**Appendix 2: Fact sheet** **Lesson: For Women, by Women** Lesson: Solidarity

**Labour Facts about Women in the Workforce in the 1970s**

* Between 1965 and 1975, the number of women in Canada’s workforce increased seventy-nine percent
* Most women were confined to low-wage jobs such as retail, service and clerical work
* Women in the 1970s were paid half the wages of men for doing the same work—or work of the same value
* Of the 250,000 women workers in BC in the 1970s—only 1 out of 5 was in a union
* Women in unions made $100 to $400 a month more than non-union women workers
* The “big five” Canadian banks employed 145,000 people in the 1970s —and about three-quarters (72%) were women
* Few daycares were available (and were costly) for working mothers
* Women were often “passed over” for promotion in favor of men
* Women workers had fewer benefits than men, including pensions, protection against harassment and job security
* in 1972 a small group of working women in Vancouver formed an independent trade union, called Service, Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada (SORWUC) and began organizing women workers

\*SORWUC signed up a majority of workers in 24 bank branches across BC in 1976 but had many difficulties and eventually folded—but made history organizing one of the toughest industries

*Compiled by J. Nicol*