

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

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UNPAC Manitoba

United Nations Platform for Action Committee Manitoba is an association committed to the empowerment and equality of women in Manitoba. UNPAC's mandate and focus are articulated in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, which is where UNPAC has its roots.

UNPAC's current work focuses on promoting women's economic equality through popular education and empowerment projects.

Creating a full awareness of the social and economic systems and policies that impact communities and individuals is an important educational aspect of Community Economic Development. Developing a greater awareness of our social, political, and economic systems is critical to creating stronger and healthier local economies, reducing poverty and homelessness, and building more sustainable communities and a people-centred economy. There is also a need to understand how our current cash economy and labour market intersect with

the realities, concepts, and valuation of unpaid work—something that women are usually over-represented in.

UNPAC operates with the belief that women already possess the knowledge to make positive change in our communities. The Change Makers project is a year-long training program for small groups of community women, designed to assist them in harnessing their knowledge and skills in order to create positive change in their communities. Each Change Maker works on a major project and facilitates workshops in their communities to equip and empower community women. Since 2004, →



→ UNPAC staff and Change Makers have facilitated workshops for over 700 Manitoba women.

Historically, UNPAC has been deeply involved in educating women about the importance of gender budgets. From 2004–2007, UNPAC coordinated the Gender Budget Project. This project strived to encourage the government of Manitoba to create a budget more responsive to women’s economic realities, and to focus on creating economic opportunities to improve the social conditions of women in Manitoba. This project also worked to promote women’s economic literacy, encourage women’s participation in the public budget process, raise public awareness about how budgets impact women’s economic equality, and promote women’s economic security.

UNPAC has been very creative in making sure that the voice of women and their economic priorities are heard, both by governments and the public. In early 2010, UNPAC published a Manitoba Equality Report Card which “graded the Golden Boy on his commitment to Women’s Equality.” During the Gender Budget Project, UNPAC created a super-heroine, called *la Femme Fiscale*, who appears in this resource. A complete set of her comic book adventures can be

found at www.unpac.ca/gender/femmeAdventures.html. *La Femme Fiscale* represents Manitoban women, and has attended numerous events over the past few years. One of her most memorable events was her debut at the 2006 provincial budget, which coincided with the release of the Alternative Gender Budget created in collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. At this

widely publicized event, *la Femme Fiscale* surprised the media with her budgetary knowledge and her brightly coloured heroine costume, which contrasted well with the standard suit-and-tie costumes worn by most other attendees.

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Education, advocacy, and mobilization remain a large part of UNPAC’s work. *La Femme Fiscale* educates the government and the wider public about how the budget affects women. Women across Manitoba learn about how the economy affects their lives through workshops facilitated by UNPAC. Through these workshops women across Manitoba also educate the government about their economic realities and priorities.