



# 8 Things To Know about Women & the Economy

BY ELLIE LANGFORD PARKS

**1** *Women represent a growing economic force as business owners & employees.*

4 out of 5 businesses in Canada are started by women.

More than 821,000 women entrepreneurs (3x the 1985 total) now contribute more than \$18 billion to the economy annually.

In 1999, 55% of women aged 15 and over had jobs (1976: 42%), making up 45.7% of Canada's total workforce.

Women-owned and women-led businesses now surpass Canada's top 100 companies in job creation: 1.7 million jobs to 1.5 million.<sup>1</sup>

**2** *Women are increasingly prominent in management & in the professions.*

Women currently account for almost half the total workforce engaged as managers, doctors, dentists, and business and financial professionals.<sup>2</sup>

In 2002-03, nearly 11,000 women were full-time faculty members of Canadian universities, a rise of 50% over the 1990-91 academic year.

In 2001, women accounted for 30% of full-time academic university instructors and 56.4% of total university enrollment.<sup>3</sup>

**3** *Women do most of the "invisible" work in the home that, while unpaid, is vital to our economy & quality of life.*

Women do two-thirds of the 2.5 billion hours of unpaid work performed in Canada annually.<sup>4</sup>

The value of household work performed annually in Canada ranged from \$210.8 billion to \$318.8 billion in 1992, or 30.6%-46.6% of the Gross Domestic Product.<sup>5</sup>

**4** *Women predominate in nonprofit & voluntary organizations: the foundation of our communities.*

Nonprofit and voluntary organizations employed 2 million Canadians in 2003, and logged 2 billion volunteer hours.<sup>6</sup>

50-75% of nonprofit sector employees are women. 54% of all volunteers (80-90% in some sectors) are women.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Women Entrepreneurs: Resources & Links Women Entrepreneurs - General* (Royal Bank of Canada, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> *Women in Canada 2000 - Highlights* (Statistics Canada, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> *The Daily*, 24 February 2005 - *Study: The rising profile of women academics* (Statistics Canada, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> *Canadian Social Trends* (Statistics Canada, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> *Value of Household Work in Canada* (Statistics Canada, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Hill, Michael H. et al., *Cornerstones of Community: Highlights of the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations - 2003 revised* (Statistics Canada, 2005), pp. 9-10.

<sup>7</sup> Louise Mailloux, Heather Horak and Colette Godin, *Motivation at the Margins: Gender Issues in the Canadian Voluntary Sector* (Statistics Canada, for the Voluntary Sector Initiative Secretariat. March 31, 2002).

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*Women are over-represented in non-standard (ie part-time, occasional, seasonal) & minimum wage employment.*

Women form 70% of the part-time workforce in Canada.<sup>8</sup>

Women and youth account for 83% of Canada's minimum wage workers.<sup>9</sup>

Annual salaries have remained stagnant in much of the voluntary sector since 1990: as low as \$20,000 for daycare services and civic and social organizations; and \$27,000 for mental health/substance abuse services and social advocacy organizations.<sup>10</sup>



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*Despite their increasing role in the paid workforce, women's wages & share of the national wealth remain well behind that of men.*

Women employed full-time earn on average 73% of what men with full-time jobs earn (1997).<sup>11</sup>

Women in Canada enjoy 63% of the disposable income that men do (2001).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Women in Canada 2000: A Gender-Based Statistical Report* (Statistics Canada, 2000), p. 103.

<sup>9</sup> Marika Morris and Tahira Gonsalves, "Women & Poverty Fact Sheet: Third Edition, 2005" (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2005), pp. 2-3.

<sup>10</sup> Louise Mailloux, et al., *Motivation at the Margins*, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> *The Daily*, 23 March 1998 - *Earnings of Men and Women*, Statistics Canada.

<sup>12</sup> "Canada's Response to the UN Questionnaire to Governments on Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)."

<sup>13</sup> *Women in Canada 2000*, op.cit., pp. 137, 259.

<sup>14</sup> Morris and Gonsalves, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

<sup>15</sup> Katherine Scott, "Women and the CHST: A Profile of Women Receiving Social Assistance in 1994" (Canadian Council on Social Development and the Centre for

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*Women make up a disproportionate share of Canada's poor.*

2.8 million Canadian women live in poverty, or nearly one in five (19%, compared to 16% of men).<sup>13</sup> That includes one in four immigrant women (27%), and possibly two in five Aboriginal women (43%).<sup>14</sup>

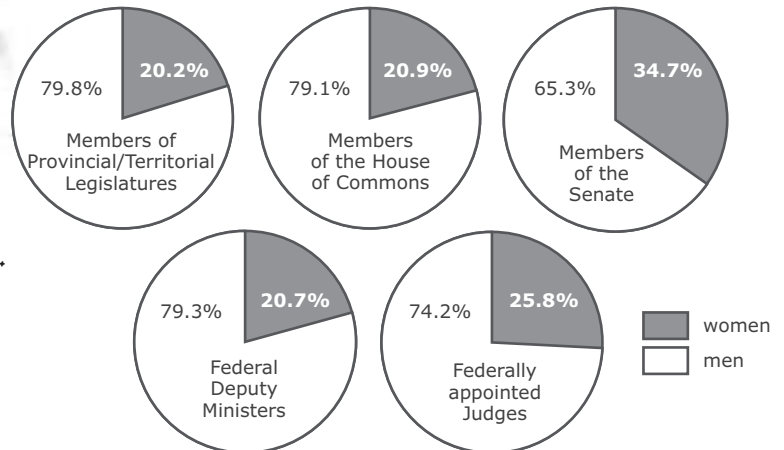
In 1994, women made up over half (54%) of adults living in families that draw social assistance.<sup>15</sup>

The average income of female lone-parent families is \$34,357 - 43% of the average income of 2-parent families and 71% of male lone-parent families.<sup>16</sup>

56% of lone-parent families headed by women had incomes below the low income cut-offs, as did 49% of senior women who lived alone.<sup>17</sup>

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*Women remain very under-represented in our law-making and judicial institutions.<sup>18</sup>*



International Statistics, March 1998), p. 17.

<sup>16</sup> Glen Drover, *Women's Income and Poverty in Canada Revisited* (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2004), p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Women in Canada 2000 - Highlights*, op.cit.

<sup>18</sup> *Women and Men in Canada: A Statistical Glance - 2003 Edition* (Status of Women Canada, 2003).



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