

TOOLKIT:

Ensuring a Young Feminist Economy



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About the Author

Mekhalaa Muraly (she/her) worked with Fora as a Research Assistant, researching the development of a toolkit to help establish a 'Young Feminist Economy' in Canada. She is in her final year of undergraduate study pursuing an Honours Double Major in Economics and Finance at Huron at Western University.

Mekhalaa is passionate about gender equity and women empowerment advocacy, and she is looking forward to a future in public policy and sustainable development initiatives. In previous years, she has worked in the non-profit sector in research and communications in fields related to boosting youth engagement and economic development. She has also been involved in academic research projects with specific focus in applied economic research in multidimensional women empowerment policy analysis.

She aspires to use her experiences in intersectional feminist research to advocate for gender equity. She hopes that her positive mindset, passion for cause and perseverance will keep her through the challenges to empower young leaders across the world to choose fields where they could be underrepresented.

About Fora: Network for Change

[Fora: Network for Change](#) delivers programs and skill-building opportunities that prepare the next generation of leaders to amplify their voices in decision-making spaces. Since 2009, Fora (formerly G(irls)20), has been investing in young changemakers experiencing gender-based discrimination, and working to build more inclusive and equitable decision-making spaces by placing young leaders marginalized by their gender at the centre of decision-making processes.

Through renowned leadership training, advocacy, and community-building initiatives, as well as Fora's signature programs – [Rise on Boards](#), the [Global Summit](#), and [Advocacy](#) efforts – Fora helps young trailblazers gain new skills, confidence, supportive networks, and opportunities to lead gender equity movements, advance in their career trajectories, and change the status quo.



What is the Purpose Behind Creating a Toolkit to Support the 'Young Feminist Economy' Initiative?

The Toolkit is designed to strengthen our comprehension of how socio-economic inequalities can be perpetuated by various policies and practices within the economy, both formal and informal. The Toolkit further aims to identify strategies to promote social and economic equity to establish a 'Young Feminist Economy' in Canada. **Policymakers and community-based organizations can use the guidance provided in the Toolkit to effectively implement policy changes and take necessary actions.** The ultimate objective of the Toolkit is to assist changemakers in designing gender-sensitive public policies and services that facilitate equal access to opportunities for young women and others marginalized by their gender in public decision-making.

The Toolkit highlights the perspectives of community members and organizations, outlining their suggested recommendations, including specific actions to advance gender equity and equality in Canada. The inventory of tools help enhance governance and ensure accountability for promoting socio-economic equity, specifically gender equity, aiming to amplify the gender-responsive nature of public policies.

In addition, the Toolkit is intended to inspire and ignite the enthusiasm of young leaders and individuals in governmental sectors, public administrations, and organizations that promote social change, specifically youth-serving organizations, to incorporate novel and inventive approaches to advocate for gender equity in public life. This Toolkit serves as a dynamic instrument that can be constantly updated with effective practices created and disseminated by our society. Emphasizing the significance of continuous gender education, the Toolkit also anticipates that readers will utilize the provided guidance to amplify and refine the concepts presented, fostering a truly gender-responsive economy.





Who is the Toolkit for?

The Toolkit is designed to assist young leaders and decision-making institutions in advocating for and enhancing gender sensitivity through the implementation of policies, legislation, and awareness initiatives. Specifically, parliaments, local deliberative bodies, civil society organizations, gender equality bodies, non-profits, international organizations, and associations focusing on gender equity, women's affairs, and empowerment play a leading role in providing financial support, technical expertise, and legal frameworks to protect and empower gender-marginalized communities. The Toolkit may also support ongoing research and analysis conducted by research institutions to understand the underlying causes of gender inequality and offer evidence-based policy recommendations. Finally, the Toolkit can also aid private sector corporations in promoting gender equity by incorporating well-informed practices into their corporate social responsibility initiatives.

In the following sections, we aim to conduct a thorough analysis and understanding of the needs, interests, and challenges encountered by young leaders, and subsequently compile a comprehensive inventory of tools that can be utilized to affirm society's commitment to advancing the cause of achieving gender equity and equality.

Note: The recommended tools provide suggestions for integrating people, policies, structures, and institutions to establish a 'Young Feminist Economy' in Canada and are not intended to directly address specific challenges or gaps in the Canadian economy.

On Language: We acknowledge that gender equity goes beyond the experiences of cisgender women to include the experiences of all individuals navigating gender-based discrimination. Because research continues to be limited when it comes to individuals with multiple intersecting identities (including trans youth and non-binary youth), some sections of this Toolkit refer to 'young women' based on the data available, recognizing that this does not reflect the experiences of all individuals marginalized by their gender.

Acknowledgements

This toolkit was made possible through the necessary insights of our partners in the civil society space who consulted on the critical task of actioning the young feminist economy framework. We are grateful to our respondents which represent 9 organizations including: Oxfam Canada, Plan International Canada, Young Diplomats of Canada, Basic Income Canada Youth Network, Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity, Missing Children Society of Canada, Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness and TGC (formerly Tech Girls Canada). We extend this gratitude to Kassandra Neranjan the author of our Young Feminist Economy report, and the 40 young leaders who served as informants for that research.

Fora's Young Feminist Economy project including this toolkit resource is funded entirely by the Feminist Response and Recovery Fund delivered through Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE). We are incredibly grateful to WAGE Canada for investing in and trusting our team to conduct this necessary research and develop key resources.



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
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Advancing a STEM
economy where
women thrive | Vers une économie
STIM ou les femmes
prospèrent



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Beyond the Pandemic: Mapping the Canadian Economic Landscape

Young women and everyone marginalized by their gender face disadvantages stemming from a range of factors such as disparities in education and employment, restricted access to resources, household responsibilities and societal expectations influenced by gender and social norms. Below are some statistics to note:

- Based on the OECD's findings in 2022, there is a 16.1% disparity in annual median earnings between women and men working full-time, relative to men's annual median earnings. In the country ranking conducted by the OECD, Canada is ranked as the eighth worst in terms of gender pay gap ("The gender pay gap", 2022).
- As of 2021, the low-income measure¹ reported by Statistics Canada reveals that 11% of women in Canada live with low incomes (Government of Canada, 2023b). This benchmark can be used to highlight the problem of gendered poverty. Women and gender-marginalized individuals experience poverty because of distinctive factors, including sexism, discrimination based on gender, and other systemic barriers such as involvement in low-wage precarious employment. Economic insecurity has a severe negative impact on the lives of women and people navigating gender-based barriers, affecting their safety, quality of life, and access to fundamental necessities like housing, food, and healthcare.



¹ Low-income measures (LIMs) are benchmarks for determining low-income levels, calculated as 50% of the adjusted median household income.

- Certain populations in Canada experience higher levels of core housing need. Research indicates that 2SLGBTQIA+ young people are disproportionately represented within the youth experiencing homelessness population, and they frequently encounter instances of violence rooted in homophobia and transphobia while on the streets or when accessing shelter services (“Youth – Supporting communities to prevent and end homelessness”, 2013).
- As per a 2022 report from the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, 184 women and girls were victims of violent killings, predominantly perpetrated by men. Shockingly, an average of one woman or girl is tragically killed every 48 hours (Dawson et al., 2022). It is important to recognise that women with disabilities, Indigenous women, racialized women, gender-marginalized people and people who are homeless face the highest risk of gender-based violence.
- The presence and leadership of women in decision-making bodies contribute to the creation of more inclusive and representative laws, rulings, and policies which can result in improved social, economic, and political outcomes for individuals of all genders. While advancements are being achieved in promoting gender diversity and inclusivity in leadership positions, significant disparities persist in the representation of women and gender-marginalized people in professional and political domains. For instance, disaggregated data on the Canadian labor market indicates that Black women, Indigenous women, women with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people collectively occupy less than 1% of senior leadership positions held by women (Hamilton, 2022).
- A global pandemic such as COVID-19 disproportionately impacts women, and gender-marginalized communities, primarily because a considerable number of women work in frontline positions in healthcare, caregiving, cleaning, and other essential sectors (Gunraj, 2020). The specific gendered consequences of the pandemic include a heightened risk of intimate partner violence due to isolation, as well as increased instances of food and income insecurity stemming from job losses and economic distress.

While numerous community organizations and non-profits actively strive to address the prevailing economic and social justice challenges within the Canadian economy by engaging the youth in their programming initiatives, it is important to acknowledge that the **tokenization of young people** remains a prevalent issue.

Youth Tokenomics: Tokenization of Young People and its Impact on the Canadian Economy

Tokenization of young people entails superficially engaging youth without truly incorporating them into decision-making procedures. They may be active in organizations and communities, yet they still lack a voice, lack access to information, and are left out of important discussions (Smith, 2022).

Tokenism is a pervasive problem that impacts everyone involved, specifically the youth being engaged as they tend to feel unappreciated and overlooked. Involving young people in a tokenistic manner not only hinders the development of their leadership skills but also fosters frustration that may lead to disengagement in the future (Smith, 2022). Organizations frequently interacting with young people must be able to identify when their efforts become tokenistic, enabling them to shift towards building genuine relationships with young people. It is important for organizations to promote youth-led initiatives by embracing a collaborative approach that involves young leaders in decision-making. This can have an empowering effect on youth, granting them major influence and input while also providing access to the resources and expertise of other members in the organization.

The challenging aspect of tackling tokenism is that most organizations often struggle to recognize it, given that tokenistic practices are rarely deliberate in nature. The lack of confidence in young people's capacity to lead their organization's initiatives reflects society's view of them as leaders of tomorrow rather than leaders of today. Acknowledging the significance of young leaders' perspectives is crucial, as they possess unique insights into the challenges faced by their community in various areas, such as health, economy, governance, education, and the environment (Ferreira, 2019). Only when young people's perspectives are heard, considered, and honoured in the decision-making process, do their voices have equal opportunities to make a profound impact.

Overcoming tokenism involves recognizing young individuals as important stakeholders in shaping impactful and inclusive policies, programs, and environments. This includes empowering young leaders to determine what engagement means to them, expanding their involvement across planning, implementing, and monitoring activities, embracing diversity

of thought and representation, and, lastly, creating a collaborative and inclusive work culture (Anup & Youth Advisory Board Members, 2020).

Young leaders of today need to be valued, respected, and included in all levels of decision-making. They possess the potential to be powerful agents of change and, therefore, need to be treated as such. This would not only help them succeed in their goals but also allow us to create a truly inclusive and empowering environment. Concerted efforts are required to ensure that young individuals are not merely tokenized but are actively and meaningfully involved in shaping a more inclusive and equitable economic landscape.



From Voices to Visions: Collaborative Consultations for a 'Young Feminist Economy'

In the process of creating the Toolkit to establish a 'Young Feminist Economy' in Canada, Fora engaged in consultations with nine community organizations and respondents from distinct parts of Canada, ranging from local to national or even global operations. These organizations are involved in diverse aspects of social change, such as promoting gender equity, combating inequality and poverty, advocating for children's rights and gender equality, championing the benefits of basic income, conducting public engagement on global issues and sustainability, working to enhance social connectedness, and supporting immigrant women in finding employment, among other important causes. Fora seeks to foster inclusivity by involving diverse stakeholders, including community members, local leaders, young individuals, women's rights advocacy organizations, and other non-profits focused on social change.





Community consultations were done by conducting one-on-one interviews that lasted about one hour each. The research process followed ethical protocols and integrated principles and strategies related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). The approach also demonstrated a profound regard for safeguarding the confidentiality of data and honouring the interviewees' consent for sharing the findings.

Fora recognizes the importance of consultations in collecting stories and data from community organizations. This helps us understand the specific needs, aspirations, and obstacles of the community we serve, ensuring that the Toolkit's content aligns with the lived experiences and priorities of the target audience. The consultation process allows Fora to gain in-depth insights into the unique challenges faced by young people, particularly young women, and gender-marginalized individuals, within the Canadian economy. Through these conversations, Fora strives to create a safe and inclusive space where the voices that have been marginalized, universalized, and oppressed can be amplified and valued.

Fora uses storytelling, a powerful feminist research methodology, to pass the mic to young women and individuals navigating gender-based barriers, enabling them to share their challenges and aspirations. By embracing qualitative research and storytelling, Fora hopes to emphasize the importance of everyone's unique journey and how these narratives collectively contribute to shaping a more equitable future.

Moreover, engaging in consultations builds trust and meaningful relationships with community organizations. The active participation of changemakers from these organizations in the Toolkit development process is deeply appreciated, as they recognize the value in sharing their work and recommendations while considering it a powerful tool for advancing their respective causes. This collaborative approach distinguishes it from formal research studies, ensuring that the work we do remains accountable to the community members, offering transparency and efficient implementation strategies. Fora strives to create a Toolkit that is relevant, effective, and impactful in advancing gender equity and promoting positive social and economic outcomes for young leaders in Canada.

Data Collection and Analysis: Guiding Questions to Identify Resources and Gaps in the Canadian Economy

- What are the efforts undertaken by you/your organization in collaborating/engaging with young women and gender-marginalized communities locally/across the country?
- Which social structures/institutions/policies most impact your organization and how?
- In relation to your organization's work, what are the biggest gaps you see within our current economy?
- How can the Government of Canada better engage with organizations like yourselves to address the gaps you previously mentioned?
- If your organization were able to receive new funding to address a specific issue impacting young women and others marginalized by their gender, what key issue(s) would you most like to have the funding address?
- What resources/tools would help your organization (and youth leaders involved in your community) engage more in conversation around Canada's future economy?
- Did your organization review the 2023 Federal Budget? If so, what does your organization view as its key successes and gaps?

Empowering Change: Understanding the Young Feminist Economy Vision

An article published by the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) maintains that “building Feminist Economies is about creating a world with clean air to breathe and water to drink, with meaningful labor and care for ourselves and our communities, where we can all enjoy our economic, sexual and political autonomy” (“Building Feminist Economies”, 2020).

The vision of a Young Feminist Economy envisages a transformative paradigm that empowers and uplifts young women and gender-marginalized individuals in all aspects of public life. It envisions an economy that breaks away from traditional structures, challenging systemic barriers and ensuring equal opportunities for all genders. This vision embodies a collective aspiration to create a thriving economy that fosters the well-being and agency of every individual, fostering a society where diversity is celebrated.

Feminist Economics adopts an intersectional approach which maintains that “gender does not exist in isolation but instead configures gendered experiences through interactions between different systems of organizing power in society” (“Intersectionality and feminist economics”, 2021). Throughout history, variations in gendered experiences among young women and gender diverse individuals have been an integral aspect of both society and the feminist movement. Recognizing the epistemological and political value of these differences is crucial as we endeavor to bring about social transformation. Acknowledging the diversity of young leaders, including aspects such as race, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socio-economic background, is essential. It raises a fundamental question about the possibility of universalizing the oppression faced by young women and individuals facing gender-based barriers. The crux lies in understanding that young women and gender-marginalized individuals do not share an identical form of patriarchal oppression, thus rendering their political struggles distinct (“Intersectionality and feminist economics”, 2021).

In this section, we illuminate the perspectives of respondents representing their community organizations regarding the essence of a Young Feminist Economy and the steps needed to actualize the vision.

One respondent envisions a Young Feminist Economy as an economy which:

“... properly values the economic contributions of young women and gender-diverse folks as they are often involved in precarious work – and they are underpaid for the work that they do – so really an economy that centers them, their expertise, and their needs.”

Along the same lines, another suggested that:

“A Young Feminist Economy recognizes unspoken acknowledgements of the traditional economy – we already operate in an economy that centers young people. (...) However, it operates on sexism (...) we need to recognize that young women and gender-diverse folks participate extensively in unpaid labor and care work and value young people’s contribution including both paid and unpaid.”



In the pursuit of a young feminist economy, one respondent emphasized the importance of constantly re-evaluating the conditions of success for women, allowing them to define success on their own terms:

“It is about breaking away from imposed definitions and providing women the agency to determine their own paths to success, fostering an environment where self-definition and empowerment are at the core.”

Another respondent expressed their perspective on basic income, stating:

“I see basic income as a way for young women and gender-diverse people to create space for the things that bring them joy, enabling more opportunities for resistance and meaningful participation in the community.”

The Toolkit embraces these diverse perspectives, recognizing that they collectively contribute to shaping a more equitable and inclusive economic future for all.



Mind the Gap: Understanding the Key Challenges in the Canadian Economy

The following outline the primary categories of gaps identified by respondents during community consultations:

I. Gap in the Care Economy

One of the prominent gaps in the Canadian economy lies in the lack of investment in the care sector, particularly in frontline staff and childcare workers. Respondents highlight the necessity to allocate greater resources to social protection, healthcare, long-term care, childcare, and community care.

II. Unaffordable Housing and Homelessness Crisis

Another significant challenge faced by the Canadian economy is the issue of unaffordable housing and homelessness. To combat this pressing concern, respondents advocate for treating housing as a human right and implementing measures to subsidize housing and increase accessibility.

III. Youth Education and Employment

Many young individuals find themselves outside the realms of education, employment, or training. Respondents stress the necessity of ensuring that young people are in school, reskilling, and upskilling while the economic economy recovers from the pandemic.

IV. Underfunding of Non-Profit and Social Services

The non-profit sector, charitable organizations, and social services face lack of federal funding, jeopardizing their invaluable work in supporting communities and advocating for gender equity and the rights of equity-deserving groups.

In the parts that follow, the Toolkit delves into a comprehensive exploration and analysis of the gaps identified by respondents and community organizations within the Canadian economy.



I. Caring for Caregivers: Lack of Investment in Frontline Staff and Childcare Workers

There is a common misconception that healthcare is not as crucial as sectors like resources, finance, manufacturing, gas, and mining, which are believed to drive the economy. However, healthcare and social assistance, accounting for nearly 13% of Canada's GDP ("Canada: GDP by industry 2022", 2023), make a substantial contribution to the economy, even surpassing other major sectors. Furthermore, the care sector is highly labor-intensive, representing at least 21% of all paid labor, making it a vital contributor to the economy (Armstrong et al., 2021). It is important to note that this calculation does not include the significant contribution of unpaid labor in care work. In reality, a care economy encompasses a wide range of services, both paid and unpaid, that cover various aspects of health, including childcare and eldercare, as well as social and domestic services ("What is the care economy?", 2023). One respondent reiterated that the "economy needs to focus on the needs of people rather than the needs of corporations" and added, "investing a lot more in social protection, healthcare, long-term care, childcare, and community care is important."

During 2022, over half of women aged 15 and older (nearly 8.4 million women) were engaged in providing care to children and care-dependent adults, either through paid or unpaid means (Government of Canada, 2023a). It is noteworthy to highlight that there are substantial gender differences among unpaid caregivers. Around one third of women (32%) took on the responsibility of providing unpaid care for children, while nearly 23% of women offered unpaid care to adults with long-term conditions or disabilities. These percentages exceeded the corresponding figures for men, which were 26% and 19%, respectively (Government of Canada, 2023a). It is interesting to observe that among unpaid caregivers, women dedicate an average of 10 hours to caregiving, while men provide around 6 hours of care (Government of Canada, 2023a).

According to the study, "Women Working in Paid Care Occupations", findings reveal that women in care occupations earn lower wages on average compared to men, with an **11% gender income gap**. Additionally, the study indicates that immigrant women and those from visible minority groups were less likely to hold well-paid care positions in comparison to their male counterparts (Government of Canada, 2022a).

Despite the possible rewards of being a caregiver, paid or unpaid care often has an impact on a person's physical and mental health. The health care system and its frontline workers caring for Canadians have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting their mental health, health risks due to exposure to COVID-19 cases, increased workloads, and personal lives (Government of Canada, 2022b). Concerning unpaid care, it has been reported that women were more inclined than men to disclose adverse effects resulting from caregiving, such as experiencing fatigue, worry, or anxiety (Pinault et al., 2023). One respondent substantiated this by stating, "we're not investing in the workers who are the foundation of the economy...we also see that frontline staff have gone through a very intense period in the pandemic, particularly frontline anti-violence workers who experience vicarious trauma and struggles in their own lives...with rising costs of living and inflation, their wages have not kept up." She added, "supporting early learning and childcare workers making sure that they have decent working conditions and ensuring that they have a living wage is so important."

In our community consultations, majority of respondents emphasized that the most crucial gaps lie in providing adequate support for workers in the care economy, who predominantly comprise women, especially racialized and newcomer women. These gaps encompass recognizing the value of unpaid care labor and ensuring fair compensation for paid care labor in the Canadian economy.

II. Unlocking the Door: Need for Housing as a Human Right

A significant number of participants interviewed during community consultations voiced serious concerns regarding the existing gaps in addressing the homelessness crisis in Canada.

One respondent asserted,

“I think the government has an opportunity to intervene in the market driven approach to housing to treat housing as a right, as human right, to subsidize that and make it accessible.”

Another quoted,

“Housing and financial support is important specifically for women and gender - diverse people who are fleeing situations of violence...investments in affordable housing, in shelter spacing, in transitional housing and a huge influx of federal dollars could make a big difference in everyone's life.”

The government, policymakers, and community organizations have exerted significant endeavors to address the escalating homelessness crisis. The Canadian National Housing Strategy (NHS) is a collaborative effort between the federal government, public, private, and non-profit sectors aimed at revitalizing affordable housing nationwide. This 10-year, \$72+ billion-dollar strategy combines funding, grants, and loans to develop diverse and accessible communities, fostering affordable and stable living conditions for Canadians (Dionne et al., 2023). In 2019, the Government of Canada implemented the “Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy” that supports NHS outcomes and allocates funding to urban, Indigenous, rural, and remote communities, enabling them to tackle local homelessness challenges. The primary objective of this program is to assist the most vulnerable Canadians in “securing safe, stable, and affordable housing and to achieve a nationwide reduction of chronic homelessness by 50% by fiscal year 2027 to 2028” (Canada, 2023).

Nevertheless, in the past year, the challenges faced by individuals in Canada have escalated. Issues like inflation and increasing interest rates, the rapid depletion of affordable housing, and disproportionate barriers for newcomers to Canada have compounded the difficulties in achieving adequate housing rights ("Budget 2023 fails to address Canada's housing emergency", 2023). The issue now demands heightened focus as it poses numerous adverse effects on the economy.

It is estimated that there are around 235,000 individuals experiencing homelessness in Canada, but this number might be significantly higher due to the presence of hidden individuals experiencing homelessness.

On any given night, between 25,000 and 35,000 people experience homelessness in the country, with

20%

of them being youth between the ages of 13 and 24 (Blair, 2023).

Additionally,

30%

of those experiencing homelessness in Canada are from Indigenous communities (Blair, 2023).

Toronto has the highest number of people experiencing homelessness in the country, with 10,811 individuals reported as "actively homeless" in the first quarter of 2023 (Draaisma, 2023). This has prompted the Toronto City Council to declare homelessness an emergency.

While the government has implemented various programs and initiatives aimed at improving the housing situation, such as increased funding and investment, the construction of emergency and permanent shelters, and policy measures addressing unemployment and poverty, community organizations like the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) have expressed their concerns about the issue in press releases stating: "For thousands of Canadians who will not be able to pay their rent this week, they will find no relief or meaningful support in this budget." They further add, "The budget does include \$4 billion for an Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy, which is positive, but far short of what's needed...The budget indicates that this will be delivered by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), rather than by an Indigenous-led organization" ("Budget 2023 ignores Canada's worsening housing and homelessness crises", 2023).

III. Breaking Barriers, Building Careers: Addressing the State of Youth Education and Employment

The current generation of Canadian youth, aged 15 to 34, shows greater educational attainment, entrepreneurial drive, and a global outlook compared to any previous generation. However, there is still room for progress and development in the youth education and employment domains, as evidenced by the responses from our community consultations.

Status on education of youth, specifically young women:

Recent years have witnessed an increase in education levels among Canadian youth, leading to enhanced labor market engagement and higher earnings, particularly for women. Despite these positive developments, challenges persist in the transition from education to employment and in fully leveraging the skills of young individuals. One respondent validated this issue by stating, "I think having more resources in society to support young people's holistic education is really important because I think we do dis-service to the next generation when we're not giving them the experiences and skills that they can actually use once they leave the classroom".

Moreover, young women face unique challenges and responsibilities, often shouldering caregiving duties that young men do not. The Labour Market Information Council (LMIC) survey highlights that "family-related obligations are why close to one-third of women aged 16 to 29 (32%) are not in employment, education or training, compared with only 5% of men" (Goulet, 2021). Recent advancements in the labour market, such as the ongoing efforts to implement universal childcare in Canada and providing work-from-home opportunities for women, can be viewed as potential ways to address the existing gap (Jean et al., 2023).

Work-Study Balancing Act:

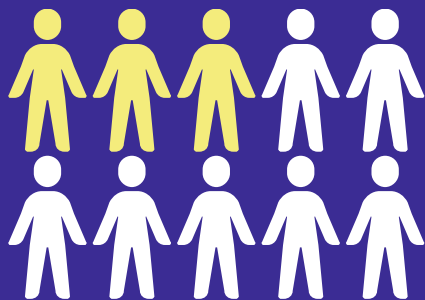
According to Statistics Canada's 2022 data, more than 41% of Canadians ages 15 to 24 work full-time while studying, with 72% working part-time during their studies (Jean et al., 2023). Juggling work and education can offer non-financial benefits, such as acquiring work experience, valuable workplace skills, and expanding networks. However, students who are compelled to devote significant time to work due to financial constraints might encounter academic difficulties and undergo stress and exhaustion.

41%
of Canadians ages
15 to 24 work full-
time while studying

One respondent emphasized the importance of an income floor for young people, enabling them to "make the choice to leave precarious work environments instead of having to decide between paying rent or putting food on the table." She added, "Student debt is increasing, and access to university education is becoming more and more prohibitive, so we believe that basic income would help students have greater access to education and lower financial burden.

Youth Skills and Job Mismatches:

Unfortunately, mismatches between youth skills and available jobs are a common occurrence. One respondent passionately stated, "Credential recognition is not letting young women, specifically immigrant women in STEM, get the jobs they want - the idea that you need Canadian experience to find employment is a huge barrier to them. Something we can advocate for is changing the norm...you have women with two PhDs who run their own research labs in their country, and they only earn a minimum wage here... These women might have got a survival job where they barely make a living wage, and the government considers that a success, but it is not as these women have so much potential, credentials, and capacity."



Of Canadians aged 25 to 34 with a STEM degree, only 30% of young women work in an occupation closely related to their field of study, compared to 60% of young men.

Statistics Canada's findings for Canadians aged 25 to 34 indicate that only approximately 30% of young women with a STEM degree reported working in an occupation closely related to their field of study, compared to around 60% for young men (Jean et al., 2023). Moreover, those with degrees in the humanities, arts, and social and behavioral sciences exhibited the highest levels of overqualification. The findings underscore a significant issue in the current Canadian economy: It is not sufficient to simply secure a job; young individuals also need to find employment that allows them to fully utilize their education; otherwise, they risk losing potential future earnings.



The Pandemic and its Impact on Education and Social Capital:

One respondent mentioned, “For the first time in a very long time, one in four young people were not in education, employment, or training... Because of the pandemic, young women and gender-diverse youth, in particular, but young people as a whole, have experienced less opportunity to make connections, network, and build their social capital.” She added, “When you lose a job or detach from the labour market earlier in your career, that can have long-lasting scarring effects - it reduces our economic productivity and our country's GDP... It is important to ensure that young people are in school, reskilling, and upskilling while the economy recovers because it's not beneficial to have that detachment from the labour market.”

When asked about specific gaps in the ongoing initiatives to promote youth education and employment, one respondent stated, “I've seen that there are a lot of interesting initiatives for young people up until the age of 24-25, but one of the things I am noticing a gap in is for individuals between the ages of 25 to 30.”

Younger workers faced increased job insecurity during the pandemic, leading to higher chances of losing work hours, becoming unemployed, or experiencing income loss. Notably, three specific groups, including young Indigenous individuals, young adults with disabilities, and young Black adults, were significantly negatively impacted in terms of education and job-related skills training, with a higher likelihood of postponing or stopping postsecondary education (Environics Institute for Survey Research et al., 2021).

Research also suggests that the shift to a post-pandemic lifestyle, involving increased online learning and work from home, resulted in a significant decline in young people's mental health due to social distancing and isolation (Environics Institute for Survey Research et al., 2021). There is a pressing need for society to prioritize mental health as a crucial component of a comprehensive public health approach, as it has the potential to bring about substantial positive changes in outcomes for Canada's youth.

In short, continued focus and investment in youth education and employment are imperative to pave the way for a brighter and more promising future.

IV. Investing in Impact: The Need to Support Social Services, Non-Profits and Community Organizations

Most respondents in our community consultations voiced concerns about the significant lack of funding for non-profit and charitable organizations, hindering their ability to carry out impactful social work. They recommend that both federal and provincial governments must prioritize investing in high-quality programming within the non-profit sector – it is worth noting that Canada's Official Development Assistance still falls short of the UN target of 0.7% of the gross national income (GNI), making it an important gap that needs attention.

One respondent asserted,

“2SLGBTQIA+ and the non-profit sector must understand that they play a role in challenging power, pushing for policy change and advocacy ... we are doing life-saving work... Creating spaces that protect gender-diverse communities is necessary for these people to feel valued and participate in society... But, our sector is extremely underfunded and we are not really able to do the work that we want to. Government and market forces should recognize that they need to do better for people at the margins.”

Non-profits like Imagine Canada join the conversation suggesting that while there are many success points in the 2023 Federal Budget, “Action on long standing recommendations related to the creation of a home in the federal government for charities and nonprofits, improved data on the sector, and the urgent need for core funding were noticeably absent” (“Budget 2023: A missed opportunity for structural change”, 2023). They further express dissatisfaction with the government's budget for neglecting numerous recommendations from the nonprofit sector, including those concerning increased international development spending, support for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, and the establishment of a Canada Mental Health Transfer.

Similarly, Development and Peace – Caritas Canada published an article stating that a coalition of more than 80 NGOs, comprising various development, humanitarian, environmental, and advocacy organizations, expressed their disappointment regarding the reduction of total funding for international assistance by at least \$1.3 billion, constituting a 15% cut, in comparison to Budget 2022 (“Canadian aid sector responds to Federal Budget 2023”, 2023).

To sum up, it is widely agreed that increasing funding for the social services sector is essential to address the social and economic challenges arising from multiple crises, such as climate change, hunger, conflict, and the erosion of human rights and democratic values, to name a few.



Toolkit Tales: Budget 2023 Through Our Eyes

In Kassandra Neranjan's (2023) analysis of the Budget for Fora, she highlights that "there are several gains made through direct investments to support young leaders, but the budget fails to make meaningful and intersectional advancements across different economic sectors to empower the agency, autonomy, and leadership of young women and those navigating gender-based discrimination." Additionally, she provides specific illustrations of investment gaps, such as the absence of "programs or career opportunities for Women in STEM or parental leave support", as well as the inadequate funding for "student loan/debt incentives to encourage young leaders to pursue careers in clean energy". She emphasizes the successful investments in the care economy that have significantly benefited women and Personal Support Workers, but asserts that "Without greater institutional supports, for example for nurses to meaningfully live in rural areas (afford the cost of living, ensure physical safety especially for racial minorities, and access transportation), these measures fall short of holistic considerations for women in the care economy."



Discover the insights gathered from our community consultations, where we delve into the key successes and gaps of the 2023 Canadian Federal Budget:

"We were very happy to see the extension of the sexual and reproductive health fund and that's something we and our member associations feel is an essential component of gender justice in Canada...We were really disappointed to see that there was a lack of action on the gendered housing crisis, and no new actual additional dollar for affordable housing."

Amanda Arella, Young Diplomats of Canada

"I think our biggest concern is that we didn't want this budget to be an austerity budget."

Amar Nijhawan, Oxfam Canada

"There isn't any other proposal right now to push for basic income...we are talking about guaranteed basic income or basic income beyond something like the disability benefit hasn't been included in the budget at all so it's a total absence."

Ellen Spannagel, Canada Youth Network

"One of gaps is that women and gender-diverse folk are the majority of the population in Canada but we have barely invested anything in them. We must invest a minimum of 5% of the total budget but we are nowhere close to that...Acknowledging intersectionality and funding each one of them - we would like to see diversity of funding into different programs and a significant increase in funding."

Samantha, TGC (Tech Girls Canada)

Bridges to a Young Feminist Economy: Tools and Resources for a Thriving Future

During our community consultations, a remarkable observation emerged as all respondents presented almost identical feedback regarding the resources and tools needed to enhance their organizations' engagement in discussions about Canada's future economy. They expressed a strong desire for the Government of Canada to foster greater collaboration with organizations like theirs to effectively address the challenges ahead.

How to use the recommended inventory of tools?

These tools do not directly tackle the specific challenges faced by the Canadian economy or address the identified gaps. Instead, they offer suggestions on integrating people, policies, structures, and institutions and provide guidance on the necessary steps to further the dialogue on establishing a 'Young Feminist Economy' in Canada.



Tool #1: Hear Us Out: Transparent Consultation Process

Non-profit and community-based organizations, representing individuals and communities both locally and nationwide are calling for a more transparent and inclusive consultation process. They seek increased outreach to facilitate meaningful engagement. Advocating for longer lead times during engagement, they aim to gather valuable feedback from all stakeholders to effectively inform the government. Additionally, community-based organizations appreciate the opportunity to intervene in the legislative and budgetary processes through roundtables or summits, where parliamentarians and policymakers can reach out to them. They emphasize the importance of keeping all participants informed about the discussions and next steps. They note that ongoing communication with the federal government during their consultations is not a regular practice and firmly believe that addressing this gap will ensure a more transparent consultation process.

What is Government Consultation?

It refers to procedures by which governments gather input from individuals or groups regarding policies, programs, or services that directly impact them or in which they have a significant stake (Government of Canada, 2021b). Consultations serve as a tool employed by the government to shape the understanding of an issue, explore or analyze various options, and assess existing policies. The incorporation of public participation in the policy process is crucial for the success of governmental initiatives, particularly in the context of Canada's increasingly diverse, educated, and well-informed society. Public participation entails a reciprocal communication process, where all involved parties actively share views, information, and ideas, engaging in critical reflection and dialogue. This creates an environment of genuine listening, showing respect for all perspectives and opinions.



What is Citizen Engagement?

Citizen engagement stands apart from consultation due to its emphasis on thorough deliberation and dialogue, a focus on finding common ground, extended time commitments, and its capacity to enhance civic participation (Government of Canada, 2021b).

The Government of Canada acknowledges that both Parliament and stakeholder groups, along with voluntary associations, play a crucial role in representing the perspectives of Canadians on public policy matters. They have made considerable efforts to ensure transparency in the policy development process. For instance, the Policy Statement outlines the Department of Justice's dedication to engaging Canadians in the creation of legislation, policies, and services "through adequately resourced processes that are transparent, accessible, accountable, supported by information, and are inclusive of Canada's diversity" (Government of Canada, 2021a). However, important questions that arise here are:

- To what extent is the consultation process truly reciprocal in nature, based on trust and mutual respect, such that any relevant information in the ongoing process of policy development is shared with all stakeholders involved?
- Do consultations also take into account the perspectives of individuals, not just big industries, associations, businesses, and non-profits? One respondent emphasized the significance of accessible consultation, stating, "if you haven't gone to university yet, people assume that your ideas are not worth listening to."
- How can the issue raised by a respondent be addressed, as they noted, "the youth sometimes don't have the time and money to participate in these conversations and be an activist, so it's a circular problem"?

Given these concerns, how can we effectively apply the tool to find the solution?

It is essential to equip young individuals with resources to conduct independent research, analyze evidence, and scrutinize government policies based on evidence such that their participation in the consultation process is meaningful. Developing handbooks that cover research methods, requesting evidence, understanding the policy-making process, writing pre-budget submissions, and providing policy feedback would address the current gap in policymaking and significantly improve the consultation process's effectiveness. Evidence for Democracy's work in providing non-profits that advocate for evidence-based policymaking with handbooks and toolkits to assist them in understanding and navigating the processes of budgeting and policymaking.

Once young leaders have been equipped to take part in the consultation process, it becomes crucial for them to understand how to directly engage with policymakers and actively contribute to budgetary processes, allowing them to effectively present their valuable insights. Therefore, a set of resource guides to provide young individuals with information on directly engaging in budgeting processes, both at the federal and provincial municipal levels, would be highly beneficial. Creating a guide for how a youth-serving organization can conduct a consultation that contributes to the pre-budget discussions would also be effective. These resources should explain the consultation and engagement process in an accessible manner, demystifying it and offering guidance on collaborative efforts. Sometimes, young individuals and organizations may hesitate to submit their feedback due to uncertainty about where to begin. If the federal government could develop a universal comprehensive guide to address this gap, it would assist in enhancing civic literacy.

Among other considerations, a transparent consultation process involves addressing specific questions to tailor public involvement methods that align with policymakers' objectives ("Viewfinder: A policy maker's Guide to Public Involvement", n.d.):

Purpose:

Is the consultation aimed at involving people in policy development or generating innovative policy options?

Duration:

Will the exercise span an extended period (e.g., an issue forum) or be a one-time event (e.g., a one-day workshop)?

Use of Information:

Are participants to be provided with information, or do you seek their immediate responses to a specific issue?

Time:

Have you allowed enough time to ensure sufficient input from participants?

Group discussion:

Are you seeking participants to engage in discussions and debates with others?

Nature of responses:

Do you prefer qualitative or quantitative feedback?

Effective Approaches Used by Federal and Provincial Governments for Consultations with Individuals and Community-Based Organizations as outlined by Municipal World's article titled "Four Ways to Engage Citizens in Local Government" (Froman, 2019):

Mixed-Method Approach:

Many Canadian municipalities are adopting a comprehensive approach to public involvement by combining traditional face-to-face consultations with innovative online tools. The City of Toronto's employment lands consultation process in 2013 exemplifies this mixed-method approach, utilizing various communication and engagement tools such as stakeholder roundtable sessions, public open houses, online questionnaires, social media campaigns, and more. This diverse range of methods successfully engaged residents, community groups, associations, organizations, and other stakeholders, enabling their feedback to be documented accurately and incorporated into the final policies.

Crowdsourcing:

Crowdsourcing and online ideation are widely employed by government agencies to implement open government plans. Crowdsourcing involves inviting groups of people to submit, discuss, and refine ideas related to specific questions or problems posed by organizations. This approach is commonly used for various purposes, including pooling collective knowledge, micro-volunteering, crowd-creation, crowd-voting, and crowdfunding. An example of crowdsourcing in Canada is the British Columbia government's Apps 4 Climate Action contest in 2010, where Canadian software developers were invited to develop applications for web and mobile devices to raise awareness of climate change and reduce carbon pollution. The government shared its climate and greenhouse gas emission data to facilitate the creation of innovative and creative climate action applications.

Forums and Panels:

Citizen panels, summits, assemblies, and deliberative polls, offer effective ways to involve a small group of citizens in focused discussions on critical policy and governance matters. While they may have a more limited participant pool compared to social media-based engagement, deliberative methods ensure inclusivity of under-represented groups. Toronto Community Housing has also employed participatory budgeting processes over the last few years, involving residents in decision-making on capital fund usage for community improvements.

Tool #2: Walk the Talk: Turning Consultations into Real Change

Many consultations occur with the women's rights sector, young individuals, and individuals navigating gender-based discrimination. However, these consultations often do not lead to meaningful engagement, or the adoption of the ideas shared by those being consulted. The challenge also extends to smaller grassroots groups, where roundtable discussions can sometimes lack lasting impact. This issue extends across the government and affects various communities, including Indigenous communities, racialized communities and new immigrants. To truly engage people and create policies that positively impact lives, it is essential for the government, administrative officials and policymakers to move beyond surface-level input and avoid cherry-picking perspectives from the panelists.

The development of this tool draws on the insights acquired from the 'Guidelines for Productive Regulatory Consultations' created by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, which highlights strategies to ensure consultations are effective and influential (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, n.d.).

Establishing a continuous, positive, and professional connection between the government and stakeholders is essential for achieving valuable results in consultations.

- Clarity about the purpose and objectives of the consultation is vital for a positive relationship.
- All stakeholders, especially those most affected, should have a chance to contribute their views, ensuring balanced representation.
- Transparency in the process, decision-making, and how stakeholder input will be used is crucial for building trust.
- The government should be accountable by documenting how stakeholders' views were considered and explaining any reasons for not incorporating them.

Effective regulatory proposals are the result of careful planning. Creating a consultation plan demands upfront investments in time, budget, and effort.

- Consultation plan should clearly communicate the approach and guidelines for interested parties to decide on their participation.
- Stakeholders can offer input on the consultation plan and throughout the policy development process.
- Tailoring the plan to the expected impact and scope of the regulations ensures convenient and resource-appropriate mechanisms for stakeholder input.
- Consultations need to be initiated at the early stages of policy development such that sufficient time is granted for stakeholders to educate themselves, analyze the issues, hold internal discussions, and craft a well-informed response.

Departmental Coordination, Participant Inclusion and Budgeting in Consultations

- Interdepartmental discussions and coordination provide officials with the chance to assess how their initiative aligns with other departments regulating the same stakeholders. This enables the government to present a unified voice and deliver consistent messages.
- Involving stakeholders in pre-consultations at an early stage would help in the selection of suitable consultation methods based on the proposal's size, scope, regional factors, and stakeholder types. The chosen methods could include interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, forums, and more.
- Officials should consider the valuable input of individuals with diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and expertise. The level of participation of participants will vary based on their interest in the matter, the potential impact of decisions on them, and their ability to engage effectively.
- Budgeting for consultations involves allocating funds for various aspects such as communication, technical resources, logistics, third-party support like facilitators, participant funding, and more.

Monitoring and Ongoing Evaluation

- Continuous evaluation during the consultation process allows officials to assess the successful implementation of the consultation plan, measure the validity and reliability of the gathered information, and identify any adjustments to achieve objectives.
- When evaluating consultations, two main aspects should be considered: (i) the effectiveness of the process itself, and (ii) the achieved outcomes.
- Both consultation officials and stakeholders should be involved in the evaluation process.
- End-of-process evaluation should assess the quality of the collected information and advice, the level of integration of results into the regulatory initiative, and the overall success of the consultation process.

Feedback and Accountability

- Obtaining feedback is crucial for accountability, and it should be collected both during and after the consultations. Feedback can be gathered informally or through interim reports, questionnaires, and evaluations during the process. If stakeholders' input couldn't be incorporated into the proposed regulations, officials should provide clear explanations for this.

It is imperative to ensure that government consultations lead to meaningful action, reflecting the perspectives and input of stakeholders for effective policymaking.



Tool #3: Pave the Way: Engaging Youth in Policy Co-Creation and Development



Youth participation in the co-creation of policies has numerous benefits for young individuals, including skill development, self-perception as citizens, and involvement in policy design and implementation (OECD, 2017). Firstly, it fosters transferable non-cognitive skills and competences, providing substantive knowledge and practical skills. Secondly, it enhances self-awareness and identity, leading to increased resilience and well-being. Young leaders learn to process information, build decision-making abilities, and gain a better understanding of government processes, promoting public transparency and accountability. Lastly, policy makers can use youth input to improve program design and implementation, increasing ownership and success of initiatives.

One respondent emphasized the importance of educating and involving youth in policy development, expressing, “It is in our hands to build a different future than what currently exists, but many young people are often left wondering how they can contribute. We are motivated by the passion that young women have to create change and want to address the uncertainty about how to get from idea to action.”

Young leaders should be involved in participatory budgeting at different levels by engaging in extensive consultations and voicing their funding priorities. Young activists and leaders must advocate for recommendations that align with realistic budgetary requirements to address their demands and concerns effectively. Building coalitions and movements is essential in this process.

Youth Participation should be Youth-Centered

- Youth participation should be authentic and centered around young people's realities, encompassing their visions and concerns. It should be transparent, voluntary, respectful, relevant, inclusive, and accountable. The topics important to youth are diverse, ranging from national youth policies and poverty-reduction strategies to education, adolescent sexual and reproductive health, employment, rights frameworks, and gender policies.
- Adopting an intersectional approach to youth participation is essential to recognize and address the diverse experiences and needs of young individuals.

Recognize Levels of Youth Participation

- At the lowest level of participation, young people are merely informed of policies and the intentions behind these policies made by adults. Although their role is passive, they are considered stakeholders who need to be informed about the policymaking process.
- At the level of consultative participation, young people can be involved actively or passively. While adults mainly dominate the policy process, young people's opinions are taken seriously.
- Collaborative participation, the third level of involvement, allows young people to become active partners alongside adults in decision-making processes. While initiated mainly by adults, young individuals can take self-directed actions, influence, and challenge the processes and outcomes. They actively contribute to formulating solutions, and their advice and recommendations are integrated.
- Empowering youth with complete autonomy represents the highest level of participation, where young people hold the authority for final decision-making. By taking on the role of leaders, young individuals initiate and undertake projects centered around issues they have identified independently.

Implement Active Collaboration with Youth, Specifically, Young Women and Everyone Marginalised by their Gender

- Active collaboration occurs when young individuals participate in the development, execution, and oversight of policies and programs. This objective can be accomplished by engaging them in internship or fellowship initiatives.
- Due to their practical understanding of youth-related matters, young individuals have the potential to collaborate in research by contributing to indicator and methodology design, data collection, report writing, and the review process. They can also be regarded as equal partners on steering committees and advisory boards.
- Autonomous and active participation of youth can be limited due to legal constraints and/or political frameworks. However, youth can still engage in autonomous participation by being empowered to launch and lead information campaigns, consultations, and research efforts.
- Active participation allows young individuals to evaluate their circumstances and program operations, leading them to develop policy and implementation recommendations that are subsequently presented to policymakers.

Equip Young Leaders with Skills and Competencies for Active Participation

- The skills required for effective engagement in the policy-making process include political literacy, democratic attitudes and critical thinking.
- These necessary skills are attained within the family, educational institutions, non-formal education settings, and through informal learning experiences in various aspects of life. Other factors such as religious institutions, associations, peers, and role models also play a major role.
- To ensure meaningful youth participation, there must be political and institutional backing at every level of engagement. This includes offering training and assistance to young individuals and adult decision-makers, aiding them in effectively engaging with youth and attentively considering their perspectives.
- Facilitating operational funding for capacity-building enables the implementation of mentorship programs, advocacy summits, and other initiatives for people to come together, receive professional guidance and drive innovation.

Toolkit Tales: Budget 2023 Through Our Eyes

One respondent explains the importance of youth engagement and empowerment, affirming, “What happens especially if you work with younger people is that it gives them a taste for civic engagement... the federal government to leverage their youth council as a way of creating space or toolkits for young people to self-organize to give input into the future of the country that has been underexplored.”

The government's policies and decisions have a significant impact on the lives of young people, and they have the right to influence these choices, both individually and collectively. By promoting youth participation in governance and valuing their diverse perspectives, democratic institutions' credibility can be enhanced, resulting in the development of more effective policies and programs, ultimately contributing to the economy's sustainability. Investing in Canada's youth can lead to social and economic growth in the economy.

The foundation of Canada's youth policy lies in the values and aspirations of young Canadians. It is a holistic government strategy aimed at enhancing the prospects of young people, engaging them in federal decision-making, and creating pathways for young leaders, all with the objective of fostering unity and inclusivity in Canada (Youth Secretariat, 2020).

The six priority areas of focus of Canada's Youth Policy are:

- Leadership and Impact
- Health and Wellness
- Innovation, Skills, and Learning
- Employment
- Truth and Reconciliation
- Environment and Climate Action

Furthermore, the Prime Minister's Youth Council consists of a cohort of young Canadians collaborating with senior government officials on various initiatives, including Accessibility, Youth Policy, Youth Summit, Gender-Based Violence, Mental Health, and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples (Report of the

Prime Minister's Youth Council, 2022). Council members have the flexibility to provide their contributions through their preferred methods, such as video, social media posts, formal presentations, written letters, or e-petitions. Council members significantly contribute to shaping Canada's youth policy by actively participating in dialogues with youth nationwide. Additionally, they share their valuable insights on the policy's objectives, guiding principles, and future actions.

Community-based organizations focused on youth can utilize the programming of the Prime Minister's Youth Council to facilitate a mutually beneficial exchange of ideas. This allows the government to gather input from young individuals on specific programs and initiatives, while the council members can advocate for issues that hold significance for them (Report of the Prime Minister's Youth Council, 2022). Such interactions contribute to policy development that better aligns with the perspectives of young people and Canadians as a whole.



Tool #4: Follow the Money: Ensuring Accessibility and Efficient Allocation of Government Funds



Community-based organizations encounter numerous obstacles when seeking federal funding. Federal grant applications are intricate, demanding extensive documentation that can be difficult for these organizations to handle with limited staff. Moreover, additional requirements imposed at the state or local level add complexity to the application, awarding, and oversight procedures (SPARCC, 2022). Furthermore, it is crucial to assess whether the allocated funds are being optimally utilized and whether the social welfare programs are achieving the desired outcomes. This tool is created by analyzing the recommendations and insights collected during our community consultations and is intended to bridge the divide and propose ways for community-based organizations to enhance their access to federal funding.

Ensure that Information about Federal Funding is Accessible

Creating easily accessible platforms for sharing information on funding opportunities, mentorship, and peer-to-peer exchange will assist community-based organizations in navigating the federal funding application process.

Emphasize on Allocating Funds towards Creating Real Grassroots Change

To avoid competition between small and medium-sized community-based organizations and larger nonprofits, funding opportunities should be categorized according to their size, capacity, and tenure. This approach ensures that each category receives suitable opportunities tailored to their specific needs and resources.

Streamline the Process for Applying for Federal Funding

Ensuring compliance is essential, but it can lead to burdensome reporting and insurance demands for smaller community-based organizations. Simplifying contracting procedures, reducing reporting requirements, exempting certain federal rules, and eliminating unnecessary regulations and sub-government requirements will make the process more accessible and manageable for smaller community-based organizations.

Implement Collaborative Infrastructure to Help Smaller Non-Profits

Community-based organizations can gain significant advantages from a collaborative infrastructure that assists them throughout the federal application process. Regional organizations, operating at a more accessible level, are particularly beneficial for smaller organizations with limited resources. These regional entities can provide essential administrative support, such as application assistance, legal reviews, financial support, and meeting compliance reporting requirements. This support allows smaller non-profits to dedicate their efforts to directly serving their communities.

Evaluate Budget Utilization in Social-Impact Programs and Initiatives

Identify key stakeholders and assess the effectiveness of government programs and initiatives. It provides insights into what works well and what doesn't, offering explanations for any shortcomings. Additionally, evaluations help identify issues in program implementation and service delivery, as well as highlight good practice.



Conclusion: A Few Words from Fora's CEO

The Young Feminist Economy Report provides necessary context, analysis and guidelines for deconstructing and improving traditional economics to better serve gender marginalized youth.

Our complimentary Toolkit takes that work a step further by spotlighting tried and tested resources and instruments to assist in actioning the young feminist economy framework.

This toolkit serves as a resource to help guide our fellow non-governmental organizations and economic leaders in taking the first steps toward ensuring a young feminist economy.

— **Emma Asiedu-Akrofi**

Chief Executive Officer

Fora: Network for Change

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