

Action Coalition 6: Feminist Movements and Leadership

The key priorities and actions outlined in this document are based on extensive discussions within the Action Coalition 6: Feminist Movements and Leadership Working Group of the B+25 Network. For the Beijing +25 review, there are six Action Coalitions centring on critical areas for women's rights and gender equality: Gender-Based Violence, Economic Justice and Rights, Bodily Autonomy and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Feminist Action for Climate Justice, Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality, and Feminist Movements and Leadership, plus the GEF Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Actions.

Overview of the Issue in Canada

- At the current rate of change, Canada will not reach gender parity in federal leadership until 2106.¹
- 51% of respondents to a 2020 online survey of women's organizations indicated that they were forced to make reductions to vital services for women, and 48% indicated that they had to entirely cancel programming due to the COVID-19 pandemic.²
- The women's rights sector has faced deliberate and systemic defunding for decades. With each year that passes, fewer resources are available for service provision, wages and benefits for employees are reduced, and capacity for training, skills development, and community engagement is diminished.³

Commitment to feminism and a strong movement requires that governments recognize the importance of women's rights organizations. Long term core funding from government ensures continuation of vital public services, and allows feminist

¹ Equal Voice (2015), as cited in: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. (2019). *Unfinished Business: A Parallel Report on Canada's Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. <https://www.criaw-icref.ca/updates/unfinished-business/>

² YWCA Canada, CRIAW-ICREF, Canadian Women's Foundation, G(irls)20 and Oxfam Canada (2020), *Women's Sector at Risk of Financial Devastation – Implications for Canada's COVID-19 Recovery*. <https://www.criaw-icref.ca/publications/womens-sector-at-risk-of-financial-devastation-implications-for-canadas-covid-19-recovery/>

³ Boucher, Lisa, CRIAW-ICREF (2019), as cited in *Women's Sector at Risk of Financial Devastation – Implications for Canada's COVID-19 Recovery* (2020).

organizations to collaborate and share analyses. Multi-year, flexible, core funding to women's rights and feminist organizations increases representation, meaningful engagement, and participation in leadership positions for all, including young women, and provides vital support for new groups and organizations in the early stages of development.

It is important to recognize, understand, appreciate, and support the diverse range of experiences, priorities and expertise of Canada's women's rights and feminist movements with sustainable core funding. Every government department and agency should recognize women's rights and feminist organizations as primary stakeholders and ensure their meaningful participation. Governments must fund and support initiatives for feminist mentoring and leadership, multi-generational dialogue, experience sharing and capacity building, for and among activists, organizations, movements, and leaders across the sector, while respecting the autonomy of the movement.

Enabling and empowering equitable participation of diverse women and girls, including trans, intersex, and non-binary people, expands and protects civic space. Feminist movements and organizations must be inclusive and accessible, recognizing and accounting for intersectional identities. Consultation with young feminists, older feminists, and feminists with disabilities, and deepening solidarity within all social justice movements, including feminist movements, will ensure civic spaces and online platforms that are truly accessible to feminists from all walks of life. Finally, it is vital to combat harmful stereotypes that reinforce discrimination, entrench inequality, and stigmatize feminist activists, organizations, and movements.

Key Commitments per Action Coalition Blueprint

As part of the 25-year review process of the Beijing Platform for Action, UN Action Coalition leaders have defined the following concrete set of key actions to be realized by 2026:

Action 1: By 2026, double the global annual **growth rate of funding** from all sectors committed to women-led, girl-led and feminist-led movements, organizations, and funds in all their diversity, including those led by historically marginalized women and people, including trans, intersex and non-binary people.

Action 2: Promote, expand, strengthen, and protect civic space across all domains, including online, and support the efforts of feminist activists in all their diversity, including women's human rights defenders and women peacebuilders, trans, intersex and non-binary people, girls and other members of historically marginalized groups, to defend civic

space and eliminate barriers to feminist action, organizing and mobilization in all its diversity.

Action 3: By 2026, advance substantive representation and increase the **meaningful participation, leadership and decision-making power** of girls and youth leaders, and of women and feminist leaders in all their diversity, including those who are trans, intersex, and non-binary, through efforts to:

1. Advance gender parity and the inclusion of those historically marginalized in all aspects, sectors and levels of public and economic decision-making, including the private sector, civil society, international organizations, political and government institutions and executive and legislative positions;
2. Promote and expand feminist, gender transformative, intersectional approaches to decision-making and leadership, which acknowledge, analyse and challenge existing power relations and advance inclusive, gender transformative and rights-affirming laws and policies.

Action 4: By 2026, allocate, monitor and evaluate specific, flexible financial, technical, and other **resources** for adolescent girls and young feminist leaders and their movements and organizations to strengthen them, and create safe and inclusive spaces to lead, share ownership and substantively participate in and co-create decision-making processes.

Realizing Feminist Movements and Leadership

Key Priorities

Funding women-led and feminist-led organizations:

- Allocate core funding to women-led and feminist-led organizations to ensure decent wages and benefits for workers
- Increase transparent funding for women-led and feminist-led organizations and movements
- Increase funding for women's and feminist organizations to offer training, workshops, mentorship programs, educational opportunities, capacity-building, resource mobilization and inter-organizational meetings, founded in intersectionality and decolonization
- Allocate funding and resources to address accessibility needs and concerns for all women-led and feminist-led organization activities
- Promote and fund more leadership and/or decision-making positions for girls and women

- Recognize the expertise and time invested by women's organizations with adequate financial compensation
- Fund spaces for young feminists

Fostering meaningful participation of adolescent girls, young feminists, and women in all their diversity in feminist work and movements:

- Within feminist movements
 - Promote mentorship opportunities and professional training for women
 - Establish and provide private resources, workshops, training, and information to students, girls and young women in all their diversity
 - Ensure culturally relevant resources and materials are available and accessible to adolescent girls and young feminist leaders
 - Ensure meaningful participation and inclusion for people with disabilities by implementing ASL/LSQ, captioning and other accessibility options for events, and enforce [W3C standards](#) for websites, online civic spaces and platforms
 - Build cross-sector alliances among, and support mentoring, experience and capacity sharing between feminist activists, organizations, movements, and leaders. Ensure fulsome participation of Inuit, Métis and First Nations women's organizations
 - Remove barriers to access and participation for feminist groups and organizations who espouse opinions that are not mainstreamed or centered. Prioritize the most marginalized whose voices are often excluded from civic discourse
 - Encourage and support intersectional knowledge sharing and inter-generational dialogue
 - Advocate for girls and young women in STEM and sports, especially 2SLGBTQ+ folks and girls and young women with disabilities
- At the government level
 - Ensure participation of women in all their diversity by implementing feminist, gender transformative, and inclusive legislation and policies
 - Remove barriers to necessities (such as childcare services and transportation) and support family-friendly work conditions (such as flexible hours and leave) so that diverse women are able to move into leadership positions
 - Engage in ongoing, formal partnerships with civil society organizations and feminist activists and provide adequate compensation for their time and expertise
 - Implement formal mechanisms for consultation with feminist organizations, including debrief sessions, to create transparent and ongoing engagement

- Ensure the ongoing and continuous participation of national Indigenous women’s organizations throughout the full evaluation process lifecycle
- Develop and implement policies and regulations that advance gender parity and ensure participation of all women, girls, trans, intersex and non-binary people in decision making
- Support the creation of safe and inclusive online spaces for organizing and activism, that are more prevalent because of the COVID-19 pandemic

Take Action

Government Actions <i>Holding the government to account</i>	Grassroots Actions <i>Feminist Work</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide annual reports and updates on funding to Canadian feminist groups, disaggregated by project VS core funding, from WAGE ● Conduct surveys and feedback reports on the quality, issues, needs, and gaps in gender equality policies and regulations ● Produce disaggregated gender data ● Implement recommendations identified in baseline data ● Conduct qualitative studies assessing the impacts of increased mentorship and access to resources for girls, 2SLGBTQ+ folks, and women with disabilities ● Create and maintain formal and informal knowledge and expertise sharing partnerships with women’s rights and feminist organizations founded in intersectionality and decolonization ● Establish baseline data to analyze the nature and scope of government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advocate for public core funding of feminist organizations ● Support intersectional and multi-generational dialogue ● Promote meaningful participation within the movement, including ensuring online platforms and civic spaces that are accessible to women and girls with disabilities ● Push for investment in gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting at all levels of government ● Advocate for improved donor practices that meet the needs of movements and organizations of young feminists, trans, intersex and non-binary people

consultation with women's rights and
feminist organizations

Acknowledgments

CRIAW-ICREF acknowledges its presence and work on the Indigenous Territories. We respectfully recognize the legacy of colonization upon Indigenous Peoples.

The key priorities and actions outlined in this document are based on extensive discussions within the Action Coalition 6: Feminist Movements and Leadership Working Group of the B+25 Network. These discussions were held between March and October 2021 with the following feminist and women's organizations: Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights (Meghan Doherty), Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (Jackie Neapole), CanWaCH (Aminata Wurie), Council of Canadians with Disabilities (Jewelless Smith), Ending Violence Association of Canada (Erin Whitmore), Global Women in STEM (Anja Lanz, Damineh Akhavan), Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak/Women of the Métis Nation (Tamsin Fitzgerald), and the National Association of Women and the Law (Sandeep Prasad).

The findings were compiled and presented by Elizabeth Nguyen and Kenya Thompson.

We wish to recognize this document is one part of an on-going process for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Canada. Thank you to these organizations for their contributions and collaboration through thought-provoking discussions, critical feedback and participation throughout this process.

Project Coordinator: Olivia Atsin

Copy Editor: Janine Bertolo with Consensual Copy

Design: The Public Studio

Layout: Kenya Thompson

Publisher: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW-ICREF)
250 City Centre Avenue, Suite 807, Ottawa, ON K1R K67

ISBN: 978-1-77483-010-9

This project has been funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada.



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