Because since I set foot in this place you don't like me. I can tell and other people have noticed it." Like three of my colleagues actually said to me, "Don't take that, you know." When other people notice it, I know it's not in my head. So after that he kind of straightened out because he knew he had to.

Dangerous to feel too comfortable

Leslie: I work at the Navy dockyard in Halifax, Nova Scotia. We're all civilian tradespeople there. Our tradesmen have about 1500 men and about five women. In my shop we have about 150 machinists and tool-and-die and precision workers. I'm a journeyman machinist. I am fortunate enough to have another journeywoman machinist that I work with. I moved to Nova Scotia 10 years ago from British Columbia and I couldn't find a job in Nova Scotia without having the name of McDonald.... So, I knew I had to get some training of some sort. I was fortunate enough to be led to the Introduction to Trades Training for Women. I became interested in machine-shop work. Subsequently took a pre-employment course at NSIT.

I was hired at the dockyard in 1982. It took me three years to get my papers. Also at the dockyard in addition to doing our interprovincial ticket, which they don't really care if you do or not, they have their own trade test. It's a practical trade test. It's a pretty gruelling, two-day test. We also have a written test. I made the highest score on a competition, with ninety-nine and a half out of one hundred on a written test. Six of us in the competition and I came fourth place.

The way that happened is 40 percent of the mark was a grey area called "suitability." As a way of becoming accepted in my shop I became very involved with my union. I was on a two-week leadership course during the year, my final year as an apprentice, and they held that time against me. So I only scored 13 out of 20 on my personal suitability and all the rest scored 20 out of 20.

I want to talk a little bit about acceptance at the yard. I guess Kate and I, the other woman, we made the mistake of feeling a little too comfortable and a little too accepted at the dockyard. Like I said, I was very involved with my union. Because they never held any family social events, I organized Christmas parties, and picnics and whatnot. So, about five years after we'd started working there... we had known all along that the men have stags at the union hall every six months or so, where they hire a prostitute and one of the guys wins the door prize and they perform right up on stage there. We went to our union, the Social Club executive meeting one night and asked them, "Please don't have this in our union hall. Please have it somewhere else. These are reasonable men that we're dealing with. It's not looking good for a union,

Fortunately, when I went around applying to places I hit on this place where they have the only woman journeywoman, who had sworn she would never try and train another man.... I had to fight with them to keep my job, but the woman that was training me said there wouldn't be a man unemployed that would get the job, because she wouldn't train them. Because she'd had many, many guys in there that just couldn't learn from her because she's a woman.

especially a union that has women members. This is our money. We don't mind you guys having them, please don't have them in our union hall." In fact, when Kate was on her way to a union meeting one night, the cab driver turned around and said, "You don't look like you're dressed to perform." So that was really the final straw.

The men that were at the meeting, there was just the executive – keep it in mind all the time I'm very involved with the union – when we went back to work the next day, they lied and said we had threatened to call the police, the CLC, anybody else that would care to listen. For about four months – we're journeymen at this point – they sabotaged our work, our machinery. These guys we'd been really close to for four years, disowned us. That was about three years ago. Now we've been accepted back into the fold. They've sort of forgiven us. So, there is a danger of feeling too comfortable and too accepted.

I didn't do too badly in high school math. I only took it to grade 11. And grade 11 science. I spent three years between high school and going to trade school. I had to go back and do a really good review to get my math up to date. I did find it easier to learn when I had a trade to apply it to.

Opened up a small print shop

Valerie: I'm a journeywoman colour-stripper in the printing trade. I got my ticket in May of 1981. Fortunately I was very lucky to be trained by the first woman who was ever qualified as a colour-stripper in Ontario for the first three years of my apprenticeship. It made things a lot easier than they've been since then.

I guess as far as educational background, I remember very vividly the first course I tried to take to get somehow into this trade. *Grasping at Straws* was a course sponsored by Manpower [Employment and Immigration Canada] at Brantford, Ontario. I applied for the course and they made me take a pile of tests to qualify to take this course. I was the only woman who applied. I failed, miserably. They gave me spatial exams, all kinds of things. I think I got about 46 percent or something. They told me I couldn't take the course. So, I went back and I convinced them the reason I failed was because I was forced to take shorthand all through high school. Which I was. I still have a little certificate in my drawer that gave me a silver medal in the Victor 10 Key adding machine contest.

So they did finally allow me to take the course – however, I was the only one in the class who paid to go; the men were paid to go. So, I would waitress in a bar three nights a week and pay them $7.50 a day to take this course. I managed to get through the year and pass and everything.

I was told also I would never get a union apprenticeship because I was a woman and it just wasn't done. So, I decided I'll at least get a job somewhere in the trades. I managed to get a job in a little place to begin with. Fortunately, when I went around applying to places I hit on this place where they have the only woman journeywoman, who had sworn she would never try and train another man. They were getting really busy and I just happened to walk in the door the right day the right time and I was hired. But the union at that time tried to kick me out because they said there were a lot of men unemployed that should've got the job. So, then I had to fight with them to keep my job, but the woman that was training me said there wouldn't be a man unemployed that would get the job, because she wouldn't train them. Because she'd had many, many guys in there that just couldn't learn from her because she's a woman. So I got real lucky on that. Served my first three years apprenticeship there with her.

Then I had decided I wanted to specialize in colour-stripping so I moved to a very large plant in Hamilton, Ontario. It was a very large plant and it was all men. And me. I had a lot of harassment from my foreman there because they were telling me the men there were very unhappy, that I shouldn't be making the same money as them because I didn't have a family, didn't have a mortgage, and on and on and on. I asked them how everyone happened to know this. I guess they'd been in file and all that kind of stuff. So I had to take them on, on that one. I was there about a year and a half and things got a little bit better after awhile because I'd started working with some men

who were a little bit supportive of the whole thing and also, they could see that I could do my job. I stayed there until I ended up moving out west.

I had worked in my trade out here up until last September. I decided at that point I wanted to not work with all men and there was not anywhere where I would be working with other women. So, another woman and I opened up a small print shop on the Sunshine Coast in Gibsons. One of the reasons I was really interested in coming to this conference is because we're looking at the possibility of getting some funding to train women in the trade from pre-press up to printing and have more women apprentices in that trade.

Other than the Victor 10 Key adding machine, not a whole lot of experience in math and science. I did have a lot of difficulty at the beginning thinking differently. I had done quite well in grade nine in math, but the high school I was in told me I had to take shorthand or I couldn't stay there. It was a new school, and they had only so many seats. Because I was a woman I had to take shorthand, which meant business math. So, all through high school I took business math. So I was really quite lost at the beginning... but again, as it's applied to what you're doing it's a lot easier to learn. I found after awhile it's not a problem for me now. It was.

I'm not scared of heights, I'm scared of not having secure footing. I guess everybody is.

More fun than I've ever had in my life

Betty: I'm from Whitehorse, Yukon. I was the first woman in Canada to become interprovincially certified as a radio and television repair technician. What I was even prouder of is that two years later I received my CEASA certification. And again, I am the first woman to hold that. CEASA, it's Canadian Electrical and Appliance Service Association. It is a voluntary certification which is actually looked after by about 25 companies in Canada.

I was really well prepared to go into electronics because I have a bachelor's degree in music also. Back in the middle ages when I went to high school I took home ec and a what they called a commercial course which was shorthand and typing because you had to then.

On my 40th birthday, I decided I was tired of being a musician so I wanted to go into something different. I had been fascinated by electronics. All in all I think it took a period of about 10 years before I got my certificate, because I took my theory by correspondence course. I could not get into Vancouver City College or BCIT. In one case they refused to accept my application at that time. I was too old.

I could not find work in Vancouver, so I went to Whitehorse. Found a job there. About a year later, my husband, my son and I started our own shop. Now that made me ineligible for an apprenticeship. So I had to prove six years in the industry before I could write the examination. That's quite common. They will not let owners of businesses into an apprenticeship program. Obviously. All that I can say about it is that I really look forward to a lot of years being a bench technician which is what I love to do and I'm having more fun than I've ever had in my life.

No job, no apprenticeship, no nothing

Barbara: I'm from Prince George. I'm a journeyed electrician. I work in the pulp mill there. I started my apprenticeship at the Ocean Falls pulp mill which Premier Bennett closed down. I don't have very kind thoughts of him. The announcement was made about three or four months after I started my apprenticeship: "We're gonna shut the place down." I got no job, no apprenticeship, no nothing. I figured I didn't have a hope of getting anywhere. However, at that time Northwood Pulp in Prince George was expanding. They hired a bunch of extra apprentices from outside. It is very rare for the pulp mills to do that in B.C.

The union there, my local 603, said if you're hiring outside apprentices, give preference to the people from Ocean Falls. So they did. There were two first-year electrical apprentices, one man who talks too much and me. And they hired three apprentices from Ocean Falls altogether. Me, one pipefitter, and one millwright. So I got in there, went straight through a four-year apprenticeship and I've been working there for the last five years. Well, eight years all together now. Almost five years as a journeyperson.

I finished high school with grade 11 math and got my grade 12 afterwards. I even got a year of university math although at university I majored in English and history. So that's not really related to my trade.

There's no one in my family who has really encouraged me very much. My husband was totally opposed to the idea of my going into a trade. He figured I'm scared of heights, I'll never make it up on those ladders. I did. I nearly quit a couple of times over the climbing. I survived and it's okay now. I'm not scared of heights, I'm scared of not having secure footing. I guess everybody is. I was forty-five when I got into this. No problem. Actually the biggest problem has been lack of muscle. Because I am not as strong as most men – with nothing but men around, there's over 200 tradesmen at the mill and me. I'm the only woman at all three pulp mills in Prince George. You get a fair-sized transformer, not just fixing little lights like these things here, those are small. I'm a heavy-duty electrician. Not electronics at all. Transformers, 100, 200, 500, 1700 horsepower motors. They're not little. My union is Local 603, Canadian Paper Workers Union. I don't lift anything more than what the union says is okay. The thing was, I had never done any really heavy work before. Housewife and so forth.

You can't do that to me

Lin: I'm a fourth-class power engineer in B.C. I got my certification in '81. It's not an apprenticeship, it's a training program here in B.C. You can do either a correspondence course in a certain amount of time or you can go to school full-time for a year, which is what I did. So I completed that in one year. Went through on a Manpower [CEIC] sponsorship, which was a problem to begin with. I walked into the Manpower office and said I wanted to take this course and they said, "No you can't, you're a woman." I said, "You can't do that to me, you're not allowed to say that." He said, "Yes I can, I can deny you the right to take a course if I feel that you will not be employable in the field and because you're a woman you will not be employable." So I went to the Boiler Inspector's office and talked to the Chief Boiler Inspector. I went to the school where it was taught. I talked to the head instructor for the course. Both of them phoned the counsellor at Manpower back and said, "This is ridiculous." So finally I was allowed into the program with a sponsorship. I completed the program, finishing first in my class in everything except machine shop where I finished second. I was the only woman in the program. There were about 25 or 30 of us.

Then came the problem of looking for work. Well, this was 1981, at the beginning of the recession. I was interviewed by some of the oil companies. One of them asked to see the top three students in the class. They hired the other two. Who were men. And not me. Finally the head instructor knew a chief engineer at the power plant at Riverview Hospital in Vancouver and talked to him and he hired me. I was hired as an auxiliary for the B.C. government. Well, we all know what happened with the auxiliaries for the B.C. government very shortly thereafter. So, that was the end of that job. I then worked as a draughtsman for a plumbing company for a short while and decided that $5.00 an hour to do drafting for a plumbing company isn't what I wanted and I went back to university. I've since completed my Masters degree; I'm working on my PhD at Simon Fraser. In mathematics.

So my background is in academics. I took math in high school. Grade 11, and physics and chemistry. I never finished high school. I went back to university as an adult student. But I enjoyed it and did well in all the way through. As far as problems in getting a job, one of the things I found very interesting, as a power engineer you often work on shifts, with two people in a powerhouse at night. And I

was told, this was going to be my biggest problem – this was by the instructor in my course, who was very sympathetic – that it would be assumed if I worked all night with a man there would be some hanky panky going on and his wife would not like this and therefore nobody would hire me. It ended up, I worked in a plant where it was a two-person shift. I did work night shift. There was never a problem. There were 20 to 30 engineers in that plant, but only a few that worked in the control room. And I got along with them fine and did not have any suggestion of that problem while I was working there. But it certainly was a barrier to employment in that field. The other silly excuse they used was that a lot of plants did not have separate washroom and shower facilities. It's very easy to put a sign on the door or something.

I was interviewed by some of the oil companies. One of them asked to see the top three students in the class. They hired the other two. Who were men. And not me.

Training women in machine shop

Suzanne: I'm from Toronto. I am the first woman in Ontario to become a journeywoman machinist. In high school I took math and all three sciences to grade 12. Although I wasn't encouraged to do it, I did it because at that time I thought I would be going on to university. As it turned out, I didn't go on to university.

I did take a WITT program. Following the WITT program I took the basic machine shop course at George Brown College in Toronto. Following that I worked in three small machine shops. Following that I did get into the University of Toronto – Mechanical Engineering department. That's where I took my apprenticeship. I completed that in three years, which is the normal length of time. Following that, I took a two-year CAD-CAM course. It means Computer-Assisted Design, Computer-Aided Manufacturing. Then following that, I joined West End Machining. I was a project coordinator there for three years. West End Machining is funded through the federal government. We train women in the basics of machine shop. I just left that program in December. I am now working for Toronto Hydro as an underground transformer inspector. And that's it.

I actually want to get in to be a station mechanic at Toronto Hydro. That's my aim. It's a different trade. But it is somewhat associated with machining, in that you are repairing things, taking them apart, fixing them, and that sort of thing.

Apprenticeship through low-paying jobs

Jan: I'm from Kelowna. I got my papers in benchwork and joinery in January of this year. At BCIT. In the class there were three women which is kind of neat. It's the first time they had three women. He'd call us his cooking class. In high school I took honours math and physics and stuff like that but I went to university taking English and archaeology. You weren't encouraged particularly to go on in maths at that time, '69.

My apprenticeship took five years starting with a WITT course in Kelowna. My experience has been a little different – actually kind of worse in some ways, because benchwork, joinery and cabinetmaking is probably the lowest-paid trade. In the Okanagan, certainly. I started off at $5.00 an hour. Worked with one employer for a year, came back after scoring top in my class, asked for a fifty-cent-an-hour raise. He laid me off. Next job, same thing happened. I got my apprenticeship basically through very low-paying jobs. I've never been paid more that $8.75 an hour for doing identical work that the men in my shops, mill-workshops, get paid $12.00 an hour. Including the job I was doing when I went away to school which was machining. Doing all the dados and all the brain work in the shop basically. When I came back, they didn't hire me back – because they would have to pay me $12.00 an hour instead of $8.75.

Right now I'm unemployed, trying to become self-employed. But that's difficult because in the last year I went to school twice. It cost...

you get UI so, for me that was about $600 because I had low wages. My room, alone, in Vancouver cost me $750 'cause they closed the residence for out-of-town students. It's been an extremely difficult apprenticeship. But I still do love cabinetmaking.

It's hard to believe, but during the time period that this was happening, I've been raising four teenagers. So... I came here to find out what to do next. I would like to make some money, because my expenses have been identical to the men's. My experiences have been identical to the men's. There's no power for the women in my trade. None at all. Every time I've raised my voice, I've been fired. My apprenticeship counsellors have said, "Tough. Don't make waves, because it's a small valley and if they get to know who you are, no one will hire you." And that is somewhat true.

So now I am trying to be self-employed. But I've paid out $4,000 to go to school and I have to pay that back first, and I'm raising kids. My husband works. The good part is that my husband, who's supported me wonderfully (he's a mathematician) through this whole experience, has an extremely good job. And it's too good for him to leave. When you're raising a lot of large children with size 12 feet....

Oh, I run a tablesaw in my yard because it doesn't fit in my basement, and I have to unplug my dryer to plug my tablesaw in. So I don't know. There are no unions, there's been no support. I've done it out of a love for woodworking. Because of something you said earlier. I was too damn stubborn to quit. I mean, I'm tough. I mean when I went back to school, I always came in second. And pushed one guy to beat me. And yet, it's very frustrating. In the shop I was working in, other than the draughtsman, I was the only person with papers and still, the lowest-paid person. So, I don't know. This may be discouraging to women going into trades, but that's just one person's experience. The pressure on you, as a woman, is everyone in the shop listens for the zing. You know, zingggg...! "Oh, what was that?" It's a strange experience. At the moment I'm looking for other things.

I am also very concerned about health standards in workshops. The fact that people are getting cancer. The fact that the shops are filthy. The stuff you breathe is unbelievable. That I'm the only person in the shops I work in who wears headphones. Masks. I mean, I look like an alien at work. They can't tell if I'm a woman because I... anyway, that's a different experience. And I needed to come here to get some support... of, you know, "What do you do next?"

First woman in the union

Marcia: I'm a journeywoman carpenter. For a long time I thought I was B.C.'s first journeywoman carpenter. But I went in and got all the records back to 1978 from the Apprenticeship Branch of all of the women who had ever gotten their tickets in British Columbia, and I discovered there was a woman, I never knew her, don't know where she is now, but she did get her ticket before me. It was wonderful going through all those records and looking at the over 600 tradeswomen who we've qualified here in British Columbia in the past 10 years.

I started my apprenticeship after building a community centre for three years as a volunteer. Decided that people make a living at this sort of thing, so I would too. I tried for almost a year to get into the course. The apprenticeship counsellor in my area put every block in my way that he could, including not telling me when the course start date changed and things like that. I had to go to the director of the apprenticeship branch in the province, to tell him I was angry and that I had been discriminated against and I'd been waiting a year, and it was time. He said, "Well, you can't get into the course you want to get into, but there just happens to be a course up in Dawson Creek in northern British Columbia that's starting in three days if you want to go up there." It was January and I went up there. Spent six of the worst months of my entire life with a bunch of guys who really didn't want to see me through that course.

In terms of the math stuff – I spent a year trying to get into that course and on the very first day they gave us a math test and I got a 58 percent because that was never my forte in school. And I just thought, "My God, I've

spent a year trying to get into this course. I'm going to flunk out on the first day." I immediately went to the basic training, skill development people, I said, "I need an upgrading textbook quick!" And they gave me the textbook and the answer book. I spent every night for the three months studying refresher mathematics. And I got the highest mark in the class on the final exam. So, it paid off, and I figure we can do anything we set our minds to – even if we didn't do it in high school.

When I finished my training experience there, I was fortunate enough to work with an architect and a carpenter-cabinetmaker, both of whom had great skills. And was really fortunate to work with really fine men, learning wonderful skills. I then got apprenticed to a Victorian renovation and finish-work company and did bits of work for them for quite awhile. Then I decided I was ready. The guy up the road was getting the jobs all the time. When the jobs came up, he would get them before me.

I felt if I were on a hiring list and they had to send me out to work, nobody could really complain. So I tried to join the union, and I spent a year talking to the business agent to get into the union. He kept saying, "Wait till the work picture is better." Then finally I was getting tired of waiting. I said, "Look, it's March. You said the work picture would be better in March. I'm coming to the meeting." And he said, "Okay. Fine. Come to the meeting."

Well, I got to the meeting and he wasn't there and he had never spoken to the executive at all about my coming, ever. I walked into these older Doukhobor men who were just sitting around saying, "What are you doing here?" And I said, "I'm Marcia Braundy, and I'm a third- or fourth-year carpentry apprentice and I'd like to join the union." It was like their mouths dropped open. They couldn't believe their eyes. And then they said, "Hmmm. Why don't you come back next month?" Which I did. And I guess they talked to enough people in that process, and I heard later that the business agent had in fact said to them, "You know, you have a human rights case on your hands if you don't do this." And when I got there to the next meeting, I walked in and they all looked at me and then I had to go out and they voted about whether or not I could get into the union. Then when I came back in, the president of the union reached over and said, "I'd like to welcome you as the first woman in the Carpenter's Union in British Columbia." I had no idea I was in that position because a lot of other women had taken the course before me. I figured they had made it before me, but they hadn't.

I worked on great union construction sites. When you're an apprentice, you never know whether what's happening to you is because you're a woman or because you're an apprentice. And never until you get your ticket do you ever find out what the difference is. Once I was building a hospital, a senior citizen's hospital up in Nakusp, and the business agent had come around to the job and I was due to leave the job and go down to my fourth-year course. I was feeling very nervous. It was four and a half years but I felt like I didn't know enough. And so I was sitting in the bar with the guys, and I said, "Len, do you think maybe I should put this off? For maybe another six months? And perhaps I should get a little more under my belt?" He just laughed. All the guys at the table just laughed and said, "We all felt that way." The fact is just because you get your ticket doesn't mean you have to know everything the next day. "People will understand," they said to me. I mean, you're a new journeyperson. They're not going to expect you to be somebody completely different than you were last week. But I understand what you were saying, that they do, and they can.

It took me four and a half years from the time I started my apprenticeship. I had three years experience working before that but it didn't count.

It's been really good since I got my ticket in terms of the attitudes of the men. The change is that you've made it. And they respect you for that.

Using the right tools for the job

Mirelle: [Simultaneous translation from French] I'm a lineman with Hydro Quebec. Linewoman if you like. If you don't know what a lineman

is, I put up electricity lines. I climb up electricity poles. I build new electrical lines. I renovate old lines too and bring them up to date. I'm 24 years old and for a year and a half I've been doing this thing. It's a governmental project that was set up a while ago. It encouraged 12 women actually to get into the area. That project lasted for about three months. There were six men and six women together. And everything worked out very well, it was a tremendous team. The instructors were good. They didn't discriminate against women. There were guys who were learning the same thing we were learning. And they weren't better than we were at all. We were all beginners in that business. So we had a lot of fun in those three months. But after that real life really started. I was in a team with a leader, a journeyman and myself. Three of us. It was a bit more difficult than the training stage because that was real life. And everything we learned in our training period was to use the tools that would make the work easier but really on the spot you had to have muscles, arms.... The women could use the tools but often don't do so because of a sort of pride, we go at it just as heavily as the men do. You know, we often wonder why we should suffer for our pride. You get a back pain all the same. My team leader respects me as a woman and respects the job that I do. In any case I am making progress. They all help me with my job and they didn't discriminate against me because I was a woman. In the six-person group there were some macho men who were saying, "What are you doing here? This isn't your place." That was depressing and it really wasn't much fun at all in that kind of situation.

We get a kind of a certificate after three months, which indicates that you've been a lineman. First-year lineman, second-year lineman up until the sixth year. And in the sixth year you become a real lineman. You can be a journeyman or a team leader, a crew leader. Because there are always problems of seniority. You can become a crew leader after six years. But you don't forcibly get sent on from one stage to another. I just got my second-year ticket. I'm a second-year lineman at the present time. I passed the exam.

One of us was a borderline case. She worked hard. It was that person who was working with the macho crew and she had more trouble because she was always working under pressure. She explained to me that when she was working her knees were trembling because they were criticizing her, "You don't do it right. You don't do it like that. That's not the proper way of doing it. You're just a woman. You don't know what you're doing." And so on....

That girl didn't have the same character as I did. If I was on that crew they wouldn't have continued saying things like that to me because I've got a very tough personality. And I can get myself respected and I explain what's going on. She was telling us her problem, but when she was on the work site with her workmates she suffered. So we had to explain to her that she had to tell them what was going wrong, when it was happening and we hope that she wont give up because in January we're changing crews. We change crews every January. And she is going to perhaps find herself amongst a more understanding group.

About my studies. I studied clerical, accounting at high school, but I really wasn't satisfied. I was always sitting down and I've got a lot of energy. I don't want to spend my life sitting down. I want to do something else. So that's why I went to Hydro Quebec as a clerk in the computer department, but it wasn't enough. So when I heard about this project, I said, "Let's go, I'm going to do it. If I don't get in, I don't get in but at least I'll have tried." So, for a year and a half I have been always outside. Working hard physically. And I like it, and it keeps me in good shape.

Well, about muscular strength. I often use my body instead of my arms when I have to deal with heavy things. The men, of course, they do that with their arms, but physical strength, well, I give out 100 percent. Men are only giving perhaps 75 percent of their potential and I'm very tired in the evening. My arms are stronger than they used to be and my legs are too. When it really is hard, my workmates – well, there's often things that you can't do alone and we help one another. So, I get help, and if I didn't I wouldn't be there. We've got tools that help you when it's really super hard,

physically hard, some of the men use those tools and I try to use them. I think that's the way we can get by. The guys, they get backaches too. More and more guys are using those tools, so I think women in the workplace help them realize the potential of those tools. Before they didn't use them because they were wimpy if they used those tools. The context that I live and work in, people are much more gentle; we used to talk about linemen being really hardboiled and drunkards but they're much more gentle since the women have been in the workplace.

I'd like to be an instructor – give training courses for linemen and linewomen in the area of electricity, for example. There was a basic electricity course I took at the technical high school because they require electricity and mathematics so I took an evening course. Electricity, I really love it. I can eat it. I'm going to continue to take courses in electricity because it really is super. Something that is very interesting and that I like. But I would like to become an instructor or a manager because in our area we've had, for example, a pilot project, trying to get more women into management. But management doesn't really interest me so much, not because I don't want to manage men or don't want to manage women but I'd rather manage myself or else give courses to people, training courses to people. And more and more they have these kinds of pilot projects. You know, Hydro Quebec is really vast and there are a lot of chances for women to get in and if I could apply as an instructor I would. But you need the basic courses as an instructor and some more courses that I am going to do in order to become an instructor. We're quite lucky that we are on an equal footing with the men from the point of view of seniority and so on.

I mean when I went back to school, I always came in second. And pushed one guy to beat me.

Once I got my ticket, the pressure was off

Sally: I'm from Nelson, British Columbia. I'm a benchwork-and-joiner. I got my ticket about three years ago, that'd be three and a half now. It took me, I think it was five years to finish my apprenticeship, which is a year longer. And I spent the last part of my apprenticeship scrambling for work and working a lot on my own. I was apprenticed to Marcia, but there wasn't enough work to keep both of us busy, and she was doing other things. So, I spent a lot of time working on my own. The apprenticeship branch in Nelson at that time was quite supportive because they were losing apprentices at a mad rate because of the economy. So they were desperate to keep anyone on that they could.

I quit taking maths and sciences in high school as soon as I could because it seemed like too much hard work.

I've been working for the last year and a half as coordinator of the Nelson Women's Centre. The year and a half previous to that after I got my papers, I did carpentry work and was sporadically unemployed. My ticket didn't make a difference in terms of the people I was working with. It made a difference to me in that I felt like, it had been a long hard struggle to find enough work to get my papers and once that was done somehow the pressure was off. And when the opportunity came up to take the women's centre job it seemed like a lot steadier work. It's a short-term job, but it just seemed like there wasn't that drive in me to go on scrambling for work related to my trade anymore. So that certainly made a difference.

Loved running heavy equipment

Karen: I'm from Toronto. I'm working for Ontario Hydro. I'm a cleaner right now, they call me a shift handyperson. They pay me $15.00 and change an hour. I clean toilets and vacuum boilers and stuff like that. Which is days with weekends off, which is at this point it's what I'm looking for. It's not a wonderful job but I've been doing it for a year and a half and it pays the bills. That's the bottom line at this point. I graduated from grade 13 with three maths, three sciences and I was looking at going on to university. Had, in fact, been accepted into an engineering program in

one of the universities. But looked at myself and realized I was not going to make it through university at that point.
I worked for Canadian National Railways for seven years. Two years in the office, and five years running heavy equipment. Loved running the heavy equipment. Was on the road all the time when I wasn't laid off. Spent 14 months north of Thunder Bay. So it took me 24 hours to get home by train and 24 hours to get back. I was working an eight-and-six cycle. Four days at home. They sent me up there just before Christmas. Just after I'd gotten married. I don't know what's it's like to be married with both of us working days with weekends off. I've never been in that kind of relationship.

Part of the reason I came here was, I missed the 1980 conference in Winnipeg and I really desperately wanted to connect with other women. I am at present working with some other women so that makes life easier. But the five years out on the track, I was the only woman all the time. I found that really hard to deal with. It's the isolation. You know, you'd connect with your own women friends, a lot of them looked at you and said, "Well, it's nice for you, but why would you want to get dirty?" Basic maintenance was part of my job and getting covered with diesel fuel on a fairly regular basis was also part of my job. It's strange, but I loved it.

I have a daughter at home now and could not be on the road all the time. So I went to work for DeHaviland for a short while and absolutely hated it. I'm not cut out to be an assembly-line person. Although I've been a union person most of my working life, working for the CAW [Canadian Auto Workers], I found a real hardship. The relationship between the CAW and management in this particular plant was really antagonistic and I'm not comfortable with that. The unions I worked with before and after were much more low-key and if there was a problem we would deal with it. But where I was, perhaps because of the environment, management was yelling at union and vice versa and I disliked it intensely. So, I stuck it out and they laid me off. That was fine, it was one of the best layoffs that I've ever had.

I ended up working at Ontario Hydro a month later. Had heard through the grapevine that they were hiring. Ontario Hydro has a really strong Affirmative Action program. They're really pushing to get women into the apprenticeships. That's where I'm hoping to head, in fact, I'd like to talk to you more because I'm hoping to get into the industrial end of it. They've never had a woman apprentice in the particular thermal plant that I work at. They've never had a woman pregnant out in the plant before. Which I am. So, for all that I'm a cleaner I'm still being a pioneer again. You know, one of the big questions at this point is, how am I going to fit into my coveralls at nine months? And stuff like that. So it's kinda fun in that way.

It's nice that I'm at a comfortable level in terms of my own personal life. I'm comfortable in terms of working with men as well but it took a long time to get there. If I had my choice, there was a heavy equipment operator's job that just came up, but because I'm pregnant, I didn't want to take it at this point. And there's a lot of flack. There's one woman running heavy equipment in the plant I'm in. And she said, "You know, unless you're willing to put up with all the bullshit all over again, don't try it." I'm not willing to do that at this point. So, that was fine, I didn't bother. But that's eventually what I'm looking to get into.

The only other comment that I have is, I'm married and I say, "Well, the woman is expecting that of her man, what is my husband going to think of me?" You sort of turn it around and that was the only way I could deflect the attitude a lot of the time. Because when I was away living with men, up to 140 of them for 15 days, guys would come up to me and say, "You know, I would never let my wife or my girlfriend or someone do something like that." The key word was "let." My husband never "let" me do anything. He sort of, "Fine, just go for it. If that's what you choose, go for it." And that's what would happen. The trust works both ways. I was away for 15 days. He was at home for 15 days. God knows what he could have been doing. So that the reverse also works. That's what I learned you had to do. Try and deflect it that way.

CHAPTER 3

Sharing our union experience

Workshop coordinators
Janet Lane and Jill Jones

Janet Lane, avionics mechanic, and Jill Jones, an active labour historian, lead this discussion of women's union experience.

Janet: First, I'd like to talk about my non-union experience to illustrate how my union sympathies were born. I was brought up comfortably middle-class in a small northern Alberta town, quite a conservative environment. I didn't know anything about unions when I was growing up. Nothing positive, nothing negative. My first employer didn't exploit me. He was my father. He trained me well as a worker, taught me to be honest, responsible and hardworking.

My next work experience, however, planted the seeds of how employers can exploit their workers. I worked for a millionaire businessman in Edmonton. I worked shift work for minimum wage with no benefits. My job was in a downtown drugstore in Edmonton, the only methadone clinic for heroin addicts in the city. For $2.00 an hour I was the afternoon shift supervisor and had the responsibility of locking up the store at the end of the day, then walking two blocks to the bus. So, I had the opportunity to be robbed and assaulted by heroin addicts who were looking for the keys to the only methadone in the city.

I didn't feel very good about it but I thought my only option was to get another job. It didn't occur to me that we could unionize or organize. Something else about that job aroused my feelings of injustice. They had hired a boy, a part-timer who I trained and supervised, and paid him more money. It enraged me but, again, I didn't have any idea of what to do about it.

Eventually I did get a better job, a clerical job at the university which gave me more money and some benefits, although there was no union. I wanted a promotion to a job which paid a lot more money. I had

Why would they elect me when they had a choice of all those men to represent them? Well, I can tell you why. Few of the men are as committed as me and will invest the time and energy it takes. The men I work with have learned I'm mouthy. They've seen me stand up to managers and to the business reps.

almost all the qualifications, but they turned me down language. So I went out and became fluent in another language. I applied for the job again. And they said, "Sorry. You need a university degree." They kept changing the qualifications. So my mind started opening up to alternatives.

There were some electricians at work one day doing rewiring. Seeing them do this work with their hands was interesting. Plus the idea that your skills are transferable and can be used all over the world. And they got good money.

I coordinate the activities of the stewards in my area. I do "stage two" of grievances with the business rep and I deal with management on company policies and issues not covered by the collective agreement.

A career change and a union

So I made a career change and with that came a union. My early experience in the Machinists union really made me a fan of them. There were two instances in my first year that the union successfully represented me. One time I didn't even ask them to and they went ahead and did it. And that was apart from the good wages and working conditions they had negotiated over the years.

Even when I got laid off from that job, I was protected by the union principle of seniority. I knew they would eventually recall me to work. I wasn't out the door just because I was a woman, or because some supervisor didn't happen to like me or thought I didn't need the job because my husband was working and had a good salary.

After about a year, I got laid off and had a non-union job for a while. Finally I got another job with B.C. Rapid Transit in Vancouver. It wasn't organized at the time but now I belong to the Office and Technical Employees Union [OTEU] which is part of the Office and Professional Employees International Union. That's what it's called in the rest of Canada. I'm in a local that has 7,000 members (about 50 percent women) in 20 different bargaining units with 20 different employers.

My unit, with 300 employees, is one of the smaller ones. The position I hold is councillor and I have a dual role. I sit on the local's executive council which is a policy-making board. I'm also a chief job steward in my bargaining unit. I coordinate the activities of the stewards in my area. I do "stage two" of grievances with the business rep and I deal with management on company policies and issues not covered by the collective agreement.

In my bargaining unit, the councillors and the stewards are more participative than in the other units in my local. We want more control, not just to leave it in the staff members' hands, because we work on the floor and we know what the problems are. The staff reps deal more with management and tend to resolve things without consulting us. We often get into disagreements with them which causes us to spend energy on internal fights which should be used against management. That's frustrating, but it's part of the process of democratizing unions.

Initially, I didn't have any intention of holding office. I felt really inexperienced, too shy to be an advocate, in fact a little bit afraid of management. I also felt it was hard enough for my fellow tradesmen to accept me as an equal tradesworker, let alone as their representative. Why would they elect me when they had a choice of all those men to represent them? Well, I can tell you why. Few of the men are as committed as me and will invest the time and energy it takes. The men I work with have learned I'm mouthy. They've seen me stand up to managers and to the business reps.

I got my first elected position as alternate steward by acclamation, by apathy really. I thought being an alternate steward would be a comfortable way to ease into being a rep. But the steward went on vacation and left me with two grievances to handle right away! It wasn't that difficult, I just had to do the "first stage." I did my investigation, went into the meeting

and didn't resolve the grievance. But at least I sat there and had the meeting. I felt it opened up communication between the manager and his department, and we could probably work together to resolve problems. I was quite naive, but I thought that. It whetted my appetite for more involvement.

I took a grievance-handling course right after that. I learned one important rule that helped me immeasurably: a union rep is on an equal footing with the employer when we act on behalf of our members. So when I go to talk to my manager, I'm his equal not his underling. I don't think he realizes that. But it sure helps me.

Eventually I was ready to run for the council position which I hold now. I thought, "Well, I'm going to be running against the men so I'd better do this in an organized fashion and campaign." I talked to an organizer in a local union and she told me I should talk to the members and find out what their issues are. While I might think seniority is the most important issue, they might think shifts are, and I'm not going to get any votes by talking about seniority. So, I did. Then I wrote up a pamphlet explaining what I thought the issues were and how committed I was.

I got support from a lot of shop stewards. My opponent helped too. His campaign was running around saying, "You don't want a girl to represent you, do ya?" I got elected, overwhelmingly, by a group of about 100 people, only six of whom were women.

On the negotiating committee

Shortly after, the stewards elected me to the negotiating committee for the second collective agreement. The committee was three women and one man, plus two staff reps. We members were pretty green. We'd never negotiated before. The reps were accustomed to running the show with other negotiating committees in the unit. But as I said earlier, our unit was a little different. We formulated proposals from a survey we'd done of the membership, from our experience in other unions, and from weaknesses in our first collective agreement that we'd noticed in administering it as stewards.

We were ready to start with 91 demands. The staff reps told us we were crazy. "You'll go to the table and management will laugh in your face. They'll send you away and tell you to pare down your list and come back when you're serious. And don't call them demands, call them proposals."

But we argued, "This is only our second collective agreement. The other units have negotiated them over 30 years, gone out on strike and gained a lot. We have a lot to ask for."

We stuck with our decision. We took our 91 demands (and they were demands) to the table. Management tabled 120. And they didn't ask us to leave or to pare down our list or get serious. So the staff reps began to take us a little more seriously. I have to put in a good word for the reps because they are talented negotiators. In the 10-month process we learned a great deal from their experience, debating skill, humour, and nerve.

By the end of negotiations the reps had developed a new respect for us. They said we'd reminded them of some of the ideals they'd long since lost.

They often thought we asked for too much or took too radical a position. So we honed our debating skills on them. Even when the reps disagreed with our position, they took it forward to management and argued for it from the heart as if it was their own idea. I really admired that. By the end of negotiations the reps had developed a new respect for us. They said we'd reminded them of some of the ideals they'd long since lost.

We ended up with at least some language on over 70 of our demands, and no concessions. We knew it wasn't perfect, but it was a good step forward for a second agreement. But the membership rejected it. We were devastated.

All our hard work, our commitment, the training we'd been through, the agony and the frustration. But it was a protest vote from the membership against the negotiating committee, not the company, because we hadn't communicated with them all the way through the process. We were too busy because we were also servicing grievances and stuff like that. They were mad at us. So they wouldn't give us a strike vote. They just sent us back to the table.

It's a tough position to be in – facing management without a strike vote. We took another two months and this time we involved the stewards. We took them to the negotiating table with us and attempted to make them take decisions, which wasn't too successful. But we improved our communication. Eventually we got an offer that was accepted. It was a difficult lesson to learn: that communication is really important in a union and any democratic organization. To criticize ourselves for failing on that was hard.

I don't feel positive about all my union experience. I want the members to participate more than they do because that's what makes our union strong. The membership frustrates me by thinking the union should babysit them and help them out when they're in trouble, yet they can't even bother to show up for a meeting. Business and media have done a good job at making people believe unions are really powerful, in fact, too powerful. It makes the members think we have more strength than we do. I think it's hard to make activists out of well-paid, steadily employed union members.

On the power of unions, I'll always remember what a labour lawyer told me. He said at the negotiating table, you invest lost wages in order to get good language in the agreement. Then you go back to work and the company doesn't live up to that language. The union has no recourse except to grieve it and arbitrate it. Statistics show that arbitrators rule 70 percent in favour of employers. So the company has a 70 percent chance of not having to live up to the language that you went on strike for.

I keep telling my members that management has all the powers and rights. We have only what we can negotiate away from them in an agreement. Our only hope is more unity and more militancy.

Jill: I grew up in rural Ontario as part of my training. I came from a large family, not very rich, and a lot of people like me were screened into either not going to college or into low-paying jobs. I left high school at grade eight and later completed grade 12. They wanted me to become a secretary, but I couldn't type and I couldn't take shorthand. I worked as a waitress. I was a factory worker in a union shop. The work was terrible – long hours and lousy pay. I got laid off, which was probably one of the best things for me.

The right day at the right time

This was in 1972, the first time the government was sponsoring new training programs in community colleges and they wanted some women. I happened to walk into the right Manpower [Canada Employment Centre] office on the right day at the right time, just as they were looking at a machine shop retraining program. They asked me if I was interested. Work hadn't been so good up to this time, so I took the opportunity.

I was 19 and the only woman. It was a very tough training program. We started with 25 people and five graduated. I loved it. I have seven brothers, I should tell you that. I was driving cars when I was 12 years old, motorcycles at 14. I felt I could do anything.

The men in the course really supported me, more so than the teachers who were hesitant at first. They really thought they were getting this woman dumped on them. But they came around.

I had to do an enormous amount of cramming to pick up the names of all the tools, to keep up with the men in the program who had learned it in shop at school. When I went to high school women had to take home economics.

At the end of the program, I was hired by Canadian General Electric. I loved my employer. They'd given me this wonderful opportunity to make more money than I ever made before. They offered me a job working on a huge turbine machine that machine-rounds

pieces of metal. It's like a screw only 500 times larger. I found out afterwards that they offered this machine to all the women that came into the plant. The coolant for the machine is black oil, so at the end of the day you'd be black, just soaked in oil. It was very noisy and you worked hard because it was piecework.

When I first started I thought the money was great but I didn't think the job was great. I was one of the youngest workers in that department. We worked on machines, cutting out internal parts of generators. It was a very technical job. Your tolerance for accuracy was plus-or-minus two-thousandths of an inch. That's cutting it pretty small.

Making a stink about coolant

I became a union steward about six months after I was there. And I became active over the issue of coolant. When you went to use your machine it was about two feet away from you, and the coolant sprayed out. They were using a soap-based coolant so there would be less friction in the machine. But it was expensive because the piece cut had to be washed and then dried before they could use it. So a guy came in and decided he'd use varsol as a coolant. It saved millions of dollars a year and it worked.

I was union steward at the time. I just jumped in. It was the first time I felt I had power and control in my life, and I could say, "NO." I could say things to protect myself. So they picked the time I as union steward was not on shift. They got the varsol man in on Friday to try it. They used it on Friday and on Monday. So by the time I came on shift, it had been used in three shifts and they said, "Well, the varsol has been used for three shifts and nobody has made a stink about it."

We immediately got the women organized. We would work for a while and then we would go to the nurses' station and have a nurse check us out. Our blood pressure would go up. It was very hard working under those conditions. We found as we started to do more research that they couldn't use varsol without a ventilation system above to take all the fumes away. You definitely could not spray yourself.

So then they brought in gas masks we had to wear. Then plastic gloves, arm bands and aprons. In health and safety the best thing to do is stop something at the source. Then stop it in between the source and whatever it's harming. The third and most ineffective method is protecting the person at the other end. So, of course, it's also the least expensive. That's the way they tried to go. For a week they made the women on all three shifts go through this. But we won our fight. It took a lot of time and talking. Our union supported us all the way.

That battle taught me that inside this type of industrial plant, you need some kind of organization to bring people together, to protect yourselves. Because those employers didn't care about us. They would have had us breathing in this stuff in order to save money.

I was union steward at the time. I just jumped in. It was the first time I felt I had power and control in my life, and I could say, "NO." I could say things to protect myself.

The fight over equal pay

The other fight we had was over equal pay. The men were working on larger machines, but doing the same work as the women. In fact, they were doing the rough cuts and we were doing precision work. Our work was more technical than theirs, yet they were getting paid about $2.00 more an hour. So we decided to file for equal pay. The first argument management came back with was: workers on this side of the aisle in the plant get paid this much money and workers on that side of the aisle get paid that much money. We continued on, and we won that battle.

In the union as a woman

I loved my union work. I got involved as a union steward, and as a chief steward. I worked on all kinds of committees. For the first time in my life I really felt that I was

accepted for what I was. I've always been a fairly large woman. I'm not married, I don't think I ever will be. And those kinds of things always ostracized me from other people. In the union, nobody cared about that kind of stuff.

I don't know if you've had the experience where you've been working on a lot of things in your life and it's okay, but it's not just quite right. Then all of a sudden something clicks. For me it was understanding that, yes, unions are important, but the men inside the union hadn't realized how I felt as a woman. What happened was, I wanted to run as a union executive in our local. My union executive, men that I'd worked with for a long time, told me they weren't sure the membership would accept that. I was invited to an organizing meeting and they handed us a list of people who were running on the slate. And I wasn't on it. I thought, "Very interesting." I just said to them straightforwardly that I was running; they could support me if they wanted to, they didn't have to if they didn't want to. And I did run and I went out every break I had and talked to as many people as I could. I even went into the enemy territory where the other guy was running against me.

I loved my union work. I got involved as a union steward, and as a chief steward. I worked on all kinds of committees. For the first time in my life I really felt that I was accepted for what I was.

I did win. It was a wonderful, overwhelming win. In a local of 2500 people they hadn't had a woman on the executive before. It didn't seem that difficult to do. It's like the jobs I held there. I went to different departments and I was the only woman on the job. You go in and you go through all these rituals to prove you're a superhuman person. There have been many women elected to the executive since that time and they've made a wonderful contribution.

Organizing Working Women

I want to tell you about OWW [Organizing Working Women]. At the Ontario Federation of Labour conference in 1975, women got together and said, "Okay, it's time to have a women's committee." And what they got from the federation was money to have a big conference in 1976 called "Women in Unions." They brought women from all over the area to talk about forming an organization and out of it came OWW. Its goal was to promote women's leadership positions inside unions and to educate women.

We had a workshop that went around to unions in Ontario and we did presentations like Public Speaking Skills. We taught women how to write up resolutions. We had mock union meetings and conventions with people up there cheering and other people presenting resolutions, and we practised debating skills. As a result of the work OWW has done, a large number of women who were involved in those early stages are now in leadership positions inside the labour movement or are working as union staff reps. It's a wonderful organization, still continuing on. The union movement in Ontario has become a lot more progressive and more humane because of it.

It has been an uphill battle but I think in the last 15 years the labour movement in Canada has become a lot more active. A lot of women are now in leadership positions and it's getting democratic.

VOICE: I'm a member of the Electrical Workers, at Toronto Local 353, since 1985. The first couple of years I wasn't active but I attended union meetings. I felt that was one of the most important things. I was only the second woman in and I felt we needed to keep showing the men, "Look!" They wouldn't believe they had women because we are so few and far between at the job sites. The union is actively trying to get women into trades through entry programs. We find we have certain problems with certain women. We pay attention to ensure they get the special training they need.

A sub-local for part-timers

VOICE: I'm Antoinette from Winlaw in the Kootenay region of B.C. One of the things I do is I'm a part-time ambulance attendant. Part-time ambulance services in rural areas are indispensable. Yet you don't get that many calls, so attendants are employed only on a part-time basis. Which means you go around carrying a pager all your life and you get paid only for the calls you go out on.

Full-time ambulance people in cities are unionized within CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees]. They're in the process of trying to establish a sub-local for part-timers, which we're excited about. The community has been depending on us but they aren't prepared to pay us enough. They want us to be volunteers forever.

I went to my first big NDP conference last year. I hated being around the union executive types who were there. They have a "what the hell do you know about anything?" attitude. I'm intimidated by them. I see them spending a lot of time politicking, trying to get people into various positions, but I don't ever see them listening. I have this fear that unions can be terribly undemocratic. At the same time I have a dream and a hope that we'll be starting off with a new sub-local and we can make it what we want to make it.

VOICE: Your situation reminds me of maintenance electricians who're employed by a company and get paid $20 or more an hour, and three-quarters of the time they're on standby. When machines break down, they go to work, but get paid every hour, 40 hours a week. It's just the cost of doing business, and that's the way it should be with you.

The good, the bad, and...

VOICE: I'm Leslie from Halifax. I work at a naval dockyard where I'm employed at ship repair. We have about 2,000 tradespeople. Our local is made up of just machinists and fitters. There's about nine different unions in the yard but we all negotiate as one collective bargaining agent or council. My experience with the union has been both very good and very bad.

Right now we are in the unique position of being the only federal government employees who have no right to strike. We have a sister dockyard in B.C. which does exactly the same job as we do, for the same employer, but we work for less money. Wage equity should be straight across Canada. The cost of living in Halifax is no lower than it is in Victoria. I'm sure if we were all women at the dockyard we'd have a court case. But because we are largely Anglo-Saxon male, we have no court to go to.

We have no right to strike because Trudeau legislated us, the ship repair unit to the Navy, an essential service. Our last contract expired one year ago. We're still trying to get the government to negotiate. We're also trying to figure out creative ways to deal with not being able to strike. About three weeks ago when all the tradespeople punched out in the evening, they didn't go home. So the Military Police and management had to come back. We ended up with over 1,000 people staying overnight on the base, including top management.

One [concern of the women's committees] was that the union had to take on women's battles and provide money for them, and I think we've achieved that.

I'm very proud of the Machinists union as a whole. It's given me a lot of opportunity. In fact, I think the only reason I was ever hired was because a union member sits on the hiring board.

VOICE: There's two women in our local and we asked our union executive to stop having stags and prostitutes in our union hall. We made the final decision to go to the executive when, on our way to the union meeting one night, the cab driver turned around and said to my co-worker, "Gee, you don't look like you're dressed to perform." I was on the executive at the time and we two women went to a meeting and said, "Please don't, it's not a

good thing to have it on mutual territory. What if the police came? How would this look for our union? This is our union, too."

It was just a small group organizing it, but some of the executive lied to the membership about what we'd said. They said we'd threatened to call the police, to close them down and to call the CLC [Canadian Labour Congress]. They lied through their teeth. It was a political lesson I never want to live through again. All the guys in the shop were not seeing it as a union issue. They saw it as the two lowly women trying to tell them what to do in their shop.

When I went to work the next day, I couldn't get tools out of the tool crib and no complex tools were available to me. My work was sabotaged. My machinery was tampered with. It got dangerous.

VOICE: How did you cope with it?

VOICE: I always organized a children's Christmas party every year. This happened in September, and in December I went around asking, "Are you bringing any children to the party?" But the guys who wouldn't talk to me couldn't bring their kids. So, they forgave us. We were right, but they forgave us.

We don't see notices on the board anymore for the stags. I don't know if they're just not telling us or what. We knew what went on at these stags. The guy who won the door prize would get up on the stage and do whatever with a prostitute. If the police ever raided, my friend and I would have had to tiptoe at work the next day because we thought we'd be blamed for the raid. That's why we wanted it out of our union hall. Something bad was going to happen and we were going to get blamed for it because we were the only women in the union. Now, if any of this is still going on, we have no knowledge so we can't be blamed.

It shocked me because they seemed like reasonable people. It wasn't so much that the executive members lied, but that the guys I'd been so close to and had been friends with for eight years never asked me what I'd said. They just jumped on the bandwagon. We do have religious people there, and other people who know better, but they're just afraid to be against it after seeing what happened to us.

President of the local

VOICE: My name is Blanche. I'm a member of the Railway Maintenance Employees Union, 1768. I work for Canadian National Railway [CNR] in Halifax.

I've had all good experiences in my local. I didn't plan on running for president of our local, but a few of the guys talked me into it after I'd been to several union meetings. I didn't have to campaign because they campaigned for me. I got it by a landslide.

VOICE: How many women in your local?

VOICE: You're looking at her.

VOICE: And how many men?

VOICE: Thirty-five. I've also been elected to several committees, like the grievance committee. And then the CNR asked me to be in employee relations, helping the guys I work with deal with some personal problems.

Good thoughts about the union

VOICE: My name is Barbara and I'm with the Canadian Paper Workers Union in Prince George. The union primarily got me into the mill with an apprenticeship, so I have very good thoughts about it. I've never been a shop steward. I figure I don't have the temperament for it and keep steering away from it. I work on the financial committee and with the executive board. I'm the outside guard at executive meetings, keeping a register of who's coming and who isn't. I was also the delegate to the Prince George Labour Council which I enjoyed.

I think we had about six people at the last executive meeting when we were supposed to be discussing how to distribute a cash award we had just won. Five hundred members each getting $2,000. And you've got six people making the decision. It's disgusting. We set up a committee to decide what to do.

Used by the union

VOICE: I'm Carole. I work on the Sky Train in Vancouver. I've worked a lot of years at all sorts of things, secretarial and all that. I realized I had to get into some sort of trade which would give me equal pay for equal work. I decided on electronics.

I set out to get a union job which I felt I needed because I I would be the only woman. Secondly, because I was a little older getting into the field, I needed some type of protection. So I fell into my first electronics job with the CBC and that union is an international union, based in New York city. In Canada NABET is controlled by the members in Ontario. I don't want to do any Ontario-bashing here, that's just the way the numbers are. I don't recall the number of people we have out here in B.C., somewhere between 200 and 400.

I started working at CBC in TV and video maintenance. The union local approached me to run for vice president. I was flabbergasted. I thought, "What do they know? I just wanted a job in the union." They said, "If you run, you get to go on trips." I said, "No, I don't feel like doing it." And they said, "Oh, but you can help the women in the clerical end." So, that's how they caught me. I didn't really have to run either, I won by apathy.

I have some background that makes me unafraid to deal with management. I was able to present myself. Ultimately I believe the union was using me. They needed somebody else to run and they discovered I could actually get some stuff done.

I discovered NABET was very politically motivated inside. We knew there was one representative out in Ontario that everybody wanted to get rid of, but it was just impossible to dislodge that person. So my experience with NABET was that there is some corruption, it is not democratic and there really isn't representation regionally like a federal union or an international union. We couldn't get our things done here in B.C. because the union was controlled from back east.

At a certain point I was called in by my supervisor and told I was through at the CBC. He was no longer going to listen to me and was really sorry he'd hired me, and he said, "This is coming right from the top." He named the persons and it came right from the top of the CBC.

At that time I was going through all sorts of other things and I thought, "Screw it." One of the reasons I said that was I'd tried to get some things done at a time when people were getting transferred around because CBC was readying for a layoff. Members would come to me with their problems and I'd go out and do something. Then I'd go back to them and say, "We're going to try and do this or that, would you come to the meeting and state your facts?" They wouldn't. They wouldn't even stand up for themselves. Let alone stand up for a group. Let alone back me who was trying to help them.

We really tried to get people to attend meetings. We had breakfasts for the family. Bring the wife and kids. We even had all-paid dinners. If anyone can come up with an idea to get membership to show up for meetings, I'd like to hear it. Anyway, I actually resigned from the union and eventually got laid off.

So now I say to the men I work with: "If you don't stand up for yourself, you in fact stab me in the back. You expect me to stand up for you? Individually and as a group? Forget it. If I'm going to spend my time organizing and standing up, it will be for a women's group or something I'm interested in. But for you men, forget it." I guess that's a cop-out. Maybe being here will change something in me, I don't know.

I say to Janet all the time, "Thank you for staying in the union." I'm getting the benefit of it and so is everyone else. I copped out. There must be something with women, because the men don't like to work with us. They don't want us there to begin with. Yet, they're the first ones to ask us to represent them. That's incredible.

Janet: I'd just like to add my editorial comment. The department you work in is really small and it does have a lot of jerks in it, out of proportion. There's probably only 15 of you or less?

VOICE: Fourteen of us and me. And they're real weirdos. All ages, from 28 to 55. I'd rather have some carpenter with a hammer in his hand threaten me than have these technical people connive nightly on what they are going to do to me the next day. Sabotage and all that.

I believe the union we have here, the OTEU, has done a good job. They've had a hard time because most of our members want to go and join other unions. I think the OTEU is really working towards something. I think Janet has something to do with it and there's quite a few women in there.

VOICE: I think there's a difference in the way international and national unions operate. The union I'm with is an international union. A lot of our dues go down into the States, and we only get so much back. We barely have enough money to make our local survive because it's small. Our business rep is so busy, she works so hard. So there's all kinds of power dynamics outside of your local union.

VOICE: There's a lot of bitching in my department about unions. When I hear it, I just say: "Shut up! Give it to the meeting. When you come to the meetings, then you have a right to complain. If you don't vote in the elections, don't complain about the government."

The Confederation of National Trade Unions: a definite socialist program

VOICE: I'm presently working for the Confederation of National Trade Unions [CNTU], which is mainly a Quebec union which has a definite socialist program. There's 225,000 members, about half women. It's a varied membership, with construction and social workers, teachers, etc. Nine different federations.

I came to Quebec from Nova Scotia and got a job with CEGEP [technical college]. It was unionized and not long after I was there we went on strike to get workers minimum wage in Quebec in the public sector.

I was invited to one of the first training sessions around our union's Women's Document. From that we started women's committees – national, regional, and local. So we now have a huge network of women's committees. There were three main thrusts. One was that the union had to take on women's battles and provide money for them, and I think we've achieved that.

Then it was to build union solidarity among women. We are at the point now that a woman wouldn't dare to run for an election without the support of the women. A lot of men come to try to get the support of the women's groups. Guys will come to me as president of the national committee to try and get me to sign their candidacy because it's so important. But we also have solidarity in small things. For instance, at congresses, we have a room reserved just for women.

And finally, we've worked on solidarity with other women's groups because most women are not unionized. Quebec has 1800 women's groups. That was the hard part because we were seen as sellouts to men because it was a male union. We worked with every kind of women's group, and we always felt when it came to a union, we should walk in with a holster on our hip, you know. That took a lot of time but it has worked out. Now there are great men working on women's groups.

An education on how things work

VOICE: I work for the City of Winnipeg which puts me in CUPE Local 500. The carpentry shop is a really small part of Local 500. I've been a steward for about six months. It's been an education about how things work. There's only seven people in our shop and I won by apathy because nobody else wanted to do it. I had come to realize that if there was going to be any kind of protection or support, it had to come from the unions working in the kinds of situations I was in.

"No interpersonal problems here"

VOICE: I'm Sandy and I do a lot of training for different organizations, including unions. I'm not in a union, I have my own business.

Often my clients will say, "We have one day. Do you want to come in and do Stress Management?" And it's usually vague and it's

not a commitment to the issues people have named.

VOICE: It's interesting that the B.C. Federation of Labour Women's Committee once got very excited about asking you and Maggie to give us a whole weekend on conflict resolution. My understanding is the executive of the federation decided they didn't need that.

VOICE: We just got asked again and the executive ended up saying, "Nope, we have no interpersonal problems here." So we got real close again but they said NO.

Women are not incompetent

VOICE: I'm Heather and I'm a member of Local 359, which is in the Brotherhood of Boilermakers. I work in Victoria. Vancouver is the local base. It's a field union with field membership in that we have a central hiring and dispatch hall in Burnaby [a suburb of Vancouver] but the work is done all over the province. It's on a board system so when you're finished with a job you go to the bottom of the board and the names for the next job are taken off the top. Under the terms of our collective agreement, the hirer has a certain discretion as to the number of name requests that can be made for a job site. It's about one-third name request and two-thirds off the board.

My experience with the union is really good on the whole. The Apprenticeship Coordinator is excellent. He's actively recruited women and supported them in their apprenticeships. The success rate is still really low. It's a type of work where you have to be mobile. Every job is a new job and a new crew. So you have to be patient and teach the same lessons on each job.

I think in 1982 I was the second woman through the apprenticeship and I was the first female member. That was very hard because they made it plain they didn't want women in the local. It was obvious: "Women are incompetent." That was the base from which all membership worked. But it was easy to deal with because women are not incompetent. Within two months of me coming out of the apprenticeship program we were on strike for a month. After we went back to work, I went to a union meeting and a very agitated individual approached me and said, "We really need you on the negotiating committee. It would be great to have a woman representative on the team." I looked him in the eye and said, "I appreciate the vote of confidence, but I'd like five years to establish myself so come back to me then." He was blown away that I would be politically aware enough to see that he was trying to set me up.

He went on to a woman welder and set her up on the negotiating committee. She had to work for two years to combat the attitude: "What the hell did you do, lass? You just came in and suddenly you were sitting on the negotiating committee. And look what a contract you made up."

When I'm not away at work, I go to union meetings. I'm not looking for a position in the union but I'm a strong supporter. We have a very active membership. Because of the nature of the work, with people all over the province, they have meetings in Prince George, in Kamloops, on Vancouver Island, and people will drive for two hours to go to those meetings.

There will probably come a time when I feel like I have sufficient trade experience and membership connection that I will run but it's not now. Too much energy is being put into the work. I'm looking at supervisory positions, that's what I'm being offered and that's how I prefer to go.

VOICE: Are they in the union?

VOICE: Yes. Right up to general foreman is union, so you're looking at three stages of supervisory positions before I couldn't be a member. I feel that's where a lot of the work can be done. It's the idea that women have to be there and be seen to be there.

Lobbying and infighting

VOICE: My name is Kathleen. I'm from Local 353 of the IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers] in Toronto. I got into my trade as a re-entry, after my children were in

school full-time. I still have one year to go till I complete my apprenticeship. I believe I'll be the oldest licensed journeyperson in my local union, if I ever reach that day.

Being in the trade, on all new job sites, and being in the union, I have a million issues in my head. A lot of them concern the union – the power of the union as a lobbying group, the infighting within the union.

VOICE: I'm Kate, Carpenters Local 452. I also have mixed feelings, although I probably come off as a rah-rah union person. The union has treated me and other women well. When I started, I got involved with the apprenticeship committee, but I found I have a lot of problems with the executive. I think they're oldfashioned and traditional.

Eventually the members asked me to run for office, and I did. The executive didn't want me to run but we had a big caucus meeting and the membership forced them to put me on the slate. I won, and I keep winning. The members are always sending me to conferences and they asked me to be the job steward.

I feel strongly about the membership and I was on my executive for three years as a trustee, but I didn't run again because it's so discouraging when you're the only woman. It's just that the way I think is different. For example, the executive is horrified when I suggest things like, "Don't you think we should take this back and discuss it with the membership?" Their response is, "We're the leaders. We should tell them what to do."

I found myself getting bitter so I dropped out of the executive and the guys promptly voted me on to the Vancouver and District Labour Council, where there are at least other women. I'm also on the B.C. Federation of Labour's Working Women's Committee, and that gives me a certain amount of juice, but there my isolation is that I'm the only tradeswoman and also the only rank-and-file member, the only person who loses a day of pay.

I try to bring up the issue of women in trades but those women (although some are more sympathetic than others) say, "Women don't want to be tradeswomen. No one else except you wants to be a tradeswoman." So I need more tradeswomen and more union women who support this issue.

Janet Lane is a Vehicle Technician at B.C. Rapid Transit in Vancouver. She qualified as an Avionics Mechanic at CP Air where she also worked as a Network Controller in Computer Services. She has sat on the Executive Council and been a Chief Job Steward in the Office and Technical Employees Union 370. Lane is a former member of the Int'l Association of Machinists and Areospace Workers Lodge 764, and is a founding member of the Vancouver Women In Trades association.

Jill Jones – See Chapter 9, "Women and unions."

CHAPTER 4

Gender talk

Workshop coordinator
Carol Brooks

This workshop explored the differences between male and female language styles.

Carol: The reason I wanted this workshop format is that Phyllis Chesler in *Women in Madness* talked about coffee klatches. When linguists analyzed klatches, they saw a very finely-tuned matching construction in which one woman would give her experience, another woman would give hers, another hers, and then they would start to match experience with experience. They would cover all aspects of an issue: the physical, the mental, the emotional, the spiritual, the relational. The process is often called a spiralling and it goes to resolution. That's one style we've learned in our training as women. There is the other kind we also know, the old A to B type. Somebody says something, somebody asks a question, then you answer it. That's fine too, so both of these will be going on.

Speaking what is real

"Perhaps instead of being concerned with making women talk more like men, it would be more productive to ... work towards helping men to listen more like women, because it seems to me that at the core of women's co-operative strategies for talking is a respect for, and competence in, listening. If co-operation (which implies being a willing listener as well as a willing talker) rather than competition and domination were to be highly valued in discussion, if 'talk' were seen as an opportunity for understanding the views of others and not just for airing one's own, we would witness profound changes...."

— Dale Spender,
Man Made Language

Talking is really important. It is our work as women to speak what we really mean or feel, and to speak out. A lot of us have come through 10 or 20 years of preparing and training ourselves to do that, putting ourselves into situations where we've had to practise. The whole issue of speaking what is real for us is summed up for me in a line from Margaret Laurence's *Stone Angel.* Ninety-three-year-old Hagar asks, "When did I ever speak the heart's truth?"

It's the heart's truth that is real. Those proper appearances we think are out there are not real. Every day in our lives and our work we deal with that contradiction. The more we recognize, understand and verbalize that heart's truth, the clearer, stronger, more direct, and more easily understood our language becomes.

Do you ever feel you know something intuitively, instinctively or discreetly that would help a situation but you feel unable or unwilling to express it in the circumstances? Something is there, something very important for us as a culture. It has to get into the larger setting, the whole setting, and speech is the vehicle.

Sometimes what we know is hard to bring out. It feels nebulous, you don't know where the words are or you need the right setting to struggle to get the words out, to have them pulled out. We know from the way we're put together as human beings that information is encoded through our whole system. It's not just in the mind. We get information through the body, the feeling.

In order to be in touch with this part of yourself which really knows something, what's necessary? Let's have some suggestions:

- A chance to write in a journal.
- Discussion with my children. They are honest and direct, and seem to know me better than I know myself.
- Thinking that what I am saying is not for myself, but for the status of women.
- Experimenting; making mistakes to sort out what works and what doesn't until I understand it in my own way.

Just keep trying until you find something that hits. The key is somehow connecting to that heart's truth, then it just comes out of you.

Developing good habits

A lot of this is habit. It's like learning to dance, just muscles and air after all. We have to keep experimenting and teaching ourselves different habits of language, different sounds and words to let our strength come out.

When we surveyed women inventors across Canada they said over and over that what helped them the most in communication was rehearsing. They would rehearse if they had to make a phone call. They'd hear themselves speaking, their ear would self-correct and they'd do it until their vocal cords got comfortable. They didn't expect to be comfortable the first one or two or three times they said something in a different way. So, it's just the rehearsing over and over, saying it out loud. The result is you hear a beautiful voice and something in you loves it all the time no matter what response you get from the phone.

Self-defeating things we've used

- Question intonation. Say real sentences, but with a question at the end? Then I get nods from people and know it's okay, but mostly I'm uncertain of myself.
- Having my voice get shrill when I want to make a point.
- Using phrases of ambivalence or pauses to weaken the directness of our statements.
- Keeping our heads to the side when we're talking. Like we can't even hold our own heads up.
- Not being able to handle compliments.
- Mumbling because I don't want people to be watching me for any length of time. I don't want the attention.
- Letting people interrupt me and then continuing to talk so that we're both talking at the same time.
- Knowing that what I have to say is more than likely correct and valid, but I don't feel confident enough so I ramble on and on.
- Being intimidated by others' ability to talk on and make me believe they understand more than I do, even when I know they don't.
- Feeling that I come across like a kid; my sentences get unstructured and baffled.

- The inability to interrupt when time is of the essence. Somebody is rambling and you send every form of body language imaginable to transmit the fact, but you still can't voice it.

- Using trivializing expressions that demean or belittle our work. "Well, this is a little thing I've been working on for 10 years."

- Getting so anxious to try and make a point that I don't formulate what I want to say. So it comes out as nothing.

- Having my mind go blank, just stopping, or losing track of what I was saying.

- Hedging, starting sentences with "Well, I think..." or "I guess maybe...." You give the most importance to that introductory phrase.

- Getting so physically anxious that by the time I get up to speak, I spoil the effect of what I was trying to say.

All in a dither

VOICE: At a course I learned what has been a saving thing for me about that physiological anxiety state. Excitement and fear are physiologically the same thing. When you feel that feeling in your stomach and your throat, and you tell yourself, "Oh my God, I'm scared," that causes a vicious circle and you become more afraid. But if you think, "My heavens, I'm excited," you'll accept it and it'll start abating, instead of feeding the fear.

Carol: Do you know the old English word, dither? It means to tremble in fear or excitement. They don't make any distinction between the two. It's in the interpretation that you choose. If it's fear then you feel physically in danger. There are very few times like that. It's usually excitement.

It's important not to dwell on these self-defeating things we do, and it is important to look at where certain language patterns come from. Let's look at developmental stages of adult women based on work by Karen Gilligan in *In A Different Voice.*

Sometime between age 10 and our teens, something happens to a lot of us. There is a silencing of our voices, either because we don't want to hurt others, or we're afraid if we speak others will hurt us, or we're afraid we won't be heard, so why speak.

Learned helplessness

We can add to this a thing called "learned helplessness." We did a needs assessment of 300 adolescent girls, aged 13 to 18, a few years ago. We found often around ages 10 or 11 they stopped connecting the effort they were putting into something with the result. They felt whatever happened to them was happening from some outside force. If they did well on a test, it was because the teacher liked them, not because they had worked hard.

Learned helplessness starts with disassociating yourself from what you're doing. At around 10 or 11, the girls start to deny their own style. They'll say, "Well, I'm different," or "I can't do it like they can." That's probably right. They probably have their own gifts, but they turn against themselves.

Physical mastery of the technical world gives us a sense of confidence.

They deny their own style. At first they don't mean it; it's cool. But then, they start to believe it and there's a loss of motivation. The phrase you hear is, "I don't like to do that." But often they've never done that or tried, but if they say they don't like to, people will assume they've done it and that way they get by. Loss of motivation leads to fears and anxiety.

That leads to depression. One of the characteristics of depression is feeling not in control of our lives. At that point the cycle just goes around and around. The difference in the way it strikes girls and boys is that girls start by denying their style, for example, in math; they say they're not good at it. Then they're afraid during tests and feel not in control. But with girls it doesn't just stay in math, it generalizes out into their whole life. Whereas with boys if it's in math or shop that they're not doing well or are experiencing this learned helplessness, it just stays in this one

area. It doesn't generalize out into their whole lives.

With this cycle, girls started to become silent. They might talk to friends. When we asked what activities they were interested in, the first was talking with friends. Number two was talking about their problems. They need their friends to talk with, because they have become very silent in the adult world or in the world at large. This internal silence pushes on the system, but the system (the outside world) is not that interested and so it doesn't try to pull the words out of girls either. It's a pressure from both sides to be silent.

The silence goes along with vulnerability. As girls go into late adolescence or early 20s, they relate to other people in order to know who they are. That's why relationships become the most important thing. It's like there are two sets of rules during this stage: one set for other people and one set for you. You're always juggling. You just don't feel free to say what you want to say. You feel restricted all the time.

Starting to break out

That changes when women start to learn, when they start to go out to a group of other women or other people, when they start to break out of themselves. That's why some of the pre-trades training courses and women's discussion groups have been so good, because it gets us out of ourselves a bit. We see that we can be our separate individual selves and still have relationships with people. So many people are threatened by being separate. They feel that separation is disconnection but it's not. This is difficult for adolescents because the relating is so important.

As we get older, we can deal with it better. We come back into groups and we see that being different and separate is not a disconnection from others. Gilligan says that is stage number two. We start to develop ourselves, there is more of a social participation, and we start to see ourselves as responsible people. Suddenly, we have one set of rules instead of two. We become fairer to ourselves in that we apply that one set to ourselves and other people equally.

During this stage, there is a lot of experimentation with expression and speaking. We start to express ourselves as different from other people. That's why women's groups are so useful because there is support for that experimentation.

Having your own style

In the next stage of maturing, women discover ways of being with others that also allow them to be themselves. You see that being different and acknowledging your own style actually gives you better relationships. Stage three is a new kind of inner judgement that we start to listen to. There are no rules. We lose all the rules and go based on the situation or the context. In this stage, instead of feeling held back there is a willingness, a wanting, to express ourselves.

Gilligan says these stages have to do with your experiences and what you do with them. Some women have found in some areas, such as work, they may be in one stage and feel really mature, but in terms of family relationships, they may be at another. You're constantly working to get everything in line. Women in the trades have been in settings that demand much of them. You are encouraged and pushed to listen to your own judgment.

Strategies to break the cycle

- Physical competence, in sports for example, something public where people can see it. You learn through feedback from others who point out concrete evidence of what you're doing. So you have the guts to keep going and give up the fear.

- Physical mastery of the technical world gives us a sense of confidence.

- Verbalizing, talking with other people, with other women. Being a role model forces you to speak up publicly and makes you feel good.

- Detachment, not taking things personally. We are socialized to be sensitive. We have to figure out what am I really feeling andd what is somebody else's feeling that I have picked up. In adolescence we pick up everything and we think it's "mine." As adults we learn this process of detachment.

- An inner realization that I am different and it's okay, I'm going to survive anyway.
- Beginning to look for our own approval rather than others' approval.
- Learning that you can speak with some authority and expect respect and response.
- Breathing deeply from your diaphragm helps to keep you centred, even when you are anxious. It is also really important in the production of sound.
- Trust in your own sense of timing, not acting on someone else's agenda. You choose the moment to come forward and speak, when you feel you understand enough of the problem you're dealing with to effect a positive change.
- Learning to change our language habits and styles, using language as a tool to effect change. For example, speaking harshly to someone who doesn't respond to kind and caring language.
- Changing language and culture. Knowing I could never be perfect, making mistakes and getting laughed at was a great relief.
- Changing my name.
- Insisting my children call me by my name. It gives everyone a different outlook on each other.
- Developing self-awareness; giving ourselves and each other space to figure out our strengths, interests, etc.
- Using a time of being detached from the world (like being at home with children) to try out things alone. It can bring a sense of self and a great deal of pleasure.

Carol: When you mentioned finding enjoyment being alone, you reminded me of Piaget, the child psychologist. He found there is a direct link between the amount of pleasure you have and how in control of your life you feel. It's important to feel in control inside. Giving yourself pleasure will reinforce that.

Soft mastery and hard mastery

Now I want to talk about Sherry Turkle's work with people who were learning to use computers. She talks about hard mastery and soft mastery. Hard mastery is the imposition of will over the machine through the implementation of a plan. Soft mastery is more interactive, more back and forth, getting to know the machine and relating to it, negotiating.

Turkle found girls tend to be soft masters and boys hard masters. She linked this trend to socialization. This is what she said: "In our culture, girls are taught the characteristics of soft mastery – negotiation, compromise, give-and-take – as psychological virtues, while models of male behaviour stress decisiveness and imposition of will. One aspect of the soft or relational style is the personification of the machine, communication and personal involvement with it."

Turkle found girls and boys were equally successful in achieving their goals no matter what style marked their learning and that each style took about the same amount of time for achievement. She also found once mastery was achieved, people looked almost identical until something new was injected into the situation, and then you'd see hard or soft mastery: negotiating and relating, or the imposition of will. It's important to look at what happens when we face something new or unfamiliar.

In some other research, we found the first things women experienced when they approached unfamiliar machines or technical equipment was, "What if it breaks?" or "What if I get hurt?" or "What if it goes out of control?" Then, as they were left to their own devices, they would start to relate to the machine or equipment. They would say to themselves, "What does it do?" or "What will it do?" Then they started to speak of the machines or tools as having personalities and might make up names for them. Instructors knew at that point the person was just going to fly. As the women experienced mastery, the questions were, "How can I perform better?" and "How does this machine link with a whole network of machines, or a whole network of tools?" "Relational learning" was

really important for the female trainees in those situations.

VOICE: I've written a series of poems because every one of my tools has a whole character. I love my nail puller, it's a joyful, friendly, happy tool because it solves all my problems. My framing square is really severe, strict but that's part of keeping order and putting things in balance and proportion. My hammer is very androgynous because its shape is very male but its function for me is, it gives me power. Makes me feel very powerful as a woman. There's a whole character there.

Gender-related language use

Now we'll look at what some of the research says about women's language and about men's language. Research shows that in mixed conversation or with each other, males interrupt more than females. If you are not used to interruption, it can set you off, break your timing. It's important to know it's not personal, it's habitually done. If you don't take it personally you can say, "Hey, you're interrupting me," or "No, wait!" or figure out something to do about it.

Another pattern linguists have observed in male/female behaviour in language is when a female makes a suggestion, it often tends to be ignored. Then it's picked up and reintroduced later into the conversation as somebody else's idea. You think, "I said that. Why didn't anybody hear me?" But somebody did. What you have to say is, "Yeah. I introduced that five minutes ago," or "Yeah, that was my idea. I'm glad you liked it."

Retarded minimal responses

Another thing is called "retarded minimal responses." It's when you ask a question and get an answer so ambiguous you hardly know what it is. But you think you know and you act on it and then later you find you were wrong. It's done by somebody who doesn't really know either so he covers himself by being ambiguous. He's relying on you to go in one direction and see how it works.

Do you find sometimes you have to keep asking questions? You've asked a question, you get a long answer, you keep asking and asking, and then somebody says you're nagging. There is a difference in attention to detail there. You tend to be very precise with your detail and you tend to have a lot more vocabulary for description of details. We find a lot of times males don't have as large a vocabulary for certain descriptive detail items, texture, material, or colour. Also females have a much larger sensitivity of vocabulary than males.

When we were working on the needs assessment with adolescent girls, we also did a survey with boys. People who work with adolescents around 13 and 14 say what the girls need is a sense of their own confidence. What the boys need is age-appropriate affection. They're getting their affection-word vocabulary from heavy metal music. It's just not sensitivity-oriented. So, if you've been trying to relate to somebody and you're not getting something back, but you know the feeling is there, it could be that the vocabulary is not there. It's not personal.

Reversals or projections

There's another interesting one called "reversals" or "projections." An example is a woman who did research for a university department head for three years. She was a very fine researcher and because of it he got to be wellknown. At the end of three years, she knew she needed to move on, that she had accumulated all the experience she could from that job. But that wasn't the point. She was standing still and he was going out and getting all the rewards.

So she said, "I've enjoyed this time I've been with you, but I have to move on now." He said, "Gee, Deb, I didn't know you were so ambitious." What he meant was, "I am ambitious." You can figure it out. It's almost a formula. If you hear something and it doesn't quite ring true, then do the substitution. Especially in a work situation, it's important to keep clear about who is doing what and to know there's a tendency to project on you certain things.

Men talk more and say less

Researchers have also found women would rather converse in an all-woman group; they cover more ground. And males would rather converse in mixed groups. Linguists think the

reason is that women's speech is facilitative, it brings people out when they need to be brought out.

The stereotype that women talk more than men is wrong. Linguists have tested this by having people speak to audiences for different amounts of time. The woman speaks for the same amount of time as a man, but everybody think she's spoken longer. Even if she speaks for less time than the man, everybody thinks she's spoken longer.

This stereotype keeps a lot of us from speaking. We think, "Oh, I'm talking too much." Perhaps this thing about speaking less, but thinking we've spoken longer, is because we say more with fewer words. That's something to pay attention to.

Does "man" mean everybody?
Do you feel vocabulary is getting easier to deal with? In many cases the use of non-sexist language is being handled on a policy level, whether in an educational, government, or business setting. But some people say, "There's no difference. Man means everybody." Linguists have found that man does not mean everybody. If you give people (children or adults) a textbook with pictures of both females and males in it equally, but it uses the word man (man in his environment, man and technology), when you ask people later about the pictures they'll think they were mostly men in the pictures. A lot of studies show the word "man" is not a neutral or generic term, it is still sex-weighted. What people hear does affect what they end up thinking and believing and acting on.

VOICE: Yesterday I heard some tradeswomen talking. One woman was saying she didn't want to be known as a journeywoman, nor as a journeyperson because that in effect identifies her as a woman. She also didn't want to be a journeyman because she wasn't. It's the women at this point who are being forced to change the title of the job they are doing.

VOICE: Vancouver Women in Trades started using the words journeyworker and tradesworker. That seemed to flow more easily than tradesperson.

I work for B.C. Rapid Transit in Vancouver. It's a new company, started in 1984. All their job classifications are generic: technicians, mechanics, storekeepers. The company did this all on their own. Our first collective agreement was also degendered; it doesn't have any references to he or his. Instead we pluralized things, and used they. It flows really easily.

VOICE: I'm a welder and they made my trade apprenticeable at one point. So they had us turn in all our qualifications, how long we've worked, etc. The process was called "grandfathering" but I would always refer to it as "grandmothering" and my co-workers' heads would just snap. It made a tremendous impact on me and that was when I realized it was important to do it.

VOICE: When I first joined the union they always had me as Mr. Sheryl Ann. I couldn't figure out how the women in the office could call me Mister. So I kept sending back all my mail to them.

But when I get my licence, I'm going to be journeyman. Not a journeyworker, not a journeyperson. I feel it's a position of status, not gender.

VOICE: What I usually do is what they do in England. They say, "I'm journeyed. I'm a journey carpenter." That's consistent with the origin of the word because after you apprenticed, you journeyed. You travelled for five, six or seven years. So saying, "I am a journey carpenter," is saying I am in that state of journeying. It was applied directly to men because there were only men.

Refusing to be ignored
Carol: Now let's look at some strategies for dealing with these linguistic patterns and behaviours, like being ignored and interrupted.

- Calling attention to it. Saying, "I can speak for myself," or "You interrupted me," or "Thanks, that was my idea, remember?"
- Joking about it.
- Working with your tone of voice. Partly it's getting louder, deeper, or whatever, but somehow making a forceful statement.

- Learning to yell. It was an incredible experience, and can be very effective. It's better than profanity!

- Learning to swear, and then exercising the choice to not use those words after all. But that was a choice, an internal choice, not an external choice.

- Learning to be more direct, less subtle. Getting over the anger that I have to do the changing, and realizing the important point is being heard.

- Learning to "fake it till you make it" (or bullshit). Women tend to avoid saying they can do something if they aren't completely familiar with it, while men just barge in. Women need to learn that if you know the beginning or you know how to take a step, you can do the rest.

Carol: We've talked about male and female styles, but I wanted to tell you that over the last few years we've been working with learning styles and, in most systems, there are about 80 ways of looking at how people learn. Basically they all boil down to four different styles and language style goes along with them.

Females are socially conditioned to be more relational learners while males are conditioned to be mental learners. As well, we have a combination of the two, a values-oriented and organizational style and the physical style, more methodical and concrete. The reality is each of us has the potential to develop all four of these styles. What is important is that you realize you do have very concrete strengths and that you talk to other people about them. The starting point is always what you've already got. The strength of your own language, that's the starting point.

I want to say, "Let's be speakers." Just get out there and speak. We'll worry about it later. We'll talk about it later. I want to remind you that knowing when it's the heart's truth strengthens our speech.

The last thing I would ask you to do is very gently let drop away everything we've talked about. Because what you've learned from this whole session, from talking with each other, you've already learned. There are stories that will pop up later but you've already got it from relating to each other.

Carol Brooks, PhD, is an educational consultant known for her nationally recognized study, "Needs Assessment of Girls" (1986) and her instuctor's manual, *Working with Female Relational Learners in Technology and Trades Training* (1986). She has recently engaged in research on the learning and work styles of women inventors (1988) in which she has found self-help strategies applicable to women in all walks of life.

CHAPTER 5

Overcoming Isolation

Workshop coordinator
Karen McMahon

This workshop deals with the problem of being one woman among many men, or of being alone to figure out your own way through the mysteries of your trade. Karen McMahon, a labourer at Ontario Hydro, leads this empowering discussion of meeting the challenges alone.

Karen: I think one of the reasons I was chosen to help with this workshop is that I spent five years out on a gang with 40 to 140 men, living away from home five to 15 days at a time. Marcia heard my story and said, "Ah ha! Have I got the workshop for you!" So, part of what I want to get out of this are some of your stories, whether you have been isolated, how you have dealt with it.

There were some days out on the gang that I used the old AA method where you take one day at a time, then you take one hour at a time, then the next five minutes at a time. That's sometimes the only way I could cope. Looking back on five years of being on the gangs, I coped a whole lot better after that length of time because I had learned how to deal with the men my own way. What worked for me wouldn't necessarily work for any of you. Had I known how to do that initially or had I had someone there to say, "Let certain things slide, don't get your knickers in a knot over things," it might have made life a little bit easier.

I think one of the reasons I was chosen to help with this workshop is that I spent five years out on a gang with 40 to 140 men, living away from home five to 15 days at a time.... There were some days out on the gang that I used the old AA method where you take one day at a time, then you take one hour at a time, then the next five minutes at a time.

Getting the job

When I first started on the gangs, I had worked for Canadian National Railways for two years. I had graduated from high school and started working in the office. Working in the office in CN is not a nine-to-five job, it's a 24-hour-a-day business, 365 days a year. It meant I was working midnights with Tuesday and Wednesday off and afternoons with Monday and Tuesday off. Wonderful hours if all you like to do is work. If you wanted any kind of a life outside work, it was a little difficult. I got into CN because my dad works for CN. Nepotism is alive and well in the world. Large companies tend to hire relatives of

people that work for them. I don't know whether it's right or wrong, but it worked at that time for me so I wasn't going to argue.

I ended up in Toronto from Sarnia where I had started out. I'd been there for two years when I realized I wasn't going anywhere. I could advance through management if I wanted to move to Montreal. That really is what I think my father wanted for me. He was pushing me to do something that he hadn't been able to do himself. I was young. I was bright. I was female. CN is desperate, like a lot of companies, for women that fit into all those categories. I was also quite eager. When I looked at the fact I was going to be working midnights for what seemed like forever, I thought, "This is nuts. What am I doing here?" They required 60 operators – they put up a little bulletin. "Operators" are people that run heavy equipment. There was a lot of traveling but they offered to train me on heavy equipment. To me at that time, that meant bulldozers, it meant roadbuilders, it meant front-end loaders. It did not mean the stuff that I ended up running, the track equipment used for maintaining and repairing track.

Two other women and I applied. One woman was turned down because she has a 50 percent hearing loss and working with large diesel engines would destroy whatever hearing she had left. The second woman had filed a human rights case against CN here in Vancouver and had won it. She went back to Vancouver to take the job. So there was me against the world. I was the first woman they had ever hired to do this sort of job. There was another woman shortly afterwards and we actually worked on the same gang for three months. Then she started working out of Sudbury and I worked out of the south so we would only see each other once a year, if we saw each other at all. The isolation was pretty tough for me. It was not only that I was dealing with men on an entirely different level than I had ever dealt with them before but I was also living away from home. I didn't have the backup support that we sometimes get from our mates and our family. If a guy came on to me or showed up at my room at two o'clock in the morning I had to deal with it right then and I had to wait until the weekend to talk to someone about it. Men didn't understand what I was going through.

Learning to love it

I made it through six months and I thought, "God, I don't know why, but I like this work. I'm outside." My husband supported me. I had one friend who supported me, the woman that was turned down because of her hearing problem. My family still thinks I'm a little strange but because I'm their only daughter, they're willing to go along with it. I got through six months and I thought, "I like this job. They've taught me how to change rail. They've taught me how to use machines. They've taught me how to get covered in diesel fuel... and smell absolutely disgusting!"

[H]ad I had someone there to say, "Let certain things slide, don't get your knickers in a knot over things," it might have made life a little bit easier.

I had an inordinate amount of self-confidence. At 19 or 20 you don't usually know where you're going or how to get there. I still don't where I'm going or how I'm going to get there, but I have the confidence that I'm going to get there eventually, no matter what I decide to do. I got that through working with men, proving myself.

Part of my job was lifting 100-pound cans of spikes. Officially, it's not allowed. Realistically, it was part of the job. Guys respected me because all of a sudden they saw a woman slinging these cans of spikes around, I wasn't a weak female. I was someone to be respected because of my strength. If someone came on to me on the track and I wasn't interested and they were really persistent, I could look them straight in the eye and say, "Fuck off! Leave me alone." In the office I did not have that option, because I felt constrained. I felt I had to be polite. Working with men was quite freeing in some senses.

Restraining always, but I could say what I felt. If I didn't like the way things were going and I got angry, they accepted that. Whereas in the office they didn't accept the fact that I got angry.

Where I'm going from here, I don't know for sure. I've overcome the isolation in a sense because I'm living at home. I have a daughter, expecting a second and I'm working half an hour away from home for Ontario Hydro. It's days with weekends off and they pay me huge sums of money to clean toilets and vacuum. I know Mary Ella's sitting there giggling, but they do.... That's the way I'm looking at it, as a means to an end. Ontario Hydro offers apprenticeships and that's what I'm after. Probably in mechanical, as a millwright or as a heavy equipment mechanic. I'm working with other women for the first time in my non-traditional job career. I can go to my locker room where I actually have a shower and my own locker and sit there on work time and talk to six or eight other women. I have never experienced that before. I don't want to move. I'm afraid to. I've become almost complacent because I don't want to give up this feeling of companionship which I've never had before. All the women I work with are not necessarily women I would call friends if I had met them outside of work. I don't always connect even inside of work. They very definitely have very different ideas on a lot of things. But the fact that we're all there and that we've all gone through certain experiences is a unifying thing. For me at this point it's really important to have that. [Karen has now had her second child and has since been accepted into Hydro's mechanical maintenance training program.

Women in trades

I also got through the isolation after the first year by belonging to a group called Women in Trades. It was a support group set up specifically for women in non-traditional jobs. Without that I don't know what I could have got through because Women in Trades confirmed that I wasn't a freak. That was the feeling. You look at the advertisements. You look at the media, you look at everything that's presented to you. If you're going to work, which is accepted nowadays, it has to be in an office job, it should be a supervisory, management-type job where you're nice and clean. The fact I was coming home covered in grease and dust because I'd been on the road all day, was not fitting into the traditional idea of what a woman was supposed to do.

When I went to my first Women in Trades meeting, there were other women that did exactly the same thing as me. All of a sudden it was, "Ahhhh!" That was a really big thing for me at that point because I did think I was all alone. You get that feeling, because no one else tells you, "There's a woman mechanic over there," or "I heard of a woman who's been running a crane for twenty years." There's a woman here from CN who's been a machinist for 17 years. I never heard about these people. The only way I found out about them is that I stumbled across them.

That's when I ended up at Women in Trades.... I had written a letter to Louise Brown who is a columnist with the Toronto Star. She ran a column dealing with problems women faced in the workforce. I had written to her, praising her on a column she had written about her sister who had gone to work in a vaguely non-traditional summer job. I said, "It's nice to hear there are other women out there, because I don't hear about them." She printed my letter. I thought, "Oh God, my career is ended." Either I didn't write anything terribly derogatory about CN or she didn't print it – for which I was quite grateful. She did recommend Women In Trades. I went and there were people the same as me. Your spouse or companion can only give you so much support. Until you meet other women who have gone through the same thing, it's very hard.

Women in Trades as a group is like a phoenix, it sort of dies down, then rises from the ashes. Right now they're in a dying down process. It's a vicious circle: people work, then they don't have time for the volunteer work at Women in Trades. If they're not working, then they have all kinds of time. In Toronto women appear to always be working so nobody has time for Women in Trades. I'm hoping that it springs up from the ashes again.

VOICE: I am a joiner but I was doing carpentry. In the latter part of my apprenticeship I ended up working mostly on my own. There weren't even men to relate to and I found that really hard. There were no women I could get together with and I didn't have those ties with the men. Somehow it wasn't okay to just go and compare notes, "... Have you ever dealt with this kind of situation?" I was doing jobs on my own and sometimes not knowing what I was doing. There were two aspects of isolation. One, not having a peer group to go to and compare notes, and also not having any women to relate to, just to feel normal.

VOICE: One of the isolation areas for me was going to school. When I arrived in Vancouver at Redford House, I was in my first year of benchwork and joinery. I had already done six months of carpentry. I was 32, 33 years old. I had never left my husband and children since I got married when I was twenty. I went to Vancouver to the BCIT campus to take the first year, after having worked in my trade for a year. I stayed in a hotel with 350 men. Six women. I thought I was going to die of fear and isolation. I had no resources at that time to reach out. I knew there was a Women in Trades group, but I was busy being freaked out by the teacher, who was a total jerk, and by the entire situation which was very intimidating. It was just horrible so I started running. I needed to get rid of the stress. The only things that got me through the first year were cheerful phone calls home, and running. I'm not fast and I'm not an athlete particularly, but I discovered that it made me tired enough that my brain would stop buzzing. I often worked out assertiveness type things when I was running. One woman was saying she takes karate: she thinks about a guy, chop chop!

I made it through six months and I thought, "God, I don't know why, but I like this work. I'm outside."

There are all kinds of levels of isolation. You're isolated working with 30 or 40 men with your earphones on and your mask on and all by yourself, surrounded by all sorts of people who don't want to relate to you.
VOICE: I'm isolated right now because I'm trying to start a business. I don't have other women who have worked as cabinetmakers in the Okanagan who can say to me, "Ask me...." When I ask men, they feel really threatened.

I've got three children at home and a husband so I've always had companionship, direction and support. But enormous isolation. There are no Women in Trades in the Okanagan, largely because there are only four or five of us. I've been so damn busy, I couldn't run it.

VOICE: I've worked in a shop with a woman who was here yesterday, but what we found was often we just complained too much to each other about work. Making that situation even more intolerable. There is a certain level at which you need support from outside the workforce. Now, I find myself working 10- to 11-hour days to get my business going. I feel isolated there too.

Sexual harassment

Karen: When I worked for CN, you were supposed to document sexual harassment. Then you're supposed to go to your supervisor who will say, "Well, gee, I'm sorry,..." and then you go to.... If I did that every time I was sexually harassed, I would have been tossed off the gangs after the first week.

VOICE: Besides, they don't recognize that sexual harassment is the men's problem. They say, "Goddamn woman, we shouldn't have hired her anyway." They don't comprehend. So I believe there's a Catch 22. I've just

I did think I was all alone. You get that feeling, because no one else tells you, "There's a woman mechanic over there," or "I heard of a woman who's been running a crane for twenty years."

comprehend. So I believe there's a Catch 22. I've just backed off from making any complaints or grievances because you lose....

VOICE: Working non-union, you don't have anybody to complain to.

Karen: With the union, I sort of had an out. I had a foreman, bless his heart, who was a very black-and-white man. He saw things one way or the other way, and as far as he was concerned, women should be at home looking after the kids. That's fine. That's his belief and I'm not going to change that. I did good work on his gang. When my brother worked as a labourer on his gang two years later, my foreman said, "If you do as good work as your sister, you'll have no problems."

Yet, when it came to accepting me working on his gang there was a real problem. The first night I said, "Well, I need a place to sleep." I'm on the gang, the gang had been running for awhile, I was bumping someone else. He said, "Well, you're an operator, you sleep with the operators." I was forced to share a room with the men that night. I have never spent such an uncomfortable night in my entire life. It was hot in the room. I had only brought my flannel nightie. The man who used the bed before me hardly ever took a bath and I couldn't even find clean sheets – I slept between the wool blankets. I don't think I slept more than 10 minutes the entire night. I went to the supervisor the next day and it was fixed but I don't think the foreman ever had his knuckles rapped. I did involve the union at a later point because it looked like the situation was going to arise again. I called my union rep and said, "Come on, this is bullshit, I'm not putting up with this." He got in touch with someone who got in touch with someone, there was a huge conference called and then in fact, the foreman's knuckles were rapped. They said, "This can't happen. She gets her own room." Fine and dandy. But it raised a lot of hackles because I did get my own room. But what can you do? I'm not sharing a room with a man. First of all, they say, "What's his wife going to say?" What the hell is my husband going to say? I was lucky; my union people were receptive and fairly responsible people. Not all unions are like that.

The co-op approach

Karen: I know a cabinetmaker who belongs to a ten-person co-op, three of whom are women. They co-own all the equipment and rent a shop space. She's been in the co-op now for five or seven years and it's working out really well. They get along well together, and if she has a problem she can go to someone else and say, "I don't know how to do this," and they will show her. This co-op is in Toronto and was already organized. She had shared space with another man before she moved into the co-op. She said even that was not too bad because the man she was working with was sympathetic.

Your spouse or companion can only give you so much support. Until you meet other women who have gone through the same thing, it's very hard.

VOICE: Well, that certainly sounds like one way to overcome isolation and how to share some of the equipment cost.

Karen: The cost of some of the equipment can be horrendous. I forget how much it cost her to buy in, but if she ever decided to leave then she could simply sell her share.

Tradeswomen in Quebec

VOICE: I'm an apprenticing carpenter in Montreal. I am isolated as well.... I moved to Montreal not too long ago and I'm separated from my husband. I only have one friend but she's often out of the city. Also, I don't even speak French yet. I think if I was completely immersed in French it might be easier. But there's always English everywhere, except where I'm working. It's only during lunch that I hear French. It's just not enough for me to really catch on.

I've been feeling really, really lonesome but also feel very proud of myself. Wow, there's not many of us around! I feel special and at the same time, there's nobody to talk to, to discuss ideas with.

VOICE: My husband doesn't talk wood, he's not interested. I have no one to talk to about my trade. I had two women I went to school with. The teacher said, "Oh no, women will fight each other for marks." We just saw each other.... Hallelujah! We became instant friends. Now we live a long ways apart and have some ridiculous long-distance phone calls. The Okanagan Valley is very middle-class, very much a retirement and farming community. Women aren't doing what I'm doing. The women who were Women in Trades here, moved away to where the real work was.

Karen: In Toronto, the women's gay community have a lot of women carpenters. I don't know how it works in Montreal, but I know if I was going to try and connect in Toronto, that would be one way of trying to do it.

VOICE: In Quebec, probably the main reason we are here today for this conference, is that there is a network for women working in trades. The most strength comes from women already working in trades. There are, like you say, unofficial networks, underground networks, for women working in trades. Eventually it would lead participants to a national network that would involve everybody. We have a lot to learn about around here.

Our project assists women to enter into non-traditional trades – any type of occupation that has less than 30 percent women. Most persons have been on welfare for five or 10 years or are on UIC. The program is made up of workshops, vocational guidance, technical drawing and those kinds of things. So people will find out what kind of non-traditional occupation they are interested to go into. We finance them while they are doing this program. Afterwards, there is a period to search a job – two or three weeks. And we finance that period. Parallel to that, we do representations to employers and we meet with representatives of enterprises to open doors while women are searching. We have a certain negotiating power to join their negotiating power to go into the trade and work together. And finally, with the money we have, it's independent. We don't have to give an account to any ministry for our money. We can subsidize women who are in trades a certain amount. I've negotiated with employers so that they give a certain amount. It's a very simple procedure. No employer has said that it is too complicated. There is a contract, and on that contract it specifies your non-traditional job with the person it occupies. It's signed by the woman also. If we did just financial follow-up and not follow-up on the health and not very rigidly it would be like women sweeping brooms like cheap labour, but we support them throughout their training and job search, and even after they are working.

Our bodies: pregnancy and aging

Karen: When you're young and physically able, physically demanding jobs are okay, but later many workers start to look at other jobs.

VOICE: Most men when they reach my age, which is 37, are now running the company. They're foremen. They're doing the management stuff. For me, the only way to get into management that I can see, is to start my own business by using my own skills. No one is going to hire me in a management position in the construction industry. Women are just too new. I have to produce the evidence that I am able to run a business and have the skills. It's really difficult to keep going. Especially when your body starts to let you down, it gets pregnant on you or... your knees go or....

VOICE: I think the practice that even big companies have of hiring one woman at a time is torturous.

VOICE: Then they proceed to try and get rid of you.

Karen: Perhaps in a group we can try and put pressure on companies to hire a group of woman. It depends on how much publicity they get, it depends on if you can get your CEIC [Canada Employment and Immigration Centre] people involved and whether, if you belong to a union, you can get the unions

involved. It's power stuff. It's men's stuff. It's connecting into the old boys' network, which is really hard for us to do sometimes. It's sometimes a necessity for us to do in order to survive.

VOICE: I work for Ontario Hydro, at Darlington. I've been an ironworker for the past ten, fifteen years. I was pregnant, approximately ten years ago my body got pregnant, accidentally. I was working on the job and at the time I had to climb structural steel, carrying about 30 to 40 pounds and I was pregnant. I was the first girl in the union. I was a red-steel welder. I felt they had given me a really rough time getting into this occupation and if I didn't make it I'd be setting the rule for everybody else. If I didn't make it through, if I quit in the middle of my pregnancy, they would say, "Why take any more? They're all going to get like that. They're just wasting our time." So, I stayed and I worked till I was eight months pregnant and nobody knew....

I was doing jobs on my own and sometimes not knowing what I was doing. There were two aspects of isolation. One, not having a peer group to go to and compare notes, and also not having any women to relate to, just to feel normal.

VOICE: Nobody knew? They just thought you were getting chubby?

VOICE: I'd go out with the guys at the odd time to fit in, to have a beer. They would say, "Jeez, Pat, you've been having a few too many. You're getting a bit chubby." I just went along with it all this time, but towards the end it was really getting tough. But I wasn't actually from Toronto, I was from Cornwall which is maybe about 150 miles away. I had made up this excuse by the time I was eight months pregnant that my family was sick at home and I had to go home and I needed a layoff.

VOICE: Like an unwed mother story. It's true.

VOICE: I got a layoff and went home and had my baby and a month and a half later came back to Toronto. They said, "Wow, did you lose lots of weight!" "Yeah," I said, "nine pounds, eight ounces." They couldn't believe it. They said, "Why didn't you tell us?" I said, "You know how you would have reacted, everybody would have just freaked out: 'What are you doing here?' "

Besides, at the time I was a single mother; I couldn't afford to quit. I needed to put the time in to be able to collect UIC. I only gained 12 pounds with my daughter the whole time I carried her. I never even thought much about it. At the time that I did it I just felt I had to. Because I had a hard time getting into it, I wasn't going to quit. There are approximately 10 other women in apprenticeships now.

First of all, they say, "What's his wife going to say?" What the hell is my husband going to say?

Karen: You do things you never thought you could do. I remember first going back to work on the gangs, and I was incredibly fortunate. I had a woman who lived down the hallway who would take my child at very unusual hours. I went back to work when she was two and a half months, my daughter. I would be leaving my place at three o'clock in the morning, my husband works nights, so I couldn't leave the baby there by herself. I would drop my daughter off at three o'clock in the morning, go to work, and sometimes put in eighteen-hour days. I'd come home, and I was still breastfeeding. I was talking to a friend last night, and I had never looked at it before. I thought, "My God, you were really stupid. Why did you do this?" "You did this because you had to." There was no alternative at that point. I told them I was pregnant this time around for my own benefit. I didn't want to

get stuck on certain jobs that would involve really heavy lifting or whatever. But cleaning is a heavy job regardless.

When I first started on the gangs I wouldn't have quit because I knew if I quit, no other woman would ever be hired. You put yourself under an awful lot of pressure when you are the first woman. It's not just the fact that other people expect things from you, but you put yourself under a lot of pressure too. After five years of running heavy equipment, I left knowing that I'd done my job; it was time for me to move on. I was happy with it and I wasn't letting down womanhood.

When I first started on the gangs I wouldn't have quit because I knew if I quit, no other woman would ever be hired. You put yourself under an awful lot of pressure when you are the first woman. It's not just the fact that other people expect things from you, but you put yourself under a lot of pressure too.

How to start

VOICE: I was just thinking, the way to start anything really, is to start very small. Invite someone over for coffee, and then maybe theyhave a friend, and they know somebody else.

VOICE: Once a month we had a potluck at each others' houses, and if you didn't have the room or your husband was in or whatever, we'd excuse them. That's how we got our group going.

VOICE: I have a friend who's an aide in a senior citizens' home, and she complains about her job. She's got a heavy job. She comes home covered in shit and all the rest of it sometimes. Why the hell would she do something like that? She says to me, "Well, why the hell do you do something like that?" Well, they pay me gobs of money. That's why I'm there right now. It's not the be all to end all but I certainly get more enjoyment out of it than just the money.

Karen: I know a woman in the teaching field, and she said, "Before I started an MA I was nothing." She lives on degrees. She's got two kids, a husband and she's working 35 hours a week. She's taking a correspondence course at night and getting A's. Fine, if that's where you're at, lady, then go for it. I don't got the energy. She looks at me and says the same thing, "How do you manage?" We just have a mutual respect for each other and a mutual dislike for each other's jobs. She would never do what I do, and I would never in a zillion years do what she does. We're both happy with what we do, and that's what the bottom line is. Not everyone wants to be non-trad or trad either.

Karen McMahon has worked in trades areas for eight years and is about to start a mechanical maintenance apprenticeship. She has been a member of the Toronto Women In Trades association for seven years.

CHAPTER 6

Supervising male employees

In this workshop, women involved in both trades and technology from all across Canada discussed both the advantages and the pitfalls that come along with being assigned to supervisory positions, and with being offered advancement within the company. We have extracted some important points from their discussion.

A woman seeking a supervisory position among men encounters a number of obstacles.

Nothing speaks louder than experience, and inexperience will compound a woman's problems, especially if you are perceived to have been chosen as a "token" or to meet a quota.

In some cases, large percentages of the men you are dealing with are illiterate. Relaying information and trying to do your end is extremely difficult when working with the technically illiterate. While the problem opens many doors for the literate woman, apprentices are not in a position to negotiate. Thus, you are often used by management to supervise men while unable to assume a supervisory position.

Seniority and ability often clash. Some union agreements are now asking for seniority *and* ability. (At B.C. Rapid Transit, the agreement says, first demonstrate the ability and then they'll look at your seniority). But in many cases, it's one or the other.

If it's seniority, your hands are tied and sometimes an incompetent person gets the job. If it's ability, the company can streamline the qualifications to hand-pick its own candidates. The company has complete authority to determine "ability." That's why it's important to negotiate supervision into the language of the collective agreement.

Companies often take advantage of a smart woman (i.e., a literate one) by keeping her in a position because they are "using" her there. Women who know they need the hands-on job training to get their ticket are fearful the company will drop them and train someone else if they protest.

Women supervisors are constantly being tested by men and need to be totally confident – frequently an unrealistic goal to meet. If a woman makes a mistake, everybody knows about it. If a man makes a mistake, nobody cares.

They know their business, and I know mine, and if I can make something work a little bit better for them and get the whole group of people behind it, I've gained respect.

"The building inspector would come on and look around and the lead hand, who is a woman, is there and this guy, a day worker, is just sitting there, and the building inspector goes, 'Who is the one who thinks?' He was more subtle about it than most. They would consistently come on and say, 'Who is making the decisions around here?' and go up to the guy standing there. It doesn't matter who he is. I often have guys coming on site, and they will always go to the male. He could be sweeping the floor. It doesn't matter."

Resistance to change is always there, particularly from older men. "I have quite a bit of problem with this," relates one participant. "You get some of these guys and they say, 'Well, this is the way I've done it for 30 years. Are you nuts?' They just don't want to change."

"I find when I have to contact salespeople and get technical information, I make sure they know what I do for a living, right off the bat. I phone them and I say, 'I'm ..., and I do the designing and drafting for...,' and it changes their attitude right off the bat."

It is extremely important that women have real training and real qualifications. There is no "back door" for women. Men can "buy their book" to qualify, but women have to take special courses in their spare time. It's unfair, a double standard, but these are union and company practices. At one time, when men were hired from out of the country, they brought their own translators who were, in fact, the ones with the skills. So the men hired as engineers lacked real qualifications, having bought their papers.

A good example comes from a woman who worked with a supposed aeronautics engineer. "Our company was very short of people. They had me work with him one day. I picked up the torque wrench and he said, 'That's an interesting looking tool, isn't it?' I couldn't believe it. He had his engineering papers, he just bought them."

It is important to understand supervisory positions can be offered or not offered for a variety of reasons, and that you can take up the option for a whole other set of reasons.

Three women's stories

VOICE: I guess I'm kind of caught in the middle. I've been heavily involved with my union for 10 years. During our last fall elections I was elected as chair of the Women's Committee (Steelworkers). So shortly after that management got together with the executive who took us out to dinner. We had a one-on-one dinner so whatever problems we might be having could be discussed. So I said, "Well, the first thing I would like to go for as a part of the Women's Committee is childcare." I didn't say too much, but three days later, my foreman comes to see me, "Polly, would you be interested in supervising?" he asked.

Why had I been offered the supervising job? Because I asked for daycare? Are they trying to shut me up or make me the first woman supervisor for public relations or something like this? I don't know if there is a future there for me as a supervisor or if I should get more involved with the Women's Committee.

It's one of those things you've got to fight for, you've got to say, "Okay, look, I need skills. I need to know how to supervise people. I need a course in supervision."

One aspect is I'm the one opening the door for other women that want these supervisors' jobs. I like the challenge. At the same time I like chairing the Women's Committee too.... I've been there 12 years. If I take a supervisory position, my 12 years of seniority will be gone, and I'll have no security. Now I have my seniority to protect me.

I wrote an article when I first became chairperson at the union, to get women

involved with the union, to get on these executive positions. Get involved as a shop steward, safety rep, first. That's how I started, I knew nothing about the union members. I just got involved with the union and said, "There's something wrong here," and ran for it.

My first take is, why can't I have the best of both worlds? So, what if you take this job, there must be another woman or two, who could also chair the Women's Committee. I think we as women and workers are morally bound to each other, so your faith won't get lost or your integrity won't get lost if you take the job. But you have to train other women to take the knowledge you have already gained, give it to them, work with them. Even though you are in this supervisory position, you can still work with women on your own time. But it's dangerous. And we have to wonder whether the company is picking off the union activists and moving them into management.

[Y]ou have to train other women to take the knowledge you have already gained, give it to them, work with them. Even though you are in this supervisory position, you can still work with women on your own time.

I want to see the Women's Committee succeed whether I chair it or not, I just want to see it there for the women. Especially in a male-dominated company and union. We need that but at the same time I want to open the door on the company's side.... I think management needs women just as much as the union does.

VOICE: I'm a research chemist. I was an electronic materials technician. Then I was promoted out of the union and I am now in a professional position. They do it occasionally. My company hasn't done this in the past. It usually took 11 years of working on the union side before you could be transferred over to the professional side, even if you had all of the qualifications. They wouldn't promote you. Other companies would do this much quicker.

This company is doing it more quickly now. I went in there and said, "I'm not going to stick around forever. You're either going to promote me or I'm going to leave. You've got an option. Here are your options." You have to say, "I'm worth it," and not be afraid of losing.

You're talking about the transition of going from the security of your union position to that professional unknown. I went through this whole decision-making process myself because I was protected in the union but I was a very junior person so seniority didn't do dick for me. In fact, I was threatened to be bumped out of my job on five different occasions. So the only way I could keep my job was to fight for being taken out of the union. The seniority clause works in reverse for someone who is very junior.

What we have in our company is a very aging workforce because whenever the bumps happen, they happen to all the junior people and they keep all of the senior. If you look at the distribution of the ages in our company you'll find the very young are missing. Thirty and under, there aren't a lot of people around. Thirty and over, there's a lot and because of that seniority clause, whenever the first job or crew reductions happen it's the young people who get thrown out on to the street. It's a problem that companies and unions are going to have to start dealing with – that the seniority clause is a good thing to have, but it's creating this problem that isn't being resolved. Eventually there will be no apprentices or young people coming to work.

So, the way I look at promotion is you go for the education. This company provides its supervisors a very broad-based training and education. But you've got to know the right people to get into the courses. It's one of those things you've got to fight for, you've got to say, "Okay, look, I need skills. I need to know how to supervise people. I need a course in supervision." So you get on the list to get some training to know how to supervise. You start building, they'll pay for it. The whole bit.

So if they do let you go, you're a marketable product to another company. The obstacles can be overcome.

VOICE: If it's any consolation to you, I haven't worked within the confines of the union as such for 12, 15 years. I have been doing supervisory work in any number of capacities for a long time and I have not been treated badly. At my present job, I was hired over 35 men who had applied. Whether it was some sort of tokenism, I don't think so. All my qualifications were good, but I am and I have been, at some point along the way, always their token female. But it's a small price to pay for what I get. I've had a lot of training.

Advice to the female supervisor

Here are the recommendations that came out of the workshop.

Instill confidence. You have to work at it, not by showing off your knowledge, but with team effort. "They know their business, and I know mine, and if I can make something work a little bit better for them and get the whole group of people behind it, I've gained respect," says one woman. "I try not to intimidate them, but work with them," says another.

Introduce yourself. "When I have to contact sales people and get technical information, I make sure they know what I do for a living right off the bat. If I say I'm Joan and I do the designing and drafting for..., they don't seem to have quite the block, even though I'm female."

Keep your eyes and ears open and you learn a lot about systems and hierarchy and how they work.

Get your training while you've got the chance and *speak up* when it's time to move on.

Admit what you don't know, and ask others for help. "It's just simple good sense and good use of resources," explains one participant. "If you have someone on the site who can do something very well, then that's the person who should be doing it."

Delegate workers according to ability. "There's a place for everybody." That means you've got to know the guys you work with. "I just find out which ones like to do what and how good they are and it makes the job a lot easier."

If you have an apprentice, they should try their hand at everything. You can say, "I'd like you to give it a try, at least once." As a supervisor, you're a mother, a doctor, a psychologist. You have to be everything to everybody.

Be active in the union. "Like you're not just there for yourself," says one woman. "Things have got to change. We've got to have the exposure in our unions to support one another that way."

Women have to support each other in the union situations too. "It's really a nervous situation to walk in there and it's something that's pretty scary but I took a deep breath and walked in there anyway. From that point, every other woman that's been initiated, they send me her name and address and when she's being initiated, I contact her and make sure she has somebody to go with so she can have somebody to sit with and just explain what's going on and who is who. So they can be comfortable by not having to walk in there by themselves."

Train other women. "We as women and workers are morally bound to each other, so that your faith or integrity

> *I said, "I'm not going to stick around forever. You're either going to promote me or I'm going to leave. [These] are your options." You say, "I'm worth it," and not be afraid of losing.*

won't get lost if you take the job. But you have to train other women to take the knowledge you have already gained."

Take a risk. Management needs women as much as the unions do. Train yourself through company programs. If the company lets you go, you're marketable.

Don't regard yourself as a token woman. "We are skilled and deserve every goddamn penny we make and should be getting more. It's a real trap to fall into by regarding yourself that way, because you put yourself down. If your skills are there, the job will happen for you."

In a Yukon study, *60 percent of women entrepreneurs said they started their own businesses because they were tired of having to worry about their jobs,* particularly in the government. They didn't want the hassles with unions, they didn't like what was happening, and they wanted the ability to stand on their own feet.

You have to learn to have confidence in yourself, in your skills. If you lose your job, then you can go down the street and find another one. But don't look for someone to be a big brother and protect you.

Look for ways to facilitate negotiation between union and management. "We don't have to hate these people and they don't have to hate us. Take the chance and go in there and facilitate."

Women can bridge the gap. They are capable of reaching for more understanding between union rank and file and management. They can communicate across barriers that men do not seem to see.

Learn to look at both sides and come up with a "creative consensus." The operative always seems to be compromise, which doesn't have a very nice sound to it. But if you work for consensus, it's a good solution all the way around.

Acknowledge your emotional side. It's okay to cry, go for a walk, look for a release. "Five minutes later you can turn around and cope with the problem," says one woman. "We need to be more honest with ourselves and certainly with the people we work with. Let them have emotions."

Listen a lot. Compliment a lot. A survey by the Federal Business Development Bank revealed the most important thing to employees on the job is to be told they are doing a good job.

Use a positive approach. Do you say, "Don't do it that way"? It's much better to say, "I think it would work better if...."

Use a verbal sandwich, mix the good with the bad. The approach is useful for change. You don't want the worker to give up what has been done right. "I have supervisors who only go over what we've done wrong... and what happens is it gets worse instead of better."

If a woman makes a mistake, everybody knows about it. If a man makes a mistake, nobody cares.

Keep expectations realistic and focus on the important. "I found that initially my expectations of male employees were really out there because of what was expected of me. Women are expected to do twice as well in half the time. You can't maintain that attitude when working with male employees."

And the concluding comment: "God, we're valuable out there. God, we're good!"

CHAPTER 7

Neither friendly nor familiar: Language styles, stress, and macho

Workshop coordinator
Kate Braid

Kate Braid explores the gender differences in work and communication styles that can be so baffling on the job.

Kate: I have been thinking about the three main ways the workplace was different from what I was used to, in what I hadn't even recognized was sort of feminine culture. One was the language, one was the physical environment, and one was the style of work, or the style of relationship at work.

Language

When I first went on the job, I thought I was in another culture because I didn't understand a word the guys were saying. They talked in short non-sentences. They were just words and it wasn't a whole conversation. For example, some guy would say, "Last night eh?" They would all burst out laughing and I wouldn't know what was happening. Or they would say, "Twenty-four eh?" They would all guffaw. I think the twenty-four was beer. But I don't know. Or a twenty-four ouncer.

The other thing I found was they used humour differently than I was used to. They talked in a joking way all the time. It wasn't a discussion, it was just repartee and wit. The other thing I noticed was their language was much more aggressive. There was more swearing. It was more punchy. Things were acted upon. For example, everything was like, "Lay 'er down," "Move 'er," or "Hit 'er." So there was a sort of a violence and a pushiness to the language. And the other thing is, it was impersonal. We didn't talk about things, about our own family or our own experiences. It was always more object-oriented. And the vocabulary was more sexual. It was more female sexual. So we'd move things a "cunt hair" or all the objects were "she" or, in my trade we have "studs" that we "erect." Everything that sticks out is a "nipple" and so on.

I felt humour was used to cover up any kind of feeling or personal thing. Any kind of emotional thing. They would cover it up with a joke and it wouldn't always be a good joke. In fact, it would be a kind of sick joke.

None of the guys I've ever worked with could explain anything to me satisfactorily. You know, they can do the work, but when it came down to explaining either what you were supposed to do or how it works....

When I first went on the job, I thought I was in another culture because I didn't understand a word the guys were saying.

VOICE: Right. I'd want to talk about the schematic, the detailed technical stuff. That's what they couldn't explain. I think it's their command of language. They didn't become technicians so they could talk to each other about electronics. They became technicians because they couldn't talk to each other about anything and they got this job where you sit alone at a bench all day and you don't have to talk to anybody.

Kate: They would show me. They would say, "Well, here." And they would stick their hands in it and they couldn't explain anything. They could show, but not tell.

VOICE: I found the Jamaican or Barbados person was able to give me, and more than willing to give me, all kinds of information. They would be even more specific than some books I'd read on that topic or whatever. The other apprentices those people worked with, the Canadian men, didn't ask the questions I asked. They just accepted that this is the work we were to do, screw two and a half turns and who knows why we're doing it.

When my turn came, years later, to give a young person guidance in the trade, I found he didn't ask too many questions. I just offered him the answers and explained everything. When another journeyman male got him to go assemble outriggers, he came to me and asked, "Diane, how do you assemble outriggers?" He didn't bother to ask that other person, and that person never offered any information to him. That's a complete waste of time. Sure, you learn by experience, but that's kind of an expensive way of doing it and you should offer him some guidance. That's what journeymen are supposed to do to apprentices.

VOICE: It's competitiveness to make the other guy look bad.

VOICE: It's also not wanting to admit ignorance. Not wanting to admit you don't know. One thing I've noticed from people's comments, it seems like a lot of us were the only ones in school that asked questions. And then later we found out the men didn't know either. And they were really glad that we asked the questions.

Aggression and competition

Kate: I worked in this one shop that was always referred to as the retirement shop. When workers would go there, they would be set for life. Most of the men working in there had been in the war and played some set of rules. Groups were drawn between people who had been in the Navy and people who had been in the RCAF. A lot of lines had been drawn around that. I think that's probably with the older male workers, but certainly it was very interesting.

In terms of aggression, I noticed when we wanted to file a grievance on some particular thing that happened in the shop, the first reaction from a lot of them would be, "The way to deal with this is to take this guy out behind and...." That's the way they were going to deal with it.

Someone just told me there is a cabinetworkers strike on in Vancouver and the fellow who is their organizer has been amazed by this strike. It is mostly women in the shop. And he said he had never seen a picket line like it. It was so peaceful on the picket line, the company couldn't get an injunction to make them stop picketing. Which was a first. He said that for those women, the thought of violence had never crossed their mind. It wasn't an alternative for them. Which it is for guys if you've been on a picket line, like most of us have. Women never did that, and so it's like a whole different approach to dealing with disputes.

Men are so competitive. Even if you're talking about one of those subjects, like cars or sports or booze, it's like, "Top that!" I think it's both language and relationships. Their competing with each other is reflected in their language. Certainly in workplaces where there are more women there's much less of that competitiveness.

One of the points I wanted to make too is about competitiveness. I assume this is true in all the trades, but certainly in machining. If one of the men was describing something about one of the other men, they always said something about how good a machinist they were – whether or not it had anything to do with the situation. The person who was talking was always the "best" machinist in comparison to the other man. "He may be okay, but... he's only a so-so machinist, you know." And there was this whole level of competitiveness on that level, but also of placing themselves in a hierarchy in terms of the trade, which often had nothing to do with reality. That was their pride, that was their work. "They" were good

machinists and that was important to them. They talked about that a lot.

VOICE: Guys are proud of doing a hard day's work, and proud of what they've built. Although they won't often say it like that – it more often comes out as competitiveness.

Conversation on the job

VOICE: One of the things I found really surprising, was that whole impersonal kind of conversation. Even men who, on a one-to-one level, were obviously very close to their partners or to their kids or their family, would never admit that. In fact in conversation, they would totally deny these things were important to them – that their kids were important or that their partner was important. In a group situation, as opposed to talking to them one on one, the language changed entirely. Even men you'd get to know quite well and would have reasonable, intelligent conversations with on a one-to-one basis, put back into the large group, always reverted back.

I felt humour was used to cover up any kind of feeling or personal thing. Any kind of emotional thing. They would cover it up with a joke and it wouldn't always be a good joke. In fact, it would be a kind of sick joke.

It depends on the type of men in the group. You get the ones that are telling sexual jokes all the time, then the rest of them join in. Whereas if that man wasn't there, you would never hear a sex joke the whole day. So they are more susceptible to peer pressure.

VOICE: It's also the sheep mentality. Different places I've worked there's always a leader and they're always going along with the leader. They're all a little meek and mild on their own, but Mr. Macho would come on the scene and all of a sudden they're all acting macho too. I found men to be very sheep-like.

VOICE: You know, you get one of them by themselves and they actually become human. When they're in a crowd, it's a totally different kind of behaviour. It's like a public self and a private self. And it can be two different people. A person that I can trust privately, I can't trust publicly. I wouldn't ever trust any of them publicly. Because they maintain the public self when they are with each other. And I do that. That's what I do too because I play that game.

Playing the game

VOICE: Nothing is serious enough to have an argument about. Like, an argument is just an excuse to have a laugh about. And they bait each other: "We know this guy, we can really get him if we bring up this issue. He'll rant for half an hour." You know, "There goes Joe again," and that kind of stuff.

As a woman I find this really difficult, because someone would scream at me and then be really surprised I was upset. Like I had sort of broken a rule by taking it seriously.

VOICE: When I first encountered all the differences working at the dockyard, it was really rough. It took me about two or three years. It was about a year before I would say anything, because I just didn't know who to be. The person I was used to being seemed like the wrong person to be. How I explained it to myself was that what's behind their group process is that they are actually supporting each other. Just like women, like we support each other, and support each other in groups, by taking care of each other. I'm telling you that I care about you by being concerned about your welfare and that's how my public self relates to you. If I'm a man, I tell another man I care about him by treating him poorly because it means I trust him to take care of himself. I'm saying in essence, "I know you can handle it, man."

I cut myself once and I came back to work covered with blood, with this huge bandage around my head. It was not a bad cut, but it was a scalp cut and they bleed like crazy. Everybody on the refit ship saw me walk off with blood dripping down my arm holding this pad of paper on my head. It was almost quitting time and they were all sitting there watching me. So, I get back to the shop and I walk in and there are two guys, and this one guy's got a John Wayne act that you wouldn't believe. And he says, "Was it clumsy or stupid or both?" And the other guy says, "If you're looking for sympathy, you came to the wrong place." But they did that because they were worried about me and they wanted me to

know they cared. When I'm there expressing that I care about them by taking care of them, it's like it makes them weak, they don't like it. They resent it. When they are demonstrating to me that they trust me to take care of myself by being insensitive and impossible, it is really caring and support. They test each other and they support each other to be tough.

VOICE: At first my feelings were hurt and I thought they didn't like me. It took me a long time to get it straightened out, that's what's going on.

VOICE: I think another part to that is the way they also ignore things when it is obvious somebody is having a problem. Men think they can hide things really well, but they don't hide things any better than anybody else. But the way the other men would deal with a problem would be by completely ignoring it. This is not happening. You can deal with this by yourself. We're going to show you that you can deal with it by yourself by not recognizing that anything is going on here. It is quite bizarre.

When I was going through my pregnancy, that was also something they ignored. I worked till a week before my son was born. And the men managed to completely ignore it. At first I thought it was because they just didn't look at me. Then I realized they had to see me at some point.

Even when I left – I worked my last shift before I was taking my maternity leave. They all pretended like I was going to be back the next day. That was their way of assuming that I was going to be back after my leave and that everything was going to be fine and that I could control this.

I think one of the things that happens is that men have to relate to each other on a superficial level. They seem to be afraid to get to know each other, because they may not like each other. If you keep it all very superficial and very sort of witty and light and impersonal, you don't have to deal with any of those kinds of things. And you're working with the same people all the time.

I worked in one place where the people were going to be there till they retired. That was it. They had found their little niche. They were going to be in the machine shop till they retired. They didn't want to potentially ruin the rapport of the shop by setting up lines of communication between each other. The way they did that was not by working things through and accepting differences, but by keeping things very light. Even the men who weren't into sports pretended they were so that people wouldn't think they were different and it wouldn't become an issue. That was how they kept the shop going, by not getting involved in each other's lives and not really getting to know each other.

My take on the competitiveness is that certainly in the tradesmen I work around it's the same as their so-called "advocating violence." Or so-called "problem-solving by violence." They're real eager to advocate problem-solving by violence and they're real eager to win and not look like they're losing, but in fact, if you stand out and do something that is noticeably better or noticeably worse you'll get ostracized. They're not really competitive.

Kate: But what I did find was that they always pick on the weakest. Like, my experience with women has been that women generally pick on the strongest. But the men pick on the weakest.

VOICE: We have 1,000 employees, 950 of them men in the service section. It was very usual for that to be the case. For example, Workers' Compensation was a real issue for them. They would not report injuries because it looked bad. They would take care of each other. If there was a head injury, or an arm injury, whatever, they would keep the person in the dog house for the day and not let anybody know about it. Instead of that person seeking proper medical attention and, if needed, going on compensation. They had the same attitude about the use of safety equipment, which I found difficult because I am fairly safety-conscious. If my co-workers were using faulty safety equipment or doing something that was dangerous, my interjection was not welcome. And when I said, "I'm not doing that," well, that didn't go over very well either.

Swearing

Kate: Going around swearing. That's also a part of their relationships, and their attitudes towards ladies.

VOICE: They still think there are ladies, and so they go around apologizing. For me, I don't care if they swear. Go ahead. I'd rather just

hear them swear naturally than constantly apologize to me. Because I swear just as much as them sometimes. Doesn't bother me.

VOICE: I've worked on a crew where there were a couple of very religious men around and the other guys would say, like, "He wouldn't say shit if his mouth was full of it." So they wouldn't really watch their language around that person. They felt that man would have to just accept the rest of the men as they are and yet with a female, it was different. As far as I was concerned it didn't matter either as long as the words in between were constructive.

VOICE: Their attitude was to respect the ladies but not each other. But it wasn't respect really, it was tradition. They have that respect for each other.

One of our instructors at our first math class gave this whole long thing about how he was going to have to clean up his notes and how he was going to have to behave himself now that there were ladies in the class. He was quite consciously doing that to draw attention to the fact that we were there and to exclude us, to separate us from the class. The implied assumption was that we were making him clean up his notes and he was going to have to behave himself and that was going to be a drag for the guys. It was quite belligerent, quite obnoxious.

I think there is another issue. Men feel just as much that women have their own language and they really don't know what it is. And some of the hostility and also the confusion has to do with them not knowing how women talk to each other and thinking maybe the difference is that we don't swear. I find over and over again that they're not real clear how to talk to each other. And they certainly don't know how to talk to women. I think that could be the focus point for that confusion and so there would be anxiety and anger and all of the other things that come with it.

Female-male relations on the job

I taught at the Women Into Trades and Technology program so I was around the technical instructors a lot trying to encourage them – to talk to our women, teach our women, etc. We had this one machinist who was excellent and was really trying. And then one day after a couple of years I walked into his office to talk to him about one of my students and he said, "Susan, I don't want any more women around here." I said, "I don't understand." And I didn't because he had been so wonderful. I think because I had been able to work with him for awhile that he had some level of trust. He was at a point of real frustration and he couldn't talk to any man about it and he didn't know who to talk to. And I think that was the other thing because he couldn't talk to his wife about it either.

What he was beginning to realize was how much he liked women. One of the things that had happened to him, you see, was that all the time he had been teaching in the machine shop, he had never had to deal with women. And he was a very Christian man and he had a wife and family and had never been around temptation. Here he was in his late 40s, early 50s, something of that nature. He was struggling and he said, "You know, I don't know what to do. I have to be around the women. I have to go and get really close during instruction because of the noise, you have to get close." He said, "They smell good. Men don't smell good." And he said, "You know, they talk really nice back to me and it's like there is some caring." He was really genuinely struggling with something, and from that moment I've thought how important it is for the men to be able to talk as well. Not to forgive them for any of this... but they don't have a support system of their own to really talk about their true feelings. Maybe that awareness will help some of us to understand some reactions that are going on.

Kate: I found it was partly sexuality and partly liking. They realized they could talk to someone and feel better talking to that person, and they assumed it was sexuality at first but when you denied that, they realized they actually liked you. The union is really helpful because we have these words, sister and brother. They would say, "I feel about you like a...." It was like we had gone through whore, mother, wife, and it was none of those, and I'd go, "sister?" and he'd go "Yeah!" But they'd never had a sister before. They had never been able to care or to have a friend. It was sort of like a friend.

Women have at least two jobs and men have one, which I think makes some difference in terms of their energy level. I used to wonder how the guys had so much energy and then I realized they just went home and sat down. When I had a camp job, I realized why the

guys had so much energy. I just walked in, someone had supper ready, someone made my bed, someone did my laundry. Great!

VOICE: I have a friend who is a carpenter and we were brainstorming about men and women working together. He said, "You know, I always feel good when I have a woman on the job, and she's my apprentice and I can teach her everything I know, and I am delighted to do that. I am delighted to raise the skill level of all those women. But you know, I've never had to work on the job where there was a woman who knew more than me, and I'm not sure I could handle it." I think that's something we're dealing with here. Competition. It's so subtle. Men sort of basically hand over to women their emotional lives because they're not sure how to handle emotional relationships. They know women are good at it and they let women do that. But if women have the the tool skills too, then women have everything and men only have the tool skills and maybe the women are even better at some of those things. What are we going to do then?

I think these are very complex issues we are dealing with. It's difficult to have to put ourselves into that position of not only do we have to be a competent worker, but we have to be a role model and we have to be this and we have to be that. The stress created for women in that pioneering situation is too great, but on the other hand, if we don't somehow take that as role responsibility.... I know when I first went to carpentry school, I didn't think it was my job to teach those men anything. They could just do their thing and I was just there to learn my skills. It didn't work, you know. You have to speak to them and you have to be able to be really direct and really straight and really clear. And it's only by our modelling that kind of communication with them, that we're going to start getting that back.

It's like, talking about the job or how you're doing it, is questioning the way they are doing it, or questioning their abilities.

VOICE: I quite often get, especially from one of my co-workers, "Oh I get all the nag, nag at home, and now I come to work and I get the nag, nag from you." It's not that I'm nagging, it's just that I like to talk a lot. I talk about what we are doing, or something that's on the radio. I like to talk, instead of just doing the work. It makes the day go better. But with them, it's nag, nag, nag.

What I recognize at work is that I don't give up. If I decide I'm right about something, I won't give up, generally speaking. And the men I'm working with do, like, they would let each other hang rather than press a point. What they call the nagging thing is persistence in making something go right.

They want to get the job out as quick as they can, but don't worry about the quality so much.

Attention to detail

VOICE: We gave a survey to persons in trades training. The women describe themselves as very good with detail, being thorough, and taking their own time. So there was a kind of value of precision about their work. The men described themselves as being fast. When we interviewed trades instructors, they said if there's anything they have to work on with their women trainees, it's to be faster, but sometimes that's not even an issue. With male trainees, they said they always have to work with them to slow down and to focus on detail.

VOICE: Their focus on speed, I think, is also the focus on the end product. We are more concerned with the process of getting there, having it right, understanding what you are doing and then having a product you can be proud of. We never focus on the goal of getting it up, so to speak. So, in terms of men, their focus is on the goal, without precision.

VOICE: Just make sure it runs long enough so they don't get blamed. Their friendships are more important than having something go right. I think it's a general hopelessness actually. They don't believe the problem can be solved. It relates to ignoring problems and all that other stuff.

VOICE: This is another contradiction. The quality of the relationships at work is more important than the quality of the work?

VOICE: Well, you persist in what you're doing because you want to keep going until the conflict is actually resolved, and they don't have a belief that conflict can be resolved. I think that's where the hopelessness comes in. They are hopeless about changing the work situation to make it safer. They're hopeless

about confronting each other about problems. They're hopeless about making a job a little bit better. It's easier to do it the way they have always done it.

So hopelessness about solving problems? It's lack of conflict resolution skills and it's also a sense of powerlessness which is a total contradiction in the sense that we assume men are the ones who have the power. In fact, they are feeling powerless.

Must women teach men?

VOICE: Historically, women have always been teachers. The men are used to women teaching. They are taught by their mothers, they are taught by their wives. I think that men, when they go out to the workforce, don't want to have to deal with that. They find women threatening in the workforce because that is like being invaded again. There are still those people that are teaching. We do have to teach. We have to teach them how to be able to discuss things, and how to carry on a relationship in the workforce. They don't know, and it's up to us to teach them.

VOICE: I wanted to say something about women teaching. Quite frankly, I am sick of it. Probably some of us have done it in our marriages, in relationships and I'm tired of always being the one in our union who is supposed to be "educating." I think they have to get off their duffs and do a little changing of themselves. I don't feel I have to be responsible for changing all the men in the world. Especially since they don't want to be changed.

That was a lot of the reason I left machining and decided to become a carpenter. It was something I could do myself and I could do with other women. Having identified the men in the shop who were reasonably progressive, reasonably gentle and sensitive, and reasonably decent human beings, I got really tired of me being the one to say to all of them, this is your job. If men are ever going to change, it's going to be because other men are going to change them. Not because we change them. We can identify the men who are going to do that, but we can't change all men.

VOICE: I want to know who teaches men that when they are with a woman, they have to go to bed with this woman – that whole mentality that women are just to go to bed with. They don't know how to communicate. Can't we tell someone to start teaching men that they have to communicate, and they don't have to sleep with every woman that comes on the job?

The effect of us being in the workplace, in my impression, is that we are teaching them by us simply sort of pig-headedly needing to talk or needing to communicate in some way, just because of who we are. Eventually some of those men are learning that is an option. So, in our own means of survival, we are actually teaching them along the way. This is another way to operate. We're not the only ones, that's what the women's movement is about. It's happening, it's just a lot of work. People like us who are at the front, feel like we are butting our heads against the wall. This is why women burn out. This is why women drop out of trades.

Coping with the dirty work

I think this is something also alienating for women. We come out of environments that are mostly office or home kind of environments – white-collar environments, whether hairdressing, clerical work, sales, or whatever. I found it incredibly shocking to come on to a workplace, for example, where I was always working at heights. Where heights was a real issue to be dealt with. Whether it was walking on the top of steel or a wood frame or climbing a ladder.

Another problem is the noise. It's often the women who pick up earmuffs. I worked with men for about six years before I started working with women and I realized by the time I worked with women that I had become really macho about noise. When I worked with women I was amazed about how concerned they were about noise. Now I'm like that too and I know that when I go back I am considered a fanatic. The noise factor is a serious danger. Another problem is the size of equipment and the way it's built. I found in carpentry that I like Makita tools because they are built for a slightly smaller hand. For example, on the saw, the height adjustment is perfect for me, but a lot of the guys don't like that saw because their hands are too big and they can't reach the button. The tools are built for really big men, bigger than most men are. I know in my trade too, tool belts are made for gorillas. Even the guys don't fit those tool belts and everybody puts little blocks of wood at the back, so why doesn't someone realize that most human beings aren't that big? Also the size of the clothing and equipment sizes

are really discouraging. Just the fact that you can't even get a pair of gloves that fit. You can't get coveralls to fit. This makes you feel unwelcome. You can't get boots to fit. I know at Hydro it's a major problem because the electrical people need a particular safety boot and they just don't make it in any women's sizes. If you're really lucky, you have really big feet and you can fit some of the men's boots. That's not just a thing that makes you feel unwelcome, it's an actual physical hazard. If your pants don't fit, it's a hazard. They catch on things.

VOICE: Where I work, the thing that got me was how scared I was to be there with the sparks and all the rest of it. The physical environment was scary. The hot stuff. Hotter than you could put your hands near. It probably ties in with the height thing. Danger. Dangerous situations.

VOICE: When I first went on the job, it was so drab. I wanted to fit in so I wore really drab clothes but eventually I really got brave. Then I got my ticket and I wore a pink mackinaw. I felt incredibly radical. But the colours didn't make me feel at home. One of the things that was neat when I started working with women was that I started wearing colours again. It made me feel more at home in that workplace. Colour.

The other thing was dirt. Personally, I loved getting dirty. I was always the dirtiest one on the job site. I think it was sort of left over – I wasn't enough of a tomboy. A lot of women I have spoken to said dirt was a real problem. For example, the one woman who is a blaster said every night she went home and washed her yellow rain gear. She said she came out looking like a canary every morning. She couldn't stand being dirty. A lot of women have said they always go home and change and have a shower before they'll drop in at the bank or the grocery store because they don't want people to see them looking so dirty. I've asked a few guys and they all say, "No. Dirt. Well, you're working, you get dirty." It doesn't seem to be an issue, but it does seem to be an issue with women, and another thing that makes us feel not okay.

On the question of dirt, it was one of the things I loved about going into the trades because I have an excuse to be dirty. But when I was taking the bus back and forth to work and had to get on the bus with my work boots I realized how conspicuous I was. It wasn't so much the dirt itself that bothered me, it was other people's reactions to that dirt that was really hard to deal with. There I was in public, with secretaries on the bus who wouldn't sit beside me. It's being really conscious of the stains on your hands, dirt under your fingernails, and rough hands.

CHAPTER 8

Sexual and gender harassment

Workshop coordinator
Debra Beauchamp

In this workshop Debra discusses Canada's various human rights protections against sexual and gender harassment, and gives some suggestions about how to protect yourself whether or not you use these provisions.

Debra: Right now we don't know whether the Supreme Court will agree or decide that discrimination involving sexual harassment is discrimination on the basis of gender, so for those provinces who right now are relying on that protection, it's a bit of a messy situation. I'm going to go through province by province quickly to give each of you an idea what protections are in your province. Then I'm going to look at the definitions of sexual and gender harassment.

The Human Rights Commissions

The provincial Human Rights Commissions are responsible for all employment the province has jurisdiction over. If you're working in the airline industry, in transportation, communications, anything that involves a federal undertaking, then the Canadian Human Rights Commission would be your place to go. Everything else is handled by the provincial Human Rights Commission. The Manitoba code is similar to the Ontario code, and it's similar somewhat to the federal protection. Both the Manitoba and Ontario codes now explicitly define sexual harassment.

Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan all have protection from discrimination on the basis of sex but don't specify harassment. The B.C. Human Rights Council has made strong indications of support to pursue investigations involving sexual harassment. Quebec has gender as one of the grounds of protection but also has gone somewhat further by saying no one may harass a person on any of the grounds. So women have more protection there. New Brunswick has protections on the basis of gender, but nothing for harassment. Nova Scotia has gender protection. Prince Edward Island also has gender, but just a note here: it doesn't apply to anyone working in domestic employment. Newfoundland has protection on the basis of gender. It

[G]ender and sexual harassment [occurs] in a situation where ... discrimination within the workplace is directed at her purely on the basis of her gender. She is a woman and she's being sexually harassed. It's all discrimination based on gender. It is only somewhat different in the way it's expressed.

also describes harassment as: "to engage in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome." It also prohibits sexual solicitation in establishments, and it has quite an explicit definition of sexual harassment. So protections in Newfoundland are quite good.

Federally, the Canadian Human Rights Code prohibits harassment on any of the grounds. It prohibits discriminatory practice including sexual discrimination. It also has a section dealing with sexual harassment which says that for the purposes of all these sections dealing with sexual harassment, it would be deemed to be harassment on the prohibited grounds. In other words, sexual harassment is gender discrimination. But they don't define what sexual harassment is.

Manitoba prohibits harassment on any of the grounds. Those grounds include sex and gender, race... quite an exhaustive list. Sexual orientation is now included in Manitoba as a protective ground. No one can harass any person participating in anything the code covers, and anyone who allows it to happen, knowingly permits it, or fails to terminate harassment in a position of authority, is also liable. Gender harassment will fall into the first prohibition if it's a course of abusive or unwelcome conduct, or a comment undertaken or made on the basis of any characteristic. Characteristic refers to that list of sex, race or whatever. Sexual harassment in the Manitoba code is described as "a series of objectionable or unwelcome sexual solicitations or advances." This is the poisoned work environment variety of sexual harassment. It's been called a number of different things but the essential identification is that it has to be a series of objectionable comments, harassment on the basis of your gender.

The second part of it is a Latin term called *quid pro quo*. It's much more final – you come across with sexual favours or your work itself is threatened, either by way of being fired, or being laid off, or being reassigned. It involves some kind of repercussions that definitely are to your detriment. You may be assigned the task no one would want to do or share. It's a sexual solicitation or advance made by a person who can confer a benefit or withhold it, and who knows the approach is unwelcome – or reasonably ought to know it's unwelcome.

A number of cases in the case law we deal with at the Human Rights Commission involve *quid pro quo* – sexual harassment where women lose their jobs for refusing advances, either by way of being fired, or constructively pushed out of their jobs. In fact, most of the reported cases are of this kind. One case I've brought with me this morning involves some of the most awful variety of poisoned work environment kind of harassment.

Action in the courts

It often seems very difficult to convince adjudicators or courts that this is discrimination. One situation involving even the most insulting attack may not be sufficient, if it's not something which involves a threat to your job. That's where this "series" idea comes into the harassment concept. Which isn't to say certain Human Rights Commissions may not accept, investigate, and attempt to remedy these cases. It's only to say you're not going to get much support from the precedents, the cases that have being decided to date.

[*Editor's note:* In the May 1989 Supreme Court decison in Janzen & Govereau vs. Platy Enterprises Ltd., Mr. Justice Brian Dickson said "the *quid pro quo*/hostile work environment categorization was no longer necessary.... The main point in allegations of sexual harassment is that unwelcome sexual conduct has invaded the workplace irrespective of whether the consequences of the harassment included a denial of concrete employment rewards for refusing to participate in sexual activity." Harassment is harassment!]

Also on a positive note is the recent Supreme Court decision against Dennis Brennan and the Treasury Board. The complainant in that case was on probation as a leadhand, a position never previously occupied by a woman at that workplace. She was continually subjected to sexual demands by her supervisor. While protesting, she did submit to some of the advances as a result of the intimidation and fear that she had for Mr. Brennan who was in a position of authority over her. The review tribunal found that she had been sexually harassed. The Armed Forces claimed they did

not have any responsibility, that Mr. Brennan's actions were outside of his employment. Basically, they said they could only be responsible for what was within his employment.

The Supreme Court decided the Armed Forces was liable, a decision based on the concept of vicarious liability. It was clear sexual harassment had been going on, and no kind of responsible action was taken. This decision is important for the development of sexual harassment policies. It gets across the message: there is a responsibility on an employer to insure workplaces are free from sexual harassment. Not only the harasser can suffer repercussions, but the employer is culpable as well.

I want to describe what happened in the *Action Travail des Femmes vs. CNR* case. Here's a situation where a group of women successfully challenged the employer. The result of the action was not only to have some kind of remedy around the sexual and gender harassment, but also a recognition that there had been systemic discrimination against women to keep them from entering CN at all. One of the remedies the adjudicator initially set out was there would have to be an Employment Equity program. He set a quota for how many women had to be hired in certain job areas by CN over a given period of time and it would be monitored. This is one of the women in this case describing some of the harassment she encountered:

"They told me that they did not want me there. They tried to confuse me, they started telling me things like two or three moves at a time, which is all enough to do. They would tell me about fifteen moves in a row, like talking really quickly. They would say, 'Go and release the brakes in that engine and wait for my signal.' I would never hear the signal, they would go off and eat lunch and leave me there. They used to do that all the time. Basically to them I was an entertainment. Something there to talk about. They used to make fun of me. They used to harass me. They would get in a group and ask me questions that were supposed to embarrass me and then laugh at whatever I answered. They would ask me a lot of questions about sex, my own personal sex life, about women's bodies and things like that. Some of them told me outright, it's not a place for women, 'I would never let my wife or daughter work here.' Some of them were threatened.... They would say, 'Now there's one, soon there's going to be fifty.' "

Essentially, we have here gender and sexual harassment described in a situation where some of the discrimination within the workplace is directed at her purely on the basis of her gender. She is a woman and she's being sexually harassed. It's all discrimination based on gender. It is only somewhat different in the way it's expressed.

[T]here is a responsibility on an employer to insure workplaces are free from sexual harassment. Not only the harasser can suffer repercussions, but the employer is culpable as well.

According to the Canadian Human Rights Dossier, "gender harassment," of which her statement is only an example, can be identified by the following characteristics:

- Co-workers are usually the harassers.
- Management is not often involved directly.
- Actions and words are based on sexual stereotypes which assume inherent basic differences between the sexes, and "suitable" or "appropriate" roles for men and women in the workplace and at home.
- It is exacerbated by a poor economic climate with limited employment opportunities.
- Taunting, teasing, criticizing, and demeaning remarks are frequently made.
- Remarks which may, but need not, include sexual references or propositions are typical.

- Victims are made to feel isolated, different, guilty, and not a part of the group.
- The effect is cumulative, the result of a series of incidents.
- The victim feels resistance or complaining is meaningless as nothing is forced, so she doesn't accept or reject, but merely endures the harassment.
- The victim's job performance suffers as a result of stress, illness, ceasing to be "on the team," etc.
- Less or misleading training or instruction, no cooperation, extra workload which also creates obstacles to efficient and safe job performance.
- Usually there are no tangible employment consequences (e.g. discipline, demotion, firing). The victim is more likely to resign in anticipation of being fired or demoted.

The Dossier further states:

"Gender harassment is difficult to prove, for it is the cumulative effect of often subtle yet damaging behaviour. However, since complaining often escalates the harassment, the victim's tolerance of the poisoned work environment becomes a term or condition of employment. The victim's job performance often suffers, thus providing employers with an apparently legitimate excuse for disciplinary action or coerced dismissal."

When the Supreme Court finally ruled on the *Action Travail* case, it said, "Critical mass is important. The presence of a significant number of individuals from the targeted group eliminates the problems of tokenism. It is no longer the case that one or two women will be seen to represent all women." It was important not only that it cost CN money in terms of the remedy for the individual women, but that quotas also were set requiring CN to actively hire women in percentages to give the women support within the workplace. This will make a difference over time. Once this critical mass is reached, then some of the resistance will fall. A wedge will be formed that will open it up.

Other approaches, focused on the individual woman, have been used in decisions. "Let's compute how much she lost in terms of wages. Put a dollar figure on the injury to her self-esteem and her emotional distress [and it's usually very low] and we'll call the case closed." Some more progressive adjudicators go beyond that and monitor all the hiring of women in that employment area for a period of time. The employer is required to report to the commission the reason for departure of any woman who is hired and then leaves. So there's a bit of a monitoring going on. Our experience has been that most of the sexual harassment cases have been with women working in the traditional jobs: as waitresses, administrative, secretarial, support staff workers. To monitor is an effective way of insuring that the practice doesn't continue.

A bigger problem than we see

We get complaints from employees on a repeat basis about certain employers. It's quite remarkable how few women seek the avenue of the Human Rights Commission. I suspect the problem is much greater than we're seeing.

A problem facing women working in trades or in technology is unless you can be guaranteed there is going to be an effective remedy through the commission route, there is a real danger of not being able to find employment should you lose your job, also of not finding the support within your union, in fact, finding resistance. We've had cases where it's the unions who are the discriminators, not allowing the women to be admitted into the ranks.

Major employers have quite arbitrary requirements that don't relate to the requirements of the job. It's difficult to see these as anything but a failed attempt to keep women out, so it's understandable then that it hasn't been an effective tool.

VOICE: I just did a research paper where I interviewed pre-trades and pre-technology graduates who were working in the industry or who were unemployed in the industry or whatever. I did nine groups across the country.

I found women in all groups experiencing some of the grossest forms of harassment. But they were so afraid of calling it, or mentioning it, that they suffered in silence. They left their jobs or were just living through it. Many other women in the group said, "But that's harassment!" And they'd say, "Well no, not really." Then when you'd dig deeper you'd find they did know, but are afraid if they say anything they would be blacklisted and won't get another job anywhere. It's a big issue we as a society have to deal with. We have this legislation, but it's certainly not effective if women are afraid to use it.

Debra: There is within the legislation, and this exists within all the jurisdictions, protection against what is called reprisal action. That refers to, if you file a complaint and something more occurs to you in your workplace – an action intended to try and force you to stop proceedings, or to intimidate witnesses who might support you. It can extend to family members being threatened. One complaint was withdrawn after the harasser beat up the spouse of the woman who was filing a complaint. That's reprisal action. There's protection in the code against that, too. It can form another basis of a further reprisal complaint and there's also possible protection in the criminal law system.

Much sexual harassment in its extreme form, which isn't uncommon, amounts to sexual assault. In terms of strategies for women, it's critical that we attempt to resist harassment without giving over more power to the situation. It's the same old thing of women having to protect themselves in whatever ways they can, using the support of any co-workers who will help, or by using grievance procedures within the union, or using Human Rights avenues. It's a form of self-defence.

As far as Human Rights Commissions are concerned, we have to carry the burden of proof. But it can be achieved in a number of different ways. Situations that don't involve any eye witnesses, or involve more subtle kinds of evidence, can still establish a case on the balance of probability. We all have to choose what tools are going to forward our actual work. There have been successful complaints against unions also, but they involved systemic discrimination – in other words, refusing women based on height requirements, etc. A recent case involved a fisherwoman in the Maritimes. The unions selected who was a *bona fide* fisherman and left out women who had been fishing for years in the district. So very overt kinds of obvious discrimination still occur by unions also. But that subtle variety is difficult to arrest. Once again, the critical mass idea is part of the answer. When the wedge is growing it will be more and more difficult to discriminate against women and harass them. We have to find support in each others' presence.

Remember, there's no charge for the Human Rights process, it's free, and your right.

What to do

Here's what you do if you've been sexually harassed in the workplace. Make it really clear to the harasser that this isn't wanted. Say *no* clearly. There is a great pressure on women to take a certain amount of guff, a lot of testing goes on. There's got to be a line drawn after which you clearly do not want to participate in the teasing – harassment – any further. What would any new entrant put up with versus what is hostility directed at you because you're a woman? Log everything. Write it down with dates. If there was anyone else present, record names, and time of shift.

All that information is really critical and will greatly assist an investigator in establishing a case. If there are witnesses, solicit their support, and if possible, get a statement signed and dated.

Seek counselling, get the support you might not find in the workplace. Just reviewing some actions and approaches will assist you if you're going to file a Human Rights complaint. If you're the only woman working in a workplace, you may not have the kind of support to counter the erosion of your strength. It's important to consider getting counselling support if possible.

Keep documents – any letter of recommendation, anything that describes some sort of appraisal of your work performance or direction. Keep a record of any other women who were dismissed. It's often really

distressing in investigating complaints, especially where you know there's been a long history of sexual harassment. Because of the time delays and other factors that alienate women from each other in those workplaces, the complainant can't provide the name of witnesses. It's very difficult to get those records. Increasingly, there is more ability to actually subpoena that kind of information, but it's very difficult. If only I had some way of contacting past employees who had also been clearly harassed out of employment!

Try to amass any kind of proof your work performance was adequate, proof which says your work isn't the reason why you're leaving, being fired, demoted or laid off. Let your family doctor know. Talk about the stress.

Be careful about taking favours

Be cautious about being allowed to quit a few minutes early or being given any kind of rope that could come back later to trip you up. Also, it's important you keep working if possible. Under such incredible stress, you may phone in sick. But that kind of record might go against what you want, which is to be able to work in an atmosphere free of this harassment.

Being given a few minutes off, allowed to leave early, things like that can backfire in a number of ways. If it's coming from someone who has already harassed you, it may be he is trying to get some kind of evidence on you to prove you're leaving shifts before your proper time is up. That person might not really have the authority to dismiss you or might betray you later. If there is a lot of resistance from the men you're working with anyway, any favouritism is going to affect you in a more negative way than any short-term benefit you may receive. It's the same thing if you are assigned to do less physically demanding work, or lift weights that aren't as heavy as the men on your work team are expected to lift. It's a treatment that doesn't view you as an equal and it's going to come back.

We do need to deal with real experience and this hard and fast legal information is what we need to deal effectively. If it's sexual harassment that amounts to sexual assault, or is of such a constant undermining, devastating impact, some of this isn't going to apply. You've got to look out for yourself, and it may not be possible to continue working. If it's the poisoned work environment type of harassment, it's good to log and keep track of what is developing. If the situation is such that you're not able to work, I'm not suggesting you work anyway. But don't give them fuel to say it was your completely irresponsible work history that resulted in a firing. I'm just warning you about some possibilities that can backfire if you're forced out of a job because of harassment and you succeed in establishing a complaint at the Commission.

"Critical mass is important. The presence of a significant number of individuals from the targeted group eliminates the problems of tokenism. It is no longer the case that one or two women will be seen to represent all women."

– Supreme Court of Canada

The Commission I work for doesn't have enough officers to investigate all the complaints filed. That's a terrible situation if you're considering the issue of sexual harassment. But, if a woman has already quit her job and files a complaint with the Commission, under the present policy, the complaint would take its turn in line. If the woman is still working, the case gets an immediate assignment because there has to be an immediate response.

I want to tell you what your rights are, the routes of a complaint, the legislation, and urge you to use these tools whenever you feel they will strengthen your ability to continue on in your chosen line of work.

The complaint process itself takes a lot of support. You're not always going to get a feminist officer. It takes time to investigate a complaint. If it goes to adjudication, it can easily take a couple of years for it to be

resolved. Without support it would be an added injury.

Don't fall into being "the weaker sex"
VOICE: Sometimes it depends on the people you're working with and how the team works out its own agreements about lifting heavier things. There's stronger people than you are on your team, and they are going to work together. They continue to lift the heavy things and then you do other things around that.

VOICE: I would be very careful around that approach because what you are essentially doing then is proving their perception of you as the weaker one. You need to be very clear about their perception of you as a working partner. The tendency is to be perceived as the weaker and it will accelerate. By not doing heavy work, you do not become stronger. As a tradesperson, it was necessary to physically remove things from my partner's hand. If somebody is huge and big and strong, that's great. He got there by doing it, let me do that too. When you bring it down to an issue of money, men understand that. If you say, "Hey, I'm paid the same as you are. I'm doing the same thing." They're not going to say no.

There is a perception of equality and you also have the enormous physical benefit of doing the work. You become incredibly, physically competent. That's reflected in your own self-esteem and your own projection of self-esteem.

VOICE: You're walking a line applying intelligent problem-solving to workplace problems. How can I best contribute according to my present strength and develop my skills and strength as well? It depends on the level of cooperation among your team members.

VOICE: There is another problem. Traditionally, in terms of the physical strength issue, men have broken their bodies for the boss for a long time. But now Workers' Compensation has changed its rulings, from men lift 60 pounds and women lift 40, to, no one can lift anything that's too heavy for them. People are beginning to make some changes in their thinking. Even the men are getting somebody to help them lift. But it is a double burden on women, especially apprentices who are trying to prove themselves.

VOICE: There's not a journeyman in my shop who can pick up anything heavier than 25 pounds anymore.

Debra: In terms of dealing with the harassment initially, the person who is responsible for you on the work site is your foreman, and if that person doesn't deal with it, find the supervisor. Each of those people or the company can be named on a complaint. The best way is to confront it right on the spot, and put a stop to it. If that doesn't work, then go up to your immediate foreman or forewoman. They have an obligation to assure you have a workplace free of harassment. It's certainly going to help you in any complaint you file if you've attempted to contact your superiors. If your union has a sexual harassment and/or no discrimination on the basis of sex clause, or if you can get support through either your shop steward or your grievance procedure, consider those steps. But in filing a Human Rights complaint, the responsibility would depend on who was involved in that contracting situation. The responsibility can govery far in Manitoba. It also depends how the legislation is worded, and exactly where you live.

Debra Beauchamp is an officer with the Manitoba Human Rights Commission.

CHAPTER 9

Women and unions

Workshop coordinators
Jill Jones and Marion Pollack

Jill Jones, Typographical Union, and Marion Pollack, President, Vancouver Local of the Canadian Postal Workers' Union, discuss some of what unions have done for women, what some of the struggles and some of the triumphs have been, and begin to identify what can be done in the future.

Marion: The gap between union and non-union workers occurs everywhere. According to a Statistics Canada survey of managerial, professional and technical occupations, the average weekly earnings of unionized jobs exceeded non-unionized jobs by 32 percent. Women in unionized managerial and technical jobs made an average wage of $549.00 a week compared with $349.00 for non-union jobs. It's really clear that whatever benefits unionization has, one of the primary ones is felt quite massively in our pocketbooks.

Besides wages, unionized workers generally have more protection than non-union workers in the areas of parental and sick leaves, and benefits such as medical and dental plans. As well, union women have the opportunity to address themselves to issues that are crucial for us to achieve equality. Issues like sexual harassment, affirmative action, and paid maternity leave.

Women's issues becoming policy

In recent years working women have gained more democratic rights in the workplace, which is one of the main purposes of unionism. We are making gains not only on issues, but also in terms of policy. A number of unions have policies on sexual harassment and some unions enforce those policies or create awareness about them. We also need to get our issues on the legislative agenda. Ontario has pay equity legislation. There are problems with that legislation but it reflects the power of working women who organized and fought for years to get it.

In terms of participation, women are still underrepresented at all levels in the trade union movement, from the local to the national executive, and staff rep positions. A study in Quebec found the higher you got in the trade union hierarchy, the fewer women there were. And those who were active were single; they didn't have children. I think that makes it very clear there are barriers to our participation which we need to change so we can take our

[U]nion women have the opportunity to address themselves to issues crucial for us to achieve equality – issues like sexual harassment, affirmative action, and paid maternity leave.

rightful
place in the union.

Jill: Women in the Canadian labour movement in the early years (from 1870 to 1940) had a difficult time. But their struggles parallel those of today. When we talk now about the struggle of women to get into trades, it's parallel to the experience women had then in getting into the labour movement and getting their issues put forth.

Organized Working Women: how it began
In 1975, at the beginning of the International Decade of Equality for Women, I attended the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) conference. Up until this time, there had been three, five or maybe 10 women out of 2,000 delegates at these conferences. But in 1975, there were a few hundred. A group of women brought forward a resolution saying they wanted to start discussions about having a Women's Committee at the OFL level. Any woman who has gone to huge union conferences or to local provincial federations knows resolutions around women's issues tend to get left to the very last day when people are starting to leave. These issues are seen as divisive or as not so interesting in terms of the labour movement.

The resolution passed, authorizing money for a conference and directing the women to come back to the convention the next year with a proposal. So in 1976 about 500 women came to the conference and talked about issues pertaining to women in unions. Some of these women had been involved with their unions in their workplaces for 20 or 30 years.

The next step at the OFL conference in 1976 was to form an organization called Organized Working Women (OWW). They decided it would be a non-partisan organization, not aligned with any one political party or labour organization. Any woman in a union with a *bona fide* collective bargaining agent could be a member. The OWW wanted to promote women into leadership positions, and to promote women's committees inside unions as well as in federations of labour and the Canadian Labour Congress.

They decided union conferences for women only were needed, as well as smaller workshops at larger conferences. Things started to happen, such as skills-building workshops where they taught women how to use parliamentary procedure, how to write a resolution, how to stand up at a microphone and talk, how to debate at conferences.

Each September they sponsored a resolution-writing workshop to prepare for the annual OFL convention in November. We started to open up that process so women could see how to bring their issues forward. We tried to ensure that at least four or five different women's locals would have identical resolutions. This is important because all resolutions go into a resolution booklet and if they are similar they are lumped together and get diffused. So we found if we all sumbitted resolutions that essentially said the same thing, they didn't get watered down. That was a good strategy. We also mailed out sample resolutions to women who couldn't get to these workshops.

Most importantly, women started to get involved in OWW because of the support it offered. It's very important to have a group where you can talk about things that happen in the union local and get support.

The OFL forms a Women's Committee
In 1977, a resolution was put forward by OWW to form a Women's Committee at the OFL and in 1978 that committee was formed. There were tensions between OWW and the new committee. Some people thought after the OFL Women's Committee was formed, the OWW had essentially done its work and the Women's Committee could take over from there. It also caused tension between unions. One reason was all the women on the Women's Committee were appointed. The labour movement had been pressured into setting up a women's committee at the OFL level but they wanted to control the kind of women on that committee. That left out a lot

of women. For example, the Ontario Nurses Association is not affiliated with the OFL, nor are some some teachers' federations and a lot of the trades.

We held discussions and decided there was lots of work for two women's committees in the province. There is a need for a union women's body that isn't affiliated with a major labour organization, but we also need a women's committee inside the OFL which has access to those unions. So there were tensions among the women, but they worked them out.

Initiating Affirmative Action

One of the first things the OFL Women's Committee wanted to do was to get an Affirmative Action policy at the OFL level. In 1980 it was very difficult to talk about Affirmative Action inside the labour movement. It was thought there wasn't enough information on the issue and the term "quotas" was often thrown out as a red herring. The threat was that even if women weren't qualified, they were going to get jobs ahead of men. The system would be used to put unqualified workers into positions they wouldn't have otherwise. The quota system hasn't worked like that at all. It's been a way to open up doors and get people in who wouldn't otherwise have the chance, but who do have the needed skills.

The strategy of the OFL Women's Committee was to sponsor, in 1981, a major conference for union women only. Some male union leaders came out to check up on us and make sure we weren't planning an internal revolution. We started working on an Affirmative Action paper which would eventually be presented as a major policy paper to the OFL. Over a period of two years, we met four or five times to go over this position paper to make sure we had it. We also had skills-building workshops so women were familiar with going up to the microphone and presenting information. We broke the paper down into different sections (seniority systems, quotas, mandatory vs. voluntary affirmative action) and women took whatever topic interested them and prepared to defend the paper in those areas.

At the conference in 1982 we presented the paper. We had a number of women's caucuses at the conference itself; it was a continual process of educating women, making sure they were comfortable getting up to those microphones and presenting our positions, and getting them the information they needed to do that.

We used a number of strategies on the conference floor. We camped out near the mikes which means you get a chair somewhere nearby so when your resolution comes up you can get a chance to speak to it. We had women near both the pro and con microphones. At the con mikes they would really speak in favour of the resolution but ask for something to be strengthened. At the pro mikes we had about 30 women in each line, even though we knew there'd be a call for only the first two people to be allowed to speak. We wanted to have a huge show of support on those lines so we could sway anybody in the room who thought they didn't know the issues and didn't know if they should support the resolution. For me it was particularly wonderful because it was the first time I was at a conference like this and I was the first speaker on the issue. It's the kind of experience that bonds you to that kind of thing and you never forget it.

After the paper was passed, the OFL Women's Committee continued on. They booked hotels and booked people off work for a couple of days at a time, and they'd go out and have brainstorming sessions. We came up with a really good educational package unions could present, in an evening or a weekend. We also developed a speakers bureau and started sending people out across the province to talk about the Affirmative Action weekend of education we had put together. Then we had a group of women trained to go out and give these educationals. This was a very good strategy and we reached a lot of people. We

see it reflected in good contract language inside the unions.

In 1985 OWW had a conference on Economic Equality for Women. We wanted to get women involved in talking about economic issues inside unions because we'd seen at conventions that when policies and issues came up around an economic strategy, the women were absent from the mikes. At the time of the conference, Eaton's women employees were on strike in Toronto. About six stores had been organized and they were bargaining for a first contract. Eaton's was refusing to negotiate. The only thing the legislation required was that Eaton's sit down at a table with these employees. They didn't have to say anything, they didn't have to do anything.

The Women's Strike Support Coalition

So at this conference where we were supposed to talk about economic issues, all of a sudden the women decided to form a coalition to help support the women's strike. It was called the Women's Strike Support Coalition. There is a film about the whole thing and a book being written on that era. It was an amazing experience. We had women journalists who knew how to get the media in our favour. We had women who knew how to get sound systems out to the strike support demonstrations. We had women who knew how to do marketing and how to get out to the unions, and we had women in positions of power who had the ears of male trade union leaders. All the skills women have came together during that strike.

The first strike support demonstration attracted 1500 people, and the demos gradually got bigger and bigger and bigger. We made these demonstrations very creative. For the first one, for example, we had a 16-foot saw (that we had to carry on the subway because we couldn't find a car or a truck to put it in) and we had a huge Eaton's credit card which we broke. The campaign was to get people to tear up their Eaton's credit cards. We got good media attention.

It worked because we turned this labour strike into a women's issue and we highlighted it. And it worked because we pulled the community in to help. It wasn't just women's organizations in the labour movement but others sharing their skills from community organizing and that type of thing. It worked because we had all those people involved. For example, we had a huge benefit at Massey Hall which involved the arts community. High-profile performers came and sang to support the Eaton's strikers.

The thing that put enough pressure on Eaton's so they had to bargain was a march on International Women's Day. The Eaton's strikers led the parade of 9,000 or 10,000 women. We marched around Toronto and when we got to Yonge and Dundas, where the Eaton's flagship store is, about half of us branched off and decided to walk through Eaton's store. There is some wonderful footage of what happened there; it was part of the process of the women strikers becoming politicized.

The women got their first collective agreement. Also we now have "first contract" legislation in Ontario. Previously, the labour legislation put the onus on unions; it really didn't put much pressure on management. Now there's an onus on both, a kind of equal partnership between union and management to come up with a first contract.

Following those same lines of organizing, we've formed the Union Women's Free Trade Coalition. We educate women in unions about the Free Trade deal and strategize what we're going to do about it. Also in the Labour Studies program in Ontario, sponsored by the Labour Council, we've made sure "women in labour history" is part of the Labour Studies certificate program.

The Labour Council itself has a very active Women's Committee. A couple years ago the theme for the Labour Day parade was "Housing For People Not For Profits." The Labour Council had a lead-off float and they asked the Women In Trades organization to

build it. We went down the street, with women in their hardhats building this little house – wonderful role models.

We have a long way to go yet. Our struggles will continue but there has been some response and we've learned what we need to do to get our issues on the table. We now have Pay Equity legislation in Ontario and that's one battle won, but you have to fight constantly to improve it. Use it and improve it.

Decent pay and daycare

Marion: With the changing technologies, some women want to go into trades and technologies, and we have to support them and figure out strategies together. But other women like being clerical workers. The fight for them is to get higher pay. Whether through Affirmative Action or Pay Equity programs, what we need is decent pay for women, whichever way we can get it.

VOICE: As a mother of a two-year-old an issue dear to my heart is daycare. If I have to take time off because my kid is sick, that's reasonable because little kids get sick. I have to take vacation time or a sick day off. They don't like it if you take too many sick days off. If I ask for personal time off, it's also noted. That's a real problem for us trade unionist women.

VOICE: This is an issue for men too. Some are single fathers. A lot of them, their wives are out working and they just can't find adequate childcare.

VOICE: I think this is a good time to move on that, because of the media coverage about the issue of unemployment insurance maternity benefits only for women. A couple of precedents have been set by men going to court. Some of the softening we need for companies and unions to move in that direction has already taken place. Parental leave is down the road but if we start hammering at it now, it will be fewer years down the road.

Marion: I think we have to address childcare in several ways. We have to address it at union meetings and conferences. I think we have to look at both on-site and off-site childcare. Every time my local has a general membership meeting you just apply and they'll pay up to $25.00 for your childcare expenses. It's a wonderful way of participating. It took a while but now you wouldn't believe the people who are taking advantage of it, people who were previously opponents. I think it's an area where we can fight together.

VOICE: I work for a union and we pay half the cost of childcare for all workers on the job. We pay full cost for childcare for evening and weekend meetings, and we pay half the cost for summertime care of schoolchildren.

We do this because most people who take this type of job are people with a lot of skills. When it comes to negotiating, it's a very important game.

Marion: Even though our union pays for childcare for conferences, it's still really hard. It means an immense amount of scrambling to find people who will care for a child for a long period, like a week.

VOICE: And there is the guilt on top of it.

Marion: Our union is looking at the employer paying some cost of on-site childcare space. It's not very expensive, especially if you work for places like Ontario Hydro or COMINCO, where you have a large number of people concentrated in one area.

VOICE: Ontario Hydro's daycare is not subsidized and it's expensive. I'd like to make that clear. I have a son there and it costs $565.00 a month.

Integration of work and family responsibilities

VOICE: There are two initiatives which relate to the integration of work and family responsibilities.

The Conference Board of Canada has done a massive research project on the integration of work and family responsibilities, surveying

employees and employers. They had a fantastic response from employees, men and women, outlining their needs and concerns. But the researchers were disappointed in the response rate from employers. It was much lower than that of the employees. So we see a major imbalance between what employees want and what employers are even aware of. This research, or most of it, will be available next year [after June, 1989], and will provide a good base of information that companies, unions and government can use to recommend policies and programs.

The second point is, last year when the First Ministers met, they asked the ministers responsible for the status of women for each of the provinces, territories and federally to work towards developing strategy on the successful integration of work and family responsibilities and asked these ministers to report back this year. So each level is in the process now of compiling a document that says: this is what is already in place in our jurisdiction to facilitate the working family and this is what we are planning to do. That document should be available at the end of this year.

I think what's important is to re-market the issue of the need to support both men and women in integrating their work and family responsibilities.

VOICE: From that standpoint, it really is important to get men to speak up about parental leave and time off for family responsibilities, daycare centres and so on.

Hiring out through the union halls

VOICE: Another issue for women is that of hiring halls and the dispatch for tradeswomen. I've heard some people have had good experiences through that process, but I've also heard of difficulties.

VOICE: I know women who've been sent out to jobs and when the employer realizes they're a woman, he says, "Well, we really didn't need anyone.... I don't know why they sent you, we didn't call." Then while she's on her way back, they're sending someone else out there. That's happened a number of times.

VOICE: A friend of mine, who is a journeyed carpenter now, said the only reason she was accepted on some of her job sites was because her local backed her up.

VOICE: Speaking from the employer's side, what we at Ontario Hydro have tried to do is to put pressure on. We have let the union people know we have a very active Affirmative Action program and whenever they have the opportunity to send us women, they should. Of course, the answer we get is, when you hire through the union hiring hall you don't have the privilege of saying, I'd like this person or that person or this sex or that sex. You just get the people who are at the top of the list and that's it. Then I hear about some of the inside stuff that goes on and it's not that way at all.

VOICE: We're having problems within our union because they're having a hard time accepting so many females coming in now. I know a lot of the females who are coming in want to be just one of the boys, don't want any extra-special treatment. They sort of separate themselves from the other women.... It's strange.

Jill: That's what I mean by paralleling experiences. Women involved early on in the union movement spent many years in their unions doing just that. They wanted to get involved in the union and they didn't want to rock the boat. It was hard for them to talk about women's issues. They needed some woman to come along and stand up and make an issue out of doing it before they felt comfortable doing it.

I think as union women we need to support our sisters in difficult locals or work situations. Because the labour movement has to respond to our issues.

VOICE: Where do you take resolutions, supporting women in particular kinds of work, for example?

Marion: You can take them to a number of places. Directly to conventions or conferences of the particular union like the Operating Engineers, or if you know people in other locals who are friendly, you get them to do it. If you're part of the labour council you get generic resolutions through there or through the federation of labour.

There are other things to do – like go with four or five women from other unions and pay a visit to the people in the Operating Engineers one day. That means the woman involved doesn't have to put herself out on the line; after all, she has to work with these people. That sort of visit makes it clear this is a broad issue. It begins to put some pressure on, but it also makes you feel better because you know you're not alone.

Jill: Unions are political organizations. You can make them work for you, they have to work for you. But it takes some people to get inside and make things happen.

Marion Pollack is a trades union activist and a feminist. She has worked at the Post Office for 14 years and is a member of the Vancouver Local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. She has held a variety of positions and is currently Local President.

Jill Jones trained as a machinist, working 10 years for Canadian General Electric. She has been active in the labour movement, holding executive positions with the United Electrical Workers Union and actively working on the board of Organized Working Women. Jones works as an education consultant for the Labour Council Development Foundation and is a member of OPEIU local 343.

CHAPTER 10

Enhancing the experience of women in the building trades

Workshop coordinator
Bill Darnell

Bill Darnell, Joint Board Coordinator, talks about some of the initiatives put forth by the Carpenters' Union; participants explore other actions and potential actions.

Bill: I am going to talk about what the Carpenters' Union has done and I hope that women involved with other unions could add their experience on what they've been able to initiate or have done in their unions. To a large extent it is the women who have put the pressure on and taken the initiatives and the Carpenters' Union has been to a large degree sympathetic and supportive.

The joint committee

Four areas the union has been involved in are training, the collective agreement, the structure of the union and policy. In terms of training, something that was already established but is crucial is the idea of a joint committee. I'm the coordinator of this joint committee which is set up and funded through negotiations and has equal representation of employers and union representatives. The job of the committee is to look after training needs. We indenture the apprentices directly to this joint board. The apprentices are then eligible to work for any employer who is signatory to the Carpenters' Union. Our job is to monitor the training and to be there to help when an apprentice comes in and says, "This is it. I've had it. I'm not going back to that job site." Or, "Things are really tough. They asked me to do this work, is that right?" – all those kinds of things. We're somebody they can talk to, who will say, "Let's go down and talk to the business agent" or "Who is your job steward?" or "It's in this book, take this book home."

We also set up through the committee a joint selection so that if you wanted to join the Carpenters as an apprentice that was where you came and everybody made an effort to make sure people knew that. You were put on a list and your name was taken in order. There aren't any affirmative action programs, although that's something we might consider, but everybody was taken in turn. It was a fair system and it was equitable.

Contract negotiations can help women in the trade. Contract language was changed so that it was non-sexist, non-gender-specific. We also negotiated a sexual harassment clause. We established a maternity leave provision.

We also did seminars. "Integrating Women

Effectively into the Workplace" is a seminar that some of you may have been involved with. Marcia was involved in putting it together along with a number of other women. They came to us and said they would like some funding, so the Joint Board and the Provincial Council of Carpenters each put some money into it. We would put it on for instructors at BCIT, various colleges and institutes, some employers' groups.... It was used much more broadly than just the building trades.

Born a woman: Sexual harassment & maternity benefits

Contract negotiations can help women in the trade. Contract language was changed so that it was non-sexist, non-gender-specific. We also negotiated a sexual harassment clause. We established a maternity leave provision. The sexual harassment clause says the union and employer recognize the right of the member to work in an environment free from sexual harassment. The clause on maternity leave makes provision for equivalent benefits to UI if a woman is not able to yet qualify for UI.That comes from our Health and Welfare Program. It's not the strongest program for maternity leave in the world but if you can't qualify for UI, and that's one of the realities for a lot of carpenters, if you're on maternity leave you can get the equivalent.

VOICE: Have they been asked to look at the question of accommodating a woman's pregnancy when she can't perhaps do the full scope of the job? Has that ever come up? As her pregnancy progresses?

Bill: No.

VOICE: Our first carpenter is now pregnant, that's the one who is going to deliver any day. She's a piledriver and she took time off because she had two miscarriages while she was working. So she quit work to have her pregnancy.

VOICE: One of the things pointed out at the sexual and gender harassment workshop was that the principles of reasonable accommodation, to the point of undue hardship, apply with regard to pregnancy. That an employer is really obliged to provide employment and to provide reasonable accommodation under those circumstances unless they feel it's putting them under undue hardship.

One committee we have is the apprenticeship committee.... It's really been a place where apprentices can come in and learn how the union works. Become part of the committee, you can ask all the dumb questions and you can learn parliamentary procedure.

VOICE: I went through my pregnancy and I didn't tell anybody I was pregnant. I had told the personnel office to negotiate my maternity leave but none of the men I worked with knew that I was pregnant until the middle of December and my son was born early in February. The remarks that went around when everybody found out I was pregnant were that I didn't ask anybody for help and I continued to do my job. I worked until a week before he was born. I know that if I had asked for help the story that went around would have been, "See, a pregnant woman can't do this."

VOICE: We had one woman at Ontario Hydro who worked in the shop and they really accommodated her, like sit-down welding. She didn't have to carry anything and they did look after her until the time she was to leave.

Committee structure

Bill: Another area we worked in was structure. One committee we have is the apprenticeship committee. That's a non-elective committee.

It's really been a place where apprentices can come in and learn how the union works. Become part of the committee, you can ask all the dumb questions and you can learn parliamentary procedure. In fact it's been useful to the union because a lot of people who have gone on to being an executive or steward have come through this committee. People can do some of the work, become part of the structure of the union without having to get elected and run for office and be public and make long commitments.

An example from the B.C. Council of Carpenters is the collective agreement on sexual harassment which requires training about the issue be included in the job stewards' training course and that a grievance procedure be made easily available to workers.

In B.C. there is a Provincial Council of Carpenters, the bargaining agent which represents the 26 local unions. Policy is made at the Provincial Council level. There is a Women's and Human Rights Committee at the Provincial Council that deals with a number of policy resolutions and policy papers. It's a forum to bring women together from all around the province. They can achieve things. They had a women's conference which brought together women from all the various locals on the lower mainland to discuss their concerns, their initiatives, and really it was run by the women on the basis that well, here are the resources. I think it was quite successful.

Running for office

Kate and Marcia and Pat Tryon have been members of the executive of their local unions, so we've been able to elect women to various positions in terms of the actual running of the union, the executive of the local unions.

Besides the executive there are a number of committees, hiring committees, or delegates to various other bodies. That's another area where women can become delegates: to the B.C. Federation of Labour convention. Those are elected positions. Or to the Vancouver District Labour Council, local labour councils. Or possibly to the Building Trades, that tends to be a smaller representation and more of a business agent. It's sort of the nuts and bolts of the staff people. There haven't been any women on staff yet. That's the next hurdle.

VOICE: I'd like to mention that Pat ran for business agent for the Ironworkers.

VOICE: I missed out by 26 votes. The guy that was ahead of me has been in there for 22 years so I got the shake of the shoe. It was the first time I had actually run for any type of office and all these guys that are in there have been in there for years. So it's a good sign, and there was only one other woman that could vote, that was a journeyperson, besides myself out of the membership local of 1500. There were something like 1200 votes cast. I did get appointed as a trustee because nobody wanted that position. But I thought it's great because I know where all the money is going now.

This will be my third Building Trades convention coming up. Like I run for everything possible, they know I'm there. Like if you can get the exposure, like it will get around and they get to know you.

Bill: When members are active in their unions they get the experience to understand the relationship between the various unions and the building trades and also where they sit in the whole labour movement. Most of us, the first time we get elected we usually keep our mouth shut and our eyes and ears open and try and figure out what's going on. Any member can put forward a resolution and if it's accepted by the membership of the local it goes out to the Provincial Council of Carpenters and then depending on its subject matter, it will be sent on to the Building Trades and the B.C. Federation of Labour where it becomes debated and possibly

becomes the policy of those bodies. An example from the B.C. Council of Carpenters is the collective agreement on sexual harassment which requires training about the issue be included in the job stewards' training course and that a grievance procedure be made easily available to workers. When a resolution goes to convention, gets voted on and becomes policy of the organization, the staff is obligated to try and negotiate it into the agreement.

Women's exploratory apprenticeship training
B.C had a program called Women's Exploratory Apprenticeship Training. It was a type of bridging program. Women would come in and explore various trades and then would go on to a pre-apprenticeship once they had.... It was not only trades but dealing with the questions of being harassed on the job and physical fitness and self-confidence and all those kinds of issues. But they were the kind of things that were cut by our particular provincial government. They've been gone for quite a while.

Implementing non-sexist policy
We have the oath you have to swear as an elected member – it's pretty bizarre – trying to make it non-sexist within the Provincial Council. Being an international union and having a charter held by Washington, it's sometimes hard to make changes.

I did get appointed as a trustee because nobody wanted that position. But I thought it's great because I know where all the money is going now.

In 1982 the Women's and Human Rights Committee put a position paper out that called for a conference and educational on parliamentary procedure and this proposal on the non-sexist seminars we were talking about and that each district council and school board, local union, implement or reactivate a women's committee. The questions of safety needs for all union members,including appropriately sized materials and equipment for women. Clothing and equipment. The question of sanitary facilities for women. Actually some of these are a little embarrassing to read because you realize that some of them have been acted on and some haven't.

In 1983 when the provincial government attacked all women and social services in this province the Carpenters came through and started to take positions on those issues. The fact it's policy doesn't mean very much by itself, but it gives you a platform and lends support. Then we can give support in terms of putting our organization behind it or providing funds or materials. Carpenters in B.C. are part of the CLC. Some building trades are in the CLC and some are in the Canadian Federation of Labour. That's another ongoing issue. We looked at all the policies that can go right up to the CLC and be debated so the labour movement in Canada could take a position. So there is an access there.

You have to understand how it works and you have to be persistent. In fact the response I've heard from women on the job is that a lot of the guys like it because you don't have to be the macho guy, you can humanize the place and just be an ordinary person, you don't have to join in the bullshit. I think it might be different in framing because that tends to be where the younger people are. It's been my experience that's the guys who have the hardest time adjusting to women on the job.

VOICE: How many women in B.C. are in the union?

VOICE: We have three groups of women. We have clerical workers who are just sort of a fluke that the Carpenters have the school board certified, then we have shop women who make trailers and furniture, and then we have

construction women. At one point, at the peak of it, I think in 1981, we had about 39 women out of 17,000. I think in my local which is 2,000, there are two women. It's sort of like that around the province. A lot of women have disappeared.

VOICE: That's just been economically driven?

Bill: For three or four years, when it was really difficult to earn a living in the construction industry, they had to go look for other kinds of things as well. They were driven from the industry or recognized for their abilities and have gone on to do other kinds of things.

I agreed to join the union and when I went to the dispatcher I said to him, "I want a good job steward." And he's a cranky old guy and he goes, "Why do you want a good job steward?" I said, "So there will be somebody to back me up." And he pulls himself up and he says, "Sister, in this union, if you're in trouble, we'll all back you up."

Getting an apprenticeship

VOICE: Could the unions go to technical schools and WITT programs and find women, rather than have these women go out one at a time and get picked off?

There haven't been any women on staff yet. That's the next hurdle.

Bill: It's only recently that we've been a position to take on apprentices in any significant numbers. Because there really weren't the opportunities anyway. The guys who started their apprenticeships in 1982 were still trying to finish them in 1988. At this point we are taking people who are still on the list.

VOICE: Have you kind of browsed down the list to see where the next woman might be?

Bill: Well, I suspect there probably aren't any women at this point. I think they've probably all given up hope.

1n 1981 and '82, we had more than 1,000 people come in and put their name on our list. If they come in and they're already on the list, they continue on the list. If they don't come back, they get dropped off the list. We write to them later on and say before they start their apprenticeship they have to go to selection committee, and if they don't respond to the letter and give us their current address or whatever, they're not on the list anymore. So it's really been a sort of means test for apprenticeship because they've had to wait a long time. Some of them have already started apprenticeships somewhere else and end up transferring their apprenticeship to the joint board or something like that.

VOICE: Can you transfer from one province to another?

Bill: There isn't any official way of doing it but in fact, the western provinces have fairly similar kinds of programs so you do get credit. Somebody coming from Alberta to B.C., we would look at what they have done and how long ago they had done it and if they could document to us that they had done a certain amount of hours, a certain amount of training, we would probably give them credit for that.

VOICE: Probably?

Bill: Yeah, because there isn't any compulsion, it is sort of at our discretion.

VOICE: There's quite a divide between eastern and western Canada. It's almost like two different countries, the way it's separated.

VOICE: I was kind of wondering where the international comes in? Can we change that?

Bill: People and building trades workers in Canada have been trying for a long time to change things....

VOICE: I just want to add one thing. You were asking about checking the list. I was on the list for a year and a half and it was Bill who phoned me and said, "Your name's just come up. Do you want to come into the union?" I said no. I didn't want to because I'd been sexually harassed at my last non-union job, and I did not want to get into that again.Bill really talked me into it. He said, "Well, what are you afraid of?" I was amazed because a man cared why. I said, "Sexual harassment." He said, "Well, why don't we talk about that?" He took me into the union hall and I talked to the business agent.

Bill said, "Tell the dispatcher you want a good job steward so there is someone to back you up on your first job so you can feel more confident." I agreed to join the union and when I went to the dispatcher I said to him, "I want a good job steward." And he's a cranky old guy and he goes, "Why do you want a good job steward?" I said, "So there will be somebody to back me up." And he pulls himself up and he says, "Sister, in this union, if you're in trouble, we'll all back you up." That was my introduction to the union, Bill hauling me in there and the dispatcher propping me up. The other thing I wanted to add is the union has also given money, they've put their money where their mouth is. They regularly give the money to Women's Day and to Rape Relief. One time someone asked for 50 dollars. When they asked for discussion, one of the brothers put his hand up. I thought, "Oh, oh, here we go." He said, "I don't think 50 is enough." So they gave 100. The Provincial Council keeps one seat at the convention for apprentices. An apprentice can go to get a sense of what's going on in the union. The year I was a fourth-year apprentice the president of our Provincial Council asked me to give a speech about being a woman in the union. I called it, "Being a Sister in the Brotherhood." It was incredibly well received. The guys were just wonderful. Listening and hearing about it. Welcoming me after.

The year I was a fourth-year apprentice the president of our Provincial Council asked me to give a speech about being a woman in the union. I called it, "Being a Sister in the Brotherhood."

Bill Darnell is the Coordinator of the Carpentry Apprenticeship and Training Committee, a joint union/management program.

CHAPTER 11

Health and safety

Workshop coordinator
Susan Meurer

"Women are not miniature men." With this in mind, this workshop talks about health and safety issues, with particular reference to a woman's experience on the job. The following account has been severely edited for length, and does not follow the exact progress of the workshop. As a result, the material is presented in a different fashion from those chapters which are more directly drawn from the sessions.

"The demeaning and humiliating part of wearing overalls is that you have to get entirely undressed to go to the washroom." But Stelco worker Benita Clark was even more humiliated when this came over the loudspeaker: "Yes, Benita Clark can go to the washroom now."

Benita couldn't use the men's washroom in the plant so she had to take quite a long hike to the one woman's washroom available. Because she was a stationary engineer, she had to notify the supervisor, who would okay the trip via the loudspeaker. It's a funny story, but there's a tragic end. Benita got in the habit of holding in her water to avoid the humiliation of the loudspeaker, and she developed some serious urinary tract problems which eventually cost her the job.

Health and safety problems can develop from washrooms or lack of them. Any woman who has worked on the train tracks has learned to pee in five seconds flat because in 40 below weather, you don't waste time.

Whether it's washroom facilities or reproductive hazards, a whole different set of health and safety problems present themselves for the woman in the workplace.

Size of equipment a major issue

A real cause of concern for women is the size of tools and workbench. We shouldn't be making any assumptions today about who is going to be working at the bench and what size of tools they need, because we simply don't know. The answer is to have everything as adjustable as possible. There is a whole class of injuries called "repetitive strain injury." They are the result of a combination of oversized tools and repetition.

We shouldn't be making any assumptions today about who is going to be working at the bench and what size of tools they need, because we simply don't know.

Women are not miniature men. Respirators fit poorly because they are designed for larger faces. The shoe is too long, the goggle is too big, the respirator doesn't cover, the

glove is too large. And the exposure is double. First, you're being exposed to the hazard this stuff is supposed to protect you from. In addition, you are subjected to more physical strain in wearing it.

Very few companies make equipment for women, and manufacturers are not going to start unless pressured to do so by industry because it's a small batch and uneconomical. The Women's Occupational Health Resource Center in New York has done a lot of work on getting personal protective equipment in women's sizes. For example, only 29 percent of respirators with mechanical filters come in the right sizes for women, and only 20 percent of those with chemical cartridges, which are the much more serious ones. There are *no* powered air purifying respirators available in sizes for women.

What we should be working towards is not to have to use safety equipment at all. The equipment never eliminates the problem. It just reduces it. The safe way to go is to reduce the hazard at the source.

What we should be working towards is *not* to have to use safety equipment at all. The equipment never eliminates the problem. It just reduces it. The safe way to go is to reduce the hazard at the source. Instead of 20 workers with respirators, why not enclose the tank that has the solvent? Instead of 20 printers with earmuffs, why not enclose the loud parts of the press? Hearing protection only reduces the risk by 10 percent if you wear it 100 percent of the time. Noise-induced hearing loss is the single greatest industrial disease in North America. While it doesn't kill people, it's pretty heartbreaking when people in their 50's and 60's finally have time to enjoy their lives but they can't hear right.

The tragedy of this is that it's 100 percent preventable. It's a disgrace that we have a working population that goes deaf. There are all kinds of engineering ways to reduce noise yet the employer chooses to pass out little earplugs which cost a lot less. Macho in the workplace often prevents men from dealing with this. "I had a foreman that lip-read all the time because he had lost most of his hearing through being around diesel engines. I was the first woman, and the first one to start asking for hearing protection on the gang. And all the guys are looking at me and saying, 'Why? We've done this for years. Why?' 'Because I ain't gonna be deaf when I'm 50.' I want to be in full use of all of my facilities!"

"I was the first woman, and the first one to start asking for hearing protection on the gang. And all the guys are looking at me and saying, 'Why? We've done this for years. Why?' 'Because I ain't gonna be deaf when I'm 50.' I want to be in full use of all of my facilities!"

Hearing protection really limits the amount we can talk to each other at work. One of the reasons we go to work is to be able to talk to co-workers, joke back and forth, even yell a warning. This is simply not possible if people are wearing ear protection all the time. A good rule of thumb is: if you can't understand the person next to you, it's probably too loud in the plant.

Reproductive hazards

Occupational Health used to say, "If you want to get guys worried, get to the testicles." About two years ago, the first study related to

this came out on video display terminals. In Sweden they exposed pregnant rats to radiation similar to the radiation that comes off a terminal. The male offspring of those female rats had a smaller testicle size. All of a sudden this issue got interesting to a lot of people.

Reproductive hazards don't cover just being pregnant. The image of women always being potentially pregnant is offensive, as though we don't control our bodies. While reproductive hazards include stillbirths, miscarriages and inability to conceive, they can also cover lack of sex drive, menstrual changes or tender breasts, cancer in offspring and low birth rate. They cover our health as women and not at the moment in time when we may or may not be reproducing.

Offspring can be affected before conception, during pregnancy and after. Do you take your dirty clothes home and wash them with the family wash? How many of us walk into the house covered with chemicals or with dust hidden in our clothes? How many of us check the gunk stuck in the bottom of our work boots? Ultimately, we need a European model where you leave your work clothes at work and shower up on company time.

Ten thousand new chemicals are introduced into the workplace every year. Maybe 20 or 30 are tested! Use your common sense. You don't need experts to tell you if it burns your skin, it's probably bad for you.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women has been very active around issues of occupational health. In fact, one president of that organization, Lynn Kaye, did some really interesting work on reproductive hazards. You have to build alliances.

The hazards surrounding high voltage wires, microwaves and VDT's are currently under study. To obtain the latest information, write: The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety 250 Main Street East Hamilton, Ontario Or call, collect, (416) 572-2981. Be patient, a reply takes several weeks.

Unions have been the only ones to succeed in improving health and safety.... Nothing ever replaces workers getting together and demanding change. That's still the strongest thing you can do.

Injuries on the job

Back injuries are a big health problem for men *and* women. Because women tend to be smaller, they have had to learn to use the physics of lifting more often. One of the worst moves is to lift and twist at the same time. Training is important, but the real issue is: should we be lifting many of those objects at all? Even from a management point of view, lifting is a very inefficient way to move materials. Hoists and conveyor belts are designed to replace human backs. With the advent of Workers' Compensation language that states no worker should lift anything too heavy for them, it is clear that in order to be covered under compensation we must all rethink the movement of heavy objects. Women injured on the job get less compensation in most cases because we earn less than men and compensation is based on a percentage of weekly earnings. And because we make less than men we aren't able to save enough to help us through times of injury. So again women are in double jeopardy.

Give us air and light
Lack of natural lighting and ventilation present more problems. It's no secret it costs more to heat or cool fresh air than to recirculate the air you've passed through your nostrils 10 times. If the ventilation systems aren't cleaned properly, it's useless to bring in fresh air. The stale air builds up in the elevators and different parts of the system, and within six months the efficiency of the ventilation system is reduced by 50 percent.

To bring about changes, we have to push where it's appropriate, with sympathetic medical research personnel and through the unions. Unions have been the only ones to succeed in improving health and safety. If you're in a union, push and push and push. "We want a ventilation expert to come in here or we will call the Ministry of Labour." Nothing ever replaces workers getting together and demanding change. That's still the strongest thing you can do. It's far more difficult to get changes in small businesses.

Even from a management point of view, lifting is a very inefficient way to move materials. Hoists and conveyor belts are designed to replace human backs. With the advent of Workers' Compensation language that states no worker should lift anything too heavy for them, it is clear that in order to be covered under compensation we must all rethink the movement of heavy objects.

Vacations, stress, and sick leave
Here's a shocker from *Hours of Work Around the World.* In Canada, the minimum weekly rest required under the law is only 24 hours and the minimum annual leave is only two weeks. Compare this to Australia, three to four weeks; Belgium, four weeks; Denmark, 30 days. Even El Salvador has 15 days; Finland, four to five weeks; France, 30 days. In West Germany your vacation is transportable. So if you leave company X and go to company Y, you don't start at the bottom again. It's x-number of weeks for every worker no matter how long you've been there.

Stress is probably one of the more serious problems in all people's work. Currently in the U.S., 14 percent of all compensation cases are due to stress. In Ontario, there was a recent decision that work-related stress is a compensable injury on the job. But it's a gift with all kinds of awful side effects. You must prove beyond a doubt that the stress is work-related. This means delving into even a person's sex life. So while workplace stress is being recognized as a health hazard, much education must take place around this.

Don't confuse sick leave with disability compensation. They are very different. People have been out on sick leave for years and years; sick benefits are taxable and compensation is not.

Sexual harassment
Part of the hazards of women's work is sexual harassment. To quote from Peggy Crull in Chapter Five of *Sexual Harassment in Women's Work* (1984):
"The other surveyors seemed fascinated by what I wore. Even though I tried always to dress in baggy clothes. Every few days I would find a note in my tool box with some comment about my body like, you have the best tits out here. I have no idea who put them there, but they all seemed to stand around and wait for me to open the box on the days they appeared. When I complained to the head surveyor, everyone started ignoring me, and refusing to work with me when I needed a partner."

In Benita Clark's case, she decided to make her sexual harassment case a health and safety issue rather than a women's issue. We never get anywhere with cases labeled "women's issue." Also, it gave the men who were on her side a chance to turn things around. Health and

safety was something they could understand. And they understood a poisoned work atmosphere, whether it was the result of a solvent, asbestos or sexual harassment. The fact is, Benita Clark got sick and couldn't work because of a poisoned work atmosphere. A lot of men are offended by sexual harassment in the workplace. There are a lot of pigs too, but many men really feel they would like to be involved in changing that. Making it a health and safety issue helps them to get involved. It strengthens our position as women to have men working with us to change that. Benita Clark's case is important for that reason alone.

Along with all that comes the isolation, the depression mentioned here, the feeling of physical inadequacies, inadequate washroom facilities. In some degrees, out and out sabotage – where the work women do is actually sabotaged by men to make them look bad. It's time we handled it as a health and safety issue. It's not something cute, it's creating a poisoned work atmosphere for anyone exposed to it.

Benita finally left Stelco. She got a settlement and went back to school to take science and math.

Another way to bring about health and safety changes is direct action. A good example comes from the Goodyear plant that was closed in Toronto last year. The guys in the plant really couldn't prove it was too hot, so they had their own way of dealing with it. At lunchtime they would all get together and just faint! The supervisors knew it was rigged, but there was very little they could do about it. That kind of direct action worked well.

Enforcement a big problem

Enforcement of health and safety laws is one of the biggest problems in industry. Ontario has, for example, twice as many game wardens as health and safety inspectors.

The only way enforcement is ever going to make sense is if the workers themselves are empowered. In Europe, workers can shut down production if there is an unsafe working condition. Many of us here have that right too, but we aren't educated to use it. There are many good videos available and they will really hit home to the young people. The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety has a video library of about 30 to 40 videos on occupational health which they loan out to people in the community free of charge.

The only way enforcement is ever going to make sense is if the workers themselves are empowered. In Europe, workers can shut down production if there is an unsafe working condition. Many of us here have that right too, but we aren't educated to use it.

Ten thousand new chemicals are introduced into the workplace every year. Maybe 20 or 30 are tested! Use your common sense. You don't need experts to tell you if it burns your skin, it's probably bad for you. If you go home with a headache, there's something wrong. Ask the people you're working with. If all of you are getting a headache from something, some new solvent, there's obviously something wrong. The body is a very sensitive measuring device. Trust your instincts and insist: "I don't work with anything I don't know about."

The best place to start is your union centre and the Federation of Labour. You also have to start in the trade schools where the people who are going into those jobs are training, and educate them, so they understand they have the rights, the vehicles and can take actions. When they go to work for that employer they have, perhaps, the basis for questioning and discussing the matter.

"There's a document floating around in our company looking at the forced limit guidelines – how much of the population should be able to do a certain task. They're looking at actual task analysis to decide what percentage of people should be able to do a certain task safely without injuring themselves. They wanted some input as to what percentage of women we thought should be able to do the task. My answer is 100 percent. If you're in the business of looking at tasks, looking at tools and looking at ways of doing things, shouldn't your goal be having everybody doing it safely? One hundred percent of men and 100 percent of women.... And if that means accommodating with tools or safety equipment or whatever, that's what you have to do to make the whole society productive."

Whether it's washroom facilities or reproductive hazards, a whole different set of health and safety problems present themselves for the woman in the workplace.

The worker members of the health and safety committee should be empowered, as they are in European countries, to shut down production if there is an unsafe work condition.

What can a worker do?
Pressure companies to produce clothing and personal protective equipment in women's sizes. Organize demonstrations. If there isn't enough pressure-grouping going on, it will never happen. Involve male co-workers, who also come in small sizes, so women will not be singled out as troublemakers.

Sensitize your physicians. The issue of education is really important. Demand health and safety training on company time. If something isn't healthy or safe for a woman it probably isn't for a man either. For the most part you can go on that assumption and work to make changes. We all have a right to a healthy and safe workplace.

Susan Meurer has a post-graduate diploma from McMaster University in Occupational Health and Safety. She is a printer by trade and a member of the Typographical Union Local 91, where she also does health and safety training. Meurer is currently working as a researcher and writer in the areas of technological change and plant closures. She recently wrote and produced a musical play on this subject in Toronto.

CHAPTER 12

Relational learning styles

Workshop coordinators
Susan Booth & Carol Brooks

Carol Brooks and Susan Booth, Quinta Consulting, describe the elements and teaching strategies for female relational learners in science, trades, and technology.

Susan: For years, Carol Brooks and I have been looking at how women learn. We worked generally in women's studies and then specifically with women in non-traditional fields. Around 1984 we began to look at learning styles. There are more than 80 models of learning styles. We had a lot of the characteristics of how women learn and what we needed was a structure. We found one in the work of Sandra Seagal, and we adapted the Human Dynamic International model. We love it because it's so simple. That doesn't mean it hasn't got enormous complexity – it's something you can grasp immediately or you could do a PhD. It speaks to males and females; it speaks to different cultures. It definitely fits something we knew about women.

It starts with the premise that within each one of us are three dimensions: the mental, physical, and relational or emotional. Within each of us, one of those dimensions is predominant in our learning, in how we process our information in any situation. In our culture about 80 percent of both males and females are relational learners. The remaining 20 percent fall into the broad categories of either mentally-centred or physically-centred learners. They have a different starting point. We all have and use those three dimensions, but usually one is predominant.

The mentally-centred approach

Our educational system uses a mentally-centred approach. That's because we borrowed it from England, and Great Britain is one of the countries that is mentally-centred. Don't think about the Queen (she happens to be relationally-centred), but Prince Philip and Prince Charles are mentally-centred. They take in their information very objectively and they love ideas and abstract theories.

One of the first things relational people have to do in a new learning situation is ask, "So what? Why do I have to care about this? Tell me something I really want to know." When the connection is made, something clicks in you and you begin to understand it and know it.

The educational system we borrowed from Great Britain is one where we all sit in nice little rows and there's a person up front lecturing at us and using a blackboard or a flip

chart. It's very visual. You get lots of homework so you have to read – go to the library and do your research, and be quiet. That works beautifully for mentally-centred people. Consequently they go on to university because they love it.

A lot of us in our society are not mentally-centred and we still go on to university. We get good grades because we have that mental dimension and we've been able to work with it within the educational system. But enormous numbers of us haven't been able to make it in that system; they've failed badly or just skimmed by.

As educators and as trainers we must recognize the three broad ways that people learn. We can begin to teach so our teaching meets the needs of all the learners in our classroom. And as learners, we can learn to compensate when the going gets tough and we think, "God, I can't understand what this instructor is saying."

*VOICE:*Is that why some women seem to excel at English and history and so on rather than the maths and sciences? Part of it is conditioning, our educational system, but is it also that women are more relational?

Susan: I think there's a lot of truth in that. There are some significant studies going on right now. The theory at this moment is that learning style is innate, it's already programmed in the DNA. On top of that, there's culture so that in North American society we are more relationally-cultured. In native North American society they tend to lean more toward the physical.

Women are not only relationally-centred by nature but we're socialized to be relational. It's a double whammy. Men are socialized not to care so much about their feelings but to honour that mental dimension. Men get the message that it's okay to be emotional and have feelings, but the pressure of socialization has been to develop the mental system and be much more objective and distant.

As to the sciences... in the last hundred years, math has turned into a very mental discipline although it started as a creative, right-brain relational discipline. It now appeals to those who are mentally-centred. I think all of us have learned the scientific method: stay objective, don't have any attachment, make hypotheses, test them. But don't relate to anything or you might damage the results.

The relational approach

It's not something we can't do but it doesn't appeal to us in the same way. Those of us who are relationally-centred want to connect personally. The personal element has to be there to really make it exciting for us. One of the neatest books you can read about women in sciences is the biography of Barbara McClintoch, *A Feeling For the Organism.* She has worked with chromosomes and the book talks about her way of doing it, the sympathetic way of touch, having a feeling for the organism. Of course, Einstein was very relational. He failed in school. The greatest scientist and what was his theory? Relativity! He saw the connections.

As relational learners we have to relate or connect to the information we're learning. Secondly, relational learners value relationships and a third thing is they need to relate personally. I shouldn't say we need to. We can live our lives and not do it, but it really is important for us. We're happiest when we can relate personally. One of the first things relational people have to do in a new learning situation is ask, "So what? Why do I have to care about this? Tell me something I really want to know." When the connection is made, something clicks in you and you begin to understand it and know it.

Until it clicks personally you can still learn but there is a difference between learning something and knowing something. I got straight A's in many of my subjects but the day after the test or the moment I walked out of the room, it was gone. I always kept that as a deep dark secret. But it's true.

There is a need for relationships, not only with the subject matter, but with the teacher or instructor. And sometimes we learn things because our friends like the subject and are learning about it. We like to stay connected to people. We'll learn what we need to learn and we'll stay connected with people we really

like. Or if we really like an idea then we go out to find people who like that idea as well. Just like you came here; there's an excitement inside that bubbles over and you say, "Well, I don't know anybody but I'm going anyway."

Using your household skills

In the WITT program we were teaching the use of machines for the first time. A lot of women are fine. Others said, "You didn't tell me we were going to do the table saw today or I wouldn't have been here." We knew we needed to relate personally with the machines, as well as connect them with something the women already knew so they wouldn't be so frightful. This is called the transferability of traditional skills to non-traditional skills. So, what is a band saw like? It's like a sewing machine. It's the guiding through and the staying there, and knowing where you turn it on and off. Patience with it and letting the machine do the work. As soon as we did that, something clicked and the learning was able to happen. We used to do that with all kinds of tools.

VOICE: I worked on a women's educational grant, a business called Mom's Repairs. Women would come in and be handed a nut and bolt and they would say, "How do you know which way to screw it in?" Everyone had their answer to that. And I would say, "Jar lid." That was it. When we came to left-hand threads, that was easy: the opposite of jar lids.

VOICE: A friend of mine is a cabinetmaker. When she first walked into the shop she was terrified of using the band saw. Then she realized you don't stick your finger under the knife when you're chopping up vegetables and you don't stick your fingers into the blender. The saw was no different.

You just need a frame of reference.

When you're cutting out a pattern for a headboard, instead of using the tissue paper for dressmaking, you're using a plywood pattern. Instead of using thread to hold it together you use staples or dowels or glue.

VOICE: It's like following a recipe as well. Kate was saying she has this song she made up about how to mix concrete – you know, you take a pound of concrete and mix in a few cups of water and a bit of this and that, and all of a sudden you've hit it.

Susan: One woman in a WITT training went into metallurgy as a work experience and she just came back glowing. She said, "It's just like a recipe."

VOICE: When I took chemistry we had a great teacher and that's what he said, that quite a few women tend to go into chemistry and do very well because they look at it as a cooking process. You add something, then you wait five minutes, and you add something more, and the end result is whatever it happens to be if it doesn't blow up in your face. It clicks when everybody starts making these connections. It makes life a lot easier.

> *So many times when we were doing our research the instructors would say, "You women always want to know why. I've never had to answer why. It takes a lot of time to answer why."*

Taking it personally

VOICE: Does age have an effect on all this?

Susan: My sense is we probably come in perfect, then go downhill. We need to integrate all three learning styles and make them all very, very strong and powerful. As we age, I think that is exactly what we do. We take on learning that will help us do that. It is helpful to know we always have a home base. When we are stuck in our learning then all we have to do is say, "Okay, what I really am is a relational learner. If I can get back to that, I can get unstuck. How can I relate to this personally?"

As a teacher, you can assist in making the connections, in creating the excitement and the personal relationship with the machines or tools.

VOICE: I've owned two cars. One of them responded very well to flattery. The other one responds much better to foul language. Whenever I compliment this car it goes, "Yeah, right, pluey!..." It conks out on me. If I kick it or swear at it, it seems to run.

Susan: The woman who taught the Trades and Technology program with me is an electronics technician. She's always personified her tools. If any of you have taught trades and technology, then you know tools are dropped all the time, especially with new learners. So on one of the first days when we would be learning tool identification, she would talk about the tools very personally. She'd pick up a wrench and say, "Now you see this wrench? This is your friend. It has a molecular structure just like you and me. If you drop this you mess up all its molecules. You could give it a headache." It made people laugh but the interesting thing was that very few tools were destroyed in the program.

Sherry Turkle is from MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] and she did a study about computers and the way people approach them. In her study, there are two different approaches to computers. One she calls the "hard mastery" approach where a person has control, dominion or power over the machine. "That's a machine. This must be the turn-on button. I have control of this machine. It will do as I say."

Then there is another style, "soft mastery," one that's more interactive with the machine. "You're going to like me. I'll sit here and put my hands on it. Here it is." More tentative. You relate to it, then you work well together. Just like when you meet somebody you've never met before – you know, "Hi, nice day," – the kind of tentativeness in getting to know someone until you're more familiar.

Typically it was the men who were into the hard mastery approach. The women saw the computer as a tool to interact with and become friends with first. At first glance, it looks as if the hard mastery style is much quicker. I mean they just sit down and turn it on, you do it like this and you do it like that. The other, interactive one seems to take much longer because it's more hesitant, there's more of a delicacy as the relationship starts to build. It might appear that way, but in the long term it isn't true: you learn it in about the same amount of time.

The majority of relational learners are excellent at self-putdowns and self-criticism, and if there's a doubt it's going to be a self-doubt. So we look at somebody who seems to have no problem at all in approaching a tool in a new learning situation and right away we think, "Oh, they're really good. I'm not. I'm slower at this."

VOICE: (Man's voice) That's typical of the experience I've had training men and women. With a lot of the men, their first approach is power over the thing. It's very difficult for them to admit they don't know about it, whereas with women it seems less likely to happen like that. I think the rate of learning is either the same or the second approach is even faster in the long run.

Women want to know why

VOICE: Women will ask questions and men won't. But in asking questions you need to know you aren't the dummy – you are asking the questions everyone else wants to know.

Susan: So many times when we were doing our research the instructors would say, "You women always want to know why. I've never had to answer why. It takes a lot of time to answer why."

A good quote to keep in mind is, "Practise balance because the gift can be the burden." Being a relational learner, or a mentally-centred or physically-centred learner, is a gift. It's how you use your gifts that counts. With women sometimes the asking of why is a burden because if they keep asking they don't have to get their hands on the task. We learn that quickly as trades instructors – some people ask lots of questions and pretty soon the time is up. But when it's genuine, that wanting to know why is because we want to know: "What does this mean to me? Tell me something. Tell me why."

What a relationally-centred person really loves is to have a sense of overview – what the scheme of things is and how it relates to me.

It's helpful for all of us to have the overview but the difference is the mentally-centred person stands over the overview and always talks in global terms. He has no trouble with that big picture. I need that big picture, but I can't work with it. I can't stay competitive in the big picture. I need to work with a piece of it.

VOICE: I notice I have to go through the entire process before I can start learning about it. If it's a step-by-step process and you take me through it, when we get all the way to the end I'll say, "Now could we go back to the beginning and you could show me what we did?"

What a relationally-centred person really loves is to have a sense of overview — what the scheme of things is and how it relates to me.

Susan: Again that's like needing the overview and then needing some talking about it, and then seeing the demonstration of it. Maybe then more talking about it, maybe the overview. Always back and forth. The relationally-centred learner needs it always back and forth.

There's a need for actual doing in there. The relationally-centred person is always connecting all these dimensions because that's what she does. So she says, "Give me a little bit to think about.... Let me talk about it.... Let me do it. Okay, let's go back and talk about it and let's think about it again." So there's a lot of movement.

Talking it out

A very big need for relationally-centred learners is their need to verbalize. We absolutely must talk. That is when we learn. Have any of you had the experience where you open your mouth and coherent words come out and you go, "Oh, I didn't know I knew that. I didn't know I could be that clear with that." It's often said of the relational learner that they don't know what they know until they say it.

We're auditory learners and we're processing information, all the time, in the moment. Every learner processes. The mentally-centred learner processes after the fact. They take in only what they value and then they process it but it always sort of stays out there. The processing stays out there. The physically-centred learner takes in everything and they process everything. The relationally-centred learner processes in the moment so as I am speaking right now each one of you is saying, "Does this matter to me? Is this true? Can I relate to this?" If it's yes, then you put it inside yourself and you sort of own it; and if it's no, it's gone. There's a lot going on. If you don't speak it then you don't learn it. So what we need are classrooms that are noisy. You do need some reflective time and you need a lot of doing time, but you need to be able to talk.

We need small discussion groups, we need large discussion groups, we need to speak individually. We need to talk to the instructors. We need to talk to our co-workers. We need to talk particularly with women because one of the biggest complaints about women is that we talk too much. Especially women who go into non-traditional occupations like trades and technologies. You get into a class with all men where you're the only one asking questions. You're feeling self-conscious to begin with and then you're feeling like you're adding on to it by talking so much.

I used to do a self-learning thing but I never told anybody because I thought it was the weirdest thing in the whole world. I was ashamed of it. When I really wanted to learn something, I would go home – it would be quiet, nobody in the house – and I'd pretend I was coming to teach it. I'd say it out loud and I could hear a class say back to me, "...but what if...?" Then I would have to answer that and if I could do that, then I knew I had it. Apprenticeship is a neat way because that's part of what you do, you teach each other. In our school systems we don't teach each other.

VOICE: On our board of education they talk about RICE: Reflection, Interaction, Communication, and Experience. It's a nice

way of remembering there are always those components and I think they all fit in with relational learning. You need a time for each.

Emotional sensitivity

Susan: There's one other important factor. The relationally-centred are very sensitive in their emotional systems which is why some people call them emotionally-centred. We have a lot of negative connotations about that, particularly for women since we're accused of being "so emotional." We are emotional human beings. We have a lot of sensitivity in our bodies and it's attached to our intuitive system.

Sometimes you go into a room of people, feeling really good, and suddenly you feel the opposite. It's because we have sensors all over our bodies and we pick up nonverbal things. Something in me and in each one of us right now knows how everybody is in this room. Some of us block out more that others. Some of us are just so sensitive our whole bodies start to literally vibrate.

In any learning situation you have a lot of sensitivity to what is going on. If as a student you are relating positively to your co-students and the teacher, then what's happening is good. But if you're not liking the teacher or if you've just had an argument with the person sitting next to you or if everybody else in the room is gloomy, there is something there that would darken the learning situation.

We have to learn detachment. We really have to learn how to detach from what other people think about us and what's going on. We have to learn how to be really caring for ourselves and our goals. That's not to be uncaring about others, but to not let feelings for others get in the way of what we ourselves are here to do.

One of the best ways to work with a relational learner is to integrate everything you're going to teach. To have it together very logically so it isn't chaotic, but to integrate it so things are not separated. You know how our disciplines are: you go into history, then you go into math, and math has nothing to do with history.

VOICE: I remember a book by a woman, Lynn Hancock. She was teaching the slower kids and she got a small monkey. It was a baby when she got it and she said the monkey was the thing that related everything. Geography, language, math – the kids learned everything through raising the monkey. She said those kids got more out of that than they got out of all their entire schooling beforehand.

Susan: Somehow, there's a capability to bring all those threads together and a need to see it as a whole as well as seeing its distinct parts. We can and need to do so much more in the educational system through integration to meet the needs of the 80 to 85 percent of North Americans who are relational learners.

Susan Booth, B.I.S., is an educational and management consultant whose major work has been in the identification, documentation, and creation of alternative work and learning environments to meet the needs of women and young girls. As a pioneer in "non-traditional" training and work options for women, she has taught in both the Introduction to Non-Traditional Occupations and the Women Into Trades and Technology programs. As well, she co-authored the Ontario WITT curriculum (1981) amd the evaluation study of an employment equity program for the City of Toronto (1986-87).

Carol Brooks – see Chapter 4, "Gender Talk."

CHAPTER 13

What really happened to the WITT grads?

Workshop coordinators
Patti Schom-Moffatt & Marcia Braundy

Marcia Braundy, Kootenay WITT, and Patti Schom-Moffatt, Karyo Communications, describe and analyze the data from and the experience of women surveyed in a 1988 national research project.

Patti: Marcia and I divided up our work. Marcia went around to nine places around Canada and did focus group interviews with graduates of orientation courses for women considering training and employment in trades and technology [WITT graduates]. I undertook the data collection and collation from a questionnaire survey which netted 212 respondants, approximately three percent of the entire number of WITT graduates between 1982-87. This proves to be significant in terms of research. As some of the results vary, first I will tell you about the results of the questionnaire survey, and then Marcia will share the results of the focus group interviews.

How do women find out about WITT?

We looked at how people were recruited but not how effective it was. We asked them, for example, how they heard about the course, but we didn't ask them if this was significant in their choice. This is an interesting piece for those of you from EIC. The choices we included: friend, media, advertisement, an employment counsellor, a provincial government office flyer, or their employer. Nobody had heard about it through the provincial government or through an employer. When it came to the employment counsellors: in B.C., 30 percent of the women who took the course found out about it through their counsellor; 25 percent in Alberta; 50 percent in Saskatchewan; 74 percent in Manitoba; 60 percent in Ontario; 17 percent in Quebec and 33 percent in New Brunswick. In New Brunswick there were only three women in the survey so it is not very statistically relevant. What we're looking at is a high of almost 75 percent in Manitoba to a low of 17 percent in Quebec. Employment counsellors seem to be a significant way people find out about the course. Advertising was interesting because it ranged from 0 percent in Manitoba – so in Manitoba where all the

The women who ended up in traditional jobs had taken the course for reasons of looking for work, whereas the women who had taken the course for reasons of looking for career change and finding out about a more non-traditional job, ended up in operational, professional and technical jobs.

counsellors were doing this bang-up job of getting the support, there was no money being spent on advertising – and in other provinces, Alberta for instance, 44 percent heard about it through advertising, and 47 percent in Quebec. So there are a lot of differences, province to province.

When we asked women why they took the course, a lot of the answers had less to do with looking for work, than it did with career change, interest in a trade, or looking at what else was there. We found 46 percent of the population we surveyed were employed before they took the course. That was quite high for a training course, but only a quarter of them were taking the course for "finding employment" reasons. When we did some correlations looking at who that was, we found the women who ended up in traditional jobs had taken the course for reasons of looking for work, whereas the women who had taken the course for reasons of looking for career change and finding out about a more non-traditional job, ended up in operational, professional and technical jobs.

Almost all the employed respondants, especially those who went on to further training, credited the WITT course for the reason they went on.

Students employed after the course
Although 46 percent of the women were employed before they took the course, 63 percent were employed at the time of the survey. Twenty-five percent had not been in the labour force before the course and only 10 percent had not become part of the labour force after.

Seventeen percent had been unemployed; only 10 percent were unemployed after the course. And there were a lot more women in training after the course than before. Of those women who were on social assistance before they took the course, only a quarter were still on social assistance. That's a very important statisic.

Of those 63 percent of the respondants who were employed, 55 percent were working in what we called traditional jobs and 45 percent were working in trades and technology areas. Almost all the employed respondants, especially those who went on to further training, credited the WITT course for the reason they went on.

WITT gives women confidence
The course rated very, very high for career exploration, for confidence. It wasn't great for directly getting jobs, but in terms of indirectly getting a job, it rated incredibly high. This was true whether you got a job in traditional or non-traditional areas.

It rated extremely high in giving people confidence and assertiveness. Where the confidence and assertiveness came from was intersting to note. They didn't come from the components of the course, where someone told them, "To be assertive you say, I want... and then you tell the person what you want and you tell them how it's affecting you." It came from touching tools. It came from hands-on feeling comfortable and confident with the tools and the tools section of the course. The trades-related part rated higher than anything else in terms of, "How much I enjoyed this course." It was becoming familiar with technology and by that I mean, hands on the tools. That's where the confidence came.

VOICE: Definitely. The whole program was confidence-building. Each component of it was a building block. I went into the WITT program afraid of everything and I really, really grew and I really felt good about myself. I still rate that as one of the best experiences of my life. Definitely gave me a lot of confidence. The ability to do things, not just to stand back and say, "Oh, that's how it's done."

Patti: That's where the confidence was coming from for sure. When we look at what the WITT program turned out to be, it's obviously a good program in increasing people's employability whether that's in traditional or non-traditional work. Forty-four percent of the women ended up in trades and technology work. some people might look at the program

and say, "Well, it's geared towards getting women into non-traditional," and then say, "Only 44 percent, only one out of every two even made it...." But as an overall employment program, it really met its mandate, which was to expose women to a variety of options and it was up to the women to choose what that option was going to be.

I put an appendix together of some job titles the women were working at, at the time of the survey. Many of them had required further training. They admit 14 weeks is not enough for a lot of the jobs but it was enough to figure out what it was you wanted to do. There were installer technicians, parking lot attendants, caretakers and maintenance workers, instant potato grade inspector, auto-body prep persons, machinists, repair technicians, intervenors in special needs preschools, bartenders, set-up operators in a factory, assemblers, homemakers, bowling alley worker, industrial electrician, automotive technician, electronics industrial control, spindle-mill operator. It went on and on. It was a huge variety. There was nothing where you could say, "Oh, everybody went into this as a result," it was just all over the board. The issue is choice for women. If you're exposing women to an exploration, and if at the end of that exploration, some women choose to go back to what they were doing before or to do a job in traditional areas, that is okay too. They are making informed career choices.

VOICE: When they evaluated the graduates from the WITT programs in Nova Scotia, EIC evaluated it two months after the completion of the course, and at that point I was waiting to go into a pre-employment machinist course in August or September.... I had taken the course in May. July or August they called me back so I don't think I was counted as successful because at that moment I wasn't employed in the trades. I thought that was a real terrible way to evaluate my success.

Becoming familiar with technology and by that I mean, hands on the tools. That's where the confidence came.

Wage changes

Patti: I think the funders should actually be interested in the average wage change by province. In B.C. for example, the wage was $4.77/hour before they took the course, $8.42 after. The average wage across Canada is $7.27/hour now and it was $4.70 when they started. It is very significant: a 75 percent wage increase in Ontario. But when I started calculating, I went, "Forty hours times 4.3 weeks and it was $17,000 on an annual basis which is still, for a single woman with two kids, poverty level wages. So it's not fabulous, but it's still 75 percent more than that woman was earning 14 weeks before she took the training. I don't know why in some provinces the change is so low. Why Saskatchewan is lower than in Quebec. It's not as significant as it was in Ontario or Manitoba or B.C. We have to do some more explorations and maybe some correlations between where people are working. If there is any question at all about the research study, that would be in the wage data and that's because you would ask somebody how much they earned and often they just didn't know or they didn't know how to express it or they didn't know if it was gross or net. They didn't know if it was weekly or hourly. Like they would say, "I earned $4.00 an hour before I took the course and $8.00,..." but you may have been comparing part-time or temporary, or seasonal, or a lot of variations in that. We found it quite surprising that people just didn't know what they earned on an annual basis or on a gross basis.

This graph looks at employment status before and after the course. This section is enrolled in school: 5.2 percent before, and 12.8 percent after. Unemployed, seeking work: 16.6 percent before, and 10 percent after. On social assistance: 6.8 percent before and 4.3 percent after. Not in the labour market: 25.6 percent before and 10 percent after. Employed part-time: 14.7 percent before and 17 percent after. Self-employed: 2.6 percent before and 5.2 percent after. Employed full-time: 28.4 percent

before and 40.8 percent after. Employed full-time and enrolled in school was a very large change.

How to improve the course

When we asked how the course could be improved, the thing that was mentioned over and over again was the length of the course. There had been an expectation on the part of many of the WITT graduates that it would be more employment-related – that it would be job skills. That when you finished you would get a job. The course didn't lead directly to jobs and that in part was because there wasn't enough skills training being offered. It was an introduction. The problem might be in the expectations of what the course was going to be or what you can learn in about 14 weeks. The other area for improvement identified by a number of women was the lack of ongoing financial support from EIC, "We took this course which introduced us to all kinds of non-traditional jobs. We chose our favourite and EIC didn't support the things we chose because they were too long. Don't tell us about courses that won't be supported because we are not in a financial position to support ourselves through them." It's a real frustration on the part of some women saying, "I was so excited in choosing what I wanted, then I was told that I couldn't do it."

The others who were unemployed described job searches that would wrench your heart. They were so respectable, so clear, so strong and so persevering and they were still unemployed, and these women were top of their class.

Some women, in Manitoba particularly, asked for less feminist rhetoric in the course. Other criticisms were that there weren't enough female instructors; that those people who really were gung ho, "I want something in trades and technology," felt that there were a number of women in the course who were there just warming a seat. That the selection of students might have been done more effectively. So I guess there is a difference between how much someone knows about what they want to do and some people who are there just to explore... and then there are some people who are there maybe because of reasons of unemployment insurance or training allowance or whatever, they have to be there.

In terms of meeting the expectations, B.C. came up highest. We only gave them three choices: 1) It didn't meet them. 2) It met them to some degree. 3) It met them to a great deal. In B.C., 75 percent of the women who had taken the course said it met their expectation to a great extent. Saskatchewan and Manitoba was 64 percent and Alberta was 50 percent. Ontario was 53 percent. Now still, that's 50 percent of the women felt it met their expectations to a great degree. Only eight of the 212 women said it really didn't meet their expectations. That's significant, a very positive evaluation for a course like this. Eight out of 212 is a very small number of people.

Problems women experienced

One last thing about the questionnaire data was interesting. These are the problems women experienced. We asked two questions. Did they have any trouble getting a job? And what problems, if any, did they experience in the workplace? And we compared the people who had traditional jobs and the people who had non-traditional jobs and for the first question, the same number said they had no problem. That was almost half and when they did have problems, they were similar problems except for one or two areas. And they would be the kinds of things you would think would be a problem for traditional versus non-traditional. We did find some significant differences in problems encountered on the job. While 40 percent of the women employed in traditional jobs experienced no difficulties on the job, only 13 percent of women in trades and technical fields stated that they had no difficulties on the job. The problems identified most frequently were co-worker attitude, gender harassment, and lack of physical strength. Sexual harassment and management

attitudes were identified significantly often by both groups.

What I will do is pass over to Marcia who will tell you about the case studies and then we can answer questions together.

Interviewing focus groups

Marcia: With the intervening requirements of organizing this conference, my research is not yet formally written up, so at this point I will share with you my ad hoc thoughts of my experience as I went across the country – a sense of the themes that came out of the sessions. I spent six weeks on the road. I was in 10 cities. I facilitated nine focus groups and it was fascinating.

Two of the groups, both conducted in New Brunswick, were inadvertently comprised of women who went directly into a specific trades training course with the regular student population, rather than first going through a WITT-type course. Because all participants were asked the same questions, these two groups provided some comparative data between the experience of women taking WITT-type orientation courses before their trades training and those who went directly into technical training.

The discrimination she described from employers was pervasive right across the country.

Where do these women come from?

Overall, I found a larger number of women who had been on social assistance before they had taken the course (about 14 percent) and a higher number of women who had been employed before they had took the course (about 60 percent), than Patti did. It was not a completely random sample. I asked for a specific group makeup: two women currently employed in trades or technical work; two women currently unemployed; two women who were employed, but not in trades or technical work; and two women in training – all of whom were graduates of those courses. The instructors called telephone numbers until someone answered and fell into the category they were looking for. In a sense, it was a random sample, but as well, there were several focus group participants who were chosen by the instructors because the instructors knew they had a particular story to tell that was representative of a class experience or they were particularly articulate. Each category was represented and there was a broad cross-section across the country. A majority of those interviewed had either been on social assistance at home caring for children or in the waitressing profession before they took the course. I was amazed at how many women had been waitresses before they took the course. Many found themselves in an unexpected sole support situation because of breakdown in family. All of a sudden there they were with no skills and they had to find another way to make a living and their options seemed quite limited. Many of the women were, in fact, encouraged by CEC counsellors. In places where there was a women's employment counselling centre, there was great praise expressed for EIC's role in encouraging women to take the course, providing them with the resources they needed, assistance, counselling, etc. There was some fairly strong criticism for EIC's role in geographical areas that did not have women's employment centres. The criticisms included the discouragement, "No, you can't possibly want to do that." Where in one group, it had been suggested they take this course, in other groups they had asked to take the course, and had been discouraged. Basically, counsellors suggested they find something else more appropriate. In places where there were no orientation courses, EIC counsellors tended to recommend women take training in whatever trade or technology course happened to have space available in it.

Questions were asked about how successful the course had enabled them to be, what kinds of preparations had they received to go out into the labour market? In New Brunswick, participants stated there was no career prep: "They didn't prepare us";"We didn't know what the work world was going to be like out there"; "We didn't know what it was going to be like working with men"; "We didn't

know...." It was as if they were asking for the kinds of preparatory pieces of information and experience that comes from the orientation courses.

The women in the focus groups represented participants going back to the earliest WITT courses. In Winnipeg, I had women from the very first course they had done as well as women from the most recent course. The groups ranged from having just completed the course to having gone through their apprenticeships and been working in their field. There was one woman I ran into who was now in charge of maintenance for the Western Glove Company. I went to her business and videotaped her at work. She supervises 17 people and is in charge of maintenance for a brandnew factory. It was quite exciting to see where some of the women had taken their experience.

It is clear most employers will not, without legislative pressure, hire women and other target groups for work they see as gender or racially stereotyped.

Where do WITT grads go?

Of the women who were unemployed in the group, it was pretty clear that only perhaps three wanted to be that way. They had chosen to stay home and have children or whatever. The others who were unemployed described job searches that would wrench your heart. They were so respectable, so clear, so strong and so persevering and they were still unemployed, and these women were top of their class. It was very disheartening. But their courage that they continued to go out and bang on doors was inspiring. There was one woman from Winnipeg who described her job search. She is a black single parent with five children and she was top of her class as a machinist. She had received the CN scholarship. Her instructors sent her out to every job that came into the college and every time she came back without it. She was clear-thinking and wellspoken. She had been searching for a year. [Lois has since moved to Toronto and is employed as a machinist apprentice.] The discrimination she described from employers was pervasive right across the country.

Of significance in the interviews was that although we asked for women who were employed but not in a trade or technology, 66 percent of the women represented in that category were working in other fields non-traditional for women, e.g. corrections, groundskeeper, etc. Many were in situations where they had been in a trade or technology but had moved out from there, using that experience, to another type of job still related in some way: apprenticeship counsellor, WITT instructor, etc. About half of them were employed as WITT instructors or had used their skills to go on in another area, had taken further training, had their experience but had gone into new directions. The other 33 percent were women who had entered the course in a pretty down position but through the confidence-building of the course and exploring and assessing their own potential, they had decided they were more suited to a more traditional career option (computer/banking, computer office). One woman was moving her way up in a bank. When she started her WITT course she was a single mother who was just re-entering the labour force. She said she had had no confidence and no abilities. This particular person was in Sudbury but she was representative of that type of participant across the country: the hands-on component of the course, assertiveness training and resume writing, job interviewing skills, and all the rest of the pieces of orientation had helped her to determine that no, trades were not the area that she wanted to go into but some technology might be useful in the area she wanted to go into. Now she saw herself as a competent and capable person who could go out into the work world, get a job, and she is well on her way to becoming a bank manager. Although hers is the most clear of the success story type, there were a number of women in that category, with that kind of experience.

Frustration in the job search

Again the level of frustration described over and over again in the job search was significant. The courses were credited with providing the women with good solid training on how to go about it. When asked what they liked most about the personal development components of the course, people mentioned resume writing, and job search skills and interviewing techniques. Those were at the top of the list. As an instructor, I know it seems to be a part of the course that people hate the most while they're in it. It was quite significant that the students all said it was one of the most valuable components of the course once they got out into the world. Because whether they entered trades or entered traditional work, the ability to put themselves down on paper with some sense of what they have done, added to their ability to speak to employers, and the interviewing process and everything was put to extensive use in trying to find a job.

Most women felt the courses should be longer and should focus more on hands-on theory and practical.

Many encountered antiquated employer attitudes, men who expressed such statements such as, "We don't employ women here – they distract the men," "Sorry, no washroom facilities for girls in the shop," or if they did get on, they found they had to put up with levels of harassment that shocked the other women in the course. Most often these women wouldn't recognize or acknowledge they were in fact experiencing harassment because they were desperate for their work and were willing to put up with anything to get on in their chosen field. When some of those women described the kinds of things they were having to put up with in their work situations, the other women in their groups were saying, "But that's harassment," "But they're not allowed to say that." The women say, "Well, no, really, I can handle it." But they shouldn't have to handle it. And they are afraid for their jobs. And I said, "Yes, but don't you know they aren't allowed to ask you some of those questions?" Some of the questions asked in the interviewing process were so unacceptable. They're afraid if they say anything about the interviewing process, "They wouldn't give us a job if they thought we were mouthy. We would be blacklisted around." It was quite disheartening.

I was amazed at how many women had been waitresses before they took the course. Many found themselves in an unexpected sole support situation because of breakdown in family.

Education is really important, but there has to be some other kind of support system in place that helps these women go through that process because if Human Rights codesexist but nobody is willing to use them because they are so afraid of the repercussions, we have to find a model that will help us through that.

Some women who were working had found, most often after a long search, a supportive employer. There was one woman in Sudbury who was an electronics technician, hired on by a small electronics firm. She was the first women who had ever been hired to do technical work at this company. She was one of seven or eight employees in the company and she had basically raised his business by a large enough percentage for him to stand up on video and say so. There are supportive employers who recognize the potential of these women and are willing to provide them with an opportunity to prove it. Those women were moving well in their organizations and in those situations where we videotaped them at work, the employers expressed great satisfaction with their work right across the board.

As reflected in the data, most women felt the courses should be longer and should focus more on hands-on theory and practical. Many

women said they didn't have enough time in the shops. I know in B.C. in the curriculum I designed, published by the provincial government, the women actually go through Entry Level Trades Training, along with the Life Skills and Career Development training program. The Entry Level training takes a look at all the pieces anyone going into a particular trade or technology might need – what are the common threads needed in all those fields: blueprint reading, a little bit of carpentry, a little bit of electrical, a little bit of plumbing, learning to read technical writing, technical documents, learning to write out order forms, etc. Certainly that seemed to alleviate that kind of criticism here in B.C.

Women especially need an instructor; they are relational learners. You need to have somebody you can have a dialogue with. You need to have somebody you can ask questions. You need to feel free to ask those questions. There has to be interaction. You can't just hand somebody a book and have them learn a trade.

Their choice would have been to work in an operational, professional or technical field. Many had given up because of all the discouragement they had encountered. Others were bound and determined to continue their search.

Because we did not specifically ask the question, "Did you go on to further training?" and "In what?" on the questionnaire, we don't have comparative data on this one. But of the 72 focus group participants, 73 percent had gone on to further training in a trade or technical area. It was clear from those who were unemployed or underemployed at the interview as well as those who had found employment after a long search, and those who had gone into other employment or further training, that for the most part, their choice would have been to work in an operational, professional or technical field. Many had given up because of all the discouragement they had encountered. Others were bound and determined to continue their search. One was just on maternity leave and was looking forward to going back to a place of work where she is well-respected and enjoyed working. Of the two that had either chosen another field entirely or were strongly considering doing so, both were very glad to have had the opportunity to explore their hands-on potential in the WITT course.

There was another sort of participant in the unemployed category. Those were the women who had started on social assistance quite young and were strongly encouraged to go into the WITT course. Either due to a negative experience in job search or their own inertia, they were still in a dependent situation. It was quite difficult for me to accept that through a fluke of fate or something more sinister in our culture, the women in this category were primarily native. It was also heartening to see, in atleast one instance, the kind of support counselling and assistance necessary to move women out of that learned helplessness position; it was a native woman, 25, with seven children, who was clearly going to succeed. In the groups I facilitated, there were five native women out of the 72 women I interviewed and three of them were still in that learned helplessness position. One was right in the process of moving out of it and one was in training and starting to move ahead but they made up the majority of the women in the category of not being able to find their way out of the pattern of pregnancy and childrearing. Not from a sense of choosing to have a child but, "Another one came along and I wasn't able to...." There was a sort of acceptance of, "Well, I guess I'll just have to stay in this situation." Because my study was not of that topic I can't really speak to it but it left me with an uneasy feeling that there is a gap there that we're not addressing somehow.

It is here that the two levels of the course become obvious. We have WITT programs and we have INTO or COPE programs which have a greater amount of life skills development. Women come to their labour market exploration at different places with unique needs and to their particular level. Some

women need more life skills development than others and need to work hard on that before they are thrown into the kind of career and tool skill development encountered and desirable in many WITT-type courses. And the women who are ready for WITT don't want to spend too much time focusing on personal development. There are certainly components of that such as assertiveness training that are proving invaluable to them.

One comment I wanted to make about the wage issue: $7.27 or $8.52 an hour is not enough to support a woman and her family. I found the women who had been making $3.50 an hour and were out there making $6.00 or $7.00 were delighted. They thought, "Well, we've doubled our income." But the level of poverty that wage was forcing those women to still live in was not acceptable. In Toronto, there were several women from DeHaviland who were working and were talking about their wages being in the $15.00, $16.00 range and we got around to a woman who is a cabinetmaker and is working in a very expensive furniture building factory... they sell the most expensive furniture in the country... we're talking rosewood veneer. Anyway, she is a veneerer there. This is a skill. This is a talent and this is unique. She was making $8.25 an hour and was expecting a raise of 10 cents. But she had no idea all these other women were making so much money. It just opened her eyes. The importance of the course is to let people know, what are the economic potentials of these jobs and it seems to me we have to be careful the employers aren't just going to hire women at lower wages to take the place of men. The women were in fact being hired to do the same job at less pay and were accepting that because their aspirations were so low. We need to do something about enhancing the aspirations of these women and insuring that, in fact, equal pay for equal work, which has been legislated for a long time, does take place, at the same time we are fighting for equal pay for work of equal value.

It is clear most employers will not, without legislative pressure, hire women and other target groups for work they see as gender or racially stereotyped. Those who have recognized the potential of the vast majority of new entrants to the labour force aresatisfied and often pleasantly surprised to find that their capabilities match and often exceed the potential of traditional workers in these fields.

For information on the methodology involved in this study, we recommend you contact Helen Gosine or Shelagh Jane Woods at EIC National Headquarters in Ottawa/Hull for the full research report.

Marcia Braundy received her BA from Antioch University/West. She became the first woman in the construction sector of the B.C. Carpenters' Union in 1980 and received her interprovincial journey ticket in 1981. She has instructed WITT courses at colleges in B.C., and that province published her curriculum guide and resource book, *Orientation to Trades and Technology with a Special Emphasis on the Needs of Women,* in 1988.

Patti Schom-Moffatt, MSW, is President of Karyo Communications, a Vancouver-based social policy, research and communications firm. Her 12 years of experience include research into employment and job training issues, services for people with disabilities, and literacy.

CHAPTER 14

How to keep your WITT alive

Workshop coordinator
Pat Fraser

In this workshop, Pat Fraser asked the participants, many of whom had some experience in running the programs, the following questions. We have excerpted some of their replies.

Major hurdles
Can you identify the major hurdles that had to be overcome in first establishing your programs?

One of the biggest problems to overcome is proving your program is successful. If there are 200 people in the WITT program and only two go on to trades, it is considered unsuccessful. Then the funding goes. In fact, the mandate of the program is not to have people go directly into trades. It's to prepare women so they can make a career decision.

Most people in our program had to do upgrading to even be ready to go on to a technology. So you're looking at a three-year lag time before you have someone coming out that's qualified as a technologist. EIC won't pay for that.

As well, a WITT graduate is not defined as a success if she continues in training. The government wants them to end up in a job at the end of the course. The Re-Entry and Job Development CJS programs all say jobs. But with trades and technology, you can't go into a job without further training.

There's a lack of clarity any time you do things for the first time. We've had some problems in terms of defining objectives clearly enough so our programs were called successful.

Often, the actual setting of goals and objectives of a particular course is not done by the people who run the program. CEIC will say, "Thou shalt have a program, and it will produce this." When it doesn't turn out that way, it's not "successful." We had episodic planning, so we never had people on-stream that could

The greatest strength would be the experience. It has built confidence for women. To suddenly be able to use tools. To know you can do something you never thought you could do before.... Your greatest strength becomes your greatest weakness because the government doesn't recognize that self-confidence as a measure of success.

do the kind of advocacy necessary to keep those programs going. There was never a place where students could come back to, to gather and get together occasionally and say, "How are you doing?"

Prejudice against women is another hurdle. No one ever shuts down apprenticeship programs because of the lack of success in going on to get tickets when the participants are primarily men.

If they ask women what they thought of the WITT program or subsequent training, they would say, "It was wonderful. I felt so good about myself even if I didn't become a tradeswoman." But that's not what the government is looking for. They were looking for success on their own terms.

For a lot of women this is their first step into the territory and they have to have confidence in themselves before they can take on something they know nothing about.

Recruitment has been another big hurdle. Instructors aren't paid to recruit, in fact, some are told *not* to do it. But the people at Canada Employment are not encouraging women to even look at trades and technology.

A Catch 22 situation often exists. "We can't get people. You can't advertise because there will be too many people."

Lack of continuity in programming is another problem. Good programs get cut when governments or ministers change.

Forcing candidates from the welfare rolls to take the WITT program "or else" brings the success rate down.

Pre-trades students are often ineligible for student loans, causing financing problems for further training.

Specific information about job opportunities may or may not be given to the students. The right people are not teaching the right jobs. One woman who taught a trades course wore a dress and high heels to work every day, giving such advice as: "Never swear. Don't raise your voices, and don't fool with their territory."

Women need a role model.

I think the instructors have to be women and they have to be qualified women.

A need for honesty exists.

What is the message to give without discouraging women too much?

Major crises and setbacks

Can you identify any major crises or setbacks you've had in your programs and what happened in these instances?

The biggest crises centre around recruitment. One way to get around the recruitment hassles is to change funding. Canada Job Development for Women, for example, is specific to construction, but it encourages recruitment.

Scheduling and lack of security. Nobody in their right mind is going to take a leave of absence for a four-month contract. It takes time to develop curricula, skills, and put the materials together.

There is much added hostility towards Women in Trades and Technology going through the regular departments. Trying to get a program together that falls apart after four months is devastating for staff morale. How much energy are you going to put into a program if it's only going to fill a little chunk of your life?

There are only a few WITT programs left in the country. They say these cutbacks are directly related to the skills shortage in local areas. If there is no skills shortage, the

If there is no skills shortage, the government is not looking at the long term. "There is a skill here, there is a shortage here, so let's whip up this program," is about as long-term as the planning gets.

government is not looking at the long term. "There is a skill here, there is a shortage here, so let's whip up this program," is about as long-term as the planning gets, although severe shortages are currently being experienced and more are predicted within the next few years.

Government is waiting for private industry to take over. But industry is there for a profit and it doesn't want to do the training. They want people who are already trained, who are already at a certain level. That kind of policy is not designed to take women who are really at an entry level. It's unrealistic to think that industry is going to take responsibility for basic educational needs.

Our Native Resource Centre or our Women's Program is all in trailers around the periphery. The marginal people. These are the marginal people.

A need exists for some kind of lobby group to directly confront EIC about their Employment Equity programs. While EIC says it stands behind its programs, it cuts funding for women to get the basic skills. It's just too hard for women to go from ground zero into what often is a wolf pack mentality in the technical institutions.

Most women don't have brothers or fathers or anyone else willing to teach them how to use the tools.

If Employment Equity says hire more women, where are these women going to come from? Is it enough just to have legislation on the books? Is that all they're interested in?

The Canadian Job Strategy does not address the problem of women who haven't had the preparation to go into the trades and technologies.

The biggest crisis right now in this country is that the job programs for women are disappearing. We are a minority within a minority. How are we going to convince the local regions to train us if there's not a particular shortage in our areas?

There are shortages of trained and trainable women to fill Employment Equity targets for industry in the operation, professional and technical categories.

Changing and adapting

Has the content of your program changed and adapted to the needs of changing circumstances? For instance, a commitment to continuity?

Our pre-technology course changed with time when we began pre-testing. If you had completed high school 20 years ago, then it was really questionable what level your math and science skills might be at currently.

We tried to some extent to screen out people that really have too much difficulty.

At Camosun College in Victoria they started a bridging program designed to help tradespeople who wanted to become more technical, like welding and fabricating. But because you had to be a tradesperson to enroll, most women were eliminated.

We always have very cohesive and strong support groups develop in the class and once the class is over it vanishes because there is no continuity with instructional staff.

There is another issue with regard to the scheduling and the lack of security, especially for qualified instructors. I think we've been lucky because we've always had qualified instructors, but how can you hold them?

Strengths and weaknesses

What would you say has been the greatest strength of your program and the greatest weakness?

Our greatest strength is that we've had consistent staffing and funding. Also, because of our visibility within the community, our program has become credible. But we've had

fragmentation in terms of other services for women, like getting a resource centre. My office is quite a ways away and our courses are held in a trailer. It's typical. Our Native Resource Centre or our Women's Program is all in trailers around the periphery. The marginal people. These are the marginal people.

We were fortunate that we got a Women's CEC. It was a regular employment office and we could do all the recruiting from there. We found there was such a fantastic difference in terms of getting the right people in the programs, the most suitable candidates.

Government is waiting for private industry to take over. But industry is there for a profit and it doesn't want to do the training.

I wish I had a problem – we don't even have a program now. That would be our greatest weakness. The greatest strength would be the experience. It has built confidence for women. To suddenly be able to use tools. To know you can do something you never thought you could do before. Look at something and figure out how to fix it.

That's the greatest irony. The thing that comes out of pre-trades and technology programs is that women gain self-confidence, the ability to go and grab something. At least they know they can do it, but the weakness is that it's not tangible. Your greatest strength becomes your greatest weakness because the government doesn't recognize that self-confidence as a measure of success.

Pat Fraser is the Women's Coordinator at Red River Community College in Winnipeg. She has been involved in women's programs for 10 years. Prior to that, she worked for 10 years with many Outreach programs for women at Red River. Her work has involved her with advocacy, advisory boards, and the instructional staff.

CHAPTER 15

Community-based training: West End Machining

Workshop coordinators
Susann Haw & Carolyn Hoevenaars

Susann and Carolyn share the story from inception to current practices, including the impact of recent changes to the funding criteria of the Canadian Job Strategy.

West End Machining started in Toronto under the LEAP or Local Employment Assistance Program. In 1971, there was a program for sole-support mothers called Opportunity for Advancement, funded under LEAP as a division of CEIC. Following that we were moved to Job Corps, then Job Development, and we are now under Job Entry.

In the beginning...

The program under Opportunity for Advancement began when board members realized staff were trying to help women look at options, training options as well as jobs, but there were no specific trades training programs for them. There was a need but no facilities. So they looked at trying to set up some type of trades training program. They were trying to figure out where they could get funding, how long the course should be, who the target group should be, and where it should be – all those things. After about a year of looking into it, they decided machining would be the best trade at that time. I stress "at that time" because, of course, as time goes along, things change. Things change in the community and you have to be willing to change with the times. If you don't, you're going to lose out.

The project actually started in 1982. Staff included a general manager and a technical assistant, someone to do the training and help the general manager with the technical side of things. They had a secretary and bookkeeper/receptionist and also one woman who did counselling with the trainees. They felt it was extremely important to have counselling. In fact it's true because, as many of us know, when you first enter something new it's very difficult and you need reassurance that what you are doing is okay. And when you are looking for work in that area you still need that kind of backup. That was what the counsellor was there for.

Those women were dependable, they were at the job every day at eight and ready to work. They were very marketable for us which is why at that time we were still able to maintain our placement rate. We have a 91 percent placement rate.

From LEAP to Job Corps

When the project began, we had ten trainees because that's the number the government was willing to fund. It wasn't a magical number or anything, just a nice easy

round number. Things went along fairly well that first year. There were some lumps and bumps but basically there weren't too many problems with the government funders. Unfortunately, a couple of years later the program went from LEAP to Job Corps. I think it's important to note that was not the choice of the project, it's just the way the government is. There are changes made from time to time and you either change with those changes or you get a new funder.

When the project went from LEAP to Job Corps, sole-support mothers were no longer the target. They were looking at employment-disadvantaged women. Many people involved with programs like ours were very, very, very upset by the change because they felt the women most in need weren't taken into account. But again, unless you were looking at other types of funding, you have to go along with the rules. So, we went along with it, we did what we could and we did make some changes. Things were all right. Not great, but all right.

From Job Corps to Job Development
Then two years later the project was moved again from Job Corps to Job Development. That's when we noticed a very big change. Unfortunately, it was a very negative change. Instead of dealing simply with people who had difficulties, we went to dealing with people who had to be unemployed 24 out of the last 30 weeks. We found a lot of women were hard-working women who couldn't afford to be laid off from their job. They weren't willing to go on welfare; they had too much pride. So they didn't qualify. Because they weren't willing to be unemployed 24 out of the last 30 weeks, they didn't get into programs such as ours. The women not only had to be unemployed that length of time, they also had to be what was called "severely employment disadvantaged." The last year of Job Development was an extremely trying time for West End Machining. Our project officer did not support the project. She made it extremely difficult for us. When we say extremely difficult we mean she was holding up our funding. Three distinct different times, there wasn't enough money to operate on. In fact, the staff went without money; we had to go without our paycheques because the money wasn't there. So, last year was quite the year – I wouldn't want to see that again.

From Job Development to Job Entry
Following that, we were moved into Job Entry. And Job Entry, thank God, is much much better. The women have to be unemployed, but there is no specific time period. They still must be part of the Severely Employment Disadvantaged group, but that's not as hard to find, you're not leaving out those women that are underemployed. The most important thing to us was to include those women, so we were able to help train them as well. Things are looking much brighter this year for West End Machining; we hope that it continues.

For those of you who are thinking of starting a similar program you're going to find it really is year-to-year. Things might be going along great this year. The funding is okay, your officer is okay, then next year something happens, changes maybe within the government, and if you want the funding from them, you have to change. It's a reality.

Teaching women on the job
I think it's important for you to know the women at West End are working in actual sub-contract work. So it's different from the community colleges, where they work on projects. It's important that what you do, you do correctly. You take your time and you do it right because we really can't afford to waste the material. And that's a good lesson, it really is, for the women, but for us as well, and for the staff. We have to project from year to year how much we're going to make in sales and then deduct that from the actual grant from the federal government. The unfortunate thing about the reality is they keep on pushing you from year to year to produce more and more. But they fail to realize that you're getting new people in year after year after year. So it's not like next year you're going to have more qualified people, you're not. You're having new people come in who still don't have any experience.

VOICE: In the area of Toronto, are there a lot of possibilities of entering those types of jobs? Is the demand strong?

Susann: We're extremely fortunate because we are having no difficulties at all in placing our trainees. We really are lucky.

VOICE: How long do trainees stay with you?

Susann: The program is currently for 10 months. The reality is many women leave at five, six, seven months. When the program was initially set up, it was 14 months. It was then cut first to 12 months then to 10 months. Partly because in our area of Toronto the economy became better and better as the years went by. So the government felt it was not necessary to keep women in the program as long. They felt we could give them the basics and send them out and let industry worry about it. And yes, it's true, but again, we have to realize some people need a little bit longer to learn, some people have a few more problems at home and they need that full length of time. They need the full 10 months or 12 months to learn. From our end of it, that's what we were concerned about and that's what we didn't want to lose.

Carolyn: One of the positive things now is we are able to negotiate with our project officer. If we have a woman in the program who needs more than the 10 months, she's willing to negotiate that she can stay up to a maximum of 12 months. But there has to be a reason.

VOICE: Do you have a waiting list?

Carolyn: Presently we do not have a waiting list. We don't have to advertise. We have a wide referral component so most of the women come through referrals.

Susann: Referrals come from the Women's Employment Centre, from CEIC, from a lot of the other women's programs. They used to come from WITT programs, now they are more like Ontario Basic Skills, places like that. Word of mouth. We've had some trainees that have been through the program and have talked to their friends, or maybe their cousin and they have come back into the program. We've even had some companies refer women. Women have gone to the company and wanted a job, and the company says, "Look, if you go to West End, get a few months under your belt, come back to us and we'll hire you." So that's good.

VOICE: Are you limited to your referral area? Can someone come from Windsor say?

Susann: If they can come every day, we don't care. We don't care where they're from.

Entrance criteria

VOICE: What are the academic requirements to get in?

Susann: They must have grade 10 math or its equivalent.

VOICE: Just math and English at the grade 10 level?

Susann: That is correct. We found if they don't have the grade 10 level, they're just not prepared for the program. Machining does involve math. That's the reality. So they've got to have that.

VOICE: Do you give them math in your program?

Susann: There is math in the program, yes. Unfortunately in the past many women have had problems with math. It didn't seem to be related to their life, they weren't going to use it. But once it's applied and you know what you are using it for, it does make a difference and it's easier to learn.

VOICE: Does this program lead to an apprenticeship in time?

Susann: Yes it does. They get so much credit depending upon how long they are in the program and how well they're progressing. It's really determined on an individual basis.

We follow up for two years, and I would say that three quarters of them are still in machining or machining-related positions. I think one of the reasons they are staying in the field is the follow-ups.

They can be exempt from the first block of their apprenticeship, the in-school portion, and they do get some hours against the practical time. But like I say, it is on a practical basis and the counsellor does assess them individually.

Carolyn: And another thing is that we're on the Self-Directed Learning Concept. Some of the women have completed more of the theory than some of the other women.

Susann: What I would like to do now is to get into the training criteria. I want to explain each of the criteria, then give you a sort of composite picture of what a trainee was like at that time. At the time of our LEAP funding the government said one third of all our trainees had to be sole-support mothers. In reality the numbers were usually higher because we believed they needed the training and we really cared about that. The rest of the trainees had to be underemployed, which means they were working at jobs such as waitressing or clerical jobs, but basically didn't have any real skill training. Or they could have been trained in another country, but lacking Canadian experience. As well, women who had been laid off due to plant closures or women who were re-entering the workforce qualified.

VOICE: Did you get many immigrant women who didn't have sufficient English to do the academic part of the program?

Susann: Quite a few women came to the program who didn't have sufficient English and we would refer them to an ESL [English as a Second Language] class. Once they could understand the work and function at the grade 10 level, they came back to the program.

VOICE: This might be quite a long time for some women. Do you think you lost people?

Susann: Sure we did. But it's like anything, there's always new projects needed, but they aren't in existence.

VOICE: Do you think it's feasible at all to run the ESL concurrently with the training or do they have to have that language first?

Carolyn: They have to be able to read our material and textbooks.

Susann: We had some women who were really bordering on the grade 10 level and we would do some tutoring. So they were helped along with that. But it's an ongoing problem, that's for sure.

Basically a typical student would be a sole-support mother, with one, two or three children. She stayed at home for a while to raise her child, and in many instances things had gone wrong in the marriage; they broke up. She was having problems getting support payments. There were hassles with the husband, all the rest of that stuff and she basically found she was all alone and she had a child to raise. She didn't have any specific skill training, she had too little money, and she didn't want to stay on welfare the rest of her life. In many instances they were actually referred to us by their welfare counsellor. A lot of these women, they liked to do crafts, they liked to work with their hands. Some of them were a little bit handy at home. Not on the level of, "Oh yeah, I've repaired this. I've built a little extra room in the basement...." It was more, "The child's bike broke, and I tried to fix it and I enjoyed trying to fix it." So these were the type of women who came into the program. We encouraged many of them to go on into apprenticeships because we felt in the long term they would probably have a better job and more security.

Job Corps. We really noticed a change from LEAP to Job Corps. I think one of the major reasons for that, again, was because the women had to be unemployed for 24 of the past 30 weeks.

We didn't agree with it. It was as simple as that. A lot of these women who came into the program at that time, had low self-esteem. In some instances it was just because of the whole life experience. In other instances it was because they had been through a difficult marriage, relationship or whatever. Some women wanted to get into something different, wanted something that would eventually earn a high wage, but they were still a little bit scared of non-traditional. They hadn't heard of it before so it was a new experience. We

found as the years went by women became more aware, simply because people talked about it more, and so they weren't as intimidated. Many of the women who came in under Job Corps had the same reasons as women who had previously come into the program. They had had low-paying jobs, or they may have been trained in another country. But as well, for the first time we were dealing with people who had more long-term problems. We had some women with criminal records or a drug or alcohol abuse problem and those were difficult things to deal with. A typical Job Corps trainee was a single woman. Some of them had non-traditional experience and some of them didn't. For those who had non-traditional experience, and that included the WITT programs and the INTO programs; it made a real difference. If they had already been exposed to something like that they weren't as intimidated by the shop, by what they were getting into. So from that end of it, it was really good and we found those women did well. Again, some of those women needed a lot of support, mainly because of what they had been through.

How does the money work?
Initially we started out with about $200,000. On top of that we were given $30,000 for capital. That was to buy machines and equipment. Since then we've had approximately a four percent increase per year, until this year. No increase this year. We've gone up from around $300,000 to $350,000 to $375,000.

VOICE: Do you own the ...?

Susann: The machines? The space, the building? We do. Initially we had to lease some equipment and we purchased some old, used equipment. A year and a half after we started up, we got another $200,000 from the government to buy more equipment. The equipment we had just wasn't enough and it wasn't running that well. If the government wanted us to increase our sales, we had to have better equipment, that was the bottom line.

VOICE: The revenue you were able to achieve as a result of your contracts – what happened to that revenue?

Carolyn: We have a total operating budget of $375,000, but $80,000 of that we have to come up with ourselves. So, if we don't come up with $80,000 of that, then our budget has to be $80,000 less....

VOICE: How many people are paid, are the women paid?

Susann: Yes, they are actually paid a wage, which is unusual for most projects.

Carolyn: We start our women at $6.24 an hour and it goes to $6.90 after five months. We did that because we had trouble with recruitment. Our women were making less money at West End than at Burger King. However if our sole-support mothers make anything over $6.24 an hour, they lose their benefits. So they don't have to take the raise. At the end of the training program, they get nine percent vacation pay plus an additional four percent. So they get a lump sum at the end which they have to declare then, but at least while they are in our program they still are receiving those benefits that are so vitally important when you are a sole-support mother.

VOICE: They still have the benefits of the medical card and so on?

Carolyn: That's right.

VOICE: How many hours a week can she work?

Carolyn: 37.5.

VOICE: So the trainees aren't receiving additional training allowance?

Susann: No, they receive a wage instead of a training allowance. There was a long discussion about that when we started out, but we've found in the long run we made the right choice. The women are training, but the work they do in the shop is sub-contract work, so it is like a job and they get paid at the end of the week for their job. So, rather than treating it like, "Oh well, I'll just take this course for a while. Who really cares...?" they look at it as a job. They go out from West End Machining into industry with the right attitude. "I have had six months of training in this field, in this

job." As opposed to, "Well, I've been to school for six months and I can do a bit of things...."

Problems with Job Development

Carolyn: I'm just going to go on to Job Development. When we were under Job Development we were in a very stressful time because we had big problems with our project officer. Suddenly, if we didn't maintain our training weeks, she was going to hold back money.

VOICE: What does that mean?

Carolyn: For example, if you had 15 women in the program for one week, it was worth 15 training weeks, and that's how much money you would get. Our budget had never been based on that before. So, suddenly we had to fill our program. The more people we had, the better. It almost got to the point where we were taking anybody who would walk in through the door. Which was wrong, but we had to maintain our budget so the other women, the women who were sincerely interested in coming into the program, would benefit. So suddenly, as I have said before, we were taking people who couldn't write the math test and spending extra time with them to help them get through. And sometimes failing with the women that we took in. We knew they weren't suited and we would fail with them, but we would take that chance.

Even women with an English problem, we would take them in. A lot of Polish women came into the program at that time. They would bring their English and Polish dictionary with them and at night they would be going to ESL classes.

At that time, under the Job Development training criteria, they had to be unemployed 24 out of the last 30 weeks. That was a problem because often people in long periods of unemployment are lethargic and have low self-esteem. These women were coming in with those problems. They had poor work ethics. Their attendance was a problem. Being there at eight o'clock was a problem, all those kinds of things were problems. They had to be unemployed for all these weeks and they had to have a barrier to employment. Problematic work habits, meaning they get fired, poor timekeeping, conflicts with their supervisors, all those kinds of things that in a regular job interview would lose you the job, at West End meant, "Come on in!..." People who had attitudinal and motivational problems, who were lethargic, had low self-esteem, had problems with family breakdown and violence. People with lack of education and training. People who had less than a grade 10 education or who were educated in another country. People with math anxiety or dyslexia. People who had spent time in a mental health treatment centre or in a correctional facility. People with functional illiteracy or a history of drug and or alcohol abuse.

Fortunately we also at that time had a lot of immigrant women from Poland who had come to Canada with their husbands. A lot of them had really good non-traditional stuff in Poland. They were highly educated. A lot of them had university. They were able to come into the program and basically do the program and get out. They were really interested in companies like DeHaviland who pay $15.00 an hour. And DeHaviland was very interested in women like that because they had excellent work ethics. Those women were dependable, they were at the job every day at eight and ready to work. They were very marketable for us which is why at that time we were still able to maintain our placement rate. We have a 91 percent placement rate.

So from that spectrum of these highly educated immigrants we had the other spectrum of women who had never held a job, went from man to man to man, had been sexually abused by their parents, a multitude of psychological problems that had to be dealt with. A lot of counselling time and a lot of individual attention had to be spent with these women. We are pleased to say that a lot of them have been successful. We were very careful when we looked at placing them. We wanted a place that would be a supportive environment for them. We have employers we know will be very understanding and lenient, yet very strict in the training. Those women have gone on, maybe not to $15.00 an hour jobs but $8.00 and $9.00 and $10.00 an hour jobs.

How people find out about the program

VOICE: Do you have to do a lot of PR work?

Carolyn: We had to, but this year I sent out a letter in May to every agency in Toronto with my business cards, saying I'm interested. We do two-day hands-on placements so if an agency has someone it thinks might like machining but is not sure, they can come to West End, spend two days ad do some hands-on stuff. If they're interested, they can make application to us. That is a real pulling factor. A lot of people said, "Hey, well why don't you just go try it if you're not really sure. I know of a place." So I have not had to advertise in the *Toronto Sun* since last April.

VOICE: You don't go and see the employers?

Susann: Initially when we first started out, yes there was quite a bit of work done. Then when the changes in government occurred, things slowed down while we concentrated on the inside of the program. Then we reached another point where we had to reach out again. We started to say to people, "Remember us?"

Carolyn: I'd say we have an average of three employers that call us weekly looking for our women. Our women really never have to go out and look. They can pick and choose. We have a wonderful relationship with the Women's Employment Centre in Toronto who often call and say, "I know of an employer. I know of openings. I know of this or I know of that." Or it might not even be machining. It might be municipal labour or aviation or firefighting. They are letting our women know about other opportunities that are non-traditional. That's a very positive thing for us too in our relationship with the Canada Employment Centre.

I'd have to say last year was definitely a year of change. We lost Susann, both Susann and Shawn had been with the program for over five years. We lost both of them last year as well as another staff member, Barbara Williams, as well as our apprentice. So suddenly, we had four full-time staff all leave within six months of each other. We hired on another project manager who knew about the government. He had been a project officer. He had been with Innovations. He had been with the school board. He had been a teacher. He had been a jeweller. A man of many trades, a very open person, but he knew the government. That's what we needed because we were having a lot of problems with the government. So this man came in as the project manager. We've also hired a graduate who was an apprentice in our program. The young black woman who was speaking in the video, Donna Paris, is now our technical trainer and technical coordinator. Then we have a secretary, and we also hired another of our graduates to work in the shop. So it was a year of change.

Now that we are under Job Entry, our project officer is wonderful. She contacts us if she knows of money that's available. She contacts us when changes are coming. We are ready for anything. Suddenly we are no longer operating under crisis management. We are operating on future planning. We are looking towards Board development. We are looking towards funding. But, you know the old saying, "The future's so bright you have to wear shades." So we're walking around with sunglasses all day.

The trainees now are younger. We are getting a lot of trainees from the Futures program. They are 18 and 19 years old. We are doing a lot of counselling around job responsibility. You have to be here every day, regardless of whether three of your friends had a party last night, you still have to be here at eight, ready for work, awake. We've had women recently that have been falling asleep at the machines because they've partied so much. So that takes a lot of individual counselling. Then there are the sole-support mothers, and then a lot of single women who are sincerely interested in the trade. They want to go on to be general machinists. So it's a wide variety. But I think the fact they no longer have to be unemployed 24 of the last 30 weeks is a big difference.

VOICE: Do they still have to be unemployed? All of them?

Carolyn: Right. They have to be unemployed or on some sort of social assistance.

If you're interested in starting a similar project, you should form a group of your own. Get people together, contact people who are

specialists in their field. Look to employers, people who would be employing your graduates. Have a group, analyze your employment market. Contact your local Canada Employment Centre because it is your local manager who will make the final decision on your proposal. Contact the Canadian Job Strategy, meet with an officer, discuss your proposal. If she feels the project is warranted she will probably help you in the writing of a feasibility study, which could last up to 10 to 12 months. Basically your feasibility study contains a market analysis, a business plan, a training plan, training criteria, your budget, those kinds of things.

Looking to the future

We are looking towards some Innovations money. We'd really like to explore CADCAM. We have all the hardware for CADCAM but not the software. So we have all this wonderful computer equipment, but no software to run it. The trainees are exploring with the PC Paint and we have a blueprint dimensional program they can work with but we'd really like to expand into CADCAM and maybe even some computer-based training where they work with the computer and do some of their modules or their blueprint testing right into the computer. And also CNC. Computerized Numeric Controls seems to be the road of the future and we'd really like to expand our machines. We have a CNC lathe but we'd like to get a CNC milling machine.

VOICE: Do you liaison with other groups who produce machinist apprentices? Community colleges, high schools, how do they feel about you?

Susann: Oh fine. We've never had any problems in the past and I think the reason for that is we're not trying to take the people who normally go into community colleges. All the women we've had in the past have been too intimidated, or they didn't like the setting. Many women have found it very difficult to go into a community college where they would be the only woman or one of a very few trying such a program. So there is no problem between us and the community colleges or with other programs.

Carolyn: Actually a lot of our women who leave West End will go into George Brown College and will follow up with CNC or CADCAM or into Humber. We have a college affiliation with members of George Brown and Humber on our Board of Directors.

VOICE: Have you found now that you're getting such a different type of student who is a lot more needy, you have had to modify your training program and is it affecting the quality of your efforts?

Susann: We definitely had to modify the training program. Every time there is a change within the government we had to change with that. What we did find was, depending upon the type of changes made and depending on the type of trainees that came into the program, the placements were different. Sometimes we seem to be placing all the people into apprenticeships or we'll be placing them at the higher end of machining. Other times we tended to be more at the lower end where people were leaving and going on to be setup operators or they were working in a non-traditional area but they may not be skill-specific.

A real commitment to the trainees

VOICE: I would assume your success and your continuing funding is based on placements, on the quantity of your results. Not so much on quality. That it's quantity not quality that matters.

Susann: But I think it's important for the project to insure the quality is there and we've always been very strong about that. I think the staff over the years has had a real commitment to the trainee. We look at the woman as an individual and try to discuss with her, "What do you like? What do you feel is comfortable? Do you like working with very exact things? Do you like working with a lot of things where nothing has to be too fussy? What kind of environment are you best suited for?" It's true the government's angle is, "Just get them through, we don't really care." But you can't let that happen.

Susann: From October 1983 to December 1987, we have placed 69 women into successful employment. Meaning they have

retained their employment for three months or more. We follow up for two years, and I would say that three quarters of them are still in machining or machining-related positions. I think one of the reasons they are staying in the field is the follow-ups. We do three month, six month, twelve month, a year and a half and two year follow-ups which is quite a bit. So we're sort of still saying, "Hey, we're still here. If you have problems or you don't like where you're working or you're having problems in your apprenticeship or don't like your course, come back to us. Come and see us in person or give us a phone call. We'll help you. We'll work with you on that. We'll make the changes. The most important thing is, don't give up. We're there to support you." That is a very very big factor. It's fine while she's in the training program, she has a supportive network while she is in the program, but once she leaves, if you don't maintain contact, sometimes that's not enough.

VOICE: Can you tell us if you know if there is another program like that for specific trades, non-traditional in Canada?

Susann: No, there isn't. This is it. Actually this was set up as a pilot project. Theoretically if the project was good, if it was succeeding at meeting its goals and objectives, the government would want to look at expanding and perhaps setting up other projects in other trades.

Carolyn: In Windsor right now they are looking at a feasibility study in training women to be printers.

Susann: Ontario is so fortunate. They are doing so well. Most of the industry is there and you look at the rest of Canada, it's not and it doesn't seem like anybody is really making major efforts to do anything about it.

VOICE: Do you support the idea of bursaries or scholarships through industry? Or are they willing to give the money?

Carolyn: Yes, we have... and what we have found is in many cases what they would rather give us is pieces of used equipment.

Susann Haw is a graduate of the 1977 WITT (WEAT) program in Haney, B.C. She then moved to Toronto and began a 10-month basic machine-shop course at George Brown College. After graduation and 60 unsuccessful attempts, Haw finally secured an apprenticeship at the University of Toronto Mechanical Engineering department, becoming the first female general machinist in Ontario. She went on to take a 64-week CADCAM course and was hired as project coordinator by West End Machining. After three years of service, she left West End to further her career at Toronto Hydro where she is now helping to maintain some 54 substations and 80 vaults.

Caroline Hoevenaars is the Coordinator of West End Machining.

CHAPTER 16

Community-based training: Working at the Bain

Workshop coordinators
Joanne Magill & Jo Lee

This workshop describes a unique arrangement between George Brown College and the Bain Housing Co-op in Toronto, where women are learning renovation skills on site. Joan Magill of the Bain and Jo Lee of George Brown describe the what, how, and how's it going.

Jo: We brought some slides along and also some photographs. Theses are four stalls in the WITT area of the college. The first 16 weeks people were in a modified WITT program – modified to the extent that the concentration was in three areas: electrical, plumbing, and construction carpentry. People worked on these stalls so the plumbing is done, and the electrical wiring is done, so that the lights go on. Some people put murals up and get a little more fancy about what they are doing. They put up the stud walls, they do the wiring, then they connect the pipes, then they put up the drywall, tape, paint or paper. They do all of that process during the 16 weeks they are at the college.

VOICE: This is before they go on the job site?

Jo: Yes, that's right.

Joanne: They get a modified WITT for the first 16 weeks at George Brown College. Because a lot of these women have never had any experience at all, they're getting the use of and instruction in tools, mathematics upgrading, life skills. Then we've added the actual hands-on component where we go out to the co-op and they start renovating the suites.

Jo: They don't get much exposure to the welding and they don't do much the metal cutting. They do some. They make their own tool box but they get a very short period of anything to do with the metal.

We've really concentrated on the introduction to hand tools, power tools, blueprint reading, basic drafting, how to read specs, and upgrading in math. They have to have grade 10 to get into the program.

A couple of women were really well motivated but didn't do a grade 10 level in their functional level test. Their motivation and their enthusiasm about the project came through when they were interviewed by people both from the Bain Co-op and the college and they agreed that these two women were likely to do well on the project anyway, and they have.

Basically what happens is the walls get used as blackboards as they rip them down so a lot of the specs get written up on the wall and the women come in to see what they have to do and then go from there.

Never enough money
VOICE: How do you fund this?

Jo: CJS. It's a Job Development general project. Although, wouldn't you know it, a couple of months ago they said, "Why didn't you apply for Innovations funding?"

One of the problems we're having with the project is that there's not enough money. Never enough money, but... the women are getting paid $300.00 a week and through the help of the Community and Social Services Ministry of the province they're getting childcare paid for plus transportation to and from the childcare. And for the women on family benefits, they also have a clothing allowance. Their boots and overalls are also covered by the project. It's hardest for the single women.

This is also under the SAR agreement. The Social Assistance Recipient agreement. So that all the women have to be on public assistance.

Joanne: They actually get $7.50 an hour for going out on this....But for the sole-support mothers who maintain... there's one mother who gets $250 a month and that way she keeps her drug card and her babysitting etc.. A lot of the other single mothers do the same thing. It keeps her employment incentive. You have an employment incentives program, support incentives, that keeps them subsidized in terms of their daycare and their travelling and clothing allowance. The single women in the project that were on general welfare basis, all they got was some money for safety equipment. Then once they were employed, they were cut off social assistance altogether.

The Bain Co-op has also kicked in some money in terms of subsidies and we're covering costs such as OHIP – health insurance – for women who are not covered through a welfare system. The co-op membership has decided they will kick in the money to pay for everyone's health insurance while they're on site. We have an emergency drug fund of petty cash, so that they can bring their prescriptions and we'll reimburse them for prescription drugs. We also have an emergency daycare fund, so if something comes up where they have emergency daycare problems we can give them money back. Now that's a pay-back system – a loan system – but it still is available to them right on site. So the co-op has been very good at adding in various kinds of supplementary kinds of costs the women need. And, you know, when you figure that every three months you're paying out $90.00 for your health care, that's a big chunk of your income so we're covering that cost while they're on site.

What is the Bain Co-op?
Jo: [Showing the slides] This is the Bain itself. The houses were built in 1913 and it's a particular style of architecture developed in England for workers. It was supported by Eaton's and some of the large corporations in the city as workers' housing. They are built around courtyards. There are 260 units. Anywhere from 50 to 60 percent of the units are subsidized and it's mostly sole-support women that are occupying those.

So the original plan had been that we would get trainees from the Bain Co-op itself who would be interested in the project. It hasn't worked out that way for a number of reasons.

Joanne: They are on a five-year plan to renovate all the suites in the total co-op. We're working on four right now. The project obviously won't be able to renovate all 260 suites but we are doing a portion of them this year and then of course if the project maintains its existence next year, we'll continue on.

VOICE: So are they provincially owned?
Jo: It's municipal. But Ontario Housing has kicked in some of the money for rehabilitation – it's just a massive renovation that has to go on, basically because it's a safety hazard. The electrical wiring is an absolute nightmare. There's stuff that's been in there since 1913 and the insulation is horse hair. It's just amazing to see this stuff come down.

Joanne: It's Tudor style. It's really, really different.

Jo: It's quite beautiful.

Joanne: And on the inside they want to maintain it as close to the original as they can.

Who's teaching these women?
VOICE: Okay, so who are the qualified tradespeople that are teaching these women?

Jo: Well, the way it's been done is there are two instructors at the college who also do the WITT programs, one is out there on site.

VOICE: Women?

Jo: And men. We have three people in the WITT program in the college – one man and two women – and it was just basically them deciding that John had a lot more background than they did to do this kind of work. So he's been the connection from the college portion out on to the Bain and there is another man, Don, who is a qualified carpenter and...

Joanne: He's got a couple of tickets and he's a superintendent on one of the major job sites. He's very good with the women. Very good. That was one of the questions I asked them before I left was, do they think it would make a difference, could they see a difference in their learning process if they had tradeswomen? They said they felt they were lucky having John and Don in terms of their philosophy and the way they work with them.

Jo: They thought it would be neat if we could have women doing it but one of the instructors they did have doing a lot of the work with them in the college portion was a woman and they said basically in terms of how things were taught and how they learned, they didn't feel that there was any difference.

Basically what happens is the walls get used as blackboards as they rip them down so a lot of the specs get written up on the wall and the women come in to see what they have to do and then go from there.

VOICE: (Directed to Joanne) So, okay, you've got these two tradespeople on the site and you're supervising them, or are you deciding...?

Joanne: No, I don't have a trades background. I've just done a lot of employment counselling in terms of developing projects that have done work with non-traditional occupations. I organize the administrative work around the project and work with the women to maintain their existence at work if crisis areas come up in their lives, with children, daycare, or funding, or minimal counselling. I have vocational employment counselling background and social work background but I've done work in developing projects and working in other kinds of skill-building training projects with both men and women.

It's kind of interesting because there's work being done, as well as classroom. They are usually broken up into teams of four and we're working on four units right now. So, there's a team over in this unit and a team in this unit and they're all working with the instructors, sort of going in a circle, keeping track of things.

"The Bain, George Brown Housing Renovators Project has significance beyond a group of women being given the opportunity to become employable. I believe that we are trying to do something important. Something rare and even shocking to those with a limited vision of the capabilities of women."

– from an article written by the women on the project

VOICE: When you get to the point of electrical installations and stuff you're getting an electrician in to see them?

Jo: Yeah. Basically what's happened with the electrical has actually created a bit of a controversy, because when it's taught in the WITT program it's not taught by a qualified electrician. So it's been a sore point within some of the tradespeople in the college about how this shouldn't be allowed – particularly when you have such safety concerns. But all the work will have to be certified by qualified people, journeypeople who have got their papers and so every stage of the work will have to be checked and okayed by somebody. They've basically been introduced to simple circuitry and have done those light bulbs as you saw and will work through that kind of thing at the Bain as well but the major wiring will be done by an electrician who will explain what's going on as he or she... there's one woman electrician in Toronto, so it's not likely

her that we'll be able to get, though it would be wonderful if we could.

Maybe what we should do is take a little step back and talk about how the project got put together and then how it's working and what we want to do next time around if we get funding to do it.

The Bain had approached George Brown College with an idea originally that they had to do this renovation work and they would like it to be a campus so all the tradespeople would be coming out. As we started to talk, however, they have an Affirmative Action Policy in place for general hiring. The idea developed from there that it would be really nice if you were able to have it be all women.

I had worked as an employment and education counsellor in a women's collective in Toronto for nine years. A lot of the feedback I was getting from clients over that period of time was that one of the problems with WITT was, you would go through this, you would get all fired up, get all motivated, and then it would all just disintegrate because you might have to wait more than six months to go into the program of your choice. So the idea had been in my head for a long time, wouldn't it be nice if you could have a program where you could have the WITT program, then immediately have people go into a trades area.

And that's basically what we did, so the first 16 weeks is this modified WITT and then they go out on site for 22 weeks. Then the last 12 weeks are spent on site again, but in specific occupations... if a woman decides she wants to go into an apprenticeship when she finishes the program then, for example, if it were carpentry, we would work more intensively to give her experience in carpentry.

Responding to the women's needs
We found, on talking to the women and getting feedback from them, that the shift from the college to the Bain itself was too abrupt. They were in school with not such a long day, not the kind of physical labour involved with going on site. And partly, the weather was such that it was incredibly difficult making that transition. So we are thinking we will do it differently next time – that right from the start they would be going out to the Bain as well as being at the college. Maybe two-and-a-half days at the college and two-and-a-half days at the Bain or perhaps, three days at the college and two days at the Bain. However it works out, we would try and introduce it right from the word go. It was unfortunate because the women were just raring to go while they were at the college. They were doing their upgrading and all this other stuff and then they get out there and it was like, "Oh my God. This is too much!" So we will certainly be making changes in that respect.

The other thing is that a number of women have indicated an interest in starting their own business, so that would be another option we will build into the last 12 weeks of the program where job-search skills and placement is part, well the real focus, of that in addition to the skills refinement. So we will have people in to talk about getting a loan, the Federal Business Development Bank people who will supply money and counselling and things like this. Also, there's an MBA program at the university and at York which has counsellors available to people who are starting up. So these are the kinds of things we'll build into the program. Basically, my department, the Community Outreach Department at the college, has about 40 community-based projects like the Bain. We have worked out a way to try and work in partnership with community organizations to provide training for women, native people, disabled people and visible minorities and immigrant women as well. This project followed the basic model. We ran into some problems because a co-op is not a traditional agency, a social service agency or community service agency that's got its own staff and its own client group, so the kind of support that exists for project managers in other areas didn't really exist at the Bain. So we've got to look at that and figure out some ways we can work with an organization that's largely voluntary and has one incredibly overworked general manager who is in charge of the Bain. The manager is supposed to handle the communication, like for Joanne, as well as deal with all the daily problems that come up around the co-op, as well as be the link for the commercial renovation crew that's also out there at the same time.

Joanne: We have 15 women as I've said. Two just started about two weeks ago. So we did have some dropouts earlier in the project.

Basically because they were finding it wasn't for them or they couldn't arrange daycare. Daycare is a big problem with our sole-support mothers. So, 15 women, eight of those are single. Seven are sole-support mothers. Out of seven, three women have three children they're supporting. Two of those women travel a good hour in from out of town coming to work. I'm always amazed at their motivation and energy levels. There are two with two children and one with one child. The background of employment and skill area of these women range from previous office work, graphic art, labouring, childcare workers, the whole gamut of backgrounds. We have two native women on the project, two black women. Our ages range from 19 to 40.

How the women view the project
One of the other things I'd like to share with you in terms of how the women view the project through their own eyes is: an article was written by the women on the site for *Links*, a paper that reports on community-based training programs. They had been portrayed in a college newsletter, previous to this article being written, as stigmatized welfare women who now have been given this opportunity: "Gee, look at what we are doing for them!" – sort of a typical stigmatization that we put on the welfare scenario. When they read that article, they were quite peeved, to say the least. They said, like, "So we're on assistance. So what? We have to do that to survive." They wanted to portray themselves in a different way, so they wrote this article. I'll read it to you. It gives you an idea how they feel.

I'm always amazed at their motivation and energy levels.

"The Bain, George Brown Housing Renovators Project has significance beyond a group of women being given the opportunity to become employable. I believe that we are trying to do something important. Something rare and even shocking to those with a limited vision of the capabilities of women.

"A relative of mine told me last year as I began to contemplate goals for my future in a non-traditional job market, that women are not capable of the logic required for a career in trades and technology. Needless to say, I don't agree. Women are capable but largely are lacking in exposure, education, and experience. At the moment I am catching up on the education that was my right as a child but denied me because of my gender.

"I personally feel that it's a great tragedy that there are those who can only justify a program of this nature as a vehicle to get women off of welfare. We are then portrayed as once 'losers' and now winners. The reality is that we are a very diversified group. We live in varying circumstances. Many of us are single parents. We do not have a support network surrounding us. Our education ranges from high school to post-secondary and some members possess talents in the arts. We are not underachievers, but fighters. Given a chance we will be successful in any endeavour we choose to work at.

"We are women interested in doing something non-traditional and there are many more like us. I think that it is a moral responsibility of government to provide this type of education not only to women on welfare but to all women who want to do something non-traditional.

"Participating in this program is my way of effecting change in the way society views women. I believe that by doing this I am creating a positive role model. Not only for my daughter and sons but for the adults of the future as well as the adults of today."

This was written by one of the women and endorsed by the rest of them.

Who works for this project?
VOICE: Have the women already decided with a fairly informed kind of decision-making process that trades is a place where they belong? The experience I've had working with re-entry women is that a social worker says to them, "If there is a program starting up at the college, go up and check it out." And there is a lot of coercion, subtle or otherwise to go into that project whether or not they want to be what the project is training them for. And I wondered, before they were actually in the project, if you had some career counselling or career explorations, because it sounds like

these people had made their decisions some time before they went and that was the thing they wanted to do.

Jo: The way it worked was, like any CJS project, the counsellors had to refer women to the project. The initial attraction for a lot of the counsellors was that they were getting paid $300.00 a week and that is the highest wage rate there is in Toronto for any project. It's probably the most expensive project in the city as well. However, because of the interview situation, with people from the Bain and the woman who teaches the WITT program in the college being part of the interview team, if a woman came and was clearly there because of her CEC counsellor or her ESI worker (Employment Support Initiatives, a provincial ministry initiative to assist women who are on social assistance to getting back to work), it became pretty obvious early on in the interview. So people were counselled not to go into that program, unless they were at least open.

We didn't ask people to make a commitment to the trades but as long as they were interested in exploring it, then they were admitted to the project after they had done the functional level test at a certain level. Because again, we had to keep in mind that this was a pilot project and so we are scrutinized in a way that we won't be as the project develops, if it is developed. Partly we had to satisfy a lot of different people.

We said that if it were an ideal world and an ideal situation, all the women who were interested could go through the WITT component and then could go off in a whole bunch of different directions after the end of that rather than concentrating in these three trades areas. We concentrate in those three areas because of who our partner in the program is and what their requirements are.

What are these women's prospects?
VOICE: This is the sort of query that would come from this conference of tradeswomen: we have some concern about women getting into courses and becoming handywomen. You come out of those courses and are still at the bottom of the labour market where we get to take the worst men's jobs. I'm wondering, how is it going in terms of women starting their apprenticeship? Are there people waiting for your graduates to put them into apprenticeship programs and do they get some credit for the time they're there? And how much credit do they get?

Jo: Well, it's not that good. What we had originally hoped for in putting the project together was that we could actually count the hours towards an apprenticeship. I contacted the three joint apprenticeship counsellors in those areas and the best response I had was from the Electricians Union, in which the president of the council said, "I would like to be seen as interested in this project, because I'd like to be seen to be doing something for women before it becomes mandatory." I wasn't particularly happy with that response. They didn't care if they were doing something, they just wanted to be seen to be doing something. But that was the best response, the others were worse. These are the people who are going out into the high schools and talking about trades to young high school kids.

We are hoping the advisory committee to the program is going to have this guy on it. Once he goes out to the project and sees what the women are actually doing and what they're accomplishing, it might turn him around. We are hoping it will be considered a pre-apprenticeship program and that the women will go on to apprenticeships.

It was also unique, because under CJS there are no stipulations that a project should encourage women to go into apprenticeship but we were able to get that accepted as one of the main objectives of the program. Usually CJS wants people to be employed at the end of it. With this project they agreed that anybody who went on to an apprenticeship after the project is considered a success. So there will be work done with it, but again it's very difficult to know at this point how many women will actually be interested in doing it – given again the realities of a lot of their lives. How are they going to be able to support themselves and their dependants as an apprentice?

The other option we are going to be checking out is the Individually Subsidized Job [ISJ] options under Job Development. So if we have an employer, who is hopefully a woman, she might be able to take on an apprentice and be subsidized for the woman's wages. So we might be able to continue support longer than would otherwise be possible.

VOICE: I think it would be really good to if you could find an interested tradeswoman to come out and teach in conjunction with some of the men. I think it would be really neat to have tradeswomen out there teaching it totally.

Jo: One of the other problems is that the pay is too low – I mean the regular college hourly rate. I made some enquiries in the beginning and we were told people are not going to work for that when they can get twice that. And again, one of the tradeswomen I talked to said, "Maybe in five or 10 years time when I've had a chance to get some money together, I'll be able to go back and do something like that. But I'm still trying to pay back for my education and I can't afford to do that right now." She wouldn't be a college employee so she wouldn't be getting paid that rate. She would be getting paid the hourly instructional rate which would be anywhere from $25.00 to $30.00 an hour and she said that was too low. She was making a lot more than that.

VOICE: Is this in Toronto? Because it's not like that anywhere else.

Jo: Well, it's low for a plumber in Toronto to make $60.00 an hour.

VOICE: Doing this in Toronto, I'm just flabbergasted that you're pulling it off.

Jo: We wouldn't have done it if it hadn't been for our project officer at EIC. I usually go around screaming and ranting about the CJS, but this project officer is great from the word go. She said, "I don't care what it takes. I think this is dynamite. I'm going to get it through."

VOICE: So do you have success criteria – how many people have to be working and...?

Jo: Not now. I mean, you always find out those things after the fact, don't you? With the election now, everything is up in the air, so who knows what's going to happen. But no, basically the idea was that some of the women would go on to apprenticeships, some would be employed, and a certain number might go in a very different direction – maybe a more traditional job or maybe back on to public assistance because of the ages of the children and some of the other problems they're having to deal with.

How can anyone afford to do this?
VOICE: So with the job situation in Toronto right now and considering the cost of living, if these women are interested in continuing along the same lines of work, what are your feelings about them getting a job and do you think $7.00 an hour would be the bottom line, that they would be making more than that?

Jo: They might be making a little bit more but I think the quality of the training they are getting is that much higher than a lot of people's to start out with. It's very intensive and they do have that combination of the theoretical and work that somebody who has done a different kind of training won't have.

VOICE: Well, can you live in Toronto making $7.00 an hour? If $6.00 an hour is $1,000.00 a month at the most... $7.50 an hour, I mean you can't live with a child on that in B.C. So how can this possibly pay...?

Joanne: No, the only reason most of these women can is because they're in subsidized housing, they're getting support for childcare. But that's what I'm saying: the minute they have become totally employable at $7.50 an hour, they will not.

VOICE: What is rent like for a single parent... well, even without subsidy, what's it like?

[T]he quality of the training they are getting is that much higher than a lot of people's to start out with. It's very intensive and they do have that combination of the theoretical and work that somebody who has done a different kind of training won't have.

Joanne: I would say $600.00 to $700.00 is the normal range and up for a one-bedroom apartment.

There are so many disincentives really, for people to work that it's really a Catch 22 kind of situation. The one program that offers some hope to a lot of people is ESI, which is doing a lot in terms of transportation, and childcare subsidies. The problem with it is that it's up to each ESI counsellor to decide whether the training satisfies her, not whether it satisfies the client or woman. So a woman could go, and her ESI counsellor could say, "Why do you want to go and do that kind of dirty work? I'm not going to approve of you doing this kind of training. I don't like it." So it wasn't until we went to the supervisor that we were able to put pressure on them and say to them, "You have to sign this. This is what this woman wants to do."

VOICE: Which includes how long a program?

Jo: Fifty weeks.

VOICE: When they are earning this $7.50 an hour, doesn't that make them eligible for UIC at the end? Okay, now how does that impact on their childcare? I mean, once you collect some UIC, Social Services doesn't want to look at you, and making the transition from UIC is not an easy one. We had that happen with one of our participants this year and it was catastrophic because it got to the point where we were at the food bank.

Jo: The women get $250 a month while they are in the program and while they are on UI to keep their file open. So they never go off. So they don't run into that problem every three months to get back on. So what they do, and again we are really lucky with a lot of these ESI counsellors because they'll keep her on even when she's working so that if after six months she's still on, then it will be closed. But there is that realization that you're going to be on the job after six months and then find that you just can't afford to do it and be right back getting family benefits. There won't be that kind of situation.

If it's possible in Ontario, it might be possible in other places. Very often, working with these counsellors, you say, "Why are you saying this, because somebody else is doing it this way," and they say, "Oh really, give me that worker's name." They wouldn't know. They'd phone and find out, yeah, there is another way of doing it and then they would make a very different decision.

VOICE: I know you are still in the very honeymoon stages of the program, but what is your problem with absenteeism?

Joanne: Ninety percent of our absenteeism is totally legitimate. Normally it's health problems with the children. One of our women had to leave the other day, and was out for a couple of weeks because her child was put in the hospital with pneumonia. Actually, the sole-support mothers, I am amazed at what they will do to get to work every day. I have more problems with single women.

We have some women with some real personal problems that need outside resources in place, but aren't maybe willing to deal with them right now, and that causes some to not show up or get depressed or whatever comes with that. So there are times when we are rolling right along, no problems, and there are other times when it really shows up.

Joanne: Near the end you'll start having dropouts because people start getting paranoid about its coming to an end. Your participants start panicking because they know the end is coming and figure, "that's it, I don't want to deal with any new phase." The end is coming." Those of us involved in the educational process can start preparing for termination, even a couple of months before termination happens, to make that transition. Ask them how they are feeling about the ending coming. It's a very, very typical process that every project, or a lot of training situations go through.

Heading towards self-employment

VOICE: Something really positive you mentioned before is that some of these women are interested in self-employment. I think you've really got something there and I think somehow you have to give them the business, the accounting skills, estimating, like these women will never learn estimating on this job and you don't learn it in a school situation. You learn it from experience.

Jo: They went and bought their own tools in the beginning of the project so there was at least that exposure. And there were three quotes done so they could look and see what the varying price was....

VOICE: If they could get together, because self-employment with a group of three or four sounds good to me, if they can get it all together, they can take care of their childcare, they can take care of their wages, they can...

Jo: What I think, though, and this is what the woman who has left now raised, and I have concerns about it, is what level of skills do they have now after 50 weeks? It's so short.

VOICE: Is there any way that somebody without their ticket, without belonging to labour unions, can find work?

Jo: Oh, yes.

VOICE: It depends on the trades. Like some trades are proficiency. Some are called vocation trades and therein lies the difference. A carpenter can go and work without papers, but an electrician cannot go and work without papers and that's what makes the difference.

VOICE: There are things that can be done with women that have basic skills, absolutely basic skills and eventually they can get somebody in there with their papers. Maybe one of the three or four women can get their papers. That's how these things start. EMBLA started in Winnipeg, they didn't have a journeywoman carpenter, so they hired a man. Eventually women were coming out with their papers.

VOICE: They had five registered carpenters through their company and they've all spun out from there to other jobs.

VOICE: These women can put in playgrounds. They can build kids' furniture. They don't have to know anything more than this basic stuff.... Like what they are getting with you people is confidence, a vision that they can see....

Jo: Joanne and I had met with the women, and when we go back, they want to know how we did in the workshop and what people wanted to know and what people think about the project. So we'll do a report back with them.

Joanne: The other thing, too, is that after the first couple of sessions that I've sat in on, the panel discussions, I thought to myself, "If the women had to come out here, I know for a fact they would have changed their mind about wanting women tradesmen teaching them." I know that for a fact because I feel it even stronger now. That's no discredit to the two instructors that are there. They might not say there is a difference, but once they got a woman in there they would.

Jo Lee is the acting chair of the Outreach Committee of George Brown Community College in Toronto. She began as a consultant in the outreach department and is currently working with the Bain Rehabilitation project.

Joanne Magill is the project manager onsite at the Bain. She oversees the administration of the project and works with the women around counselling issues.

Employment Equity

FOREWORD

Employment Equity: Facts about the Act

Presented by
Marcia Braundy

In this brief introduction, Marcia discusses the Employment Equity Act of 1986, its effects and its implications.

In 1986,the Employment Equity Act was proclaimed. It gave two and a half years to federally regulated employers with 100 or more employees (those in transportation, communications, and banking, which cross provincial lines, for the most part) and crown corporations to begin to report publicly and annually on the makeup of their workforce. It required reporting with specific reference to hirings, terminations, promotions, salary levels and occupational categories of the four designated groups: women, aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and persons with disabilities.

In consultation with employees' representatives, the employer must identify and eliminate employment barriers against members of the designated groups. They must institute positive policies and practices and reasonable accommodations to ensure representation of these groups at least proportionate to their representation in the workforce, including special measures necessary to correct the effects of past discrimination.

A plan must be developed and retained by the employer for three years past the last effective date of the plan, and a report must be filed on or before June 1 of each year, starting in 1988, certified accurate by the Chief Executive Officer of the company.

The report is analyzed by Employment and Immigration Canada, and a copy of the report is sent to the Canadian Human Rights Commission for review.

The role of Employment and Immigration is to analyze and synthesize the reports, and provide a aggregate summary, by

In 1986, the Employment Equity Act was proclaimed. It gave two and a half years to federally regulated employers with 100 or more employees (those in transportation, communications, and banking, which cross provincial lines, for the most part) and crown corporations to begin to report publicly and annually on the makeup of their workforce.

industrial sector, of all the reports to parliament and the public. This summary was tabled in Parliament in December, 1988. It is now available in libraries across the country.

EIC provides consultative services to assist companies under the act, as well as those companies who have chosen to implement voluntary Employment Equity. These services include assistance with workforce analysis and self-identification questionnaires, setting targets, developing action plans, and general advising.

EIC also administers the Treasury Board policy of contract compliance that requires federal contractors with 100 or more employees and federal contracts in excess of $200,000 to sign an agreement to implement Employment Equity. Although the contractors do not have to report to Parliament, they can be audited at any time, and if found in non-compliance with the agreement, they can lose the right to bid on federal contracts.

This program and its criteria are presently under review, and it looks as if they might lower the required employee and dollar amounts, as well as including construction, grants and contributions which are now exempt. This program currently covers approximately 900,000 workers. One hundred and thirty-five of 1162 contractors are under now under review, and so far two have been cited for non-compliance.

Although the federally regulated companies had two and a half years to modify their workforces before their first reports were due, most did nothing until shortly before the reports were due, then scrambled to get their workforce analysis together. 371 companies submitted reports, 97 percent of those required to do so, covering approximately 600,000 employees.

An examination of the reports shows that hiring and promotion practices by some of the country's largest employers continue to favour white able-bodied men. Women, who comprise the largest category of the four target groups, continue to lag behind. Aboriginal women and women with disabilities are the most severely employment disadvantaged groups.

Although women are entering senior management in small numbers, for the most part, they are white able-bodied women, and visible minority women and women with disabilities continue to be underrepresented in the workforce as a whole.

To be effective, employment equity for women must include equal pay for work of equal value; occupational choice, as pay equity only covers a small segment of the workforce; accessible child care; and increased training opportunities. For natives, it must include policies shaped to geographic and cultural differences; for visible minorities, it means a commitment against racism and a method for assessing foreign qualifications, and for disabled people, it means the provision and use of aids to ensure accessibility.

CHAPTER 17

Employment Equity

Keynote speaker
Shelagh Day

Shelagh Day, former director of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and human rights activist, reflects on the issues.

Systemic discrimination
What we have learned in the last twenty years is that discrimination against women is systemic. It is widespread, persistent, and entrenched in the ordinary operations of all the institutions of our society. Centuries of discrimination against women have made it normal. If an institution does nothing to root out the discrimination that is entrenched in its operations it will, in the normal course of things, discriminate against women. No employer has to work at discriminating against women. It comes naturally.

Let's look at the case of CN Rail, which provides an example of how systemic discrimination works.

In 1977 Action Travail des Femmes learned that there were entry-level jobs at CN Rail which were often available. ATF is a Montreal women's organization dedicated to helping women find "non-traditional" work, and it began referring women to CN Rail.

The jobs women applied for required no special qualifications. They applied for positions as brakemen, checkers, bridge and building labourers, track maintainers, signal helpers, coach cleaners and engine cleaners.

The women were discouraged at the employment office or interviewed in a discriminatory way. Physical tests were given to women which were not given to men. Tests were administered which tended to screen out women, although the skills being measured were not clearly related to the jobs for which the women were applying. Welding experience was required for positions in which it was not needed.

Canadians have been so concerned about being nice, about avoiding backlash, that we have programs with no frontlash. As a result, employers have been able to avoid change and women and minorities are still dealing daily with discrimination which is illegal but untouched.

Some of the women who passed the tests still did not get hired, and some of the women who did get hired were sexually harassed. Some women were hired after they filed Human Rights complaints. At the time when these

women were applying women held 0.2 percent of the blue-collar jobs at CN Rail in the Quebec region.

This pattern of exclusion and discrimination at CN Rail is not the exception, it is the rule. This is the way Canadian workforces are for women. Where there are large numbers of "non-traditional" jobs, the numbers of women are minuscule. And where there are large numbers of "traditional" jobs the numbers are high. In neither group do women figure significantly in senior positions or at the highest salary levels.

Almost any workforce in Canada, large employer or small, public employer or private, will show us these patterns. The fact that discrimination against women is systemic is now widely acknowledged in Canada, as is the fact that discrimination against other groups – native peoples, people of colour, and disabled people – is also systemic. It is no longer a radical statement, but an accepted truth. In the last 10 years the reports of Parliamentary Commissions, Committees, Inquiries and Task Forces which have documented the systemic discrimination against these groups have piled up, and it has become clear that achieving equality in Canada requires fundamental changes in the ordering of our society. Achieving equality requires breaking current narrow patterns of privilege, creating different and more various institutions, and redistributing wealth and power.

Achieving equality requires breaking current narrow patterns of privilege, creating different and more various institutions, and redistributing wealth and power.

Understanding all of this has led us to two conclusions:
1) this discrimination cannot be dealt with through individual complaints;
2) the onus should not be on the victims of this discrimination to correct it.

Both of these underline central flaws in our Human Rights system. Let's take them in order.

First of all, the systemic discrimination which we have identified cannot be eliminated by dealing with it on a one-by-one, case-by-case basis. It does not happen on a one-by-one, case-by-case basis, and to be asked to deal with it that way is rather like being asked to dismantle a mountain with tweezers.
This means our Human Rights system, as it has traditionally operated, is ill-suited to the task of dealing with discrimination as we understand it in the 1980s. Clearly one cannot identify persistent patterns of inequality for women, aboriginal peoples, people of colour, and disabled people throughout the Canadian Labour force and then recommend that to achieve equality the victims of discrimination should each go and file an individual complaint with their local Human Rights Commission. Yet the individual complaint model is still at the centre of our Human Rights system.

Progressing?
Although we are making some progress in changing the target of our Human Rights law enforcement from individual discrimination to class or systemic discrimination, it is rather like turning a tanker at sea: very slow. Human Rights Commissions will generally agree that systemic discrimination which disadvantages whole groups of people is our most significant equality problem. But Human Rights Commissions have not yet altered their own systems to allow them to address it more effectively. The Federal and the Ontario Commissions are perhaps the furthest along in the path towards change, but in general we can still say that Canadian Human Rights Commissions are not yet able to identify systemic complaints readily, investigate them in a sophisticated manner, or present them well before tribunals and courts. Officers are not yet trained to investigate systemic discrimination, and the statistical and conceptual capacity to deal with system-wide complaints is not yet present.

Complaint-based mechanisms
The second conclusion we have come to is that the onus should not be on the victims to eliminate systemic discrimination. But a complaint-based system, which is what our Human Rights law is, requires the victim of discrimination to "kick start" it. Without a complainant, nothing happens. The effective assumption of the complaint-based mechanism is that if the inequality is important enough, the victim will complain. Only the discrimination complained of requires redress; any other discrimination is insignificant.

A complaint-based system assumes what we have now is equality, and it is the lapses from it which will be complained of and then remedied. Since it is unfortunately not the case that what we have now is equality, the present Human Rights system is, at bottom, false in its description of the society in which we live.

It is clear that placing the burden of correcting discrimination on the victim of it is onerous and unfair. The victims of discrimination are vulnerable and often do not survive the complaint process with their jobs or their dignity intact.

Despite this, Canadian Human Rights Commissions have not moved to use their power to initiate complaints. Human Rights law allows commissions to initiate complaints and, in addition, gives them a positive duty to ensure compliance with the law, but commissions in the main have not used this power.

We have not yet achieved the wide introduction of programs or the enforcement of program goals and timetables which is necessary to successfully breaking barriers for women and opening opportunities for them.

The principal reason for this, I believe, is that commissions are reluctant to be active; they perceive themselves not as obligated by that positive duty to secure compliance, but as brokers between discriminators and self-identified victims. As long as they perceive themselves this way, they will not initiate complaints.

This is particularly inappropriate when we are attempting to address systemic discrimination because when we have information about the patterns of discrimination in a workforce we do not need individual victims to identify the discrimination, although we may need them as witnesses. More than that, the victims of systemic discrimination are not always in the best position to identify it, since they see only an individual corner of it and may not be able to identify the systemic pattern as a whole.

Women and other equality seekers simply should not have to carry the burden of eradicating discrimination against them which is illegal. Law enforcement programs should be working on women's behalf to accomplish this, and employment systems which do not meet Canadian standards of equality should be required to correct themselves.

Affirmative action
It is for these reasons that at the same time as using and trying to improve the Human Rights system, women and other equality seekers, joined by Human Rights experts, unions, and some Human Rights Commissions, have struggled to obtain the introduction of Affirmative Action programs in Canada. Only by moving away from the one-by-one, case-by-case model, only by lifting the burden from the victims, only by analyzing systems as a whole, and only by requiring employers to transform their workforces, can the problems of systemic discrimination be effectively addressed.

Our history with affirmative action in Canada is a wobbly one. We have not yet achieved the wide introduction of programs or the enforcement of program goals and timetables which is necessary to successfully breaking barriers for women and opening opportunities for them.

One of the reasons we haven't is that governments have wanted to introduce affirmative action programs only on a voluntary basis. They have attempted to persuade us that employers would engage in transforming their policies and practices and in opening new work opportunities for women on a voluntary basis, and this would be "nicer."

The first programs were introduced in the 1970s after the Royal Commission on the Status of Women report identified that governments were discriminating in their employment practices. Some municipal governments and school boards also had programs, usually called Equal Employment Opportunity programs. These early programs were determinedly not affirmative action programs. Goals and timetables were considered a dangerous American idea. The effort of these programs was just to establish the same treatment for everyone. That, it was thought, would do the trick. Women and minorities should not receive any special treatment to try to compensate for the effects of decades of discrimination. That, it was thought, would be discriminatory.

This kind of thinking is revealed in the evidence presented in the CN Rail case. In the early '70s an internal report, called the Boyle Kirkman Report, was done at CN Rail on employment practices at CN. That report found women were only four per cent of the total CN workforce. It documented discriminatory attitudes, a lack of management commitment to change, and a need for standardized job specifications. It recommended special recruiting of women, and a comprehensive program with established targets for improvement. However, CN Rail did not agree with setting specific name and number targets for hiring, as the report recommended, so no goals were set and no comprehensive program was undertaken. Some steps were taken, but in the face of the entrenched systemic discrimination evident in the statistics and from the report, we cannot be surprised that these steps did not solve the problems.

More recently, some voluntary programs have been more sophisticatedly conceived. They have included goals and timetables and monitoring schedules. Some of them are being successful.

Despite this, we have to say that the record of voluntary programs in Canada has been a dismal failure. Voluntary programs simply do not show results in the vast majority of cases, and they have not been introduced widely enough to have the impact on women's work opportunities and conditions that is needed.

There are a number of reasons why voluntary programs haven't worked. Let me simply list them.

1. They have no money behind them. Canadian employers have wanted them to be cheap, if not free.

2. They have no commitment behind them. Public employers, in particular, have been pressured into having programs by women and minorities. Many of these public employers have been motivated in adopting programs by the political need to appear to be doing something for these groups. No commitment to make real change has been demonstrated.

3. Those responsible for the programs have not had the authority to make real change. Often the positions of Equal Employment Opportunity Officer or Affirmative Action Manager have been given to junior employees who, no matter how good they are, are incapable of moving the pieces which must be moved to make a transformational program work. Too often the hiring of an Affirmative Action Officer *is* the program. "There you are, dear. There's your office. You're interested in the equality stuff. See what you can do." Too often the positions have been located in the public service commissions or personnel departments, where resistance to change is intense because these departments have shaped the very policies which will require change, and program managers vanish into the maw of personnel departments.

4. There is real resistance to change, as well as the weight of inertia, and managers of voluntary programs have no tools to counter that resistance. There are no real incentives to managers and supervisors and workers to change, and many incentives to resist.

And this is really the final point:
5. No shoe drops when the program shows no results. If nothing happens, nothing happens, and it is simply naive to think that the fundamental restructuring of jobs and pay, which eradicating systemic discrimination implies, can be done by sweet agreement, with no resistance, without enforcement behind it.

Canadians have been so concerned about being nice, about avoiding backlash, that we have programs with no frontlash. As a result, employers have been able to avoid change and women and minorities are still dealing daily with discrimination which is illegal but untouched.

Too often the positions have been located in the public service commissions or personnel departments, where resistance to change is intense because these departments have shaped the very policies which will require change.

Experience with affirmative action has shown us voluntary programs don't work. The federal government, after 15 years of employment programs for women, has just set up another committee to try to find out what the problems are. Canadian universities which have been scrutinized by women faculty and faculty associations in numerous reports, which have had committees and recommendations and further reports, show no change in the representation of women in faculty positions. It was about 14 percent 17 years ago and it is about 14 percent now. The City of Vancouver, which has had an Equal Employment Opportunity program for about eight years, admitted a few months ago there has been little change in its workforce patterns in that time. The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, after almost 10 years of working intensively with voluntary affirmative action programs, concluded recently that voluntary programs in Saskatchewan are simply not showing results.

The voluntary programs themselves do not show results because there is no requirement that they do, and programs being introduced voluntarily means there is a program here and a program there, but no spread of programs blanketing the labour force so that women and minorities can be assured of equality in employment wherever they work.

Mandatory programs

Women and minorities have known for some time that voluntary programs cannot address the massive inequities in the Canadian labour force. They pressed for a royal commission on equality in employment in Canada and that commission, the Abella Commission, found in October of 1984 that mandatory affirmative action programs are necessary in Canada. The Abella Report drew the circle widely in describing the systemic discrimination which requires attention. The pay systems which penalize women, the lack of accessible childcare, the resistance to women entering trades and "non-traditional" jobs, the inaccessibility for disabled persons of transportation systems and buildings, the inadequate education and inappropriate training provided to native peoples, the lack of language training for immigrants, were all identified as barriers to equality. And the inescapable conclusion, given the scope of the problems the Abella Report documented, was that achieving equality in Canada requires mandatory affirmative action measures.

In response to the Abella Report and its recommendations, the federal government introduced an Employment Equity Act in 1985. This act required federally-regulated businesses, about 10 percent of Canadian employers, to report annually, starting June 1, 1988, on the composition of their workforces by sex, race, and disability. Nothing else is required by this act. Employers are not required to have affirmative action programs. The legislation suggests what elements should be in a program if an employer has one, but employers are not required to have affirmative action programs and, if they don't, no shoe drops. If nothing happens, nothing happens.

When this law was introduced women and minorities protested, loudly and jointly. The good news was that women's groups and organizations representing people of colour and disabled people worked together, sharing information and resources, organizing joint press conferences and meetings with Flora MacDonald, and, in the process, an alliance was forged which has lasted and deepened.

The bad news, however, is they were unsuccessful in changing the Employment Equity Act. Flora MacDonald told us the mere publication of the data would provide an incentive to employers to improve their employment records. Women's response was skeptical. In Saskatchewan employers with affirmative action programs had been reporting annually on their workforce profiles in public meetings to which the media and interested groups were invited for some years. This public reporting had no appreciable effect on the rate of change in the employers' workforce practices. In addition, the publication of the data, with the exception of a condensed report to parliament, consists of placing the data received from employers in 250 libraries across Canada. Many of you will know what these workforce profiles are likely to look like. Pounds of pages of computer paper whose meaning will be difficult to determine. The likelihood of these masses of obscure computer data generating sufficient public disapproval of the discriminatory practices of Canadian employers merely by the fact of their being available in your local library seems fanciful.

We have established that discrimination is identified by effect not intent, and that the same treatment does not always produce equality of results.

Canadian uman Rights Commission

Flora MacDonald also told us that if further enforcement were needed, the Canadian Human Rights Commission could initiate complaints based on the data, and the prospect of complaints would further motivate employers to effect change.

This was so clearly not what was recommended or needed. Affirmative action programs were not required, and in order to ensure that they were introduced where needed, it might well be necessary to go after it one employer at a time, on a complaint-by-complaint basis. Even if the commission initiated the complaints, this was clearly not an efficient or just mechanism for women still struggling to gain equality.

It was some comfort, however, that this might lead to improvement in the Federal Commission's, and in others' by following along, handling of systemic discrimination complaints, and require the commission to take a more active role by initiating complaints. It is clear, from the American experience, that successful systemic complaints, which have cost American employers millions of dollars in back pay and compensation, have made employers want affirmative action programs. There is an incentive to have a tough affirmative action program if not having one can bring penalties.

[T]he Canadian Human Rights Commission could initiate complaints based on the data, and the prospect of complaints would further motivate employers to effect change.

When Max Yalden, the new Chief Commissioner, was appointed in early 1988, he said he would like to see the Commission take a more active and activist role against systemic discrimination. "The Canadian Human Rights Act does, after all, empower the commission to launch complaints on its own initiative," said Yalden. "If we can detect reasonable grounds to think that there is a systemic type of discrimination, we should go on the offensive and try to do something about it." It seemed then at least that the Employment Equity Act could lead to improvements in handling of systemic complaints at the federal level and that the commission was prepared to do that.

And so three years ago women and minorities did not get mandatory affirmative action programs, but rather mandatory statistics reporting, with the promise of commission-initiated complaints to spur employers on. And then there was a three-year wait for employers to report their data.

Federally regulated employers and crown corporations with 100 employees or more began reporting as required on June 1, 1988. Also on June 1, 1988, the Canadian Human Rights Commission issued its operational procedures for ensuring compliance with employment equity. This procedures manual, which women's groups were not informed was being developed and were not consulted on, states that once the commission has analyzed the data with employers who show possible problem areas, the commission will initiate a voluntary review. The commission will invite employers to engage in this voluntary review with the commission and to agree to voluntary goals and timetables and to commission monitoring. In the commission's press release announcing the new procedures, Max Yalden, the Chief Commissioner, is quoted saying:

> "As far as possible we will work with employers on a voluntary basis, because we think that's the best and fastest way to bring about results."

The procedures manual indicates, however, that the commission would be required to investigate a third-party complaint.

This is a stunning reversal. And in the face of our 15 years of experience with voluntary affirmative action programs in Canada it is either profoundly naive or profoundly cynical. It ignores the fact that voluntary programs which have no mandatory requirement to produce results have not produced results, and it throws the burden back on women and other equality seekers to file complaints and bring mandatory affirmative action programs into existence as remedies through the complaint process.

What course to take?

What, then, is the appropriate course for women and minorities now? I suggest the following:

1. Women should lobby both the government and the Canadian Human Rights Commission to obtain their recommitment to the initiation of complaints without delay where the now reported statistics show underrepresentation.

2. Women must decide where strategic complaints should be filed against employers, and we should file them.

The burden should not be on the victims of discrimination, we have agreed, to eradicate the discrimination against them. But when the burden still is on women to advance our equality, and I'm afraid it still is, then we must push for the law to be enforced to the extent of its capacity. Right now that means learning to read the pounds of computer data that will shortly be filed in 250 libraries across Canada, and acting on what is there. Now, it is not women acting alone, but organizations like this one which can be effective in initiating complaints.

Canadian Human Rights Law has never been enforced to the extent of its capacity. This is the moment, in my view, for women to demand that complaints of systemic discrimination be processed, and for women to be active initiators of complaints. The climate in the courts is as good as it has ever been. Many of the principles necessary for success with systemic discrimination claims have been established in Human Rights case law. We have established that discrimination isidentified by effect not intent, and that the same treatment does not always produce equality of results. Also, in the CN Rail case, we established the most significant milestone. The tribunal which heard the CN Rail case ordered CN Rail to change many employment practices which were found to be discriminatory. In addition it ordered CN Rail to hire one woman in every four new hirings until the representation of women reached 13 percent. CN Rail contested that remedy and appealed it all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. That court found the hiring quota was both a

legal and an appropriate remedy in the circumstances. The Chief Justice wrote:

> "To render future discrimination pointless, to destroy discriminatory stereotyping and to create the required critical mass of target group participation in the workforce, it is essential to combat the effects of past systemic discrimination. In so doing, possibilities are created for the continuing amelioration of employment opportunities for the previously excluded group. The dominant purpose of employment equity programmes is always to improve the situation of the target group in the future.... [S]ystemic remedies must be built upon the experience of the past so as to prevent discrimination in the future. Specific hiring goals ... are a rational attempt to impose a systemic remedy on a systemic problem."

To render future discrimination pointless, to destroy discriminatory stereotyping and to create the required critical mass of target group participation in the workforce, it is essential to combat the effects of past systemic discrimination.

Women must continue to press for mandatory affirmative action programs by every means possible – through lobbying, educating, and voting. But this is also an important moment to use the courts to spur the process on, and to ask the courts to give equality rights their full recognition and effect.

Shelagh Day received a BA, Phi Beta Kappa from Carleton College, Minnesota, and an MA from Harvard University where she was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow. Day has worked extensively in the field of human rights and equality rights for women. She worked as a Human Rights Officer in British Columbia from 1974-78, and became the Director of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission in 1980. She was the president of LEAF (Legal Education and Action Fund) 1985/6, and has spoken extensively on the subject of the Charter of Rights.

CHAPTER 18

Court orders: What then?

Workshop coordinators
Marie Tellier & Rob McConaghie

Marie Tellier, Assistant Vice President, Employment Equity, CN Rail, and Rob McConaghie, Consultant, Sheetmetal Workers Union, U.S.A., describe their respective approaches to evening up the score.

Marie: The court order that affected the hiring practices of CN was handed down by the Supreme Court of Canada in June of 1987. It's a decision of historic importance for Canadian women pursuing careers in trades and technologies.

CN is a company steeped in a long tradition of railway culture. Like the rest of the transportation industry, we've been a predominantly male operation since our beginnings. Working on the railways was a man's job. Men built and repaired the tracks, ran the engines, cleaned the cars, collected the tickets, even held most of the clerical jobs. The railway language reflected this fact. Hundreds of job titles implied they were the domain of men. We had legmen, brakemen, yard masters, road masters, and many more.

By the early 1970s CN realized it needed to make some changes. The world was changing and we couldn't ignore what many have called the most profound and far-reaching social movement of our times. That's the renewed political and social consciousness of women, including their aspirations to take their rightful place in every occupation and at every level of our society.

In 1975, CN began the process of redress. We created a working group and started to integrate more women. In 1981 we adopted an Equal Opportunities Policy. The process of integrating women, however, was slow. In 1975 CN was a very large corporation of around 80,000 employees with operations all across Canada. Of those 80,000 employees, only 5.7 percent were women and only 86 women worked in non-traditional positions. But women weren't knocking down our doors to work in those years, especially not in the blue-collar sector. We had to go out and look for them.

[T]he court order ... has had a profound effect on the workplace in Canada. It established the authority of the Canadian Human Rights Commission to impose hiring quotas to help disadvantaged groups make up for past discriminations ... The order set a standard for all companies, not just those under federal jurisdiction, to pursue the goal of fair representation in the workplace.

We approached a women's group to help us recruit candidates. That group was Action Travail des femmes in Montreal. We wanted them to help us find women applicants for those non-traditional jobs – like brakepersons, welders, and car cleaners.

Action Travail des femmes did find candidates, but they felt CN hired too few of the candidates they had found. In 1979 they lodged a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission challenging our hiring practices.

CN ordered to revise hiring practices
Five years later, in August 1984, a Human Rights Tribunal ordered CN to launch a wide-ranging program to increase job opportunities for women. It ordered us to revise our hiring practices; the order stated one out of every four persons hired for blue-collar positions in the St. Lawrence Region, which covers Quebec and eastern Ontario, must be a woman, until women represent 13 percent of the workforce. The tribunal chose 13 percent because that was the national average for women in blue-collar positions. The tribunal pointed out that only 0.7 percent of those jobs were held by women in the St. Lawrence region. Today, that figure is up to 3.2 percent.

CN was ready to comply with the principle. We immediately set out to achieve all the goals set down by the ruling, including implementing a quota system. We took a good look at our selection process, and we immediately abandoned some of the tools we'd been using to select people. One of those was the Bennett Test, a test that measures mechanical ability. Women often did poorly on the test, because most of them hadn't been brought up with the tradition of taking apart their bicycles or cars as boys had. But the point is that you did not need these skills for jobs such as car cleaners.

We set out to develop a selection process that would provide our employment office people with tools to select the most competent employees using criteria based on the ability to perform a particular job. We had a team of 16 people working with an industrial psychologist to develop new selection tests for all positions and we started with the entry level positions in the blue-collar occupations because that's where we were looking for women.

It's easier for women to enter blue-collar jobs at CN today, and one factor is our updated hiring practices. In the past because we never had problems recruiting competent employees and because we were a large corporation with operations all across the country, we had procedures that varied from one region to the other. We never really felt the need to systematize those procedures. They ranged from word-of-mouth information about jobs available to skills tests which inadvertently, but very effectively, discriminated against women. As did word of mouth. In a workforce that is predominantly male, word of mouth will go from male to male to male, bypassing the women who will never know there is an opening.

I want to emphasize here that CN didn't have a deliberate policy of keeping women out of non-traditional jobs. The problem was really systemic discrimination. As the word implies, it's in the system – in recruitment and hiring practices, in the staffing of jobs, in giving promotions. The entire system had to be analyzed and changed in order to reverse the situation.

In this respect CN was no different from any other company or industry in Canada, particularly those employing large numbers of blue-collar workers. Of course the publicity from the hearings did put us on the centre stage and I hope we did serve as an example to other companies. But what is important is we've not only met the requirements of the court order but we've gone above and beyond them.

Surpassing the impossible
When the tribunal judgment was delivered in 1984, most people in the company thought its aims were impossible. They said we could never apply those quotas and keep our trains rolling. Well, we've achieved the impossible. The quota was ordered for the St. Lawrence Region only, but CN has applied it all across the country. We were asked to hire one woman out of four. We hired one woman out of three and a half last year, and this year's objective is one woman out of three. Not only was it not impossible, it was possible to go even further.

Thirty years ago, there were 130,000 people in CN and there are 40,000 now. We have been through massive downsizing. We still have to go further in order to survive as a company. Nevertheless last year we hired nearly 200 women across the country to fill non-traditional entry level positions. We see this as an achievement. We now have women working at every CN blue-collar position. They work as locomotive engineers, train service employees, car maintainers, air brake inspectors, yard workers. They do physically demanding work like repairing tracks as well as highly skilled work as electricians or machinists.

As I am sure many of you can testify, it isn't always easy for women entering the all-male world for the first time. That's why we try to pair women so they don't go one by one into an all-male environment, but at least two by two so they can support each other, at least talk to each other about what they are going through and how things are with the men around them. Women are still in a difficult situation; they are often perceived as tokens. They have to prove they can do the work, and believe me they have. Their supervisors have sent excellent reports on their performance and their competence has helped to change attitudes as much as anything.

More women at all levels
Our overall objective, of course, is to increase the number of women at all levels of the company. So far we've done well, but we still have a long way to go. We now employ more than 3,000 women. One hundred and ten women hold upper and middle management positions. Of those, 30 are in senior management and that is up from only two in 1975. Six hundred and seventy women now hold non-traditional jobs. That's 2.2 percent of all non-traditional jobs in the company. So the figure may not be high but it shows improvement over 1975 where we had only 1.5 percent women.

The evolution is even more interesting in our St. Lawrence Region. That's where we can really see the weight of a court order. The St. Lawrence Region did move faster than the other regions in the CN system. In that region we went from 0.7 percent or 31 women in 1984 to 3.2 percent in 1988. That is quite a jump in four years and it is still increasing.

The entire process has been quite an undertaking for a company the size of ours. It hasn't been achieved overnight and we've had some setbacks. Since 1986, we've lost nearly half our female skilled craftworkers. We went out to find them and hire them, and we were very satisfied with the work they were doing. But because of shop closures and centralizing operations we had to let half of them go. There is no easy way out of that. Seniority rules say the last ones hired are the first ones out. The unions at CN have been supportive of employment equity. We've informed them of what we've been doing and they've cooperated, but we've never discussed or tried to change such things as seniority rules. I'm not sure I would have much success with that proposition.

Other advances for women
We've also made other advances apart from women in non-traditional jobs and I think those are worth mentioning. We set up an educational sponsorship program, providing full leave with pay for women employees wishing to pursue studies in disciplines that would help them further their careers in CN, such as business, commerce, engineering, marketing. The program covers full-time MBA's, undergraduate studies, seminars, and courses at the community college level.

We've also established a program to help women advance in management positions. We found it wasn't the theoretical knowledge women lacked, but the experience necessary to get into those senior or at least upper-management positions. This new program involves a two-year in-house training program designed by individual departments for individual women. We call that a bridging program. We also aim to hire more women in the professions – engineers, accountants, auditors, financial officers, systems analysts, programmers, and so forth.

We have a scholarship program designed to encourage women who want to enter non-traditional fields. Every year since 1985 we've

awarded 68 scholarships to women entering non-traditional programs of study at community colleges, or schools of trades and technology across Canada. This program applies to women who are not CN employees – women who are outside. A few years back we could hire quite a few of those women into CN. Since we are not hiring tradespeople now, we are not hiring these women. But we're still awarding the scholarships, knowing it's important for women to enter trades and technologies even if it's not for employment with our company. As a special measure, employment office personnel interview all women applicants to make sure they're not letting one good candidate slip by. We're not, of course, interviewing all men applicants because we have thousands of applicants every year, but every single woman is interviewed.

CN is currently involved in the lengthy process of redefining 220 job titles, a matter that must be worked out in detail with the unions. Job titles must be redefined so women are included instead of excluded by the titles themselves. We have some interesting proposals. We have legmen who may become marine leg attendants. Matrons may become janitors. For brakemen, we're considering train service employees. These are just a few examples of what we are doing. In fact, we are changing the entire vocabulary of the railway to make it non-sexist. Some of you may think these are small details or cosmetic issues. I don't. I think language is a symbol, and a very strong one. It talks of attitudes, feelings, prejudices, and behaviour.

Besides these initiatives we are also making efforts to help parents cope with difficulties they may be facing combining careers and family responsibilities. Our maternity leave benefits are among the best in the country. We top up unemployment insurance benefits to either 70 percent or 90 percent of a person's salary depending on the job level. Unionized employees receive a maximum of $370 a week and all women have the option of taking an additional leave for 24 weeks without pay. Two years ago we opened a daycare centre in Montreal that was one of the first company workplace centres in Quebec. There are eleven now. That centre accommodates 60 children ranging from two months to five years. It's a private, parent-run organization financed by parents' fees and provincial government subsidies. We are also working on a pilot project to look into the feasibility of part-time work at CN headquarters.

For us, employment equity is a philosophy. It's not a program, it is a philosophy to which CN is committed from top management through the rank and file.

In closing, I would like to return to the court order I was asked to talk about, an order that has had a profound effect on the workplace in Canada. It established the authority of the Canadian Human Rights Commission to impose hiring quotas to help disadvantaged groups make up for past discriminations. This should encourage employers to settle complaints before they go to a tribunal. The order set a standard for all companies, not just those under federal jurisdiction, to pursue the goal of fair representation in the workplace. We at CN feel we've made major progress in the quest for equity and we hope that every working milieu in Canada will follow our example.

Rob: I step in here where Ms. Tellier leaves off. Her description of CN and what they have done is really very comprehensive. We've looked at a lot of other companies that have been in similar situations. They have been found guilty of discriminatory practices, either on the job or in the entry level and it sounds like CN has put together a system that addresses both issues.

The work we've been doing in the metropolitan New York City area over the last eight years begins after the dust has settled from the attorneys and the legal process. We approach the problem from the perspective that affirmative action makes good business sense. I don't know what it may have cost CN or some of the other companies I've heard mentioned here these past few days but it's expensive in terms of time, money and morale. Affirmative action makes sense as well when you look at the changing demographics. The labour pool is changing dramatically. You cannot rely on the same groups you've drawn from in the past. So the programs that we've designed down in the States address these issues. They are in

place as a result of a court order and are to remedy past actions, but we sell them to the employer and to the workers as something that is going to benefit everybody. The diversification of the workforce will benefit employers and workers in terms of the kinds of things that go on in the job.

What happens once the doors are open

The other thing I want to talk about is what happens in the workplace once the doors have been opened up. I've heard a lot of people over the last couple of days talk about what their companies have done or the nice programs that have been put in place, but I keep hearing conversations where somebody will say, "I end up feeling like I came in with a tag that says, 'I got my job and I am not equal.' That I came in different." Or someone tells about a company where they were using women to do the recruitment and the men were complaining, "Why don't we get to go? What's this different treatment?"

There is a level at the top of an organization where people feel very positive and motivated to do these affirmative types of action. Whereas down in the trenches, and if you're a plumber, they are the trenches, the reality is very different. By bringing in women, or people of colour, you're upsetting a job. A job is more than just putting your time in and getting paid. These are people you spend more time with than you do your own families. It's a social network and that becomes disrupted. How do you begin to deal with that change? It's fine to open the doors and to have good hiring practices but what do you do in terms of what happens in the trenches? That's what I want to address today.

When the movement to affirmative action first started it didn't make good business sense. People didn't want to end up in court, so they got smart and said, "Well, let's just open the doors and bring people in." And they did what I call a body sweep. They just said, "Come on in, you've got the job." I'm certainly speaking broadly, but the consequences of that were pretty negative. People were brought in to do work they were unqualified to do. The individuals that came in were often isolated. As a result you saw a very high dropout rate. There were also problems related to absenteeism and poor quality of work productivity. There was also the backlash of harassment, resentment by the people who were on the job. Because I've been looking at this issue pretty closely, I've run into some really terrible stories – women who have been assaulted on the job, who have been emotionally abused. Women were brought into a major U.S. fire department and no one spoke to them on the job for two years. Imagine, going to work every day and no one will talk to you. Who needs it? And so people would quit and that led to further stereotyping of women doing that particular type of work because they would leave. I mean, who is going to go to work every day when nobody talks to you? So you leave and the guys say, "Hey, I told you they couldn't do the work. They weren't strong enough. They weren't smart enough. They weren't capable." Those are the kinds of things that we'd run into.

If you're a woman, you may be isolated, especially if there is a court order. John may think, "Fine, I have to work with her, but I don't have to talk to her." So the woman loses out on that informal learning process critical to successfully learning a trade. That informal network is okay as long as everybody is included in the process.

Working with a long-range plan

We've put together a long-range plan with six areas we focus on. Everything from how to work with ninth-graders to teach them math and science to what to do on the job. Recruitment, specialized recruitment is the key place to start. You have to define what the job is and then go out and work with the schools. We've been working with construction unions, and over the last six years we've visited the vocational schools that teach carpentry,

electrical work, sheet metal work, welding, vertical lifts – those are elevators and in New York City those are critical because everything is over 20 storeys – and we recruit from those schools. We've set up co-op programs where during the summer the kids can come and work in the union, generally on a gofer-type job. They get acclimated to that world of work. I'm talking here not only in terms of women, but of minorities as well. Some things apply across the board, but there are some specific things for women and I will talk about that.

Before anybody goes to work we do a lot of orientation to acclimate the new entrant to the labour market. If we're talking women we talk to them particularly about hazing and sexual harassment. This is particularly important where men and women have to live together working in fire departments, in shipping interestingly enough, or as powerline technicians who are generally on twenty-four-hour call. Places where there are bunk rooms. This is one of those interesting areas where they say, "Oh you're doing all this stuff for women, and there's only a few of them." This protects men as well. If women are having to use the same bathroom facilities as the men, there will be guys later who will come up and tell you, "Look, I really don't like being in there going to the bathroom with a woman there brushing her teeth. It makes me uncomfortable." So it's for everybody's benefit.

There are also issues around technology. They are developing, up in the northern regions, special alloy tools that withstand the cold. They aren't brittle, they won't break. They are however, very lightweight and are an advantage to women. In the technical trades the more traditional iron or steel tools require more upper body strength. It's just mechanics and technology, but it makes the job simpler and it's a way to compensate for the upper body strength differentials.

The next two areas we address are job performance and evaluation, and personnel policy. Marie Tellier mentioned the old boys' network, the way in which jobs went out, and the way policies were handled. Another woman here mentioned that in airline traffic control towers, 92 percent of the people were related or came in through friends or family. So there is a very informal network through which people get their jobs.

There's also an informal network through which people keep their jobs. If Charlie's late Monday morning because his car is not working, well, John will stay, if it's a shift job, maybe the extra 15 or 20 minutes and cover for him until he gets there. However, if it's a woman, maybe John won't be quite so ready to stay that extra 15 or 20 minutes and she'll be marked down late. If your father or your uncle is a sheetmetal worker and you're now in the trade, he's going to take you aside and show you the special tricks that make the job easier. If you're a woman, you may be isolated, especially if there is a court order. John may think, "Fine, I have to work with her, but I don't have to talk to her." So the woman loses out on that informal learning process critical to successfully learning a trade. That informal network is okay as long as everybody is included in the process. But if people are not included in that, then different systems are put in place. That's how you end up with the complaint I hear from many men, "Well, women get treated differently once they're on the job." They get treated differently because the men exclude them from that informal process. For example, sometimes when women come on to a new job, they are given the phone number of a special person they can call if they're having trouble. And the guys say, "Hey, there's nobody there for me." The reason there isn't is because the men settle their arguments or disputes among themselves. Women aren't allowed to resolve them the same way, or they are going to be excluded from some of the perks of the job. Therefore the woman has to go outside of the normal reporting process because she's been already excluded from the informal.

Job performance evaluation. We make sure everybody who is going through their training period gets evaluated similarly and that it's adhered to across the board. Before the first group of women came into the New York City Fire Department, nobody in the hundred-year history of the fire department had ever been fired based on their job performance evaluation. Within six months 10 percent of the women had been fired based on their job

performance evaluation. To say the least, these women wanted a great deal of money in back pay and were reinstated. It does not pay to discriminate. The same is true of the personnel policy. We make sure the policy is accurate and it's enforced across the board. Employers say to me, "Look, I don't care what colour they are. I don't care whether they're from Mars. I want them there on time and I want them to do their job." In the private sector that's true. If you can make your boss money, you're going to do very well. Your boss is not necessarily going to care whether you are male or female, or Haitian or Afghani or whatever. But then comes the whole issue of co-workers – the trenches I mentioned earlier. People want to get along on the job, and teamwork, especially in the trades and in firefighting, is critical to the success of any job. So people have to be able to get along.

After a court order

These are some specialized things we do in the situation where there's been a court order. Because initially with a court order, temperatures are high. The men feel like, "Hey, you're ramming this down my throat. I didn't do anything. I was a good guy, why is my job now being threatened? Why is my safety being threatened?" This with the firefighters was a constant complaint. "If I'm going into that fire, I have to know the person backing me up on the hose is going to be able to drag my butt out of there if I get in trouble," and he looks at this 110-pound woman and says, "She can't do the job." Those are serious concerns and they need to be addressed. We do a special orientation for the men. We have gone in to every single firehouse in New York city and trained 13,000 firefighters over the last six months. We sit around a table of approximately 18 firefighters – there are only 43 women in the New York City Fire Department – and when women are on that shift, they're there. We focus on things like recruitment and personnel policy, and show them that the changes being made as a result of the court order are to their benefit. It's going to upgrade the skills and the quality of the fire department. We also, though, hit them hard around the whole issue of sexual harassment. We let them know what the law is, what they're liable for, and what the officers are liable for. We spend a lot of time talking about hazing. My understanding is that in the trades the "put out or get out" rule, which is the request for sexual favours in order to keep your job, is not as critical an issue as "get out or watch out." That is the behaviour which has the effect of creating a hostile work environment or impairing the woman's ability to do the job. In the trades I think that is a bigger problem and so we spend a lot of time talking about what hazing is and for those of you who don't know, it's the pranks, the jokes, the dead cat in the locker, the dye on the helmet, the foreign substance you find in your boots, whatever. That can be done when it's accepted as a way of inclusion into the group. It's a ritual, it's something you all go through. It's also a way of excluding someone from the group. And we talk about that.

When we do these firefighter trainers, these guys, they pound on the table, they curse, they scream, "Women can't do the job. They don't belong there, etc., etc...." But afterwards, generally one or two men will come up and whisper, "You know, I was hazed a lot. I still am, and you know, it really hurts. I don't want to go to work and put up with that every day and I'm really glad you said what you did." There are those men out there. It's useful if you have a small workforce to identify who those men are and to build them into your training programs.

We also talk to the men about conflict resolution skills because the standard is, boom, "I don't like what you said," and you thump them. That's easy, but somebody loses and what we're talking about is creating an environment that allows a win-win situation. That way nobody loses and that's why we stress so much throughout the training that this is to their benefit too. So that we teach them when conflicts arise there generally is a way they can be resolved where both sides win. You don't have to lose.

We also do special training for managers and supervisors. Because a lot of times women are placed on jobs without adequate backup. All of a sudden the women are there and the supervisors are going, "Holy mackerel. What do I do now?" They need to be trained. They need the leadership skills. Often they've been

recruited up from the ranks and have been promoted because of seniority, and they don't necessarily have the leadership or the people management skills. These are critical skills these people need to learn. As well they need to be able to defuse problem situations. I will guarantee if you look at any sexual harassment claim, it's happened on a lunch break, or a coffee break, one of those times when people are hanging around, and that the supervisors were aware of the situation and ignored it. Supervisors need to be trained in how to deal with these kinds of situations. We do role-playing with them. We teach them about stereotypes, and tokenism. This is all for the people that are on the job, already. Getting them prepared.

We then do special things for everybody coming on to the job. We answer their questions. What should they expect on the job? Are they going to be a gofer? What's that about? Are they going to have pranks played on them? We talk about hazing and teach them the difference between hazing that's inclusive and hazing that's exclusive.

We then look at job requirements. What kinds of support services exist for them on the job that they can take advantage of. We set up a series of networks. If the woman is not the first one on the job, we pair them up so there is somebody on the job they can go to, to answer questions. Advocacy. This is a tricky one. Initially, I think there should be an advocate available who will speak out on behalf of a woman or a minority who is having a problem on the job. And this is different than your shop stewards. This is someone who deals specifically with that new group that's coming in. Because of that whole issue of inclusion, they are not going to have that informal system and initially there is a need for an advocate.

Health issues

We've found we've had to do a lot of work around health, and this is after the women have been on the job. My own stereotype is that women know a lot about health. My mother cooked for me. They raise children, they know all that sort of thing. We found women started developing a lot of stress-related problems. Back pain. Women who worked 24-hour shifts in some of the work settings we've examined, where they shared the bathrooms, would not have a bowel movement for 24 hours until they went off shift. That creates all kinds of problems. So we ended up setting up special health training groups for the women. We used the Employee Assistance Program. That's a company-sponsored counselling program that its employees or union members can take advantage of for alcohol or substance abuse, mental health, family problems, etc.... It's confidential. There's also MAPs – unions have MAPs because they don't call their members employees – Members' Assistance Program or Employees' Assistance Program. In the trades it's sort of family. Father, son, uncle, nephew, that kind of thing. We use the EAP as an alternate to that until there are enough women or minorities within the trade so they then have their own informal network.

There are a lot of problems that come up for new entrants into the labour market. Particularly for women. We're not as advanced as you are in childcare. Single parent households make up a major component and they are predominantly female-headed. The men in the blue-collar trades, most of them, their wives are home, they're not working or they only work part-time. The job isn't taken as seriously as the man's job, therefore, if the child is sick the woman will stay home. Well, if there is a woman on a construction job, you know as well as I do, what happens in terms of delays. So much of it is teamwork between the apprentice and the mechanic. It sets back the bidding process, it really messes it up. So we use the EAP to help the individuals deal with those kinds of problems.

Next we deal with curriculum. In the apprentice programs or training programs that's critical. The curriculum has to establish the training requirements. Because we find that when you get out into the field, or you're in the shop, or working at a construction site, the white male apprentice whose uncle is the best friend of the foreman, is the one who is going to get into doing the interesting work. He's going to be doing the estimating. He'll be in the shop working on the computer cutter. Whereas the woman or the black who's been on the job for two years, they're still going for lunch. "Well, that's the way it is. You've got to be the gofer." Yeah, well, you've got to be the gofer up to a point, but then somebody new comes along and you've got to establish the levels you go through in the training to learn your trade.

Last, women and minorities entering a closed workforce do not have access necessarily – have not grown up around the tools of that particular trade. If you're a sheetmetal worker, chances are your grandfather was one. It's in your blood. You learn about it from the time you are a kid. A woman or someone from outside the trade coming in is going to need access to special training opportunities. This is something that benefits everybody coming in. This is not just for women. But when there has been a court order in place, we find resentment from the people on the workforce is strong. They won't hear about it up at the top and the top will tell you everything is fine but I'm going to tell you that many times it's different. There's a lot of subtle kinds of things that are done and they need to be addressed. That informal network within any workplace, you have to get in there and meet with it. That's why, whenever possible, we go in and we go to the shanties, the firehouses, or the police departments, and talk to them. We let them know what we're doing, why we're doing it, what the law is, and what the benefit is to them down the long run.

Marie Tellier, Assistant Vice President, Employment Equity, Canadian National Railways, received her Masters Degree in 1970. Prior to her work at CN, Tellier was Manager, Employment Equity Program, EIC. She has written extensively in French and English on employment equity in various business and university journals, and has spoken to a diverse range of audiences on this subject.

Rob McConaghie works for Employee Assistance Programs and Services in New York city. He has designed and implemented integration programs for the Sheetmetal Workers Union and the New York Firefighters, among others.

CHAPTER 19

From Task Force to implementation

Workshop coordinator
Mary Ella Magill

This workshop is a description of the work of the Ontario Hydro Women in Trades, Technical and Operators Occupations Task Force.

The Ontario Hydro Women in Trades, Technical and Operators (TTO) Occupations Task Force was carried out a couple of years ago. It is a story with a happy ending, though not a Harlequin Romance because it is a true story with real people, real places and real events. It has all the features of a story – a beginning, a plot, passion, characters who develop, events which shape the story, a denouement, and in keeping with recent trends, all of the makings for a sequel or two.

When the Affirmative Action program in Ontario Hydro began in 1984, the representation of women overall was about 17 percent. The representation level of women in the Trades, Technical and Operators jobs was 2.2 percent. It was clear some work was needed.

First stage of the strategy

The first stage of the strategy to increase the numbers of women in these jobs was the Women in Trades, Technical and Operators Occupations Task Force. Ontario Hydro is a large organization with many branches. It was important for the branches with TTO jobs to be a part of the Task Force. Also, the members had to have insight and information about the current status of women in these jobs. Finally, the members would have to make a commitment to the Task Force. The time commitment was extraordinary – the Task Force met two consecutive days once or twice a month until the job was done – about six months. The terms of reference were approved by senior management, which consisted of the chairman, the president and all the vice presidents. The members of the Task Force had been invited to represent their branches by their vice president.

The objective of the Task Force was simply put – to increase the representation of women in trades, technical and operators jobs. This objective implied change in the way of thinking about, perceiving and doing things.

The four branches with the majority of TTO positions in the corporation were well represented. There was also a representative from the Human Resources branch who brought a corporate perspective regarding resourcing and staffing, and liaison with outside

agencies including universities and colleges.

The objective of the Task Force was simply put – to increase the representation of women in TTO jobs. This objective implied change in the way of thinking about, perceiving and doing things. The outcome of this change in the long run would be that women and men would have a more balanced representation in TTO jobs, equal status and power within the jobs, and would work alongside one another as peers.

Principles embraced by the Task Force
The principles expressed in the rationale have to do with social justice and responsibility, and productivity. The first point in the rationale is we will remove barriers, eliminate prejudice and provide free and equal choice to men and women. If women are interested and capable of doing the job, they are entitled to it.

The second point is we will move toward occupational desegregation. Right now, these jobs are clearly segregated on the basis of sex. There is nothing inherent in these jobs which says only men can do them.

The third point is we will recruit from the whole population. At the time, we were recruiting from about 60 percent of the available market. By casting a wider net, we should be assured of selecting the best.

The final point has to do with increased productivity through fuller utilization of the skills, interests, and abilities of the internal and external populations.

I would like to add one other point. It has become abundantly clear that the labour force has been changing and "diversity" is the key word. Women can offer a different way of doing things, of thinking about things. Those differences can be a value-added element of the workplace, and should be honoured as such.

Examining the workforce
Let's take a closer look at the workforce in Ontario Hydro at the time the Task Force was underway and some of the characteristics of the TTO jobs. There were 23,000 regular employees and an additional 9,000 non-regular employees, most of whom were construction workers hired through union hiring halls and considered "casual" employees, even though some of them would be working at Ontario Hydro construction sites for decades. Regular staff is divided into five categories: executives; management and professionals (mostly engineers); supervisory staff; clerical; and TTO. The TTO population is a little more than half of the total population.

It has become abundantly clear that the labour force has been changing and "diversity" is the key word. Women can offer a different way of doing things, of thinking about things. Those differences can be a value-added element of the workplace, and should be honoured as such.

Most trades, technical and operators jobs fall under union jurisdiction. There are contractual obligations which must be observed regarding posting and filling vacancies.

The Terms of Reference for the Task Force identified that the problem of increasing the representation of women in TTO jobs was a multifaceted one involving all phases of attracting and retaining women. For example, it was recognized that attracting women to these jobs was a problem. The number of women applying suggested they were not attracted to these jobs. The usual interpretation was that women were not interested in working in these jobs. However, other factors were seen as contributing – for example, intimidation from male-dominated environments, recruitment practices, etc.

The Task Force was charged with analyzing all aspects of this situation and making recommendations to senior management.

Effects on members of the Task Force
Earlier, I mentioned each member of the Task Force had to make a commitment to full participation on the Task Force. We all knew that at the outset, but we didn't know what would happen to us as individuals and as a collective as we went about our job. So let me tell you the crux of the story of the Task Force. It's an important story because in some ways and on a much smaller scale, it foretold what would be happening in the organization.

A pioneering spirit is needed not only by the women but also by the crews and supervisors, and by top-level management. They need to "dare to be different."

In doing its work, the Task Force used a variety of methods – we began with Terms of Reference which had been approved by the senior management; we gathered information from interviews with women in non-traditional jobs and their supervisors, and with external agencies; we recounted our own personal experiences; we went on tours to various work sites; and we researched specific topics.

All that information led to our findings and conclusions, from which we identified the needs for Ontario Hydro, and then we mapped out the strategy for the corporation to follow to meet the Task Force's objective.

Each member came to the Task Force with a set of subjective views on the subject – certain biases, preconceptions, insight, and certainly ambivalence about how far and how fast to go. For example, we hotly debated the merit of special orientation programs for women. As the Task Force did its work, a transition occurred. This change process was gradual and evolving, generating an emotional reaction. This grappling and struggling with issues was most evident when it came time to put pen to paper and put our names to the words. As with any change, there is no turning back, and for all of us on the Task Force, this has certainly been the case.

As a concrete sign that the Task Force existed, there is the Report. A more important statement of the effect of the Task Force are the many files documenting the implementation of the recommendations set out by the Task Force. But of course, the most telling and rewarding comment on the effect of the Task Force has been the growing number of women in these jobs.

How it worked
But more about what we did. We interviewed a number of women and their supervisors. The women expressed a high level of interest in their work and a real desire to do the job well. As an aside, I should ask whether this needs to be said – is it a surprise, are women any different from men? Uniformly, they stated selection of women must be based on qualifications and merit with no obvious special treatment on the job. One somewhat related exception was a willingness to assist in presentations to groups such as students which would advance the interest of women in TTO work.

They wanted to be accepted by their male peers and realized some men might have difficulty with the introduction of women to their crews, so in general, they were prepared to tread discreetly but firmly to perform their job well and to try to be integrated into the group.

All the women interviewed were distinctly different in personality. However, one common trait was the determination needed for the pioneering they are doing. The challenges even before starting work in this "non-traditional" field consisted of unsupportive school systems, unbelieving peers, opposing parents, and more. Here are some details of a couple of the interviews.

A women ironworker – her father was an ironworker, whom she admired and emulated, but she was not encouraged to go into this field. When her marriage (to an ironworker) ended, she realized this might be her best chance to take up the trade. The union would

not then accept women so she freelanced for several years before finally being accepted by the union. She is now a sub-foreman and loves her work.

A women mechanical maintainer – in her mid-50's, breadwinner of the family with a disabled husband. We met her first in the head office of Ontario Hydro so she was wearing usual office clothing. Then, later, while touring a coal station, we saw a grimy figure in coveralls and hard hat come up out of the bowels of some machine to greet us with the same big smile we had seen earlier. It took just a few moments to recognize her.

It may seen obvious, but it has to be said. The women working in these jobs are real people with real lives, ambitions, hopes, dreams, and feelings. The interviews affected all of us in the Task Force. It helped us all to hold a mirror in front of us and take a look at our biases and views about women working in non-traditional jobs.

Some questions

In talking with and listening to their supervisors, we heard a lot of the ambivalence associated with women in non-traditional jobs. For instance, should they be treated the same, or should they get special treatment? Should there be an orientation before they start or should they just show up for work one morning without the crew hearing about it first? Should they be given feedback about their performance, good or bad?

I'm going to step out of the role of chairperson of the Task Force and do some analysis of the dynamics by asking some more questions. Can a woman doing a man's job be a real woman? If the answer is yes, then can the men in these men's jobs be real men? You hear these questions cloaked in many different words, especially in the assumptions and stereotypes about both men and women.

Conclusions

Now, to move on with the Task Force towards its conclusions. Our experience showed us there already was support for affirmative action in Ontario Hydro. But it also showed us evidence of stereotyping and gender bias – one women stands for all women so if that one woman happens to be pushy, then all women are labelled "too pushy." All the concepts described in the *Tale of O* [an audiovisual presentation] had been shown to be based on reality.

Gender bias is seen in the selection process and on the job. On the job, it shows itself in longer periods of testing, a more critical analysis of performance and spotlighting of interaction. When a woman changes locations, all these things start all over again. It also is demonstrated when a women does a task in a different way. Even if it is an effective method, it is not the traditional one, so it is labelled as the wrong way.

Adaptation is required – we are talking of a change process, so there has to be acknowledgement that things will be different, a women is not "one of the boys."

A pioneering spirit is needed not only by the women but also by the crews and supervisors, and by top-level management. They need to "dare to be different."

There had been achievements in some areas which were noteworthy. During 1985, while the Task Force was underway, there was an increase of about 15 percent in the number of women in TTO jobs. When we began our program in October 1984, there were five women operators in Ontario Hydro. By the end of 1985, there were 31. We needed to remind ourselves and the people carrying out our recommendations that there would continue to be opportunities to bring more women into these positions. It's very common to hear "this is not a good time to be doing affirmative action programming" for whatever set of circumstances prevail.

We concluded there is some support but more was needed at all levels if we were to be successful. From these observations and conclusions, we judged the needs in five different areas and developed 28 recommendations. The most important feature of our recommendations was we clearly designated who was responsible for carrying them out and we clearly spelled out the time frame. We did not do this in isolation, but rather in consultation with the people involved.

For the comprehensive list of recommendations I would refer you to the Report, available from the Employment Equity division at Ontario Hydro. I am going to discuss only the key ones at this time.

Recruitment practices recommendations

- That we improve our internal and external recruitment practices to ensure that women will apply to and be selected for TTO jobs, and to ensure that full utilization is made of the inventory of applications from female candidates.

[T]he most telling and rewarding comment on the effect of the Task Force has been the growing number of women in these jobs.

- That hiring targets were established. Where they had been set, they had been met, which was proof positive that the process would work.

At this point, I want to digress for a moment. During the work of the Task Force, we heard a lot of objections to the term "quota" and we also heard parts of the corporation felt quotas had been imposed from on high, and women were to be hired *regardless*. What *regardless* meant was regardless of their qualifications and ability to do the job – it meant to disregard the usual selection criteria and just hire them. Of course what this also means is disaster – for the individual woman, for the affirmative action program which will hear the litany of, "We told you women can't do men's jobs," and for subsequent women who will be told, "We tried once and she didn't work out."

I want to reflect upon what it means when people say qualifications will have to be set aside to hire women. Frequently, this statement is followed by a prediction about the drop in productivity, etc. This type of statement has been made about women in all kinds of jobs, with the implication being, of course, women are simply not as smart, not as well educated, not as experienced, not as capable, as men are. A drop in our standards in order to meet affirmative action objectives, is the implication.

Now to continue with the recommendations:

- That a central inventory of applications from internal as well as external female candidates be maintained and utilized.

- That the TTO jobs be described clearly and fully and in common language in internal vacancy notices and in external advertisements.

•That programs be implemented which would eliminate bias from the selection process.

Orientation recommendations

•That we reinforce positive, effective orientation techniques for supervisors, peers and new female incumbents to facilitate the entry and retention of women in TTO jobs. This is the first step towards changing the attitudes which have successfully kept women out of this workplace.

•That orientation programs be designed, delivered and monitored. These would be for supervisors, work groups and women.

Communication recommendations

- Communicate to female employees, female members of the labour market and female students the opportunities, benefits and environment of TTO careers.

- That comprehensive information about working in TTO jobs would be given to existing female employees and to external applicants.

- That a long-term project be undertaken to enhance the awareness of TTO jobs among elementary and secondary level students.

- Implementation of an approved scholarship program for women entering community college programs related to TTO careers in Ontario Hydro.

Training and upgrading recommendations

- provide training opportunities specifically designed to enable female employees to

obtain the necessary qualifications for selection to TTO jobs.

- Identification of suitable female employees, the assessment of development needs including the provision of short-term familiarization programs and the provision of assistance for upgrading.

Accountability recommendations

- Ensure accountability was in place with line management for implementing programs and activities aimed at increasing the representation of women in TTO jobs, and for monitoring their effectiveness.

- Utilize the existing accountability system for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the recommendations in the TTO Task Force Report.

And now, the reactions

Now, I'll tell you the reactions we got when we took these recommendations out for review. They ranged from resistance or concern, to use the euphemistic term, to support.

First, we heard the hue and cry about backlash and reverse discrimination – that it's unfair to try to hire women. This has continued to be a reaction. The second concern was that the affirmative action program was going in too many directions at the same time and was using a sledgehammer where it wasn't needed. In fact, the program very deliberately advanced on many fronts at the same time because it was needed.

Some reacted by saying the recommendations were too ambitious and all kinds of additional resources would be needed to accomplish them. Some said though this work might be a priority for the corporation, they wanted to set the priorities and time lines for accomplishing the recommendations themselves. It was recognized priorities would vary from branch to branch.

Some said they were already doing many of the things recommended. Some identified the recommendations as being practical, and some gave general support for the work of the Task Force.

Signs of success

The Task Force also identified the signs of success – in the short term, increased representation; in the longer term, women in supervisory positions, and also in the longer term, a more positive attitude. The first two signs are easily measured, whereas we will have to look more closely and at subtle things to see the change in attitude. We will look for men and women working side-by-side as peers; we will see less surprise when we talk about women in non-traditional jobs; we will see a declining number of complaints and grievances, etc. There will be a general feeling that the welcome sign is out.

The Task Force made a presentation to the Senior Management Committee and received endorsement for all the recommendations.

That's where the work of the Task Force left off. Since that time, we have moved into the implementation phase and we will be there for a long time. Let me show you some of the accomplishments.

Representation level

In 1984, there were 256 women in TTO jobs. At the end of 1987, there were 440. We regard that as real progress. There is still only one woman in a trades supervisory position, but there are a couple of female sub-foremen.

Representation target process

There is a five-year target-setting process in place for women in all staff categories, including TTO.

TTO registry

This is the registry for all applications from internal and external female candidates interested in non-traditional jobs. They are considered before advertising externally. Periodic circulation of the names of the women in this registry is made to all the human resources offices in the corporation.

Orientation

FYI: Orientation Information That Makes a Difference was a package developed by the Corporate Affirmative Action department for use in the orientation process.

Liaison with school systems

Ongoing liaison is done with various school boards, especially at Career Days, etc.

Scholarship program

Several women have received scholarships through this program, and a small number have been hired as regular TTO employees.

Electrical operator familiarization program

One branch provides a program to give internal female candidates an opportunity to tour a site, followed by an assessment interview and a week-long rotation to determine if she is a good candidate for the electrical-operator-in-training positions.

All-female powerline maintainer training crew

This project began recently. More than 400 inquiries, and from these, 200 applications, were received. Five women were selected, and are about halfway through the training program. They will soon be placed in crews.

Liaison with the construction trades unions

At our construction sites, we deal with more than a dozen trade unions. Our liaison with these has been intensified, and our commitment to affirmative action has been clearly reinforced. Most recently, we have taken on five women apprentices with the IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers].

What is ahead of us? More work, more frustrations and successes. We still have a lot of work to do to change the attitudes of men and women, so that women will feel not only welcome as newcomers but that they belong, and that they have the same entitlements as men have.

I'd like to congratulate the tradeswomen in the audience for the achievements which made this conference possible. It's an important signal to everyone in the workplace.

An idea whose time had come

VOICE: What made Hydro do this?

Mary Ella: This is strictly a voluntary program but it certainly placed us behind the provincial government to be starting the program in 1984. They began theirs in 1975, International Women's Year. So we were already several years behind but there were internal and external pressures which made senior management take a look at the status of women in the corporation and say they wanted to take more pro-active steps towards changing that.

VOICE: Did you set quotas for the company?

Mary Ella: No. We've never gone that far because our program at a corporate level provides guidance to all the branches to set out their own program. We want them to be committed to their own goals and timetables. So we've never said, "You've got to have this much by that period of time." However, we have continued to say, "If we go at this rate, it's going to take until the '20's and '30's to have such-and-such representation." We've been guiding them, prodding, and pushing. But the corporation has not set an overall target or goal or timetable yet.

VOICE: Women say the actual trades are not offered to them. They become cleaners or handypersons. How can you come in and start your apprenticeship doing this instead of real apprentice work?

Mary Ella: We have five women who are electrical apprentices with the IBEW. It's the first five we've ever had. The construction trade is in the vanguard of affirmative action. We've worked long and hard to make them aware of our program. Hydro has fairly high education job requirements for many trades and operator type jobs. If you're applying to be a nuclear operator, for instance, you must have grade 13 maths and sciences.

The number of women applying suggested they weren't interested in TTO jobs. That was one of the things we heard when we were doing our task force. We were told nobody who was currently working for Hydro in a clerical job would ever be interested. But that was definitely dispelled! During 1984 there were 10 internal women applying to TTO jobs. During 1987, were were more than 360. They're being accepted and meeting qualifications. You're never going to get those 360 appointed, but the fact is, they are coming forward more than anybody ever guessed.

VOICE: What do you think caused the increased interest in the TTO jobs?

Mary Ella: I think a lot of it just had to do with getting the message out that we were serious about wanting women to come forward and apply if they were interested. There are some subtle and not so subtle things that go on. Let me give you an example. A guy comes in and he says he's interested in job X. Let's turn it around, a woman comes in and she is interested in job X. I'm not saying this happens all the time but I've heard it many times. One of the common answers is, "Well, why are you interested in that job? You know you can't wear high heels in that location. You know you're going to get your fingernails dirty. You know it's going to be shiftwork and you can't work shiftwork, you've got a child. You know you're going to be required to move all around the province. You can't do that. You're not going to be able to have nice lunches in downtown Toronto like you have now. You won't be working in a nice, clean office setting. You know it's dirty and noisy out there. You won't like that." So a whole set of assumptions has been made about women, saying they're not interested, and until they hear the message very clearly that they are being invited to come forward I think a lot of them have just not bothered and many have been discouraged. When you listen to people even outside of Ontario Hydro who have had to apply three and four and five times before they get a serious hearing for a job and the same job with the same recruiter with a male applicant would be, "Oh, it's a great job. You get to work outside. You get to move around. You get to wear coveralls, you don't have to worry about your own clothes. You'll beworking on your own. You don't have to worry about supervision. It's shiftwork so you'll have Tuesdays and Wednesdays off sometimes." Listen to the different message that is given. The impact of that has never been fathomed. We just pretend it doesn't make any difference. It does make a difference.

Mary Ella Magill was the Affirmative Action Officer at Ontario Hydro from 1985-1989. She joined Hydro in 1982 as a Staff Planning Officer and is currently in Human Resource Planning in the Finance Department at Hydro. She began her professional career in the field of psychology, and was a psychometrist for 12 years. She then returned to university for and MBA in 1980. A major component of her work in the AA/EE Department at Hydro has been in the area of women in operational, professional and technical occupations.

CHAPTER 20

Seniority and employment equity

Workshop coordinator
Bill Black

Bill Black, currently of UBC's Law faculty, examines contract language and potential modifications to protect union seniority and implement employment equity.

Bill: I will begin with a short overview of the different kinds of discrimination and protection against discrimination federally and provincially. Then I'll move into the question of seniority and how it fits into the picture.

Intentional discrimination
The most obvious kind of discrimination is intentional discrimination. We want to harass someone because they are a woman. We won't hire or promote someone because they are a woman. An example is a case in B.C. with a woman who wanted to work in a technical capacity at a mine site which was 70 miles from town. All the men were given housing and she wasn't given any. A complaint was filed and the company's reaction was, "Well, if she wants housing, she can move into the men's dorm." A tribunal decided that was discrimination and a clear, blatant attempt to reduce the opportunities of women.

If seniority is operating to deny women employment opportunities, in promotion for example, that is a barrier that an Employment Equity plan would have to overcome. If the effect of seniority is women never get into the upper echelons of the job, we could say seniority is a barrier just like the height and weight restriction.

Unintentional discrimination
But perhaps an even bigger area of difficulty is what is called unintentional discrimination, policies that are put in place for reasons besides discrimination but nevertheless, have the effect of discriminating. For example, women are often kept out of jobs because of height and weight requirements unrelated to the job. Sometimes they were never related to the job. Sometimes they were related to the job 40 years ago before they mechanized the job. So they will say that you have to be five feet ten and weigh 175 pounds to drive a forklift. Restricting apprenticeship opportunities would be another of that kind of indirect discrimination. It may be done to save money, it may be done because they think it's too much trouble but if the net effect is to keep women out of an area of employment, that's unintentional discrimination. Seniority itself can be a barrier in

certain circumstances.

Individual or systemic discrimination?
Before I talk about that though, I wanted to describe two different ways of looking at discrimination. The first is to look at each situation as an individual discrimination, and once in a while that happens. A company generally doesn't have discriminatory policy, but on this occasion this personnel officer discriminated against someone because they were a woman.

What I think is more often true is the discrimination is built into the system. Sometimes it's intentional, sometimes it's unintentional but it's built into the system on an ongoing basis. So whenever a woman goes into that personnel office she is either not given the same welcome others are given or automatically told only about the clerical and secretarial job, not told about the trades jobs and so on.

The CN case Shelagh Day described this morning is a good example of a situation that was systemic, in other words built into the system, and was a mixture of unintentional and intentional. It had some things like a math test women had to take, when the primary job they were going to do was clean railway cars. What it had to do with cleaning, nobody ever figured out. That might be considered unintentional.

Protection against discrimination
So we have those different kinds of discrimination. We also have different kinds of protection against discrimination. The first one, our Human Rights statutes, have been in effect for 10 to 20 years depending on the province. These exist both at a federal level and at a provincial level. The Canadian Human Rights Act, the federal act, covers the same areas of employment as the Canada Labour Code. The provincial Human Rights Acts cover the same areas of employment as the provincial Labour Codes. So, airlines, banks, railroads, those kinds of things are within the federal Human Rights Act. Forestry, construction, most other kinds of employment, education, nursing, so on, generally come within provincial jurisdiction.

Most provincial Human Rights Commissions have the power to start complaints themselves. They don't rely necessarily on individual complaints. They could bring a complaint on the behalf of the whole group. They could say, "We, the Human Rights Commission, bring a complaint saying women are systematically being discriminated against in the Montreal region with respect to non-traditional jobs by CN." That's one way it can happen. Now for those of us who are unlucky enough to be under the B.C. act, that can't even theoretically happen. In B.C. they have to deal with it on a case-by-case basis, each person filing a separate complaint. That doesn't work very well for all the reasons Shelagh described to you. Even in other provinces, where the commissions have the power to start these complaints, very few complaints have been started.

So even under the federal act, even in Ontario, even in other provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, where the commission *can* start complaints, they almost never do. They rely on individual complaints as well. So in 20 years, we often found human rights legislation had helped one particular person. You find cases where that person was given the job they deserved. But when you look at the statistics, we still have women in job ghettos, native people with extremely high unemployment, people with disabilities with very few employment opportunities. We still find not much has changed after 20 years of human rights legislation.

In part, that's what led to the Abella Commission Report on Equity in Employment. As a result, in addition to the Canadian Human Rights Act, the federal government passed the Employment Equity Act and put into effect the Contract Compliance program. Companies with over 100 employees that are in the federal sector have to file reports. The reports are being made public. They're supposed to also develop Employment Equity plans where they find a problem, although there's no enforcement mechanism built in if they don't. Plus there's the Contract Compliance.

The Employment Equity Act applies to banks, airlines, radio stations, interprovincial trucking companies, pretty well the same things covered by the Canada Labour Code. If you are within one of those companies and you have a trade, if you're an electrician for CN, you're covered under that Employment Equity Act.

VOICE: Could you talk about the fact that the building trades are being excluded from that?

Bill: My understanding is that the building trades were excluded from Contract Compliance but not from the Employment Equity Act. The Contract Compliance program says any company is covered, whether it's in the federal sector or not, if it does over $200,000 in business with the federal government and it has more than 100 employees. But there were some exemptions, including an exemption regarding construction. Frankly, I never did understand what the justification for that was.

[D]iscrimination is built into the system. Sometimes it's intentional, sometimes it's unintentional but it's built into the system on an ongoing basis.

VOICE: The person I spoke to in the CCA said it was because they already had a voluntary program in place and they lobbied very hard not to be included.

Bill: I agree with the second reason. The other protection, not particularly designed to protect human rights but in practice it's a protection, is labour legislation. Labour legislation protects in part by having the system of collective agreements. If you look at the statistics, you'll find women in the unionized sector have less of a wage gap than in the non-unionized sectors. So, in that way, collective agreements are human rights tools, as are grievance procedures. Sometimes it's easier and faster to grieve the loss of a promotion than it is to go through the human rights machinery. The human rights machinery is often quite slow, and if you are getting good support from the union, it may be better to bring a grievance if there was a violation of the collective agreement.

There doesn't have to be a specific discrimination clause. "The promotions were supposed to be made on the basis of seniority. I was the most senior. I didn't get it. I file a grievance." So, in that way labour legislation gives protection. Also, most labour legislation has a duty on the union of fair representation. Which can be another protection of human rights, if you feel the union is itself not representing the interest in a non-discriminatory manner. The union has an obligation to fairly represent the issues of all workers.

Seniority
Okay, how does seniority fit in this system? First I want to talk about two different kinds of seniority, then about how it fits in with the legislation. The first kind of seniority is sometimes called benefit seniority: as you get more seniority, you get more benefits. Typical examples are: longer vacations, a pay differential, and increased pension benefits. It applies to all workers equally. The other type is sometimes called competitive seniority, when seniority covers promotions or layoff or recall. It's called competitive because there are winners and losers. If 20 people are going to get laid off, this person is going to get laid off and this person isn't. Whereas with benefit seniority, everybody could get six weeks vacation. There's no logical reason why that can't happen.

Most problems come from competitive seniority in terms of human rights difficulties. If seniority is operating to deny women employment opportunities, in promotion for example, that is a barrier that an Employment Equity plan would have to overcome. If the effect of seniority is women never get into the upper echelons of the job, we could say seniority is a barrier just like the height and weight restriction we talked about earlier.

Seniority, in some circumstances, might also be a violation of ordinary Human Rights legislation, because it covers unintentional discrimination as well as intentional. An

employer may have two possible defences in this circumstance. One defence which applies in Saskatchewan and B.C. as well as the U.S., is the existence of particular provisions saying, "This legislation doesn't apply to a *bona fide* seniority plan."

What is a *bona fide* seniority plan?
The key question is, what is meant by a *bona fide* seniority plan? Some U.S. cases have recently taken quite a conservative view and said, "As long as the purpose isn't to discriminate, even though the effect is to discriminate, it's still a *bona fide* plan." Earlier U.S. cases went the other way but as Reagan appointed more members to the Supreme Court the court kept getting more conservative, and that's been the most recent U.S. approach.

In any event, I don't think we should follow those cases in Canada. In Canada this comes up strictly in B.C. and Saskatchewan and we can argue that a seniority plan isn't *bona fide* as soon as the employer realizes its effect. It may have been put into effect in good faith but now that we have called the employer's attention to the fact it's discriminating, I think it's a good argument that it's no longer a *bona fide* plan.

Under the federal legislation and in the other provinces there is a defence saying any employer policy isn't discrimination if it's based on a *bona fide* occupational requirement, or occupational qualification. A visual requirement for pilots undoubtedly discriminates based on vision but we might well hold that that's a *bona fide* requirement. One question that hasn't really been answered in Canada is whether seniority is a *bona fide* occupational requirement.

VOICE: In a case involving CN, the question wasn't asked but it was sort of answered by the Supreme Court judges. They stated CN should be hiring one woman out of four up to 13 percent proportion but that quota would apply only after all laid-off employees had been recalled.

Bill: With regard to the CN case, it may partially give us hints but it was mainly dealing with hiring. They said laid-off employees had protection first but that doesn't necessarily tell us how the court will deal with a situation where people who are already employees are saying, "I'm denied promotional opportunities because of seniority." Seniority tends to be viewed as human rights on one side and trade union rights on the other, fighting with each other. There are situations where we have to resolve some conflict, but I think we should remind ourselves first of the ways seniority and human rights are complementary.

The effects of seniority
Seniority protects against management favouritism or arbitrariness. As an example, there was a case in Ontario where black pipefitters and welders were laid off on the basis of a foreman's recommendation. There was no seniority provision and the supervisor decided who was going to be laid off and who wasn't. That's a good example where a seniority rule would have prevented the discrimination. There was another Ontario case where the company laid off a person of East Indian origin who had greater seniority than the person who was kept on. It was held in the absence of a seniority clause that was permissible, but if there had been a seniority clause it wouldn't have been.

[I]f you have to have an Employment Equity plan, if there is an effective enforcement of that Employment Equity plan, you have to make some modification because otherwise you won't get women into those jobs. And the answer for the union will be it's illegal to stick with that plan if that's the way it operates.

Seniority also gives credit for the investment in time that working people have put into a company, and reduces intra-union conflict. One of its advantages has been its ease of administration.

Seniority has the unintended effect of keeping out new entrants, especially in cyclical industries. If an Employment Equity or Affirmative Action plan starts to get women into areas they haven't been in before, in the forestry industry or construction, over four or five years during economic growth we may make some real progress in getting women into new areas. Then the recession hits as it inevitably does and we have layoffs on the basis of seniority. The effect is in the down cycle you lose most of the gains you got during the growth cycle.

When women get entry-level jobs, they are the last eligible for promotion. There are already lots of men with more seniority. Women may stay in their present job rather than switching departments if they lose their seniority when they go to the new department. They can say, "I'd like to move from a clerical job on to the shop floor, but I just can't risk it because then I'll be subject to layoff." So we have to admit that seniority does sometimes have the problem of delaying or reducing employment opportunities for women. If that happens, it can be challenged under Human Rights legislation, but that may or may not work for reasons we just discussed.

Solutions to the seniority problem
Let's look at possible solutions. I've tried to set four goals a solution should meet. Our first goal is the most obvious one: equality for all workers. Another goal is to safeguard that our human rights solution doesn't unintentionally shift power from workers to management. A third goal would be that discrimination on the basis of union activity, such as seniority, is important to go along with. Finally, as much as possible the net result shouldn't be to penalize third parties, the men who have had those jobs. However if we totally preserve the old seniority we are preserving the unfair advantage that men had in the past and that seems to me to justify some modification of seniority.

A possible solution looking at benefit seniority would be to say, "If there hadn't been discrimination, on average, women would have ten years seniority instead of three. Okay, we'll give them the benefits of ten years seniority even though they have three." The male workers may not be thrilled, but at least it doesn't take anything away from them. Now obviously employers will worry about the cost. If they have increased costs because they gave benefit seniority, they probably are going to bargain harder at the time of the next collective agreement and the overall salary increase won't be as great. In the long run there will be some effect on other workers.

VOICE: It could work by what I call constructive seniority. Let's say in 1977 women started to apply for non-traditional jobs at CN but it was 10 years before they were hired. What you could do is say, "All right, all women now working at CN will get 10 years constructive seniority, because women in general couldn't get hired in those years."

Bill: There are two ways this could work, one very narrow way and one broader. The narrow one would be to say, "If a woman can prove she applied in '77 and wasn't hired, we now think that at the time there was a discriminatory hiring policy. She can apply now and if she gets hired she can get 10 years seniority on the grounds that she should have been hired in '77." That's the same as we've always had in labour law for wrongful dismissal – that if you're reinstated you get seniority for the period in between. That's looking at it as a remedy to that individual who got turned down.

The second possibility is to look at it on a group basis and argue the group has suffered a disadvantage. The only way to rectify that disadvantage is to now give some benefits to the group. There are very reputable human rights thinkers who have said that is a sensible way of proceeding. Indeed, many people say the difference between Canada's approach and the U.S. approach is that we are more willing to address human rights from a group perspective.

If we were using constructive seniority we might say that a woman gets four weeks seniority, let's say, instead of two. A man who got hired on the same day may say, "Hey, why don't I get two weeks?" But at least a partial answer to that man is, "You don't get any less than you would have gotten without this program. She gets more, but you don't get

any less. So you haven't paid any price for this program." If we have the same kind of constructive seniority when we get to competitive things like layoffs, then the net effect is to say, "Gee, you've worked a year longer, you get laid off instead of her." And that, needless to say, doesn't always sit well.

Other ways to open up jobs

What I've tried to do is roughly, in order of contentiousness, set out various options, some of which have nothing to do strictly with seniority but are other ways to open up jobs.

The first one is a program of voluntary early retirement with incentives. Men in the higher positions leave, opening up jobs and if we have a decent number of women in the entry-level positions, it opens up positions for them to move up without affecting anybody's seniority. Now this costs something, obviously, but we know employers have been willing to have such programs in some circumstances. It won't always work. If you don't even have women in the entry-level positions, obviously it won't work. But sometimes it will work and it's worth thinking about.

The next one, which I think is absolutely required by law, is to eliminate those few cases where there are intentionally sex-segregated seniority lists. They used to have them in the fish industry where two people would be working along the same cutting table and you would have fish-cleaner male and fish-cleaner female and they would have separate wages and separate seniority lists and everything. One way is to integrate the seniority list.

A third possible option is called red-circling. In the case where a woman who wants to move from a clerical position to a potentially higher-paying job on the shop floor, but is discouraged because she will lose seniority or temporarily lose benefits, she might keep her wage and benefits package intact until such time as the new job matches the old job. From there on you can just go by the normal rules of the game. It means you get to keep your old wages and benefits even though the new job you moved to would normally have less pay or lower benefits.

People were mentioning this morning, how do you know that you like the new job until you see it and do it? Plant-wide seniority is a fourth way, allowing workers to keep their seniority when transferring and also the right to return to their old job without losing seniority.

VOICE: Would you keep your seniority from the past position?

Bill: I think if this is going to work you have to or seniority operates as a barrier.

The fifth such proposal for avoiding the effects of seniority, is training opportunities.
The sixth one I haven't seen anywhere, and I don't know quite how this would work. It would be to have a requirement that the employer justify layoffs, to build something into a collective agreement that the employer had to show it was really necessary to eliminate those jobs. Now that wouldn't be easy to get but it would help.

VOICE: I guess that was negotiated into the contracts I deal with because every time we try to lay somebody off we get grievances and that's exactly what they're asking us to prove – has the funding really been reduced and the program really been eliminated?

Bill: Okay, good! It's more feasible than I thought. It is possible to build contract language in a collective agreement that prohibits layoff in certain circumstances. So you might be able to eliminate the layoff entirely, which obviously eliminates the problem of deciding who gets laid off.

VOICE: It seems to me that rather than talk about who should be laid off in industrial workplaces we should be going for no-layoff clauses. I know in my collective agreement we have a no-layoff clause. I know some other unions have them and I think in certain industries that's what we have to go for. I think it's going to be more important now with free trade and things like that, to go for those kinds of clauses.

Bill: Okay, this is interesting, because I thought my suggestion was maybe unfeasible, and everybody's saying I didn't go far enough.

VOICE: To mix things up a little bit, my company has 40,000 employees. A few years from now we will have 25,000. With no-layoff clauses? No. And 85 percent of our workforce is unionized. It's just sometimes reality if you want to survive you have to continue with less employees. It's not an easy choice. It's not something we do because we like it, it's because we need to survive. Life is not all simple out there.

Bill: I am going to assume that's true if only because I have no excuse to talk about the rest of my list if it were all so easy. For whatever reasons not everybody is going to get a no-layoff clause, and there are other potential measures we might consider.

One that's already come up is to switch to plant-wide or company-wide seniority – so that when someone moves, she takes her seniority and benefits package with her. The advantages are that everyone can build up some security in the company, that men too have the right to change to jobs that are non-traditional and there may be more incentive to reduce the clerical/shop floor pay gap. There are some problems with this one, especially where you have separate unions. It obviously involves some co-operation between the different unions.

Plant-wide seniority often works well for women in companies where they are concentrated in clerical jobs while men are in the higher-paying jobs, and where by having company-wide or plant-wide seniority you allow women to cross over. But it does nothing, for example, for native people who don't have any jobs in any part of the company at all.

Other considerations

Another problem that needs consideration is concern about all kinds of discrimination, not just women. Plant-wide seniority often works well for women in companies where they are concentrated in clerical jobs while men are in the higher-paying jobs, and where by having company-wide or plant-wide seniority you allow women to cross over. But it does nothing, for example, for native people who don't have any jobs in any part of the company at all. In some ways it can even make it harder for native people to get entry-level jobs, as there are fewer openings if they are being filled internally. It's something we have to think about in coming up with a good solution for women: that it's not a non-solution and maybe a hindrance for other groups.

How one deals with bumping can also be an issue. One way is to say, "We integrate the list tomorrow morning. Everybody has the seniority they have tomorrow morning." If everybody has the right to bump tomorrow morning, the effect would be considerable dislocation. It's disastrous, I think, if you don't have the training. People would say, "I would love to get into that other job in six months but right now I don't have the skills yet because I never thought I had the chance." It wouldn't take the potential for training into account and it could even operate to the disadvantage of women. And there are other options.

You could try staged bumping, no right to bump initially but the right to the first opening, so that it isn't a question of bumping but of waiting for an opening. There's a whole range of options in between. It's something to think about in the contract language. It's probably better if the contract language deals with the bumping issue rather than just leaving that to happenstance or whatever happens to be currently in the collective agreement. We're dealing with a whole new problem. Whatever is in the collective agreement now may not be the satisfactory language to deal with that problem.

Another option comes up with regard to promotions and relates to the question of bumping. Let's say you deserve that higher job but we have decided in light of the problems of dislocation that a woman, while she deserves that higher job, won't get it until there is an opening. One proposal has been

that she stay in her present job and get what is sometimes been called front pay. In other words she will stay in her present job and get paid for the job she should have been in, until it opens up. That will cost the employer something and there's going to be some price to pay in some other part of the bargaining process, but it is a way to get women something they deserve immediately and not have the dislocation that immediate bumping would sometimes have re training, etc.

VOICE: I am a little unclear when you are talking about company-wide seniority. Why there is a problem of bumping? Are you talking about instituting company-wide seniority after you've had separate lists?

Bill: Yes.

VOICE: And the bumping then refers to layoffs happening at the same time?

Bill: The problem I heard as an example, somebody I teach with told me this happened.... He was working in the summer, a sleeping car conductor when you had to be white to be that. Even in Canada. If you were black you were a porter. The collective agreement said the most senior people got to be sleeping car conductors. It was found to be discriminatory so they merged the two unions. Instantly, most of the porters had the right to bump most of the sleeping car conductors. What they did then, was build in some kind of graduated scheme so there wasn't just wholesale switching of jobs the next day. That depends on the terms of your collective agreement and not every collective agreement would give that right of bumping. If it doesn't, then that's not a problem. I just wanted to raise that it may be a problem by the terms of some collective agreements.

Another possibility is constructive or retroactive seniority. We talked about it in conjunction with benefits. If we can show a history of keeping women out of these jobs, we will say, "In the absence of that kind of discrimination women would have, on average, five years seniority, instead of the two they do have. Therefore, as a remedial measure, we'll give all women three years seniority." Just add three years on to the seniority. This does means sometimes women will jump ahead of those hired on earlier. Its biggest risk is that it could divide the union. That is certainly a cause for worry. But it's at least one of the options that should be considered, if only to remind ourselves that even if women agree not to use options like this, they have a right to demand pretty hard. Where they are doing the men a favour by not demanding such an option, they should be able to say, "You'd better give us a pretty good alternative program. We've done our share here towards worker solidarity."

If you give constructive seniority on individual basis, it's not so contentious, if an individual can say, "I should have got that promotion three years ago." I don't think it's too contentious to say, "You should get three years seniority in that new position." When you say the group should get it, "We will give every woman two years of constructive seniority on the grounds that women as a group should have two years more," that obviously is more contentious. Something to think about.

Another option is proportional promotions. In other words, we will say 50 percent of promotions will be female, and just have a proportional number of promotions for men and women. Now some kind of goal is going to be a part of any effective Employment Equity program. A lot of terminology gets in our way here. Quotas to some people mean we will promote a woman or anyone else into a job they know nothing about, and we'll grab anybody off the street and say you're going to be president of the company. That isn't the way it has worked in any program anywhere. When we talk about quotas we assume the availability of a qualified or qualifiable workers, that the person who gets the job always must meet the minimum qualifications for that job. Looked at that way, talking about quotas on the one hand and goals and timetables on the other, the difference narrows somewhat.

VOICE: I can see how you can do that with management positions but if you're talking trade unions, seniority is a governing factor in most selections – a minimum qualified, senior qualified candidate. So how do you have two things going at the same time? You have a target or a quota system, you also have a seniority clause in your agreement.

Bill: What you have to do to some extent is modify the seniority clause.

VOICE: How realistic do you really think that is? In our trade union for Ontario Hydro, there is no way the union goes to bat for any of the women's issues. There are very few women involved in the union.

Bill: I am not going to take sides as to how the union has done but if you have to have an Employment Equity plan, if there is an effective enforcement of that Employment Equity plan, you have to make some modification because otherwise you won't get women into those jobs. And the answer for the union will be it's illegal to stick with that plan if that's the way it operates.

Indeed, even without Employment Equity, there is a significant possibility that the existing seniority provision has a discriminatory effect on women. Women don't get promoted because of it. Let's assume that is true in that particular situation. That is what we call *prima facie*, on its face, discrimination. On its face, you've won your case. Then the employer or the union has to come back and show this requirement is reasonably necessary to the performance of the job. And it may be, in light of these other options, if you don't consider any of those options the tribunal will say, "It is not reasonably necessary to the job and therefore we declare that part of the collective agreement to be in violation of the Human Rights Code so you can no longer enforce it."

From the union's point of view in representing the interests of men and women, it's a lot better for the union to say, "If we try to push the existing seniority too far, we can lose the whole game. Now let us look at some of these other options and try to come up with an option that we think is the best for our members rather than waiting for a Human Rights Tribunal to choose the option which may not be the option that's best for all the members."

So the answer may be that it's illegal, that ultimately the union will go along for the same reason that the union will go along with pay equity in Ontario because it's against the law not to.

VOICE: A collective agreement should be reviewed the same way any other employment system should be reviewed. The collective agreement is part of the employment system and if you can prove any one of those clauses brings about a discriminatory effect on women or on blacks or on natives, you can have a *prima facie* case of discrimination. Because the onus is on the employer to bring about systemic changes, an awful lot of employers may catch on to that and really use it as a very heavy tool and the unions need to recognize that. You cannot negotiate justice. You can only negotiate certain measures. You can't negotiate equity. That's non-negotiable.

Seniority tends to be viewed as human rights on one side and trade union rights on the other, fighting with each other. There are situations where we have to resolve some conflict, but I think we should remind ourselves first of the ways seniority and human rights are complementary.

Bill: We have the strange situation at the federal level that those employers in the federal sector that are subject to Employment Equity have a duty to implement a plan but it's not enforceable. They aren't punished if they don't. Now frankly I think that's unfair to the employers because it puts them in a horrible middle ground. Either they cynically violate the law, saying, "Ha ha, you can't punish us," or they try to implement it, in which case the union says, "Well, we're not going along with that and you don't have to go along with it either because it's not really enforceable."

That's a defect in the federal plan. Even at the provincial level, even under the Canadian Human Rights Act we have somewhat the same problem and I think it's a head in the sands attitude to say, "Well, we're just going to wait until lightning strikes." It's much better to think through, "What are the options we think we can live with? What are the options that at least grudgingly we can sell to all our members?" and then try to get that at the next agreement. Or at least to be prepared if that Human Rights case happens, to know exactly what you are willing to look at.

If you think proportional promotions with some kind of goals and timetables and exceptions to promotions based on seniority are somewhat controversial, my next option is proportional layoffs – that if women should be 13 percent of the workforce, or are 13 percent of the workforce after they finally move up, when we lay off, only 13 percent of the layoffs will be women. Otherwise, women have the least seniority, and 80 percent of the women would be laid off if we followed the normal seniority provisions. The mechanism for this would be to have separate seniority lists for men and women and to lay off on the basis of the separate list but proportional layoffs is the ultimate effect. Now this has the great advantage of developing employment equity. You lose a little bit of your gains on the down cycle but you don't lose them all because you don't lay off 80 percent of the women as you would in the other. It may not be easy to sell it, but we all have to keep facing this point: in a cycle industry with an Employment Equity plan, we can work really hard for five years during the boom and lose everything in the next downturn. Stelco is a perfect example.

Another possible option is seniority for periods off work, certainly seniority for periods off work for maternity and pregnancy. Where you not only don't lose the seniority you have but you continue to get seniority for that period. Another version would include maintaining seniority during the layoff. For the purposes of seniority, women during the layoff will be treated as if they had continued to be working. So that if they finally get rehired they haven't had their seniority frozen and they certainly haven't lost it; they've gained two years seniority in the meantime. Which at least in the next down cycle puts you a bit ahead and the problem isn't quite as big as it otherwise would be.

Other possibilities

I just wanted to mention some possibilities other than seniority really quickly. I could have put in my "require the employer to justify the layoff" at this stage because it comes in this category. Others include overtime bans and rotating layoffs, everybody gets laid off if there are any layoffs at all. Instead of saying, "Those with the least seniority get laid off until they are rehired," there would be some kind of rotation. Periodic shutdowns and work-sharing. All those would at least keep women on the job, even periodically, and therefore would be better than completely losing the job for two years because women don't have the seniority.

VOICE: At lunch today I talked to someone with the CSN, one of the unions in Quebec, and they were telling me about their Affirmative Action provisions and their seniority provisions and it just blew me away. What they were saying is, even in some internal hirings and in some external hirings and some layoffs, they have it that every second layoff, or every second hiring, will be done on seniority and prefer a woman and it seems to me they are miles ahead of what we have here. I was just wondering if there was anyone here from CSN who could give us the details. I mean they worked for ten years to get it. That seems to be something we can see as a gain unions have made in terms of women and I was wondering if we could get any further information.

VOICE: Yeah, I've heard of that and that's what I say the unions have to do. CSN has worked quite closely with us as consultants to try and... this is at the federation level, I mean, I don't mean that every local union is ready to do that, that's why you've got to get, for instance, the federation and the confederation level to help either local women or the employer at the local level to educate their unions. Because you can't go out and get that tomorrow. You have to talk it out or negotiate it out, but you'll never negotiate it if there are no women in that bargaining unit. So what has to happen if you know women already in the bargaining unit, you've got to have an employer that's willing to go over the heads of the local bargaining unit to the federation and say, "This is what your policy says, now how are you going to implement it at the local level?"

That's one thing, the other thing that I must say for the CSN is: recently an employer who is a federal contractor had two women who were infiltrating non-traditional jobs in a Quebec plant. These women did not pass their probationary period, they never became union members, but the CSN has helped them prepare a brief to the Human Rights Commission and they are going for systemic discrimination because they'll never become union members at that rate. We've worked with the employer, with the Equity coordinator. Actually, the Equity coordinator is quite pleased this is happening – it will help her job immensely. We've got to see this as positive action that will break down certain barriers. We can't see it as necessarily a confrontational issue as, "Oh, isn't this awful. I'm the coordinator within this place of work and the union is going against me and they're going to institute a complaint." I think sometimes the complaint really helps.

VOICE: Just a thought that it's important to negotiate that kind of language long before the language is actually needed. An example is tech change. Telecommunications workers got incredible language in the contract because the company thought, "We'll never use it," but it's there. Of course, once it's there it's more difficult for the company to get rid of it. Anyway it may be the same kind of thinking with some protection for women before there are a lot of them, in that everybody will think, "Oh well, it will never be used," and then it is there for the protection when it is necessary.

Bill: I agree fully. It works in terms of negotiating with management. It also means that we don't face the situation where somebody is voting on a contract where they say, "Hey, if this goes through I lose my job tomorrow."

Unions are democratic organizations. If women don't have their fair share of say within the union, it's natural that women's issues won't be given the attention they deserve. So we need to work on women's representation on that level as well.

So there are options to think about. My conclusions are Employment Equity is the necessary next step. I'd like to see a better Employment Equity plan at the federal level, but we have to give some credit; most provinces don't have any at all. So better to have a plan that maybe could be strengthened than no plan at all. I think seniority is sure to arise as a problem, even likely to arise where we don't have Employment Equity requirements. Workers should be ready with plans.This leads to my final point. Unions are democratic organizations. If women don't have their fair share of say within the union, it's natural that women's issues won't be given the attention they deserve. So we need to work on women's representation on that level as well.

Bill Black is a law professor at UBC where he teaches Human Rights Law and is doing a study of unions and equality. He's also a research director of the Human Rights Centre of the University of Ottawa, working on a research project on systemic discrimination.

CHAPTER 21

Employment Equity: The nuts and bolts

Workshop coordinators
Donna Huminicki and Deb Kobilansky

Donna Huminicki, from Manitoba Hydro, and Deb Kobilansky, from B.C. Telephone, discuss the initiatives taken by their companies to implement employment equity. Regretfully, due to the poor quality of the recording of Deb's part of the workshop, we were able to retrieve very little of her excellent presentation.

Donna: There is ample evidence in all sectors of society that equal access to employment has been denied to certain groups because of their sex, racial or ethnic characteristics, or disability. This situation not only violates basic human rights but also hinders economic growth by preventing full participation of skilled individuals from designated groups. Women, natives, visible minorities, and persons with disabilities face different but significant disadvantages in employment. Such disadvantages include occupational segregation, pay inequity and limited progression.

Affirmative Action, or Employment Equity, is a process of developing and implementing employment practices designed to improve the status of these target groups. It is consistent with hiring and promoting qualified people and it values the diversity of our community.

Background

In June, 1983, the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board approved an Affirmative Action policy and the following statement was issued by then-president John Arnason:

> "Manitoba Hydro is committed to the concept of Affirmative Action, to remove existing barriers and to enhance promotion and equality of treatment within Manitoba Hydro for women, physically disabled persons, and persons of native ancestry.
>
> It is the intention of Manitoba Hydro to ensure that Manitobans within the target groups, underrepresented in the employ of Manitoba Hydro, have access to employment and opportunity for career path development within Manitoba Hydro, while recognizing the existing rights pursuant to the collective agreements between the various parties and the necessity of maintaining safety standards."

The policy was revised in 1987 to include those persons who are, because of their racial origin, a visible minority.

Baseline data collected in 1985 showed that women were underrepresented in all categories except clerical jobs.

The strong support articulated by the president paved the way for program implementation.

Affirmative Action development plan

I. Planning

Planning involved a clear statement of executive support and accountability. In June, 1983, a senior vice-president assumed responsibility for the program. A review committee with representatives from various unions was established. Resources, both human and financial were committed.

II. Analysis

This involved a workforce analysis to determine the representation of designated groups within the corporation. Baseline data collected in 1985 showed that women were underrepresented in all categories except clerical jobs.

Analysis also included a review of employment systems to determine whether there are policies or procedures which have an adverse impact on certain groups. Analysis was undertaken in recruitment, selection, training, promotion and so on. The key criteria during this analysis were:

Legality: does the policy conform to existing human rights legislation; e.g., are the pre-employment inquiries we make regarding age and marital status legal?

Consistency: are the policies or practices applied in an equitable manner; e.g., are the same interview questions asked of both males and females?

Adverse impact: is there unequal impact on target versus non-target group members; e.g., does the requirement for math and physics for our training program prohibit certain groups from entering that particular area?

Validity: does the practice accomplish its predictive or evaluative function by objective methods; e.g., do the pre-employment tests actually predict future performance on the job?

Job relatedness: is the practice based on a *bona fide* occupational requirement; e.g., does a clerk really need a driver's licence?

Business necessity: is the practice necessary for the safe and efficient operation of the business; e.g., it would not be possible for a colour-blind technical operator trainee to distinguish the different coloured wires on an operating panel.

III. Design

The third step in the development of the plan is that of design and involves four essential elements.

1. Goals

Long-term numerical goals were established through a community analysis which predicted target group representation in the overall labour force. The target for women is 50 percent since they are assumed to represent 50 percent of the labour force.

Short-term goals are established by taking into account labour force trends and availability of qualified target group members. Managers have been provided with guidelines to assist them in their Affirmative Action responsibilities but there are no fixed goals or quotas at this time.

The setting of short-term goals permits measurement of the effectiveness of Affirmative Action initiatives.

2. Fair Employment Systems

This involves eliminating practices which have an unjustifiable, negative effect on target groups and replacing them with fair practices.

3. Temporary Special Measures

These are introduced to remedy the effects of past practices and usually take the form of special training programs and recruitment drives.

4. Monitoring Systems

The development of monitoring systems involves an ongoing analysis of target group participation rates, movement and turnover within the corporation.

IV. Implementation

This phase begins as plans turn into actions and measures are implemented, monitored and evaluated. Specific initiatives have been developed by Manitoba Hydro to recruit qualified target group members into input positions, to promote community awareness of our job requirements, and to promote career progression opportunities for our present employees.

Career days. Staff respond to requests from schools and community groups to provide employment and career information as well as to act as role models to students in all areas of the province.

Temporary Special Measures ... are introduced to remedy the effects of past practices and usually take the form of special training programs and recruitment drives.

Outreach recruitment. Develop working relationships with external sources and groups representing target groups for the purpose of communication, recruitment and identification of employment barriers.

Pre-technical training. Develop programs to help students acquire the prerequisites for our training programs.

Community advisors. Affirmative Action staff participate as advisors to community-based programs, such as the Pre-trade/ Pre-technology For Women programs at Red River Community College.

Scholarships. Offer scholarships to encourage outstanding target group students to enter engineering, computer science and related technological fields. The awards are in the amount of $600 each and include the first option for summer employment following the successful completion of the first year of study.

Food-for-thought noon-hour symposiums. A series of lunch hour skill-builders, particularly for women, were held including "Balancing Home and Career" and "Time Management."

Career Development Program. A pilot program to provide an opportunity for employees in dead-end jobs to develop the competency needed to bridge into other occupational areas. Involves an individualized competency-based training process utilizing on-the-job experience and any necessary academic upgrading.

Technical/trades orientation. Non-traditional Career Exploration Days provided employees with an opportunity to talk with people in the trades, view tapes and photographs of the work performed, and gather information regarding duties involved and qualifications required.

A survey was developed to gauge the number of females interested in entering the technical/trades occupations. Preliminary results indicate 58 are interested but the major drawback to the programs we offer is the requirement that the individual be available to go anywhere in the province during the first four years of the training program. As a result it was mainly young females without families who were willing to consider trades as an alternative to what they were doing.

Accessibility/technical aids. Included renovations to dormitories to provide appropriate washroom facilities and sleeping quarters for female trainees and technicians.

Employment systems review. Included the following:

- established effective means of communicating openings to the external community
- compiling an extensive target group inventory of applicants
- revised application forms in accordance with the Human Rights Code

- reviewed employment tests for the purposes of validation
- developed a process to determine accessibility of corporate buildings as a means of determining the physical demands of our positions

Results
One means of objectively trying to assess the effectiveness of the initiatives is to compare our current internal labour force data with the baseline figures collected in 1985. Comparison of the March, 1985 data to March, 1988 data, indicates the following:

- Within the executive grouping women increased their representation from 5.9 percent to 13.6 percent (three out of 22 positions).
- Within engineering and support, women more than doubled their representation (from 3.1 to 6.5 percent) through the recruitment or promotion of ten engineers, 14 engineering aides and one chemist. Women now hold 43 of 658 positions.
- Within management and administration women made significant inroads primarily by 14 women moving into accounting, eight into personnel and administration, and three into purchasing. Women now hold 149 of 705 positions (21.1 percent).
- Within the clerical job families one does not track women as there appear to be no barriers to their employment in this area.
- Within operating and construction, the largest grouping, women's participation has increased from 1.0 percent to 1.4 percent (30 of 2091 positions).

As you can see, there has been fairly rapid progress towards long-term goals in some areas from 1985 to 1988; however, programs in other areas have moved much slower. This reflects the realities of our employment system, our human resource needs, and the realities of our present workforce. The apparent underrepresentation of target group members with the necessary qualifications and experience within our present employee population is indicative of the external labour force in which we are located.

The Affirmative Action process is a temporary phenomenon designed to change existing practices such that fair employment systems eventually become the way in which the corporation does business. Our role is to identify the issues, initiate appropriate changes and ensure their continuity.

Our plan for the future involves continued support for the initiatives which have been mentioned. Ongoing systems review and monitoring of target group progress, identification of career routes and priority areas for action, and investigation of Human Rights and sexual harassment allegations are planned.

The Affirmative Action area hopes to lead the corporation towards an employment system free of artificial barriers and towards one that provides equitable employment opportunities which will benefit all employees and achieve a workforce representative of the Manitoba population.

It's been very important for us that we have a consultative process with the union because to further employment equity in our organization we need the cooperation of both parties and the current collective agreement supports that.

B.C. Telephone supports equal opportunity
Deb: Employment equity means eliminating employment disadvantages experienced by women, aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and those who because of their race or colour are seen as a minority in Canada.

Equal Opportunity programs have been an integral part of B.C. Tel's Human Resources Management strategies for several years and they've been quite successful. The Employment Equity legislation has just raised the profile of a lot of existing programs.

It's been very important for us that we have a consultative process with the union because to further employment equity in our organization we need the cooperation of both parties and the current collective agreement supports that.

B.C. Tel, as do all other telephone companies, has a large number of women in the workforce, 43 percent, which is comparable to the number of women available in the workforce in B.C. So we're on board there, but the question is where the women are, what positions they fill. What we need to do is develop those people and encourage them to move into more creative and non-traditional, higher-paying positions.

Our organization has always been very supportive of the development and education of our employees. We have the largest corporate training institute in Western Canada for our employees. B.C. Tel also supports a very liberal tuition refund policy. If you're interested in going into the technical side of things and want to become a computer programmer, we simply identify that in your career plan and if you're successful in the course of your choice, you are reimbursed.

In addition, we have formalized the career planning process. You sit down with your manager and identify areas you're interested in and your manager then has the responsibility to say, "This is likely a position you can go into based on the experience you have." Or if you don't have the expertise, the manager will contact the manager of that area or department and determine what skills, work experience and education are necessary before you would be considered a candidate for that position.

Donna Huminicki, Career Development Coordinator at Manitoba Hydro, is responsible for implementing a program designed to help employees bridge into job families that offer a degree of career mobility. Huminicki is also involved in developing a joint pre-trades orientation program with two other major employers in Winnipeg. The goal of the program will be to prepare female employees to compete successfully for training opportunities which come available within their corporations.

Deb Kobilansky is employed in the Employment Equity Division of B.C Telephone developing and implementing employment equity programs.

CHAPTER 22

A comprehensive affirmative action plan

Workshop coordinator
Kerry Kellough

The Department of National Defense (DND) has taken a trailbreaking role in getting women into jobs previously unthought of for women. Kerry Kellough gives an overview of Affirmative Action/Employment Equity planning and focuses on the target-setting exercise and accountability.

This session looks at implementing an Employment Equity or Affirmative Action plan. To try and talk about that issue in the fullest extent would take more time than we have. I'd like to give a short overview, and then hone in on one particular area that is essential to any Employment Equity plan, setting numerical targets. Though it can be a very complex issue, it's a key item in the overall planning for Employment Equity.

Attitudes to women in the department

National Defense is a very traditional department with many operational, professional and technical jobs, often defined as non-traditional for women. People have varying opinions on women working in these. Some are positive, some are sitting on the fence, others question, "Is this the right place for a woman to be?" and still others say, "This is a bunch of junk."
Basically there are these three types of attitudes.

So, as in any planning process, there is some educational groundwork that needs to take place. We are talking to managers, and on a continual basis at the senior level. We needed to produce some educational material to reflect the problems that can occur, but also, to show that things are working.

We produced two videos. One is called "I Can Do That" and it focuses on the experience of women in non-traditional areas within the Department of National Defense. The other film is called "Keeping an Open Mind." Dealing with all four Employment Equity target groups, it is also a good film for managers.

Workforce analysis

Federal government departments and crown corporations were directed by the Treasury Board to do a workforce analysis of their total workforce to determine how many of the target groups (women, aboriginal people, visible minorities, and people with disabilities) were currently employed. The analysis also

Our specific action plans also include ... actual numbers called numerical targets ... and the support measures necessary to assist us to meet our goals.

went deeper than that. We had to look at everything, from which occupational and salary groupings they were in to how many training courses, development opportunities and promotions they were given.

The report is literally two and a half inches thick because of the amount of analysis needed to look at what you've got in the department right now. We combined that with an Employment Systems review. We did a review of the policies and programs we've already got in place for hiring within the department or in the public service, training and evaluating.

You do the workforce analysis and the Employment Systems review, and then you say, "What are the shortfalls? Where do you see the problems, given the analysis?" Then we develop an Employment Equity plan.

When you develop a plan you must set some very specific targets, actual numbers called numerical targets. We had to present those to the Treasury Board, with timetables for implementation.

Targets and timetables

Our specific action plans also include initiatives and programs for accomplishing the task, including training courses, developmental and educational opportunities, audiovisuals, etc. – the support measures necessary to assist us to meet our goals.

What is involved when we say departments or private industry or crown corporations must set numerical targets? In the Department of National Defense, because of our size, we have a relatively complex system. The goal of numerical target setting is not equality, it's equity and that's the whole key issue. Without knowing that difference you would probably have a difficult time discussing the more technical aspects of Employment Equity. Equity is dispensed based on a series of complex formulas; equality is 50-50. Fifty percent for the representation that is in the workforce.

Numerical targets are set based on projected vacancies and the proportion of target group members within the workforce having the appropriate qualifications. That's really the key. The bottom line says, they are not quotas, but a measure of success of ideas, individual efforts and action plan initiatives.

For example, in the Department of National Defense we have, on the civilian side, approximately 37,000 people. We have another 85,000 military. My division deals only with the civilian side. One of the ideas was to set numerical targets.

Numerical target-setting formula

***Step I* — Determining the number of projected vacancies**

A — Present population x growth rate = projected vacancies as a result of growth

B — Present population x separation rate = projected vacancies as a result of separations

C — Result of A + result of B = total no. of projected vacancies

***Step II* — Determining potential numerical targets**

A — No. of projected vacancies x estimated availability indicators = potential target

B — Suggested target analyzed and reviewed by management = estimated target

***Step III* — Projected representation at end of period**

(Projected number of target group members at end of period) + (Projected population at end of period) x 100 = Projected representation

The Treasury Board really didn't have many guidelines for setting numerical targets. We developed our own system and there are various systems that you can develop. One of the easiest is pure guesswork. The other is to try and develop some sense to the system that adds some rationale to it.

When you're dealing with a management program, whether it's a controversial one like Employment Equity or it's designing a new ship, people need some specifics. They want some solid ground rules to deal with. For example, in one of our occupational groups, we'll call it occupational group X, you may have a thousand people, various mixes of men and women. Of the proposed target group members of the workforce, having appropriate qualifications – let's say this is a technician type of group – 20 percent of the available workforce are women. The approach of some consultants to this would be to say, DND had 1,000 people in that particular occupational group, so you take 1,000 times 20 percent and our target was what? Two hundred women in that group. Simple, but it's the wrong answer. It's not that simple, unfortunately.

This long-term goal seems to make sense, yes, again, based on equality. With equity, you are not saying 50 percent of this work should be women; it's based on availability. The availability is above 20 percent, so we should be around there.

We set targets for three- to five-year periods so what you have to say is, "What's going to happen in that group of 1,000 people in the next period of time?" How many staffing actions will take place? For example, let me go through the thousand people: if you're only going to have 20 vacancies over the next three years, you sure as hell can't get 200 women in there, it's impossible. So what we tried to do was calculate how many vacancies we thought we were going to have and then we would look at the availability. The number of projected vacancies times the availability indicator of women, times 80 percent, equals the projected numerical target.

Why times 80 percent? The Public Service Commission provides availability data on women and other designated groups in the marketplace, compiled from Statistics Canada. The Public Service Commission manipulates the data and tells us what the availability of women is in various areas. Now they readily admit the analysis at this stage is not very sophisticated. So they said, when you're studying your targets, as long as they are within 80 percent of that number you are all right. There's something the matter with that philosophy.

VOICE: But 20 percent is an awfully wide margin, is it not?

Kerry: Well, that's part of it, yes. The problem is they are saying 80 percent. Well, the availability could be the other way, it could be 120 percent. So, if you're within 80 percent of the availability, that works fine but it could also be that the availability indicator is way too low. So for our purposes we take 100 percent of the availability indicator. It's the best we can do at this stage.

In DND, as an example, we have a group of 1000 people, it doesn't matter how many women are in it, it could be only 10 percent, for that matter. The Public Service Commission comes along with data provided by Statistics Canada and says, the availability in the marketplace of women that have that kind of skill and background is approximately 20 percent.

VOICE: Say you're trying to bring on someone who is an apprentice ironworker and they don't have the skills or qualifications to fit into that category, so are you basically interested in looking at people who have already gotten the training? Is that figured into the formula?

Kerry: Well, it is by Statistics Canada. The questions you're asking show the data is not as good as it should be and everybody is willing to admit that. That's the problem, all those things you could bring up, what about this, what about that? StatsCan through its statistical manipulation is trying to factor that in. There's no question these numbers are inaccurate, but it's the best we've got. And from a corporate planning perspective, we have to use something as a baseline.

It might be worthwhile to look at how much is involved to come up with numbers for managers to deal with. If you've got a large group of people and we say, "We must increase the number of women in that group," there is the problem with setting quotas. It may be an impossible task to reach what looks like a modest goal over a short period of time. If, for example, we have in this group, say 100 vacancies and we have to staff 100 women into that when the availability indicator is only 20 percent – now that may not be accurate, it may be 15 percent or it may be 30 percent – but I think everybody may agree, the availability isn't 100 percent.

What you have to do is figure out when these things are going to happen. So what we do is take the present population, times the growth rate, if there is a growth rate, and sometimes the department is obviously decreasing in growth. We're going down in numbers. We're not going up unfortunately. But we must increase target group members. How? That's an excellent question. Because it's certainly one that the Treasury Board battles with. The government is supporting Employment Equity, so it certainly makes it very difficult if we're also downsizing but that is also the policy of the government. The two, trying to weigh things together is difficult. We come up with projected vacancies as a result of growth, then we look at the present population times the separation rate. How many people are leaving? So you simply add the two of them together and then you're going to have the number of vacancies.

In our example, we came out with 100. Overall you're going to have 100 vacancies over the next three years. Now we've got something to work with. Previously, managers found affirmative action, equal opportunity, was extremely frustrating because it was so vague. They were told, "Go out and do something for women." "But what?" "I don't know." "Well, how much do we have to do?" "What do you want us to do?" "I don't know." And so managers got a very negative reaction. Even ones that were willing to say, "What do I do? Help!"

Here, we are telling them numerically what the expectations are. It isn't an impossible task. At DND the managers, especially the military people, like things to be ordered. If they can see some sense to it, they don't always have to agree with it, but you've got a better chance of having some support.

So that tells us something of vacancies. Then we determine the potential numerical parts. Take the number of projected vacancies times the estimated availability indicators. The suggested target is then analyzed and reviewed by management and that equals the estimated target.

The analysis also went deeper than that. We had to look at everything, from which occupational and salary groupings they were in to how many training courses, development opportunities and promotions they were given.

Remember, this is all just numbers done at headquarters by myself and the staff. We then sit down with managers. They find it valuable because I'm not just telling them about what's going on in Employment Equity, I'm telling them what's happening in their groups. We are sitting down and saying, I think you're going to have so many staffing opportunities over the next three years, what are you doing with it? We're talking about something that can help managers. We'll always be putting emphasis on the employment equity aspect but it's not just that, it's being integrated into the planning process. It's not easy and the department is struggling with it, but you've got support now.

We do the research and tell them over a four-year period how many people are leaving and we compare the normal separation rate with the separation rate in general with the separation rate of women. So if it stands out that the women are separating at a higher rate than men, maybe we have a problem there.

We look at the availability throughout the marketplace and then we calculate. So managers get a detailed chart, and we break it down into the various commands and regions.

VOICE: Now that they know what they have to do, what's the time in which they have to follow through on this action?

Kerry: The managers then decide whether the targets set at headquarters make sense. They should know their occupational groups better than anybody.

If they agree with the target, fine. It then gets fed back to my office. If they don't agree with the targets, then maybe they should go up and surprisingly, they do sometimes go up. They may wish to go down. If it's above or below, we ask for an explanation. It may be 18, it may be 21, but if they come back and say, "No way, we're only going to have five," then we ask why. If they don't have a good rationale, what happens? Well, as a matter of fact it goes to the Deputy Minister and he will review this.

The first year we did this, when we went to the senior committee, they sent it back and said that, in a number of cases, our targets weren't good enough. This past year they didn't. In virtually every case they were very close to what we projected. The rationale seemed to make sense.

If we get a woman firefighter, we're very happy. That woman firefighter is qualified. She can do the job. She's not out there hoping she knows how to put out the fire.

Then we send all this data to the Treasury Board and they review what the department has done. They look at our numbers, at targets and say, "Why were they that?" and "Why aren't they this?" There's always a question, to have the targets as high as possible. And we have to explain whatever the rationale is for those targets. DND's targets have been accepted completely by the Treasury Board. In total. We're one of the few departments that had that because we have a very detailed system of how we come up with calculating those targets. In other words, it's not guesswork. It's based on a system that is checked and reviewed.

So in fact, the only one they asked to raise targets from what we calculated were on the management category, that is the most senior levels. Our target was based on the availability indicators. I think it was 12 percent in the management category, so our numbers were quite low – the actual number of women we felt could get into management categories. The target has been to increase those numbers even though statistically it doesn't seem possible. What has happened in the past three years in the department, is that we can actually see our targets for the management categories every year. To be perfectly honest with you, we still have a very low figure. Three years ago, it was zero. Zero women in the management category in DND, but right now we have eight women in the most senior positions in the department. And you think, the nature of DND, eight women in three years is considerable given the small size and the number of vacancies in the management category.

That in a nutshell is the system that's involved and this just shows an example of the type of thing we've been talking about where we take a group, project the vacancies, times the estimated availability and you come up with a target.

These women are qualified for the jobs

VOICE: Do you decide a certain position will be posted? I'm starting to feel like a target number here. It's my feeling perhaps I'm just a token number, hired simply on the fact I'm a woman and not because of what I can do, and it scares me a little. I would rather not have had the job if it was simply to fill a position. I would rather somebody hire me for my knowledge and what I know.

Kerry: I would definitely not feel that. I'll be perfectly blunt with you. If we get a woman firefighter, we're very happy. That woman

firefighter is qualified. She can do the job. She's not out there hoping she knows how to put out the fire. Or a woman engineer, they know the job. That question often comes from managers. "Do I have to hire an unqualified woman to get my numbers up?" The Treasury Board president writes the Minister of National Defense and tells him, after analyzing all our targets, whether he agrees with the targets and that gives you a goal for the next three years. Or if he doesn't agree with them, you're going to have to up them. And as I say, in our letter we usually agree we will up the targets for the women in the management category and in fact we decided we would up our targets for the disabled – but I'm holding my discussion just to women. Every department gets this, in some of the departments none of the targets were accepted. They had to redo the whole thing. There is a very strong check and it is part of the Deputy Minister's appraisal, his annual assessment.

VOICE: You also have to look at what's going to get me in there. I've got the qualifications. If I'm going to get the job because I happen to be a woman, I'm going to succeed, regardless. If discrimination is happening against me, or against women for so long, then I'm going to use it for me in reverse for a change. I'm not going to feel guilty that I was hired to fill a number because I know what I am. I've got a point, I'll use it. It's just as good in my pocket, the money, as it is in someone else's.

Kerry: I don't envy you at all. I guess the advantage of being a man, in a way, is I don't have to think of this. I got out of school and I knew I'd have to work and knew what I had to do and there was no problem.

Hopefully you can find some males that do try and assist you but you will find some that don't. Yet, it's going to be tougher. In the two days I've been here, I've heard a lot of things that have probably been accurate but have been negative, and I think there have been some positive things happening. I really do, and I think there's a long way to go but boy, it's not like it was 10 years ago. These issues, you wouldn't even talk about... management would not even listen to these things. Management asked me and my response to them is – when you have two candidates that are equally qualified, one is a man and one is a woman, what do you do? – I say we are supporting a government program and he as a manager has to decide his support for that and if that support means he's going to hire you instead of me, that's what's in government policy and you shouldn't feel at all guilty about that.

Management is accountable

Management is responsible for the implementation of affirmative action, employment equity, and is accountable for achieving results. Some managers don't like that. All I'm doing is providing management with guidance to the system. They're responsible and if they don't achieve the results, yes, the DM is personally going to ask me, and I go out from the DM's and ask the senior managers, "Why didn't you?" So they're responsible.

VOICE: How accountable?

Kerry: They're accountable in the sense that all senior management appraisals include evaluation on it. Right up to the DM. The Prime Minister himself reviews those appraisals and that could mean that actually the DM could be released. Treasury Board tells us what our targets are, we better have a bloody good reason if we didn't meet them because there's hell to pay for it. There isn't a lot of sanction like we're going to take $10,000,000 away from you.

VOICE: That's where you'd hurt though.

Kerry: I don't know, if you are a senior manager and your appraisal comes up negatively, there can be many consequences. I don't want to leave the impression if you're .5 percent under your target, you're going to lose this much money, etc.... It's not that finite and hopefully it doesn't get to that.

VOICE: It has to be strong enough that they have to....

Kerry: It sure does and that's a problem with the Equal Opportunities program. It was the most wishy-washy thing I've ever seen. No sort of analysis done, or what could be done or what are your targets. There were no

targets. Just go and do something to keep them quiet, so to speak. Now we have to report to Treasury Board every year. Now we have to tell them if we did it or not and why we didn't if we didn't. What happened. It's everybody's responsibility.

Of course, as I say, we do a lot more checking. We want to see what's happening in competition. We're doing a detailed analysis to see how many women are being referred to positions and how many are being successful when they do get referred. We're doing a human resources planning job for management.

[W]e are supporting a government program and he as a manager has to decide his support for that and if that support means he's going to hire you instead of me, that's what's in government policy and you shouldn't feel at all guilty about that.

What's a target and what's a quota?

VOICE: In dealing with targets or quotas, you had something on the screen that said these were not quotas. The experience I've had is that the goals, even though they may not be a mandatory quota, are perceived as being unofficial quotas. Has that been your experience?

Kerry: I would have to say yes, people tend to think they are until it's explained to them that they're not. However, on the other hand we don't want to leave the impression these are just wishy-washy numbers that you can fool around with. I don't have any great guilt feelings about saying these numbers are pretty solid.

VOICE: Quotas have been put in place because of the particularly outrageous history of discrimination on the part of employers. I've found where there have been targets they are still perceived by the line workers as unofficial quotas. It's a stigma that they "were given the job" and therefore were not as good and must work harder just to pass as even. There are times when quotas are, in fact, valid, and people who have been actively discriminated against are entitled to those jobs. Over time your children, our children, will look back and say, "This is kind of crazy." But in times of opening the doors, this is really very necessary.

Kerry Kellough received a BA in Political Science from the University of Saskatchewan in 1968, when he joined Statistics Canada as a Manpower Planning Officer. He moved over to the Department of National Defense in 1972, to the Directorate of Civilian Careers. In 1980, Kellough, selected for an exchange program, went to Canberra, Australia. Upon his return, he became Career Manager in the Management category. In 1984, he was appointed the Director of Civilian Employment Equity and assigned responsibility for developing and implementing a civilian EE program for DND.

CHAPTER 23

Employment Equity: Consultative process models in a unionized environment

Workshop coordinator

Anne Adams

Anne Adams, Employment Equity Coordinator, Employment and Immigration Canada, Quebec region, presents material based on her recent thesis.

I would like to share with you my analysis of the consultation process in the implementation of Employment Equity.

First let's lay the ground rules: consultation is not a process that *may* be used, it *must* be used. In fact, Section 4 of the Employment Equity Act requires employers to consult employee representatives and bargaining agents in the process of implementing employment equity. "An employer shall, in *consultation* with such persons as have been designated by the employees to act as their representative, or where a bargaining agent represents the employees, in consultation with the bargaining agent, implement Employment Equity."

Before turning our attention fully to the consultation models, I feel it is important to review the context in which this process is to be implemented.

The legislature and judiciary in Canada appear to have come to a consensus around the meaning of discrimination. This is evidenced by the recognition of systemic discrimination and its remedies in the Supreme Court's decision on the CN case and in the pro-active, systemic and remedial approach prescribed by the Employment Equity Act. However, true consensus on what employment equity is, and how best to implement it, has yet to emerge between employer associations and the labour movement, as well as between the policy level of labour organizations and their bargaining units.

While the Canadian labour relations context is adversarial, the basic approach of Employment Equity is one of cooperation. Our greatest challenge lies herein.

Employment equity is not equal opportunity

Employers and their organizations tend to equate "equal opportunity" with employment equity. Employer associations such as the *Conseil du Patronat du Quebec* and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, for instance, still equate the two concepts. *Le Conseil* called for "une politique d'egalite des chances" in its brief on Bill C-62. They have not yet revised their position two and a half years later. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association adopted a similar position in a recent publication,

stating, "The concept of Employment Equity is rarely questioned. Most Canadian employers readily agree that equal opportunity in the workplace is a worthy philosophy."

They further suggested the purpose of an Employment Equity policy is "to outline equal opportunity as it affects employee status and working conditions and to ensure that discrimination does not exist within [the firm] ... by providing equality of treatment and opportunity to all employees and applicants."

A firm which adheres to the CMA policy would meet the criteria for being an "equal opportunity employer." It will remove from its application forms any reference to race or sex, eliminate discriminatory questions from interviews, and base promotions and transfers on job-related criteria. To assure that adverse impact is not alleged, test and educational requirements will be reviewed and eliminated where necessary.

Despite such measures such an employer will not fully meet the requirements of "Employment Equity." Special measures are needed to break the cycle of systemic discrimination. These measures may take the form of outreach or support programs that enable women and designated group members to enter a firm in numbers that mirror their availability on the appropriate labour market.

In summary, employers and their organizations equate equity with equal opportunity.

Labour organizations theoretically supportive
At the policy level most labour organizations support Employment Equity. The Canadian Labour Congress, the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Confederation of National Trade Unions and the Quebec Federation of Labour, go beyond advocating "equal opportunity" through non-discriminatory hiring and promotion, and they propose changes that address systemic discrimination.

The largest central labour body in Canada is the Canadian Labour Congress, whose affiliated membership in 1981 accounted for 74 percent of all unionists. Since 1980, Canadian Labour Congress policy has advocated the negotiation of:

- Contract clauses that ... establish Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Committee;
- Non-discrimination clauses;
- Equal base rates between female-dominated and male- dominated occupations where covered by separate collective agreements with the same employer.

In October 1985 one of its major affiliates, the Quebec Federation of Labour, took the position that they supported pre-approval of Employment Equity plans by the enforcement agency of "les programmes d'acces a l'egalite."

While these are the positions taken by the labour movement at the policy levels, it is difficult to find evidence of "non-discrimination" clauses and Affirmative Action/Employment Equity clauses negotiated by their affiliated bargaining units.

In fact, neither the Canadian Labour Congress, the Quebec Federation of Labour, nor the Confederation of National Trade Unions monitor the proposals made to negotiate Employment Equity clauses by member bargaining units. Moreover, once a clause has been negotiated, no system has been put into place to insure the Federation or Confederation is made aware of it. They invoke the lack of funds and the diversity and multitude of bargaining units that belong to the federations and confederations as the main reason for the absence of monitoring.

Some revealing statistics are also provided by Labour Canada who monitor provisions of collective agreements of firms under the Canadian Labour Code. As of September 23, 1987, of the 1,048 agreements monitored:

- 56.3 percent did not include an anti-discrimination clause;
- 98.3 percent did not include an Employment Equity/Affirmative Action clause;
- 70.4 percent did not include a provision regarding the rights of disabled workers;
- 98.6 percent did not include a provision regarding daycare facilities;
- 99.7 percent did not include special (seniority) provisions for designated groups. (In fact, only three agreements included such a provision.)

The majority of labour confederations and federations take the position that within unionized workplaces, Employment Equity programs should be negotiated in the collective bargaining process. The Quebec Federation of Labour, for instance, goes so far as to demand the government recognize unions as "partenaires sociaux" for the negotiation of Employment Equity programs, in other words, that the role of the union in the negotiation of Employment Equity programs be regulated. However, since the incidence of unionization of women is low, and union membership data on natives and visible minorities in all sectors are non-existent, it is unrealistic to expect that employment equity will be negotiated by representatives of white male unions. Negotiation would thus assume that at the bargaining table the representatives of the majority would bring forward and priorize proposals the membership perceives to be at best, in the interest of others and at worst, against their own best interest.

While fully-negotiated Employment Equity programs may be possible under certain circumstances, especially where there is a respectable proportion of women and other designated groups already in the firm, they may be counterproductive in the near term to the implementation of employment equity where women and other designated group members are absent.

Consultation between labour and management
While full negotiation is not a must for employers and, as we have seen, may be counter-productive, *consultation* on the implementation of employment equity with employees or their bargaining agent is necessary.

There are many reasons for consultation, not the least of which is the legislated requirement. It will also allow management:

- To test the understanding of the concept by the unionized workers;
- To test the level of acceptance or resistance to the concept;
- To determine the priorities of the unionized work force with regard to employment equity, particularly where women and other designated groups already form an integral part, particularly with regard to "special measure," and the "accommodation of differences";
- To assure feedback on proposed policy;
- To assure feedback and cooperation at all steps of the implementation process.

For example, important information on the workforce profile may be lost if the union does not support the employee census. Further along in the process it would be difficult to establish priorities for special measures and accommodation of differences, not only because of an inadequate worker profile but also because the employee representatives would perceive there is an inadequate mechanism in place to ensure their concerns will be taken seriously or there is inadequate protection from abuse of the information.

Some employers have already begun their program with a flawed data base. This has occurred because adequate consultation did not take place at the initial stage and the unions not only withdrew support but in some cases boycotted the census.

From a broader perspective, the adversarial and conflict-ridden nature of Canadian industrial relations is undisputed. Into this environment, the government has intervened with a strategic approach to the integration of designated groups; and it has directed the employers to consult the workers.

Model for implementation
The model proposed for the implementation of employment equity is flexible and result-oriented. A component of sound human resources management, the Act makes consultation an integral part of such a model, for "support must be mobilized, coalitions built, opposition handled and bargains struck." In other words, consultation is fundamental to a strategic approach to the integration of designated groups into a place of work. If it is properly done, it should harness the power inherent in the knowledge each player in the system holds. It should also allow all the parties to recognize the problem, offer solutions, air their apprehensions and grievances, and find common ground. "Both parties must be able to see the change

programs as being instrumental to the attainment of goals valued by their respective organizations and/or constituents." In other words, consultation should bring about a win-win situation.

Consultation, however, will not necessarily be readily accepted by all players involved in these fundamental changes to their workplace. In fact, management might perceive consultation as an undermining of its age-old prerogative to manage as it sees fit; and labour might perceive it as a fundamental change in its approach to defending worker rights.

Consultation in the context of implementing Employment Equity programs is not an issue. It has already been decided by public policy. Consultation may take many forms but it always implies the presentation of a problem and possible solutions, time for reflection and feedback.

Models for the consultation process

I will now suggest some models for the consultation process, their structure and their implications. I have named them this way:

- The "mere notice" model of consultation
- The "advance notice" model of consultation
- The committee models –
  a) The Affirmative Action Review groups
  b) The existing negotiation process model
  c) The "Hybrid."

The models proposed are drawn from already existing mechanisms such as joint labour-management committees and other consultative approaches that have been suggested by scholars, the labour movement and practitioners. Some may already be found in legislation governing technological change, health and safety and pay equity. The models proposed, however, do not suggest any legislative changes and may be implemented under present legislation.

The "mere notice" model of consultation

When consultation is equalled to mere notice, the union and/or the employee representatives are informed of the firm's intent to implement employment equity when the policy is published. All employees are presented with the firm's policy decision at the same time. They are not given any lead time, and no mechanism is set up to allow them to give input into the program. At each stage of the implementation of an Employment Equity program, the employees and the union are merely informed and presented with a "fait accompli." For instance, the census questionnaire might be simply administered. Special measures to recruit, train and promote designated group members would be implemented without first informing the workforce and allowing time for reflection and feedback. Employees would simply submit to the employer's interpretation of employment equity under this model. My perception, from the field work I do, is that this occurs frequently.

[M]ost labour organizations support Employment Equity ... [and] go beyond advocating "equal opportunity" through non-discriminatory hiring and promotion.... [T]hey propose changes that address systemic discrimination.

An employer that uses this approach may do so for many reasons. She may perceive that because a constituency of designated group members is absent from the firm's work force, management has the sole responsibility to rectify the situation; or that recruiting designated group members is the only way to meet the objectives of employment equity, and, since it comes solely under the purview of management, management is best situated to determine when and how employment equity will be introduced and implemented. Other firms may hold that since the implementation of employment equity is the duty of management, management has the "right" to decide how to implement it "subject to any express terms in the collective agreement providing otherwise, as long as it acts in good faith and in a manner which does not jeopardize the integrity of the bargaining unit."

While the "right" to implement employment equity unilaterally may theoretically be grieved, unions are reluctant to do so. This reluctance appears to come from four sources:

- Relatively few collective agreements, to date, explicitly provide for a non-discrimination clause;
- The onus will be placed on the union to prove that management has not acted in "good faith" or has "jeopardized the integrity of the bargaining unit";
- The financial realities of unions. As one union official said: "We do not have the money to spend on grievances that do not relate to specific negotiated clauses of the Collective Agreement." In this context, unions would be more inclined to grieve where an employment equity clause was not being respected.
- Public policy now called for a "broad interpretation ... of human rights legislation" that encompasses systemic discrimination. Thus employers do not have to fear a local union would put into jeopardy an Employment Equity program unless such a program directly contravened an express clause of the collective agreement.

This model might be effective where a firm is new and expanding, the employment policy can be fully integrated into the philosophy of management and the culture of the organization, and results can be obtained immediately; or where the culture of the organization is accepting of management's unilateral decision-making. On the other hand, where an organization is unionized and the culture is one of formalized and negotiated employment policies, an Employment Equity policy that is unilaterally imposed will most probably not be accepted. Such an approach would reflect the fact that management has not fully appreciated the implications of the implementation of an Employment Equity program on its organization, or the extent of the changes it will bring to its employment systems. For instance, the self-identification process, required by the employee census, of the members of the designated groups within the firm's work force may be jeopardized by the union that has not been fully consulted. Such reactions can seriously handicap employers when establishing the profile of designated group members in their firm's workforce and establishing realistic targets for their integration.

Another area where mere notice might cause problems is the "no-growth" or "layoff" situations where employers cannot rely on external recruitment to get results in integrating women and minorities into their labour force, and must look to special measures. Such measures may be brought about by: reducing the numbers of bargaining units within the firm; recognizing plant-wide seniority; allowing for transfers between bargaining units; or by special accommodation made to seniority for training and promotions of designated group members.

Where the firm recruits females and minorities into a white-male-dominated unionized environment, and has not previously harnessed union support, it will have to implement support systems for these women and minorities that are outside the union structure. CN, I understand, has such support systems in place. This action will be open for union criticism suggesting equity laws are being used to set up parallel protective structures for the workers, thus undermining the union.

Where mere notice on the surface may be attractive to and has been used by many employers in the implementation of employment equity, they should resist this approach in most situations because it does not recognize the implications for the employment systems in place, nor the principles inherent in the process of sound organizational change.

The "advance notice" model of consultation

The definition of "consultation" given in "Employment Equity: A Guide for Employers" appears to be most closely related to advance notice. While it does not spell out a structure for consultation, it states: "consultation means that a full and sufficient opportunity and sufficient information are provided by the employer to ... bargaining agents, so that they may have a reasonable opportunity to ask questions and submit advice." Before embarking on each stage in the establishment of an Employment Equity program, the employer would share with the union all information underlying the rationale for, and structure of, that stage with ample time for

employees to study, evaluate and respond to the employer's plan. Legislation on the implementation of technological change, for instance, specifies time frames of between 90 and 120 days "advance notice."

Under this model, a firm that is preparing an Employment Equity policy announcement would share ahead of time the findings of the preliminary analysis indicating why employment equity is needed. These findings would show the relative place women and other designated group members occupy in the firm and reveal wage gaps and job segregation as well as the absence and consequence of special measures such as ramps, daycare, etc. Employers should provide sufficient data on hirings, promotions and terminations as well as salary ranges of designated groups. This would allow for valid input from the union on the integration into the firm of designated groups.

Moreover, once this information is shared, reasonable delays should be afforded the union to study the information, set up group discussions and confront union policy or the collective agreement before asking questions of, and submitting advice to, management. The time frame allowed should recognize the size of the firm and the complexity of policies to be studied. For instance, small firms might allow as few as 30 days advance notice while larger, more complex ones, might allow 120 days.

Only to the extent that the union is given the opportunity to ask questions and submit advice on the same facts that the employer has, will the union "be able to see the change program[s] as being instrumental to the attainment of ... [its own goals] and those of its constituents." Where it is not consistent with the constituents of a particular bargaining unit because of some well-entrenched benefit to the white male, such as unit seniority and preferential overtime, advance notice might foster the use of education on the part of the union to facilitate the implementation of employment equity and to sensitize its constituents to the adverse impact effects of seniority and other employment practices that are entrenched in the collective agreement. In fact, in certain instances the provincial or national federations of labour could be enlisted in this educational process. Some have expressed their willingness to train their locals.

Where a firm is planning expansion, the advance notice model of consultation could also be effective where the bargaining unit has the traditional white male makeup and should be educated to the need for employment equity as well as its process.

Consultation under these circumstances will be effective insofar as advance notice is genuine, and the unions are given adequate time for an appropriate response and advice is not only taken but seen to be taken.

Advance notice is not only an effective form of consultation in the preparatory stage of the employment equity process, it should be extended throughout the implementation phase. The extension of the consultation process would also mean an expansion of the process to allow for meaningful input from designated group members so their true needs for integration are met. If these requirements are met, the foundations will be laid for the effective implementation of employment equity.

The committee models

Recent literature on labour relations recognizes the social concerns that must be incorporated into the choices made by labour and management and suggest various committee models. The most famous of these models is the Quality of Work Life model for labour-(worker-)management interactions. It has its origins in the approaches of the behaviourial science-trained human resource specialist of the '60s. More recently we have seen the emergence of the committee in legislations such as health and safety, and pay equity.

Whatever committee is adopted, the preconditions for effectiveness are:

- The commitment of senior management to the employment equity principle in general and to the committee in particular, which is usually demonstrated by:
  a) the appointment of a senior manager that is committed to Employment Equity
  b) the provision of sufficient human and financial resources to do the job
  c) prompt follow-up on committee recommendations including explanation for delays in implementing or rejecting recommendations
- The commitment of the employees and/or labour unions to the principles of employment equity in general and to the committee in particular, which is usually demonstrated by:
  a) the appointment of representatives that are willing and capable of participating effectively;
  b) the acceptance of responsibility for committee decisions, particularly those arrived at by consensus;
- An environment and culture that is favourable to, and capable of integration of the recommendations of a committee with the strategic and day-to-day decision-making process of the firm;
- A clear mandate defined by:
  a) Whether the committee is to initiate actions for change or react to systemic problems brought to its attention;
  b) Whether the committee is advisory or has the authority to effect real change, as well as the content and extent of the change;

(Other elements for consideration are: the budget; the availability of persons for committee work on part-time or full-time basis; and the role of members *vis-a-vis* other workers at the place of work.)

- Training for committee members in problem-solving, systemic discrimination and in the practice and policies of the firm and the terms of the collective agreement;
- Access to information on demographics of the workforce as well as personnel policies and practices.

Finally, the committee should meet regularly under a pre-agreed schedule to:

- Review and analyze the various studies undertaken during the initial analytical process;
- Make "recommendations on the basis of findings";
- Ensure "communication and feedback with all segments of the organization."

Three committee models that might be used in the implementation of employment equity are suggested. While all three share the fundamental principles described above, they differ in approach and structure, particularly in the unionized environment.

Model A: "The Affirmative Action Review Group"

The committee model most in use is the Affirmative Action Review Group, recommended by most consultants in the field and found in the Technical Training Manual of the Canada Employment and Immigration voluntary program. This model provides a mechanism through which management and employees are involved jointly in problem definition, analysis and decision-making. It may be used in a unionized or a non-unionized environment. Where it is used in a unionized environment it is not integrated into the collective bargaining process as would be the "negotiated model" or the "Hybrid model."

The committee is composed of representatives from management and union, from the various levels of the organization, shopfloor through to senior management, and/or employee groups (representing non-unionized staff) as well as members of designated groups, where these are available in the firm. These persons may be designated either by management or by the union or undergo a selection process based on their knowledge of Employment Equity. The program is set up because of the absence of women and other designated group members from the employer's workforce. While it may be theoretically possible to invite designated group members from the outside to take part in this committee, most employers would be understandably reluctant to invite outsiders to review their personnel policies and data. Trained persons in the field of employment equity are available to help firms design programs to improve accessibility of the designated groups whose needs in the labour market have been very well documented. These persons could either head the committee or be members of it. The composition of the committee is important, given its main purpose, which is consultative. With this in mind, members should be selected for their abilities in problem-solving and team work.

Care should also be taken when setting up the committee to assure that where the union is concerned, management's legitimate opposite is a union member. This will ensure that power

is evenly distributed. Where there is agreement, proper action may be taken on both sides; where a dispute arises, the mere strength of one side will not prevail over the other. This (these) person(s) should also be in a position to express the concerns of the "rank and file." In smaller firms, this may be done by informal discussion. However, in larger organizations, more formal survey tools should be used.

This model will be most effective:

- Where the culture of the organization recognizes a committee process;
- Where women and other designated group members are an integral part of the workforce, albeit in segregated and low-paying jobs, even if they are members of the non-unionized group in the plant or office;
- Where national federations have strong equity policies even if the local union represents the traditional all-white-male membership.

Model B: The "existing negotiation process" model

Under this model, the sole respondants to an employer's initiatives in the field of equity would be the union representatives elected to the bargaining table. The changes the employer or the union proposes to meet the requirements of employment equity are thus integrated into the collective bargaining process and negotiated at the time of contract renewal.

This process may have a twofold impact on the collective agreement. It may serve to include, in the collective agreement, clauses on childcare, parental leave, educational leave or even the setting up of an Employment Equity program. It may also serve to eliminate from the collective agreement clauses that upon analysis have been found to act as barriers to women and other designated group members. Such clauses often refer to non-job-related requirements for a specific position that have grown out of tradition rather than a true analysis of the abilities required for the job. For instance, in the pulp and paper industry, all non-specialized workers begin on the woodpile, a heavy and hard work position. This traditional line of progression may systematically serve to bar women and other designated group members who may be physically smaller.

> *[C]onsultation ... should harness the power inherent in the knowledge each player in the system holds. It should also allow all the parties to recognize the problem, offer solutions, air their apprehensions and grievances, and find common ground.*

Under this model, management or the union would submit either as a package, or on an issue-by-issue basis, changes to the collective agreement needed either to eliminate systemic discrimination or to meet employment equity requirements.

While few Canadian employers have as yet negotiated Affirmative Action clauses, the effects of such negotiated clauses in the United States have been adjudicated by the U.S. Supreme Court. In fact, as far back as 1979, in the landmark decision, *United Steel Workers of America vs. Weber*, the Supreme Court addressed the validity of a voluntarily negotiated Affirmative Action plan. In accordance with their collective agreement, the steelworkers and the employer had developed a training program to facilitate the entry of its black production workers into the skilled trades. Selection for the training program was based on seniority, but 50 percent of training positions were reserved for blacks who received training in preference to more senior white employees. More recently, the United States Supreme Court reaffirmed the Weber principles for hiring and promoting minorities and women in "traditionally segregated job categories" in the case of *Johnson vs. Transportation Agency, Santa Clara County, California, et al.*, decided on March 25, 1987 (no. 85-1129).

The implementation of remedial and special measures under this model depends on the membership's support and/or the needs of the designated group. The support for negotiated remedial measures may come from:

- Women and other designated group members that are an integral part of the unionized work force albeit in segregated and low-paying jobs;
- National federations that have strong equity policies.

Together with strong equity policies at the confederation or federation level, the presence of women and other designated group members in the workforce in low-paying and segregated but unionized positions should have a positive effect on the priorization of their needs in the collective bargaining process. As we saw in Weber, even the seniority principle may have to be temporarily waived to facilitate accessibility of women and minorities to previously unattainable positions. This approach was further confirmed in 1987, when the United States Supreme Court stated that: "The sex or race of an individual or individuals are factors that may be taken into consideration in the hiring process."

> *[W]here an organization is unionized and the culture is one of formalized and negotiated employment policies, an Employment Equity policy that is unilaterally imposed will most probably not be accepted.*

Where the union represents the traditional all-white-male membership, women and designated groups being absent from the employer's work force, this model will be least effective. Under such circumstances, the main impetus for an employer to implement employment equity will come from the *Employment Equity Act*. The local union(s), however, may perceive, for instance, that it is in their own best interest to bargain for the more obvious requests of women if they are trying to unionize the clerical staff of the firm and thus broaden their base and increase their membership.

Model C: The "Hybrid"

This model of consultation is a blend of the "Affirmative Action Review Group" and the existing negotiation process. It may be described as recognizing the roles of both management and the union in the employment process.

The committee, under this model, is made up of representatives from management, the union, and designated group members. The representatives of the union should have a formal mandate on employment equity from the membership. This may be obtained either through election to the committee or formal appointments that reflect their representativeness.

This consultative model should be formalized by an enabling clause, which may take the form of a letter of intent appended to the collective agreement or a formal clause of the collective agreement. Such enabling clauses are already a part of some collective agreements. In such a clause we would find the commitment to employment equity, the mandate, the structure of the committee, and the process to be used for the alteration of existing contract clauses such as how union consent is to be obtained. Ideally, where both management and the union are familiar with employment equity, it may take the form of a formal clause which may be written into the collective agreement.

Certain circumstances facilitate the acceptance of such a clause:

- A stated policy on employment equity from the national labour federation;
- A local union constituency made up of women or other designated group members;
- A firm that is subject to a policy or law that has an impetus effect and precipitates the implementation of employment equity, such as the *Employment Equity Act* and the Federal Contractors Program.

The Hybrid model differs mainly from the negotiated model in the process for the implementation of employment equity, the mandate and the composition of the committee.

In fact, built into its mandate are executionary powers to make changes to the employment systems. Because of the internal and external pressures that are brought to bear on a place of work, labour and management recognize the systemic nature of discrimination and understand it may be found in all policies and practices of the organization. These include the employment systems under the purview of management rights as well as the collective agreement. Such a recognition leads management and the union to agree in principle to an Employment Equity program, and necessary changes are made to the employment system upon agreement of the committee. Only the most contentious issues are then brought to the bargaining table. For instance, the bargaining table may be presented with special measures that would on their face conflict with seniority principles. Such measures might include bypassing a heavy work requirement that hereto has been done by new entrants, or giving priority to less senior persons of a designated group for a training program.

This approach could be most effective in bargaining environments where there is a healthy respect between union and management, and where designated group members make up a large proportion of the workforce even if they are not unionized or belong to another bargaining unit. Not only does such a mechanism provide for the implementation of employment equity at all points of the employment system but, because of the Employment Equity clause, the grievance procedure provides for an integrated feedback or follow-up mechanism on how and how well it is implemented at the shop floor, as well as a protective mechanism for theworkers against abuse or misuse of an Employment Equity policy.

To summarize, in the implementation of Employment Equity, the required consultation may take many forms from mere notice to full negotiation.

These are not novel ideas, not even the first time they have been found in legislation. They have, however, yet to be used to their fullest potential.

While the Canadian labour relations context is adversarial, the basic approach of Employment Equity is one of cooperation. Our greatest challenge lies herein.

Anne Adams, extensively involved in the integration of women into operational, professional and technical employment at the national, regional and local levels of EIC, developed the women's employment policy in 1976 in which women were given preferential treatment in training for "non-traditional" employment. In 1980, Adams was seconded to the Minister of Employment and Immigration to work with women and other designated groups. She managed a CEC from 1981-83 and since 1985 has been the Regional Coordinator of the Employment Equity Consultative Services. She received a Masters in industrial relations in May, 1988 from Queen's with a thesis on this consultative process.

CHAPTER 24

Bridging programs for industry

Workshop coordinator
Eleanor Ross

This workshop discusses "Bridges," a program piloted by the City of Toronto for moving clerical women into entry-level operational and technical jobs.

Eleanor: I am going to tell you about the Bridges Program in the City of Toronto – how it came about, what we did, how we did it, what happened, and what we plan to do in the future.

This was a pilot program that looked at organizational change, and one, we believe, which can help organizations address corporate and Employment Equity goals. It's very much an Employment Equity program because it deals with barriers to change and it looks at those barriers in an interactive and interdependent way. When we started this program it was called INTO because it was loosely based on the Introduction to Non-Traditional Occupations program at community colleges. As we began to develop it, it changed and became its own program, quite a bit different from what's offered to women through the community colleges. So it seemed very clear it should be called something other than INTO. We felt the name Bridges made sense because the program is an attempt to move women into non-traditional occupations in their own workplace. Over an eight-month period, 13 women employees from various city departments took part in the pilot program which provided them with the opportunity to experience non-traditional jobs within the corporation.

There was a real need for a program such as Bridges to provide women with the opportunity to learn the skills that would assist them to qualify and compete for promotional vacancies in the operational, professional, and technical areas.

Why the Bridges program?
Between now and the end of the century, two out of every three new workers will be women, and at the same time many of the traditional jobs women perform will be lost in the continuing technological revolution. So women are now looking towards labour and jobs in other occupations as sources of employment.

In our city we have a workforce that is almost totally sex-segregated. Women do certain types of jobs. They are underemployed in the occupational, professional, and technical areas. In 1983 when we started to think about this program – even earlier when

we looked at our workforce data – half of the civic workforce was employed in occupations designated as labour, transport and material, and inspector type functions. Women represented only 2.2 percent of the jobs in these categories. So the Equal Opportunity division began thinking about ways to move women into non-traditional jobs. These jobs are defined as jobs where fewer than 30 percent of the employees are women.

The jobs the women hold in the civic service fall within a very narrow range, and they have little opportunity to develop the skills that enable them to make occupational change. It was interesting for us to find out promotions of women reflected this very narrow focus. Women experience problems with every aspect of the recruitment and selection cycle leading to employment in labouring type jobs. Men who came in and worked in clerical jobs, or were mail clerks or whatever, moved with ease into the labouring type jobs but for some reason, it didn't seem to happen for women. There was a real need for a program such as Bridges to provide women with the opportunity to learn the skills that would assist them to qualify and compete for promotional vacancies in the operational, professional, and technical areas.

How the women were chosen

The first thing we did was develop a questionnaire. We distributed it, with the assistance of the community college we were working with, to 1600 women employees. It's interesting, we have 6,000 employees, but only 1600 are women. We were delighted to receive over 500 replies in the first few weeks after their distribution. We were addressing women's feelings and attitudes about exploring new and different employment options. We were very careful in the wording of this questionnaire. We wanted to know how the option of non-traditional employment was viewed. A lot of women were interested in change. That was a major thing they wanted. It wasn't that they wanted more money. Some, of course, did want more. Some wanted higher jobs, in different levels, but really they were looking for change. Quite a number of women wanted to move into the computer field, others were interested in management and still others were interested in non-traditional jobs. As a result of this response and our corporation's commitment to employment equity, the city allocated resources to the development of the Bridges program. Women employees would be able to explore other job possibilities without having to risk losing their present jobs.

The women who indicated interest in the program in response to the questionnaire were invited to attend a series of information sessions. As you know, when you work in a city program you work on many projects simultaneously, so this program's development took place over a number of years. Slowly we developed information sessions for the women and invited them to attend, and we made sure we offered these sessions in different parts of the city in different work sites.

We had about 150 women attend those sessions. Women who decided to become further involved were asked to complete an application profile outline. It became clear we had to look at jobs that would have some turnover in the future. There's no point in assisting women to move into jobs where this wouldn't be possible. As well we had to look at salary ranges. Sometimes it turned out the wages of the jobs, although higher than many clerical type jobs, were not as high as, say, the nurses were earning. That made a difference to some women who wanted to make a career change.

Next, each woman met and interviewed a city employee. She was asked to go out and interview someone of her choice in one of several city departments. The fire department was one, the buildings and parks department, public works, the property department, and our purchasing and supply, because in that department is our equipment division, which purchases and maintains all the city vehicles. So the women went out and interviewed a city employee engaged in a job considered non-traditional, and then each woman was asked to make a list of questions she needed the answers to in order to thoroughly explore what is involved in the job.

Once we received the written information, arrangements were made for a personal interview. Feedback from the women's interviews was interesting. One woman said, "Never in a million years would I consider doing this job. It means I have to go all around the city." Others very seriously considered this as a job they would be interested in. They had an actual opportunity to get out of the office and see what other city jobs are and meet someone doing that job. It was a commitment on their part. They not only had to take the time to go out and interview, they had to fill something out and hand it in. They weren't just saying, "I'm interested." They had to write a report about who they had interviewed, what they had found out and what they thought about it. We were asking for something from them as well as giving.

Developing and delivering the program

About 25 women completed the interviews and at this point we realized we had to start developing a program, so we engaged an external consultant. She was hired on a contract basis to develop and deliver the program. She designed it with a modular approach, the first part of which involved tours of work sites within the organization. A classroom component included discussion and application of workplace issues such as health and safety, assertiveness training and self-defence. We had interest and aptitude assessment and personal goal-setting exercises. The women were able to acquire generic tool skills and shop training in a community college setting, added experience in city shops, and finally they had a three-week hands-on work placement experience in a non-traditional city job. The women were very well accepted during their work placement; they learned a lot and rated their experience a great success.

Now in 10 minutes I told you what took place over eight or nine months with a tremendous amount of work. Because involving the women in each step meant their being away from their current job, we had to inform and notify everyone involved in making contracts. This entailed a tremendous amount of paper work and careful discussion with everyone involved.

VOICE: How many women were in that first program?

Eleanor: When we finally moved into the program, there were 13 women. Our object was to have no more than 15 as a pilot program. So it was a self-selection basis that worked out to 13.

What the women were required to do

VOICE: I'm wondering how much of this happened on their own time.

Eleanor: When we asked them to come to the information sessions, we were able to negotiate their lunch hour, it was half an hour of work time and half an hour of their own time. Also an individual fitness program was drawn up to be carried out independently by each woman. A lot of that required her own time. She had individual sessions with the fitness instructor. Each woman was required to maintain an individual fitness plan leading to a physical fitness evaluation. The program was developed particularly to build upper body strength, because we found most women have not developed their upper body strength. We put a lot of emphasis on that as well as general stamina. The program was specifically designed to use an individual plan based on each woman's present level of fitness, her general health, and her stress levels. We used the job descriptions supplied by the departments as a guide, so if the job a particular woman was interested in required so much heavy lifting or whatever, we could develop a program to suit it.

The other major component of the program was counselling. Each woman was helped to gain insight into her own abilities. We felt with greater self-awareness she would be able to make informed decisions about whether she wished to enter this type of job. During the program we gathered information through standardized aptitude tests, through mechanical reasoning, interest inventories, occupational research, and hands-on experience. We felt counselling would permit each woman to integrate all this information, examine the realities and make decisions about her future. It was, of course, voluntary and confidential. We discovered the women used it rarely during the program; after the program was completed and they had begun making occupational changes, they began to realize there were things they had to look at. Then they would contact the counsellor and meet with her and receive a lot of assistance post-program. Of course it was a pilot and things we hadn't

expected turned up. There was always a surprise. We designed each module so it could be offered independently. All the component units were intended to be offered sequentially as a complete package, but as I say, they could be offered independently and there were some months and some weeks between sections of the components.

The first unit was the tours. We invited each woman to come out with us on tours of city departments, to go for a morning and see city work sites. Then in the afternoon we'd have a classroom component where the women would talk about what they had gone through and do some assessments. Four city departments were involved in these city tours. I should say that before we invited the women out on these tours, we had done the tours ourselves, and we began to realize how many hundreds and hundreds of jobs keep our city going. Most of us had no idea these jobs even existed. And when the women saw the variety of jobs being done, they could get a sense of, "Maybe this is something I might be interested in."

We found the departments were very cooperative; they knew we were coming and they arranged for their employees and supervisors to take us around and show us the areas. With the assistance of our instructor the women began to explore their motivation towards operational and technical work. They began to identify skills and to look at the possibility of transferring skills they already possessed to these jobs. At the end of this unit a final decision had to be made on both sides about the women who would continue and complete the entire program. Some women dropped out. They decided for various reasons that this wasn't the best time to pursue it, or it wasn't something they wanted to do. But the tours really helped the women to focus on what the program would offer and what it was like.

The whole focus of the program was to find jobs where women could learn some basic skills and would be able to carry out the work without having to go back to school. For example, there was a man repairing the parking meters in a little shop. This was something a woman could do that didn't require great strength or extensive training. As it turned out, after being in their placement jobs, they often expressed an interest in returning to school. "Yes, I want to go to night school and take drafting. I want to take blueprint reading," and so on. But the jobs selected by the department for possible placement were jobs women could take part in right away. That eliminated a job such as building inspector. Unless a woman had a lot of construction experience and usually women haven't, that would not be a placement position open for her.

VOICE: Could she get into those jobs anyway if she went to school?

Eleanor: Yes. If this was something she decided she really wanted to do, then she could go to school. There is employee assistance for education so she could get some assistance if her department was willing and she decided that's what she wanted to do.

VOICE: Is she granted a leave of absence?

Eleanor: That would have to be negotiated with her department. To recap, the City of Toronto has 16 departments and each department is fairly autonomous so it's like working with 16 different work sites. Every department that was involved had to be negotiated with directly. It was like a big work site but not all in unity. We had to continually keep in touch with each commissioner, each senior manager involved with the program, and keep them informed and work through them to make the arrangements for the program.

Picking the final group

VOICE: Of that group of 25, was it mostly a self-deselection process?

Eleanor: Yes, it was, but it was also with interviews. It was, because we did an exit interview with each of the women. We had already done personal interviews with our counsellor involved before the women were selected into the program so mostly it was a self-selection process, but included us and our input and our decision-making.

In unit two, we invited a panel of six women employed in trades and technical jobs to speak to the women and offer their advice and

expertise. The women had a chance then to hear firsthand about the opportunities and frustrations of being employed in a non-traditional job. That was a very exciting morning for us. We offered workshops on assertiveness training and on sexual harassment in the workplace, with special emphasis on the operational environment. We looked at confidence-building and personal growth exercises. We helped the women to discover and value their own strengths. We had a day of WENDO training in women's self-defense. Not that you can learn the complete WENDO techniques in one day but in fact it helped women understand how much strength and control they actually have. We did a half-day session on accident prevention.

Getting underway

By that time we felt the women were ready for the shop training component. It was designed specifically with George Brown Community College to accommodate the tasks, the environments and requirements of the jobs in which the women were going to be taking part during their hands-on experience. We discovered in dealing with the departments who had to release the women, that we would have to do the training one day a week, rather than doing it in four days. Our shop trainer was very frustrated. He said, "I can't possibly teach what I need to teach in four days," but it was successful in that they became comfortable with the terminology. They learned some very basic skills. Parallelling this experience, we asked the four departments involved if the women could go in the evening into their shops. It was an enormous amount of work setting this up because each woman had to have time over the four weeks in each department shop – about two to three hours in the evening. The departments were very willing to open their shops and their sections for the women. So they not only learned in the community college setting, they were able to go in and work with the men on the job and see what was required. Although it was only a few hours a week, and in each shop a different experience, it proved to be very helpful to the women. It helped them learn and we know it increased their trades knowledge because we did pre- and post-testing. All along the way we were doing evaluations of each unit, each section, each day. In part we did this to help the women realize this was a first and they were going to be focused on a lot and we were going to ask a lot from them in questionnaires and in evaluations. They were very cooperative about this. Their trades knowledge did increase. They learned basic construction theory. They began to use power and hand tools, they learned about electrical wiring and the wood and metal work.

The final day of unit three in this program we had a fitness evaluation day. That was very exciting. It was highly visible and involved a lot of publicity. We divided the women into two teams and they had to do simulations of the work they might be carrying out on the job. It was a lot of fun and it brought the women a sense of pride and accomplishment and purpose in the work they had been doing. It was a good focus point for the conclusion of that section of the program.

The fourth unit consisted of three weeks full-time placement. That was negotiated with the supervisor, with the management of that department, with the supervisor on the job with the women. We had an agreement set up. We had replacement costs built in and most departments were able to absorb that. Let me give you an example of hands-on placement jobs. We had one woman who adored bylaws. She was working in our legal department and she was knowledgable about bylaws and she liked them so much she was eager to get into our building department and become a zoning information assistant. People phone in from all over the city to find out about building bylaws and codes. That was her placement experience and her desire. So she was able to do that and took her bylaws home every night. She loved them, wanted to read them all, get to know them. At the conclusion of her experience her commissioner and the commissioner in her placement department were so impressed they arranged for her to go in on a temporary basis to work as a zoning information assistant. That was really amazing because I couldn't understand how anyone could love these boring bylaws. But Elvira just took to them and she had her oral exam last week. I haven't heard the results but I am very hopeful she's been successful and can take that job permanently.

One woman became a technician's helper in water meter repair in the Public Works department. Women are really interested in inspecting type jobs and many of those jobs in the city are still held by men. One that has changed is Health Inspectors. We now have many women Health Inspectors. But out of the Public Works department, where they go out, for example, on street allowance control, or as a general services investigator who has to investigate garbage that's been illegally dumped, there are all kinds of jobs that have always been carried out by men. So several women were interested in going out and taking part in those jobs. A street allowance control officer goes out to the construction sites and examines them to see that they are working within the city bylaws. It's a very interesting job, and two women chose to do that. Others became labourers in parks or became equipment maintenance workers, working on the cars, doing auto-body repair and assisting the auto mechanic.

Follow-up to the program

Of the 13 women who completed the program, eight had already started to apply for jobs by September, and of these eight, several applied for more than one. Four women were successful right away. One became a noise control inspector trainee and two became water revenue inspectors. They enjoyed it so much, being outdoors. One woman who had worked at a computer terminal was just transformed six months later. She was so happy to be outdoors moving around and doing something where she wasn't sitting behind a desk.

Other women have left. This time four women have left the city. We hadn't known this would happen but maybe that is as a result of looking at a career change. The noise control inspector trainee has become a policewoman and she is now an officer on the Yonge Street beat. She graduated just two weeks ago. For us that's a very great success. Another woman has started her own garden centre and two are working full-time in renovations. They decided for them it was time to leave.

All through the program we worked with the Quinta Consulting Group. They were very instrumental in evaluating the program. Their results indicated a lot of success. When they looked at why it was successful, one of the main reasons was the support of upper management. We really worked hard to get management to agree and get their departments' time and energy, ideas and training, and resource and materials. And they were committed. Another reason for our success was the adaptive design. It was a flexible program sensitive to the needs of the women and of the organization, and input was invited from everyone since the beginning.

We looked at the program methodology, addressed organizational attitude and interpersonal barriers, and helped to make the learning style meet the needs in the program from the woman's perspective. An active role was played by us, the program staff, to facilitate and integrate the program components. Our Bridges instructor was first-rate, very committed to the women in the program. Her level of knowledge and experience, and her great ability with the women, contributed enormously to the program. Meticulous preparation at all levels from all the people involved helped make it a success. We were very cautious about success. We made it very structured; it was not done in an *ad hoc* way. It was planned, it was formalized, it was understated. Publicity didn't come until late in the program.

We invited our mayor, by the way, to join us at the fitness evaluation. He came and at one point the women spontaneously grabbed him and put him on their shoulders. It made a great photo and the papers picked it up. In fact, one of the television reporters challenged him to a wheelbarrow race. There were some great shots in the papers, he and the television reporter and the women moving the wheelbarrows. He still has the picture in his office. It was very helpful to us to have him there. And of course, all these things contributed to its success.

Quinta looked at the program and said, "It was a change agent. It dealt directly with barriers to organizational change." So the women not only experienced working in a non-traditional setting, but the organization was able to see women in this job. "And the fact that they were competent, they were effective in carrying out their work, accomplished in three

weeks what years of workshops and print communication could not have done," to quote Quinta. So the effect of the program wasn't just confined to the 13 women. Other women who were peripherally involved began to see this might be something they would like to do, and they began to raise their own concerns and biases and to look at their own barriers to career change and career move. So the impact is really sustaining on a personal level and helped the women who were involved in a whole variety of ways. Their self-confidence and esteem was noticeably improved while they were involved in the program. They had role-modelling and bonding between the women. They were in very different jobs, and were very different from one another. They increasingly mastered the jobs in the physical shops. They connected and made career decisions and all this had a significant bearing on their lives.

It was very moving to hear at the end of the program how things had affected them and what had changed in the workplace. One woman had discovered when she was doing maintenance work in City Hall itself, that they had never permitted women to do shiftwork. There is a lot of shiftwork on weekends and evenings to set up City Hall for functions. She was able to work shifts; they've started to offer women shiftwork. They made major differences in the way jobs were carried out.

The cost benefits are most likely to accrue in the long term. It was costly to develop and it took place over a long time. When we look at aggregate Equal Opportunity and quality-of-work programming, they often have a long-term effect of reducing absenteeism and turnover. We found as a model for career change and retraining within an organization, this program is a viable alternative to layoff when we are addressing job obsolescence. And of course the graduates of such a program increase the pool of qualified, eligible workers.

One goal of our program was to see if it was transferable to other organizations. We decided it was. We went on to do some research thanks to Innovations Canada. We wanted to know whether other employers would be interested. When we went out and interviewed other employers they said, "Yes, we would be interested in such a program." So our next step is to join with other employers in a three-year demonstration project. We felt one year with 13 women showed change, but it does not show if this program really works. So now we will have an opportunity to work with other employers to bring women in to go through training and then to go back to their home workplaces for their placements. We feel there's a great advantage to such a shared process, which avoids isolation, fosters cooperation, and tailors itself to each organization's needs. City council has agreed to facilitate such a program and we are asking public and private sectors to be involved. The Innovations program and Employment Equity Canada have also agreed to substantially support it and we are currently waiting for confirmation of funding from the Ontario government.

So we will share the organizational facilities, resources and expertise and help women learn about, experience, and qualify for jobs in which women are currently underrepresented or totally nonexistent inside the organizations. We will be able to review existing job categories, develop ways to resolve corporate personnel planning needs, look at new training methods, provide a vehicle through which unions and management can work to implement a broader and more equitable workforce, and provide assistance to workers for whom the entrance of women presents a change. As well, we can help the city and other organizations implement and realize their Equal Opportunity goals and objectives.

We're hoping and planning to offer this twice a year to a maximum of 36 participants drawn from all the corporations, including the city. The program will span a four-month period instead of eight months. We will have an experienced facilitator full-time who will help employers implement such a program.

Representatives from small communities without resources may be invited to attend workshops. They will be able to offer information and assist women to identify resources in their own community. Brochures and flyers have been developed. We are going to be producing a video and we have the manual and that will help employers. The

evaluators' report is available for people to review how the program was implemented and what could be changed, developed and recommended. We will have modules similar to the original pilot. We plan to have a steering committee of participating employers, and people involved in an advisory capacity to the program.

We believe the program is unique because it joins a number of employers together in a cooperative, cost-shared way. We will utilize the existing workforce, and provide a situation in which training and planning needs can be examined. We can look at new ways for training, employers' needs can be accommodated, and we can transfer what we are learning to other designated target groups.

Other plans for the future

We are hoping to look at an apprenticeship program, which we do not have. We can look at job training needs and we may be able to apply this to groups such as people with disabilities. Our findings could be applied to the organization as a whole. We believe employers will achieve a more uniform and integrated workforce, and women in the Bridges program will enter into and remain in non-traditional jobs. We also believe it helps employers because of minimal government intervention. The employer is doing the work, is helping to make the change. We will look at effective methods of screening applicants, and do some research and testing to see what happens to the women, the rates of labour force change for those who take part in the program. We are proposing to offer a lot of tours, so women who may not be interested now might think about entering later. We want to see what happens with women who take the tours as opposed to those who don't. We'll have questionnaires and data and so on to compare those who have taken part in the program and those who haven't. We believe this program helps to empower and enhance an employee's work life and her opportunities and helps her to prepare for a greater variety of jobs within an organization, resulting in a much more equitable workforce. And as I said, it helps employers with their Employment Equity goals. It's too early to predict how successful it will be and what will happen with it and how it will go but we really believe it will be helping to make more equitable a situation that's come to be seen as the norm over the years. As change agents we're accelerating and facilitating a new process, one that's overdue. We believe as bridge builders we can literally provide access to opportunities which have been denied to women. We hope we will be able to lay foundations for change.

Roadblocks on the way

VOICE: You said 25 women went on the job tours and I was wondering, out of the 500 questionnaires you got, how many expressed an interest? I guess what I am trying to figure out is if there were some women who were unable to attend because of work pressures.

Eleanor: This is always a problem. This was a program put in place and supported by the corporation through the Equal Opportunity program. So it meant negotiating and dealing with it at the commissioner level, the head of the department and the senior manager. Therefore we had their permission to release the women. Now that didn't mean it was always easy. We asked the women to call us if they ran into any problems. We had to inform certain managers that the women were having problems leaving work. But at the beginning of the program they were expected to do a lot on their own time. They were expected to go out and do the job interviews after work or on their own time, but once the program started the tours, everything was on work time.

VOICE: Did you ever get a sense of how many people were eliminated from the process early on, because even if they were getting paid time to do it, the pressure of the job was still there?

Eleanor: To our knowledge, for the women who dropped out, it wasn't that, but it could have been and they may not have been able to tell us. We wanted them to be open with us and share it if there really was a problem. Some women might not want to risk it. In fact, one woman deliberately dropped out. She had terrific potential but she knew there was an opportunity coming up to move into another job and she didn't want to risk being away from her work and jeopardizing the chance to get this job. So there was some real crucial decision-making here – do I want to take advantage of this program or do I want to make it till this job call comes up? – and indeed she did go on and do that and didn't take part in this program. There is a lot of personal decision-making here. All along we had a steering committee made up of members from the union, and the different departments would meet to discuss some of these problems.

VOICE: What about going to management for release time, management saying your employees could take part in these programs for the amount of time it's going to take?

Eleanor: Absolutely critical to do that. When we had our workshops onsite in City Hall, we found the women running to their desk at noon or the elevator would open and there Elvira would be answering the phone. So we realized we should hold the sessions away from the workplace because we're always conscientious about doing our work and feel guilty if we're away and being permitted to do this. Of course they had questions from other employees they worked with, "What are you doing, going to this program?" That's why we made sure there was a counselling component and we were available for the women to talk to us on the phone if there were problems. We had to go out and negotiate carefully. So it's a lot of one-to-one and time taken. Maybe once the program gets established – and we are going to do it again – it will not be as difficult. The first time around takes a lot of careful negotiation.

VOICE: Although I agree working with 13 women is very good logistically, for you and for them, it concerns me because it represents less than one percent of all women who are working for the city. To take something as large as Toronto with 1600 women, where does that leave the smaller centres where we don't have that many women?

Eleanor: We think there are a lot more women who would take part in the program, but we couldn't take more than 10 to 15 women in the beginning because of the extensive documentation we wanted to do. We believe it could be done in other workplaces if other workplaces join together. For instance, they could look at working with a community college to develop it there for some of their women, or look at joining together with other workforces. I think some places in the country have started already. So you could join with other employers to do that for the women.

VOICE: When you talk about the 13, you said there were four that were successful getting jobs right away and four that have left the city and so on. Are there five still in their same jobs?

Eleanor: Yes, there are. The women remained in their original jobs, and we send them copies of the job calls that come up with the city. Some women have decided at this point there is nothing that has interested them. They are really anxious to move but the right job hasn't come around. Others have found their work has been expanded or made more interesting and they are no longer as interested in moving. Our recreation instructor had never been permitted to demonstrate the full range of her skills. She had been in a typical recreation instruction role. Her supervisor has recognized her skills and has permitted her to move into work that's really facilitated her growth. She's now giving woodworking shops, and working with seniors in the community and she's a much happier woman. Although she was really interested in moving into working with refrigeration, ice rinks and so on, at this moment she's not prepared to move.

VOICE: The second question is more in the area of expectations. Those on the part of the women, for example, those five women who are still in their same positions and their expectations of being able to move into jobs and also the expectations on the part of the employer. What expectation on the part of the employer is there that this is going to be successful?

Eleanor: Well, because it was new and not done before, they did cooperate with us fully in saying, let the women take part in this program and yes, we will see where it leads. We offered them no assurance the women would move. This was an opportunity for them to apply, to qualify to apply when the jobs came up. So indeed, the supervisors and employers were advised to expect change, but what change, we didn't know. They may remain in their jobs or they may move, and

subsequently some have moved away from the corporation, which we hadn't really expected. So it made a change in many women's lives, some more significant than others. I think your expectations can't be too narrow; they have to say, there's going to be job change but in what way, we don't know.

VOICE: And what was the cost investment on the part of the employer?

Eleanor: For the employer, it was permitting the women to be away from their jobs. For us it was the training cost, and developing and designing the program. These were monumental at the beginning because we had to develop it from scratch. We now have that, so in the future the cost won't be as great.

VOICE: And the last question is around unions. What kind of strategy will you take in that three-year program with a variety of unions?

Eleanor: We'll invite them to be part of our program right from the beginning. CEIC is saying right out front, in your contract with them, unions have to be involved. We've always felt they should be part of the whole program.

VOICE: Have you any examples of a woman who has changed unions?

Eleanor: None of our women have moved out of the union. I know we have had one woman move into Parks, outside driving trucks, but she wasn't part of our program. We have to overcome this transferability problem between union locals. There will be some resistance but we hope to overcome that. They are being informed and invited to be part of our steering committee and part of our program committee.

VOICE: This program is for women who are already employed. Do you think it could be used for women who are presently unemployed?

Eleanor: We hire a lot of casual labour during the summer months in our Parks department. There's many, many women. We would like to invite these women to be part of our program and that would give them more hours in building up to their aggregate to move into their temporary placements. I'm not sure we would use it for unemployed women at this point because the focus of the program is employees, but we may use casual women employees.

VOICE: You did mention you are including computers in the next go-round. I was wondering if there are any particular reasons why they weren't included in the first go-round.

Eleanor: I think we were looking at the outdoor jobs – the jobs in our departments where manual labour would be the usual type of job. I know computers are in every department but we hadn't looked at that as a valuable possibility at that point. It may be something we want to include in the future.

Eleanor Ross, Equal Opportunity Training and Development Consultant with the Personnel Services Division, City of Toronto, is responsible for the development of the innovative "Bridges" program as well as programs as diverse as English in the Workplace and Management Training for Women. Employment Equity and Human Rights are the major training areas under Ross's jurisdiction.

CHAPTER 25

Community-based training: Winnipeg Core Initiative & Women Working Inc.

Workshop coordinators
Jennie Styrchak & Joyce Rankin

The presentation format of this workshop has been changed slightly due to technical and contextual considerations. (The taping was inadequate particularly in the Women Working Inc. section.) Mona Katawne, Director of Corporate Equity for Manitoba Telephone, introduces two community-based programs that are extremely useful to the Employment Equity efforts of the Manitoba Telephone System: Core Area Initiative, and Women Working Inc.

Services employers and the community
The Core Area Initiative in Winnipeg is an organization whose goal is to revitalize the city's core. Their mandate covers everything from construction to job training. The CAI receives their funding from the federal, provincial and municipal governments.

As an employer and a crown agency, the Manitoba Telephone System has found the work of the CAI invaluable. The employment training component of the CAI has resulted in employment equity in two specific areas:

- Pre-apprenticeship training for women. Core has designed and delivered training packages which include the needs of women at the entry level of trades and technical jobs, i.e. English as a Second Language, cultural shift information, strength training, harassment/ discrimination responses and options.

  MTS selected eight female employees for this program and Core recruited 12 aboriginal and visible minority women. The course is designed on a modular basis. Over the year-long program the participants will receive specific job training. At the end of that time, MTS and the City of Winnipeg will hire the external or Core Area recruits.

- Entry level operator training program. Core selected 18 aboriginal and visible minority people for operator training for MTS. Once into the company, MTS will undertake to further educate and train these employees for other job possibilities.

Core Area Initiative deliver[s] quality job training and cooperate[s] fully with potential employers in employment equity agendas.

Although the complexity of the programs is of interest, I want to comment on the value of Core's existence. Due to the tripartite

funding, the government agendas must blend and the result is the Core enjoys a fair amount autonomy. The integrity of the original goal is not lost in a maze of bureaucratic decisions. The upshot is that Core does deliver quality job training and does cooperate fully with potential employers in employment equity agendas.

As a company we must ensure that we hire, train, promote, etc. all people and move towards a representative workforce of women, aboriginal people, visible minorities, and persons with disabilities. While employers accept the training responsibility for current employees and will in the spirit of corporate citzenship contribute to the educational pursuit of others in the local community, full cost for job training or target group members must be shared by various institutions of the social order.

The Core Area Initiative model demonstrates government and business and community groups working together. Educational institutions could be brought on board in a similar manner by designing courses which are industry specific or subsidizing the cost of target group training.

The other very exciting community-based program MTS is working with is Women Working Inc. Described at the conference, this private trade school registered with the Manitoba Department of Education is a small-share capital corporation which offers courses in computer literacy and home maintenance as well as a CJS Re-Entry Project for women in "non-traditional" occupations.

This project is a thirty-week program that includes math and English upgrading and four weeks of pre-trades, core skills, computer literacy training, and eight weeks at South Winnipeg Technical Centre.

The contract with Manitoba Telephone System and the Core Area Initative is to train 20 women to apprenticeship in the telephone craft lines. Women Working Inc. is responsible for the design and implementation of a 12-month program including shop training, math, AC/DC, physical training and on-the-job training to the specifications of the MTS job description.

Women Working Inc. is also a general contractor who seeks to employ women where possible.

Winnipeg Core Area Initiative: employment & training program
Promoting accessibility
Background:
The Winnipeg Core Area Initiative is a tri-partite agreement to revitalize the inner city. The first agreement, which ended in 1986, has been extended for a further five-year period and will end in 1991. The entire initiative consists of 13 programs and has a budget of $100 million. The Employment and Training Program is Program 9 and has $12 million.

Mandate:
The mandate of the Employment and Training Program is specific:
- to identify jobs for unemployed core area residents
- to deliver, or arrange training to prepare, core area residents for those jobs.

Within the geographic boundaries of the core area, we are mandated to serve social assistance recipients, unemployment insurance recipients, and the working poor. Specifically, our target groups are women, natives, disabled persons, and visible minorities.

To achieve our mandate, jobs are identified in occupational areas:
- where our target groups are underrepresented;
- where there is a need for trained workers by employers and a commitment from those employers to hire;
- where there is no existing training program or where our target group cannot access existing training.

Given the diverse needs of our target groups, we try to develop a corresponding broad range of program options, ranging from basic pre-employment programs to occupational job training to post-secondary education.

Types of programs:
Occupationally specific programs
Most of our resources are directed towards programming which provides direct access to employment. They are of two types:

- Affirmative Action Programs
In these programs we or the industry identifies a segment of the labour market in which our target population is underrepresented. Examples of these programs are: financial institutions (to prepare natives and visible minorities to work in banks), the Human Justice Training Program (to prepare natives and visible minorities to enter into the field of police or corrections officers), and firefighters (to prepare women to enter into that profession).

These programs are generally pre-employment in nature, meaning that they are to prepare the trainees to pass the entrance in those areas of employment. Before the program is begun, commitments of varying degrees are given by the employers to hire and spots are guaranteed or quotas are set for employment.

Where there is a labour market need for programs and employers are willing to hire but where there is no existing training or where our target group can not access existing training, a range of program options is found. There is a range in salaries, skill training required, and credentialing, and there is a corresponding range of skill level and background in the students.

Programs of this sort embrace both the private sector and the public or para-public sector. In the private sector, there are programs such as the Home Energy Program (to prepare workers to be able to make homes more energy-efficient). This program is short and the jobs not much above minimum wage. Other examples of programs are Furniture Manufacturing, and Windows and Glass. Again, these are relatively short programs preparing people to work in those industries where there are employment opportunities and a chance for stability and full-time work.

Programs in the public and para-public sector include a two-year program in Developmental Services (a program preparing our trainees to work with persons with mental retardation), School Age Childcare and the Metis Community Economic Development Officers Program.

Non-occupationally-specific programs
More recently, we have expanded our programming to include non-occupationally-specific programs for those people who are not able to access existing occupational or training opportunities due to low educational levels (in some cases illiteracy), personal and social problems, or specific language problems. Examples of these programs are:

- North End Women's Centre Employment Readiness Program – an exploratory first step for women considering entering the workplace.

- English for Job Finding Purposes – a full-time six-month program to prepare recently arrived immigrants who already have marketable job skills with the language necessary to get and maintain employment in their fields.

- English for Academic Purposes – a six-month program for immigrants requiring the language skills necessary to resume their studies either at the university or community college level.

That, in a very general sweep, is the range of programming that Employment and Training offers. Across the spectrum, I will attempt to outline the features of the programs that promote successful access to employment either directly into employment or into training leading to employment. Even though the features I identified are specific to access to employment, they are applicable to access to post-secondary institutions as well.

Program features promoting accessibility:
- Cooperative involvement of employers and other relevant parties

Employers are included in all aspects of the program. For example, in the Library Clerks Training Program, both the City of Winnipeg and Winnipeg School Division were involved in the recruitment and selection, participated in the Curriculum and Advisory Committees, and were involved in setting up the work placements.

Where the program focuses on access to further training such as in the case of English for Academic Purposes, the same model is

used. The receiving institutions (Red River Community College, University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg Education Centre) participate in recruitment and selection and sit on the Advisory and Curriculum Committees. We have found their participation invaluable: advising on prerequisites, providing a liaison function between the EAP student and the institution, and advocating on behalf of the EAP students.

- Certification

Wherever possible, certification of training is provided. In the cases of School Age Childcare, the Native Instructors Program and the Native Clerical Program, collaboration with Red River Community College resulted in the students obtaining certificates in these areas.

- Establishment of New Certification with Institutions

In the case of Developmental Services where formal training at the Community College level did not exist prior to 1984, a certificate (one-year) program initially was developed with Red River Community College and currently a diploma (one year) is being implemented.

- Articulation between Deliverers

Wherever possible, attempts are made to provide students in our programs with access to other institutions. In the case of English For Academic Purposes students, because the students were registered with Red River Community College, they were given preferential entrance. Where there was a waiting list, the students were able to move up the waiting list because they were already college students at the time of application.

In the pre-employment programs, in all cases our goal is to provide the students access to other training or employment. By taking an individualized approach and by advocating on behalf of the students we are able to link our program up with other programs.

- Advocacy

Advocacy is a significant part of our programming from development on through to implementation. The staff are accountable for the program goals being achieved. They accept the responsibility for advocacy as part of their jobs.

For example, in the English for Job Finding Purposes Program, the coordinator not only teaches the students the language required but also secures a suitable employment location and builds up a network of employer contacts. The work placement is monitored and, where necessary, the coordinator intervenes and advocates on the students' behalf.

- Responsiveness to the Community

Particularly in the non-occupationally-specific programs, the community has a large role to play. They identify their clients' needs, identify the actual students for the programs, and participate in the design of the program. Most often, they provide on-site facilitation and as well the actual physical space for the program. They are involved throughout in the program's Coordinating Committee.

- Provision of Canadian Credentialing

Much work remains to be done in this area. However, we have most recently been using our special needs funds in the English for Job Finding Purposes, to provide Canadian credentialing where it is required to access jobs. This has meant buying training courses in a beauty school for beauticians and providing truck driver training. Our English for Job Finding Purposes coordinator is also negotiating with the Apprenticeship Branch to begin compiling lists of newly arrived immigrants requiring Canadian credentials.

- Range of Program Options

The discussion paper highlighted the need for a wide range of program options, "from professional to specific job training, from formally accredited courses to informal self-learning opportunities."

The market-driven, occupational programs strive to achieve a wide variety of program options in both the public and private sector.

In an attempt to broaden the base of programming options even further, the Central Park Learning Centre was established to meet the needs of those not served by occupational programs. This has expanded our programming options to include academic upgrading, GED [General Education Degree – grade 12 equivalent] preparation, employment preparation, life skills and English for Special Purposes.

In all cases, our mandate remains employment and training. However, we recognize we have to deal with students at the point where they are, and therefore for some students it may mean a sequence of programs to achieve the ultimate goal of employment.

The challenge in providing a range of options is to ensure suitable candidates are selected for each of the programs. By selecting the candidates with the greatest need, given the financial, time, and resource limitations of the program, any program regardless of its occupational level can provide a real and valid opportunity. A good example of such a course is the Winnipeg Boys' and Girls' Club PACE Program (a 32-week pre-employment program for social assistance recipients between the ages of 18 and 24). One particular student suffered from epilepsy and had been trying in vain for two years to become employed. Her goal was to be a salad maker in a restaurant, but she had been unable to achieve that goal on her own. As a result of the supports in the PACE program, her confidence improved and, with advocacy and the cooperation of the employer, she began work part-time and is now employed full-time with the Country Kitchen. Given this particular student's limitations and her objectives, I would consider that a successful placement. At the other end of the employment scale, assisting medical doctors to get into the clerkship program at the Health Sciences Centre is yet another successful placement, given the goals and the abilities of the individuals involved.

- Recruitment and Selection

As with many of the other access programs, Core Area Initiative does not have formal eligibility criteria. The selection process is a humane one, using the "bias for best" model. The recruitment and selection process is six weeks long and the employers are integral to the process. In the information and selection sessions, the applicants are given time to gain an understanding of the program, and they have the opportunity to show themselves as favourably as possible. The selection process encourages team building and provides a variety of activities which address a variety of learning styles.

- Student Supports

Again, as with other Access programs, there are financial, personal and academic supports. The supports in our program are based on a "success model." In other words, whatever is needed to ensure success within program and budget limitations is done. A fairly healthy special needs budget can be used at the coordinator's discretion to provide those things necessary for success – this could mean new clothing for a work placement, money for a hair cut and, in the case of an immigrant, a course leading to Canadian certification, as well as the more usual emergency needs such as rent subsidy and medical needs.

- Adherence to Adult Education Principles

Employment and Training is committed to working from adult education principles – professional development is provided to staff in this area. The features of our programs based on these principles are:

- experiential learning (each program has a high proportion of practical experience)
- starting where a student is
- recognition of what the student brings into the program (both their strengths and past experiences as well as their needs)
- a non-traditional environment (often in a non-threatening community location)
- student-centred rather than teacher-centred approach
- flexible scheduling/flexible exit
- creative approaches (group work, problem-solving, discussion groups).

- A Holistic Approach

All the elements deemed necessary for success in the program are woven in a holistic fashion into the program. For example, the Firefighters Program consisted of first aid training, physical fitness, driver training, assertiveness training, work-specific training, personal challenge activities (an Outward Bound experience), and communications. These aspects were delivered using a team approach. The staff met frequently and regularly to make sure the message they were sending was the same, and the coordinator's responsibility was to ensure that the staff were working from the same

value base and that they all saw the students across the difficult program areas.

• ESP Approach
In both the occupationally-specific and the language programs, a special purposes approach is taken. This means that the purpose for which the language will be used is identified ahead of time and then all language activities and language development exercises focus on the particular purpose for which the language is used.
This type of language training has proved to be the most powerful and effective means of language teaching because its relevance and urgency increase students' motivation, and the students have a chance to practise what they have learned as soon as they step out of the classroom.

• Information Function
The Planning and Research Branch discussion paper recognized the important part availability of information plays in access. Our programs address this by providing:
- information to the community and general public at each of the sites
- one-on-one interviews with individuals
- presentations to community groups
- information workshops for referral agencies
- information (both on a group and an individual basis) for students in non-selected applicant workshops and as well as on an on-going basis to students in our programs.

Employment and Training supports projects that increase access to information. For example, the Job Market Adaptation Program is done in cooperation with the International Centre and IWECS to develop an ESL-sensitive comprehensive program to be used by those institutions in assisting their clients to access the job market.

• Introducing Systemic Change
In some instances, the programs we have done have introduced a systemic change. The Refugee Community Workers Training Program was such an example. A need was recognized in an area where no services were developed and no training was available. As a result of the Refugee Community Workers Training Program, a new service was created which continues to exist and provides an essential service to the community. This is one example of how a response to a community need generated permanent employment for our target population.

• Increased Awareness and Responsibility of Employer/Institution for Success
Recently in our programs we have begun to try to bring about a greater sense of awareness and responsibility among the employers. This is achieved by increasing their participation in all the phases of the program as well as by more pro-active measures such as providing workshops in cross-cultural understanding and women in non-traditional occupations.

Jennie Styrchak is the Program Development Manager for the Winnipeg Core Initiative, and is responsible for working with employers to determine training needs, develop and write program proposals for the Core Area projects. She received her BA in Psychology from the University of Winnipeg, and is a trained Life Skills Coach, Vocational Counsellor and a member of Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association (CGCA).

Joyce Rankin, BA, worked for CUSO for six years. In 1985, Rankin became the founder and President of Women Working Inc.

CHAPTER 26

Using the Canadian Job Strategy

Workshop coordinator
Lorraine Cameron

This workshop describes some of the creative ways people can take advantage of the CJS, and some of the pitfalls in its implementation.

Lorraine: My role here today as a Women's Employment Coordinator for Employment and Immigration Canada [EIC] is to introduce you to the Canadian Job Strategy [CJS]. I'm not involved in directly delivering the programs of the CJS. I'm in a rather schizophrenic role in this very large bureaucracy, playing an advocacy role within the bureaucracy representing the special needs of women in regard to the programs and services we provide. I play the other half of my role out in the organized women's community representing our programs and services.

Original intent and design of the CJS
I want to familiarize you with the original intent and design of the CJS so you might be in a better position to measure your local activity in terms of what the CJS is intended to do. This information will equip you to deal with our local offices on an informed and assertive basis when it comes to using the Canadian Job Strategy's programs.

Since Barbara McDougall became Minister of Employment and Immigration, women are figuring more prominently as a priority in programming and services. In very simple and practical terms the objective of EIC is to find jobs for people and people for jobs, and failing this, to provide training and temporary financial support where necessary. CJS represents the Government of Canada's current approach to training and employment, and economic development. The CJS is six different program areas as well as a process within which each of us can seek skill development and meaningful employment. It was originally intended to be a dramatically new, fundamentally different, selective approach to labour market programming. Six programs were

Most of the successes in women's participation in the Canadian Job Strategy are happening because women are not waiting for EIC to provide access to our programs. The areas where women are seizing those programs are the areas that are working and that is happening in spite of EIC and not always because of it.

designed to solve certain labour market problems for certain groups of people, with local decision-making – doing what works best for those most in need. The six areas are: Job Entry, Job Development, Skill Shortages, Skill Investment, Innovations, and Community Futures.

How it works and how it doesn't
Now the problem for a lot of us who both work with or benefit from the Canadian Job Strategy is that our vision of what it is, our understanding of what it is meant to be, stops here. Our staff are trained in delivering one, or in some cases, a combination of program areas but are just as lacking in familiarity as many of you about what the intent and design of the other programs are meant to be. That is a defeat of the program as a strategy because a strategy implies links between the various components and not a fragmented approach. There is much more to the Canadian Job Strategy than its individual programs. The most important element of a strategic approach to labour market programs is flexibility. Now already you'll be able to see the danger in a nationwide program which is committed to flexibility, local decision-making and local control, which also implies individual discretion.

Doing what works best implies we know what we are doing well and what we are not doing well. As the Canadian Job Strategy is three years old this month, we are just now coming to terms with what we are doing right. Then we find this whole other area of things that are just happening accidentally. Most of the successes in women's participation in the Canadian Job Strategy are happening because women are not waiting for EIC to provide access to our programs. The areas where women are seizing those programs are the areas that are working and that is happening in spite of EIC and not always because of it.

Who are the most in need?
We define the most in need in Canada these days as being the long-term unemployed. We've defined long-term unemployed as someone who has been unemployed 24 out of the past 30 weeks. Today we consider youth to be a client group most in need of our programs and services; by youth we mean anyone in the age group of 15 to 24 or 25 years old. We consider women who are re-entering the labour market after a period of time outside of it to be a client group most in need. We distinguish a woman re-entering the labour force from a woman entering the labour force if she has spent three years doing primarily homemaking activities. Today we talk more in terms of the transition women face from unpaid work to paid work. Workers facing layoff we consider to be a client group most in need. Communities with chronic unemployment, hard hit by layoffs, we consider to be communities most in need. When we speak of the Canadian Job Strategy as doing what works best for those most in need of our programs and services, we are talking specifically about these groups. A strategy that appears today to be working for many and not working for some, the CJS is six programs each designed to meet the needs of these priority groups. The result has been a participation rate of more than 400,000 people each year.

How to connect with the CJS
For individuals, accessibility to the Canadian Job Strategy translates into their day-to-day contact with our two points of service with the Canadian public: Canada Employment Centres and CJS operations offices.

Not every program of the CJS is suited to every woman nor with the exception of re-entry are any of the programs designed specifically with women in mind. However, there has been a fair representation of women in each program largely due to the establishment of targets. Job Entry is for young people making a transition from school to a job and for women making a transition from unpaid work in the home to paid work in the labour market. Job Entry provides programs for students still in school who want to obtain work experience related to their studies, and youth and women who wish to gain skills and training through courses administered through public and private training institutions.

Young women and men in this country face an unemployment rate upwards of 30 percent. There are more than 400,000 young women and men who are attempting to break into the workforce every year. They are caught in that very frustrating round of job applications and rejections, that old vicious cycle of no work – no experience; no experience – no work. The entry option offers young people today a chance to get those basic skills and experience and to demonstrate them to employers.

A similar challenge faces the 200,000 women who attempt to re-enter the labour market every year in Canada, often after working several years in the home. Many of them are unsure of themselves, unsure of their skills; they underestimate their experience or abilities and feel intimidated by employers looking for up-to-date skills and work experience. Re-entry women often come with a considerable range of experience and skills but lack confidence or require updating in order to make a transition from the home to the labour market. Re-entry projects across the country are helping women to evaluate their existing skills and to build on those skills towards a career. They provide orientation to today's labour market, job search techniques, as well as specialized on-the-job training. Individual and group counselling support and other support services can be and are made available to them throughout the duration of their training. As well there is a whole client group of the severely employment disadvantaged, what we call SED – people who are disadvantaged in the labour market either because of a significant or serious lack of training or experience, prolonged periods of unemployment, institutionalization, functional illiteracy, or a prolonged history of drug and alchol abuse. For that group of people to acquire skills and experience, they require an integrated program to make their transition into and become active members of the labour market.

What participants do
Participants in all of the options gain practical on-the-job work experience combined with classroom training. They are placed with local employers who agree to cooperate in the program as training place host. Projects are designed and delivered by independent coordinators on contract with EIC. Working closely with local businesses or community groups, these coordinators insure their participants receive relevant training and experience which can lead to lasting employment. As a result, Entry, Re-entry and SED participants all benefit from training that is very customized to their own individual needs as well as customized to the needs of employers in that particular community.

Participants always receive a training allowance or UI benefits if they are eligible, whatever is greater. They may also be eligible for supplemental allowances to cover requirements such as childcare arrangements, commuting, living away from home or travel assistance.

Job Entry also supports, through the Cooperative Education Program, school work-study programs which help graduates make a smoother transition into the labour market. There are some very exciting initiatives under Co-op Education for training girls in high school in the trades and technology fields. The Victoria School District attempts to link women in grades 10 and 11 to scientists, technicians and tradeswomen in the community in a practical work experience. This exposure helps them realize how important high school maths and sciences might be to their decisions for a career later on.

VOICE: I hope we are going to talk some more about those who are considered underemployed. I'd like to know if co-op education has an age restriction or requirement? Is it only available to high school students or can community colleges develop a proposal that takes into account co-op education?

Lorraine: It's open to high schools, community colleges, and universities.

VOICE: I work for Forentek of Canada Corporation, it's a non-profit research laboratory and we get a lot of our students through the co-op.

Lorraine: Students who take part in Challenge, the Job Entry summer job program, benefit from the career-related work experience they can get in a summer, which hopefully will assist their transition from school to the labour market.

Individual interpretations of criteria
VOICE: How are you going to let all EIC employees know about what you've just said? Because this summer a girl completed her grade 12 in Brandon. She took drafting in grades 10, 11 and 12. She had her math and science and she wanted to take a pre-trades course offered in Brandon this year. The reason she didn't fall under Job Entry was she had only been out of school two months.

VOICE: One of the guidelines we have been given by our local EIC office has been that youth must be out of work 21 out of the past 52 weeks. If they are eligible for UIC benefits they are not eligible for a training allowance.

Lorraine: Yes, that's true, but they can participate in the program and continue to receive UI if that rate is higher than the allowance.

VOICE: Okay, because we are not under that impression. We are not getting people who are eligible for UI.

VOICE: I think the reason there is controversy is they're saying because a person is receiving UI benefits then they have made the transition from school to work.

Lorraine: We are trying to emphasize among our staff that they look at the qualitative measure of transition and not a strict quantitative measure of numbers of weeks or months. Focus on whether they are in dead-end work and if they are and they still meet the other eligibility criteria, then put them in for the sake of their transition.

VOICE: So that's where it comes to the individual judgment of a counsellor to determine whether the successful transition has been made or not.

VOICE: Women who are working at McDonald's for minimum wage are already showing they want to work. They want a chance at pre-trades but get turned down because they haven't been unemployed for three years. It's not fair, if what we want to do is give the women in these minimum-wage jobs a chance to re-enter in a non-traditional area.

Lorraine: You're referring to an interpretation of eligibility which says we'll define someone who has not successfully made the transition as someone who has been unemployed for three years. You're voicing a criticism of the re-entry program that we've heard across this country over the last three years. Our own staff lacks the understanding that our programs and definitions should be dealt with flexibly. We have not done enough staff training and sensitization.

The re-entry program criterion for women is a three-year period out of the labour market, with a real emphasis now on a more qualitative definition of a successful transition or not. If, for example, a woman has been waitressing 15 hours a week every week for three years, she may be eligible for re-entry as well as someone who has been completely at home that whole time.

Women must treat a Canada Employment Centre [CEC] or any government office as any place of business: when you don't get satisfaction at one level, you move up to the next level and when you don't get satisfaction at those levels you find other routes.

VOICE: I think one of the things that should be pointed out about Job Entry is it involves local decision-making. In Ontario the unemployment rate has been very low. As a result programs that were directed at youth and Futures programs have been cut drastically because there doesn't appear to be an employment problem for youth in Ontario. So as the employment picture changes, and it changes very rapidly, there goes the funding. So I hope one of the things we're going to talk about is long-term commitment.

But will I get a better job?
VOICE: I am concerned about the re-entry program because there hasn't seemed to be any priority to get women into positions that pay well. Most of the re-entry programs are still minimum-wage or very low wages. There is almost no push for any non-traditional types of funding.

Lorraine: There is a guideline in re-entry jobs that the jobs we should be aiming for should be paying at least eight dollars an hour. It's a standard or a minimum that is explained away community by community in terms of certain labour market realities there. It is a problem we can discuss in terms of the whole CJS at the end: how much we are doing to move women into a wider range of occupations, and how much we are reflecting the labour market in general by contributing to employment inequity.

VOICE: It seems to achieve the same effect as the skills shortages list not being relative to the community. Victoria has a huge construction rate right now and yet they are saying it's not a skills shortage so they won't fund more construction programs.

A fundamental flaw
VOICE: I have one question with regard to an observation I made. It bears on your comment regarding advancing women in the workplace and I think it's a fundamental flaw in the design of the CJS because past programs are evaluated on their job success rate. You have to take people who have pretty good qualifications to start in order to get them into a job after the maximum time of 52 weeks. I know there is always pressure to reduce the cost of the program, to shorten the programs, but if you're taking people with low skill levels you are not going to be able to advance them very far in that time period and for me that's a fundamental flaw. You cannot get a woman through a two-year technical program under this funding.

Lorraine: Yes, you're right. The duration of our projects, whether in the 52-week limit, and we operate more often on an unwritten 26-week maximum limit, is not enough to make a difference for many women. We are trying to respond to that criticism, which was made within months of the announcement of the CJS in 1985, by linking more of our programs so we can, over a longer period of time and in different ways, address the longer-term needs of women and especially those women facing multiple disadvantages – whether it be women of colour, disabled women, women with non-Canadian work experience or credentials.

Problems with the program
VOICE: A built-in failure we see is that if a skills-training program is developed and women come into it, they're not equipped to proceed directly to that level. They need something first and we can't seem to get acceptance for a proposal to do that.

VOICE: I have experienced in our area a dramatic cutback in our bridging programs.

VOICE: In our region we have no cutback because we have no bridging program.

VOICE: I have a friendship with a woman who is blind and she was on a SED program. She completed that program and she still hasn't found employment. She really needs to be sponsored under another program but we went to the local Canada Employment Centre and my understanding was that she could not qualify because she had been on this previous program and now she wouldn't qualify for any of the other programs.

Lorraine: That actually happens a lot, this idea that if you've been through one of the programs you're not going to get another chance. In an attempt to spread very limited budgets very thinly across a number of people in need, we are trying to encourage our staff to link an individually subsidized job contract to graduation from a SED program to provide that extra incentive for an employer. Thinking strategically is creative thinking. It is difficult when you are dealing with a large number of people, whether it be our own staff or people who run Job Entry programs on contract, to get people thinking imaginatively and creatively. Everyone is under such pressure in terms of the needs of the participants. It's a big challenge and one that will take us longer

than the three years the programs have been around.

The one-time limit we are working with is: any one individual's participation in the Canadian Job Strategy is 52 weeks. If a woman has been in a SED program for 25 weeks she would still have another 27 weeks of eligibility for CJS assistance – in which case a link between SED and Re-entry to me would be very logical, very creative, and very responsive to the needs of women. For a woman with disabilities this is a perfect link. For women with English as a second language, it's a perfect link, one that makes a lot of sense when you look at the Canadian Job Strategy as a whole, but one that makes no sense when as an EIC staff person you're only trained in this or you're only trained in that. We are lobbying for more resources to train our staff in creative thinking and to work with coordinators in the area of strategic thinking in their use of the tools the CJS provides.

Programs for the long-term unemployed

The other area of program activity under the CJS, meant specifically for that group called the long-term unemployed, is Job Development. It's designed to enhance the employability of long-term unemployed persons through work experience and skills training. The participants in either the general projects component or the individually subsidized job component can have a good chance of re-establishing themselves in the labour market. At the same time, it meets employers' needs for a trained workforce. If somebody has been unemployed for 24 of the previous 30 weeks they are eligible. If someone has been unemployed 18 of the last 30 weeks, okay, because they got involved with some seasonal work in the interim. We've made this explicit with our staff that the definition of long-term unemployed, 24 out of the past 30 weeks, is a guideline.

In Canada at this time there are over 500,000 people that have been out of work for the last 24 weeks, so we have a large pool to draw on. But in the cases of target groups, and by target groups I mean women, persons with disabilities, aboriginal people, members of visible minority groups, we are encouraging them to use those 24 weeks as a guideline only. Not as a criterion of exclusion. If an individual is likely to be unemployed six or 10 weeks from now and then meet that eligibility, don't force the person to wait and fill in that time before they become eligible for training.

Many women are caught, as we all know, in periods of unemployment owing to the changing needs of the workplace; their skills may no longer be required and in this sense, Job Development in either area of program activity is very good for them. The project coordinators that deliver general projects include non-profit organizations, municipalities, community groups, local businesses. Job Development offers employers wage subsidies in order to take part in the training of that person and hopefully to hire them. Individually Subsidized Jobs [ISJ] is basically a wage subsidy on an individual basis to an employer to take someone on for a period of time. Wage subsidies vary and we have maxima within which we work and again the principles of individual discretion, local decision-making and flexibility apply here. Both can last up to 52 weeks, but I believe most regions operate with the unwritten rule of "average 26-week duration for program activity."

It's the Canada Employment Centre that determines the client's eligibility for ISJ. Ideally in the proposal for your Job Entry program you indicate you intend to make use of a program like that to make the difference for a group of women among your entire group that may need that assistance. Inform your CEC all along the way and as those women begin to be easily identified towards the end of the project, start getting the wheels in motion – marketing it to local employers because most local employers don't know about ISJ unless they've used it before and until it's introduced to them with a specific candidate in mind. Training is delivered out of CJS operations or programs centres and ISJ is delivered out of our Canada Employment Centres. So if you're dealing with one member of our staff, with your program or project officer, you may or may not, depending on the size of the community, come into contact with an employment counsellor at your Canada Employment Centre. You're going to have to make the links for the staff of a very large organization that work in separate bailiwicks.

In small communities across Canada where the CEC is intimately involved with anything happening in their community, what they often do is assign one member of their staff to liaise with all their women's projects, and one member of their staff to liaise with all their youth projects in that area. That person becomes the counsellor for each of the participants and they become your point of contact with that office and you develop a good working relationship with them. It happens in small communities because that's how things work in a small community. It can happen in larger metro areas if you initiate it yourself. In the three years of the CJS our staff has been reduced by 30 percent. The flip side of local decision-making, individual discretion, is that you must train the staff of a large organization to deal with that responsibly and sensitively, then you run into problems. That's where the onus falls on the non-governmental community to take the responsibility to hold us to our original vision of what we are supposed to be doing. I'm not justifying it, but I'm saying that's a reality.

How to affect the CJS

VOICE: When you say it's up to us to change things, is there sort of a formula or a strategy that would work better than... letters to the editor?

Lorraine: One group that has succeeded in taking the Canadian Job Strategy to its fullest has been the native community and particularly the native community of B.C./Yukon. They said, early on, "The CJS is not meeting our needs; we want it to operate differently in response to the unique needs of the native community." What we have in B.C./Yukon is a whole separate strategy for applying the CJS to one community of people. The situation of native Canadians is very different in terms of organization into communities but they had set up a regional advisory body on which native leaders and members of our organization sat and together looked at the labour market adjustment problems of native people. What it did is make a public organization like ours accountable to the community involved, the community that had been defined as a target group, and it also made the organized native community accountable to a public organization. I think the key to success is a community-based mechanism for consultation and accountability, joint problem-solving between government and organized community people that a government program or strategy is meant to serve.

VOICE: I may be really out of touch in Whitehorse, but we hadn't heard about any of this up there. As a matter of fact, when we were doing research into apprenticeship I got a copy of a letter from the chief of Selkirk Indian Band who said, "If the apprenticeship program ceased to exist, it certainly wouldn't make any difference" to their group, and also from a woman who was coordinator of the Stepping Stones Women's Group who said as far as they were concerned, Canadian Job Strategy did not relate to the native community in the Yukon at all.

Lorraine: That's interesting, because the only problem facing the committee as it was set up was the lack of women participating on it. This is a common problem – there is also a lack of disabled women on our disabled advisory committee.

What about people as cheap labour?

VOICE: What governs the kinds of general projects that you approve? I'd like to see something that insures employers do not take advantage of people as cheap labour.

Lorraine: Taking advantage of people as cheap labour is a danger in our program areas because of the partnership of employers, trainees, and a coordinator. Our staff at EIC is committed to principled employment practices. The local office knows their community of employers pretty well in terms of judging whether there may be abuse. The person that can apply the most scrutiny is the independent coordinator attached to general projects by involving

those employers they believe want a fair and decent workplace.

Can you apply twice?
VOICE: If you've had previous job entry wage subsidies and have gone on in your education, can you apply again?

Lorraine: Because the CJS is three years old we're just now facing that question. There is nothing stopping people from being eligible again but it would be a local decision depending on local priorities.

Skills Investment and Skills Shortages
Two program areas to seize the use of are Skills Investment and Skills Shortages because they train and prepare people for the jobs of the future. When we talk of the jobs of the future for the most part we are talking about better-paying work than jobs of the present. These programs have not been doing well in women's participation largely because they are employer-based programs. We deal with applications from employers who put forward candidates from among their workforce to take part in the training. We're in a position of being reactive to applications more than ever and have found many of the employers that take advantage of Skills Investment especially, are not putting forward the names of women on their staff to receive upgrading or training.

The Skills Investment program is for employers and their workforce to plan ahead by supporting efforts to train employed workers to avoid layoffs or lost jobs. For individual workers Skills Investment is a chance to get the skills they need for continued employment and for employers it's a practical way to avoid laying off employees during times of change. As well, it's an opportunity for small business owners, for self-employed individuals, managers and employees to cooperate for their mutual benefit. Training may be full- or part-time. It can take place in the employer's firm or in the firm of another employer, a community college or a private training institution. Training can last up to three years depending on the option chosen. These options are: retraining; continuing employment; training trust funds; relocation and travel; and work sharing.

The retraining option is designed to meet the training needs of small business for owners, employers, and also self-employed workers whose jobs are threatened by technological or market change. It includes support for training for management and business skills in addition to a number of areas of technical training. Employers can save up to 60 percent of a worker's wages while they are training as well as up to $20 per training hour for each participant.

The continuing employment option assists people whose employment is threatened as well as displaced workers who have already lost their jobs within the past four months because of technological or market change. New or expanding employers can hire recently displaced workers and receive the same financial support as employers under the retraining option.

The training trust fund is a cooperative effort among employee associations, unions, employers and government to create or increase training trust funds. There is a strong possibility that a Women In Trades association would be considered an employee association and could set up a training trust fund under Skills Investment. There are some real possibilities for seizing these program opportunities and making them work for women.

Relocation and travel assistance assists unemployed workers to go to a job interview as well as paying relocation costs if you have found a job elsewhere. Under this program it's applied to those workers facing technological or market change.

Work-sharing agreements between EIC and employers allow employers to retain their workforce during economic downturns. It is an agreement that allows employers to spread available work among a large number of employees so perhaps a three-day week is worked. EIC will cover through UI benefits the cost of the other two days of the week. Work-sharing agreements are temporary; they are meant for periods of economic downturn. The maximum duration is 52 weeks with some flexibility depending on the situation.

Skills Shortages is a program to develop skills that are in short supply and an attempt to identify those nationally, on a regional basis and within regions on a community basis. Assistance is available to employers to train staff in a skill shortage area. Relocation and travel is available for job interviews and actual relocation cost for workers moving from areas of unemployment to fill skill shortages in another area. We hear about a skill shortage through a variety of sources. It then goes to one of our labour market economists to research and provide the rationale to our national office.

Community Futures
Community Futures is based in community economic development to enable communities to make adjustments in anticipation of change. Major layoffs in single-industry towns affect women and men alike and Community Futures is geared to anticipate those kinds of changes and work with identified communities to assist development. A combination of need as well as potential goes into identifying eligible communities. Community Futures attempts through a variety of program options to assist those areas to look at their economic situation and to take measures strategically to deal with problems of unemployment, economic diversification, any aspect of economic development related to the recovery of their community.

Community Futures operates through committees set up locally and meant to be representative of that community. The committee undertakes over a year or two to examine the situation of their community and to tell us how they want to use any of the four options available. Most communities want the establishment of Business Development Centres. They are centres that provide locally-managed technical and advisory services to small business as well as loan and investment assistance.

The Self Employment Incentive option, SEI, is a grant program aimed at people receiving UI benefits or social assistance, that receive a grant of 180 dollars a week for up to 52 weeks to try to get a business venture going. This is a substitute payment for what they would normally get on UI or social assistance but which then puts them in a valid position to work on a business idea.

VOICE: Is there any possible way for a group of women to form a cooperative and get a small business going?

Lorraine: Yes, as long as the recipients of the SEI grant are in control of the business. The community committees determine whether or not they want to make that option available to their community and set the number of participants each year. Then it would be available through that Canada Employment Centre in that community. Applicants would seek advice from the Business Development Centre and show that they had done a proper business plan and they were all set to go. The business plan has to be complete but no one judges its viability. Anyone in business, and most committees, of course, are made up of men in business, will say the best business ideas were those no one believed in to begin with, with the exception of the people trying to get it started. So to judge them according to established criteria would not be in the best interest of free enterprise.

The Community Futures Initiatives Fund is controlled at the national level for communities that have a project or an initiative they feel is key to their plan for recovery but that cannot be covered through any other Community Futures options or any other source of assistance, either public or private. It is based on a 50-50 cost-sharing with the Community Futures area. Most of the Community Futures communities have been identified but we annually still receive applications from communities that want to be considered.

The committees are made up of people from the community who were selected by CEIC staff, together with the local member of parliament office and our local CEC. We had quite a bit of influence in determining the membership and getting a cross-section on those committees. Once they are established

and have their own constitution and executive, our staff then are just resources for sorting out the requirements to access the rest of the program. The committees like to think of themselves as independent but they are tied to us through their funding. They have to have democratic elections but they're pretty well set for the next year or two and they're only changing as people leave but they are trying to maintain an organizational or interest group representation in them.

VOICE: Can you lobby to make it more representative?

Lorraine: In our region we found out not many women were serving on these committees and it's a concern because of women's access to the CJS.

The Innovations program
Innovations is another of the mysterious programs of the CJS and one that's not easy to access. In the last year however, there was a commitment made by the minister at that time, Benoit Bouchard, together with Barbara McDougall, that they were committed to making Innovations work better for women. There have been projects that have been pro-actively solicited in response to that announcement, where the organized women's community was invited to submit proposals and make use of this program. One of the things the organized women's community identified as a barrier to accessing this program is the expense of developing a proposal. In response to that criticism our national office for Innovations has made available developmental funds to women's groups to hire someone to research and develop a sound practical proposal for Innovations. There was no commitment to fund it once developed but it did provide some additional access to compete for some of the Innovations dollars.

Commitment to employment equity
Central to the Canadian Job Strategy is the government of Canada's commitment to employment equity for women, for persons with disabilities, for aboriginal peoples and for members of visible minority groups. We have achieved significant progress in the levels of participation by women in all program areas, but in qualitative terms we are still asking ourselves the question, "Is the CJS meeting the needs of Canadian women in terms of moving them out of job ghettos into a wider range of occupations that offer decent wages, decent work conditions and some security and opportunity for advancement?" Women continue to be a priority in all planning and development in CJS programs and services. The barriers women face and the barriers CEIC as an organization faces in meeting their needs, in many cases go beyond our mandate, which requires and demands from us as an organization to reach out and co-operate with other federal departments that have a mandate for women – the Secretary of State being key among them – and with our provincial counterparts and the organized women's community. I believe the only option open to us is a community-based consultative mechanism.

Lorraine Cameron was an Employment Equity Coordinator at EIC at the time of the conference and is currently a CEC Manager in Vancouver. She did her undergraduate work at McMaster University, and received her MSW from UBC. Cameron has worked in social and community development in a variety of private and federal agencies. She has done extensive work in program development with the Canadian Job Strategy.

Women and Technology

CHAPTER 27

Women changing technology changing women

Keynote speaker
Elaine Bernard

The question I was asked to venture into was, "Will women change technology or will technology change women?" Yes, yes, yes, a thousand times yes.

There is a problem when we start talking about technology, a problem of definition. Think about a situation in which some economist, who is a person who knows the least about the economy, explains inflation. By the time he or she has finished explaining inflation, you think it's like that commercial about the "White Tornado." Remember that one? The White Tornado came through the house and zip zip zip – the house was spotless. Only in the case of the economy the White Tornado goes through the grocery stores and everything goes up in price and it is magical like cartoon-land.

What that person is doing is mystifying economics, making it sound like there is a weird phenomenon out there called the economy, probably centred somewhere on Mars, and every now and then the Martians drop something on us. Bam – unemployment. " Well the economy just brought down unemployment." Damn, if we can find this sucker "the economy" we'll wring his little neck. And what the economists are trying to do, is to remove these concepts, make them sound so bizarre and so difficult to understand that we ordinary human beings could never try to do anything about them. And precisely the same sort of thing is happening around the concept of technology.

"Technology is the means and processes through which we as a society produce the substance of our existence." [It's] tools, materials, energy forms, techniques, and organization of work.

Defining technology

So I always start any talk on technology by defining it. The easiest way to define anything is to go to the dictionary. You open up the dictionary and you understand what a dictionary is really good at – telling you how to spell something, not defining something. It says, "The practical arts in total." This is brilliant. Or it says something dumb like, "Applied science." This is an English teacher's idea of a definition because now, now you must look up science – which will say something

like "the root of technology, the intellectual and...."

Obviously, the best way to define technology is to make up the definition yourself. So, that's what I've done, and I have been getting away with it for a number of years so it must be right. "Technology is the means and processes through which we as a society produce the substance of our existence." It's a sneaky definition. First it goes on for three lines, so it has to be good. But secondly, it puts people collectively together – society at the centre of technology. And that, I think, is one of the more important lessons. I then further define it into five things: tools, materials, energy forms, techniques, and organization of work.

Now, tools most of us are familiar with here. Certainly here. We've always thought of technology in that way. Whether it's computers, or robots – the most recent advance in the articulating arm of a computer. Hey, that's all a robot is, it's a tool. But as women we have thought of hand tools – how to operate hand tools. At different times in history we have even talked about an age by the invention of a specific tool. Tools are easy, that's technology, you've got it.

What about materials? Now that's a trickier one. I remember the first time I had to teach for the plumbers. Truly an experience. "Ah,..." they said, "Well, come on, you can come down and teach us about technology. Ha ha." Then they said, "We can now work out the length of pipe by using a hand-held calculator. I guess that's tech change. Ha ha."

I said, "Hey jerks." Plumbers like the direct approach. I said, "What's happening to your apprentice program?"

They said, "Yeah, well, you know..."

I said, "Do you think maybe it's got just a little to do with the materials you're using? Remember the good old days when plumbers were real plumbers and they carried metal? What's this plastic stuff you're playing around with nowadays?"

I said, "That's tech change you know, that's revolutionizing plumbing and it doesn't even come in computer boxes."

And they started to think about it, and they thought about how plumbing is changing massively because of a change in materials. The way you bond metal versus plastic has substantially changed the job, has even changed the number of apprentices you meet on a job site.

Because in the old days, as those of us who have been through apprenticeship know, apprenticeship training was thinly disguised as a teaching methodology but it was really a way of getting a cheap grunt. "Here, hold this."

"What will I learn by that?"

"To Obey the Craftsman."

Oh well, it's an important lesson.

Tools, materials, energy forms. In the past, we've even defined ages and revolutions in technology by energy forms. The Steam Age. Was this some British plot to sell tea around the world? No, there was steam before the steam age and after. It was harnessing steam as an energy form that made the difference.

Techniques. Ways and methods of doing things. Organization of work. And that, by the way, is the most important aspect of technology today.

Revolutions in work organization

If you think back to the turn of the century, you'll see that we went through a technological revolution in work organization. We moved from craft production that was people-centred with the craftsperson in charge, to assembly-line production. It wasn't that on an assembly line you made inferior products, but that the very method of mass production removed the knowledge from the worker and put it into management, where it was lost forever. By the very nature of the way the work was organized, the workers' knowledge was limited, and yet they were still able to produce more and more complex machinery. That was an organizational change.

If you want to see some of the changes, the real changes, don't watch the lights and buttons in the computer age. If you're watching them you're missing the real fundamental change. In the computer revolution the real change isn't the lights and the bells – it is, in fact, the organizational change.

Today we are going through a massive technological revolution. Our world, we technologists would say, is being reconfigured. It's being redesigned. Will technology change women? Of course it will change women. Of course it has changed women.

More often than not we've been the victims of technology – from the numb-bum designs that fit fictional, statistical, average persons as if there were not the wonderful diversity of shapes and sizes that characterizes us as humankind; to our current medical practices in reproductive technologies, treating pregnant women as if they were merely an environment within which the fetus grows. It's a whole new field of study – woman as the environment upon which the fetus grows.

How can women change technology? First of all, if you're going to do it you have to be there. You can't do it from the outside.

If you think about it, look at the very birthing process in hospitals. It is marvellously machine-intensive – machines that put women in the correct position so the doctor will be comfortable. Now that's progress – if you're a doctor and you're worried about your back. If you're a woman delivering, you may have a different perspective.

Need we be victims of technology?

We tend to be the victims of technology. What maintains us in this victim's position? Well, I have three factors. One is the belief that technology is progress, that it is unbiased, that it's neutral, that it's inevitable. Second is the lack of concrete experience and knowledge of science and technology. And third is the lack of reasonable alternatives. Hell, even unreasonable alternatives, I'll try anything. Let's look at each one of these in its turn.

Technology is progress. Well, that's an article of faith. One that many of us have started to abandon. Technology, in order to be progress, must be measured by a human measure. We see endless potential for technology, but the reality is leaving us far behind.

Look at the reality of help for the disabled. That's one of the most exciting aspects of technology today. But look at how many people you still see who are physically disabled and who are still running around in wheelchairs that haven't changed in their fundamental design for 50 years. Where is our technology there? Where is it when it comes to occupational health and safety for workers? Where is it in women's health? Where are we seeing this technology serving the needs of you and me? We're not. It's not progress, not by our measures. It must be and it can be if it meets our needs. If it doesn't – forget it.

Technology is unbiased. You know, there is a mental process you go through when you read a book. You say, "Well, this author has a bias, and I recognize his or her bias." And you can think critically about that book – accept or reject its author's premise. But if that same nerd puts on a hard hat, calls herself or himself an engineer and, instead of writing a book denouncing unions or women, creates a machine that does the same thing... oh well, that's objective, I mean ooh that's technology. Was it designed to imprison me? Oh no no no, it's simply answering the demands of physics. Nonsense! That's nonsense. Absolutely nonsense.

Technology is inevitable. If there are no other alternatives, yes, it is inevitable. But choices are tricky things. For example, if I were asked to vote on a choice between light, cheap, rapid mass transit versus the individual car, I'd probably go for the rapid transit. But it doesn't appear on the ballot, and it's not really available. The whole system is configured for individual car ownership. Choices, real choices, are disguised. They are not there. Often non-

choices are seen as inevitable. "That's the way it had to be, there was no other choice."

Frequently human decision-making is hidden by making it look like a machine or technological imperative: "The computer can't do it." What a line, eh? That's a short way of saying the truth – the people who designed this computer don't want to let you do this, therefore they have purposefully designed it to exclude that possibility. But if anyone said that, you would say, "Then maybe we should change those people." They don't want you thinking that. It's much better if you say, "The computer can't do it." Or, "We can't afford it," – that's another great one. We can't afford pay equity. We can't afford employment equity. We can't afford whatever. Well it's damn funny how we can afford submarines. Damn funny how we can afford all sorts of things the government wants to do. It's damn funny how during WWII, we could afford childcare.

Now if you think about it, that's the way the system works, as if things are inevitable, as if there are no choices, as if you've just got to accept it.

But we don't accept it. If you as electricians were using a multimeter or voltmeter, and you plugged it in, testing lines, and it couldn't register current properly, you wouldn't say, "Well, that's the way the system works, guess we just have go with it." You wouldn't. You would say, "Junk this crap, give me one that works! Give me an adequate tool that meets my needs." Well, I would suggest in many walks of life, we have to start saying, "Junk this crap, give me something that works, something that meets our needs."

The need for knowledge

That leads us to the second problem: lack of concrete experience and knowledge of trades and technology. That is, do you have sufficient experience and skill to say, "Bullshit"? Because we are always being faced with someone saying, "Well, that's the way the machine works, there is no other alternative, that's the way it has to be."

Now, as a humanist, you can cry all you want, you can say, "Well, you know, I wish it were a friendlier world, where people got along better. If we would all just pull together...." And that's good, and if you do it well, and it's grammatically correct, you may even get a job teaching English Literature or History or something. But you're not going to build the world where people cooperate, where they see alternatives, because to do that you must have the tools necessary to do that construction. And that means literacy, and knowledge, and experience in science, technology, and trades, because that's where it's at. Without it you will always be the victims of other experts.

How can women change technology?

Now the third thing I mentioned is a lack of alternatives. I would like to focus on that and the process of starting to think about feminist trades, and feminist technology alternatives.

How can women change technology? First of all, if you're going to do it you have to be there. You can't do it from the outside. You can't say, "Well, it would be real good if somebody would fix it this way for me; call up a tradesperson, get her to fix it." You have to be there in it.

I agree with Kate Braid, for instance, who said earlier, she doesn't like the term non-traditional work or jobs for women in trades or technology. If you think about, it since the dawn of civilization it was women who first developed in hunting and gathering societies: agriculture; animal domestication and husbandry; healing and medicine; construction – the building of shelters. Almost all the practical arts were first developed by women. So when we demand mandatory affirmative action programs, don't get defensive. Don't apologize. We're following the finest of union traditions. We're merely asserting our collective seniority. We were there first and we're coming back to claim our due. We are reclaiming our traditional work, if you take a long view of history.

The nice thing about being a woman, (you probably don't view this as being a super great thing) is that we are always on the outside of the inside. You know what I mean? Like, okay, you finally made it. You busted into a so called "non-traditional" area. You've done it. You are now a scientist. You are now a technologist. You are now a tradeswoman. And you walk into a group of scientists, technologists, or tradespersons and everybody outside is saying, "Ooh, she's one of Them, she's one of those experts." And you sit in that room of experts and they're going, "It's a girl." Because you're still on the outside of the inside track. You haven't made it. Because we stick out, we're different, and no matter how much we fake it, no matter whether we dress one way or another – or streak through the meeting – we will always be outsiders on the inside track.

Well that's easy for us, because if that's the way we are going to play the game, then it's very simple, we are going to change the rules.

So, you have to be there, and secondly, when you are there, you have to work for change. Because if you allow this brotherhood to stay together, they're going to do you in, they're going to do me in, they're going to do themselves in. They're so dumb.

So what we must do, being on the inside, is fight for change. Because otherwise we can't survive. We know we can't walk around saying, "I'm okay, Jane, you know I'm a craftsperson." The crafts are in crisis. Technology is in crisis. Science is in crisis. And I think part of that crisis is the inhumanity, the dehumanizing nature of the new technology currently being designed and configured, the attempt to make victims of all of us. And within the context of that crisis, there is no individual strategy that will work. I cannot say to myself that somehow if I get to be the best scientist within this particular area or technology, then I can keep my head down and I'll be safe. What we're talking about right now is a global crisis and it requires collective action to change.

The third step: work towards alternatives. New options. Technology that puts people back into control. This is not currently a design prescription in most technology. You may have picked that up. It is not human-centred technology. It is not a method I teach which is called "User-Driven Design." I came up with the term because if you walk into a group of engineers and say, "I'm here to talk to you about workers' control," they freak out. But if you come in to say, "I'm teaching a new design methodology called User-Driven Design," they go, "Was this on the exam, man?" So I do whatever it takes.

The one thing we do know about design and about the cycle of design is the earlier in a design cycle you put in your needs and options, that is, the better they are defined at that point, the better your chance of success towards the end.

Let me give you a really straightforward example – access for the disabled. There are two ways of getting access for the disabled into a building. One is to ignore the disabled the way we normally do, and say, "Well, the hell with them. With any luck there aren't enough up here to really raise hell, and if they do, they're poor and don't carry much political weight. So, we'll just build the building the way we wanted to." And at the end of it some sneaky disabled person gets together with some other people and they start going to political bodies and raising a stink. And now you have an expensive proposition – called tearing apart a building that was designed with no access for the disabled and all of a sudden trying to give them access. *Give* them access, right? That is one way of doing it. That is costly for all of us taxpayers. It's costly even for the stupid company that permitted such a design to be accepted.

A far more exciting way of doing it is to legislate access for the disabled in every building. That shares the cost out so no company gets a competitive advantage. Everybody has to do it. It's sort of... it's natural as the rain. And when that demand is made, you unleash tremendous creativity. It means at the planning stages you incorporate a creative way of access for the disabled. It's cheap to do it then; it means four or five hours of the architect's time. And it's part of the plan for the building. It doesn't add to the cost because it was designed to be accessible to everyone and everyone means the disabled. Everyone means Every One.

So you add your needs and options to your design from the very beginning. It costs less and it releases creative possibility. We've got a

creative crisis here. In the long run it will be cheaper.

Fourth: we work democratically. One thing I believe is happening in our society, is that we are being disenfranchised through the mystification of technology.

Women are great demystifiers; our bullshit quota is very low. That's why sometimes women don't speak up at conferences. You must have noticed that often when you're at mixed conferences, the guys get up and repeat each other. And the women there just don't have the level of bullshit to do that. They just want to get on with it and do what needs to be done. This is very useful in a design sense because, what we want to do is demystify. We have no ego tied into making something look more difficult to enhance our personal stature. We have much more interest in trying to explain it simply enough to build up the support of the majority of the people to make sure it's actually done.

That's what I mean by starting to work democratically. Open doors for others. That's what some of this conference is about. Not just feeling good about the gains we've made, but now that we've kicked open the door, being able to yell to the rest of the sisters, "Come on in!"

And why are we going to do that? Because there are two strategies. One is to run around and say, "I'm Jane, I'm the only one in my workplace who's female. I'm the token Queen Bee." But that doesn't last long and you don't get anywhere. Far better to be the senior woman who kicks open doors to let the others in, and then together as a gang to start changing the place.

And when we do that, we discover some of our brothers who never ever used to identify themselves to us – they were the ones who sat in the back and couldn't put up with the bullshit either. All of a sudden they start saying, "You know, I like this, okay, you keep doing that." And they are on our side. You find that all sorts of guys that never spoke up in meetings before are on our side. For the first time they're interested because they see some of the creative possibilities coming out.

It's opening the door, not just for women, but for people of colour, disabled, aboriginal people. Not just out of some sort of moral posture – not that I think it's wrong to be in favour of all these things – but out of our own enlightened self-interest we have to do that.

Because that is the diversity of our society. And technology, real technology, like society, thrives on diversity. It becomes stagnant with homogeneity. When I see the little engineers running around with their identical briefcases, their identical calculators, I feel sad about our society. Because what we need is diversity. What we need is people who will challenge our ideas and think about things differently. Trades need that. Science needs that. Technology needs that.

Finally, work cooperatively. Now that's important. One of the problems in technology today, if we look at some of the new fields like technological assessment or environmental impact studies, is that historically our disciplines have taught people to become the world's expert on the narrowest version of their discipline. But most of the problems we're facing today aren't as simple as phoning a plumber. They're far more complex, so you need a team of people who haven't been trained to, "my methodology is the only correct way to look at this problem." Women have traditionally and still have great communication skills and far less ego tied up in their methodology. And what today we need to solve a lot of our problems is teamwork, is working together in groups with different disciplines.

The fact we could put together a conference of trades and technologists and scientists, and not have people say, "Well, you know, I'm really a scientist, I mean, you are a technologist, I'm a scientist, you're a tradesperson,..." is a particular strength we as women have.

My grandfather was a tool-and-die maker and he maintained that was the cream of the craft. He used to put down my other grandfather who was merely a plumber. But now you know the thinking must be, "We need them all." To work together in any site whether it's collectively, cooperatively, is something that we have to do today to solve some of the problems of society. We also need to start working on a technology that will meet the needs of the end-user. And the voice of the end-user has to start appearing in our work sites. We've got to start raising the issue of "and what does this lead to?" as citizens as well as tradespeople or scientists or technologists.

Some inspirational examples

Let me end with a couple of really fast examples. In one of my various incarnations, I was a historian for the brewery workers. (It was a marvellous job.... If you ever want to study work, study beer-making – the fringe benefits alone are worth the study.) I chose the beer workers as an example of the sort of change some workers are going through, some of the exciting changes.

First, brewery workers are not your crunchy-granola trade unionists. They're not usually considered the "intelligentsia" of the labour movement. They do not pride themselves that way. They are in the private sector, and they're in a highly competitive industry. They have identified completely with their employers until very recently. If you go outside of a beer plant you will not see union jackets, you'll see Carling O'Keefe jackets. You'll see every beer company jacket imaginable and all sorts of beer paraphernalia, as they say at the border. But you will not see a great union identification. Well, recently they were challenged with technological change. The company started to bring in canned beer. And the brewery workers realized that canned beer was going to be devastating for them. It takes 30 brewery workers to staff a bottle line; it only takes eight to staff a can line. And they started to think about what canned beer was going to do to our universal recycling system. Which is absolutely destroy it, because, even though in theory cans are recyclable, they come in those weird sort of plastic things, that nobody after one or two beers can get back into the plastic.

What they did realize was they couldn't just shut down the plant, their traditional industrial strength wouldn't carry them through. So they started to think, "Who else, other than beer workers who are going to lose their jobs, who else would care if we switch from bottles to cans?" They started to think, "Well, bottle-makers." And then they discovered a really weird group of people that good beer workers would never talk to. Environmentalists. And they discovered the environmentalists had been fighting against canned beer successfully in the United States. They could show a majority of roadside litter in the States is beer cans, and that in the U.S. they have destroyed the universal recycling system. So here's a bunch of beer workers sitting down with a bunch of environmentalists, and discovering for the first time in their lives that they actually have a whole lot in common.

For the environmentalists it was scary – beer workers like to be scary. But the beer workers found the environmentalists even more scary. For instance they kept calling everybody "Doctor This," "Doctor That," because everybody knows an environmentalist is a Doctor of something – I don't know... Doctor of Birds.

But eventually they discovered they had a whole lot in common and in fact they had tremendous strength through the public. Then together the environmentalists and the beer workers started a campaign called "Glass is Class." They discouraged people from buying canned beer by all sorts of wild and wondrous means. My favourite is, "Don't drink your beer out of a can, you don't know what's in it." It works! Particularly after a couple of beers.

But this is what was really exciting. Think about what is happening intellectually here. What is happening is the producers who are the beer workers and for many years have identified completely with the company, are now realizing they are also part of the consuming public. They also live in the environment and maybe, maybe, what is good for them as consumers at home should be what is good for them as producers.

And maybe they have to start seeing we can't live one world at work, throw down our helmet or throw down our hat, and go and live a different world at home. It doesn't work that way.

So to see a group like the brewery workers, and I chose them because they're private

sector and because theirs is not a group that has historically had a great social conscience, begin to think that way is very exciting. And you know they have been fairly successful. I mean they haven't won the world. There still is canned beer, but I know nobody here will ever drink canned beer again.

What they have started to do is to think a bit about the environment. They are even starting to think just a wee bit about the quality of beer. And that's something I could really march in the streets for.

So, one other example, because there are a lot of people in the building trades here. I don't know if you know about the building trades in Australia. Australia is rather like us, a boom and bust economy, with weird politicians who have bizarre ideas about what to do. Every now and then, like us, they gut most of their city core – drop historic buildings, and pave over farmlands. People from B.C. will be very familiar with this phenomenon. People from Ontario will lament because you've already done most of it.

Well, a few years ago the building trades in Australia met with environmentalists, and with community groups, and they, the building trades, declared "green belts." Not the government, but the working people and their unions declared green belts. Sort of an agricultural land freeze with muscle. And they did it as building trades people, the people who actually do the work.

It's real hard to construct a building if nobody comes. If the teamsters won't drive the stuff to the site, and if the carpenters won't put up the forms, and if the electricians won't wire the place, you can't build the building. And when the building trades are united with the community saying, "We as a community demand that some of this agricultural and green space in our cities be saved, and we'll put muscle behind that demand by telling you that's the way it's going to be," well, that's people's democracy.

It's also exciting for the trades because then when the trades come and knock on the people's doors for support, the people are there. And so that is the beginning of a sort of coalition and of a different vision of how we can use technology. We're there to change it. It is our servant.

If it's getting away from us it's nothing innate about the technology. It is our failure, it is our willingness to accept that we'll let other people do it.

One of the most exciting things is women getting back into technology. Returning to our roots. And I think now that we are coming back, maybe we can start remoulding that technology so it starts meeting human needs. You know the best way to predict the future is to create it. And if you look around this room, you'll see a core of women with the skills of hand and brain to start the transformation of technology and trades for ourselves, for our sisters, and for everyone.

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CHAPTER 28

Overcoming math anxiety

Workshop coordinators
Tasoula Berggren & Lin Szpitun

Everybody needs math. But many of us are frozen with fear in the face of a simple equation. Tasoula and Lin describe the factors that contribute to math anxiety, strategies for eliminating the causes, and techniques for controlling the symptoms.

Tassoula: Math anxiety is something everybody has and it's something we can manage in our lives. There are ways to get over it. Some people simply don't know what math is and some don't know what math isn't. The fear of math these people feel is engraved in their hearts, in their minds, from very early ages. It creates in them feelings about mathematics which not only apply to their own lives but are often passed on to their children.

Everybody needs math

Unfortunately, hating mathematics, like hating Reagan, is a luxury our society can no longer afford. Such hatred is usually a disguised form of fear, and it's dysfunctional. Whether we're managing a home or business, or organizing a fundraising drive, we need to understand maximizing profits and minimizing cost. We need to understand terminology if we're to gain control of our lives in this computer-dominated age. To understand mathematics opens up as many opportunities as knowing how to read. Our work, for better or worse, is based on data, plans, charts, graphs, and percentages. Because of that, our society, which prides itself on being a democracy, can't let its citizens not acquire the skills they need for full, responsible citizenship.

Over 85 everyday occupations are close to impossible without grade 12 mathematics. We're living in a world where mathematics has become a vocational filter. It's a prerequisite to numerous professions and provides a lot of opportunities. As people's careers advance, the need for mathematics will return to haunt those who didn't learn it earlier in their lives.

Researchers in learning theory say we learn better if we have an overall framework within which to organize the material we learn from day one. There is a structure to mathematics, but seldom is the student let in on the secret.

Math anxiety has been rooted in the minds of too many of our young and old. Why do so many in our society give up when called upon to perform simple calculations? Why is it especially the case that such anxieties and

feeling keep women from participating in skilled trades and technology?

Characteristics of math anxiety

Lin: I hear the words math anxiety, math phobia and math avoidance all the time and they describe the same phenomenon. It's a level of anxiety that is a debilitating barrier, when approaching a math problem. Many psychologists have identified at least two characteristics of math anxiety. The first relates to the causes of anxiety: conscious worry, negative thoughts, talking negatively to ourselves. The second they call the effective aspect. That's an emotional response which is characterized by nervousness and tension and it seems this emotional response – muscle tension, lump in the throat, sweaty palms – is the more debilitating. It seems that's the one which prevents people from accomplishing something in mathematics. Test anxiety is also a component in mathematics but we see test anxiety in all subjects. It becomes more prominent in mathematics because so often the evaluation of success is based exclusively on tests.

What defines math anxiety and the effect it has on us is the subject matter. Is there something unique about mathematics that causes the problem? Maybe it's the teaching of mathematics, but at the elementary school level where much of the anxiety begins, the same people who teach math teach reading, social studies and science. Is it something different about the learning of mathematics or the nature of mathematics itself, or is there such a thing as a mathematical mind, an ability to understand mathematics that some have and some do not? I don't believe it.

VOICE: Do you think people are capable of doing much better or much more in math?

Lin: Certainly most people are capable of finishing high school math and going on to university. It's poor teaching, emotional factors and avoidance that prevent them from doing math. Possibly it might be a cultural thing. Studies in the United States have looked at the differences between men and women with math anxiety, and also looked at racial minorities. The way it lines up is the blacks are at the bottom in accomplishment in mathematics and at the top in anxiety; next up the scale are the Chicanos; at the top are Asians who have the least anxiety and have the highest accomplishment level in math. And this is true for both males and females in these different racial groups. It seems to reflect something in the socializing process.

Social factors and the learning process

Obviously many different factors cause the anxiety but they can be divided into two groups. One is social factors:

Lack of motivation. Many people simply find mathematics boring. They say it has no relevance to their life. Solving a quadratic equation in grade 10 is totally boring if you can see absolutely no way to use it. When you learn to read, you're usually reading all the time (novels, newspapers, magazines) but often in mathematics you simply don't use it.

Socialization pressures, especially on girls. I remember a high school girl asking an undergraduate math student at Simon Fraser, "How do you have any boyfriends when you're studying mathematics at university?" This was a serious concern; these pressures are still there, not just in obvious ways but in subtle ways as well.

Lack of persistence, especially in girls studying mathematics. At some point in their studies girls may be having a lot of difficulty and be told, "You don't have a mathematical mind," or "This isn't important to you, you don't need this." This is a perfect excuse for not working harder. Girls are given this excuse where usually boys are not. Boys are rewarded for their persistence, for working hard. Girls often drop math courses as soon as they become optional.

The problem of authority. There is one right answer, no room for discussion. The math teacher is the authority with absolute control. He tells you whether you're right or wrong and often you're told you're wrong in a math problem. This intimidates students so they worry more about getting right answers than about understanding what they're doing.

The second group of factors deal specifically with the learning of mathematics:

The problem with understanding. Often we go through a great deal of mathematics by simply memorizing, like the alphabet. Much of high school mathematics is memorizing formulas. At some point understanding becomes important and if up until then all you've done is memorize, you're going to panic: "I'm too stupid. I can't understand this. I don't know that formula." On the other hand, in mathematics it's often a lack of understanding you're criticized or punished for. You're not punished for laziness or carelessness, areas that you can change, but for not understanding something. Many people have experienced this when they've asked the teacher to explain something, only to be told it's really quite simple and to concentrate and you will understand it. All this does it to make you feel stupider.

The problem with speed. We assume we have to come up with an answer quickly, if not right away, which makes us feel really anxious. If the answer doesn't pop into my head immediately, this leads to panic that I may not be able to come up with the answer.

The apparent lack of organization. To many people, math is simply an ongoing list of rules and techniques they have to learn. There's no overall structure. Researchers in learning theory say we learn better if we have an overall framework within which to organize the material we learn from day one. There is a structure to mathematics, but seldom is the student let in on the secret.

The problem of symbols. Math contains many symbols. You have to know what they mean. We're suddenly told we're learning a new language and we have to learn these symbols. They intimidate us, they seem mysterious, like a secret knowledge. We think everybody else understands them and we don't. It frightens us when we feel stupid.

Specific strategies

Tassoula: Let's look now at strategies for overcoming math anxiety.

Encouragement instead of negative labelling. Whether as teacher or student, start from the basis that success is possible and desirable, and verbalize that.

Equal expectations, for females and males.

Focus on process instead of on the right answer. Make rigid methodology give way to more flexible solutions.

Reduce the volume. Forcing someone to repeat a calculation 20 times leads to boredom.

Work at home, to reduce humiliation.

A one-on-one tutor.

A class of females who are all math-anxious, or have a supportive network or attitude built into any situation.

Work out answers collectively rather than individually.

Have non-flunkable courses.

Have students deal with math that relates to the world around them and make up the problems themselves. Like using a racquetball game to figure out how ratios work. Teachers need to use examples to show what math is good for.

Have the courage to admit you don't understand, and find somebody who can help you understand.

Put some fun into math, with games or feedback-computer programs. Play with the material to get comfortable with it.

Is there a cure?

Tassoula: We can now see that math anxiety is like a disease with causes and symptoms. And, just like a disease, it's communicable. It is passed from teacher to student and from parent to child.

Is there a cure for it? The answer is, just as with some diseases, there are no sure cures. However, there is hope and promise that once the causes are found and fought the symptoms will be less overpowering, giving the victim a chance to pursue further math knowledge. In most cases, the victim of math anxiety is the one who needs to make the important decision to seek therapy and repair the harm of past years.

The next step is to do a careful assessment to find the causes for the anxiety. We may find the problem has its roots in basic arithmetic, in understanding English, with difficulty in concentration or lack of interest. Other causes may be too much work, family problems, emotional pressures. The treatment of math anxiety can be more successful if the

evaluation is broad and includes a variety of variables. There are diagnostic tests that can be used.

Once we locate the causes of math anxiety we can eliminate them and proceed with the therapy. The therapy will differ from person to person and will consist of a variety of suggestions and techniques such as: choosing the right teacher; providing additional help and emotional support; starting with basics; using spatial visualization; memorizing terminology; using math immersion or math rehearsal; playing math games; working hard; and practice, practice, practice. These techniques will control and lessen the symptoms but not completely eliminate them. However, the individual will be able to pursue her studies and take the needed courses in mathematics.

Because most of the problems are caused by the poor teaching or learning of math, it's important to choose a school and teacher carefully. When a child enters school he or she depends on the teacher for their entire learning. The level your child is going to reach depends on the competency, enthusiasm, and imagination of the teacher.

We have to be willing to provide the pupil with help outside the school. Help may be of two different kinds. It can be marginal support, like my cousin offered to her daughters. When they were in university she always went to be with them at exam time. She gave them emotional support and they did well. The second kind of help is tutoring the student on an individual basis. I recommend that parents offer both kinds of help.

Spatial visualization helps students understand mathematics better – things like mechanical drawings, educational toys, macrame, map reading, surveying, using the compass, and a lot of other interesting activities which deal with space and dimension. Word problems seem to be at the heart of math anxiety. They cause panic, depression and defeat. Such attitudes get in the way and leave a suffering student.

However, nothing is better than practice with many problems. And study habits are important too. Watch a mathematician read a math book. She sits there for hours with a pencil and a notebook. She sketches the problems and she works very slowly.

Understanding of mathematical concepts is the key to freedom. Memorization creates a feeling of slavery and causes anxiety. Rehearsing mathematics will help understanding and learning. Rehearse means to speak aloud – speak in unison, touch materials, write on the board as a group (not one by one), and so on. Practice math to increase awareness. Memorize terminology so you feel confident with it.

One last thing to remember: anxieties are learned. So there must be a way to unlearn them. The way out is not to deny anxiety but to manage it.

Tasoula Berggren completed teacher training in Nicosia, Cyprus, and studied at the University of Washington under a Fulbright Scholarship. She then took a BA in Mathematics. After returning to Cyprus, marrying, and working for a year as a high school teacher, she returned to receive her MSc at Simon Fraser University, where she is currently working as a laboratory instructor in the Department of Mathematics. She recently organized the "Women Do Math" Conference for 9th and 10th grade girls.

Liz Szpitun is a graduate student in Mathematics at SFU.

CHAPTER 29

Stereotyping in maths and sciences

Workshop coordinator
Leslee Lee

This workshop discusses common perceptions of what it is to be a scientist or mathematician, and how these perceptions work against women who are interested in entering these fields. Leslee Lee, mathematician, also discusses historical and present-day "scientific" theories that have been used to "prove" gender differences in intelligence.

Leslee: Scientists and mathematicians in general have very little public visibility. So what we get as a scientist is a picture of Einstein, or the mad scientist in the comic books. This image is what women, teachers and textbooks still have in their heads. This creates all sorts of dangers to society and to women, particularly those who want to go into an area that involves study in math or science.

Women behind the scenes

Women tend to see scientific endeavour as a man's world. In reality over 80 percent of scientific work is done by women, lab workers and such. But the visible ones, the ones in charge of the lab, are the men. When I look at the people I know in science, that is the case. The women do all the day-to-day donkey work and generally at the head of the scientific research work is the man. Men are in all the posts in universities. Very few women are full-fledged professors.

[O]ver 80 percent of scientific work is done by women ... but the visible ones, the ones in charge of the lab, are the men. The women do all the day-to-day donkey work and generally at the head of the scientific research work is the man. Men are in all the posts in universities. Very few women are full-fledged professors.

Many women say, "I really enjoy science, but I want to work with people." Once you know the way science and mathematics function in the real world, you know that being able to work with people is probably the most important characteristic. No scientist I've ever heard of has a lab to himself. You're lucky if you can get a little corner. Research teams are anywhere from four to 40 working on a project, plus being in touch with people in Israel or Japan working in a similar area. Any scientist who sticks to himself goes nowhere, no matter what kind of beautiful work he's done.

The training of people who go into these fields neglects the social aspects of it. If you study who succeeds and becomes famous in science today, who gets the theories out and who gets the money to do more research, it's the person who can communicate, who has charisma and can build up the research team and

function with it. Probably half of future scientists' courses should be human relationships, group dynamics, communication and so on. If you want to work with and for people, we sure need you in the scientific professions before we all go up in smoke.

Probably the biggest misconception concerning scientists is that they're smarter, more intelligent. Even each scientist thinks every other scientist is more intelligent. The whole myth of intelligence is really detrimental to everybody including people who are actually in the field.

From gout to genetics: excluding women

I'd just like to take you on a little review of the role played by the scientific community in excluding women from science. Let me start with early scientific theory about why women can't do mathematics and science. There was a general attitude about higher education for women; it's what I call the uterus versus the brain. The theory was if one developed the brain too much the uterus suffered and women would miss their biological destiny. So one must not encourage girls to do too much brain work.

Another theory was the association of ability in mathematics with the presence of uric acid in the blood, associated with gout. Since women didn't have gout they also didn't have the ability for math. Now you can laugh at that, but we've got just as ridiculous theories today.

We got into craniometry in the nineteenth century and it carried into the twentieth century. Do you remember all those scientists who collectd skulls and weighed brains? That was real, serious science for a long time. First of all the key was brain mass. The heavier it was, the more intelligent you were and therefore your place in society should be determined by that. It turns out women have less body weight, and brain weight is proportional to body weight. Therefore women have less brain weight.

If brain weight meant intelligence, women were less intelligent so why waste money on educating them? The people who have the heaviest brain weight and therefore should be at the top of society happen to be males from northern European countries who come from well-fed upper-class families. So obviously they were in the proper place.

Eventually brain weight was changed for brain volume or mass. They took the skull and packed it with little beads, then measured the volume of beads. It worked out to about the same conclusion: people with skulls with the largest volume were at the top of society.

As we started to learn more about the brain, measurement of certain parts of the brain responsible for higher-order thinking functions became popular. The conclusion again was that the people on top were there because they had superior brains. Brain theory eventually came under fire. But a few scientists, right up until the '50s, went on about superior brains, and it was used to discriminate against people, like immigrants. People from southern Europe were less welcome than people from northern Europe. This theory continued until the evidence was overwhelming against it and then some scandals came out about falsifying evidence. Finally they had to have a new theory.

The scientific community came up with a new theory, which was genetic. We didn't know much about genes. So everything was dumped on genes. They speculated there must be a mathematical gene linked to the sex gene. It obviously was in men and research "proved" it. An American researcher did a study on the top three percent of results from a math ability test. And he found fewer girls than boys in that category and so they speculated without any knowledge of genetics whatsoever that it was a genetic difference between boys and girls. The media loved it. It was in every bloody magazine, with titles like, "Boys are born superior in mathematics." That was in 1980. So that was the genetic lie.

Around 1983 another theory came along. Scientists found a correlation between high presence of testosterone, male hormone, and ability in mathematics. Before you all go and get an injection, it's also correlated with all sorts of lung disease, asthma and so on. Correlations in technology and science don't mean a damn thing. It doesn't mean that one causes the other; it means sometimes the samples occur together. So that is the latest scientific theory, if you want to know why boys are superior.

You can laugh about it, but the devastating effects of that kind of thing repeated and magnified by the media in terms of women going into these areas is unbelievably awful. If you believe only the most intelligent people succeed in maths and sciences, and on top of that you've been told and science has proven that boys are superior, but you're a woman — it affects you in many ways.

For most girls and women, it means they avoid any course that involves math. They're willing to go on to a non-traditional occupation as long as they don't have to take a math course, as long as there are no numbers in it. Women who do persevere get no support from society because they're freaks. They feel like freaks. They get told they're not feminine. They feel unfeminine. You start to wonder about yourself.

I was one of those kids who skipped grades and changed schools at least once a year which made me a very independent learner. In primary school I was told, "Well, you may be good in math, but wait until high school. Wait until you hit geometry." So I was always thinking, "Maybe this is the year I'm going to get hit by it." When I got to high school, I wanted to go into math and physics so I did. Then the theory was that with adolescence somehow my ability would decrease and the boys' ability would increase. Teachers, male and female, always would say, "Well, you're top of the class again, but any day now those boys will get down to work." Every time I hit something I didn't understand, it was total panic. I'd think, "This is it! I've met my Waterloo."

Then I got to university and I was still winning. I spent my university years that way too — waiting for those guys to just suddenly take off. It didn't happen. There were just three of us women amongst a couple hundred guys in the physics part of the program. The year before I entered the professors had said, "Over my dead body. A woman is not coming in here." We pretended we weren't there, we never spoke. We just ran around the edges.

When I finished university, no one offered me a job. The duds behind me with 60 percent averages were bought up by companies in the first year. I used to get to a few interviews because my name is Leslee. They didn't think there were any females there. When I'd go in they'd say, "Do you know how to type?" I had no expectation of getting a job in my field.

My feeling about teaching mathematics is that the problem is not in the math content. You deal with women who've had emotions about numbers since they were small. Math is used for very nasty purposes to filter people in our society. It's highly over-valued in terms of its usefulness, but it's used as a social and sex filter.

> *[G]iven adolescent girls' headset, particularly when they're making career or course choices, I would be inclined to keep math compulsory. Otherwise, they may end up being severely limited in career choices.*

Busywork and irrelevant junk

VOICE: My perception is that the technical, math and science fields take more hours to do than being a social worker, for example. Both the workday when you're learning and then when you're working.

Leslee: My feeling on that is it's part of contesting the school system. When I think of the math courses piled on university students it's ridiculous. It's busywork and produces dreadful results. You memorize the most irrelevant junk because the prof says, "This may be on the exam." All you do in class is take notes and the prof just fills the blackboards. The kind of person who comes out of there is your docile, submissive, eat any old garbage you throw to them, grad.

It's hard to say we should be encouraging women into this, but we need women in these areas to contest the teaching. Not only the

sexism in the classroom, but the fact that as long as society puts these jerks on a pillar none of them will have to really teach. They never learned how to teach. They don't know how to deal with people and this has to be challenged.

Today we were talking about a school for women. That's such a beautiful occasion to rethink what math and science women really need, instead of putting people through these grocery store courses. A bundle full of junk.

In the teaching I do now, we spend a lot of sessions on how to deal with the school system because you've got to prepare the women. I mean, you can be critical and show them they've got the ability but you've also got to prepare them to go back into that system. Strategies like sticking together with a group or confronting teachers on the question of timing for tests and assignments.

When I was in regular college teaching, I had an adult show up in my class who was considerably older and she just couldn't function. She said to me, "It's the timing. It's knowing I've got one or two periods to do this test and I just can't think." So I tried to arrange that students had unlimited time, or they could come to my office. I took off this time pressure, which is easy to do. She finished on time after that.

VOICE: I always thought I was a typical math bozo. The adolescent crunch hit me hard. I couldn't understand anything. I don't know why. It wasn't like me, but I just gave up. When I went into my apprenticeship it was the same thing, "Oh God, oh no, I'm not going to make it. I just know it, this is going to be the reason I fail." My apprenticeship counsellor said, "There's a correspondence course at the Open Learning Institute called Industrial Math. Why don't you take it?"

So I took it and it was just amazing. I loved every second of it. I couldn't stop doing it. I'd come home from work and I'd sit down and start doing it. I got an A in it and when I started doing my school training, the math was almost the most fun part. It was such a sense of satisfaction. For me in cabinetry, the industrial math is all very applied. But maybe I just approached it with a different attitude too.

Leslee: I just finished a two-year research project with students of algebra. Even the kids who pulled 99 percent on the provincial exams had no idea what algebra was about. They were just good jugglers. They were your good, submissive students who had learned to juggle equations and turn them inside out and send it over to the other side. But it made no sense to them and they'd say things like, "Do I have to solve this with algebra? Or can I think? Do I use logic or do I use algebra?" That's the result of school. When we try to make it so general that students of 2,000,000 different interests can do it, we take all the life out of it.

VOICE: Do you have any ideas about how to increase the number of girls in math and science, at least in high school — things that policy makers or others can do, or we can do to make sure that it's less boring?

Leslee: Quebec has the best policy on girls in math and science in North America and the reason is, it's compulsory. Right through high school. Every gal who graduates from high school has a background in maths and science so if she needs it later, she's got it.

Even if girls have the ability and the marks, a lot of them don't see themselves as needing those subject areas. They see them as demanding, requiring a certain amount of effort. So why should I take it because I'll never need it? In later life when they see what the real world looks like, they may decide they need those courses. Now if you keep it compulsory for as long as possible, they don't have to go back so far to pick up what they need.

The other thing is there are bridging programs in mathematics. When you go to university in Quebec, you can apply on an adult basis even if you haven't finished high school. They say after a certain age, we'll give you a chance and you are admitted on the basis of that adult status. Except to the sciences. For that you need your math course. They say go back to square one and work your way up. But bridging programs can take people as they are and in a very short space of time take them to where they need to be. You can take a motivated adult with grade nine math through high school in a few months.

But, given adolescent girls' headset, particularly when they're making career or course choices, I would be inclined to keep math compulsory. Otherwise, they may end up being severely limited in career choices.

[One theory:] The people who have the heaviest brain weight and therefore should be at the top of society happen to be males from northern European countries who come from well-fed upper-class families. So obviously they were in the proper place.

Leslee Lee, BSc, Math & Physics, Queen's; MsT, Math, Concordia, researches and develops educational programs to demystify math and science for adult women. She is constructing teaching models for this. Lee balances academic life with participation in the CSN women's committee.

CHAPTER 30

Strategies for encouraging girls into science and technology

Workshop coordinators
Mary Vickers & Ann Holmes

Mary Vickers, Society of Canadian Women in Science and Technology, and Ann Holmes, Ontario Women's Directorate, present programs from technical community organizations and government perspectives.

I. The Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology

Mary: The Society For Canadian Women In Science and Technology (SCWIST) is a non-profit society with charitable status, based in the lower mainland of B.C. but with members all across Canada. Our purpose is to encourage equal opportunities for women in scientific, engineering and technical careers. We educate the public about careers in science and technology and try particularly to improve social attitudes on the stereotyping of such careers. We also assist educators by providing current information on careers and career training in science.

When we in SCWIST looked at the problem of why there are so few women in science and technology, it became clear the biggest impediment to the movement of women into these areas was attitude – the belief by society and by women themselves that women don't do science or work in technology. So we tried to figure out a way of remedying this situation. How can we convince young girls and women that they do belong in the science and technology workforce?

We designed a program called Girls in Science to encourage nine- to twelve-year-old girls to go into these areas. We targeted this age group for three reasons. One, they're nice to work with. They're open to new ideas and experiences, and their role definition is not yet complete. Second, they haven't yet reached the age when they can opt out of that critical filter, math, and we hopefully can convince them math can be important to them. And third, children at this age have the necessary concentration and mechanical skill to tackle simple science or technological tasks.

In designing the program, we thought it was important for young girls to have role models. So the instructors are all women or students working in science, engineering or technology. We felt the kids should have the opportunity to work – tinkering, problem-solving,

> *You've got science, engineering or technology students who learn how to teach the material they've been studying at school. They're young and they relate well to the girls.*

fixing things themselves. So all our workshops are hands-on. And we thought each workshop should have a take-home element. So at the completion of a workshop the girl takes home a completed project.

We've run this program for the last five summers in the lower mainland and have received funding from various governmental agencies. In 1988 we were fortunate to get funding from the Women's Secretariat, Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training. They gave us enough money so we could take the program around the province. We got money also from the Canada Employment Centre's Challenge program to hire students, and we got in-kind contributions from UBC and junior colleges.
Girls in Sciences is a summer program, consisting of four or five half-day workshops. We have a very low student/teacher ratio, about one instructor to four girls on the average. With the girls divided into little groups, your instructors don't have to be experienced teachers. We train them sufficiently. You don't have to worry about discipline or anything like that.
It's a good interaction. You've got science, engineering or technology students who learn how to teach the material they've been studying at school. They're young and they relate well to the girls.

We gave the workshops this year in six locations in British Columbia: Vancouver, Courtenay, Port Alberni, Prince George, Fort St. John, and Dawson Creek. In each of these locations we contacted the junior or community colleges and got space from them. They looked after registration and such details.

Criteria for workshop topics
We use a list of criteria for selecting workshop topics. They have to:

- Be hands-on, have some element of tool usage.
- Introduce girls to things they may not have done before.
- Demonstrate scientific or technological principles using familiar, everyday equipment.
- Be relevant, useful.
- Be traditionally something men might be doing.
- Develop problem-solving skills. If something doesn't work we don't say, "Oh, this is how you do it, dear." We say, "Oh, that is a problem. Let's take it apart and see what the problem is."
- Develop their ability to think in three dimensions, because the literature says girls are lacking in the ability to visualize in three dimensions.
- Have a take-home element.

What we really hope to do is build the girls' interest, ability, enjoyment, and confidence in these sorts of activities. If they learn this now, hopefully it will make them more positive about moving on in science and technology as they go through their school years.

Five workshops
In 1988, we offered the five following workshops. In the bicycle workshop they remove the front wheel and learn how to fix a flat tire, and they get to use all kinds of tools. They take home tire irons, a little patch kit and the unit instructions. They go home and tell their parents, friends and brothers how to do it. We've had feedback about how Jane has tuned up everybody's bicycle and showed them how to do all these things. This to me is really important.

In carpentry they learn how to use basic tools and this year they built a bird feeder, which they took home with the instructions so they could hang it out in the garden. There it could hang all year to remind them of what they did and what a good time they had making it. Perhaps they'll remember the people who instructed the unit because, for instance, in the carpentry workshop we made an effort to have a woman working in carpentry come in and talk about being a carpenter. An effort is made in these workshops to relate what the girls are doing to something that might be important later on.

The concrete workshop. The advertisement was, "Make a planter and take it home if you can carry it." It worked just wonderfully. Our magic advisor, a chemist, found a great recipe for concrete where instead of using sand and gravel, you use peat moss and vermiculite. So we made wonderful planters you could carry home.

Heat transfer. This is our physics unit. We made ice cream in a test tube to demonstrate the principles of heat transfer. It was set up as an experiment. We had them use different kinds of liquids to make ice cream and they measured the time each took to get lumps in it.

The electricity workshop gave them an excellent opportunity to go through the basic principles of electricity using a battery and wires, nails, paper clips and whatever. Then at the end of the unit they got to take home a circuit board they had made, with a little light and a switch on it.

The girls themselves were really enthusiastic. They rated the program 9.9 out of 10 overall. We asked them which units they liked best. Half of them liked all the units and were unable to say which they liked the best. Of those who picked a first choice, it was carpentry. Electricity came second, ice cream making third, bicycles fourth and concrete fifth. And the message we got was they learned they could do what they were good at or liked doing, not necessarily what their mothers or grannies did.

The parents also were enthusiastic about the program. One said, "Words can't describe. It's all she talks about. It has enlightened her to how important it is to continue an education in science and math."

Other programs
Right now we have a grant from Canada Employment and we've hired three people to work on the development of a Girls in Science book about how to set up a program. Our next step is to contact community groups. We feel it would be more beneficial to the community if they could set up the program themselves.

I wanted to mention the two other programs SCWIST does. The Visiting Scientist program sends women or students of science or technology into the grade schools. Last year, we had 22 role models who made 45 visits in the lower mainland schools, to grades six and seven. They talked about their job and brought some kind of a hands-on demonstration to the kids. Talking to boys, too, that's great. It's exactly what we should be doing.

Another successful program has been workshops for elementary science teachers. It's been going for three years, co-sponsored with Simon Fraser University. The rationale here is that the science teachers in grades five, six, and seven don't have a good science background. Therefore they are really hesitant about teaching science and don't do a particularly good job of it. The teachers who went to the workshops were ecstatic because it gave them hands-on experience and different kinds of activities they could do with the class.

II. The Ontario Women's Directorate
Ann: Because networking is in my blood I will start internationally and make you aware of an international organization called Gender And Science And Technology (GASAT). The biennial conferences held by GASAT include examination of topics such as: gender differentiation in scientific, engineering, and technological education; gender differences in status attainment patterns in those fields; and, strategies and intervention programs for gender equity in education and employment in science, engineering and technology.

We do things in specific ways in our own communities and people all over the world do specific things in their own ways in their communities. But there is a network to plug into so we don't reinvent the wheel and instead learn from others' successes.

The Ontario Women's Directorate is an autonomous provincial government agency with a staff of between 80 and 90. Its aim is the improvement of the social, economic and legal position of the women of Ontario. We have two programs that relate to the issue of encouraging young women.

1. Change Agents program
This is operated through our Consultative Services Branch. The Change Agent projects are liaison between an employer and the directorate, and are not particularly aimed at young women. However, one of these projects, with Suncor in Sarnia, included a role-modelling program. Suncor not only set up the program, they also produced a video of the women in their workforce who were occupationally integrated, if we can evolve a more positive term than non-traditional.

2. The Community Grants Fund
The criteria for the awarding of grants are related to the goals of the directorate, one of which is the elimination of sex-role stereotyping.

The more I work towards the aim of eliminating sex-role stereotyping, the more it becomes clear that every segmented part is important. We need a wholistic approach in which we have something that engages and involves the students, the teachers, and the parents. Our approach must eliminate the strangeness of the topic for all three groups, build confidence, and encourage all those groups to act, and perhaps to act differently.

In looking at the projects that have been funded, they break down into three main areas.

Conferences and workshops

These have been targeted mainly at young women and have been sponsored and run by universities and colleges. These institutions are usually fairly easy to convince that their enrollment figures will benefit from these programs. We also remind them how good this is going to look in their Affirmative Action/Sex Equity report. They've got to have something to put in there and we're helping them meet that goal.

The Boards of Education have done a lot of good work. The Federation of Women Teachers' Association has sponsored a lot of workshops and so have the Status of Women Committees of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation.

Publications

We give grants to publications like the Women Inventors Project manual. Algonquin College in Ottawa did a publication about women going into trades and technology. There have been various mentoring manuals. An interesting project in Windsor linked the Board of Education with General Motors, whose employees acted as mentors.

Audio-visual productions

There have been videos made about a skills training project, discovering technology, and the Women Inventors. Carleton University is producing a video called "The Science Women Can Do." The main job is to make everybody else aware of what's going on so they don't reinvent the project and can share experiences instead.

I want to give a few more details about a couple of other projects which have been funded by the Grants Fund because I think they are particularly relevant to this topic. One is the publication of a booklet of role models done by an ad hoc committee in Sudbury. The booklet, called "Careers – Sudbury," presents photographs of the women and interviews. In northern Ontario, and some of you may live in areas where this is relevant, distance becomes a problem. So if we can't have a real, live role model, at least we can have print and audiovisual role models.

The other project is not directly related to science and technology but it's the step before that – confidence-building. On the north shore of Lake Superior the educational community put together a peer-helping conference for young women. They came together, supported each other and developed assertiveness skills. They also looked at their own aptitudes and interests, and how that might move forward to career planning or occupational investigation. There were also some role models who came and visited with them.

I've already spoken about the importance of a multifaceted approach. Where the directorate started was with role-modelling programs. Since the fall of 1984 we have been involved with a program called "Open Doors." We set up pilot programs in six centres around the province. We identified the role models – women already in the paid labour force in occupations usually thought of as men's occupations. We provided training to give the women background about the general situation of women in the workplace and to give them some public speaking skills. Then we let the teachers know about this program, and we sat back and waited for wonderful things to happen.

Don't do that. By piloting the programs we set up an example. The places where people have looked at what we've done and said, "That's terrific! We should have that here," I have much more confidence there will be ongoing activities.

Pathmakers, the second program we initiated, had the same goals: broaden the students' occupational horizons, raise their awareness of the ramifications of dropping math and sciences, and educate them about the changing roles of men and women in the workforce. Pathmakers differs mainly in that the role models are post-secondary, college and university students in fields of study leading to occupational integration.

In using role models, we have to remember lots of people don't like talking to groups. We build the role models into a network so they can discuss with each other the things they want to tell students and how they go about doing it. That's cheaper than trying to get a facilitator to do a day of training.

The issue around hourly-waged people getting time off when school is on indicates employer involvement is really crucial. Our position is that the employer should regard the woman's contribution as part of her work time so she is paid. It helps the employer have more educated potential employees and it raises their profile in the community. It's crucial to persuade the employers because otherwise it's women volunteering all over again and we need to move beyond that.

I also wanted to highlight the issue of teacher interest. First you have to make them aware there is a need for this resource. Their issue awareness level around women in the labour force is a negative number. So we speak to faculties of education whenever we can, and cooperative education courses.

At the directorate we're not going to set up any more programs on our own. We're developing resources that will allow us to work more on a consultative basis with communities that show an interest. We're also developing a manual on how to set up a role-modelling program. We're updating our kit of resource material for teachers. And we developed an 11-minute video designed as a marketing tool to encourage people to initiate or get involved with existing role-modelling programs. But on the way we hope it will raise awareness of the issue of sex-role stereotyping and occupations where women are underrepresented. The video is called "Eight Hours A Day," which is the title of a song Nancy White wrote for it.

This is what I mean about it being a wholistic, interwoven issue. Many initiatives need to be taken to have a full body of social support and to change general impressions about things. But that's not to say that small events and small initiatives aren't worth doing. Everything makes a difference.

Ann Holmes has been a program coordinator at the Ontario Women's Directorate with responsibility for the Open Doors initiative and other programs designed to eliminate sex-role stereotyping. Holmes is an educator and has sat on the boards of Interval House, a transition house, and the Working Skills Centre, a retraining facility for Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking women.

Mary Vickers, MSc, is a biologist and a teacher, currently at Kwantlen College in Surrey, B.C. She is a founding member of The Society of Canadian Women In Science and Technology (SCWIST), and has directed their Girls in Science Program for the past five summers.

CHAPTER 31

Gender discrimination in new technologies

Workshop coordinators
Marcy Cohen and Maggie Benston

In this workshop the opportunities for women in the rapidly growing computer fields and in biotechnology are explored. Also discussed is the way clerical work is defined as women's work, and jobs are thus devalued by turning them into clerical work.

Maggie: The information presented in this workshop is the result of a three-year research project by the WomenSkills Development Society and the Microtechnology Research Group. First we will give you some facts and figures, and then some analysis.

The two most important areas of emerging technologies are the computer and the biotechnologies. In both, you find occupational segregation, and both have traditionally been dominated by men.

According to American statistics, programmers in computer science have increased 94 percent since 1980. Since then there has been an 88 percent increase in computer systems analysts and another 94 percent increase in operational procedures.

Biotechnology is a much newer field. Between 1971 and 1981, the number of women technologists and technicians in the life sciences went down. But the commercial application of molecular biology and genetic engineering began to accelerate ten years ago, and has skyrocketed recently. As you would expect, growth in the field from 1981 to 1986 included more women.

Women's opportunities for moving into "non-traditional" occupations are greatest in the rapidly growing fields. When we are in a period of expansion, women seem to be able to do better. Between 1974 and 1980 women analysts and programmers increased from 13 percent to 22 percent.

Computer systems are rapidly becoming essential technology in all parts of the economy: production, clerical work in offices, government, education. Even though the computer field is only 40 years old, it's well established. (Women, by the way, were the first programmers.) It was seen as a clerical function, and lacked a history of work structure. Today the dynamics of the hierarchy are rapidly changing.

Education, rather than hands-on training, is the way into some of these jobs. If women are going to make it up the career path they need to know the different requirements.

Biotechnology is newer, but older in the sense that the work organization comes from the

agricultural, biological and biochemistry sciences. After all, when you talk about biotechnology, you're talking about the commercial, large-scale applications of genetic engineering, using biological principles. It's much more steeped in traditional occupational structure.

Changing jobs in the computer field
Let's look at an occupational breakdown of the computer field and talk about how these occupations are changing.

The most important area is in software, or data processing. For example, there are many different categories of what are essentially data entry clerks:

Coders – take written design programs and put them into code. Essentially a clerical job with some specialized training. Not a high-level, professional job anymore.

Maintenance and documentation – a new area which used to be part of a programmer's job. Changes in the way documents are examined have made this a specialty, with some specialized training required. The job is to find bugs in programs and figure out a solution.

Applications programming – take pre-written applications of programs, modify, maintain and install them. Another rapidly changing area, it's contested terrain these days. The job requires a Bachelor of Science or a technical degree.

Programmers – need a Bachelor's or technical degree.

Systems analyst – need a Bachelor's degree. If going into management, extra training with a Master's degree in business is needed.

Education, rather than hands-on training, is the way into some of these jobs. If women are going to make it up the career path they need to know the different requirements.

Computer operator – This field has changed from being a relatively tiny, specialized job with a lot of skills to a clerical job. The majority of the workers are women. Pay and skill requirements have gone down.

Physical maintenance, installation, and repair – basically an electronics technician. This is another field that's undergoing some interesting changes. There are production engineers, people who actually oversee the production of hardware components. There are people who do the design of hardware. And then there are, of course, managers. In the past, this field required detailed knowledge of circuitry. But machines are now self-diagnosing. So the field is now split in two. Those who repair self-diagnosing machines are clerical, basically changing circuit boards. Those who tackle the serious problems are highly skilled. Guess where the women are!

Production engineer – people who oversee the production of hardware components. Need engineering degrees.

Designers – Need a BSc or Master's degree.

Managers – Need a degree in computer science plus technical degrees.

Jobs in biotechnology
Biotechnology is not as complex:

Research and development technicians – grow cultures and run test work of researchers.

Production technicians – deal with quality control.

Production engineers

Researchers

Managers

Most of these jobs require a Bachelor's or technical degree. A graduate degree, preferably a PhD, plus a business degree would be ideal.

What does all this mean for women? There are two career paths. If you go in at the technician level, you don't go any place else. Deadend jobs, they are probably better paying than most women's jobs, not bad working conditions, but the field has traditionally had masses of female technicians, particularly in biology. After all, you're washing dishes. You're stirring up little messes. You're keeping track of things, carefully following recipes. It's not so hard, is it? Aquaculture is a two-year certificate program, but what you do with your highly specialized education is feed fish!

New jobs in computer science
The world is more open for computer science. It's possible to get up there without a Bachelor's degree. There are increasing numbers of women in the field. In 1970 women were 13.6 percent of the workforce, and in 1980 it was 22 percent. Programmers went from 24 to 31 percent. Within the occupation itself, the data show women programmers are paid less than men, but not much less. If you adjust the differences for age and education, there is only about a 10 percent gap.

There are some negative parts – discrimination and segregation still exist. Data entry is nearly 100 percent women; coders about 80 percent; maintenance and documentation is a female specialty.

So the field is now split in two. Those who repair self-diagnosing machines are clerical, basically changing circuit boards. Those who tackle the serious problems are highly skilled. Guess where the women are!

From here on the majority of the practitioners are men. According to a study by Kraft and Dupont in 1984, if you know the number of women in an area, you can predict the relative wages in the field. There is a strong negative relationship between the average pay of the specialization and the segregation of the sexes. Women are likely to be supervisors, rather than executives. As women get higher up, the few women who make it are paid less relative to men, than the women lower down. So if you are a systems analyst, you make about 60 percent of male earnings. If you're in maintenance and documentation, you make about 85 percent of a man's wages. It's not all roses. Women are overrepresented in the lower-paid sectors and underrepresented in the higher-paid positions.

Marcy: A few years ago an electronic technologist was concerned that other women weren't entering her field. (There are still only three percent women). She felt other women weren't going to be encouraged to enter the field because of the way men work: from crisis to crisis. You've got this deadline, and you don't know if you'll make it over the hump. Here's the crisis, can you cut the mustard? It appeals to the macho ego.

Over a period of time she scheduled her "crises" and got good enough at it to manage her work. Meeting these challenges, she found, was the motivation for men. But if you want to appeal to women, you must appeal to their desire to contribute to the future or make some kind of concrete change in the world. So to make that appeal around technology, you have to create something, make it something of lasting value outside yourself. Perhaps this is the way we will contribute to change.

Equal pay and affirmative action
We have to put together strategies for equal pay and affirmative action. Which is more important? Many say equal pay because it affects more women. Affirmative action is just going to take a quick look over management. But when you look at how clerical work is changing, we realize affirmative action and equal pay need to be more integrated. The issue is education and training. Unlike the trades, most of these technologies require years of schooling. We have to look at affirmative action as a way for people to get back to school.

Discrimination in computer occupations
American studies have found within three occupations – systems analyst, programmer and researcher – there is a 30 percent difference between men's and women's wages. Why is there still discrimination within the computer occupations?

First, women have less education, less on-the-job experience,and are more likely to take

some time off to have children. Women can't take upgrading because most courses are in the evenings or weekends when they have childcare responsibilities. In fact, a study at Kenata, a high-tech area outside Ottawa, found the main reason women were concentrated in word processing and data operating was because most other courses were offered at times when women had family responsibilities.

Secondly, there is discrimination in wages. For every year increase in education or experience, men get more back than women. If they go back to school for one year, they get $662 and women get $552 for doing exactly the same thing.

Thirdly, women generally work in different jobs in different industries than men. Women work in end-use companies, like insurance, banks or utilities. These also hire systems analysts and programmers, but they are paid less. It is estimated they pay, on average, $6,000 less a year than if you work in high-tech manufacturing – and women are concentrated in the service sector, men in manufacturing.

Men tend to leave the occupation as women enter it. When a highly technical job like computer operator became clerical, the employers said, "Okay, we can bring in women who already have these skills. They are used to getting paid less." It happens over and over again. When technology changed the printing trade, typesetting became clerical keyboarding. The men left, the women came in, and the salaries went down. When women went into bus driving they drove a school bus, because most municipalities are unionized and the women had a hard time getting in.

In our own work, it happened in desktop publishing. We had someone who was an incredibly good clerical worker use her graphic and layout skills to do the work of three people. It takes a lot of training to do the job. Yet in B.C. high schools they're making desktop publishing part of clerical training. Obviously they're only going to teach the basics. So now printing companies require their clerical workers to do desktop publishing at clerical wages.

But then there is another desktop publisher. He's a man. He has never had a clerical background, calls himself a graphic artist and charges $40 an hour. It's a brandnew occupation, and there you have segregation recreating itself before your very eyes – another level of clerical workers who are becoming paraprofessionals. However, there is a real danger women won't get these better jobs. Most of them require two years college training.

Employers get more for less

Here is what happened at one company. An applications programmer used to figure out how much wood the sawmills should cut relative to sales. She did all the calculations by hand until she learned the Lotus program on a microcomputer. She developed a system with a man (who was paid two grades higher than she was), and when he left, she took on his responsibilities. But she was still called a clerical worker, even though she was teaching all the salespeople how to use the system.

Unfortunately, she completely identified with the company and had no solidarity with women. The company would not allow women in management and she was totally frustrated.

In the accounting department, they needed a senior person who could look at the computer printouts to see if they made sense. The system was fully automated and you had to know if there was an error. But because the company wouldn't promote a clerical worker internally, someone with a two-year college degree had to be hired... more than likely a man.

Other companies have the same problem. They need a group of clerical people familiar with the programs whom they can call night or day. It's kind of a professional job, a clerical job with training, now requiring a degree.

Some companies use a sort of fourth-generation programming language used by people who are not programming specialists. They are called end-user languages. The companies have found women working in clerical jobs can do the very basics, but when it comes to more complicated problems, it is the engineers or the women with degrees who can use the computer language.

[Y]ou can see the convergence of the clerical, technical and semi-professional and the need for affirmative action as well as pay equity.

To bring us back to the start, you can see the convergence of the clerical, technical and semi-professional and the need for affirmative action as well as pay equity: access for women to the wide range of occupations and salaries in the technical fields, and the economic recognition of and public policy support for education and training in the clerical fields.

Margaret Benston, PhD in Chemistry, teaches in Computer Science and Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University. She has delivered numerous papers and led workshops on women and technological change, and been an active support to women at SFU. She has been involved in the women's movement for the last 20 years.

Marcy Cohen has a Master's degree in Education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). She has completed four years of research with WomenSkills into how technology is changing women's work. Cohen was the coordinator of the Tools For Change Project, which produced an extremely useful resource and information book and provided workshops on the subject of women and work around the province of B.C. She has worked with the Women's Research Centre and been active in childcare and equal pay issues.

CHAPTER 32

Women Inventors Project

Workshop coordinators
Shelly Beauchamp & Lisa Avedon

In this workshop, Shelly and Lisa describe the activities of this extremely innovative project to identify and provide networking and support material for young and older women inventors.

Shelly: The Women Inventors' Project evolved out of my own isolation. I was working at the Canadian Industrial Innovations Centre in Waterloo, which is a national program for inventors. I was working in an all-male environment in terms of staff and clientele. We just weren't reaching any women and the male engineers didn't see anything wrong with that. Everyone knows women don't invent, so what's the problem?

Women patently underrepresented

Well, I thought there was a problem and I did a little research to find out the dimensions of the problem. It turned out only about five percent of the Innovation Centre's clients were women. By and large, since their ideas related often to domestic things and were being evaluated by male engineers, they tended to get a pat on the head and, "That's nice dear, but it will never work. It's really not worth going any further with it." It also turns out that only about one percent of Canadians holding Canadian patents are women. Which is really kind of mind-boggling since we all know women have been inventing since pre-history. In fact, as people do more research, there is more information suggesting women were probably the earliest inventors.

We researched women who had gone through the Innovations Centre. We mailed out a questionnaire and did some interviews and found out how incredibly isolated these women were. Some had never met another woman like themselves. A lot of them are from rural areas which obviously exacerbates things. They didn't even consider themselves inventors although they had inventions they submitted to the Innovations Centre. But if we asked them what inventors they knew, it was always their son, or their husband or father. I decided the Innovations Centre should do something for these women. I contacted Lisa Avedon, an expert in adult education whose background complements mine

[W]hen you say "inventor," people have an image in their head. If you say "women inventors" you immediately have dissonance – they don't think of women as inventors because women have been written out of the history books.

and together we obtained funding for this program, primarily from the Innovations program of Employment and Immigration Canada and bits and pieces from elsewhere including the British Columbia and Ontario governments.

A book for women inventors

Lisa: We decided to find ways to provide tangible assistance to women inventors. We did a number of pilot workshops with women from across Canada. Out of the workshops came our book, "The Book for Women Who Invent or Want To," a Canadian best seller. Interestingly enough most people who buy it are men, not women. Innovations Centres across the country now promote the book.

The book is sensitive to women's learning styles such as going from the practical to the theoretical. You have an idea, okay this is what you can do. There's a very successful woman inventor, Colleen "Chips" Kline. She is a member of our advisory board and has been doing media appearances throughout Canada. The book follows her invention from idea stage to manufacture and marketing. The book also explains how to organize a network. We have five or six networks now and they are still growing.

Newsletter and networks

Shelly: We've been producing a newsletter called "Focus" to address the problem of isolation. It's hard being a national project and working out of one office in the middle of Ontario. We've tried with the newsletter to reach out to everyone. It has a profile of a woman inventor in each issue as well as a "how to" article, something on patenting or the different types of plastic manufacture or brainstorming. As well as news about the project.

We're also trying to set up networks in individual cities. There's one in Kitchener/Waterloo that was actually started by two alumnae of one of our workshops. They've been meeting every month or so and hearing a speaker and exchanging information on where to get a prototype made, etc. In Vancouver, there's an informal group of about six alumnae that have been meeting. There's a group in Calgary that's very active and is planning a big conference. There's one in London, one in Toronto starting up and there's a group in Montreal that's interested too.

...[O]nly about one percent of Canadians holding Canadian patents are women. Which is really kind of mind-boggling since we all know women have been inventing since pre-history.

Eighty-six percent of the isolated women inventors who had gone through the Innovations Centre without any direct support or contact with other women saw their own lack of ability as their major barrier. Only 24 percent of the women who went through a workshop saw that as a problem. It's really made me a believer in adult education.

Lisa: Also, in the workshop evaluation, almost all the women said being involved with this had changed their idea of what kind of work they wanted to do.

"Women inventors": why not?

We were concerned about developing lots of different media devices so we would hook into people's different learning styles. We made two videos, the long version we tend to use with adult groups because it gives a lot more detail on the whole process women go through. The short one we use in workshops with kids because it introduces the idea of women's inventions and introduces women inventors themselves. One of the biggest problems we face is when you say "inventor," people have an image in their head. If you say "women inventors" you immediately have dissonance – they don't think of women as inventors because women have been written out of the history books. The videos are particularly useful to demonstrate to kids that women can invent.

The dissonance of the words "women inventors" has helped us to get funding. People say, "Well why...?" and then they say, "Well why not!"

The young woman who worked on the research with Shelly was at the photocopier when a fellow graduate student, male, came over and said, "Oh. Is that your thesis? What are you doing it on?" She said, "women inventors" and he said, "Oh, women investors." The conversation went on for awhile before he finally did hear women inventors at which point he said, "Isn't that a contradiction in terms?"

Getting the word out

We now have additional funding from Science Culture Canada to continue our work getting Women Inventors' networks set up throughout the country. We have funding from the Ontario Women's Directorate to work on exhibitions of women inventors. We're hoping to be able to develop a travelling exhibition. Women who have ideas will then be able to see themselves as inventors and also it will promote the whole idea of getting young women interested in science and technology. I believe very strongly we've been using the wrong method in trying to hook young women into this. We've been doing it in a very punitive way. "If you don't learn these things you're going to keep yourself from being able to do...." Rather than say, "Hey, this is exciting. It's creative and look at the fun you can have and you can make a lot of money, too."

[T]he first invention to be patented in North America was a machine for cleaning corn. It was invented by Sybilla Masters. It was patented, of course, in her husband's name. She was the inventor, though, it says so in the patent.

We just did a workshop for girls in grade ten. They heard from Chips Kline what it was like to be an inventor. Then there were small group discussions on what they thought inventors looked like, women inventors. My favourite was the group that came up with the woman inventor who is a combined astronaut, doctor and lawyer. They debated a long time about whether she's married or not. But she had long curly hair.... They were all very concerned about their hair.

I think it's critical to give girls in school an opportunity to do "hands-on" work. There's a lot of interesting research now on the nervous system that clearly shows if you don't use it, you lose it. The old stereotype about women having inferior spatial perception, I am convinced, is all environmental. If girls have the opportunity to do hands-on work and to develop the confidence, that will influence the types of connections that will get made in the brain developmentally. Based on that workshop we've done a handbook for teachers and other people that would be interested in running similar workshops.

In our early workshops we brought in men, who were usually the ones who provided the information in Innovations Centres and in government agencies on entrepreneurship issues. One thing we found out was they simply don't know how to communicate. Even when they tried very hard to be open they always came off as being rather patronizing.

Plans for the future

Our next two years will be spent in developing materials and running workshops with the trainers, to help them understand how women learn and how they can project their material effectively. We may even help them to look at their own biases so they can work through them. We're going to be developing materials of all kinds and helping these people meet their employment equity targets. That's our immediate future, I'm not sure where the whole thing is going to take us in the long run but obviously there's a lot of work to be done in women inventors. We are the only group in the world doing any work with women inventors. We are recognized by the United Nations.

One thing so exciting about working with women inventors is that the only thing these women have in common is their ideas. They represent every educational level, every race,

religion, ethnic background, age, urban, rural; there is nothing they have in common with one another other than they're all inventors. There are no impediments to their communication based on all those other factors. They're only interested in their inventions. I am really convinced in the pioneer days of the U.S. and Canada where women were fairly isolated and had to make do and figure out ways of making things better for themselves, they invented things. They probably passed those things around to other women in their area. Along comes an itinerant peddler, sees this neat thing, gets the patent and makes a bundle. I'm sure many inventions happened that way.

Shelly: In fact, the first invention to be patented in North America was a machine for cleaning corn. It's actually a British patent because at that time there was no patent in the United States or Canada. It was invented by Sybilla Masters. It was patented, of course, in her husband's name. She was the inventor, though, it says so in the patent.

A woman at Bell Laboratories in New Jersey invented a levered crowbar which allowed women to lift up manhole covers. One reason women had not been able to work underground for Bell Telephone in the States was because they didn't have the strength to lift up manhole covers. That invention opened up a whole field of work for women. Just by that simple crowbar device.

Lisa Avedon is an adult educator and counsellor, wellknown for her involvement in innovative programs and as the author of numerous publications on women's learning. She is Coordinator of Adjustment Programs, Ontario Ministry of Labour and the Co-director of the Women Inventor's Project. She has held executive positions for The Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW), and is a founder of the Ontario Committee for Non-Traditional Employment for Women.

Dr. Rachelle Beauchamp, molecular biologist, has many publications to her credit as well as numerous awards. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude from Brown University, was a University Fellow at Washington University (St. Louis) and was awarded an NSERC postgraduate scholarship and an MRC postdoctoral fellowship for work at the University of Edinburgh. She received an Alumni Gold Medal for her PhD work at the University of Waterloo, and presently belongs to a number of professional associations. She was recently awarded a gold medal by the World Intellectual Property Organization for her work on the Women Inventors Project. Throughout her career, Dr. Beauchamp has been active in support programs for women in scientific and technical fields. In 1980, she co-founded the Canadian Association for Women in Science and has been involved in related projects – a registry of Canadian Women in Science, Engineering and Technology, and the Science Council's workshop on Science Education for Women (*Who Turns The Wheel?*)

Recommendations

National Network

The participants of the 1988 Canadian Conference on Women in Trades and Technology recommend and resolve:

That women in trades and technology ensure their voice is heard on issues of national concern by establishing a national network, by lobbying and meeting with governments, educators, employers and unions to effect needed change and by seeking support and funding from governments, educators, employers and unions for this network.

That a steering committee be struck, with representatives from each province, one from trades and one from technology (at minimum), to meet on a continuing basis.
[The conference advisory committee is currently fulfilling this function, until reps can be chosen in a more democratic fashion by interested members in the regions. Currently included in this group are educators and advocates who have a strong commitment to ensuring the success of our greater numbers. Some consideration should be given to their ongoing inclusion in the National Network. – *Marcia Braundy*]

At the follow-up Steering Committee meeting, it was confirmed that the mandate of this committee is to develop strategies, funding sources and structures for:

1) a National Network of Women In Trades and Technology;
2) a National Data Bank Inventory of female trades and technology workers, the broadest definition to include women working in other blue-collar, scientific and technical employment;
3) a National Women's Trades and Technical Training Institution;
4) and to begin the work on a National Conference for 1990.

We recommend that all regions and/or provinces research funding sources for future conferences on a national and provincial level so that more tradeswomen and technologists are able to attend these conferences. We recommend that issues brought forward at the conference be again brought to all candidates' meeting with regard to the federal election.

Training

At the 1988 National Women In Trades and Technology Conference, October 1-4th at Naramata, British Columbia, participant representatives from unions, governments, trades and technology, and industry recognized the need for ongoing skills development in trades and technology. The lack of active commitment to such development and long-term training will have devastating economic and social consequences.

It is clear that the federal government's reduction and capping of funds to long-term apprenticeship and vocational training programs minimize quality, availability and accessibility. This capping of funds is not acceptable, especially at a time when unemployment is high and yet many parts of the country are experiencing skill shortages.

We are particularly concerned with issues which inhibit target group members from becoming an active part of the skilled labour force. Recognizing that women are a majority of the population, additional funding must be allocated for exploratory trades and technology training for women, childcare assistance, educational upgrading and income support. This becomes more significant when it is noted that Employment Equity targets are being set based on the availability of "qualified" or "trainable" women and other designated groups. These measures will, in term, address some concerns we have about Employment Equity.

The solution to the skills shortage problem can be found among our own Canadian human resources.

From the Official Conference Committee:
The official conference committee requests

That the Federal CEIC respond publicly to the results of the WITT Graduates Research Study, and tell the public what action they intend to take to reinstate the WITT-type programs across the country.

Recommendations from the WITT instructors meeting:
Given the importance of exploratory and bridging programs for women's access to employment, Employment and Immigration Canada will be accountable for its mandate of Employment Equity by:

> Modifying the Canadian Job Strategy eligibility criteria to insure accessibility and funding of bridging and exploratory programs to all interested women;
>
> Making a commitment to provide funding on a continuous ongoing basis to ensure the success of these programs.

Recommendation from the Sexual Harassment Workshop:

> We recognize that bridging programs are of critical importance in preparing women to succeed in employment where sexual and gender harassment can be a day-to-day occurrence and recommend that the provincial and federal governments commit sufficient funding to support both existing programs and the reinstatement and expansion of bridging programs.
>
> We recommend that CCLOW, among others, be requested to lobby on our behalf for increased funding of exploratory trades and bridging programs for women.

Recommendations from the "What is our experience entering and working in trades and technology in education".
Definition
There must be a very clear and consistent definition of the type and nature of programs offered across Canada, e.g. "Exploratory Training Course" to offer occupational options in trades and technologies (also known as Bridging, Pre-trades programs, Orientation to Trades and Technology, etc.)

It is imperative that the continued financial support be provided to exploratory training courses, so as to make them available to more women in all provinces and regions.

That there be an improvement in the quantity and quality of information pertaining to the trades and technical work being distributed by support staff, teachers, counsellors, etc. That this information be distributed to kindergarten through grade 12 students in the public school system.

Recommendations from media/communications/government workshop are:

> That life skills courses that include shop and home skills be mandatory for all jr. and sr. secondary students across the country.
> That clarification of the CEIC seat reservation policy be communicated to the public.
>
> That criteria for entry into CEIC training programs are inappropriate and major changes need to be made in order for women who want orientation and trades and technology training to have access to it.
>
> That CEIC be called upon to develop in consultation with the organized women's community a strategy to open trades and technology training and employment to more women.

Apprenticeship
Privatization will not work for training excellence, therefore it is necessary to have a well-funded and consistent apprenticeship training program for all trades across Canada, available, promoted and outreached to all Canadians.

Whereas:
- Gender discrimination against women in trades and technology continues to be rampant;
- there is still a shortage of skilled labour in B.C., the Yukon and Alberta;
- There is still no comprehensive national apprenticeship program in place in Canada;
- We are still importing skilled labourers and technicians;

The B.C., Yukon and Alberta caucus of the 1988 National Women In Trades and Technology Conference makes the following recommendations on the implementation and delivery of apprenticeship programs.

1) Endorse the establishment of a levy grant system, where industries who do not provide training would be taxed. These funds, supplemented by government, would be used to subsidize companies providing training programs. Example: Sweden.

Redesign and tailor apprenticeship programs to address the identified obstacles to women's successful transition into fields of trade and technology.

Mobility – access to courses, and suitable employment opportunities, which will facilitate completion of apprenticeships.
Address the subtle but debilitating harassment evident in all levels of training.
Flexibility – e.g. daycare; training conforming to the needs of women ... not vice-versa.

Lobbying to ensure that women are represented on decision-making bodies, particularly at a local level

- Community futures boards
- Liaison groups for Canadian Job Strategy
- Policy boards of educational institutions
- Apprenticeship Boards

In summary, there is a strong need for creating apprenticeship training in industry and education for all types of trades. The present experience of importing tradespersons from other provinces and even other countries is a lamentable and dangerous practice. This raiding of resource talent results in the creation of huge skill shortages in all trades. Dramatically increased apprentice

training must become a priority to fill and perpetuate the growing demand for skilled tradeswomen and tradesmen.

Canada is experiencing a skilled trades shortage, and has indicated a commitment to Employment Equity. Treasury Board is requiring government departments to develop a 10 percent participation of women in all non-traditional occupations.
CEIC are expecting the provinces to develop a 20 percent participation of women in apprenticeship.

Therefore: Treasury Board should at least meet the 20 percent level of training women into non-traditional occupations.

Recommendation:

> That an extra 10 percent participation of women be required in federal government departments with designated trade jobs. There should be intake at first level (entry) and an opportunity for women to move through levels of apprenticeship and gain "journeyman" status then be integrated into the permanent positions without rebidding for their jobs.

This process will require staff/year allocations to double-bank the apprentice during the apprenticeship program.

Employment Equity
We recommend that EIC immediately change the policy regarding contract compliance for federal contractors to include the same performance requirements as for federally regulated industries, and also that the wording be changed to include all contractors with over $200,000 in contracts or over 100 employees.

Data Bank Inventory
That CEIC be asked to fund a national organization for women in trades and technology to set up and maintain a National Data Bank Inventory of Tradeswomen, Technologists, and women in other blue-collar fields for purposes of networking and accessing employment opportunities.

From the Prairie/North Region:
We recommend that people in regional meetings identify available information and resources on women in trades and technology and become a clearinghouse of these resources. We recommend that regional chapters identify tradeswomen and technologists for entry in a database.

Recommendation to be brought forward on the 26, 27, 28 of October to the Interprovincial Standards Program Coordinating Committee meeting:
It is recommended that the apprenticeship branch of each and every provincial and territorial government establish and maintain a data base on women in training for or employed in trades and technology occupations, and make that data base available to all those facilitating women's employment in those occupations, including: EIC, Women in Trades and Technology Organizations, employers or employee organizations, etc. – that data base to include at minimum:

- the woman's name
- address
- phone number
- trade or technology occupation
- apprenticeship status
- on training – by year
- completion date

This recommendation to be sent to Danny O'Neill – chair of Interprovincial Standards Program Coordinating Committee – to put on agenda and present recommendation for consideration.

Human rights
We recommend that the Canadian Human Rights Commission be directed to actively initiate complaints against companies that are found, through their reports or audits, to be in violation of the EE legislation or Contract Compliance Program.
Evidence suggests that prior to legislation women were being trained, yet now in the face of EE and AA legislation, pre-trades and pre-technology programs are being cut and women are not being trained.

Education is guaranteed under provincial human rights.

We recommend the consideration of filing complaints of discrimination on the basis of sex, due to inconsistent and reduced funding of the exploratory trades and bridging programs which provide the educational opportunities needed for employment equity for women.

These complaints would be filed against provincial Ministries of Education (or other Ministries responsible for job-related training) and CEIC, through the Federal and Provincial Human Rights Commissions.
[the above recommendation passed by a very small majority]

Sexual and gender harassment

Recommendations from "What happened to WITT grads" workshop.
We recommend:

> That women taking pre-trades, pre-technology, and other non-traditional training be advised during or after the program on how to make an individual complaint of discrimination to their provincial Human Rights Commission;

and

> That individuals who experience discrimination or prejudice in seeking work after their training be actively encouraged and supported in making such complaints.

Recommendations from the Sexual Harassment Workshop:

> We recommend that the governments of those provinces whose human rights legislation does not specifically define and prohibit sexual harassment amend their legislation to do so, in order to provide clear and certain human rights protection from this form of discrimination. In addition to employment, we recommend that this protection extend to all other areas and activities covered by the legislation and that domestic workers be included within these human rights protections.
>
> We recommend that employers and unions include effective sexual harassment policies and complaint procedures in their employment policies and collective agreements and communicate these policies and complaint procedures to all persons who are working or are members of their organizations.
>
> We recommend that all trades and technology programs include a teaching unit on sexual harassment as a required part of the curriculum.

Unions

Women in Unions
The 1988 National Women in Trades and Technology Conference recommends to the Canadian Labour Congress, Confederation of Canadian Unions and the Canadian Federation of Labour that unions facilitate the role of tradeswomen and women technologists by providing support in the areas of:

1. Training, i.e. counselling, networks, mentors and courses.

2. Contract provisions, i.e. parental leave, protection from sexual harassment, and non-sexist contract language.

3. Organizational structure, i.e. women's and apprenticeship committees, women delegates to convention and affiliated bodies, and encouragement of participation of women.

4. Policy, i.e. policies to welcome women, end harassment, provide parental and family leave, provide childcare, promote part-time jobs and job sharing, increase access to information, oppose pornography and support transition houses.

From "Enhancing the Experience of Women In The Building Trades" to all Trade Unions, Federations of Labour and National Labour Organizations.
That unions be encouraged to facilitate the entrance of women into their ranks by making changes in the area of their training, contract language, organizational structure and policies. Some of these changes include:

In the area of training:

The establishment of training committees or training boards which would provide:

counselling
outreach to colleges and high schools
outreach to Women In Trades and Technology Assoc.
seminars for new apprentices and new union members
courses in such things as parliamentary procedures and assertiveness training

These committees would also provide assistance such as networking, a buddy system, mentoring, etc. to help people through the training period.

These committees would operate between locals and between provinces in terms of setting standards and exchanging information and ideas about programs.

In terms of contracts and contract language:

Clauses are required on maternity and parental leave, sexual harassment, mandatory education for all union members on sexual harassment; and contract language throughout that is non-sexist and gender neutral.

In terms of organizational structure:

The development of apprenticeship committees which are like bridging programs, a non-elected body where apprentices can come and learn how the union works in a non-threatening atmosphere.

The constitution of women's committees within the unions that would:
provide networks and deal with women's issues
provide women delegates to conventions and other bodies so they would be able to see how the organization works at a policy level
relate to other parts of the labour movement
encourage other women to participate

In the policy area:

Passing policies throughout the organization, usually through a convention by way of a resolution that provides a welcome to women in the trades and technologies:

policies against sexual harassment
providing leave for parental and family responsibility
policies providing childcare for union meetings
establish commitment to ideas such as part-time work with full benefits and job-sharing
providing access to information so everyone knows how to get into and become a member of the union, and how to enter particular trades
policies on issues of concern to women such as pornography, transition homes, etc.

From the Prairie Region:
We recommend that women in union locals support their sisters and encourage other locals to hire women.

Health and safety issues
From the Health and Safety workshop:

That health and safety seminars, designed by workers, that include information on hazards and potential changes to the working environment be provided on company time. That these sessions deal with the hazards at their source, and solutions focus not only on the individual's responsibility for personal safety, but also on modifications that can be made to the workplace to make it a safer place to work.

That employers and women's groups put pressure on manufacturers to produce clothing, tools and personal protective equipment in appropriate forms and sizes for women.

Recommendations from "Women, the Workplace and AIDS"
Whereas AIDS is caused by a virus that is not transmitted by casual contact with an infected person in the workplace, and whereas today AIDS is mainly transmitted by unsafe sex and by the sharing IV needles for drugs:

We recommend that unions and employers provide accurate information to their memberships and employees about AIDS/HIV infection and its transmission and adopt policies that inform and protect workers who have AIDS from discrimination in the workplace.

We recommend that the federal government significantly increase its funding commitment to accurate and effective AIDS education, drug research and health care.