

OUR QUESTIONS: Leadership, Feminism and Equality in Unions in Canada

1. CLIMATE/ ATMOSPHERE/ ATTITUDES

How would you describe the current **climate** within your own union and/or the labour movement more generally?

Some areas to consider include:

- women' equality issues;
- feminist ideas;
- feminist-identified activists and leaders;
- women in elected leadership and/or staff positions;
- women of colour, Aboriginal women, lesbians, women with a disability in elected leadership and/or staff positions;
- other

2. CHANGE

Over the last number of years, are you seeing **changes** in union support for and climate about equality issues?

- If yes, is there less/more/the same amount of positive commitment?
 - Is there less/more/the same amount of positive commitment among women members specifically?
- Is there backlash or new forms of resistance?
- If you notice an increase in anti-feminism, what does this look like?
- Do you see generational differences among women leaders and activists in attitudes towards feminism and equality issues? If yes, how would you describe them?
- In what arenas and at what union levels (local, provincial/regional/national) are these changes apparent/visible/happening?

3. WHY?

Why do you think these changes are happening?

Over the years, union women's organizing has led to many equity policies, constitutional commitments to women's committees, funding for women's conferences and staff, designated and affirmative action seats for women on leadership bodies etc. How effective are these policies and committees in the current context?

4. WHAT DO THE CHANGES LOOK LIKE?

What are some of the manifestations/examples of the climate changes you have identified?

For instance, have you seen changes in

- numbers of women in leadership and/or staff positions;
 - which women? Feminist women? anti-feminist women? women of colour? Aboriginal women? women with a disability? lesbians?
- financial and/or staff support for equity positions, women's committees, equality conferences, campaigns, etc.
- decrease in authority accorded to women's committees
- focus and direction of women's committees - e.g shift away from political issues

- tensions between various constituency committees (rainbow, workers of colour, LGBTQ, disability, Aboriginal, youth etc)
- incidents of harassment and bullying in the union
 - directed at elected women?
 - directed at women staff?
- space/coverage of women's issues in newsletters, website, speeches, convention, etc
- specific initiatives to encourage rank and file women into activist and leadership roles, for example, training
- policy and campaign initiatives in equity-related areas
- opportunities to debate/discuss/campaign on women's equality issues – e.g. women's committees, equality conferences
- prioritising women's equality issues in collective bargaining

5. MOVING FORWARD

What strategies would be most effective in the current context to ensure an equity consciousness, and to move forward the equity agenda?

- How important are women-only events and spaces?
- Many identify the importance of feminist leaders. Is there a need to build a new layer of feminist leaders? How?
- Other ideas/strategies?

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