

# Manufacturing Jobs Matter to Women

In the past five years *over 300,000 manufacturing jobs have disappeared* in Canada, through plant closures and major layoffs in communities across the country. Canada has lost the equivalent of about *185 jobs every single day*. When high-paying jobs are lost, the wage gap widens as women workers are increasingly pushed into low-wage unstable McJobs.

## What do these job losses mean for women?

Over the past five years, women have lost more than 55,000 good paying jobs in manufacturing. Contrary to the stereotypes, women do work in manufacturing: in jobs like food and fish processing, auto, auto parts, aerospace and general manufacturing. Over the last five years, women have lost jobs at a greater rate than men with 9% of women in the manufacturing sector losing their jobs compared to 7% of men.

Compared to many jobs traditionally held by women, manufacturing jobs often provide good pay, benefits and access to a pension plan. For example, the average hourly wage in manufacturing is \$20.94 compared to \$15.05 in retail. Many women in manufacturing are workers of colour and recent immigrants. The loss of these jobs has had a severe impact on women and their families, especially on women who are single parents or primary earners.

## What is causing all these job losses?

- ♀ Work relocation to the US and Mexico and the off-shoring of production internationally.
- ♀ Bankruptcies and plant closures.
- ♀ Workplace downsizing – all so corporations can further increase their profits.
- ♀ Growing imports of manufactured goods.
- ♀ A decline in exports.
- ♀ The rapid rise in the Canadian dollar.

## Canada's manufacturing sector is a critical part of the economy

- ♀ Accounts for two-thirds of Canada's total exports and funds.
- ♀ Is highly productive.
- ♀ Provided one out of every eight jobs.
- ♀ Generates the highest value-added in the economy.
- ♀ Represents three-quarters of private sector research.
- ♀ Has suffered more than *300,000 job losses*.



Equality  
once and for all!



Canadian Labour Congress  
Congrès du travail du Canada

## Women's Stories

Women's stories are connected in a common struggle for hope. In community forums across the country, women spoke of family and friends that lost their jobs and were forced to emigrate to find work in other parts of the country like Alberta.

Women talked about the lack of quality jobs for workers who have been laid off, highlighting the fact that few "good" jobs are being created despite Canada's record-low unemployment. Many women spoke about the threat to pension plans, both now and for the future, stressing that workers have the right to retire from their jobs with dignity and security. Others spoke of experiencing depression, the complete lack of opportunity for young people and a loss in identity after the closure of a mill, foundry, manufacturing plant, or processing facility.

The women's stories expressed feelings of helplessness, confusion, abandonment and anger that plague their communities. They believe that no one, not even our elected representatives in Parliament, is doing anything to fix this problem.

This fight is not over. As women, we must take up this issue. We need to work with our union sisters and community allies to develop concrete solutions. Women need a strong manufacturing sector. Collectively, we need our politicians at all levels of government to take action to protect our jobs, our communities and our future.

### LAID OFF AT FORD MOTOR COMPANY: One woman's story

*New job prospect. Part-time. Can't afford to take this one because day care costs more than I'd make in a week working there.*

*Called my Conservative MP. He has no sympathy and says universal day care couldn't match their government's child tax credit. Wonder when was the last time he had to choose between working and day care?*



## What you can do

*I'm just one person, what can I do to protect decent jobs for women?*

Buy products that are union-made in Canada.

Talk to your friends, family and co-workers about women in manufacturing.

Lobby Members of Parliament and tell them what they can do to help:

- ♀ Establish a fair trade policy, not free trade.
- ♀ Develop a National Action Plan that utilizes government policy tools to maintain a strong manufacturing sector.
- ♀ Support new investment in key manufacturing sectors – for new machinery, equipment, technology and skills training for workers.
- ♀ Initiate a national debate on the future of manufacturing jobs.
- ♀ Outline a comprehensive set of economic, fiscal, monetary and trade policies to strengthen and protect manufacturing jobs.
- ♀ Ensure that workers are protected in job loss through improved bankruptcy laws, wage and pension protection, training and relocation programs and better Employment Insurance benefits.

Join this campaign, find more information about manufacturing jobs and other equality issues on our web site at:

[www.onceandforall.ca](http://www.onceandforall.ca)

**Check it out!**