
Annual Report of the Women's Union for Pay Equity

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Donors

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We would also like to thank the following organizations for their donations of office supplies and equipment, photocopies, postage fees, telephone fees, transportation, meeting rooms, office space and equipment rental :

- the Canadian Labour Congress, Atlantic section
- the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women
- l'Université de Moncton
- Support to Single Parents

To reach us



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Anthropologist Margaret Mead once said: "When a small group of people is truly determined, they can change the world; this is the only method that works". In the spring of 1999, a group of about twelve devoted women set a goal for themselves: the adoption of pay equity legislation in the Province, both in the public and private sectors. Since then, the group has grown much larger and its work continues. Last year, a lot was accomplished the group is determined to continue its actions until the goal is reached.

The concept of equal pay for work of equal value, the idea behind pay equity, is not always well understood. This is why it was decided to give conferences to explain this concept. Conferences were given to women's groups, unions, employers, high school students, etc. Our message has reached over 2000 people so far.

Two lawyers from our group have identified essential points that should be included in pay equity legislation in New Brunswick. They have summarized this information in a document entitled *Social Contract*. This document has been circulated to several organizations asking them to sign the following statement: "*We, the undersigned, convinced of the unfairness of wage disparity sustained by persons working in a female-dominated workplace in businesses in the Province of New Brunswick, believe that the Legislative Assembly of this province has a legal and moral obligation to correct this inequity forthwith.*" In June 2000, we held a press conference where we were happy to announce that approximately 30 groups, representing roughly 35 000 people, had signed our agreement. This list of signatories has since grown longer and was presented to Minister Norman McFarlane on October 13, 2000 with 74 organizations representing a total of 65 000 people subscribing to the pay equity agreement. We plan to continue securing signatures for the

Social Contract until we obtain pay equity legislation.

The Women's Union for Pay Equity has taken on one of the two demands of the World March of Women 2000: i.e. the adoption of a law guaranteeing pay equity in



the Province (the other demand focussed on the issues of eliminating violence). Between March 8 and October 13, 2000, we obtained close to 30 000 names on a petition that called for provincial pay equity law. This petition was presented to Justice Minister Brad Green when we marched on the Legislative Assembly on October 13. We had already

met with about 20 MLA's to inform them of our demands and many of them were present at this event.

In the winter of 2000 - 2001, a smaller group got together to prepare our strategies and outline an action plan. Three committees were formed: a Communications committee, a Research committee and a Action Committee. We have also developed our organizations' bylaws. Our first Annual General Meeting marks the official beginning of our group in its representative capacity.

We dream of a day where all women in New Brunswick will benefit from pay equity. With the support of countless citizens and most of our MLA's, we will obtain this legislation and achieve this goal. Employers will see the merits of such a legislation. In order for this dream to come true, we must be strong and work together. The road ahead is a difficult one, but in the end the reward will be well worth it.

Auréa Cormier, president

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Since January 2001, when I started working as the co-ordinator for the Women's Union for Pay Equity, I have had the pleasure to witness the incredible drive and conviction with which the women - and men - of this group come together to work for pay equity.



I was also able to benefit from the tremendous amount of work done by the people who preceded me. Claudette Lagrandeur greatly contributed in the distributing copies of the social contracts, in ensuring that the Union received exposure in the media (over 100 appearances in 2000 - 2001!) and in providing logistic support to the World March of Women 2000 Committee. During her brief passage the Union, Yvette Audet set up our office at 154 Queen Street in Moncton, in a space rented from Support to Single Parents. Yvette was also instrumental in the re-kindling of activities after the World March of Women 2000.

In January, after the strategic planning meetings, the co-ordination work focussed on supporting the committees, developing a first draft of a communications plan, establishing media relations for March 8 and searching for new funding sources.

The year 2000 - 2001 was marked by the mobilization for the World March of Women 2000 as well as promoting awareness about the current lack of pay equity. It is important at this point to continue mobilization by setting up a network of regional committees which will include Anglophone and first nation communities. We also need to bring together women's groups, trade unions, employers, as well as policy makers to work together for pay equity legislation in order to correct the injustice and discrimination experienced by women working in traditionally female trades and professions.

Johanne Perron, co-ordinator

Word from the co-ordinator

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Pay equity is equal pay for work of equal or comparable value.

The Women's Union for Pay Equity (the Union) is a coalition of organizations and individuals of New Brunswick, who by their actions and demands, are asking the provincial government to adopt legislation that will ensure pay equity in all sectors of work.

The Union's goals are :

- 1) to obtain a commitment from the provincial government to the effect that the current law on pay equity be extended to sectors II, III and IV of public sector employees ; and
- 2) to assure that the legislation on pay equity will include private sector employees.

Historical Background

La Fédération des dames d'Acadie founded the Women's Union for Pay Equity on May 23, 1998. In order to reach its goal, the *Fédération* decided to form a partnership with other groups concerned with the issue of pay equity.

In 1999, the World March of Women 2000 Committee put forth two demands for New Brunswick: pay equity and the elimination of violence against women. The consensus was that it was useless to form a second committee on pay equity. The March Committee instead opted to join forces with the Women's Union for Pay Equity.

The Union now continues its efforts to obtain pay equity legislation. It established a structure that includes organizations and individual members.

Board of Directors for 2000 -2001

In the beginning the Union was structured on the model of a collective, but later changed to a Board of Directors in May 2000 to become more efficient. Louise Aucoin served as president from June 5 to October 12, 2000. Auréa Cormier became president on October 13, 2000.

The members of the Board of Directors for 2000 - 2001 held 10 meetings. For the 2000 - 2001 period, members of the Board of Directors included :

Chantal Abord-Hugon
Mélanie Allain
Michelle Aubin
Louise Aucoin
Michelle Caron
Pierrette Comeau
Bernice Chiasson

Auréa Cormier
Docile Cormier
Rachelle Daigle
Madeleine Delaney-LeBlanc
Rachelle Diotte
Florence Léger
Huberte Gautreau

Rose-Aimée Haché
Lise Levesque
Kafiy Nzeya-Weva
Wendy Robbins
Lise Thibodeau

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Volunteers

The Union owes its vitality first and foremost to the commitment of its volunteers, including the members of the Board of Directors. In addition to the time volunteered by the members of the Board of Directors, the Union has benefitted from approximately 500 volunteer hours.

Employees 2000 - 2001

During this fiscal year, three co-ordinators have worked at the Union :

Claudette Lagrandeur (from February to October 2000)
Yvette Audet (November and December 2000)
Johanne Perron (since January 2001)

Highlights:

- *30 000 individuals signed a petition supporting a pay equity law*
- *74 organizations, representing 65 000 people, signed our social contract*
- *20 MLA's were made aware of the lack of pay equity*
- *Over 2000 attended our presentations on pay equity*
- *Approximately 7000 pamphlets were circulated*
- *Pay equity, the Union and the World March of Women were the subject of over 100 media coverage items*

Petition

Thanks to the participation of the regional March Committees across the Province, a petition in favor of pay equity legislation gathered close to 30 000 signatures.

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Social Contract

Lawyers Louise Aucoin and Michèle Caron developed a social contract stating 14 points to be included in pay equity legislation for New Brunswick. 74 organizations representing over 65 000 people have signed it.

The signed petitions and contracts were presented to the Lord government on October 13 in front of the Legislative Assembly. Approximately 400 people were in attendance as part of an activity of the World March of Women 2000.

Meetings with elected representatives

A few members of the Union met with 20 MLA's including Premier Bernard Lord. They also had discussions with Margaret-Ann Blaney, the minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Support for the court stenographers



From left to right, we see Monique Soucie, Lisa Doiron, Nilah Amos, Delalene Foran, Nancy Simpson, Debbie Fergusson, Juanita Hicks. This picture was taken at the Legislative Assembly before Christmas

The Women's Union lent its support to the court stenographers during their strike that lasted four months. Letters to the Editor in support of the court stenographers were published in newspapers across the Province. Several members of the Union participated in a demonstration, hand-in-hand, with trade unions and other interested parties when the court stenographer's union and the provincial government could not come to an agreement regarding pay equity.

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Workshops and presentations

In the spring of 2000, Auréa Cormier gave two three-hour workshops in Methegan and Ste-Anne-du-Ruisseau, Nova-Scotia. Approximately 40 people participated in these workshops. They were the last of a series of workshops, the other eight given in New Brunswick. The goal of these workshops was to train women to become militants and become involved in the World March 2000 committees.

Members of the Union offered 36 presentations on pay equity, the March of Women and inequalities between women and men. These presentations have reached 2140 people across the Province from different backgrounds. (i.e.: high schools, women's groups, trade unions, universities, employers' associations, anti-poverty groups, etc.).

Public Awareness

A pamphlet explaining the concept of pay equity and the current situation in New Brunswick was developed and over 7000 copies were distributed. The Union also put together a kiosk that has been used on three different occasions.

Media coverage

The Women's Union for Pay Equity, the World March of Women 2000 and pay equity were the subjects of very positive media coverage. This includes over 100 incidences of coverage in newspapers and radio and television stations across the Province.

Strategic planning

In December 2000 and January 2001, the members of the Board of Directors met to put together a strategic plan. At these meetings, the board devised a detailed plan of action and established several committees designed to direct these actions in the areas of research, communication and mobilization.

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In accordance with the strategic planning, the following committees were formed in February 2001:

Communications

The Communications Committee's mandate is:

- to determine the target groups;
- to develop a communication plan;
- to develop communication tools (an information kit, a pamphlet, an information bulletin, a video, a web site, etc.);
- to develop a press plan;
- to put the communication and press plans in action and to assess their impact.

Achievements:

The Committee has reviewed the first draft of the communication plan. It has also taken measures to adopt a new logo for the Union.

Members of the Communications Committee are: Chantal Abord-Hugon (chair), Madeleine Delaney-Leblanc, Rosella Melanson, Simonne Rainville and Mary Simpson.

Research Committee

The Research Committee's mandate is:

- to identify the Union's research needs;
- to guide the field research in order to mobilize the population of New Brunswick;
- to compile the most recent statistics on wage disparity in Canada and in the provinces and to make them known to the media;
- to plan and put into action priority research projects;
- to encourage the publication of research on pay equity;
- to prepare a list of researchers who wish to conduct research projects on this topic.

Achievements:

Field research: Auréa Cormier and Guylaine Poissant have developed a questionnaire in order to conduct field research in the Province. The aim of this research is to obtain statistics on the current situation of pay equity across New Brunswick in businesses in the private sector of 10 or

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more employees. The field research will also foster awareness of the pay equity issue among employees and will provide them with the necessary information to mobilize.

Answers to arguments against pay equity: In May 2000, Michèle Caron prepared a list of arguments used against pay equity and the corresponding arguments for pay equity. The Committee decided to update the list and submit it to the Communications Committee.

The social and economic impact of pay equity legislation: The Committee agreed to seek funding for a research on the social and economic impact of pay equity.

Members of the Research Committee are: Wendy Robbins (co-chair), Michèle Caron (co-chair), Guylaine Poissant, Noëlla Richard and Joan McFarland.

Action Committee

The Action Committee's mandate is:

- to prepare a plan of action;
- to create regional committees;
- to identify the needs of the regional committees;
- to provide regional committees with information kits and guidance;
- to inform the regional committees of the Union's activities;
- to participate in regional committee's meetings from time to time;
- to offer training on the issue of pay equity.

Achievements:

Preliminary contacts were made in several regions to establish committees. The first of these committees was started in St-Louis-de-Kent.

Members of the Action Committee are: Michèle Aubin, Auréa Cormier, Huberte Gautreau and Hélène Godin.

World March of Women 2000

The Union joined the New Brunswick World March of Women 2000 Committee in order to mobilize women and incite them to organize activities in their regions or go to New York. The New Brunswick World March of Women 2000 Committee had two demands : pay equity and the elimination of violence against women.

In total, 139 women went to New York. Fund-raising paid for the traveling expenses of 39 women. Numerous activities also took place across the province to show support for the World March of Women 2000.

- Bathurst: several groups – youths and adults – organized outdoor activities such as a human chain surrounding public service buildings.
- Edmundston: approximately 300 people participated in an activity for the March.
- Fredericton: approximately 400 people gathered at the Legislative Assembly when the women stopped on their way to New York.
- Moncton: on October 17, approximately 200 people participated in a noon-time ceremony and a vigil and show in the evening.
- Grande-Digue: approximately 60 women participated in an information session and a march on September 30.
- Acadian peninsula: approximately 150 people participated in a march on August 13.
- St-Louis-de-Kent: approximately 150 women participated in a march on October 1st.
- Shediac and surrounding area: approximately 150 women participated in an activity the week of October 17.

The March certainly reinforced the solidarity between the women of the Province and made the population aware of the issues of poverty and violence against women. To commemorate the impact of the events surrounding the March, a work of art by Marie Ulmer and Diana Leblanc was bought and will be exhibited in Canada Place in Moncton.

Common Front for Social

The Union is now a member of the *Common Front for Social Justice* (CFSJ). This year the CFSJ has chosen three campaign themes: (1) the improvement of our social programs ; (2) pay equity ; (3) citizen's income. Through this affiliation, the Union establishes links with other groups involved in issues of interest to women while stressing the importance of pay equity. Michelle Aubin is part of the CFSJ as the Union's delegate.

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Du 1 avril 2000 au 31 mars 2001

SOLDE au 1er avril 2000 \$ 21 218

REVENUS

Condition féminine Canada	31 200*	
Patrimoine canadien	20 000	
Volnet	668	
Dons	26 825	
Intérêts	478	
TOTAL		<u>79 171</u>
		\$ <u>100 389</u>

DÉPENSES

Salaires et charges sociales	38 503	
Honoraires**	20 013	
Déplacements	8 532	
Réunions	2 115	
Équipement, logiciel	2 744	
Fournitures, photocopies, frais de post	2 072	
Publicité, promotion	1 264	
Ateliers, présentations	620	
Téléphone	1 109	
Location d'espace de bureau et d'équipement	3 350	
Autres	252	
DÉPENSES TOTALES		<u>80 574</u>

SOLDE \$ 19 815