



CANADA

CITIZENS CALL FOR A GENDER-EQUAL WORLD: A ROADMAP FOR ACTION¹



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WHAT DO RESPONDENTS IN CANADA THINK ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY?

- ➔ Respondents in Canada generally consider gender equality important. **Eighty-two percent of female respondents and 69 percent of male respondents say that gender equality is “important” to them personally.** Only six percent of respondents declare that gender equality is “unimportant” to them personally.
- ➔ In general, gender equality in Canada is perceived to have improved over the last 25 years. Fifty-four percent of female respondents and 67 percent of male respondents think that gender equality has improved over this time. However, **33 percent of female respondents and 20 percent of male respondents think the situation is “more or less the same” as it was 25 years ago,** and seven percent of respondents think it is “worse.” Respondents self-identifying as non-white are almost three times more likely (14 percent) than respondents self-identifying as white (five percent) to feel that gender equality has worsened in the country over the past 25 years.³
- ➔ **Fifty-three percent of respondents in Canada think their government “should do more” to promote gender equality,** including 59 percent of female and 46 percent of male respondents. Demand for action is stronger among young respondents, with 71 percent of respondents aged 18 to 24 thinking their government “should do more.”
- ➔ **To advance gender equality in Canada, 42 percent of respondents think the government should “reform laws to promote equality between women and men and end discrimination against women.”** Twenty-eight percent of respondents also think the government should “focus efforts on marginalized women to leave no one behind,” and 27 percent would like the government to “conduct regular reviews of progress in the pursuit of equality.”
- ➔ When asked about the main reasons why women may not be equal to men in Canada, **40 percent of female and 25 percent of male respondents believe it is “because unpaid care, domestic work, and parental responsibilities are not shared equally between women and men.”** Thirty-three percent of respondents also believe it is “because women and men have different employment opportunities.”

¹ This country data sheet captures findings from a public perception survey on gender equality for Canada. This work is co-led by Focus 2030 and Women Deliver. The survey was executed through an online poll, conducted by Deltapoll, in 17 countries. Approximately one thousand respondents in each country were surveyed in July/August 2020. Demographic data collected included: gender, age, income level, education level, last vote in national elections (where applicable), ethnicity (where applicable), migrant status, and region of residency. In Canada, 1,006 respondents were surveyed, including 505 female respondents, 499 male respondents, and 2 respondents who identified “in another way.” Of the 1,006 respondents, 123 were aged 18 to 24, 330 were aged 25 to 44, 299 were aged 45 to 59, and 254 were aged 60 and older. Please see www.focus2030.org and www.womendeliver.org for more information.

² Text in italics and quotes reflect survey response options presented to respondents.

³ Acknowledging that girls and women belonging to ethnic minorities are often disproportionately affected by gender inequalities, the survey collected information on Canadian respondents’ self-identification to particular ethnic groups (Arab, Black, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Latin American, South Asian, Southeast Asian, West Asian, White, and other). However, data were not statistically significant and were aggregated into two broad analytical categories: white and non-white respondents.



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- ➔ **“Ending violence against women” is the top priority**, as 26 percent of respondents select this area as the first most important area for the government to focus on to improve gender equality. And 59 percent rank gender-based violence as a top-three issue.
- ➔ **Among a range of proposed actions to fight gender-based violence, 61 percent of respondents in Canada think the government should “increase accountability for [perpetrators of] physical and sexual crimes against women,” and 40 percent think the government should “fund programmes to support women who have experienced violence.”**
- ➔ **In Canada, 58 percent of female respondents — and 82 percent of female respondents aged 18 to 24 — feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment in some place or another.** The most common place is in “public spaces,” where 42 percent of female respondents feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment.
- ➔ Twenty-six percent of female respondents indicate the place is “online,” and 15 percent do in the “place where [they] work or study.” **Twelve percent of female respondents in Canada feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment in their “home.”**
- ➔ Eight percent of respondents in Canada think it is “acceptable” for women to “always obey their partner” (71 percent think it is “unacceptable”). Seventy-six percent of respondents think it is “acceptable” for women to “refuse sexual intercourse with their partner” (seven percent think it is “unacceptable”). Eight percent think it is “acceptable” to “whistle at a woman in the street or to touch a woman without her consent” (81 percent think it is “unacceptable”). Twelve percent think it is “acceptable” to “tell or share a sexist joke about a woman with friends or on social media” (66 percent think it is “unacceptable”).



ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND RIGHTS

- Achieving economic justice and rights is a close second priority** (and first priority among female respondents), as 24 percent of respondents in Canada rank *“implement access to well paid jobs, equal pay, financial independence, and property rights”* as the first priority the government should focus on to improve gender equality in the country. Sixty-one percent of respondents think women’s economic justice is a top-three issue.

In order to improve women’s economic opportunities and decision-making powers, **the most support for government action among respondents in Canada is to “achieve equal pay for men and women,” with 54 percent of female respondents**

- ➔ **and 45 percent of male respondents choosing this option.** The second most popular action is to *“prevent violence and sexual harassment in the workplace,”* with 39 percent of respondents supporting this. Of the eight prompted options, only four percent of respondents in Canada think the government should *“not improve women’s economic opportunities.”*

- Twenty percent of female respondents in Canada have ever “not [been] paid as much” as their male counterparts** where they work. This rises to 26 percent of female respondents aged 45 to 59. Furthermore, **18 percent of female respondents indicate they “did not have the same access to promotion opportunities” as their male peers.** Ten percent of female respondents *“have not or will not receive the same inheritance”* as their male relatives, and nine percent *“have had difficulty accessing education or training”* compared with their male peers. Twelve percent of female respondents in Canada, and 18 percent of those aged 18 to 24, state that they have had their *“freedom of movement restricted”* against their will by family members or a partner.

- Seventy-eight percent of respondents in Canada think it is *“unacceptable”* that *“women earn less than men for the same work,”* while eight percent think it is *“acceptable.”* Additionally, 70 percent of respondents think it is *“unacceptable”* to *“ask a woman during a job interview whether she has, or would like to have, children,”* while 13 percent think this *“acceptable.”* Also, 62 percent of respondents think it *“unacceptable”* to *“let women do the majority of housework, childcare, and elderly care.”* There is a gendered difference of opinion on all of the above, with male respondents finding these actions significantly more acceptable than female respondents.

- ➔ During the Covid-19 pandemic, 41 percent of female respondents in Canada say that their *“time doing household work has increased”* (32 percent of male respondents indicate the same). Nineteen percent of female respondents also say their *“time dedicated to the care of others has increased.”* Seventeen percent of female respondents *“could not do as many hours of paid work as they normally would,”* rising to 25 percent among those aged 18 to 24.



FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND LEADERSHIP

- ➔ **Feminist movements and leadership is the third most prioritised issue**, as 12 percent of respondents choose *“improve women’s participation and leadership in politics, and cultural and social movements”* as the first area their government should focus on. Forty-six percent say feminist movements and leadership is a top-three priority. For non-white male respondents, improving women’s participation and leadership is the most important area (57 percent).
- ➔ **The most popular action to promote feminist action and leadership is to “support women’s political leadership and participation”** (35 percent). Thirty-three percent of respondents think the government should *“achieve equal representation of women in politics,”* and 29 percent want the government to *“achieve equal representation of women on the boards of companies.”*
- ➔ Forty-one percent of respondents think that imposing gender quotas is *“a good way to advance gender equality in Canada,”* while 26 percent think it is not. Female respondents (49 percent) are more supportive of the measure than male respondents (33 percent), and younger respondents (aged 18 to 24, 60 percent support) are more supportive of gender quotas than older respondents (aged 60 and over, 36 percent), but support is greater than opposition across all ages.



TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **Technology and innovation for gender equality is the fourth most prioritized area**, as seven percent of respondents say *“invest in technology to improve women’s access to health services, education, and economic opportunities”* should be the first area their government should focus on. Thirty-two percent of respondents see it as a top-three issue.
- ➔ To promote the use of technology and innovation for gender equality, **50 percent of respondents want the government to “provide equal opportunities for girls and women to study and work in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).”** The second and third most popular governmental actions in this area are to *“address barriers preventing girls and women from accessing, designing, and developing technology”* (38 percent) and *“increase the safety of digital spaces for girls and women”* (37 percent). Nine percent of respondents think the government should do none of the prompted policies and should *“not promote the use of technology and innovation for gender equality.”*



BODILY AUTONOMY AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

- ➔ **Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights is the fifth most prioritized area**, as nine percent of respondents say *“providing access to contraception and family planning, good maternal health, and sex education in schools”* should be the first priority for government action. Twenty-nine percent of respondents see it as a top-three area.
- ➔ In order to improve women’s sexual and reproductive health, **the most popular actions the government should take are to “increase access to accurate information including sexual education in schools” (35 percent), “increase access to sexual health services” (34 percent), and “increase access to contraception and family planning options” (31 percent)**. Six percent of respondents think their government should do none of the prompted policies and should *“not improve women’s rights to sexual and reproductive health.”*
- ➔ **Ten percent of female respondents in Canada state that they have ever had “difficulty accessing their chosen method of contraception,”** and three percent have had *“difficulty accessing abortion and post-abortion care.”*
- ➔ During the Covid-19 pandemic, four percent of female respondents have had *“difficulty accessing contraception and other sexual health services,”* and two percent have had *“difficulty accessing abortion options or post-abortion care.”*



FEMINIST ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

- ➔ **Feminist action for climate justice is the sixth most prioritized area**, as four percent of respondents select *“promote women’s participation in climate change action”* as the top priority for government action. Seventeen percent of respondents see it as a top-three area for government action.
- ➔ To promote women’s efforts to respond to climate change in Canada, 43 percent of respondents think the government should *“promote the training and hiring of women in jobs related to climate change,”* and 36 percent want the government to *“increase girls’ and women’s participation in the development of solutions to tackle climate change.”* Fifteen percent of respondents think the government should do none of the prompted actions.



FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **Fifty-three percent of respondents in Canada, and 60 percent of female respondents, think their government “should increase its funding for gender equality in Canada,”** while 13 percent disagree. This measure is particularly popular among respondents aged 18 to 24 (78 percent, compared to 49 percent of respondents aged 25 and older).
- ➔ Forty-four percent of respondents think that the Canadian government should “increase its funding for international projects and organization fighting for gender equality around the world,” while 19 percent disagree. Support for more investments in gender equality abroad is more pronounced among younger respondents, with 66 percent of those aged 18 to 24 in favor, compared to 36 percent of those aged 45 and older.
- ➔ Fifty-one percent of respondents in Canada see achieving gender equality as “essential to end poverty” around the world. Only 16 percent of respondents disagree.



WHAT ACTIONS ARE RESPONDENTS IN CANADA WILLING TO TAKE?

- ➔ To encourage policymakers to tackle gender equality around the world, **38 percent of respondents in Canada would be willing to “vote in an election for a candidate supporting gender equality.”** Thirty-five would “sign a petition.” Twenty-three percent would “purchase or boycott products from companies based on their views on gender equality,” and 14 percent would “take part in a demonstration or join a movement.”



IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- ➔ Respondents in Canada “agree” (81 percent agree, three percent disagree) that “women should be involved in all aspects of the global health response and recovery to Covid-19.”
- ➔ A majority of respondents (62 percent) believe that the Canadian government’s response to support people through the pandemic has met the needs of women and men equally, but 23 percent think that “inequality between women and men will rise as a consequence of Covid-19.”
- ➔ The emotional toll of Covid-19 seems to be impacting women more than men in Canada. Thirty-eight percent of female respondents, compared to 24 percent of male respondents, say that they “have experienced emotional stress or mental health issues” during the pandemic. Among female respondents aged 18 to 24, 50 percent have experienced stress or mental health issues.

This country data sheet is a supplement to *Citizens Call for a Gender-Equal World: A Roadmap for Action*, a global report on the findings from a 17-country public perception survey on gender equality. For the full report and all country data sheets, please visit: www.focus2030.org and <http://womendeliver.org/citizens-call-for-a-gender-equal-world/>.