

# Women's Equality in Canada

## An Environmental Scan

Gender Equality Network Canada  
January 2018



Gender Equality  
Network Canada

Réseau d'égalité  
des genres Canada



CANADIAN  
WOMEN'S  
FOUNDATION

FONDATION  
CANADIENNE  
DES FEMMES

**“Until all of us have made it, none of us have made it.”**

Rosemary Brown, Founding Mother, Canadian Women’s Foundation

The Gender Equality Network Canada (**GENC**), an initiative to advance gender equality nationally, is convened and facilitated by the Canadian Women’s Foundation. This national network brings together women leaders nominated by community organizations across Canada to advocate for policy change, build inclusive intersectional leadership, and take collective action to advance gender equality over a three-year period, 2017-2020. The Gender Equality Project and GENC are funded by Status of Women Canada. For more information visit [genderequalitynetwork.ca](http://genderequalitynetwork.ca).



**Status of Women  
Canada**

**Condition féminine  
Canada**

**The Canadian Women’s Foundation** is Canada’s public foundation for women and girls. We empower women and girls in Canada to move out of violence, out of poverty, and into confidence and leadership. Since 1991, we’ve raised money and funded programs in more than 1,500 communities across Canada, and are one of the largest women’s foundations in the world. For more information, please visit [www.canadianwomen.org](http://www.canadianwomen.org).

## **Acknowledgements**

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We acknowledge and recognize all of the women and their allies that have preceded us in advocating for women’s rights and gender equality, often at great sacrifice and cost. We use their victories as the foundation of our own work.

Catalyst Research & Communications

**“The woman is the foundation on which Nations are built. She is the heart of her Nation. If that heart is weak the people are weak. If her heart is strong and her mind is clear then the Nation is strong and knows it’s purpose. The woman is the centre of everything.”**

Art Solomon, Anishinaabe (Ojibway) Elder

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# Executive Summary

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The Gender Equality Network Canada (GENC) Environmental Scan provides an overview of work on the development of gender equality in Canada over the last fifteen years. The scan was undertaken from June to November 2017, based on interviews with over 50 activists across Canada, an online survey of the women leaders in GENC, and feedback from the first National Meeting of the GENC women leaders in September 2017.

Despite progress and momentum towards gender equality, women have not achieved equality in Canada. Whether measuring women's equality or women's equity; women's well-being or specific outcomes in employment, health, education; there are women in Canada who continue to face significant challenges and systemic inequality. An intersectional approach reveals no area that has unequivocally improved for all women. Deeper analysis reveals that for some women - Indigenous, Black, and other racialized women, immigrant women, women with disabilities and women in remote areas - improvements have been marginal or insignificant.

## Context

Canadian women participated in many social movements, including the women's movement, in the last fifteen years. The diversity of strategies, ideologies and approaches in use has often led to a sense that the movement does not have a focus or theme. In fact, it has a central concern - equality and equity for all women.<sup>1</sup> As women have complex and non-monolithic identities, the movement is inevitably destined to have multiple starting points and multiple outcomes.

## Anti-racism/Anti-oppression and Intersectionality

Anti-racism/anti-oppression (AR/AO) discourse emerged within the women's movement in an effort to address issues of diversity, difference, and inclusion. Out of the AR/AO approach, an intersectional framework emerged, which requires a shift from a single identity perspective to an analysis on the assumption that an individual's experiences are based on multiple identities that may be linked to multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination.

## Popularization of Feminism

In recent years, feminism has increasingly become popularized through social media memes and moments - such as #MeToo - and embraced by celebrities such as Beyoncé, Katy Perry, Lady Gaga and Emma Watson, not to mention Prime Minister Trudeau declaring himself a feminist.

## Progress Slowed 2005-15

Progress around gender equality slowed over the period 2005-2015 in Canada. Women's equality was removed from the federal government agenda, along with poverty, housing and many other equality issues. Status of Women Canada's mandate changed to exclude gender equality and their budget was cut by 37%. More than 30 women's organizations, including national groups, lost 100% of their funding, National Aboriginal organizations, including women's organizations, were cut by over 40%, and some were eliminated completely. Settlement services for immigrants and refugees were significantly

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1. See Appendix B: Terminology for a discussion of the concepts of equality and equity.

reduced. The planned national child care program was abandoned and related agreements with the provinces cancelled.

As noted in the United Nations Gender Inequality Index, “starting in 2005 Canada lost significant ground in key areas of gender equality, dropping the country’s overall global ranking by 13 places in 2008.” Backlash from men’s rights groups has sought to undermine women’s equality. Right-wing talk shows - radio poubelle - regularly attack women, gender equality and various religious and cultural groups.

**As of 2015, Canada slipped well down in international gender equality indexes: 18th on the UN Gender Equality Index, and 35th on the World Economic Forum’s Gender Gap Index.**

## Gender Equality Back on the Federal Agenda in 2015

The election of a new federal government in October 2015 initiated a new period in movement on gender equality. Federal policy from 2015 to the present has been characterized by adoption of an explicit Gender Equality policy approach including appointing a federal cabinet with gender parity, establishing a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, adopting a Feminist International Assistance Policy and a strategy on gender-based violence, and developing an early learning and childcare framework. The government also committed to gender-based analysis of federal budgets.

## Key Priorities Today

What are the key areas to focus efforts to achieve gender equality over the coming years? The interviews and surveys yielded a range of responses, but overall, three issues and one overarching approach - intersectional analysis - emerged consistently. Addressing any issue, informants were clear that applying an intersectional lens is essential. The three current priority issues to ensure progress on gender equality identified in the research are:

- 1. Violence Against Women**
- 2. Poverty and Economic Security**
- 3. Indigenous Women**

### 1. Violence against women:

- Gender-based violence
- Sexual violence, including on campuses, sexual harassment and rape culture
- Intimate partner other domestic violence, including domestic violence in the workplace
- Missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls
- Violence against women with disabilities
- Cyber-violence

### 2. Poverty and Economic Security:

- Pay equity and the gender wage gap
- Employment equity and the wage gap

**“The women’s movement is not credible without a strong intersectional analysis. It needs to include everyone or it’s not real.”**

Bonnie Brayton  
DisAbled Women’s Network Canada  
GENC Consultative Committee

- Child care and women's access to the labour force
- Disparities for immigrant women, Indigenous and racialized women and women with disabilities
- Decent jobs
- Precariousness of income and work
- Minimum wage
- Guaranteed Livable Income
- Migrant workers' rights

### 3. Indigenous women:

- Ongoing racialized violence - missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls
- The legacy and current context of colonization including major disparities in:
  - Income
  - Housing
  - Education
  - Economic opportunities
  - Social and health services
- Intergenerational trauma, Residential schools and Truth and Reconciliation
- Interplay of poverty, housing, education and economic opportunities
- Importance of identity rooted in culture, language, responsibility to land and relationships amongst peoples
- Understandings and approaches to equality offered by the unique histories, experiences and identities of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples
- Leadership of Indigenous women in addressing issues and in providing holistic, culturally-based responses.

## Strategies for Change

The discussion of strategies is happening at two levels simultaneously. The women's movement has been fairly sophisticated about discerning effective strategies for incremental improvements. At the same time, there is concern that the big picture is not fundamentally changing and there's a lack of coherent strategies for addressing the underlying structural forces that drive inequality. Four major strategies for change used by women's organizations and partners in recent years emerged from the research:

### 1. Collaboration

### 2. Movements and Organizing

### 3. Advocacy

### 4. Legal Action

**1. Collaboration:** An essential tool, collaboration extends resources, builds momentum and stretches inadequate funding. It was particularly effective 2005-15 when promoting women's equality was not a federal government priority.

- Collaboration often requires new partners to learn about one another and understand the issues from different perspectives.
- Go beyond "the usual suspects" to engage with less typical partners, such as the legal system, police, the business sector, and faith communities.

- Build effective relationships with elected officials of all parties and lay the groundwork for a change of government.
- Inclusion and intersectional analysis are essential, both in the range of partners engaged and strategies for engaging them.

**2. Movements and Organizing:** Women have been highly effective in galvanizing social movements that have had a significant impact on public awareness and public policy debates:

- **Idle No More**, formed in Saskatchewan by three Indigenous women and one ally, quickly grew to be an international movement supporting Indigenous people.
- **#BlackLivesMatter**, started in the U.S. by three women, grew across America and into Canada. Highly effective organizing by Black Lives Matter Toronto led to a coroner's inquest into the police shooting of Andrew Loku and re-establishment of a provincial Anti-Racism Secretariat in Ontario.
- **Sisters in Spirit**, launched by the Native Women's Association of Canada in 2005 to raise awareness about violence against Indigenous women and girls, received widespread national support. With allied actions by other Indigenous women's groups, it led directly to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- **Up for Debate**, supported by a coalition of 175 organizations and hosted by Oxfam Canada, pushed for a national leaders' debate on women in the 2015 federal election. Though it failed to secure a debate, it put gender equality on the election agenda, which was taken up by the Liberal party in the election and in government.
- **Equal Voice** convened "Daughters of the Vote" to inspire young women to participate in electoral politics, which brought one young woman from every federal riding in Canada to sit in Parliament on March 8, 2017.

**3. Advocacy:** Women's organizations have filed thousands of policy briefs with the federal government and its agencies providing the evidence for change.

- Accurate, credible information is key to an effective advocacy strategy. The women's movement has led development of evidence-based feminist methodologies - including the lived experience of women - through feminist research institutions across Canada.
- Make the economic case: Quantifying the economic costs of inequality - e.g. the costs of violence against women - can become a compelling policy argument for change.
- Integrating media and social media are complementary strategies to advocating with the government and create pressure for change.

**4. Legal Action:** Women's legal organizations and clinics have successfully used the court system to make change on issues from abortion to pay equity.

- Test cases in court can establish legal precedents - change the law or how it's implemented - leading to progress for many women.
- Formal complaint processes, such as human rights tribunals, can also lead to remedies that have a systemic impact.
- International law, such as human rights declarations and covenants Canada has signed - some of which are legally binding - are used to bolster our arguments for equality.
- Some organizations offer legal clinics to enable women to better understand and exercise their rights (e.g. in employment law or family law).

# Women's Equality in Canada

## A. Environmental Scan

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At the end of 2017, a retrospect of the women's movement in recent years would initially seem to be a very positive story. The January 2017 Women's March attracted millions of women worldwide, including in Canada. The hashtag MeToo went viral as it named men who have used their power to sexually exploit and abuse women. Women are clearly mobilizing around issues of gender equality.

But has gender equality improved in Canada over the last 15 years? What evidence documents the state of gender equality in Canada today? Are improvements in gender equality and gender equity benefiting all women, or only some? If so, how are they differentiated? Seeking to answer these questions, this environmental scan, developed for the Gender Equality Network Canada<sup>2</sup> provides an overview of gender equality in Canada in the last fifteen years, including:

- The context for gender equality
- Setbacks and successes
- Effective strategies for change
- Areas for potential future action and collaboration.

The scan covers three distinct time periods:

- **2003-2005:** The end of a neo-liberal period where gender inequality was acknowledged by the federal government.
- **2005-2015:** A decade with a federal government that rejected gender inequality as a policy framework and cut back on investments in the women's movement and in services and programs that supported women.
- **2015-2017:** A new federal government has established a national platform for momentum and potential for movement around gender equality.

There has been progress and momentum towards gender equality, but women have not achieved equality in Canada. Whether measuring women's equality or women's equity; women's well-being or specific outcomes in employment, health, education; there are women in Canada who continue to face significant challenges and systemic inequality. An intersectional approach reveals there is no area that has unequivocally improved for all women. Deeper analysis of key issues reveals that for some women - Indigenous, Black, and other racialized women, immigrant women, women with disabilities and women in remote areas - improvements have been marginal or insignificant.

The 55 interviews, 47 surveys and literature review conducted for this scan generated a number of contextual themes including:

- A number of improvements in the outcomes and the status of gender equality in some areas. The current explicit federal government agenda around gender equality is very promising.
- An increase in public visibility and discourse on issues related to gender equality in 2016-17, most

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2. The Gender Equality Network Canada is national network to advance gender equality nationally, which will bring together women leaders nominated by community organizations across Canada to advocate for policy change, build inclusive intersectional leadership, and take collective action to advance gender equality over a three-year period, 2017-2020.



specifically issues of sexual violence and violence against Indigenous women and girls.

- Lack of recognition of gender inequality as a social issue at the federal level over a ten-year period and the subsequent removal of most funding for national and local advocacy women's organization had a profound effect on the women's movement.
- Institutionalization of segments of the violence against women sector, particularly shelters, into the social service sector has significantly impacted shelters capacity as a mechanism for advocacy and social change.
- The women's movement continues to wrestle with tensions between positive outcomes for individual women and addressing structural and systemic inequality to achieve gender equity for all women.
- Space and resources to have deliberate discussions as a civil society to develop strategies to achieve gender equality and that recognizes the complexity of the ideas, concepts and outcomes required has been lacking.
- The most effective and successful strategies have required collaboration and relationship building with broad coalitions and allies.

## 1. Background

The scan was undertaken from June to November 2017. There were five main steps:

a) **Material** was prepared and then reviewed by GENC's Consultative Committee<sup>3</sup> including:

- an intersectional grid indicating the range and scope of topics of the scan. This grid was used to start identifying women's organizations and individual women with expertise who might provide input into the scan.
- interview and survey questions; the same initial questions were used in the interviews and in the online survey. Supplementary questions were part of the interviews.

b) **Interviews** were conducted with 55 women across Canada.<sup>4</sup> Initially, this was based on the intersectional grid and names suggested by the Consultative Committee and generated by Catalyst. Women interviewed and surveyed also suggested names for women to be interviewed. There was some overlap between the list of women contacted for an interview, and the list of women leaders sent a survey link, and several potential interviewees opted to complete the survey instead, e.g. Fédération des femmes du Québec, Women's Health Clinic in Winnipeg, Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services.

c) An **online survey** was prepared, consisting of the same questions as the interviews, and the link was distributed to the women leaders in GENC. Forty-six of the 114 GENC leaders at the time participated, a response rate of 40%.

d) **Literature review**, including a web review of relevant documents and sites.

e) A **summary of the environmental scan** was presented at the first National Meeting of GENC in

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3. The Gender Equality Project established a national Consultative Committee Canadian Women's Foundation to provide advice to the project and connection to national women's and gender equality-seeking organizations.

4. See Appendix D for the List of Interviewees.

September 2017. The scan was further developed and finalized with their input.

More details on the methodology, including data challenges and limitations, are available in Appendix A.

## 2. The Context for the Report

### Feminist Movement/Women's Movement

Canadian women participated in multiple social movements, including the women's movement, in the last fifteen years. The diversity of strategies, ideologies and approaches women use has often led to a sense that the movement does not have a focus or theme. In fact, it has a central concern – the inequality of women and the diversity of systems and structures that facilitate that inequality. Women have complex and non-monolithic identities, and the movement is inevitably destined to have multiple starting points and multiple outcomes.

The women's movement has often been aligned with specific ideologies connected to identifiable strategies and partners:

- incremental change within the existing systems and social structures
- targeting the economic system as the source of inequality
- focusing on the power and inequality of relationships embedded in the patriarchy or in other forms of oppression.

Key allies throughout this period have been found in the labour movement.

At the outset of the environmental scan period, between 2003-2005, the federal government continued to invest in the women's movement, including funding national women's organizations that were explicitly doing advocacy around women's equality. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women, while not as powerful as in the 1980s, still provided a collective representative voice for parts of the women's movement. Other organizations, such as the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women also offered a collective national representative voice during that time.

### Anti-racism/anti-oppression (AR-AO) and Feminism

**Rather than a single approach, AOP [anti-oppressive practice] is an umbrella term for a number of social justice oriented approaches, including, feminist, Marxist, post-modernist, Indigenous, post-structuralist, critical constructionist, anti-colonial and anti-racist...As part of larger movements for social change, AOP is constantly refining its theory and practice to address new tensions and social problems, as well as underlying structural factors.**

Catrina Brown  
Anti-oppression through a postmodern lens:  
Dismantling the master's tools

Anti-racism/anti-oppression (AR/AO) discourse emerged within the women's movement in an effort to address issues of diversity, difference, and inclusion. Drawing upon Audre Lorde's famous words "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house", AR/AO practice challenged the women's movement and women in the movement to examine their behavior, actions and institutional processes and structures for power relationships that perpetuated inequality. (Lorde, 1984)

Over time, the anti-racism/anti-oppression approach had an impact on the women's movement in Canada, particularly shaping the violence against women's (VAW) sector of the movement. The AR/

AO approach provided voice to many women who had historically been marginalized by the women's movement and insights into appropriate practice and approaches and recognized the entrenched and systemic nature of inequality.

Application of AR/AO also created real tensions around approaches to strategies and investments and exposed the differentiated lived experience for women depending on their race, sexual orientation and other forms of oppression. This has been reflected at many points since the 1980s, and recently in celebrations marking 100 years of women voting, though that was only a centenary of some women voting. As writer Septembre Anderson remarked in a critical article in the Globe and Mail, the press material did note that, "Unfortunately, the right to vote was withheld from indigenous women, as well as those of Asian and African descent, for years longer," but no attempt was made to tell when they received the right to vote. Anderson goes on to say "that Black women and other women of colour are continuously rendered invisible beneath the 'women' banner. The default definition for women is white women - those with the most systemic power - and the issues of the most privileged of us take precedence over the trials and tribulations of the least privileged of us." (Anderson, 2017)

The VAW shelter movement, using an AR/AO approach, developed service approaches that recognized the complexities of a women's identity and the need to work with multiple systems to respond to the differentiated needs of women.

## An Intersectional Approach

**Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LGBTQ problem there. Many times that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things.**

Kimberlé Crenshaw  
Columbia Law School News

Out of the AR/AO approach, an intersectional framework emerged. Without an intersectional understanding, outcomes can be narrowed to only benefit a specific group of women.

An intersectional analysis is based upon two understandings. It requires a shift from a single identity perspective to an analysis on the assumption that an individual's experiences are based on multiple identities that may be linked to multiple forms of discrimination. The second understanding is that a gender analysis needs to consider contextual factors, including: the purpose and differential impact

of any legislation, regulation or policy; the nature of and/or situation of the individual at issue; and the social, political and legal history of the person's treatment in society. (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2001)

The importance of applying an intersectional approach to this work, and specifically being clear when developing policy about who benefits and who is being left out, is evident in the following examples:

- **Violence against Indigenous Women:** Government policy frameworks around violence against women are based on a number of assumptions from statistical norms. Statistics Canada estimates that one in five women will experience violence in their lives. For Indigenous women in Ontario, the estimate is 75% (Breaking Free, 1989) and a report done by Equay-wuk in Northern Ontario, (1995) estimates 98%. Applying an intersectional lens reveals that a public investment based on the global statistics will not provide a sufficient response. In addition, a reliance on shelter services is not a viable response to violence that occurs in rural or isolated fly-in communities without anonymity or shelters and is a direct result of colonization and intergenerational trauma.
- **Changes to Maternity Benefits in Canada:** The 2016 federal government changes to parental leave allow a parent to extend parental leave to 18 months, but do not extend the amount of money they will receive. Instead, payment amounts through Employment Insurance are reduced from 55% to 33%. This change in government parental benefits was heavily advocated for by middle-class women facing lack of access to childcare until their children reach 18 months. It has a differentiated impact. For women working at minimum wage or slightly above, the changes will likely do nothing to improve their choices. Surviving on minimum wage is extremely difficult, surviving on 33% of minimum wage would be unrealistic. This change only benefits middle-income earners with sufficient salary to live on a portion of their salary over 18 months.
- **Minimum Wage changes in Ontario:** The change to the Ontario minimum wage to \$15.00 an hour by January 2019 will directly benefit specific marginalized populations who are often found in low-paying, precarious employment. It is estimated that 27% of Indigenous workers, 36% of First Nation women and 42% of all immigrant women will experience a raise in pay due to the minimum wage increase. (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2017)
- **Racial Profiling in Policing:** The Black Experience Project in the Greater Toronto Area, a seven-year research project, found that 50% of Black people in the Toronto area had been stopped by the police. For Black males the figure was 80%. Contrast that with 11% of white people

stopped by the police over the same period of time. This describes a public service - the police - providing a differentiated service to citizens on the basis of race. (Black Experience Project in the GTA, 2017)



The model, developed by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, identifies the combination of systemic, institutional, historical and individual aspects of a person's identity that will confer levels of power, privilege and social oppression as part of their social location.

Adapted from CRIAW/ICREF's Intersectionality Wheel Diagram published in Everyone Belongs. A Toolkit for Applying Intersectionality (2009, p.6)

### A Human Rights Framework

A human rights framework recognizes that basic human rights are a necessary pre condition to equality. Key international human rights agreements define that all people have civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including having rights to food, shelter, property, reproductive choice, social security, health care, work, political and religious freedom of expression, access to education, and the civil rights to life, freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment and free, active and meaningful participation.

**Women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights.**

Hillary Clinton

Canada has a long history of signing on to United Nations commitments. In addition to the major international human rights instruments, two instruments specifically concern women: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Increasingly human rights frameworks have been developed to recognize the diversity of women's experiences. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), for example, is an advocacy tool for Canada's national advocacy organization of women with disabilities, the DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN).

Some Canadian feminists used these key human rights frameworks as a tool to push for change in legislation and policy and to highlight the situation of Canadian women on an international stage. This was particularly useful in bringing recognition to Indigenous women being murdered and going missing in Canada. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous People (UNDRIP) is specifically relevant as in Section 22, it makes Indigenous women's right to protection explicit:

**States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.**

**United Nations Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous People, 2007**

The Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA), which had their funding cut drastically in 2005, continues to advocate for United Nations recommendations to Canada using United Nations instruments and working with United Nations and other international bodies.

## **The Popularization of Feminism - Big Tent Feminism**

To many girls and young women, celebrity women represent a new face of feminism - Beyoncé, Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, Emma Watson. Celebrity feminism is often more about an identity or lifestyle and less about a movement for change. Feminism, in this context, can have a focus on individual aspirations and actions - Facebook CEO Sheryl Sandberg's Lean In advice for example - without recognizing the systemic and structural barriers women face that undermine women's ability to achieve their goals.

Mainstream women's magazines have increasingly provided a profile to key issues related to feminism including the 2017 *Teen Vogue* series on "How Black Women Have Impacted Feminism Over Time" and their ongoing coverage of the Trump administration. (Crompton, 2017)

Some have theorized that the positive visibility of feminism was a factor in the 2016 US election results as it touched off a misogynist backlash. "Indeed, 2016 was so feminist in its memes, shows, music, and other cultural moments that some have argued this political momentum created the backlash that led to Donald Trump's election to the presidency of the United States." (Hobson, 2016) That leading American television figures who had the capacity to shape the public view of the election - Matt Lauer and Charlie Rose, for example - were fired for sexual harassment in fall 2017 lends credibility to theories of anti-feminist reaction to a woman closing in on the White House.

It is clear that popular feminism has provided a legitimate platform for many of the issues that have emerged in 2017, including the #MeToo campaign against sexual assault and sexual harassment, which has taken individual stories and sparked action for systemic change.

The impact of the popularization of feminism is unclear. As Zeisler points out in her recent book, popular feminism has morphed from “a collective goal to a consumer brand.” (Zeisler, 2016) She describes this “marketplace feminism” as not addressing the structural inequality that perpetuates inequality.

### 3. The State of Women’s Equality in Canada

The state of women’s equality is complex and debatable. Women continue to make important strides towards equality and continue to face resistance and backlash as they do so. The context for gender equality is in constant movement and a number of key themes have emerged since 2003.

While the term “feminist” or “women’s movement” would not be embraced or accepted by all of the women who have been advocates for social change around gender equality and equity, there are key moments, movements and successes that have defined a social and historical women’s movement with a clear intention toward gender equality.

Progress on gender equality always has to be contextualized based on both national and global trends.

#### Measuring Equality

International organizations assess a country’s progress through a number of different indicators. Canada’s ranking differs across different indicators. But the more sophisticated the index and measurements, the worse Canada stands on gender equality.

Index	Canada’s ranking	What is being measured?
UN Human Development Index (2016)	<b>10</b>	Life expectancy at birth Expected and mean years of schooling Gross National Income per capita
UN Gender Inequality Index (2016)	<b>18</b>	Health: including maternal mortality rate and adolescent birth rate Empowerment: secondary school completion and parliamentary representation. Labour market participation rates

World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Index (2016)	<b>35</b>	<p>Economic Participation and Opportunity: labour force participation, earned income, representation as senior officials, managers, technical and professional workers</p> <p>Educational Attainment: participation in primary, secondary and tertiary education</p> <p>Health and Survival: sex ratio at birth, years of good health, accounts for years lost to violence, disease...</p> <p>Political Empowerment: e.g. representation in Parliament</p>
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### Behind the Statistics - A Differentiated Look and Trends

What are the trends around gender equality in Canada? Over the 10-year period, 2005-2015, Canada dropped steadily in many gender equity measurements.

In 2015, the UN Human Rights Committee (UN HRC) did their first review of the Canadian government in 10 years:

- **Gender equality:** UN HRC noted “persisting inequalities between women and men” in Canada and wanted better equal pay legislation across the country, “with a special focus on minority and [I]ndigenous women.”
- **Violence against women:** Continued violence against women in Canada, and a “lack of statistical data on domestic violence,” led the UN HRC to call for better legal protections for victims, and more shelters and services.
- **Missing and murdered Aboriginal women:** In the wake of reports on murdered and missing women, the UN HRC stated that Indigenous women and girls “are disproportionately affected by life-threatening forms of violence, homicides and disappearances” and called for a national inquiry. (United Nations, 2015)

The 2016 *World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report* found that Canada recorded a drop in female legislators, senior officials and managers, but made advances in the national parliament. In that report, economic participation and opportunities were also declining in Canada. (World Economic Forum, 2016)

The Liberal government, elected in November of 2015, identified the three issues noted by the UN HRC - gender equality, violence against women, and missing and murdered Indigenous women - as priorities for action. The November 2017 World Economic Forum report found that Global Gender Parity has stalled, however some countries, including Canada, made big strides towards parity in the previous year. Canada moved from 35th in the Global Gender Gap rankings in 2016 to 16th in 2017. The results show that national leadership and policy commitments can significantly impact gender equality goals. (World Economic Forum, 2017)

Applying an intersectional framework, the rankings only tell us part of the story. The same indicator - UN Human Development Index - that places Canada at 10 overall, ranks Canada at 67 when measuring only equality for Indigenous women. This indicates that different strategies are required to address gender equality for different groups of women in our society. (United Nations Development Program, 2016)



Canada's rankings also vary across different indicators. For example, on educational attainment, the Global Gender Gap Report finds no gender gap in Canada. This is consistent with women surpassing men in university graduates in 1990, and by 2016 being more educated across the population. Women are the majority of all post-secondary enrolments - 56.3% in 2015-16 - and are highly dominant in education (76%) and in health and health-related fields (73%) though continue to be underrepresented in STEM at 39% of those enrolled. (Statistics Canada, 2017) Yet, with gender equality in education and a highly educated population of women, Canada has not attained gender equality.

Appendix C provides a summary sources of General Statistics.

### **Gender Equality Trends 2005 -2015: Progress Slowed**

For a period of ten years, women's equality was not on the federal government agenda, along with poverty, housing and many other equality issues. This had an over-arching impact in many different areas.

By 2010, about five years into the Conservative government, there was a significant shift away from gender equality:

- Status of Women Canada's mandate changed to exclude "gender equality and political justice," their budget was cut by 37%, 12 of 16 regional offices were closed.
- Over 30 women's organizations lost 100% of their funding, including the National Association of Women and the Law, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIA), Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada and Planned Parenthood.
- All national Aboriginal organizations were cut by over 40%, including the Native Women's Association of Canada and Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. Aboriginal organizations such as the National Aboriginal Health Organization and the Aboriginal Healing Foundation were eliminated completely.
- Native Women's Association of Canada's Sisters in Spirit funding ended despite growing international concern about missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.
- Settlement services were significantly cut.
- The planned national child care program was eliminated and related bilateral agreements with the provinces were cancelled. Instead, in the name of giving parents better "choices", a \$100-monthly taxable allowance for pre-school children was instituted – an amount that barely covers hiring the occasional babysitter.
- The Court Challenges Program, which supported test cases on Charter rights, was closed.

The impact on the women's movement was significant. Cuts to women's organization funding led to many grassroots and national organizations being completely dismantled or closed, and others functioned with much-reduced capacity. The loss of expertise was considerable. Advocacy was completely de-funded. At the same time, there were cuts to the disability movement, to immigration and settlement services, and to other sectors where women dealing with multiple forms of discrimination find support services or seek systemic and policy change. The closure of organizations like the Prairie Women's Centre of Excellence also resulted in the loss of research expertise.

With the cuts also came loss of safe spaces for women to access services, identify issues and develop solutions. Many organizations that remained worked under a cloud of fear, and often hesitated to speak out, worried their funding would be cut, or their charitable status investigated. Among organizations that survived, funding is still a major issue and sustainable, core funding is almost impossible to find. Aging of service club members, closure of some foundations, and more restrictive giving patterns by some corporate donors are also a factor for some groups when seeking sustainable funding. For the most part, funding of women's organizations became piecemeal and project driven.

Some jurisdictions also saw the erosion of government bodies working on women's equality. The provincial Ministry of Status of Women in British Columbia was closed and as was the provincial advisory council in New Brunswick (replaced by the New Brunswick Women's Council after years of intensive advocacy). There were also losses in capacity in human rights commissions in different jurisdictions.

There were widespread cuts to community services and public services. Funding for shelters stagnated for 10 years in virtually every province. Women's health services were eroded in some areas. Loss of funding had a particularly severe impact in rural regions where services were minimal to start with. Many of these reductions have never been recouped.

The cuts to public services and women's organizations were a triple blow to women: most of those laid off were women, the majority of users of many of the services were women, and the supports previously provided by those services now fall disproportionately on the shoulders of women within the family, adding to the invisible, unpaid workload of women. The loss of community services often disproportionately affected women at the intersection of multiple oppressions.

A universal federal child care program had been announced in 2004. Bilateral federal-provincial-territorial agreements were signed throughout 2005. It appeared to be on the verge of implementation, when the incoming Conservative government cancelled all bilateral agreements. Had the agreements been implemented, Canada could have had something close to a national child care system by now, removing a key barrier to employment and economic security for women. (Jenson, 2006)

The Kelowna Accord was negotiated, signed and also ready for implementation, when the new government came in and revoked it in 2006. The Accord was a historic agreement among federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous leaders on a 10-year plan aimed at significantly improving Indigenous health, education and addressing poverty.

Between 2005 and 2015, there were significant losses by women around gender equality in all international measurements. As tracked in the United Nations Gender Inequality Index, "starting in 2005 Canada lost significant ground in key areas of gender equality, dropping the country's overall global ranking by 13 places in 2008." (United Nations, 2011)

For the first time since the annual survey was started three years ago, Canada ranks below the United States in terms of how well the country is closing its gender gap. This is the third year Canada's ranking has suffered a hit. Last year, the country was 18th in the gender gap survey, a drop from 14th place in 2006.

**“We survived. At the end of the Harper era, it was like coming out of a cave. You cannot imagine the lengths we went to, just to keep CRRU in existence.”**

**Martha Friendly  
Childcare Resource and Research Unit**

### **Maintaining gender equity organizations and services**

Holding the line, and keeping services and organizations open in a time of austerity, constitutes a major success. Local programs helped women address violence, gain access to employment, enter non-traditional fields, transition into a life in a new country, tend to their health and well-being, and

access legal services when they face injustice or the court system, among many other services. These and other organizations engaged in raising public awareness, teaching young girls and boys about responsible relationships, and educating service providers about intersectionality and gender inequality and how their services can be more responsive.

With a persistent women’s movement, skilled organizing and genuine collaboration, some organizations were able to strengthen their capacity:

- Women Shelter’s Canada was established and is providing a collective national voice for violence against women shelters. With the support of the labour movement, they brought together 28 organizations to draft a Blueprint for a National Action Plan on VAW before the 2015 election.
- DAWN established a bilingual head office in Montreal, and has positioned the organization as a respected intervenor on behalf of women with disabilities both nationally and internationally.
- Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan united a network of 10 member agencies and gained access to base funding and research funding.
- Native Youth Sexual Health Network is a “small but mighty” organization that has engaged numerous young women and men on key issues of sexual health. Their work is internationally recognized and they have a significant number of collaboration partnerships.
- Within a two-year period, the Ontario Native Women’s Association went from a period of instability to a budget of \$8 million and a capacity to deliver high quality, culturally-based services across the province of Ontario.
- Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario organized the 31 shelters across Ontario on and off First Nation communities, one of the first times that shelters organized across federal and provincial jurisdictions.

### **Trends after 2015: Reinstatement of Gender Equality**

The Liberal government under Justin Trudeau, which ran on a campaign committed to addressing gender equality, appointed the first federal gender balanced cabinet, saying it was “because it was 2015,” implying that gender equality was a self-evident good.

Since their election in October 2015, the federal Liberal government has initiated an explicit Gender Equality policy approach including:

- Launch of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (August, 2016)
- Reinstatement of Status of Women Canada’s mandate to provide funding for groups advocating

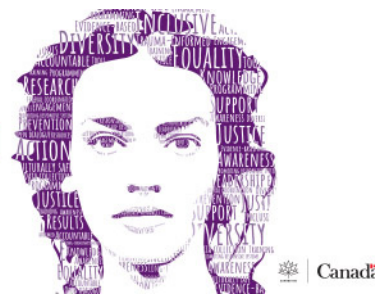
for women and girls. (Fall, 2016)

- \$10 million over five years, beginning in 2016-2017, to support UN Women's activities in West Africa, including Liberia. (November, 2016)
- \$1.5 million in 2016-2017 to the Global Acceleration Instrument on Women, Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action. (November, 2016)
- A Feminist International Assistance Policy committing 15% of Canada's bilateral development assistance to programs that target gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. (June 2017)

**“GBA+ is an analytical tool used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. The ‘plus’ in GBA+ acknowledges that GBA goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences. We all have multiple identity factors that intersect to make us who we are; GBA+ also considers many other identity factors, like race, ethnicity, religion, age and mental or physical disability.”**

Status of Women Canada, 2016

**IT'S TIME: CANADA'S STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**



Status of Women Canada

- Recommitment to government-wide gender-based analysis of all policies and decisions through a Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) process.
- Partial gender based analysis of the 2017 budget. (March 2017)
- Commitment of 25% of the National Housing Strategy to programs and services targeted to women and girls (November 2017)
- The Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence developed with community experts. (July 2017)
- The development of the National Early Learning and Child Care Framework and a distinct Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework co-developed with Indigenous partners, reflecting the unique cultures and needs of First Nation, Inuit and Métis children across Canada. (2016-2017)
- As part of NAFTA Agreement negotiations Canada has added a Gender Equality chapter because “gender equality is an economic issue.” (Fall, 2017)
- Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is a direct income-assessed transfer to parents with maximum payments of \$6400 a year for children under 6 and \$5400 a year for children 6-17. (June 2016) It's estimated that Canada's child poverty rate will decrease from 7.8% to 6.7% after the CCB's first full year of implementation. (Moscovitch and Falvo 2017)

While there has been a significant change in government direction on gender equality, there are also concerns about the ability of the government to implement a gender-based approach. Lynda Gullason

pointed these out in an April 14, 2017 Globe and Mail opinion piece:

- No mandatory requirements are in place for federal departments and agencies to conduct such analysis. Only 30 out of 110 departments are signed on to the gender-based analysis action plan – 22 years after it was initially adopted.
- Status of Women Canada (SWC) is not monitoring, evaluating or reporting on implementation and outcomes by departments and agencies, although SWC was required to do so after the 2009 audit.
- SWC doesn't have authority to enforce the application of gender-based analysis. There are no consequences for departments and agencies which don't conduct it.
- Gender equity isn't measured: no data collection to analyze and correct unfair practices and policies; no baselines or targets and no performance indicators to track progress.
- Departments conducting gender-based analyses are not meeting requirements to propose measures to address gender inequities. For example, the Canadian Armed Forces set an employment target for women of 25%, but has not developed an employment strategy to achieve that target, and women's employment remains unchanged at 14%. In his 2015 report, Auditor-General Michael Ferguson found that half of the gender-based analyses conducted by the audited departments were incomplete, but departments "nevertheless concluded" there were no gender-specific impacts. (Gullason, 2017)

## Global Trends: Last 15 Years

### Economic Context - Globalization and Inequality

Globalization and gender equality is a complex issue. Women have been profoundly affected by globalization, with globalization policies especially impacting racialized, immigrant and refugee women. Economic growth and recovery often depend on women's marginalized position in the economy. The World Economic Forum (WEF) estimates gender parity globally may now be over 170 years away. Previous WEF estimates were an 80-year timeframe, later increased to 120 years. It keeps slowing down. (World Economic Forum, 2016)

While the world has never seen so much prosperity overall, the prosperity generated has exacerbated inequalities along gender, class and racial lines, both between and within nations.

A consequence of globalization has been the restructuring of government policy to accommodate the economic context, including periods of reduction in the welfare state and public services, market deregulation and a move to risk management public policies, privatization and the emphasis of citizens as taxpayers. All of these shifts in public policy directly impact women in general and women in disadvantaged groups particularly.

**Global economic growth does not automatically lead to equality and inclusive growth cannot be achieved with gender-blind policies. Today's inequality crisis has its roots in a market fundamentalist narrative that insists that economic growth can only come from reducing public services while leaving markets to their own devices. However, it is precisely through vibrant public services and strategic government intervention that we can effectively address the social factors that drive women's economic inequality.**

Kate McInturff and Brittany Lambert  
Making Women Count, The Unequal Economics of Women's Work

## Resistance and Backlash

Since the early 1980s there has been a persistent backlash against feminism. This hasn't diminished, and has become entrenched.

Policies and attitudes of the Conservative government (2006-15) favoured groups that upheld values aligned with xenophobia and male dominance. Backlash from men's rights groups seeking ways to undermine women's equality increased. Right-wing talk shows - *radio papelle* - regularly attack women, gender equality and various religious and cultural groups. Giving space to extremist discourse legitimizes the rise of the political right, as was acknowledged by a number of political leaders after the January 29 attack on the Islamic Cultural Centre mosque in Québec city killed 6 worshippers in 2017.

**It's absolutely evident that so much of the anti-Hillary Clinton campaign was rooted in misogyny and woman hating, and that in many ways she became a symbolic representation of feminism. So many patriarchal men, especially white men, really felt like feminism had taken something from them. And I think for those groups of people, Hillary Clinton losing was a sense of victory, like they were getting some patriarchal power back. But patriarchy has no gender. There were many, many women who did not support Hillary Clinton or vote for her.**

**We can't see this as being about one, individual, male misogynist and hater, but the whole structure of our society. Masses of people really hate and fear empowered women.** This sense of fear is itself a tool. Masses of people really hate and fear Donald Trump, the President of the United States over Hillary Clinton in 2016. President Trump's language and disrespect for women exposed the level of tolerance that a democracy has for sexism that harms and belittles women, and is broadcast across North America in an integrated continental media market. Theorist and writer bell hooks' described that campaign:

bell hooks, *On The State Of Feminism And How To Move Forward Under Trump*

Deeply entrenched beliefs that have to be challenged and changed in order to achieve gender equality are also evident in the treatment of women in political leadership in Canada. Alberta Premier Rachel Notley, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, and federal Minister of the Environment Catherine McKenna have all spoken publicly about misogynist name-calling and threats they have experienced, an experienced shared by many women in political leadership. (Peckford, 2017)

**“When you're accustomed to privilege, equality feels like oppression.”**

### Social Behaviour

A recent book, *Women and Power*, describes how public spaces for discourse and debate, particularly places of power continue to be dominated by men. Until women are fully engaged in spaces that inform and shape, the fundamental discourse that shapes social behavior will not shift. (Beard, 2017)

Privilege is generally invisible to those who have it. In fact, the success of socialization is people assume their entitlement to move through society with confidence. This is problematic when the fundamental socialization promotes sexism and other forms of discrimination.

The American Council on Education did a study asking teachers to call on boys and girls equally, as best they could. After the experiment, the boys were asked how it felt. Their common response was: “The girls were getting all the attention.” The boys experienced equality as a loss.

Other studies reinforce this embedded bias. A study of men found that when a room’s population is 20% women, men see 50%. When it is 30%, men feel it as 60%. (World Economic Forum, 2017)

This distorted thinking is embedded in day to day living as described through mansplaining.

**When a man “mansplains” something to a woman, he interrupts or speaks over her to explain something that she already knows – indeed, something in which she may already be an expert – on the assumption that he must know more than she does. In many cases, the explanation has to do specifically with things that are unique to women – their bodies, their experiences, their lives.**

Lara Rutherford-Morrison

6 Subtle forms of Mansplaining That Women Encounter Each Day

Research supports the idea that men take up more verbal “space” than women:

- Men dominate conversations during professional meetings. A study by Brigham Young University and Princeton researchers in 2012 showed that women spoke only 25% of the time in professional meetings, while men took up 75% of an average meeting.
- Men and boys dominate conversation in classrooms. A 2004 study of Harvard Law School found that men were 50% more likely than women to volunteer at least one comment during class, and 144% more likely to speak voluntarily at least three times.
- Men get more space in print and online journalism.
- On Twitter, men are retweeted more often than women. Women make up 62% of Twitter users, with close to 63% of all retweets belonging to male users. (Hancock and Rubin, 2014)

Rebecca Solnit in her essay, “Men Explain Things to Me” recounts a party in which a man presumed to explain her work to her. She describes how these experiences, slight offenses though they may be, add up to something real and damaging:

**Every woman knows what I’m talking about. It’s the presumption that makes it hard, at times, for any woman in any field; that keeps women from speaking up and from being heard when they dare; that crushes young women into silence by indicating, the way harassment on the street does, that this is not their world. (Solnit, 2012)**

**“The women’s movement is not credible without a strong intersectional analysis. It needs to include everyone or it’s not real.”**

**Bonnie Brayton  
DisAbleD Women’s Network Canada  
GENC Consultative Committee**

## **B. Priority Issues Today**

The interviews and surveys yielded a range of responses, but overall, three issues and one overarching approach – intersectional analysis - emerged consistently. Addressing any issue, informants were clear that applying an intersectional lens is essential.

The three current priority issues to ensure progress on gender equality identified in the research are:

- 1. Violence Against Women**
- 2. Poverty and Economic Security**
- 3. Indigenous Women**

### **1. Violence against women:**

- Gender-based violence
- Sexual violence, including on campuses
- Domestic violence, including domestic violence in the workplace
- Cyber-violence

### **2. Poverty and Economic Security:**

- Pay equity
- Employment equity
- Disparities for immigrant women, Indigenous and racialized women and women with disabilities
- Decent jobs
- Precariousness of income and work
- Minimum wage
- Guaranteed Livable Income
- Migrant workers’ rights

### **3. Indigenous women’s issues:**

- Missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls
- Colonialism and its impacts
- Intergenerational trauma



- Residential schools
- Truth and Reconciliation
- Interplay of poverty, housing, education and economic opportunities
- Indigenous women's leadership.

## 1. Violence Against Women

Women in Canada are more likely to be victims of violent crime than men. While rates of most violence crimes are on the decline, rates of sexual violence - the victims of which are disproportionately women and girls - remain unchanged over 20 years. (Perreault, 2015) Almost half a million women in Canada report being sexually assaulted annually. (Johnson, 2012) Over 340,000 women report experiencing intimate partner violence over a five-year period. (Canadian Centre for Justice Studies, 2016)

Justice Canada estimates the economic cost of sexual assault and intimate partner violence is in excess of \$12 billion annually. (Hoddenbagh et al, 2014)

### Shifts in the Public Discourse, Policy and Law

Public awareness and discussion has shifted significantly on a number of aspects of violence against women areas, opening up possibilities for systemic change. During the research, sources attributed this positive movement directly to activism, focused attention and research by women and allies committed to gender equality, combined with the change in the federal government in 2015.

### Sexual violence

Feminist activism and mobilization in the last few years has become focused by a cascade of high profile reports of sexual assault and institutionalized sexism in Canada and in the United States. From sexual harassment to date rape, the prevalence and normalization of sexual violence in women's lives is being openly discussed.

The cases of Jian Ghomeshi in 2016 and Bill Cosby in 2015 exposed the failure of the justice system to protect women. Bill Cosby is now facing retrial. Justice Horkins, in acquitting Mr. Ghomeshi in 2016 on the basis of "a reasonable doubt" stated that this was "not the same as deciding in any positive way that these events never happened." (R v Ghomeshi, 2016)

The viral spread of the #MeToo and in translation - #MoiAussi in French - on social media starting in October 2017, denouncing sexual assault and harassment, grew to a campaign of millions of messages. Originated and used by social activist Tarana Burke, #MeToo was popularized when actor Alyssa Milano encouraged women to tweet to publicize their experiences and demonstrate the widespread nature of misogynist behavior.

The cases have also exposed the racialized biases in our response to sexual violence. One example was highlighted in the Globe and Mail in 2017. A 27-year old Indigenous woman who was homeless was violently attacked, held against her will and sexually assaulted in Edmonton, Alberta in 2014. At the court hearing a year later, the victim was jailed for five days to ensure she would be present to testify against the accused. For at least two days, she testified in leg shackles. When she asked to be released to her mother's home, the judge refused. Over the course of her detainment, she was driven to court in the same van as her assailant at least twice. (Fine, 2017)

Nicole Pietsch, of Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) contextualized the situation of this young Indigenous woman “... your age, race and other privileges (or lack of them) – can have an impact on your experience of violence. Young women from marginalized racial and socioeconomic groups are more vulnerable to being targeted for sexual violence. And while most women’s advocates agree that the justice system’s ability to resolve these crimes is weak overall, its response to Indigenous complainants is decidedly poor.” (Building a Bigger Wave, 2017)

The start of 2018 came with the launch of the Times Up campaign by women in Hollywood. The campaign against sexual assault and sexual harassment includes a \$13 million legal defense fund for women who cannot name or act on the violence in their workplace without significant risk to their livelihood. The campaign is in direct response to the concerns raised by women who could not risk naming the perpetrators of violence. It shows how responsive women are to the concerns being raised around inclusion.

Another significant success has been the legislation passed in British Columbia, Ontario and Manitoba mandating universities and colleges to implement policies to specifically address sexual violence on campus. Many campuses have taken up the issue and are acting on it, often after having consulted with women’s groups in developing their policies. Though much more is needed to successfully address sexual assault on campus, these are positive developments. Sexual Violence Action Plans were adopted by provincial governments in Saskatchewan and Ontario and the latter was enshrined in legislation.

## **A National Priority**

Violence against women continues as a deeply embedded part of society and finds new ways to manifest including the hyper-sexualization of girls, cyber-violence and human trafficking.

The federal government’s July 2017 announcement of *It’s Time: Canada’s Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence* included a \$100 million commitment over five years. Over 75% (\$77.5M) of these funds will be used to establish a Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Centre for data collection, research, and programming. Some questioned the need for more data at a time when collective actions are clearly required.

Over the last 15 years initiatives have been launched to address violence against women.

### **Federal**

- **Immigration Act:** Since 2012, sponsored spouses and partners of Canadian citizens were only granted conditional permanent residency. Conditional permanent residency meant that for their first two years in Canada, women could be deported if the government deemed that their marriage was fraudulent. These two legal provisions meant that if women in this situation reported violence in their marriage, they risked criminalization and deportation. Women’s organizations gathered a broad-based coalition and successfully achieved the repeal of conditional permanent residency in 2017. Other countries have similar laws but no country except Canada has repealed the legislation. There are also now better-defined policies for dealing with this situation.

### **Provincial & Territorial**

- The Ontario government’s 2015 Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence with a three-year \$41 million commitment focused on sexual violence on campuses and increased community based services.
- **Domestic Violence in the Workplace:** Manitoba has passed employment standards legislation providing leave, and Ontario has some measures in the occupational health and safety legislation

and is considering additional change to ensure employers provide paid and unpaid leave. The Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children (CREVAWC), working with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) developed a training program that the CLC is committed to rolling out to their entire membership. A number of the major unions are including seven core elements (paid leave, flexible hours, safety planning, etc.) in their collective bargaining.

- **Coroner's Inquests:** Coroner's inquests into domestic homicides have led to changes in policy and practice in many communities and jurisdictions. Ontario implemented changes to the law to require the courts to consider the presence of family violence when making custody and access decisions.
- **Human Trafficking:** Manitoba has led in provincial legislation and programming responding to human trafficking (Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act, 2012). Ontario passed anti-human trafficking legislation in 2017 with a \$72 million commitment to community and justice-based programming over five years. Throughout the country there is greater awareness and training among service and health providers on human trafficking.
- **Emergency Protection Orders:** Women in the Northwest Territories are better able to keep themselves safe through emergency protection orders facilitated by the shelter in Yellowknife. The protection order prevents abusive partners from entering the home, restricts their access to firearms, and takes other measures such as assigning the family vehicle to the woman. Women call a 1-800 number to the shelter, staff talk with the woman and then set up a three-way call with a Justice of the Peace, who holds a mini-court session and makes a decision.
- **Transportation:** In 2017, introduction of a bus route was announced for the Highway of Tears in British Columbia after 19, mostly Indigenous, women have gone missing or murdered there and upwards of 40 in the surrounding area.

### Municipal

- **Transportation:** Surface route audit of the bus system in Toronto resulted in the Request Stop program, the re-design of bus shelters, and staff training protocols.

### Community (Non-governmental)

- **The Femifesto project** brought young women from across the country to develop the Use the Right Words campaign and work with journalists on the impact they have based on the words they use in a story. It has changed the language that some journalists are using when describing stories of sexual violence which then changes how the public understands the issue.
- **Public Education around Violence:** In 2015, the End Violence Association, in partnership with the BC Lions started engaging men and boys to speak out about violence. The initiative has grown to engage all CFL teams across the country. This work has reached 99,000 people over six years, training them in how to respond to disrespect, to intervene as positive bystanders. Youth groups, high schools, First Nations communities and others are clamoring for celebrity football stars to come and speak to them.

### The National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

After 12 years of advocacy led by Indigenous women and women's advocates the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was launched in August of 2016. The process to get to an Inquiry was long and ended only after the election of a new federal government. Compelling evidence presented to the public ultimately led to the Inquiry, including:

- Robert Pickton was charged with the murder of 26 women and convicted of six deaths in 2007.

- In 2012, British Columbia released the results of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry - sparked by the Pickton case - led by Honourable Wally Oppal, who found that the police and legal systems had repeatedly failed the women who were murdered.
- The release of the Native Women's Association of Canada's Sisters in Spirit report found 582 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.
- In 2014 the RCMP report found 1,181 - 164 missing and 1,017 homicide victims in their report.
- The loss of an additional 25 Indigenous women and girls reported by CBC after the 2014 RCMP report.
- Between 2012 and 2015, the provincial and territorial leaders, the Official Opposition and the Liberal Party of Canada offered their full support for an inquiry.
- International campaigns including One Billion Rising, two Amnesty International reports and reports by the United Nations Interlocutor for Indigenous Rights and CEDAW called for an inquiry.
- Artists, Indigenous leaders and the women's movement developed campaigns to address the issue.
- The establishment of the October 4th Vigils which recognize and honour missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Over ten years, this activism was met with a consistent message from then Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, who stated in a national television interview in 2014, "...It really isn't high on our radar, to be honest..." (Kappo, 2014)

**Ending violence against Indigenous women:** In Ontario, Indigenous organizations hosted a series of summits on violence starting in 2007, where community and multiple government and service partners came together. Out of this came the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women, an Indigenous approach to healing and family prevention. The Framework established a unique way for government and Indigenous partners to work together. In 2016, the Ontario government released Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and committed \$100 million over three years for programming and services delivered by Indigenous communities and organizations. (Government of Ontario, 2016)

### **Negative Trends and Emerging Issues**

**Cyber Violence/Violence Online:** Unlike other forms of violence, the harassment, humiliation, intimidation and threatening online occurs 24 hours a day and regardless of whether the targeted person is present. The vulnerability of young women to online violence through social media was exposed by the death of Rehtaeh Parsons in 2013, who committed suicide as a result of gang sexual assault and online circulation of photos of the assault, and the Dalhousie Dentistry students' abusive Facebook page in 2015. In addition to cases - including Rehtaeh Parsons - that showed the direct impact on young women, Facebook and other forms of social media have been used to threaten and stalk women in domestic violence cases.

**Islamophobia and Violence Against Women:** Recent years have seen the targeting of specific racialized women in Canada through policy and the attitudes of political leadership. A consequence of racism embedded in institutions is the normalization of racism in day to day life. The targeting of Black women and Indigenous women have become normalized aspects of Canadian society through a narrative that often attributes blame or an inevitability of victimization to the women. The targeting of Muslim women, a trend since 9/11, has particularly heightened in the last five years, including:

- **Introduction of the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act in 2015:*** While the Act targeted forced marriages, polygamy and honour killings, it also framed the issue in a way that allowed the term “barbaric” to be associated with a range of cultural practices and specifically put an unreasonable focus on Muslims.
- **2015 election attacks on Muslim people, and particularly Muslim women:** Prime Minister Harper’s reference to “old-stock Canadians” during the election debate, referring to “Canadians who have been the descendants of immigrants for one or more generations,” was intended to divide Canadians. This framing of differentiated Canadians continued with Kelly Leitch’s “Canadian values” policy in the 2016 federal Conservative leadership race, and her desire for a tip line for Canadians to report when they saw anti-Canadian values in a neighbor or colleague.
- **Quebec Law:** Throughout 2015 and 2016, Quebec was engaged in a number of conversations about the banning of the niqab or burka in public spaces. The debate was heated and led to Muslim women being physically harmed in the streets, including a pregnant woman wearing a niqab being assaulted in Montreal in 2016. In 2017, Quebec passed the Act to Foster Adherence to State Religious Neutrality, which bars people from covering their faces when using public services, including attending school. Civil liberties advocates are challenging the constitutionality of the ban as directly infringing “on the freedom of religion of individuals.”
- In a 2016 study, 42% of Muslim women - compared with 27% of men - reported experiencing some form of discrimination or ill-treatment during the past five years. Incidents occurred mainly in public places - stores, restaurants, banks, public transit. Among women who reported experiencing xenophobia in the same study, 60% said they are identifiably Muslim. (EnviroNics Institute, 2016)  
Discrimination manifests in all parts of life. Muslim females encounter more difficulties in the labour market than other communities with similar demographic and education profiles, and in spite of the favourable changes in the Muslim female labour force, the labour market outcomes have not improved for them. Unemployment among Muslim females is high and persistent. Some 16.7% of Muslim females 15 years of age and older were unemployed in 2011, more than double the national average of 7.4% for all Canadian women. (Canadian Council of Muslim Women, unknown)

**Definition of Micro-aggression**  
A comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial group).

**Anti-Black Racism and Women:** The Black Experience project led by the EnviroNics Institute for Survey research, in partnership with Ryerson’s Diversity Institute, the United Way of Toronto and York Region, the YMCA of Greater Toronto, and the Jean Augustine Chair in Education, Community and Diaspora at York University found that two-thirds of Black people surveyed frequently or occasionally experienced racism and discrimination, and most shared the conviction that Black people in the Greater Toronto Area are treated unfairly because of their race. Eight in 10 said they experienced day-to-day micro-aggressions, like being treated in a condescending or superficial way. For Black women, this experience is further aggravated with racialized sexualized violence. (EnviroNics et al, 2017)

**Criminalization of Women:** Involvement of women and girls in the criminal justice system has largely been as victims of crime rather than as perpetrators. The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) advocates for women in the criminal justice system and provides valuable information on the increasing level of women in the criminal justice system and their stories.

- In 2013, crime rates in Canada reached a 30-year low, yet the number of women being

incarcerated rose. Women – particularly those who are racialized, young, impoverished, and/or struggling with mental health issues – represent the fastest growing prison population.

- The increase in women’s imprisonment is connected to the evisceration of health, social, and education services.
- Over the last five years, the total number of federally-sentenced women increased by almost 40%. In the past decade, the number of federally sentenced Indigenous women has increased by almost 85%.



- Women are criminalized for activities they regard as necessary for their economic survival. Eighty percent of women are imprisoned for economic-related crimes and the vast majority of property crimes for which women are charged involve either fraud or theft under \$5,000. (CAEFS, 2013)

**VAW and Women with Disabilities:** The confluence of gender and disability results in an extremely high risk of violence against women with disabilities. One quarter of women in the country have some type of disability and it is estimated that 85% of women with disabilities have experienced some form of sexual violence. (Ontario Ministry on the Status of Women, 2017) The DisAbled Women’s Network of Canada (DAWN Canada) has been drawing attention to the issue and recently launched More than a Footnote, a campaign calling on “political leaders to commit to responding to violence against women with disabilities and Deaf women.” (DAWN, 2017)

**Decrease in Gun Control:** The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation makes it five times more likely that the woman will be killed. Throughout the length of the recent Conservative administration the federal government worked to loosed gun controls. Removal of the long gun registry, created after much work by feminists following the murders at L’École Polytechnique, was high on the federal government agenda, and only succeeded after the Conservatives gained a majority government in 2011. That year, a bill was passed to destroy the long gun registry – a modern database reachable from a police car that tracked the ownership and location of rifles and shotguns – and since 2012 there has been no requirement to register non-restricted firearms in any province and territory, except for Québec. (Everytown Research, 2017)

**Hypersexualization:** Hypersexualization of girls and young women has become pervasive in media images. The Canadian Women’s Health Network defines hypersexualization as girls being depicted or treated as sexual objects. It also means sexuality that is inappropriately imposed on girls through media,

marketing or products directed at them that encourages them to act in adult sexual ways. (CWHN, 2014) Studies have shown that hypersexualization can increase girls' drop-out rates, particularly in the areas of math and science; change their identity as girls to objects of sexual attraction and beauty; lower their physical activity; reduce self-esteem and increase eating disorders. (American Psychological Association, 2007)

**Failure to Address Systemic Violence:** Economic coercion continues in the day-to-day negotiation of life for many women. Violence in its many forms - sexual violence, xenophobia, racism - often needs immediate attention, but the underlying roots of lack of economic autonomy, homelessness, impacts of colonization, poverty and economic inequality persist. For Inuit women, First Nations women and Métis women, issues of violence, poor housing, food insecurity, poverty and mental health are pervasive. Women in the North face greater barriers - higher cost of living, fewer options for housing - that leave women more vulnerable to violence. Homelessness and the affordable housing shortage are severe, as are impacts on women. Rates of violence against women are eight times the national average in Northwest Territories - only Nunavut is higher - and the housing shortage strands many women in violent homes. (Sinha, 2013; Qullit Nunavut Status of Women Council et al, 2007)

## 2. Poverty and Economic Security

By failing to achieve gender equality, Canada is missing a significant economic opportunity, and women are missing out on economic security. A 2017 Royal Bank of Canada study found that if women had equal opportunities in the job market, GDP could grow by as much as 21%, which is six to seven times the current growth rate. (RBC, 2017) The Power of Parity Report predicted that narrowing the workforce gender gap could add \$150 billion to Canada's GDP in 2026 and closing it - an achievement it considered unlikely - could add as much as \$420 billion. (McKinsey, 2017)

**Women, the Economy and Poverty:** In Canada, women now make up 48% of the labour force. Sixty-two percent of Canadian women participate in the workforce. Women are as likely as men to have post-secondary education, and more likely to have a university degree. (McInturff, 2016) There are more women-owned businesses and more women exporters, but women still only make up 20% of Canada's business-owners.

For decades, women joined the paid labour force in increasing numbers. In recent years, however, women's participation rates plateaued for the first time since 1976. In 2014, 80,000 women left the workforce, bringing women's "labour force participation rate down to 61.6 per cent from 62.2 per cent in 2013." (Sanger, 2015) The reasons for this have not yet been established, but it is not out of the question that eight years of policies from a federal government without a commitment to gender equality had an impact.

In 2015, 18.9% of employed women worked part-time compared to only 5.5% of employed men. Women are three quarters (75.8%) of part-time workers and almost 60% of minimum wage workers. (McInturff & Lambert, 2016) These are significant contributors to the gender wage gap.

**Child Care:** Research has shown that the cost of child care and the availability of regulated child care are factors in the decisions of mothers to enter or re-enter the paid labour force. Across Canada, access to child care is an uneven patchwork and affordability is at crisis level. Studies on the impact of the introduction of widely accessible low-cost child care in Québec in 1997 show a significant positive impact on women's labour force attachment, incomes and poverty level, and in particular for women leading

families on their own.

Child care was made available in Québec for \$5 per day starting in 1997 - introduced by Pauline Marois, the first Cabinet minister in Canada's history to give birth - and even at the current rate of \$7.75 per day, it is the most affordable child care across the country. By 2016, the labour force participation rate of Québec women aged 20 to 44 was 85%, compared to 80% elsewhere in Canada. Québec went from having one of the lowest participation rates of women in the work force to the highest. This was particularly so for mothers of children under five, which increased by 16 percentage points, from 64 to 80% between 1997 and 2016. In the rest of Canada the increase was only four points, from 67 to 71%. (Fortin, 2018) This added almost 70,000 women to the work force and provincial GDP increased by \$5.1 billion or 1.7%. In terms of addressing women's poverty, the number of single mothers on social assistance in Québec was reduced by more than 50% over the same period, from 99,000 to 45,000 and their median income rose by 81%. Québec has recently been focusing on increasing spaces. (Fortin et al, 2012)

Ontario recently introduced a major policy reform to add 100,000 new licensed child care spaces over next 5 years. Several provinces established full-day kindergarten or extended the age to include four-year-olds as well as five-year-olds. The British Columbia government is currently working on realizing an election promise to deliver \$10 per day child care. In 2017, the federal budget included \$7 billion over 10 years to create 40,000 new child care spaces across Canada, and the government has been negotiating bilateral child care agreements with the provinces and territories under its Early Learning and Child Care Framework.

A recent report from the International Monetary Fund made recommendations for ways that Canada can close the gap between men's and women's participation in the labour force. The report identified three barriers, of which the most important was the lack of child care, and recommended that the Canadian government spend \$8 billion to reduce child care fees. That action would generate more than \$8 billion in tax revenue, more than paying for the cost of improved child care. (Petersson et al, 2017)

**Wage Rates and the Wage Gap:** In annual earnings from full-time, full-year work, women 25-54 earned an average of \$52,500 in 2014, while men earned an average of \$70,700. These figures correspond to a gender earnings ratio (women: men) of 0.74, meaning that women earned \$0.74 for every dollar earned by men. (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2017) In terms of hourly wage, women in Canada earned an average of \$25.38 per hour in 2014, while their men earned an average of \$28.92. It follows that women earned \$0.88 for every dollar earned by men.

Employment earning differentials are even larger based on social location. Based on 2011 Household Survey data, Aboriginal women who work fulltime "earn 10% less than Aboriginal men and 26% less than non-Aboriginal men. Racialized women earn 21% less than racialized men and 32% less than non-racialized men." (McInturff & Lambert, 2016)

Ontario is on course for a series of annual minimum wage increases, as did the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia. This will have a positive impact on women workers, Indigenous workers and workers of colour, as discussed earlier.



**Pay Equity:** Legislation has been adopted in six provinces – Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Québec, Ontario, Manitoba – and federally, but none of the regimes have been strong enough or broad enough to achieving full pay equity in Canada. With the exception of Quebec and Ontario, pay equity legislation has not applied to private sector employers, instead is restricted to public sector and elements of the broader public sector. In Québec, employers lobbied to roll back provisions of the legislation, which labour unions countered with court action, still underway. The current federal government campaigned on a promise of new pay equity legislation to cover all federal sector employers and introduction is expected in the House of Commons in 2018. Governments are starting to recognize their responsibility for pay equity in the care sector - care-givers for the elderly, people with disabilities, child care, etc. – which is highly dominated by women.

**STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Math:** In 2015, 24.4% of the people employed in professional scientific occupations were women. These are growing fields of employment in the digital economy and achieving economic gender equality and security for women will require women working and advancing in these fields. Entry of women into STEM education field has flattened and even declined over year the last 20 years, and in employment has grown less than 1% per year. (McKinsey, 2017)

**Women in Trades:** Women are more visible in the trades than in the past, and some companies are supportive. While women hold 28% of jobs in the manufacturing sector, in skilled trades women still only account for 4.5% of workers. (Smith, 2017) Some important progress was made in the mega-projects in Newfoundland, where language was embedded in agreements to ensure companies had employment plans targeting women and invested in training women for trades and science and technology. There was good uptake, and women moved into well-paying, unionized jobs.

**Entrepreneurs:** Canada ranked second in the world in 2014 (after USA and tied with Australia) for percentage of women entrepreneurs in early stages (10%), and fourth in terms of established firms (8%). Other aspects of women entrepreneurs in Canada include:

- Early stage women entrepreneurs are more educated than men entrepreneurs (85% have some post-secondary education compared to 70% of men)
- More likely to be solo, and less likely to have 20 + employees (5% of women vs 10% of men)
- One in five have 25% or more of their business in exports (similar to men).
- Women are less likely to personally know an entrepreneur (social capital) and less likely to see themselves as having the skills and knowledge to succeed. (Hughes, 2015)

**Live-in Caregivers Program:** These workers, largely women, enter Canada on a specific immigration programs to work for families caring for children and others in need of care at home. In 2005, workers won a case that entitled caregivers to employment insurance. In 2013, advocacy successfully removed the requirement that caregivers needed to live with employers. Caregivers can now apply for an open work permit if employers violate labour or immigration laws. The Conservative government ended guaranteed access to permanent residency after the completion of certain requirements in the live-in caregiver program and brought in a more restrictive program: numbers are capped each year and new education rules apply. At that time, Canada Border Services Agency consistently detained and deported caregivers who violated working permits when escaping abusive employers.

**Resource Development:** Major resource extraction projects often went ahead without due regard for Indigenous rights and self-determination, creating adverse impacts that affected Indigenous women

and their communities. A number of studies have shown the negative impact of resource development in isolated communities including women being exposed to increased harassment, increase in sex trade and sexual violence. (Kairos, 2015)

**Paid Leave:** Women still tend to have greater responsibility for children and other family members as well as for the smooth functioning of the home. As a result, they are more likely than men to experience work absences and interruptions—both long term, scheduled absences related to childbearing and rearing and short-term, sporadic absences related to, for example, a child’s illness or a major household appliance in need of repair. In 2015, 30% of women were away from work sometime during the reference week, compared to 23.9% of men. Some initiatives that have occurred include:

- **Work/life balance:** Québec adopted work/life balance voluntary guidelines developed jointly by unions, employer groups and women’s organizations in 2010.
- **Paid parental leave** provisions were enhanced in Québec when they set up a separate plan for the province in 2006, different from the federal Employment Insurance based program.

**Canada Child Benefit:** As discussed earlier, the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is a direct income-assessed transfer to parents intended to reduce poverty in general and child poverty in particular. With maximum payments of \$6,400 a year for children under 6 and \$5,400 a year for children 6-17, the program began

in June 2016, and in almost all of the country, has no negative impact on social assistance payments or other supports. Indexation of the CCB begins in 2018. One concern is that it is paid through the tax system and requires filing tax (but not having taxable income) to receive it. With tax filing rates in First Nations estimated at 50%, “more resources are required to support tax filing in First Nations communities” to trigger CCB payments. (Campaign 2000, 2017)

**“...as a women’s movement  
how can we support  
leadership of Indigenous  
women in a really  
meaningful way?”**

**Pamela Cross**  
**Lawyer and consultant**  
**GENC Leader**

### **3. Indigenous Women**

Over the last fifteen years the focus, when discussing Indigenous women, has necessarily been directed to the ongoing racialized violence directed at Indigenous women, and specifically the situation of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, discussed in the VAW section. This fundamental risk to safety for Indigenous women is only one aspect of work over the last fifteen years by Indigenous women. Three other specific conversations also need discussion when looking at Indigenous women in Canada.

- The unique history, experiences and needs of the three Indigenous peoples in our country: First Nation, Inuit and Métis that has offered other understandings and approaches to addressing equality
- The legacy and current context of colonization that shapes and informs the lived experiences of the Canada’s three distinct Indigenous groups
- The leadership that Indigenous women have shown in addressing the issues that have shaped their lives and broader global issues, such as environmental protection and in providing holistic, culturally-based responses to addressing the issues facing women.

Indigenous women in Canada experience unique challenges and discrimination because they are Indigenous women, due to the intersecting impacts of colonialism, gender inequality and racism. When looking at all social determinants of health and well-being, Indigenous people are consistently below the Canadian average in almost all outcomes: health, housing, food security, employment, education, mental health, addictions and suicides.

Over the last fifteen years, Indigenous women have focused much of their political action on the restoration of Indigenous identity, place, family and community. Social and health services, and Friendship Centres in urban settings, have consistently been filled with women as helpers. This role as helpers is as political as formal political positions. It deliberately restores Indigenous ways of being and recognizes Indigenous knowledge to strengthen and restore communities.

#### **Indigenous Identity**

Identity is the central issue for Indigenous women. Identity is rooted in culture, language, the responsibility to the land, and the relationships amongst peoples. Indigenous women have been

disconnected from their identity through multiple forms of colonization.

### **The Indian Act - An entrenched relationship of colonization**

The *Indian Act*, created by the federal government in 1876, continues to define the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government. It serves to regulate the membership of Indigenous communities and access to reserve lands and services by dividing Indigenous people into status and non-status Indians, and was designed to both control and assimilate First Nation people.

The *Act* was designed with the colonial ideal of men as leaders and heads of households, and women as dependents of their husbands. The *Indian Act* entrenched colonial ideas that undermined First Nation women's roles in the community:

- Denied First Nation women the right to be Indians and remain in their community if they married a non-First Nation man. In contrast, when First Nation men married non-First Nation women, their wives became gained Indian status under the *Act* - they became Indians.
- Required women to give their children to the residential school system to educate them from age 7 to 15. In many cases their children were taken as early as five years old and only seen by their parents in the summer.
- Established a governance system of Chief and Council where women were not allowed to be on Council or Chief and were not allowed to vote until 1951. In First Nation governance structures, women were clan mothers, often selected the leadership and played key roles in governance.
- First Nation people, including First Nation women, were barred from:
  - practicing their spiritual or cultural beliefs including Sundance ceremonies and Potlatch
  - voting (until 1960)
  - hiring a lawyer (until 1951), effectively barring people from fighting for their own rights
  - wearing ceremonial dress off reserve
  - leaving the reserve without a pass from the Indian Agent.
- Women did not have the right to possess land and marital property, only widows could possess land under the reserve system. However, a widow could not inherit her husband's personal property upon his death. Everything, including the family house, legally went to his children. Government agents modified the *Act* slightly in 1884, with an amendment that allowed men to will their estate to their wives, but a wife could only receive it if the Indian agent determined she was of "good moral character." This amendment remained in the *Indian Act* until 1951, and to this day men still hold exclusive rights to property, even if a relationship ends. This has far-reaching implications in the lives and safety of the affected women.

The *Indian Act* continues to be the key legislation that defines the relationship between First Nation people and Canadians today. While many pieces of control have been removed from the *Act*, the underlying intent of the *Act* remains as an integration and assimilation document.

The last fifteen years have seen a significant number of Supreme Court decisions that have sought to provide clarity around identity and status for Indigenous people and specifically for Indigenous women.

- **The Daniels Case** sought to clarify that:
  - Métis and non-status Indians are “Indians” under the 1867 *Constitution Act*
  - the federal government owes a fiduciary duty to Métis and non-status Indians
  - Métis and non-status Indians have the right to be consulted and negotiated with.

In 2016, the Supreme Court ruled that “Indians” under the Constitution was a broad term referring to all Indigenous peoples in Canada. The court did not rule on the other two statements. Ongoing discussions continue on what the court decision means for Métis and non-status Indians.

- **The Descheneux Case:** In a decision released on August 3, 2015, the Superior Court of Quebec found in *Descheneaux v. Canada (Attorney General)* that equality rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms were violated by several paragraphs and one subsection under section 6 of the *Indian Act*. The issue was the difference in treatment between Indian women and Indian men, and their descendants, in Indian registration. The government of Canada has been in the process of making amendments to the legislation through *Bill C-3, An Act to promote gender equity in Indian registration* but not without a great deal of advocacy on the part of Indigenous women and allies to recognize women and their families, discriminated against since the enactment of the law in 1876.

### **Métis Women**

The dispersal of Métis people to escape persecution and the subordination of their identity has directly impacted Métis women. Métis women have been represented at the national stage through Women of the Métis Nation since the 1980s, but often without consistent recognition and funding. In the last fifteen years, as court cases have continued to recognize Métis identity and this government has undertaken a number of initiatives for Indigenous women, Métis women are increasingly being recognized as a unique Indigenous identity.

### **Inuit Women**

Inuit women are represented through one of the four Land Claims organizations in the Arctic and have a national Inuit organization, Pauktuutit - Inuit Women of Canada, that holds a seat on the national Inuit organization, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

### **“Nation to Nation/ Crown to Inuit/ Government to Government”**

The newly-elected Liberal federal government made a commitment in 2015 to a new relationship with Indigenous peoples, originally called the “Nation to Nation” relationship, emphasizing First Nation relations. It quickly became more inclusive in language to reflect the relationships that the Inuit and Métis peoples have with the federal government.

These new relationship tables have been working over the last two years to address critical issues facing Indigenous people today, primarily through co-development or devolution and transfer of responsibilities to Indigenous peoples. As these relationships were being established, the government of Canada ended the practice, since 1982, of including the Native Women’s Association of Canada and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples at Indigenous representative tables. The federal government has decided they will recognize and work with the Chiefs that make up the Assembly of First Nations. The Chief and Council structure based on the *Indian Act* does not recognize the traditional Indigenous governance structures, the Clan mothers or the women who have been removed from community because of the *Indian Act*. The “new” relationship further imbeds the sexism and patriarchal structures

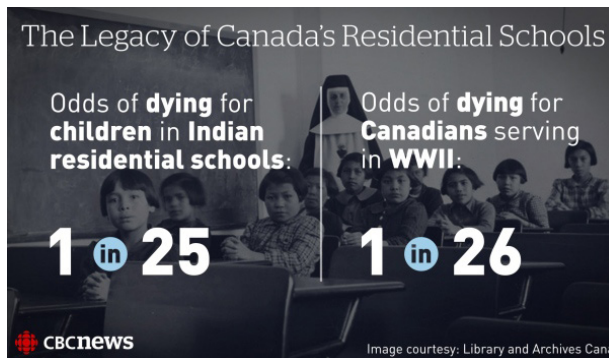
that are inherent in the *Indian Act*.

### Truth and Reconciliation - Residential Schools and Intergenerational Trauma

The final reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were submitted at the end of 2015. The residential school policy was “geared towards the final solution of our Indian problem” according to Dr. Duncan Campell Scott, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1910.

The Commission reported:

- 150,000 Indigenous children were sent to residential schools between 1870 to 1996.



Darcy Hunter/CBC

- Over 6,000 of the children died in residential schools. In some cases, the families were never notified of the burial of children.
- There were complaints about residential schools (unqualified teachers, abuse allegations, divisive religious instruction) at the time they operated.
- Physical, psychological and sexual abuse and neglect occurred in the schools.
- Scientific experiments were done on children in the schools.

It is hoped that today, the impact and legacy of the residential school government policy is well understood by the Canadian public. Yet, despite the overwhelming evidence of the realities and consequences of residential schools and the federal government’s official apology in 2008, some Canadians, such as Senator Lynn Beyak, continue to publicly debate the consequences of residential schools. The racism and superiority embedded in this debate is a stark reminder that some of the Canadian public does not share a common foundation upon which to build any policy relationship with Indigenous peoples. Arguments that residential schools were good, or Indigenous people need to “get over it”, are dangerous. They do not understand the fundamental and systemic colonization that shaped past and current policy and connects current issues facing Indigenous people with government policies that undermined Indigenous ways of being and knowing and sought to eliminate Indigenous people.

### Child Welfare

As said earlier, there is no social determinant of health on which Indigenous people are not disproportionately disadvantaged. One area that requires immediate attention is the disproportionate number of Indigenous children in the child welfare system. In 2007, Cindy Blackstock of the First Nation Family Caring Society (FNFCS), with the Assembly of First Nations, made a complaint against the government of Canada with the Canadian Human Rights Commission citing that the government discriminated against First Nation children. The Commission supported the complaint and the government of the day appealed the decision. In 2016, the Commission again ruled in favour of the FNFCS, determining that the federal government was consistently discriminating against First Nation children on reserve because they were receiving less funds for education and child welfare than children not living on reserve. Her research uncovered the disturbing number of Indigenous children who had gone through the child welfare system in Canada – over 150,000 – more than had gone through

residential schools.

These statistics are a direct consequence of residential schools. The poverty facing Indigenous people led to removal of children through the 60's scoop and continues to the present day. The normalization of gendered, racialized violence in public spaces led to the normalization of violence in private spaces.

Compulsory residential schooling of Aboriginal Children, away from their parents, directly led to the decline of parenting skills because the children were denied parental role models. The traditional way of life had been eroded to the extent that Native people found it difficult to meet the basic needs of their families which created the beginning of dependency on the Government's welfare system. (Ontario Native Women's Association, 1989)

### **First Nation, Inuit, Métis Ways of Knowing and Being**

Indigenous women have also been able to offer a different framework to address equality and to understand equality. Despite the vast diversity amongst Canada's hundreds of First Nations, Métis settlements and Inuit communities, there is agreement that a balance between women and men's roles typically existed in pre-contact Indigenous societies, where women and men had different, but complementary, roles.

**There was always a balance between men and women as each had their own responsibilities as a man and as a woman.**

Beverley Jacobs,  
Lawyer, Former President of NWAC

Strategies for change have been rooted in re-establishing that balance and have asked the mainstream women's movement to address the impact of colonization on whole communities and the differentiated impact between genders.

**Indigenous women have suffered from colonialism similarly to Indigenous men, but also in gender-specific ways, including the loss of culture, traditional territories, identity and status, children and culturally respected gender roles.**

Joyce Green, 2017

Elders like Métis Elder Maria Campbell, Cree Elder Rebecca Martell, Inuk Elder Sally Webster, Mohawk Elder Jan Longboat, to name a few, are relied on to restore the balance through sharing the cultural and spiritual knowledge that was taken through generations of colonization policies.

### **Indigenous Women's Leadership**

Indigenous women's leadership has manifested in multiple ways and consistently around fundamental areas, led by young women and Elders:

- **Challenges to Sexism in the Indian Act:** Patriarchal values imbedded in the *Indian Act* brought sexist values into the communities. Women such as Jeannette Corbiere Lavell and Sharon McIvor challenged the federal government and, in some cases, their band councils, in court to be treated equally to the men in their community.
- **Advocacy for Environmental Protection:** Anishanawbe Grandmother Josephine Mandamin

established the Water Walks where she and others walked around the Great Lakes to bring attention to the importance of water as a life force energy. Environmental Leader Taikaye Blaney from British Columbia presented her concerns for her people, land and culture to the United Nations when she was only 11 years old. Sheila Watt-Cloutier, representing the Inuit at the Inuit Circumpolar drew attention to the impact of climate change in the Arctic.

- **Campaigns by Indigenous Women and Youth:** Fighting for fundamental rights that are available to other non-Indigenous Canadians has been a focus for key campaigns by Indigenous women and youth. Cindy Blackstock with Shannen Koostachin brought the lack of schools in fly-in communities to national attention. Sadly, Shannen died one day before her 16th birthday driving home to Attawapiskat from her high school. Child and youth advocate Cindy Blackstock fought to implement Jordan's Principle, which entrenches in government what is a fundamental right for other Canadians: health care in response to need, not delayed by jurisdictional disputes.
- **International Instruments:** The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) has been a key tool used by Indigenous women, with allies like FAFIA and Amnesty International, to apply international pressure on the federal government to address key issues of inequality.

#### 4. Intersectionality - Inclusion and Social Location

**Feminism is the struggle to end sexist oppression. Its aim is not to benefit any specific group of women, any particular race or class of women. It does not privilege women over men. It has the power to transform in a meaningful way of all our lives. Most importantly, feminism is neither a lifestyle nor a ready-made identity or role one can step in to.**

bell hooks, 1994  
Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre

Over the last number of years, the women's movement has made a shift from a static, Western understanding of feminism to an increasingly intersectional approach in the understanding of feminism. Intersectionality, discussed above, is a concept coined by African-American theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw, which she has described as "a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LGBTQ problem there. Many times that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things." (Crenshaw, 2017)

As a concept, intersectionality supports advances in integrating an understanding of colonialism as it affects Indigenous women and the embedded institutional racism that is part of our immigration system, police force and criminal justice system. Young women coming into the movement are using intersectional thinking as an integral part of how they experience the world.

There is a growing understanding of the inter-relationship of issues such as housing, poverty, disability and gender, and that any issue needs to be looked at in its entirety. Service providers, institutions, and governments are also becoming more aware of this necessity.

The language of social location and inclusion predated intersectionality and is a more static way to understand people's experiences of systemic barriers and discrimination. Increasing inclusion requires ending systemic discrimination, which creates oppression and privilege. Throughout, this report has



discussed systemic discrimination lived by women woven into the issues under discussion rather than segmented, but gender equality – a term used interchangeably with women’s equality here and elsewhere – includes transgender equality.

### **Transgender Rights: Gender Identity and Gender Equality**

Gender equality is about more than women’s rights. In 2017, Trans Equality Rights in Canada released a nationwide survey that showed 74% of transgender youth experienced verbal harassment in school, and 37% reported experiencing physical violence. Transgender individuals in Ontario face unemployment at over three times the national rate and many more are underemployed. As a result of discrimination and bullying, the trans community faces high rates of mental health issues. Rates of depression are as high as two-thirds; 77% of transgender individuals in Ontario report having considered suicide, and 43% have attempted suicide at least once. (Trans Equality Rights, 2017)

On June 15, 2017, the Senate passed Bill C-16 which updates the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Criminal Code* to include the terms “gender identity” and “gender expression.” The legislation makes it illegal to discriminate on the basis of gender identity or expression, extends hate speech laws to include the two terms, and makes it a hate crime to target someone for being transgender.

**“We are talking about gender in intersectional ways more than we ever have - internationally, too. The world has changed.”**

Calla Barnett,  
Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity

Gender identity is included in the human rights code of most provinces and territories: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, PEI, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Northwest Territory.

## C. Strategies for Change

Research identified strategies that have proven successful in leading to change in institutional policies and legislation, increased levels of awareness, and/or action among different sectors of the public. These strategies were described as best used in combination with one another – one by itself will often be insufficient to foster change – and actions in one type of strategy often inform and reinforce actions in another area. Four types of strategies emerged again and again as successful over the last fifteen years:

1. Collaboration
2. Movements and Organizing
3. Advocacy (in many forms)
4. Legal Challenges and Legislative Responses

**“I’m pretty optimistic because I’ve been in it long enough to see things change and improve.”**

**Notisha Massaquoi  
Women’s Health in Women’s Hands  
GENC Consultative Committee**

As they reflected on which strategies have been effective, some leaders and activists also highlighted principles they had found useful in developing and implementing strategies.

Beyond the specific strategies, many of those interviewed highlighted an underlying concern: that, although the women’s movement has been

fairly effective at incremental change when strategic about actions, the movement and Canadian society have failed to address the fundamental factors driving inequality.

The interviews and other research covered approximately the last fifteen years. Some sources made a distinction between 2006-2015 and the periods before and after that, because of the change in federal government and resulting dramatic shifts in federal policy, programs and funding. To some extent, strategies changed to reflect this change in environment. These were largely a shift in focus - away from the federal government and towards the provincial or private sectors - or in specific details of the strategies. If anything, the challenges of the federal government approach 2006-2015 were a reminder of the importance of these strategies.

### **Inclusion and an Intersectional Lens**

Inclusion and the conscious and consistent application of an intersectional lens was highlighted as an essential aspect of all strategies and not seen as a separate strategy. That lens drives questions that need to be answered in all strategies, including:

- Recognizing responses will differ depending on social location, who bears the brunt of gender inequality?
- How have their lives shaped the analysis of the issue?
- Whose voices are included in the work and strategies being proposed?
- Who is driving and shaping the research and analysis to explain the issue and develop solutions?
- Who is at the table at the collaborative discussions that represent gender interests?

- Who frames the issue and the choice of solutions to focus on?
- Who will the proposed strategies for change benefit? Who is left out?

## Principles

In discussing strategy, women also referred to underlying principles about how to work:

- Use a strength-based approach that builds on the abilities and wisdom of women using services and working with your organization.
- Take risks for women. This may mean standing alone when there is no benefit for women and no opportunities for movement.
- Constantly learn, develop and invest in women leading the work.
- Determination, never give up.
- Make unassailable arguments. Do the background work and consider the issue from every possible angle.
- Model actions and values of equity and equality. Treat each other with kindness.
- Be creative, venture beyond the paths others have taken.
- Transparency - make sure there is nothing your opponents can use against you.

## Where have women's organizations received support for their work towards gender equality and equity?

The greatest support has come from other women's organizations, individual women members and activists, and a range of partners and allies, who have provided their voices and expertise including NGOs, labour unions, immigrant services, health groups, Indigenous organizations, human rights organizations, faith-based organizations, and many others. In terms of financial support, the labour movement has been particularly key, as well as certain provincial governments, research bodies and, at times, the federal government.

## One Conversation with Everyone in Canada

Interviewees were asked if there was one conversation that it was important to have with everyone across Canada, and three possible conversations emerged:

- A conversation about a specific issue, generally violence against women, Indigenous women, or economic autonomy, although other issues were also named, such as more women in leadership roles.
- Use the conversation to reach out to the Canadian public and widen the circle of those committed to equity. Emphasize the fundamental message that Canada has not achieved equality, and underline the advantages of gender equality for everyone.
- Focus the conversation on intersectional systemic questions: Why are some women succeeding and others are not?

The latter two approaches can engage some larger questions, such as how to create a world for generations to come? What does democracy look like in the 21st century?

## The Big Picture

The discussion of strategies is happening at two levels simultaneously. On the one hand, it is important

to seek incremental improvements, and the women's movement has been fairly sophisticated in discerning and applying effective strategies, as the successes above clearly demonstrate.

At the same time, there is a concern that the big picture is not fundamentally changing, and progress is appallingly slow on matters of basic equality, such as reducing the violence directed towards women and girls by men, economic autonomy of women, eradicating racism, and addressing the effects of colonialism on the lives of Indigenous women.

While successful at achieving specific and important reforms in a number of areas, often after many years of hard work, coherent strategies for addressing the underlying structural forces that drive inequality are still missing. In the interviews, it was suggested that more discussions focus directly on these underlying factors and strategies to re-direct fundamental assumptions and overall investments towards an equitable society.

Discussions on strategy and analysis are often missing on interesting work happening as a grassroots movement. There was a push to move away from the deficit thinking and create new ways of looking at old problems.

**“Every time we look beyond our own mandates and come together, we have had success.”**

Deepa Mattoo  
Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic

## 1. Collaboration

Collaboration was seen as one of the most essential strategies, particularly during a time of limited resources, and as a change strategy was described in multiple ways:

- Informal collaborations that come together for specific action
- Formal collaborations such as coordinating committees, protocols between service organizations
- Collaborating within the women's movement
- With outside partners that have been traditional allies such as the labour movement
- With new partners, often in the systems that need to change such as high-risk management committees with the police around domestic violence.

Regardless of type, collaborations require a number of essential elements:

- **Expanded knowledge base:**  
Collaboration often requires new partners to learn about one another and understand issues from quite a different perspective. For example, non-Indigenous organizations that wanted to engage with Indigenous women found that they needed to expand their issues based on understanding the specific legal and constitutional place of Indigenous women in Canada. Calling for more funding for shelters for Indigenous women on First Nation reserves is a call to the federal government, and specifically

**“Women's prison issues would not have been addressed without anti-poverty groups, anti-racism groups, women's groups, Indigenous groups.”**

Senator Kim Pate  
former Executive Director  
Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies

**“Networking needs to be a true collaboration and one can't simply just show up.”**

Jane Ledwell  
PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women

to the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. For all other women, funding for shelters is through the provincial and territorial governments. First Nation women on reserve would be largely missed by a campaign or call to action focused only on provinces and territories.

- **Systems collaboration:** Many women interviewed highlighted that there are times to go beyond “the usual suspects” and engage with new partners, such as the legal system, police, the business sector, and faith communities. This can provide the basis for influencing systems that have profoundly negative effects on women’s lives. In the VAW sector, one key example is the inter-agency work among domestic violence organizations, child welfare agencies, police and others, undertaken in many communities and mandated in a few jurisdictions, and can include formal protocols, joint training, and coordinating bodies at the working level and the senior

**Strategic Collaboration:** Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC) did research in the 1990s and produced evidence to show that women are safer from violence when there is collaboration among the different sectors and systems. On the basis of that evidence, they were able to work with statutory authorities to enable information-sharing, within privacy protections, among police, health care, correctional, child protection and VAW services in order to do risk assessments and coordinate responses. This is not just a networking function. Partners jointly write protocols and jointly review policies of specific services, for example, the RCMP. EVA BC has provided training in support of this work. EVA BC has core funding from the province to ensure there is collaboration across the system.

- **Inclusion:** For women with disabilities to be part of the collaborative process, ways of work need to be accessible and remove barriers to their participation, such as how materials are shared - written material in large print or voice for some - how the space is designed to facilitate movement, and the need for scent free space, to name a few.
- **Geographic considerations:** In the North, Inuit Nunangat, remote and rural communities collaboration is a way of life. With so few services, women’s organizations are required to work closely together to respond to the needs of women and to actualize change.
- **Political opportunities:** Building effective relationships with elected officials of all parties can lay the groundwork for change of government. This is particularly helpful leading up to elections, as political parties tend to be more open at that time and a public commitment during an election campaign has a good chance of leading to action if the party gains power. Relationships with public service decision-makers are also strategic, particularly if they are open to learning about the issues or considering new ideas and approaches.
- **Build and sustain key relationships with allies:** The labour movement, in particular, was singled out by a number of those interviewed as providing essential support at critical times, especially when funding for advocacy work was cut at the federal level. Many women’s groups lost capacity, and would have lost more without financial and other supports from union partners. Academics and other research partners were very helpful in mobilizing knowledge in support of gender equity. Legal expertise to support court challenges or legal arguments has been provided by supportive organizations and individual lawyers. Sometimes, individual political leaders and public servants at all levels have stepped forward and have taken clear, concrete

**Strategic Collaboration:** The Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC) at University of Western Ontario has been working with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) on domestic violence in the workplace. Together they have developed a training program that the CLC is committed to rolling out to their entire membership. In addition, the CLC has taken up this issue in collective bargaining. For example, this is now a standard bargaining clause for all negotiations by the Steelworkers and has been passed into law in several provinces.

**“These are very difficult discussions and meetings where people have to leave aside their personal agenda”**

Amanda Dale  
Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic  
GENC Leader

Formal collaboration tables were mostly dismantled in the early 1990s, including the formal consultation processes that the federal government had with national organizations. A few models still exist, including Québec, which has provincial and regional coordination tables where women’s organizations and organizations across sectors have the opportunity to come together.

### What makes collaboration work?

Collaboration requires a different set of skills as it involves building trust and respect among disparate groups, some of whom may have starkly different views and sometimes a history of conflict. Even among groups that appear to have common goals or outcomes, there are significant challenges in coming together.

Collaboration requires significant investments including:

- A common outcome
- Time and effort
- Suspending ideological starting points
- Consensus building
- Flexibility
- Leadership
- Resources

**“If you want the idea to succeed, you have to let them brand it, package it, make it their own. You cannot go in with everything already decided.”**

Barb MacQuarrie  
Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children

Incre **Strategic Collaboration:** Women’s Health in Women’s Hands, an accredited community health centre in Toronto, had historically chosen to distance themselves from drug companies and have refused the free drug samples that these corporations routinely offer medical practitioners. Yet the staff realized that their jobs provide them with complete drug coverage, while the drug samples they were refusing could be of help to women using the health centre. So, the question was: is there an ethical way to engage with a drug company? In the end, Women’s Health in Women’s Hands worked with drug companies to develop a non-directive HIV drug program. The companies each contribute thousands of dollars’ worth of drugs, and clients go to a distribution point to receive them. There is no direct connection, no pressure and no conflict of interest between the drug company and the health centre.

Although not a strategy for immediate action, having opportunities for women to gather and discuss the issues was seen as essential to long term progress. The loss of national gatherings and conferences during the years of federal cutbacks had a very tangible negative impact, cutting women's organizations off from each other. The loss of provincial gatherings during periods of provincial cutbacks has a similar impact to varying degrees according to each province and territory. Although electronic communication was still possible, it is more difficult to establish new connections and relationships this way, and the depth of exchange and analysis is generally more superficial through these means. Face-to-face conversations establish a human connection, which can then be sustained through electronic communication.

Gatherings that bring women working on gender equality issues and in services for women are needed to:

- Showcase successes
- Share promising practices
- Problem-solve on difficult challenges
- Provide mutual support, encouragement and a sense of belonging to a large movement.

**“Our work is so much more than a job. It is about living and modeling living in harmony, how to find peace with our relationships and within ourselves.”**

**Sandra Montour**  
Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario

## 2. Movements and Organizing

Organizing is key to social change. Women have shown their leadership in a number of key movements in the last 12 years. These movements have showcased the intersectional nature of women's lives.

### Idle No More

In 2012, Idle No More was formed by three Indigenous women and one ally - Jessica Gordon, Sheelah McLean, Sylvia McAdam and Nina Wilson - to protest specific changes that weakened the Navigable Waters Protection Act and the broader treatment of Indigenous people in Canada. The movement quickly grew to be international, supporting Indigenous people and their commitment to land stewardship culminating in a day of action on December 12, 2012. Idle No More continues as a grassroots movement today focusing on Indigenous rights and environmental protection.



Sheelah McLean, Nina Wilson, Sylvia McAdam, Jessica Gordon  
Credit: Idle No More

### Black Lives Matter

In 2013, after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of African-American teen Trayvon Martin, Alicia Graza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi began an American movement using #BlackLivesMatter on social media. Black Lives Matter became nationally recognized for street demonstrations following the 2014 deaths of two African-Americans killed by police: Michael Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in New York City. Participants in Black Lives Matter have demonstrated

against the deaths of numerous other African Americans by police actions or while in police custody.

Black Lives Matter has a presence in Canada, primarily in larger urban settings such as Toronto and Vancouver. Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLMTO) has been highly effective in drawing attention to issues of institutionalized racism, including in law enforcement. A 12-day sit-in at the Toronto police headquarters in April 2016 garnered considerable media attention and, eventually, secured meetings with Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne and Toronto Mayor John Tory. The provincial government subsequently announced a coroner's inquest into the death of Andrew Loku, one of the demands, and



followed with provincial consultations which led to the establishment of the provincial Anti-Racism and Hate Crime Directorate.

### **Sisters in Spirit**

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) launched Sisters in Spirit in 2005 to research and raise awareness about the alarmingly high rates of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada. The research proved there were more than 582 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada, and eventually spurred the RCMP to conduct their own research, which raised the number to nearly 1,200. In 2016, after more than a decade of pressure, the new federal government launched a formal National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.



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

NWAC has established October 4th as the day for Sisters in Spirit. Vigils are held in communities across Canada to honour the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, support the families, and push for change.



Since the launch of Sisters in Spirit, other campaigns and initiatives have added to the call for action on violence against Indigenous women:

- Faceless Dolls: NWAC contacted artist Gloria Larocque, creator of the Aboriginal Angel Doll Project, to explore the possibility of a similar project that would carry forward the visual representation of strong and beautiful Indigenous women who have become 'faceless' victims of crime. This collaboration resulted in NWAC's Faceless Doll Project, in which each statistic tells a story. The dolls created are for a traveling art exhibit in memory of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada.
- The REDress Project was started by Winnipeg-based Métis artist Jaime Black in 2010. She collected 100 red dresses and has been installing them in public spaces across Canada, "Through the installation, I hope to draw attention to the gendered and racialized nature of violent crimes against Aboriginal women and to evoke a presence through the marking of absence," Black said in her artist's statement. The exhibit has toured the country extensively and is part of a permanent exhibit at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights.



Photo credit: Andrew Francis/Toronto Star

## Up for Debate

In the lead-up to the 2015 federal election, a number of national women's and other equality-seeking organizations, sparked by an invitation from Oxfam Canada, joined forces to push for a national leader's debate on women's issues. Supported by the Alliance for Women's Rights - a coalition of 175 organizations - the Up for Debate campaign created a Canada-wide conversation on gender justice and equality, and generated a call for all political parties to make meaningful commitments to change women's lives for the better.

The initial plan was to host a live debate, but the Prime Minister at the time, Stephen Harper, refused to participate and Opposition Leader Thomas Mulcair (NDP), announced he wouldn't participate without Prime Minister Harper. As he did so, then Liberal leader Justin Trudeau committed to the debate. The Up For Debate campaign scrapped the debate in favour of individual interviews with willing party leaders. These interviews were released to a live audience and a panel of commentators and pundits who analyzed and debated the interview clips in a national conversation broadcast live from the Isabel Bader Theatre at the University of Toronto. In partnership with the Toronto Star and Le Devoir, it was also livestreamed in both official languages. Twitter Canada broadcast the event live on Periscope and promoted the debate on social media. Without securing a debate, the campaign put gender equality on the election agenda, and secured Liberal party support in the election and in government. Up for Debate organizations and strategists were key to securing the Feminist International Assistance Policy and the commitment of 25% of the National Housing Strategy targeted to women and girls.

## All Our Sisters

All Our Sisters national network advocates for improved access to safe, sustainable housing for women across Canada. They work through organizing national forums that bring together expert women with lived experience in homelessness, advocates and service providers. They support knowledge exchange, provide online resources, and promote security of housing and safe communities for all women in Canada.

All Our Sisters organized two national conferences on ending homelessness for women, in 2011 and 2014, the only national Canadian conferences with women's homelessness as a focus. The 300 women who attended the 2014 conference, including about 100 women with lived experience of homelessness, adopted a Call to Action that demanded changes to policies and programs from federal, provincial and municipal levels of government:

- A national housing strategy, a national action plan on violence against women and a national child care strategy
- Expand programs for women who are leaving shelters and prisons, recovering from abuse and trauma, battling addiction, entering the criminal system, or are new to Canada
- Increase social assistance to address the true cost of shelter.



David Donnelly/CBC

### 2017 Women's March

The January 21, 2017 Women's March started as a protest to Trump's election the day after he was sworn into office. The mission for the March was to "harness the political power of diverse women and their communities to create transformative social change. Women's March is committed to dismantling systems of oppression through nonviolent resistance and building inclusive structures guided by self-determination, dignity and

respect."

The original goal was to have 1 million women converge on Washington. In the end, over five million women and allies participated around the world as part of 408 marches in the United States and 168 marches in other countries. In Washington and New York City, it was estimated that 2 million people marched. Women's March was repeated in 2018 with lesser numbers in some places but still strong support across Canada.

### Women in Politics

Significantly more women are standing for election in some jurisdictions.

- In the 2017 British Columbia election, almost 40% of MLAs elected were women, the highest of any province. The next closest are Ontario at 35% and Alberta at 33%, both of which have women premiers. This is partly a reflection of the number of women candidates: in the British Columbia election, 50% of NDP candidates were women, 41% of

**"The vast majority of elected women are encountering some sort of misogynistic behaviour, online bullying, or harassment on a fairly regular basis. These misogynistic and sexist undertones and explicit commentary are used to diminish women's contributions to public life and also undermine the confidence and the leadership female elected officials are offering."**

Nancy Peckford  
Equal Voice

Liberal candidates and 37% of the Greens.

- Federally, the numbers of women candidates are growing, although very slowly. In the 2015 federal election, 33% of candidates from the five major parties were women, up 1.5% from the 2011 election. At this rate it will take at least 45 years to achieve gender parity.
- The publicity around the gender-balanced federal Cabinet had a positive effect on the public debate as it created gender parity as social norm to expect.

Our elected officials should reflect who we are, in terms of gender, race, disability and in all ways. Women are still not equally represented in political arenas for a number of key reasons.

**High Conflict, High Harassment:** Political life is high conflict, winner-take-all environment and there is a staggering amount of harassment or bullying, especially of women. Alberta MLA Sandra Jansen withdrew from the Conservative leadership race and crossed the floor to the NDP government side, because of the level of abuse she experienced, including receiving comments like, “Sandra should stay in the kitchen where she belongs. Now you have two blond bimbos in a party that is clueless. Dumb broad, a good place for her to be is with the rest of the queers.”

**Lack of Inclusion:** Governments are not adopting more inclusive measures (e.g. child care) to make “liveable legislatures.” In fact, the Members of Parliament in Ottawa cannot access the daycare on Parliament Hill. Indigenous women from the three distinct groups of Inuit, Métis and First Nations continue to not be present at many of the federal negotiating tables or policy discussions that will affect their lives and their communities.

**Daughters of the Vote:** Equal Voice is a national organization dedicated to electing more women to all levels of political office in Canada. To mark a century of federal women’s suffrage – which was not granted to all women – Equal Voice convened Daughters of the Vote. One young woman was chosen from every federal riding in Canada to represent their community and to share their vision for Canada. These 338 emerging young women leaders had the opportunity to become better equipped to participate in the formal political sphere in the years and decades to come.



The young women leaders took their seats in Parliament on March 8, 2017, International Women’s Day. Thirty young women were called upon by their Speaker of the House for the day to rise and give a one-minute speech on an issue that was important to them. Aygadim Majagalee, a young woman from the Nisga’a Nation in northern British Columbia, said she wants to look beyond past struggles and into the next century of possibility, where she imagines a revolution led by women. “I envision a Canada that is fierce in its leadership and shows just how much every person is equal,” she said.

Former Prime Minister Kim Campbell – the only woman to have served as Prime Minister – addressed Parliament as part of the Daughters of the Vote activities. “I can’t wait to work with all of these incredible matriarchs in training,” she said. “I can’t wait to work with them in the future – as future ministers, as future prime ministers.”

## Expanding Public Engagement

Public education is still a major tool used by women's organizations at all levels, however the interviews and surveys reflected that it is most effective used in combination with other strategies, such as coalitions or legal action.

- **Engage girls and young women:** Some organizations recognize the importance of the next generation in shifting the balance of power towards equality and equity, such as the Daughters of the Vote initiative by Equal Voice, discussed above.
- **Engage men:** Particularly on issues of violence against women, men can be important allies and supporters.
- **Direct action and civil disobedience:** For example, student action on campuses across the country was a significant factor in universities and colleges, and provincial governments starting to take action on sexual violence on campus.
- **International action and engagement:** Learn from other countries and be cognizant of the wider global issues facing women. Organizations indicated they were able to advance their work based on what they learned from equality groups in other countries. This included effective strategies for change, as well as useful knowledge and analysis about the issues. Many international NGOs in Canada (Oxfam, CARE and others) have taken a gendered approach to their work and focus on women's rights as a priority in itself and as a foundation for development at the community and national levels.

### “Respect Women “ Campaign, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Starting in 2010, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador held an annual Purple Ribbon Campaign to increase awareness on violence against women. The magnetic purple ribbons carried the tagline “Respect women” and were designed to be displayed on cars and other surfaces. The campaign was highly successful. Tens of thousands of the purple ribbons were distributed each year and could be seen on numerous cars throughout the province and even in other parts of Canada. Linda Ross, President and CEO of the Provincial Advisory Council on Status of Women, observed that the campaign had a tremendous impact, particularly in its first year, and generated many discussions about violence against women. With passing years, the campaign lost much of its impact on the public consciousness and was eventually discontinued.



from left, Debbie Hibbs, Georgina McGrath  
Credit: The Telegram

## 3. Advocacy

Three significant opportunities were cited that the women's movement has capitalized on through advocacy:

- A new government open to addressing gender equity.
- Public servants who have a gender equity lens.
- A new ally or leader speaking out in a public way.

Some women interviewed described this as serendipity while others saw it as a reflection of the success

of a

**Advocacy Strategy:** The child care movement worked to build consensus among many different stakeholders. They put together a broad-based working group, developed a paper, then raised money for a conference called Child Care 2020, which was held in 2014 in anticipation of the 2015 federal election. Bringing people together to talk allowed for the process of reaching consensus and provided a stronger base going into the election, and it paid off. Among other things, their work had a direct impact on the federal party platforms of the NDP and less so, the Liberal Party.

## Research

Accurate, credible information is key to an effective advocacy strategy. It provides an underpinning for the positions being advanced through advocacy. Starting in the 1990s, a focus on government cutbacks and accountability for how government money is spent led to the need for defensible, evidence-based research to justify government investments. The women's movement have been leaders in developing research based on feminist methodologies, including lived experience of women, numbers and stories. Increasingly, gender equity organizations have partnered with academics who have expertise in the relevant fields with the release of joint research initiatives intended to inform government policy, funding investments and best practice program design and delivery.

A number of feminist research institutions were established, including:

- Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (1976)
- Centre for Feminist Research, York University (1991)
- Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice, UBC (1991 as the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies)
- Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, University of Western Ontario (1992)
- BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health (1995)
- Institute for Gender Research, University of Calgary (1999)
- Institute for Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies, McGill University (2008)
- Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University (2012)
- Institute of Feminist and Gender Studies, University of Ottawa (2014)

The Canadian Centre on Policy Alternatives has used economic and mutual benefit arguments to showcase why everyone benefits from equality, and the cost of inequality. Quantifying the economic benefits of gender equity - the costs of violence in terms of lost wages, health care costs or how poverty affects health outcomes - provides a compelling policy argument for change.

The health care system strives to be evidence-driven and values accurate data about health care issues and responses. Yet it has been a continuing challenge to persuade hospitals and provincial health care information systems to collect information about women's specific social locations: racialized, Indigenous, seniors, women with disabilities, etc. Community service providers recognize that the health outcomes for specific women are worse than for other women, based on their own services, and have collaborated with others to provide the data.

Centres of Excellence for Health across the country have showcased the costs of not responding to the specific needs of women in the health care system: misdiagnoses (especially around heart disease which often gets diagnosed as stress), incorrect treatment; discrimination as a barrier to service; and the legacy of colonization for Indigenous women and the fear of public services for some refugees and immigrants leads to avoidance of institutions until their health issue has escalated to a serious level.

The absence of data can be a serious impediment to change. Many institutions and systems do not collect gender disaggregated data, blocking analysis of the differential impact of their work on women and men. Those who do gender breakdowns may not have accurate breakdowns using an intersectional lens. Springtide Resource's work around women with disabilities has helped shape public policy and exposed the levels and forms of violence and discrimination unique to women with disabilities. Without research, policies and programs would potentially have exposed specific women to greater vulnerability.

### **Media Relations and Social Media**

Working with the media is a key complementary strategy to advocating with the government. Some organizations indicated that they had a "back door" relationship with key government officials who would not have responded if there had not been media pressure.

**Media Strategy: The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) was able to make strategic use of media in the Ashley Smith case, which was key in leading to the public outcry and action in response. Ashley Smith was a 19-year-old woman with documented mental health challenges who died in custody. CAEFS worked hard to keep the media away from the family initially so that they could grieve. As a result, when the family was ready to speak to the media, they were strong and clear and enabled the media to see the depth of the issue. CAEFS also talked to the media, providing background analysis about the underlying issues so that the situation wasn't seen in isolation or trivialized. In short, a media strategy that was respectful to the family and focused on the systemic issues led to an expanded inquest, and eventually to extensive recommendations for the correctional system.**

Organizations such as the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change offer media training that assists and mentors workers who want to speak up about work conditions, unpaid labour and other issues that concern them. Women's organizations often work with women using their services who are interested in advocacy, to develop their media and advocacy skills. Some have created speakers' bureaus of women with lived experience.

Social media is so widespread as to be an automatic element of almost every organization's work, on a continuing basis and also for specific campaigns and initiatives. Some organizations successfully negotiated with PR firms to work for free to create media strategies and products. Other online platforms enable organizations to share resources and tools.

The key role of the media in sustaining public attention on missing and murdered Indigenous women was formally acknowledged by NWAC in their media conference at the time of the launch of the National Inquiry. Journalist Robyn Doolittle's "Unfounded" series on sexual assault in the Globe and Mail amplified the voices of women who had reported sexual assault to a police department who dismissed their report, and was instrumental in pushing many municipal police services to review their handling of sexual assault cases. Both of these came after years of effort by women's organizations and intensive

work with the media to inform, educate and encourage them in profiling these issues.

### **Targeting Institutional Change in the Women's Movement**

**Social inequality is embedded in our individual values and beliefs, and the systems and institutions we create reflect these inequalities. Therefore, change must include individuals transforming ourselves and the systems and institutions that reflect our values.**

OAITH and Springtide Resources, 2008

The women's movement has its own institutional apparatus that can be influenced and shaped. Across Canada, there are numerous shelters, sexual assault centres, women's centres in colleges, universities and communities, legal clinics and health clinics and immigrant services comprising hundreds, perhaps thousands, of organizations and agencies. All of these organizations are incubators for change, not only models for an intersectional approach but also models what a feminist way of being looks like and feels like. Women's organizations and services can be examples of inclusive and anti-oppressive structures and organizations.

It was also noted that women's organizations sometimes fail to fully engage women's communities, and consequently racialized communities, women with disabilities, low-income women and others are often missing from discussions. More could be done to facilitate advocacy, in the way that the union movement consistently has workers who speak on issues.

## **4. Legal challenges and Legislative Responses**

The women's movement has used the legal system as a tool for change in a number of ways, with major legal successes going back almost a century and establishing, for example, women's legal existence as persons, and right to reproductive choice.

Legal strategies come with some consistent challenges: the cost, the time investment, and the level of legal expertise needed to shepherd the overall process and strategy among different cases and opportunities. The legal process moves very slowly. Equality-seeking groups rely heavily on pro bono lawyers to carry much of the burden. Legal cases are primarily individual, and carry a cost for the individual women who consent to go through this arduous, demanding, and sometimes very public process.

The use of the legal system as a tool for recognition and remedy of injustice has clearly come into question following the failed prosecution of many cases of sexual violence and women who came forward charges exposed to extreme ridicule and harm. The increasing openness of women to publicly acknowledging sexual assault is shifting the stigma from women who are assaulted to men who assault.

**Court Cases:** Test cases in court, can establish legal precedents that bring progress for many women, and lead to changes in the law or changes in how the law is implemented by governments and police. This can include challenges under the Charter of Rights, and can include taking cases all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

**Complaint Processes:** Formal complaint processes, such as human rights tribunals, can also lead to remedies that have a systemic impact. These types of actions sometimes can be used to galvanize public opinion and highlight injustices that women face.

**LEAF - The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund:** A number of feminist organizations have used the court system to advance women's rights. The most active has been LEAF, which has undertaken dozens of court cases since its founding in 1986, dealing with Indigenous women's rights, sexual assault, welfare rights, pay equity, access to housing, immigration, refugees, hate speech, health care and the criminal justice system.



from left, Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, Sharon McIvor, 2012  
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights  
Credit: OEA-OAS/Flickr CC

**International Declarations and Covenants:** A number of organizations use international law, in the form of human rights declarations and covenants Canada has signed – such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) - as tools. Some of these are legally binding and carry ongoing responsibilities for reporting and accountability. These international frameworks are sometimes used by equality-seeking groups to bolster their arguments. There is a range of opinion about

the effectiveness of using these international legal tools, as some governments take almost no notice of them and are not embarrassed by having their failures under these agreements publicized. They can function as a strategy to engage media.

**Legal Clinics Assistance for Women:** Some organizations are able to offer small legal clinics to enable women to better understand their rights - e.g. in employment law or family law - and to assist with filling legal forms.

**Legal Strategy:** Years of successful court challenges to sexism in the *Indian Act* have resulted in the changes proposed in Bill-3 in 2017 to eliminate sex discrimination in the *Act*. The Bill recognizes the original wrong in 1876 where First Nation women were removed from their communities and lost their Indian Status if they married a non-First Nation man. The reverse did not apply for First Nation men. In fact, non-First Nation women who married First Nation men received Status under the *Act*. The cases that shaped this final legislative change included:

- Descheneaux Case
- Sharon McIvor Case
- Bill C-31 in 1985
- Sandra Lovelace case
- Jeannette Corbeire Laval case

Each woman who pursued these cases was exposed to public scrutiny and public attacks.



## Appendix A: Methodology

### The Gender Equality Network Project

This environmental scan was developed to support the work of the Gender Equality Network Canada (GENC), an initiative to advance gender equality nationally, created through the Gender Equality Project. GENC brings together women leaders nominated by community organizations across Canada to advocate for policy change, build inclusive intersectional leadership, and take collective action to advance gender equality. The information that follows elaborates on the sources for and development of the scan.

As noted, interviews and surveys with women working on gender equality issues were conducted to inform the environmental scan. The national and regional breakdown of interviews and survey responses is shown in the chart below.

### Survey responses and Interviews by National/Province/Territory

National/ Province/Territory	Number of survey responses	Number of Interviews
National	6	22
Newfoundland and Labrador	1	2
Prince Edward Island	3	2
New Brunswick	1	2
Nova Scotia	2	0
Quebec	4	3
Ontario	11	15
Manitoba	6	1
Saskatchewan	3	2
Alberta	2	1
British Columbia	4	3
Yukon	1	0
Northwest Territories	0	1
Nunavut	0	0
Did not indicate	3	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	46	54

### Interviews by Area of Expertise (women have more than one area of expertise)

Area of Expertise	Number of Interviews
Violence against women	18
Cyber violence	2
Domestic violence	2
Sexual violence	4
Economic autonomy/poverty	9
Child care	2
Trades and technology	2
Science, technology, engineering and mathematics	1 (3 people, 1 interview)
Pay equity	2
Migrant workers	1
Domestic workers/caregivers	1
Education	1
Legal issues	4
Health	2
Immigrant women	4
Black women	1
Muslim women	2
Indigenous women	3
Gender diversity	1
Francophone minority women	2
Women with disabilities	1
Criminalized women	1
Women in politics	2
General	4

### Data challenges and limitations

- Collecting data over the summer was challenging. Many people were away on holidays and sometimes the entire organization's office was closed for an extended period. There were many organizations contacted from whom no reply at all was received.
- The violence against women (VAW) movement is disproportionately over-represented in the interviews. The VAW sector is the primary sector that continued to receive funding over the last 10-15 years when other investments in gender equality was being eroded. Some organizations continue to function but operate without staff and are more difficult to contact.
- There is a larger number of interviews in Ontario, as this is where women who were identified reside and work.
- Many representatives of Indigenous women's organizations had conflicting commitments around the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and United Nations meetings in Geneva.
- Some women who were approached to participate declined, indicating that they had not seen the Canadian Women's Foundation do this type and scope of work successfully.

## Concerns about the National Project

In the course of interviews prior to the commencement of the project, a number of women expressed questions and concerns about the overall project, including:

**1. The transparency of the process:** Some organizations were unaware of the project call for proposals issued by Status of Women Canada and said they would have been very interested in submitting a proposal for a community-based program and to participate in the development of a national action plan to achieve gender equality. Some organizations indicated that they had applied and their proposal was not accepted yet they do not see their perspective and social location reflected.

**2. Confusing two distinct processes:** Some confusion existed for both women who had and had not received project funding as to how their work at the community level links to a broader process to develop a national action plan to achieve gender equality. Some questioned whether they are best qualified and whether it will include the different sectors of women working on gender equity in Canada, specifically First Nations, Inuit or Métis women, or racialized women, or from certain regions, or from certain sectors of the movement.

**3. The legitimacy of the process to develop a national action plan to achieve gender equality:**

Women noted that over the last thirty years there have been a number of processes to engage women in developing gender-based policy including the organizing of provincial, regional and national gatherings where women could self-select, be nominated through a formal process or where participants were democratically chosen to attend.

**4. The accountability of the process:** Women felt the location, timing and agenda of the national meetings needs to be widely publicized among women's organizations, including the materials produced during the project.

**5. The credibility of the end product:** By the end of the national project, a national action plan for gender equality will likely be developed. It was unclear to interviewees what this plan will be used for: for shaping federal policy; for identification of priorities around funding allocations or for another reason. Will it be recognized as a legitimate framework by gender equality/equity activists? Is it a federal government document or a civil society/government joint document?

# Appendix B: Terminology

## Terminology and definitions used in the report

With any cultural or social movement language continues to evolve and change as we learn more. As Indigenous peoples have reminded us over many years, language is also a way to understand that you belong to a community, that you share knowledge, understandings and ways of being that is rooted in that language. Throughout the interviews, there was interesting discussion around terminology. For the purpose of this report, working definitions have been provided. It is anticipated they may change and evolve throughout the project.

### Gender

Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed. (World Health Organization)

Gender binary is a social system whereby people are thought to have either one of two genders: man or woman.

Non-conforming/gender fluid individuals are those who do not follow gender stereotypes based on the gender that they were assigned at birth.

Most people are “cisgender”; that is, their gender identity is in line with or “matches” the sex they were assigned at birth. Cisnormativity (“cis” meaning “the same as”) refers to the commonplace assumption that all people are cisgender and that everyone accepts this as “the norm.” (Ontario Human Rights Commission)

### Gender Equality

Gender equality is the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making; and the state of valuing different behaviours, aspirations and needs equally, regardless of gender. (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.)

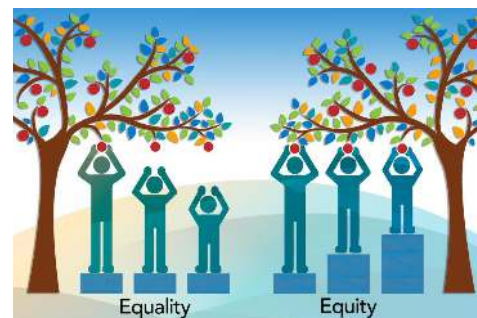
### Gender Equity

Gender Equity is the process of allocating resources, programs, and decision making fairly ...without any discrimination on the basis of sex...and addressing any imbalances in the benefits available... (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity)

### Differentiating Equity and Equality

Equality focuses on creating the same starting line for everyone. Equity has the goal of providing everyone with the full range of opportunities and benefits – the same finish line. (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity)

Concerns are sometimes raised that both equality and equity do not go far enough to describe the change that feminism is striving to achieve. They do not describe the structural and systemic change that would lead to equality.



## **Substantive Equality**

The Supreme Court of Canada has provided a number of decisions that helps clarify the understanding of substantive equality. It is a legal mechanism that facilitates addressing inequality within programs and services.

**Substantive equality is achieved when one takes into account, where necessary, the differences in characteristics and circumstances of minority communities and provides services with distinct content or using a different method of delivery to ensure that the minority receives services of the same quality as the majority.** (Desrochers v. Canada, 2009)

## **Feminism**

There are multiple definitions of feminism. One common definition is that “feminism is the advocacy of the political, economic, and social equality of gender and is embedded in the organized activity on behalf of women’s rights and interests.” (Merriam-Webster) The simplicity of the definition is actually quite complex because it recognizes that the equality of women calls for the total transformation of all existing social relations. It is also why feminism has been a meeting point for all forms of unequal social relations in our society, including challenging racism, classism, ableism, homophobia and environmental degradation.

# Appendix C: General Statistics

## Statistical Profiles of Women in Canada

A number of sources that provide statistics on gender equality in Canada. Some of the most current sources are:

### **Recent Statistics Canada Reports:**

- Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report (2017) Sixth edition.
- Women in the Criminal Justice System (2017)
- Women with Disabilities (2017)
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit Women (2016)
- Immigrant Women (2015)

### **FAFIA**

<http://fafia-afai.org>

- Submits an annual report to the United Nations on the state of gender equality in Canada as defined under the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

### **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - Gender Equality**

Making Women Count is a project from the CCPA that measures the size of Canada's gender gap and offers solutions to the inequalities that persist between women and men in Canada.

- **The Best and Worst Places to be a Woman in Canada 2017:** The Gender Gap in Canada's 25 Biggest Cities (October 17, 2017, National Office)
- **Cost of Doing Nothing:** Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (October 16, 2017, Manitoba Office)
- **Finding Her Home:** A gender-based analysis of the homelessness crisis in Winnipeg (March 8, 2017, Manitoba Office)
- **Making Women Count:** The Unequal Economics of Women's Work (March 7, 2016, National Office)

## Appendix D: List of Interviewees

Interviews Completed as of August 28, 2017

Name	Position	Organization	Prov/Terr/Nat
Jane Bailey	Associate Professor	University of Ottawa	Ontario
Jessica Baldwin	Provincial Facilitator	Women in Trades and Technology	Saskatchewan
Morna Ballantyne	Executive Director	Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada	National
Calla Barnett	President	Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity	National
Bonnie Brayton	Executive Director	DAWN Canada (DisAbled Women's Network)	National
Cherri Butt	CEO	Women in Resource Development Corporation	Newfoundland and Labrador
Tatenda Bwawa	President	Congress of Black Women of Manitoba	Manitoba
Sly Castaldi	Executive Director	Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis	Ontario
Pamela Cross	Lawyer and consultant	A range of mostly VAW organizations	Ontario
Amanda Dale	Executive Director	Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic	National
Annick Desjardins	Executive Assistant, National President	Canadian Union of Public Employees	National
Claire DeWeerd	Engineer	Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology	National
Valerie Docherty	Former Minister	Responsible for the Status of Women, provincial government	Prince Edward Island
Natalie Drolet	Executive Director	West Coast Domestic Workers' Association	British Columbia
Leilani Farha	Executive Director	Canada Without Poverty	National
Martha Friendly	Executive Director	Childcare Resource and Research Unit	National
Lyda Fuller	Executive Director	YWCA Northwest Territories	Northwest Territories
Valérie Gilker-Létourneau	Coordonnatrice	Le Regroupement des centres de femmes du Québec	Québec
Maria Gyongyossy-Issa	Director, Pathology Education Centre UBC	Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology	National

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Prov/Terr/Nat</b>
Dawn Harvard	President	Ontario Native Women's Association; Director, First Peoples House of Learning, Trent University	Ontario
Alia Hogben	Executive Director	Canadian Council of Muslim Women	National
Kerrie Isaac	Executive Director	Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan
Martha Jackman	Chair	National Association of Women and the Law	National
France-Emmanuelle Joly	Executive Director	Vancouver Women's Health Collective	British Columbia
Farrah Khan	Sexual Violence Coordinator	Ryerson University; Co-Chair Ontario Violence Against Women Roundtable	Ontario
Sharmeen Khan	Interim Coordinator	Migrant Workers Alliance for Change	Ontario
Charlotte Kiddell	Deputy Chair person	Canadian Federation of Students	National
Wendy Komiotis	Executive Director	METRAC	Ontario
Shalini Konanur	Executive Director	South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario	Ontario
Lee Lakeman	Consultant	Vancouver Rape Relief; Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres	National
Jane Ledwell	Executive Director	Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women	Prince Edward Island
Sylvie Lépine	Service de la condition féminine	Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec	Quebec
Beth Lyons	Executive Director	New Brunswick Women's Council	New Brunswick
Barb MacQuarrie	Community Director	Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children	Ontario
Lise Martin	Executive Director	Women's Shelters Canada	National
Hiroshi Matsui	Past President	Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology	National



<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Prov/Terr/Nat</b>
Notisha Massaquoi	Executive Director	Women's Health in Women's Hands	Ontario
Deepa Mattoo	Director of Legal Services	Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic	National
Cora-Lee McGuire-Cyrette	Executive Director	Ontario Native Women's Association	Ontario
Hamdi Mohamed	Consultant	Kaafi Research Consulting,	Ontario and International
Sandra Montour	Executive Director	Six Nations of the Grand River Shelter - Ganohkwasra	Ontario
Tracy O'Hearn	Executive Director	Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada	National
Kim Pate	Senator	Former Executive Director, Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies	National
Nancy Peckford	Executive Director	Equal Voice	National
Johanne Perron	Executive Director	New Brunswick Pay Equity Coalition	New Brunswick
Tracy Porteous	Executive Director	Ending Violence Association BC; Board member, Ending Violence Association Canada	British Columbia and National
Sonia Pouliot	Directrice générale par interim	Action ontarienne contre la violence faite au femmes	Ontario
Linda Ross	President and CEO	Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women of Newfoundland and Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador
Kripa Sekhar	Executive Director	South Asian Women's Centre	Ontario
Paulette Senior	President and CEO	Canadian Women's Foundation	National
Shaheen Sharriff	Associate Professor	McGill University	Québec
Vicky Smallman	National Director, Women and Human Rights	Canadian Labour Congress	National
Beba Svigir	CEO	Calgary Immigrant Women Association	Alberta

# Appendix E: Priorities

## Gender Equality Network Canada

### Summary of Priority Areas Identified in Interviews and Surveys

#### A. Results from Survey of National Meeting Participants

(conducted and summarized by Canadian Women's Foundation)

Total number of respondents: 129

Comments	Number of mentions
Gender-based violence/violence prevention	30
Pay equity/wage equity	23
Women access to leadership roles/mentorship/ decision making roles	20
Poverty/economic security/homelessness	22
Universal child care	14
Criminal Justice Response to Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence/sexual assault/police accountability	12
Equal representation in all levels of government/political equality/policy framework with gender lens	12
Indigenous women /violence against indigenous women and girls/ access to opportunities /education and alternatives to justice/ representation	13
STEM - attract, retain and barriers	7
Immigrant/newcomer/refugee women's access to opportunities/violence	7
Accessible and affordable to housing for women	5
Supports for women involved in human trafficking in Canada	5
Racism	6
Services /support/responses to sexual assault	4
Women and trans incarceration	3
Addressing the systemic barriers that keep women and girls from participating in, staying in, and advancing in sports	3
Intersectionality of Women's Lived Experiences that includes Disability and Deaf Women's Experiences; +trans; LGBTQ+ communities; diverse communities, including rural	3
Access to reproductive health services	2
Impact of toxic masculinity/ public education engaging men and boy	2
Violence against elders	2
National framework for feminist organizing/Intersectional feminisms and how the movement can be more inclusive and centre marginalized voices. How to coordinate advocacy across Canada.	2
Women living with disabilities	2
Decolonization	2
Integrating Gender Lens Analysis	2

Comments	Number of mentions
Labour issues	2
Structural determinants of health/health equity	2
Rape culture	2
Representation of people of colour in the media, representation of women in the media, and diverse representations of women of colour in the media.	2
Female genital mutilation (FGM)/ traditional practices that harm girls and women	2
Mental health	1

## B. Results from Interviews with Key Informants and Survey of National Meeting Participants

(conducted and summarized by Catalyst Research and Communications)

Priority Issues	Catalyst Interviews (54 individuals)	Catalyst Survey (49 responses)
Intersectionality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Integrate intersectional analysis into all aspects of our work</li> <li>● Need to include everyone or movement lacks credibility</li> <li>● Genuine understanding of oppression and privilege,</li> <li>● Race, disability, LGBTQ, gender as a spectrum, Muslim women, Indigenous women specifically mentioned</li> <li>● Systemic nature of oppression</li> </ul>	21	4
Violence Against Women / Gender-Based Violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Domestic violence, DV in the workplace</li> <li>● Sexual violence, especially on campuses</li> <li>● Online violence</li> <li>● Trafficking</li> <li>● Female Genital Mutilation</li> <li>● Media role</li> <li>● Blueprint for a National Action Plan</li> <li>● Engaging men and boys</li> <li>● International context and analysis</li> </ul>	21	6

Priority Issues	Catalyst Interviews (54 individuals)	Catalyst Survey (49 responses)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pay equity</li> <li>● Employment equity</li> <li>● Interconnection of poverty and violence</li> <li>● National standards and accountability for employers</li> <li>● Decent jobs, precarity</li> <li>● Housing</li> <li>● EI, pensions, tax reform</li> <li>● Language training, access to training</li> <li>● Migrant worker rights</li> <li>● Caregiver rights</li> <li>● Guaranteed Livable Income</li> </ul>	21	4
<p>Indigenous women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women</li> <li>● Understand colonization, decolonization and reclamation</li> <li>● Support Indigenous women’s leadership and Indigenous self-determination</li> <li>● Inuit women need to be at the tables</li> <li>● New relationship rooted in constitutional rights of First Nation, Inuit and Métis and gender equality rights in Charter</li> <li>● Education and economic equality</li> </ul>	14	3
<p>Women in Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Boards, corporate, government, unions</li> <li>● Role models in STEM, tech and trades</li> <li>● Democratic reform</li> </ul>	4	2
Justice system and criminalization (including related to violence against women)	5	
Child care	4	2
Immigrant and refugee women	3	
Women in STEM	3	
Environment: economic practices that respect the Earth		1

Priority Issues	Catalyst Interviews (54 individuals)	Catalyst Survey (49 responses)
Government accountability, e.g. federal strategies on Poverty, Housing, Gender-Based Violence	1	
Ensuring permanency of progress with “revolving door” of governments	1	
Strategies		
Collaboration, building bridges	9	7
Research and information-sharing, knowledge hubs	2	3
Funding for women’s groups, frontline services, Indigenous services	4	2
Use GBA+ lens consistently (could provide a page reference to the text box that describes this term)		1

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