



## STARTING AND ENERGIZING AN ISSUES GROUP

### What is a CFUW Issues Group?

Quite simply, it is a group of women gathering to discuss current issues and developing some plans for action. An Issues group can range from the very informal, to a structured interest group, with the Chair as a member of the Board or Executive.

### It starts with an issue.

If you would like to start a group, first speak to your Club's Interest Group leader or your President, perhaps advertise in the newsletter and go from there.

### Kitchen Table Talks

So many of our meetings, as with meetings around the world, are held at the kitchen table.

Organize your meetings either based on a single topic that everyone has been challenged to find out something or allow each person to bring something of concern to the table. There is no need for action, it can be simply awareness and education.

Like other interest groups, try to meet on a regular monthly basis. Some Club Issues Groups have gone on field trips, had guest speakers, organized film screenings, etc.

### Taking Action

#### Your own:

There may be times when you wish to move beyond studying and debating issues to take some sort of action, such as writing letters to or meeting with your local politicians, organizing a public event, and/or working on the adopted resolutions. Please familiarize yourself and your members with the *CFUW Guidelines for Advocacy*. Always discuss this with your President.

#### From CFUW:

The Club receives emails both from CFUW Ontario Council and CFUW National asking for your Club to take actions, such as writing letters to your MPP or MP, or signing petitions. CFUW will often create template letters that your Club can adapt, and for individual use. Any help that you can give will be appreciated.

Politicians are much more likely to listen to their constituents (i.e. you and your members), which is what makes CFUW's network across Ontario so valuable.

## The future

If your group begins to do the advocacy work for the Club, consider having a member of your advocacy group sit on the Executive of your Club. This will help ensure the executive is aware of the issues you are working on, and what the Club is being asked to support.

Use your newsletter on a regular basis to inform other Club members about the existence of your advocacy group, what it does, and to update them on issues that are currently being addressed.

Become a part of the CFUW business portion of your General Meetings, telling the Club members of the issues that you are working on.

## Energizing

If you find that your group is becoming tired, think back to Kitchen Table Talks. You may also want to have a brainstorming session to develop some new plans, such as an issues-based book club, discussion group, speakers, and field trips. Many times you just need a holiday. Saving the world can be exhausting!

## Helpful Resources

### The newsletters:

**Ontario: Ontario Council News** which has actions and activities

**National: Club Action** also sharing action and all sorts of relevant information.

Sign up for these via the websites.

### The CFUW websites:

**CFUW Ontario Council's** website, [www.cfuwontcouncil.org](http://www.cfuwontcouncil.org) Check out **What are the Issues?** and **Take Action**.

In the Advocacy dropdown you can also find Advocacy Tools, Policy and Resolutions and reports from the three Standing Committees: Education, Legislation and Status of Women & Human Rights.

**Facebook:** CFUW Ontario Council: <https://www.facebook.com/CFUWOntarioCouncil/>

**CFUW National** Members' website, [www.cfuwadmin.org](http://www.cfuwadmin.org) (log in: viewonly; password: cfuw4321) Check the Take Action drop down