



**SDG 5** focuses global attention on the need for gender equality, women's empowerment and an end to gender-based violence. The goal's objective is to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls."



COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS  
OF CANADA

**The Learning  
Institute**

Many community foundations are exploring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within their planning, granting, convening, Vital Signs and more. This Fact Sheet is part of a series that focuses on specific SDGs to engage and inspire community foundations of all sizes to deepen their work around these goals.

## What is this approach?

The **targets of SDG 5** commit us to ending violence and discrimination, valuing unpaid work, ensuring the role of all women in leadership and decision making, and recognizing women's economic and reproductive health rights. Globally, foundations have dedicated \$14 billion to SDG 5, accounting for 7% of granting in 2016/2017 ([source](#)). Despite this, more needs to be done worldwide, with women earning 77 cents for every dollar that men receive for the same work, while only 24% of parliamentarians are women, and 35% of women still experience physical or sexual violence ([source](#)). How we understand and tackle these global issues depends on each country and each community's approach to gender equality. The framework of the SDGs is grounded in the concept of both universality and localization, with every country responsible for contextualizing SDG 5 to their own realities and priorities.

**Violence against women, girls, two-spirit people and gender-diverse people is the world's single-largest human rights violation.**

— [#VITALSIGNS2020: PEACE AND GENDER EQUALITY IN CANADA](#)



In Canada, the government has adopted an intersectional approach to SDG 5 that recognizes the unique challenges faced by different communities of women, girls, two-spirit people and gender-diverse people. Canada's Department of Justice defines women as all "people who identify as women, whether they are cisgender or transgender women" ([source](#)). Canada's national approach to SDG 5 also engages men and boys in combatting harmful social norms that create unequal power relations among genders ([source](#)).

**Canada's commitment to SDG 5 is captured in the government's Gender Results Framework, which focuses national efforts on six key areas:**

1. Education and skills development.
2. Economic participation and prosperity.
3. Leadership and democratic participation.
4. Gender-based violence and access to justice.
5. Poverty reduction, health and well-being.
6. Gender equality around the world.

Reconciliation underpins Canada's approach to the SDGs, and action toward SDG 5 also requires incorporating the findings of the [National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#).

Canada envisions a world where all women and girls are valued and empowered, have control over their own lives, fully participate as decision makers in their homes and societies, and contribute to and benefit from development and prosperity equally.

— [CANADA VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW 2018](#)

## WORDS YOU SHOULD KNOW

**Intersectionality**

The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class and gender as they apply to a given individual or group regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

— [#VITALSIGNS2020: GENDER EQUALITY IN CANADA](#)

**Gender Norms**

Socially constructed ideals, scripts, expectations for how to be a woman or a man.

— [GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE PHILANTHROPY](#)

At the community level, SDG 5 draws our attention to the different ways that both gender and equality are experienced across Canada. Approaches to SDG 5 at the community scale address the intersecting ways that discrimination, exclusion and marginalization are experienced in community life. Actions include making public spaces safe and accessible for all women, girls, two-spirit people and gender-diverse people; providing shelter and support for victims of gender-based violence; increasing the leadership of women in civic institutions, municipal government and local business; providing free or affordable childcare; supporting access to health and reproductive services; promoting employment opportunities and ensuring pay equity; valuing women's unpaid work in the community; challenging harmful gender norms and stereotypes; and ensuring that women, girls, two-spirit people and gender-diverse people can actively participate in all aspects of community life. In these areas, many community foundations are already leaders in supporting SDG 5.

## Why is it important for grantmakers?

Globally, Canada ranks 35th out of all countries for gender equality but has slipped five places since 2016 ([source](#)).

**Achieving SDG 5 will require addressing persistent gender inequality:**

- Canadian women still make \$0.87 for every dollar earned by men ([source](#)).
- Thirty percent of single mothers and 42% of non-resident Canadian women live in poverty (compared to the national average of 14%) ([source](#)).
- Women make up only 21% of senior business managers, 11% of mayors, and 28% of councillors ([source](#)).
- Women are five times more likely to stay at home at night because of safety concerns, and sexual assault is the only form of violent crime in Canada that is not decreasing ([source](#)).
- Thirty percent of Canadian women have experienced sexual assault ([source](#)).

Inequality increases as race, sexuality, ability and other factors intersect with gender. Up to 40% of Canada's homeless youth identify as 2SLGBTQ+. Indigenous women earn \$0.65 for every dollar earned by non-Indigenous men, while women with a disability earn \$0.54. The incidence of gender-based violence doubles for women and gender-diverse individuals who are part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, while Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people are three times more likely to experience sexual assault than non-Indigenous women ([source](#)). The COVID-19 pandemic has also disproportionately affected women through increased domestic violence, higher rates of job losses and greater childcare responsibilities while working from home ([source](#)). Continued support from grantmakers will be vital for addressing these intersecting challenges, achieving SDG 5 and realizing a feminist future for Canada.



*A feminist future is: “A vision of a world where all women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender-diverse people have equal access to justice, opportunities, resources and decision-making. One where people have body autonomy and self-determination and can live a life free from violence. A global community that benefits when those most impacted by oppression are lifted up. A decolonized future, a future where power is shared and where identity does not dictate life outcomes. We have a vision of the future where all identities are celebrated and a source of joy and solidarity.”*

— #VITALSIGNS2020: GENDER INEQUALITY IN CANADA

Action on SDG 5 also provides enormous opportunities. Gender equality is an SDG accelerator that catalyzes positive outcomes across multiple goals. Investing in SDG 5 drives progress on targets related to poverty, health, education, human capital, economic performance, climate change, and safe and inclusive societies ([source](#)).

**In Canada, it is estimated that promoting gender equality could ([source](#)):**

- Add \$150 billion to national GDP.
- Improve business performance by up to 35%.
- Improve family relationships and social cohesion.
- Improve the well-being of children.

Canadians want action on SDG 5, with 82% of women and 69% of men indicating that gender equality is important to them personally ([source](#)). Grantmakers are responding and in 2016/2017 Canadian foundations contributed \$436 million to achieving SDG 5. Community Foundations of Canada supports organizations working toward SDG 5 through its partnership in the [Fund for Gender Equality](#) and the launch of the [Communities for Gender Equality](#) initiative. Through the Fund, 21 community foundations have granted \$3.5 million to 126 local organizations whose work contributes to gender equality.

Many community foundations are already responding to the challenge and opportunity of gender equality. The Prince George Community Foundation incorporated a focus on SDG 5 in their Vital Signs reporting, which enabled them to track a gender pay gap that disproportionately impacts Indigenous women and to evolve a giving approach that helps direct funding to those who need it ([source](#)). In Alberta, the Edmonton Community Foundation built on the success of their gender-focused Vital Signs reporting through co-sponsoring a speaker series of women leaders, while the Red Deer & District Community Foundation demonstrated its commitment to women’s empowerment through their Women of Excellence Gala. The Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation is also raising awareness of gender equality through a podcast that sheds light on the problem of sexual violence in the community in order to inspire action. Across the country, [a growing number of community organizations](#) are engaging women as donors for gender equality projects through pooling funds, researching gender equality issues, building relationships with women’s organizations and providing capacity building.

**By funding women-led and women-serving organizations, we can deliver double the impact — support decent work for female staff at these nonprofits and support the programming that serves women, girls, two-spirit people and gender-diverse people.**

— [GENDER INEQUALITY IN CANADA: POWER](#)



## Common principles to get started

### Leveraging SDG 5 to accelerate action across the SDGs involves:

- Ensuring equal rights, opportunities and outcomes for both women and men.
- Enhancing women’s agency, capabilities and participation in decision-making processes.
- Eliminating gender-based violence and discrimination.
- Transforming power relations at all levels of society.

— GENDER EQUALITY AS AN ACCELERATOR FOR ACHIEVING THE SDGs

Community Foundations of Canada has adopted an intersectional approach that acknowledges that gender and equality will be experienced differently by girls, women, two-spirit people and gender-diverse people across Canada. An intersectional approach to SDG 5 also means considering how action toward gender equality requires progress across the SDGs, including ending poverty (SDG 1), achieving good health and well-being (SDG 3), providing access to quality education (SDG 4), decent work (SDG 8), reducing inequalities (SDG 10), action on climate change (SDG 13) and achieving peace and justice through strong and fair institutions (SDG 16). All of these goals are entry points for addressing gender equality as well as areas where action on SDG 5 can accelerate change.

### 01 Learn and understand

- Learn about progress on SDG 5 and gender equality issues in Canada through such resources as the [#Vital Signs 2020](#) report, [Women Deliver’s gender equality survey](#) and the [Canadian Women’s Foundation](#) website.
- Research different approaches to gender equality, and identify tools that align with your vision and mission. A wide range of philanthropic approaches and tools exist, and examples are provided at the end of the fact sheet.
- Connect with other foundations that are working towards SDG 5, learn how they have addressed gender equality in their work, share your experiences, and explore opportunities for continued learning and collaboration.
- Join philanthropic networks that are working toward gender equality and SDG 5 including CFC’s [Communities for Gender Equality](#) initiative.

## A gender-transformative checklist

- Are gender norms mentioned in your webpages, brochures and other intellectual collateral where gender equality or race and class are addressed?
- Are gender norms part of your Theory of Change and funding priorities?
- Do you bring up gender norms whenever you mention gender equality?
- Do you raise the issue of gender norms in giving circles and other philanthropic collaboration?
- Do your funding associates foreground gender norms in presenting your work?

### — GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE PHILANTHROPY

## 02 Identify gender equality issues and SDG priorities in your community

- Gather community data through Vital Signs reporting that includes a gender focus and/or SDG 5 indicators to identify priorities for gender equality action.
- When collecting community data allow more options in the “gender” box, including two-spirit, non-binary, trans and open fields.
- When analyzing gender data, include information on ethnicity, age, wealth and sexual orientation to identify different outcomes for women and girls.
- Connect with the community organizations already working on SDG 5 issues to learn more about the opportunities that exist and the challenges they are facing.

## 03 Apply an SDG 5 lens to your work

- Do a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) of your current programs and granting. GBA+ is an analytical tool used to understand how programs, policies and initiatives could effect diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people differently ([source](#)).
- Conduct a **gender audit** of your community foundation to understand how gender equality is perceived by staff and board members, and identify areas for integrating or deepening institutional approaches to gender equality. For more information, check out CFC’s fact sheet on board governance and institutional change.
- Apply a **gender lens to your investment decisions**, and develop strategies that mobilize capital in support of gender equality while delivering a financial return.
- Look for the connections between SDG 5 and your current work and programming. How could a focus on gender equality accelerate impact in your other programming? How could your existing granting incorporate actions for SDG 5?
- Use gender-disaggregated data and apply a gender lens to monitoring and evaluation to track the impact of current and future granting on SDG 5. Consider using a **feminist approach to monitoring and evaluation** for your grants and programs.

### Gender lens philanthropy

- Grant to women and girls.
- Apply a gender lens to granting practices.
- Increase equity in internal governance and processes.
- Use gender lens investment practices.

— GENDER-LENS PHILANTHROPY

## 04 Lead and collaborate

- Raise awareness of gender equality issues in your community, and advocate for action through public engagement work, including community dialogues, podcasts, social media, speaking events and publications.
- Develop granting approaches that address the gender equality issues you have identified and that support local organizations working on these issues.
- Grant to women, girls, two-spirit people and gender-diverse people. Prioritize grantmaking for those who experience multiple intersecting challenges, and consider creating or contributing to dedicated gender equality funds ([source](#)).
- Engage and support women donors in playing a greater role in funding for SDG 5. Provide opportunities to learn about the gender equality issues in your community, and provide capacity building and support for women donors ([source](#)).
- Use the language of SDG 5 to engage new partners in your work for gender equality, including schools, local governments, businesses, academia and the government. Visit the [Alliance 2030 website](#) to find more SDG 5-focused organizations.
- Consider engaging men and boys in addressing harmful gender norms in the community and achieving gender equality. How could men and boys in your current programs (especially those in positions of power) support action toward SDG 5?

## Resource list

### **Gender-Lens Philanthropy: A Practical Guide for Canadian Foundations**

- Pages 18–22 provide background on women’s organizations and movements, the landscape in Canada and funding best practices.
- Pages 36–41 provide an overview of gender lens investing and an explanation of approaches.

### **Gender Transformative Philanthropy**

- A short 12-page introduction to gender-transformative concepts and approaches for philanthropy.
- Pages 11–12 provide a checklist and first steps for engaging with gender-transformative philanthropy as well as links to further resources.

### **Grantmaking at the Crossroads: An Intersectional Approach**

- A 30-page workbook produced by the Council of Michigan Foundations.
- Pages 4–6 introduce the concept and approach of intersectional grantmaking.
- Pages 7–24 provide a series of exercises as an entry point for foundation executives and trustees interested in applying an intersectional approach to their grantmaking.

### **#VitalSigns 2020: Gender Equality in Canada**

- Three reports that focus on gender equality in Canada linked to the SDGs with a focus on power, peace and planet.
- Each report includes detailed statistics on the state of gender equality in Canada, along with examples of community foundation initiatives.

### **Fact Sheet: Gender Lens Investing**

- A short six-page fact sheet developed by CFC that introduces the concept of, and key approaches to, gender lens investing.
- A detailed resource list that includes guides and background information for those looking to dive deeper into gender lens investing.

### **Gender-Based Analysis Plus**

- A Government of Canada website that provides an introduction to GBA+ as well as tips for integrating GBA+ into your organization and your work.
- A free online course in GBA+ (three hours) with a certificate upon completion.

### **Gender Audit Tool: A Guide for Identifying Gaps in Gender Responsive Policies and Practices at the Workplace**

- A 16-page guide that introduces gender auditing as a tool for mainstreaming gender equality in your organization.
- Pages 3–7 introduce gender auditing and a sample methodology.
- Pages 8–16 contain appendices with sample questions and checklists.

### **Applying Feminist Principles to Program Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning**

- A 24-page discussion paper from Oxfam. While internationally focused, the approach and principles are applicable to many forms of philanthropic and nonprofit programming.
- Pages 6–7 demonstrate how feminist principles are applied to monitoring and evaluation.
- Pages 9–15 provide case studies of applying feminist principles to monitoring and evaluation.