

Out of the Shadows: Women's Adult Education Leadership in Canada

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Abstract

In *Unearthing Canada's Hidden Past: A Short History of Adult Education* Michael Welton (2013 p. x) argues that "Canada has one of the most illustrious, experimental and innovative traditions of adult education in the world" and further notes that Canadians remain relatively unaware of this history." (p. xv). Women's contributions remain even more invisible compared with what can be called the 'single story' of Canadian adult education in which particular men figure prominently. Women have, throughout the history of Canadian adult education, been involved with creating new organizations and institutions, providing formal and formal spaces for adult learning, and taking the lead within social movements fighting for social justice, particularly for women's rights. This article aims to highlight some of their efforts. The first part focuses on women's work within social movements. The second part of the chapter focuses on women's leadership in the creation of feminist organizations and spaces within formal institutions, particularly their role in the creation of equality seeking organizations, organizations that were (and are) key sites of adult education, particularly the development of women's critical consciousness about their rights and ways of organizing and demanding social justice.

Keywords: Women's Leadership, Feminist Activism, Community-Based and Institutional Initiatives

1 Introduction

In *Unearthing Canada's Hidden Past: A Short History of Adult Education* Michael Welton (2013, p. x) argues that "Canada has one of the most illustrious, experimental and innovative traditions of adult education in the world" and further notes that Canadians remain relatively unaware of this history (ibid., p. xv). Women's contributions re-

main even more invisible compared with what can be called the 'single story' of Canadian adult education in which particular men figure prominently¹.

Expanding and challenging the single story of leadership in our field has been a longstanding concern of mine. More than 20 years ago, I similarly wrote about women's leadership and contributions and suggested we always ask, when making claims about "leadership" or "foundations" of adult education, "who's here and who's not here". I would also add another question: "what processes of knowledge construction are operating to create our partial views?". Similar questions were identified by Anne Firor Scott (1984, p.7) decades ago when she noted that "selective and partial vision will doubtless always be part of the historical enterprise" and she further asks "what are the characteristics of the things we are able to perceive? What makes other things invisible to scholars?"

A powerful approach to answer these questions is proposed by Canadian feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith's (1987) who has theorized that it is ruling relations that makes some phenomenon visible and others invisible. To create a richer and more complete account of the leadership of adult education in Canada requires that we continually interrogate what lens or frameworks are used and how our approaches will include some people and activities and will ignore others.

This chapter has been informed by a social justice vision of our field, one that is not only an approach to be brought to the creation of learning spaces, but to efforts to map and document the depth and breadth of those people and organizations who have contributed. Women have, throughout the history of Canadian adult education, been involved with creating new organizations and institutions, providing formal and informal spaces for adult learning, and taking the lead within social movements fighting for social justice, particularly for women's rights. Particular orientation is given to women's leadership which advanced "gender, social and ecological justice and transformation in Canada today" (Clover & McGregor 2016, p.18), an approach, as Darlene Clover and Catherine McGregor noted, that counters masculinist notions of individualized power involving directing, dominating, and being the hero and the reductionist and essentializing traits-based approaches to leadership (ibid.).

This chapter aims to highlight some of their efforts, however, it is not possible in one chapter to do justice to the breadth of women's contributions – that would take many books. A fuller account of women's leadership in our field in Canada is also an ongoing project, one that was the impetus for *Women, adult education and leadership in Canada* (Clover, Butterwick & Collins 2016). It was the first book of its kind and included many examples of women and feminist educators, learners, leaders, activists and change-makers. This chapter draws extensively on authors' contributions to that book. Other texts, noteworthy for mapping women's contributions to

1 Often positioned as the "founding fathers" of adult education in Canada are men like Roby Kidd and Ned Corbett, leaders in the Canadian Association for Adult Education; Fathers Moses Coady and Jimmy Tompkins who played key roles in the Antigonish Movement in Nova Scotia during the Great Depression when workers, impoverished as a result their exploitation by fishing and mining companies, began to establish worker-led cooperatives; and Alfred Fitzpatrick who established Frontier College which provided evening adult education classes to workers, mostly immigrant men in mining or forestry.

our field, include Taber (2015), Imel and Bersch (2015) as well as English and Irving (2015) and *Women's Social Activists of Atlantic Canada*².

This chapter discusses a selection of examples of women's commitment, passion, resourcefulness, creativity, wisdom, and sheer cheek, as leaders within social movements and organizations. The first part focuses on women's work within social movements. Canadian adult education began as a social movement long before any formal programs or organizations were created. The second part turns attention to women's leadership in the creation of feminist organizations and spaces within formal institutions.

2 Women's Leadership in Social Movements

When considering the important role of adult learning that is central to social movements, Grey and Sawyer (2008, p. 4) remind us that a power of social movements is their ability to "introduce new ways of looking at the world [...] challeng[ing] the rationale and operation of existing systems". Feminist approaches to popular education are central to many social movements, creating what Manicom and Walters (2012, p. 3 f.) describe as "pedagogies of possibility". This section begins with a discussion of women's leadership in Atlantic Canada, including the role played by Extension departments of universities in supporting impoverished communities in Antigonish and Newfoundland and women who worked at senior levels of government to provide adult education for rural communities. The leadership of Black women fighting against racial discrimination and in building community is also discussed. More contemporary movements are then explored including the creative initiatives of feminist activists. The first part concludes with attention given to the central role Indigenous women play (and have played) in fighting for Aboriginal rights in Canada.

2.1 Women's Leadership in Atlantic Canada

The Atlantic provinces of Canada were the birthplace of many adult education projects where women's leadership figured prominently. The Antigonish movement, perhaps one of the most well-known, began in the 1920s in the province of Nova Scotia. Its success can be attributed to support and leadership provided by the women and men of the extension department of St. Francis Xavier University, which began in 1928. Moses Coady and Jimmy Tompkins, two radical Catholic priests³ were working in impoverished mining, fishing and agricultural communities and sought to deploy adult education in the form of study clubs to examine these communities' challenges and ways to break through oppressive economic structures. A key outcome of these activities was the establishment of worker-led cooperatives⁴. While Father Mo-

2 <https://womenactivists.lib.unb.ca/> is a web-based report of a project directed by retired Professor Liz Burge from University of New Brunswick.

3 The activities of both of these men were regarded by the Vatican as problematic.

4 The Antigonish movement is considered to have initiated the cooperative movement.

ses Coady and Jimmy Tompkins played key roles⁵, they relied heavily on the leadership, tenacity and creativity of many women who worked in the Extension department. Catherine Irving (2016) documents their contributions as fieldworkers, writers, organizers, secretaries and editors. To create booklets for the study clubs, they gathered information, and, if it was not available, they created it. These women wrote and distributed hundreds of pamphlets on many different topics⁶, coordinated the annual conferences where residents shared their ideas and innovations, and created a bulletin which has been through many iterations and is now a major magazine (*The Canadian Co-operator*⁷).

Irving identifies some of the key women involved with the Antigonish movement. Kay Thompson (1907–1997) served as secretary of the extension department, creator of education material, provider of labour news and editor of *The Extension Bulletin*. Several women from the Sisters of St. Martha of Antigonish became involved: Sr. Marie Michael managed the growing library and wrote for *The Extension Bulletin* and Sr. Irene Doyle (1913–2008) coordinated the women's handicrafts program and created booklet illustrations. Other women were also central including Zita O'Hearn Cameron (1910–1999), an accomplished journalist and poet, who was Dr. Coady's secretary, contributing substantially to *Masters of Their Own Destiny* (Coady, 1939). Ida Gallant Delaney (1907–1997) who joined the Extension Department as a field worker promoting consumer education; and Mary Arnold and Mabel Reed, experienced co-operators, who moved from the United States to Cape Breton in 1937 to join the Extension department focusing on women's contributions to the development of co-operative housing. Ellen McNeill Arsenault (1908–2005), secretary to Dr. Coady (until his death in 1959), took charge of the massive amount of correspondence from around the world, including efforts to secure funding. Other women whose contributions survived the archival record included Catherine 'Tat' Sears (fieldworker and contributor to the *Extension Bulletin*), and Margie (MacKinnon) MacDougall, (fieldworker with women in fishing communities), and Mary (McIntyre) (writer for the *Maritime Co-operator*).⁸

Turning attention to Newfoundland, Florence Mary O'Neill's contributions are noteworthy. She was one of the first women in a high-level government position. Katherine McManus' (2016)⁹ has done extensive study of O'Neill's life. She describes how O'Neill, after completing her Doctorate from Columbia University in 1944, immediately began to work in the province's Department of Adult Education. From 1944 to 1958 she began as the Assistant Director and then moved on to be Director. O'Neill had a clear vision of creating an adult education system in Newfoundland and through her efforts regional offices were established throughout that province. Her plan, which she articulated in her doctoral dissertation, for an island-wide cohe-

5 For a fuller story of Coady's leadership read Welton (2001).

6 As is often the case with women's work, they did not identify themselves as authors of these materials.

7 <https://www.facebook.com/canadiancooperator/>

8 At a 1982 reunion of the women from the Extension Department, it was decided that their stories needed to be told. Delaney (1985) describes their achievements as well as barriers to women assuming leadership positions in co-op boards.

9 Also see McManus (2015).

sive adult education program was never fully realized; it was met with resistance from senior male leader who were distressed with O'Neill's portrayal of the level of poverty in Newfoundland's rural communities.

Later on, however, O'Neill's ideas became central to field workers approach at Memorial University Extension Service, a unit which Helen Woodrow and Linda Cullum (2016) explore illustrating how it operated as a vehicle of transformation for women in Newfoundland in the second half of the twentieth century – both as workers in the organisation and as citizens in communities. In 1959, Memorial University initiated a bold campaign to “produce social, economic, and cultural development in rural Newfoundland” (ibi.d, p. 287); it was led by several key women including Edna Baird, Julia Morgan and Vera Moore, and Neala Griffin. Literacy programs were central to these Extension programs aimed at training of rural women for the “betterment” of home, family and women.

2.2 African Canadian Women's Leadership

Women's contributions to another significant social movement is explored by Susan Brigham and Sylvia Parris (2016) who examine the leadership of Black Canadian women in Nova Scotia, home to one the oldest established Black communities¹⁰ founded by Black Loyalists, descendants of former slaves who were refugees from the University States who came to Canada in the 1700 and 1800s¹¹. Racial discrimination meant these communities did not receive many mainstream services; the women, through much tenacity, creativity and leadership created their own social and economic supports. They were particularly active in Black churches which addressed the spiritual needs of the Black community. The leadership and courage of one particular African Canadian woman – Viola Desmond – is notable. She stood up to racial discrimination throughout her life including confronting municipal politicians about deplorable housing conditions for Black families. In 1946 she was arrested for sitting in the whites-only section of a movie theatre. Jailed and without a lawyer she was fined, not for sitting in the whites-only section, but for not paying taxes of one penny. Her case went to the Supreme Court of Canada and was dismissed. Some 64 years later, an apology was issued by the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Maryann Francis, to her family and all African Nova Scotians regarding the racism experienced by Viola. Viola Desmond is a symbol for racial justice in Canada, like Rosa Sparks who is a symbol of American civil rights.

The leadership of African-Canadian women was also the focus of Thashika Pilay's (2016) vignette of Jeannette Austin-Odina, who came to Edmonton Alberta from Trinidad-Tobago where she had been a teacher. Her educational credentials were not recognized and Jeannette found work as a dishwasher. Undeterred, Jeannette encouraged others to pursue education¹². Her own home became the central space for the small Black Edmonton community. Jeannette's commitment to educating her com-

10 For more background on African Nova Scotians see Colaiacono (2008).

11 For more background on Black women's contributions to the abolishment of slavery and their role in the survival of Black people, see Davis (1972).

12 She eventually obtained her Bachelor of Education from the University of Alberta.

munity about the peoples of African and Caribbean heritage led to her creation of the Afro-Quiz, which is now an annual event. She also organized a youth homework and tutoring service. Her passion for education and community building is central to her leadership and legacy continues. Identifying African-Canadian women's contributions, is also the concern of Jennifer Kelly and Thashika Pillay (2016, p. 165) who seek to disrupt the single story of white women's social movement activities and the erasure of Black women's contributions in historical accounts. They bring attention to the racism operating in concerns about racial purity that was central to mainstream chapters of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and highlight the work of the Phyllis Wheatley WCTU chapter which "provided women of the African-Canadian community with a spiritual and intellectual place for consciousness raising" (p. 171). They point to the leadership of African Canadian women as evident in the writings of Reverend George W. Slater who created a newspaper column entitled *Our Negro Citizens (ONC)*¹³ and to the public education role of newspapers in creating, through word and image, new social and discursive realities and constructs of Black women.

2.3 Creativity and Feminist Activism

As has been noted, there is much creativity in women's leadership as noted by Canadian feminist sociologist, Dorothy Smith (1987, p. 22): "as we learn more about our women's history we discover that powerful intellectual and artistic current moves like an underground stream". A more contemporary example of such creativity is found in the work of activism of Philippine Women's Centres (PWC) in Canada, a Vancouver-based group which began in 1989. It is "a non-profit community based organization that advances Filipino Canadian women's equality, human rights and development towards genuine women's liberation".¹⁴ Working in partnership with Filipina activists in Vancouver, Shauna Butterwick and Kim Villagante (2016) explored their creative organizing and pedagogical approach. The position of Filipino domestic migrant workers arriving in Canada through the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) was a central concern of many PWCs. Through their organizing and community-based participatory action research (PAR), richly informed by Marxist feminist analysis, they examined LCP workers' struggles. As Khan (2009, p. 23) has noted, these domestic migrant workers encounter "social exclusion, abysmal working conditions, sub-standard living accommodations, sexual and racial discrimination, and exploitation on the part of employers, labour brokers, and employment agencies".

In sharing the results of their PAR activities, the Vancouver and other PWCs engaged with highly creative formats to organize and educate¹⁵. In 2003, 2004 and 2008,

13 Written by Reverend George W. Slater, Jr. and published in the Edmonton Bulletin and Edmonton Journal between 1921 and 1924.

14 <https://pwcofbc.wordpress.com/>

15 In addition to the political fashion shows, the PWCBC and other PWC across Canada used other creative formats such as painting suitcases with figures of Filipino workers and their children depicting the lived realities of many Filipino families spending years of their lives working overseas. Geraldine Pratt, a feminist geography scholar partnered with the PWCBC conducting research of LCP workers and on family separation. The findings of the latter studies have been presented in the form of plays in Canada, the Philippines and in Germany. (see Pratt & Johnston 2017).

the Vancouver group put on three Political Fashion Shows. Fashion shows are very popular in the Philippines and are not usually associated with women's emancipation. The national feminist coalition in the Philippines¹⁶ was the first group to subvert this format to raise political awareness amongst the masses prior to an election. Preparation for the Vancouver shows involved work study groups examining pre-colonial times as well as Spanish and American colonization and writing committees. Many artists, as well as community people, board members, and their friends and family members were involved. For most participants, creating a fashion show was a new experience.

The first PWCBC fashion show *Product of the Philippines: Made in Canada* was held in Vancouver in March 2004. It explored pre-colonial times and Spanish colonization. Depicting the radical and often violent changes that occurred through colonization, one of the opening scenes showed a woman wearing indigenous garb entering the stage. She is seized by two soldiers who hold her while two other women remove her indigenous garments and dress her in a Spanish Maria Clara dress¹⁷, handing her a bible and a rosary. This, among many other scenes, was a powerful and embodied portrayal of the political, social, and economic colonization by Spain and the Catholic Church. The second fashion show in 2005: *Philippine Independence Re-veiled: A Political Fashion Show* continued exploring colonization, focusing on current struggles in the Philippines as a result of globalization, capitalism, imperialism and commercialism. One of the dresses, the Rice Terrace dress, illustrated the abundance of natural resources in the Philippines and told the story of the exploitation of this land by foreign corporations, including Canadian mining companies.

In 2008, the third fashion show *Scrap: A Political Fashion Show to Stop Violence Against Filipino Women* focused on the experiences of mail order brides and migrant domestic workers. One of the dresses created was the Phone Card dress; made with hundreds of phone cards linked together. During the planning of this third show, PWCBC members had brought these cards to meetings. These cards had been collected over their many years as LCP workers and were used to call home and stay connected to their families. The cards and the dress created from them were symbolic of women's exploitation, isolation and family separation¹⁸ and told the story of the terrible sacrifice these women make – in order to support their families, must leave them to work overseas.¹⁹

The Raging Grannies are another group of women whose activism and leadership involves creative reimagining of what might be considered traditional feminine activities and attire. Carole Roy (2016) has extensively studied their development and impact. In 1987 in Victoria, British Columbia (B. C.), a group of aged 50+ women formed a street theatre group. One of their first political interventions was to dress in

16 GABRIELA (General Assembly Binding Women for Reform, Integrity, Equality, and Action).

17 The Maria Clara dress is associated with the impact of colonization of the Philippines by Spain and the domination of the Catholic Church.

18 LCP regulations do not allow these women to bring their children or husbands; many women, because of limited economic opportunities in the Philippines, are separated from their families for years.

19 Filipino overseas workers' remittance payments to their families is a key part of the Philippine's economy.

clothes mocking the stereotype of older women and to paddle canoes and confront a US nuclear-powered war ship that had entered Canadian waters. They, not surprisingly, received much media and public attention and subsequent groups were formed in many cities in Canada (and in other parts of the world). Central to their activism are their songs and lyrics which bring public attention to many social justice concerns including peace and environmental issues, affordable housing and other causes. As Roy notes, these warriors purposefully deploy their matronly credibility, gaining entrance to many events including government official meetings and gatherings. For example, at the BC Commission looking into lifting the moratorium into uranium mining in BC, the Raging Grannies offered a clothesline of their "briefs".

Some of the founding BC members of the Raging Grannies include Ran Thornburn whose activism focused on her passions for the environment and women's health, Freda Knot who was part of a disarmament group and an activist in promoting a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, Alison Acker who was a journalist reporting on war zones in Latin America who retired to Victoria and became the Grannies chief songwriter, and Daphne Taylor from Wales who studied German and worked in Germany after WWII in order to understand why England and Germany were at war. As Roy concludes, through their humour and creativity, the Raging Grannies "found empowerment, which led to the creation of an attractive form of protest, a robust identity and an effective network, and an example of flexible leadership" (p. 241).

2.4 Indigenous women's Leadership

Indigenous women are in leadership roles in the global struggle for Indigenous rights and self-determination. In Canada, a key organization supporting Indigenous women's leadership is the Native Women's Association of Canada (2018)²⁰ an aggregate of 13 Native women's organizations, which was founded in 1974. Its mission is "to help empower women by being involved in developing and changing legislation which affects them, and by involving them in the development and delivery of programs promoting equal opportunity for indigenous women" (ibid.). In its Strategic Plan of 2011-2016 several key areas of action are outlined including the promotion of Aboriginal cultures and languages, the end of violence and discrimination against Aboriginal women, taking leadership in policy analysis and development on issues affecting aboriginal women and developing women Aboriginal leaders for the future (Native Women's Association of Canada 2011, p. 4).

Indigenous women are also the key leaders in revitalizing and maintaining communities and cultural understandings. This area of their leadership is explored by Marlene Atleo (2016) who points to the leadership of young Indigenous women in the Idle No More Movement (INM), a movement which began in response to a Canadian government bill which undermined Indigenous treaty and land rights and was passed without rigorous consultation with Indigenous peoples. Atleo points to young

20 For more information see <https://www.nwac.ca/home/about-nwac/about-us/>

Indigenous women deployed their “savvy use of social media” (p. 38) to great effect, generating extension social networks. Atleo also documents how culturally informed artistic activities, such as round dances and flash mobs, were a strong theme in the INM. The contributions of the Kino-nda-niimi Collective which used dance in their demonstrations, and Jaime Black, a Winnipeg Métis artist, who created the Red Dress installation which drew attention to violence inflicted on murdered and missing women, are highlighted. Atleo points to another Métis artist, Christi Belcourt, who created a stained-glass window commemorating the Residential School Survivors.

Continuing with the documentation of the leadership of Indigenous women, Mary Kostandy (2016a) has written a vignette about Verna Kirkness, who was born on the Fish River reserve in Manitoba. Verna began her leadership activities as a teacher and high school counsellor and later supervisor of schools. She played a key role in writing the *Indian Control of Indian Education*²¹ report and *Our Tomorrows – the Indigenous education manifesto for Manitoba*. She continued to pave the way for Indigenous education as a faculty member at the University of British Columbia (UBC) where she created the Native Teacher Education Program (NITEP) and the Ts’kel²² graduate program which provides courses in Indigenous knowledge and methodology. She was also the first Director of the UBC First Nations House of Learning which she helped raise funds to build.

Indigenous women’s leadership is also central to revitalizing Indigenous approaches to health and wellbeing. Their leadership was explored by Alannah Young Leon (2016) who examined the central role of Indigenous women in the creation of a Tribal Indigenous land-based health education program called the Medicine Camp in rural Manitoba. Through this program, Tribal Midewiwin matriarchs’ knowledge is based on protocols and practices of Indigenous laws and legal traditions. Protocols is understood to mean “any one of a number of culturally ordained actions or statements, established by ancient tradition that an individual completes in order to establish a relationship” (Lightning as cited in Archibald, 2008, p. 37–38). As Leon points out, these protocols stand “in sharp contrast to the normative education models introduced by the settler state [...] [which] were devastating [and] destroyed Aboriginal cultures, languages, knowledges, and even physical bodies causing irreparable damage to many generations” (p. 113). She argues that many of these protocols “can inform a trans-disciplinary education practice” (p. 113) but also cautions that the protocols and practices must be site and case specific.

3 Creating Space within Organizations

The focus of this second part of the chapter is women’s leadership in the creation of equality seeking organizations, organizations that were (and are) key sites of adult

21 This report, adopted by the federal government and outlines how Indian education must be within the power and governance of Indian peoples. For more information see <http://www.sicc.sk.ca/archive/saskindian/a88sep18.htm>

22 Ts’kel means Golden Eagle in the Halq’eylem language.

education, particularly the development of women's critical consciousness about their rights and ways of organizing and demanding social justice. With space limitations, a comprehensive account of these activities and organizations cannot be offered. What is highlighted are some well (and lesser) known organizations including Women's Institutes, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women Canada. Also explored are women's leadership in the Canadian Associate for Adult Education (CAAE) and their efforts to create the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (originally a subcommittee of the CAAE) and their leadership in university extension services, literacy movements, as well as libraries and unions.

3.1 Women's Institutes

The Federated Women's Institute of Canada (WI) is perhaps the best known, non-formal site of adult education in Canada. Katie Stella (2016) takes us into the world of this rural organisation committed to initiating national programs for women highlighting celebrated stories of unity, and inclusion. Like the WI in England, the WI in Canada began with the goal of creating space for farm women to socialize and access education. The first WI was formed by Adelaide Hoodless in 1897, at a gathering in Stoney Creek Ontario when she spoke to a group of farm women about 'domestic science' also known as 'home economics'. Her passions about these issues emerged after the death of her infant son from contaminated milk. Her initial goal was to raise the level of knowledge about safe food practices.

As more and more WIs were created across the country, these organizations expanded their foci to include public administration, government lobbying and women's rights; their lobbying led to the creation of the Marital Property Act which gave women equal rights to property after divorce²³. Stella (2016) goes on to note the democratic structure of WI but also their strict adherence to procedures and regulations. She explores the continued relevance of WI activities and their expansion: "the WI has elevated their organization since 1897 from the rural to the international stage" (ibid., p.102). She also points to their strategy of maintaining close relations with government decision makers and how they developed "partnerships and alliances with powerful women and feminist organizations" (p. 103). For example, Emily Murphy was the first President of the Federated WI of Canada; she is well known for her involvement with the Famous Five²⁴, a group of women who pushed for legislative change such that women would become persons who hold a seat on the Senate of Canada.

²³ For more information see <https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/matrimon.htm>.

²⁴ Nelly McClung, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney and Henrietta Muir Edwards. For more information go to <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/famous-5/>

3.2 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WLPF) and Voice of Women

The WLPF, which began in The Hague in 1915, came to Canada in the early 1920s. It was created by women involved with women's suffrage in Europe and North America and who were actively opposed to war²⁵ and were centrally involved in disarmament campaigns. Many women assumed active leadership of the WLPF including Francis Beynon, Violet McNaughton, Agnes McPhail, Gertrude Richardson, Dorothy Steeves, Laura Jamieson and Lucy Woodsworth. Branches were formed in Vancouver, Toronto, Edmonton and Winnipeg. A central philosophy of the WLPF in Canada was that women, as mothers, had specific and unique obligations to create a peaceful and moral world. Laura Hughes, also active in the WLPF, is the focus of Laurel Collins' (2016) vignette. Collins takes note of Hughes more radical stance and her efforts to bring attention to the role of capitalist structures and how government and churches were profiting from war. Hughes also engaged in labour reform in light of factory women's working conditions. While the role of the WLPF declined during the Cold War, it has since been revitalized with chapters in Ottawa and Vancouver. More recent actions include creating a comparison of expenditures on social programs with the national defense budget.

The Voice of Women (VOW), which began in the 1960s with members in every province, is also focused on peace and disarmament; VOW has a representative on the federal government's Consultative Group on Disarmament and Arms Control. A central figure in VOW and other women's initiatives is Thérèse Casgrain; she is the focus of Mary Kostandy's (2016b) vignette. Casgrain began her political career as president of the League for Women's Rights and later became the first woman in Canada to head a political party in Quebec. Cheryl Gosselin continues to explore Francophone women's activism in the 1950s and 1960s and the creation of L'Association des femmes diplômées des universités de Montréal (AFDUM) (Gosselin 2016). This organization, which began in the 1960s, fights for gender equality in the work force by lobbying, advocating the principle of equal pay for equal work, and inspiring women to enter post-secondary education and to move outside the home and take up leadership roles in politics and other public arenas.

3.3 National Action Committee on the Status of Women

Another central Canadian feminist organization was the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, known as NAC. For several decades, NAC was a vocal and central advocate for women's rights. It began in May of 1966 when the Canadian Federation of University Women, under the leadership of its President Laura Sabia, along with a coalition of 30 other women's organizations, lobbied the then Liberal Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson to examine issues affecting women. Receiving no response, a march on Parliament Hill of 2 million women was planned. Fearing the image created by such a public event, Pearson moved to create the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW). Its 1971 report outlined multiple structural

25 <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/womens-international-league-for-peace-and-freedom/>

barriers preventing women's equality (many continue to operate) and actions to address these barriers. NAC was formed with a mandate to pressure the Canadian federal government to take action on the RCSW's recommendations. NAC included over 700 women's groups and the Presidents of NAC were women from those groups who brought different foci to their activist leadership including women's constitutional rights²⁶, their right to abortions, their roles in unions, feminist backlash, the racism and immigration struggles of women of colour, and the rights of Indigenous women. Laura Sabia was the first president followed by Grace Hartman, Kay McPherson, Doris Anderson, Chiviva Hošek, Louise Dulude, Lynn Kaye, Judy Rebeck, Sunera Thobani, Joan Grant Cummings, Teri Brown and Dolly Williams. As neoconservative agendas began to take hold of government agendas, funding for many women's organizations ceased, including NAC, which had to close operations in the late 2000s.

3.4 CAAE and CCLOW

The Canadian Associate for Adult Education (CAAE) is one of the most known of adult education organizations in Canada, but the role of women within that organization has received much less attention. It was created in 1935 with Ned Corbett as the first executive director (ED). CAAE for many years worked in close association with the federal government and played a prominent role in farming and citizenship education. It initiated several adult education projects such as Farm Radio Forum (FRF). Working in partnership with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) radio, FRF ran from 1941 to 1965. It involved half-hour radio broadcasts which were listened to by rural farming groups throughout Canada. These groups were sent background materials and questions about social economic issues. The ideas emerging from these discussions were part of a unique report-back process where the results of group discussions were sent back, sometimes even forwarded to government.

In 1943, the CAAE began another project using a similar adult education approach. Citizens Forum (CF) which ran for 20 years, focused on creating a more unified post WWII Canada. Isabel Wilson was hired in 1944 to be the National Secretary of this project (Butterwick 2016a)²⁷. To this role she brought previous experience in radio broadcasting and oversaw the research and editing of over 300 pamphlets used by listening groups across Canada. An exciting point of Isabel's leadership was the 1950 CF campaign on Equal Pay; Isabel crafted the materials for this initiative which became one of the most popular pamphlets ever distributed. In 1955, the production of a television broadcast of CF began²⁸. However, changes in scheduling and continual disputes over funding and control of programming meant that CF had its final broadcast season in 1964-65.

26 The lobbying that emerged from a NAC conference led to the addition to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on equal rights for females and males.

27 See also Butterwick & Fisher (2015).

28 For more information about educational broadcasting in Canada see Faris (1975).

Isabel's work was central to the success of the CF and its initiative on Equal Pay for women. Some years later, women's concerns about gender equality led to the Canadian Committee for the Continuing Education of Women (CCCEW) being formed in 1973. The women in that group drew attention to that fact that, at that time, no Canadian organisation existed that was concerned with women's education and training needs. In 1976, the committee sought and secured funding from the Canadian Secretary of State Women's Program (that had developed as a result of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women) to support the hiring of staff to look for creative models and conduct research on the status of women's learning opportunities. Out of those activities, the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) was born. Janet Willis, the first Executive Director, wrote a series of essays about successful programs for women and also prepared longer policy briefs based on research with adult educators in advance of the October 16–18, 1976 workshop in Winnipeg. Another proposal to the Secretary of State Women's Program was submitted in 1977 which led to the opening of a national office in Toronto. Throughout its life, CCLOW undertook many advocacy initiatives including briefs submitted to government. Many women took leadership roles including Dorothy MacKeracher, a now retired adult education faculty member from University of New Brunswick, who wrote *Roadblocks to Women's Learning: Issues for Advocacy*. In the 1980s many regional networks were established (e.g. British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland) from which emerged several successful models for women's program (e.g. The Bridging Program, Women Interested in Successful Employment (WISE)). The BC network²⁹, published two issues of the *Back to School Survival Guide for Women*. In 1982 the first issue of the CCLOW magazine *Women's Education des Femmes* was released. Between 1978 and 2000, CCLOW produced many other reports including studies on systemic and institutional barriers to women's learning, child care, pay equity, paid educational leave, women's learning styles, violence against women, the impact of violence on women's learning, and women's literacy programs³⁰. Conferences were frequently held which often included skills training workshops. After struggling to survive in the era of budget cuts to women's programs, CCLOW finally ceased operating as an organization in 2001.

3.5 Women's Leadership in Unions, Literacy Campaigns and Libraries

As Simon, Dippo and Schenke (1991) observe, Canadian unions are "a way in which workers have responded and can respond to the desire for a better life" (ibid., p. 128). While women make up about 44% of union membership (Kaminski & Yakura, 2008), they are not well represented in union leadership. One woman who has assumed a major role in the union movement is Winnie Ng³¹. She was an active leader who raised the profile of racialized women and gender and racial discrimination in

29 I served as BC Director of CCLOW for two terms during which time I secured funding for this booklet and oversaw, along with other members of BC-CCLOW, its distribution.

30 For a full list of these documents go to the National Adult Literacy Data Base (NALB) <http://www.nald.ca/litweb/other/cclow/doc/dateft.htm#1978>.

31 See <https://www.ryerson.ca/socialjustice/about/past-chairs/winnie-ng/>.

unions. Winnie was an active leader of the Labour Education Centre, the regional director of Canadian Labour Congress' Ontario for eight years, co-chair of Good the Jobs for All Coalition, executive member of the Asian Canadian Labour Alliance, and a board member of Labour Community Services. Her leadership in the Canadian labour movement has been recognized through numerous awards. Ng was well placed to explore the contributions and struggles of racialized women and other equity seeking members (Ng 2016). In her exploration, she draws on the voices of women of colour activists and educators to give us a reimaging of labour education in Canada aimed at solidarity and labour renewal. Two other women who have assumed significant leadership in addressing racism in organizations are Lina Lopes and Barb Thomas (2008, p. 1) who wrote a book based on their many years of training and education. That book examines how "racism, White power and privilege work in the ordinary, daily moments of organization life" and provides some powerful lessons on creating more equitable organizations.

Another woman who has given significant leadership to disrupting the male dominating of labour movements and unions is Kate Braid (2016) who was the first woman to graduate from BCIT with a red seal ticket (in carpentry), to teach full time at British Columbia Institute for Technology (BCIT), and to be voted to the executive of the Vancouver Carpenters' union. Woven throughout Kate's personal narrative is a larger discussion of women's persistent underrepresentation in the trades and the educational programmes that enable more women to choose the trades and survive and thrive in this area of work. Women in Trades (WIT), a group Kate helped to form in Vancouver in 1979, were key advocacy organisations for women in trades. Another strong WIT leader is Marcia Braundy³² who created several alternative schools in the Kootenay area of BC before starting her pre-apprenticeship training in 1977 and receiving her Red Seal qualification in 1981. She founded the newsletter of the Nelson Women's Centre and has since gone on to publish many reports on WIT and designing WIT curriculum. She received her PhD from UBC and her dissertation has been published as book about men's resistance to women in the trades was crafted in the form of a play³³.

Like unions and trades organizations, libraries are also significant sites of adult education in Canada blessed with strong women's leadership. The role of libraries in the Antigonish Movement has already been noted. Catherine Irving (2016) explores how libraries grew "alongside evening schools and Workers' Education Institutes to support learning for the working classes" (ibid., p. 219). In a profession lead by women. Irving draws our attention to Helen Gordon Stewart who in the early 1900s was "a force charged with a pioneering spirit" (ibid., p. 219). She was instrumental in the BC library legislation of 1919. She focused her doctoral research at Columbia University on rural library systems.

As funding disappears for other community organizations, public libraries are even more important. In many situations, they are the only accessible places for

32 For more information go to <http://www.men-women-tools.ca/>

33 For more information go to <https://fernwoodpublishing.ca/book/men-women-and-tools>

adults to engage with further learning. Suzanne Smythe (2016) highlights the complexity of practices and skills required by women to support adult literacy learning in a landscape of inequalities. She draws upon literacy education reports, research projects, policy visions and curricular documents to elaborate a feminist analysis of adult literacy as “women’s work”. She provides a feminist analysis of literacy education and elucidates why these issues matter to the quality of literacy instruction, to hidden pedagogies and practices in the field and to the salience of political resistance.

3.6 Creating Women-Centred Spaces with Post-Secondary Institutions

While universities can be the sties of colonial, sexist and racist ideas and practices, through women’s leadership, spaces for developing critical consciousness have also been created. This is a topic worthy of much more discussion, but it is important to mention in this chapter women’s adult education leadership within these formal educational institutions. Women’s studies courses began to be offered in the 1970s; some were outside of the formal credit system³⁴. For example, a collective of UBC faculty and community organizations got together to offer a non-credit course entitled *The Canadian Woman: Our Story*. Subsequent to that, credit courses began to be offered at many colleges and universities across Canada. Alongside these credit courses, women’s resource centres were also created within colleges and universities in the 1980s and continued into the 1990s. One woman who was passionate about supporting women’s learning was Anne Ironside (Butterwick 2016b). She directed the First Women’s Resources Centre in British Columbia which opened at UBC in 1972; she convinced the BC government to fund similar centres for all B.C. colleges. She was also the first woman to be president of the CAAE and she founded the Canadian New Work Institutes to support young people in a changing economy. She was awarded outstanding Adult Educator Award in 1989.

Earlier in this chapter, the leadership of women in Extension departments of universities such as St. Francis Xavier and Memorial were noted. Unfortunately, many universities have subsequently closed their Extension departments and community outreach initiatives replacing them with cost-recovery professional training programs³⁵.

4 Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to provide a map, within the limits of these pages, of some of the leadership contributions of women within Canadian adult education. Particular attention was given to women’s leadership in well-known (and lesser known) social movements and their persistence, creativity and courage deployed in the creation of equality-seeking organizations and institutions. As has been noted,

34 For a chronology of women’s studies courses and programs see <https://www2.unb.ca/parl/chronology1.htm>

35 For further information go to <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/nflds/article/view/22416/26072>

this is a partial view but it is hoped that it moves us forward with a more complete picture of the Canadian adult education leadership and of the powerful role women have played in that movement and its institutions.

The lack of recognition of women's contributions to our field is reflective of, I would argue, the work of ruling relations that devalue and render invisible much of women's labour. The misrecognition is also related to a narrow vision of what counts as leadership, and what might be considered adult education. Attending to women's contributions and bringing in a wider lens is more than a case of adding in their stories and giving them recognition, it is also about developing a richer and deeper understanding of our field of adult education. It is an effort to not only to provide a fuller historical account but to attend to present successes and future challenges in providing opportunities for adult learning and education for all those who seek it and would benefit from it.

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