respect + inclusion + solidarity

OPSEU Social Mapping Project
“Each and every one of you is part of this change. We must take stock of our current processes, resources and structures and re-align them to have a broad vision of inclusion. The important work we are doing today lays the foundation for OPSEU’s long-term strength and growth. Together we can ensure solidarity with each other no matter where we are coming from, no matter our points of view. It’s just the right thing to do.”

President Warren (Smokey) Thomas
Contents

OPSEU Diversity Statement ................................................................. 1
The Social Mapping Project ............................................................... 2
Why is Social Mapping so important? ............................................... 4
The OPSEU Equity Unit .................................................................... 8
Social Mapping Project successes .................................................... 10
New Social Mapping Project video .................................................. 14
Systemic barriers in your workplace: A primer .............................. 15
Equity related courses offered by OPSEU ...................................... 21
Celebrate equity with OPSEU! ....................................................... 23
Questions? Contact us .................................................................. back cover
The OPSEU Diversity Statement

As one of Canada’s leading democratic labour organizations, OPSEU recognizes the value that diversity brings into its organization. We are on the frontlines of Ontario’s rapidly changing demographics, as reflected in our membership and our staff. It is within these demographic changes that OPSEU will continue to embrace diversity as a core organizational value. We are improving our systems and generating fresh opportunities to strengthen our connections with diverse groups from across Ontario. Together with our social justice allies, we will celebrate collective diversity wins to nurture sustainable partnerships.
The OPSEU Social Mapping Project

The Social Mapping Project is a ground-breaking demographic survey and review of OPSEU membership systems. The first of its kind, this project is enabling OPSEU to identify gaps and barriers in the union, and providing the information necessary to ensure services meet the needs of all members.

In 2010, Phase 1 of the project included a comprehensive survey of 135,000 members. In 2011, Phase II examined the education and election membership systems at OPSEU. Phase III focuses on review of the union’s communications, bargaining and organizing.

A task force was formed in September 2011 to implement recommendations based on the three different phases of the initiative. These recommendations are helping to build a stronger union that understands and responds to the membership in its full diversity.
Some key targets include putting in place mechanisms to monitor enforcement of equity policies; creating education opportunities that overcome barriers of long distances; promoting opportunities for the union leadership to reflect the general membership, in particular with regards to inclusion of youth, racialized members and women.
Why is Social Mapping so important?

Social Mapping makes OPSEU a union of choice!

As we continue to organize and take a stand for working people across the province of Ontario, it is key for us to represent the full diversity of our members. Unions play an essential role in ensuring equitable access to jobs and protecting and securing rights and benefits in the workplace and community.

“Demographics are changing rapidly over the next ten years. If we do not move with those demographics, it will profoundly affect the viability and vitality of our union.”

Deb Tungatt,
Executive Board Member,
Region 2
Demographic trends

Looking at rapidly changing demographic trends, it is clear that the ability of unions to ensure rights and benefits will increasingly depend on effective response to the needs of a diverse workforce. Ability to join a union strongly determines who will become the “haves” and “have-nots”

Everyone deserves to have a union

Without better access to unions and union services, greater inequality and economic stratification will result. Without a diverse membership and workforce, unions will not be relevant to the needs of new, fast-growing communities in Canada.

OPSEU is on the cutting edge

OPSEU’s Social Mapping Project has meant our union has stayed on the cutting edge with regards to implementing real change. It promotes inclusive services for all members and helps to develop services and practices that promote human rights and equity values throughout the union.
This is a process

OPSEU is committed to being more inclusive. We are a union that fully respects and accommodates the dignity, personal worth and rights of all people. Social mapping is a planned process aimed at understanding and complying with human rights and equity obligations in all our practices.

OPSEU is a leader in promoting human rights and responsibilities

We are committed to a leadership role in promoting human rights and responsibilities at OPSEU and in our communities.

The demands of a changing economy suggest that unions will need to undergo structural and organizational changes to become responsive to the needs of its membership, employers, and the public.
Our leadership respects individual rights in an increasingly diverse society and support systems that foster and sustain inclusive services and prevent human rights violations before they happen.

**Each and every one of you is a part of this change**

We are all challenged to move beyond mere compliance. We must reaffirm diversity and inclusion as core elements of the labour movement. Inclusion, equity and human rights is not just the responsibility of equity committees and caucuses, it is a responsibility of each of us. Together we can ensure solidarity includes all of us. Together we are strong.

For more information about the Social Mapping Project, please visit OPSEU’s social mapping web-page at [http://www.opseu.org/countmein/index.htm](http://www.opseu.org/countmein/index.htm)
The OPSEU Equity Unit

The Equity Unit advises OPSEU provincial and regional committees and caucuses on issues related to human rights, equity and accessibility. There are eight provincial equity committees and caucuses including: the Aboriginal Circle, the Provincial Francophone Committee (PFC), the Provincial Human Rights Committee (PHRC); the Provincial Young Workers Committee (PYC); the Provincial Women’s Committee (PWC); the Disability Rights Caucus (DRC); the Rainbow Alliance; and the Workers of Colour Caucus (WOCC).

The Social Mapping Project is an important investment in our union in terms of making our workplaces and communities better places to live, be together and raise our families.

Jeff Arbus, Executive Board Member, Region 6

The Unit also provides strategic expertise and support to staff and individual members in relation to campaigns, grievances,
mediations, harassment and discrimination complaints, policy initiatives and training related to human rights

Equity Unit Officers also administer OPSEU’s Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy, Personal Harassment Policy and Accommodation Policy.

The work of OPSEU’s Equity Committees, Caucuses and the Unit provides a foundation for members and activists to promote and maintain an inclusive and accessible union, workplace and community. However, to ensure that equity reaches every member and every workplace we need every member to be a champion for equity.
OPSEU Social Mapping Project successes

Since September 2011, the Social Mapping Implementation Task Force has been acting on more than 150 recommendations developed by the Project Consultant in Phase II of the Project. In Phase II, the Project Consultant examined two OPSEU systems: education and electoral systems. In March 2012, the OPSEU Executive Board referred the recommendations from Phase III of the social mapping project to the Task Force for implementation. In Phase III of the project, the consultant examined three systems: communications, organizing and bargaining.
Implementation of Phase II Recommendations

Of the 150 Phase II recommendations that the Task Force is currently implementing, six of the implemented recommendations include motions and resolutions that have been approved by the Executive Board.

Motions and Resolutions

Examples of motions and resolutions that have passed at the Executive Board include:

- A new Accommodation Policy—members with disabilities can better participate in all aspects of the union, including Convention and Regional/Divisional meetings;
- A third-party auditor conducted an accessibility audit of Convention facilities;
LEC’s are now required to submit the minutes at which they elected delegates; and the number of days that constitute “reasonable notice” for local elections is now specified in policy—thereby strengthening the integrity of the electoral process.

To embed equity in all OPSEU training and development, a regular time is to be included for equity topics in regional educationals

**Existing or New Practices**

- More than 20 OPSEU practices have been developed or revised in response to social mapping recommendations. A few of these new and existing practices are:
  - In order to ensure consistent compliance with OPSEU’s equity goals, members are encouraged to self-identify when they register for convention, regional meetings, educationals and conferences;
  - Promotion of the Bargaining for Equity and Pay Equity Educational documents thereby increasing organizational capacity for equity;
• Revised member orientation materials that acknowledge and welcome groups of focus; including a video produced for 2012 Convention;

• Development of an accommodation policy and an accommodation request form to ensure members with disabilities can be confident that the accommodation they require will be provided at events and meetings.

Policy/Practice Changes in Progress

The Task Force is working on more than 45 recommendations. A few examples include:

• Research into best practices regarding targeted recruitment and limit terms;

• A process for reporting election irregularities;

• Development of a “wise practices” document that describes the knowledge, skills and experience needed in the various member positions in order to serve the full diversity of the membership.
Implementation of Phase III Recommendations

The Task Force is currently reviewing the Phase III recommendations and prioritizing short and long-term activities required for implementation. This includes developing specific tasks for each recommendation, researching recommendations and reviewing financial implications.

New social mapping project video

Watch the new social mapping project video produced for OPSEU Convention 2013. This fully animated piece highlights OPSEU’s leadership support and the strength of the union’s commitment to achieving success as a leader in equity and human rights issues. http://youtu.be/TGRF_d7ZXLU
Systemic barriers in your workplace: A primer

The following information provides a framework for understanding, identifying and removing systemic barriers so that we can advocate for accessible and inclusive workplaces and communities.

1. Understanding systemic barriers

A systemic barrier is a neutral policy or practice that unfairly excludes some groups of people. Groups likely to be disadvantaged can be identified by looking at historical changes to public policy and legislation. It is also important to consider the historical context of individuals, community groups and organizations that have been subjected to harassment and/or discrimination. The identification of barriers may include an assessment of:
• specific systems, policies, practices
• the manner in which a policy/practice is implemented
• organizational culture
• impact on groups of focus

2. Identifying systemic barriers

The following questions can help to identify possible equity barriers in your workplace.

• Is there a policy or practice regarding removing equity barriers?
• Are there physical accessibility issues in your workplace?
• Is there an equity clause in your workplace hiring policy?
• Are there accessibility issues with regards to your workplace communications?
• Is there equal access to training opportunities?
Numerical data

An initial step in analyzing systemic barriers is to look at existing numerical data such as workplace surveys and membership lists. This data is important in terms of demonstrating the existence of under-representation, over-representation or the unequal distribution of employees in certain positions or departments. For example, there may be an unequal distribution of racialized workers in the workplace because they are over-represented in service positions yet under-represented in senior management positions.

Policies, practices and decision-making processes

A review of systemic barriers should involve the identification of key policies, procedures and practices. This may be a formal or informal process, written or not, as well as attitudes and conditions which might negatively impact groups of focus.
Informal policies do not often follow written policies or clearly prescribed practices. There may be procedures based on traditional practices or those that occur on an ad-hoc basis as a result of “common understandings.” These are normally based on the preferences of a few individuals within an organization. Informal practices typically represent substantial barriers because they are not recognized. In other cases, a formal policy may apply but it is implemented unevenly. It is important to examine and evaluate whether formal practices are actually followed and procedures are implemented.

Organizational culture

Organizational culture is the shared patterns of informal social behavior that include decision-making processes and interpersonal relationships. Specific aspects of organizational culture that tend to act as barriers include communications styles, interpersonal skills and leadership qualities. For example, an employer may emphasize evening social activities as key to
networking within the workplace. Employees who do not attend these social activities because of family care, cultural or religious reasons may not be seen as “team players” or have the same opportunities for networking.

**Input from equity groups**

Often the most useful tool in identifying a systemic barrier is direct input from members of the groups of focus. These members have first hand knowledge of the operation and impact of systems and practices, and can help to identify unintended negative outcomes, attitudinal barriers and cultural biases.

3. **Removing systemic barriers**

Removing barriers in your workplace is a long-term project with no beginning or end. It requires identification of barriers and on-going monitoring. The following are some suggestions of how to apply this process.
• Survey your membership to understand the composition of your local or workplace
• Do a workplace needs assessment or assessment of barriers
• Evaluate your collective agreement and ensure there are comprehensive human rights and equity protections and benefits
• Transfer knowledge through mentorship and leadership capacity development
• Re-balance leadership structures: open access to leadership positions, provide accommodation at meetings etc.
• Develop an internal support structure or affinity group e.g. a black, women’s or LGBT network
Equity-related courses offered by OPSEU

A number of courses with an equity theme are offered by OPSEU. These are important education tools as we move forward with equity improvements across our union.

- Mental Health: Challenging the Stigma in the Workplace
- Speak Up and Organize: Challenging Bullying and Psychological Harassment in the Workplace
- Duty to Accommodate: A Tool for Inclusive Workplaces
- Making Accommodation Work: Duty to Accommodate 2
- Women and Unions: Strengthening Leadership
- Women in Unions: Getting Involved
- Human Rights, Union Rights and Global Solidarity
• Cross Cultural Communication at Work: A Union Perspective
• Challenging Discrimination in Everyday Union Work

For information on equity and human rights components of other OPSEU courses, please visit: http://www.opseu.org/membereducation/activities-and-tools.htm

Please visit http://www.opseu.org/membereducation/description.htm to find out about the courses offered in your region.
Celebrate equity with OPSEU!

Each year, OPSEU celebrates the full diversity of its membership by participating in equity events across Ontario. Here are some of the events we are celebrating in 2013-2014:

- OPSEU’s Annual Joint Leadership Meeting—September, 2013
- OPSEU Human Rights Conference—November 2014 (biennial)
- OPSEU International Youth Day Event—August 2013 (annual)
- OPSEU Women’s Conference—November 2013 (biennial)
- Black History Month—February 2014 (annual)
- Human Rights Day—December 2013 (annual)
- International Day Against Homophobia—May 17, 2013 (annual)
- International Day for the Elimination of Racism and Racial Discrimination—March 21, 2014 (annual)
- International Francophonie Day – March 20, 2014 (annual)
- International Women’s Day—March
NOTRE POPULATION CHANGE

Deb Tungatt
Executive Board Member
Membre du Conseil exécutif

DEMographics Are Changing
INVESTMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY

Jeff Arbus
Executive Board Member

INVESTIR DANS NOTRE COMMUNAUTÉ
For more information about OPSEU Equity Committees and Caucuses visit:

- Provincial Francophone Committee (PFC): http://www.sefpo.org/comites/francophones/index.htm
- Provincial Human Rights Committee (PHRC): http://www.opseu.org/committees/phrcindex.htm
- Provincial Young Workers Committee (PYC): http://www.opseu.org/committees/youth/index.htm
- Provincial Women’s Committee (PWC): http://www.opseu.org/committees/pwcindex.htm
- Aboriginal Circle: http://www.opseu.org/committees/aboriginal/index.htm
- Disability Rights Caucus (DRC): http://www.opseu.org/committees/disability.htm
- Rainbow Alliance: http://www.opseu.org/committees/rainbow.htm
- Workers of Colour Caucus (WOCC): http://www.opseu.org/committees/woc/index.htm
It’s just the right thing to do.
Questions? Contact us

Contact the Equity Committees and Caucuses (contact information below) and the Events page at the Equity Unit for more information at http://www.opseu.org/committees/equity/events-and-projects.htm

The Equity Unit can be contacted in confidence.
Email: equity@opseu.org
Phone: 416.443.8888 ext. 8790 or 1.800.268.7376