

### Neutrality vs Equality

- An “open door policy” isn’t necessarily open to everyone.
- The notion of equality enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms acknowledges that laws that appear neutral often have differential and unequal outcomes. Equity means more than treating people the same. This is because historical inequities result in people being endowed with different resources, and as such people confront different barriers.
- A “neutral” attitude is informed by the context and environment of each individual.
- “...to achieve true equality, it is frequently necessary for policies and programs to treat different individuals and groups in different ways. Both the intent and the result of a policy should ensure the equality of women and men. Policies that appear to be ‘neutral’ can lead to discrimination if, in their application, they have a disproportionate impact or adverse effect on [wo]men”  
(Status of Women, 2000).

### Programming

- Be aware of how programming decisions affect women. Consider a programming policy around both air-time and content. Make women part of a “programming collective” or group that audits on-air programs for language and lyrics.
- Women are part of the music environment. Promote music by women.
- Provide programming resources such as women’s news and music magazines and program networks.
- Don’t make personal resources a requirement for programming.
- Programming collectives offer support and can make programming commitments easier to manage for single parents and others.

### Culture

- Cultivate a culture that promotes and supports diversity and “inclusion with influence”.
- Institutional memory and culture can support formal policies. A station with a strong community position, activist volunteers and policies around labour and outreach is likely to advance gender-equity and diversity with less of a formal policy structure. At the same time, an institutional culture that promotes one particular group of people or people of a certain age or who like a certain type of music is not going to be open to everyone.
- Internal democracy helps to build communication and understanding and also locates the station in the greater democratic principles of independent media. Volunteers understanding that there is a strong culture of democracy may be more likely to see that there is a place and role for them at the station.

### Safety

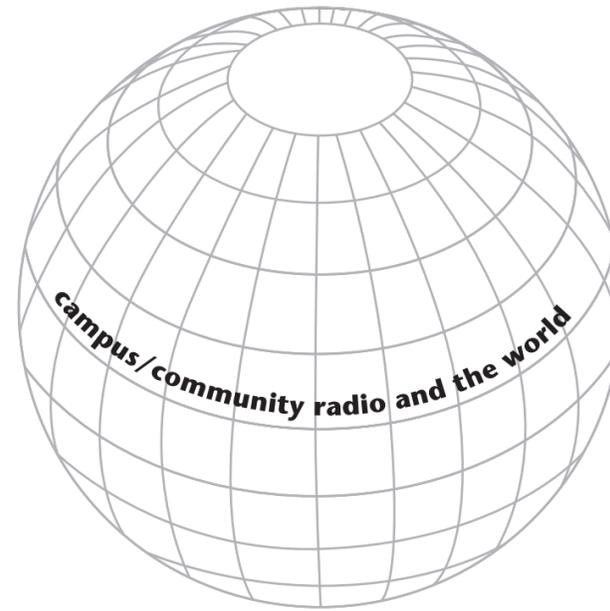
- Provide emergency telephone numbers and emergency information for on-air programmers and anyone using the station late at night or other times there is little traffic.
- Consider a formal or informal safety audit. Access information online or through Women Against Violence Against Women. Be aware of sightlines, access routes and visibility.
- Make policies visible and make sure they are followed. Federally-regulated workplaces are required to have a harassment policy.
- LISTEN and respond to concerns, and take them seriously. Sometimes security issues are hard to articulate, and sometimes the institutional culture doesn’t encourage people to voice concerns.

### Environment

- Be aware of how imagery affects others at the station.
- Stations with a particular environment (such as a university environment) may be exclusionary to people who are not part of that environment.
- Provide, nurture and support by introducing new women volunteers to other women, either informally or formally through a mentorship program or women’s collective.
- Make the environment conducive to different groups, such as by providing toys for kids and making sure there are change tables in the vicinity.
- Post security information and policies such as anti-harassment and training.

Since  
barriers to equity exist in the world,  
and  
campus/community radio stations exist in the world,  
it is inevitable that  
these barriers will exist at our stations.

While this is more a problem with the world  
than with our stations,  
there are specific actions we can take  
to combat inequity in campus/community radio.



### Education

- The role and mandate of campus and community radio stations are defined by ourselves and the CRTC. They include the concept of offering an alternative vision and a place for communities that have been marginalized.
- Station volunteers should receive the same training in the role and position and democratic nature of community based stations as they do in technical skills.
- Forums and networks at conferences and online should re-examine these ideals and ensure that they continue to be appropriate and meaningful, and that we continue striving to meet them. Look to national and international women’s media groups for information.
- Each station must determine, to some degree, its own mandate given its own particular situation, needs and community.

### Formal vs Substantive Equality

- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms also includes the notion that equality can be both formal and substantive.
- Insisting on treating people the same, without regard to different resources and different barriers applied by history and the world, can mean that real equality is not being addressed.
- “Formal” equality (treating everyone the same) can actually reproduce or reinforce “substantive inequality”. Pressing for formal equality can therefore be seen as a barrier to substantive equality (each person or group has the same level of access, recognition and support as any other group).
- “...employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences”  
(CRTC 1992-59).

### Policy

- Policies are not an end in themselves. They should co-exist with a culture and environment that supports their implementation and embraces the concepts.
- Samples and resources can be found from other radio stations, like-minded organizations, and on the internet, including [www.womenshandsandvoices.ca](http://www.womenshandsandvoices.ca). Contact a community or national group that supports equity and access sample policies around equity, hiring and employment, harassment, outreach and anti-oppression.
- Policies should be applied with transparency, consistency and openness.
- Be aware of external policies that may apply such as the CRTC, federal labour standards and employment equity standards.

### Understanding Multiple Barriers

- There is no “universal woman”.
- Make links about the general issue of increasing the participation of women and the role community radio is intended to play in Canada. Some stations are inadvertently inaccessible to women from low-income backgrounds, women with disabilities, older women and non-students.
- Consider gender in the context of increasing civic participation as well as creating a more robust democracy within communities. It is vital to acknowledge that women face multiple barriers including racism, homophobia and poverty. Research indicates that women have become more vulnerable to poverty over the past twenty years.
- It is important to recognize that an environment that is comfortable for a particular group of people will continue to welcome that particular type of person, and may de facto exclude other groups.

### Recruitment and Training

- Offer flexible training times for parents and others with little time, people who live far away and volunteers working several jobs to make ends meet.
- Provide peer training and mentorship opportunities. Offer a variety of shows for training, rather than slotting volunteers into certain shows. Peer training is especially important for technical training.
- Have a policy around outreach. Don’t just wait for whoever comes in the door. Again, an “open door policy” may not be open for everyone. Ask other stations for sample Volunteer Training and Outreach Coordinator job descriptions.



This poster summarizes the recommendations of *The Status of Women in Community-based Radio in Canada*, a report prepared by Elleni Centime Zeleke on behalf of “Women’s Hands and Voices”, an initiative of NCRA/ANREC. Financial assistance was provided by the Women’s Program, Status of Women Canada. The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the official policy of Status of Women Canada

[www.womenshandsandvoices.ca](http://www.womenshandsandvoices.ca)