GENDER EQUALITY AND ACCESS IN OUR OWN WORDS

UNTIL ALL OF US HAVE MADE IT

MARCH 2020

CANADIAN WOMEN’S FOUNDATION
“UNTIL ALL OF US HAVE MADE IT, NONE OF US HAVE MADE IT.”
- The Honourable Rosemary Brown (1930-2003), Founding Mother, Canadian Women’s Foundation

These words continue to inspire and guide our efforts to advance gender equality. Rosemary Brown was passionate in the fight for gender justice and knew we won’t get anywhere in our quest for equality if we don’t pay attention to under-heard voices and make things better for those facing the greatest barriers and discriminations.

While advances have been made in gender equality, benefits haven’t been experienced by all. Whether looking at outcomes in employment, health, education, or other areas, there are women in Canada who continue to face significant challenges and systemic inequality. For some women — Indigenous women, racialized women, immigrant women, and women with disabilities to name a few — improvements have been marginal or insignificant.¹

**Survey Focus**

There are many reports and studies about gendered outcomes in education, employment, income, housing, abuse, and service access, but this report focuses on lived experiences, in the words of respondents, with an intersectional lens.

This report is a qualitative study and represents self-reported experiences. The findings paint a picture of how gender inequalities can play out differently for different segments of the population, and point to systemic changes that need to happen for true gender equality to be realized for all in Canada.

Due to the wide diversity of respondents and corresponding small size of some segment samples, we highlight statistically significant² survey findings that emerged from the survey.

**Who Was Surveyed**

An online survey was conducted by MARU/Matchbox among 1,332 people from different backgrounds and identities living all over Canada. The survey was extended to people over 18 years of age who are not retired, and who identify as female, trans, non-binary, or Two Spirit. The survey did not include those who identify as male. It was conducted in English and French between January 28 and February 11, 2020.

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²“Statistical significance is a determination ... that results in the data are not explainable by chance alone.” Source: Investopedia. Available here.
**Important Terminology**

**Intersectionality:** coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989, the term ‘intersectionality’ “starts from the premise that people have multiple identities, and being members of more than one ‘group,’ they can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege. Intersectionality sheds light on the unique experiences that are produced when various forms of discrimination intersect with these converging identities. It is a dynamic strategy for linking the grounds of discrimination (e.g., race, gender, class, sexual identity, etc.) to historical, social, economic, political, and legal contexts and norms that intertwine to create structures of oppression and privilege.”

**Racialized:** the term ‘racialized’ “acknowledges the fact that the barriers … are rooted in the historical and contemporary racial prejudice of society and are not a product of our own identities or shortcomings.” The term ‘visible minority’ is often used by governmental bodies to reference people of colour who are not First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. In this report, we use the term ‘racialized’ as it acknowledges “the process by which societies construct races as real, different, and unequal” and the fact that racial barriers are rooted in social prejudices and not in individual or community shortcomings.

**Newcomers/immigrants:** we used the following categories as defined by Statistics Canada:

- Newcomers: landed immigrants who have been in Canada for 5 years or less
- Recent immigrants: landed immigrants who have been in Canada for 5 to 10 years
- Established immigrants: landed immigrants who have been in Canada for more than 10 years

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Nearly half of respondents say they have not achieved the level of education they wanted.

Those who have not achieved the level of education they wanted are 48% more likely to have a high school diploma or less or some college or technical/vocational training but not have finished.

*Respondents who selected 'other disability' may have been referring to mental health-related disabilities, disabilities caused by brain trauma, neurodivergence etc.
WHAT STANDS IN THEIR WAY?

**AFFORDABILITY**
Of those who haven't reached their desired level of education, the most common response is that they couldn't afford it.

- **ALL RESPONDENTS:**
  - Without a Disability: 42%
  - Newcomer and Recent Immigrant: 38%
  - Indigenous: 46%
  - Without a Disability: 38%
  - Ages 18-34: 45%
  - Ages 35-54: 43%
  - Ages 55+: 43%

- **RACIALIZED**:
  - All Respondents: 37%
  - Newcomer and Recent Immigrant: 40%
  - Indigenous: 47%
  - Without a Disability: 45%
  - Ages 18-34: 41%
  - Ages 35-54: 43%
  - Ages 55+: 43%

- **NON-RACIALIZED**:
  - All Respondents: 45%
  - Newcomer and Recent Immigrant: 42%
  - Indigenous: 26%
  - Without a Disability: 40%
  - Ages 18-34: 41%
  - Ages 35-54: 29%
  - Ages 55+: 34%

**TIME**
When asked to rank barriers, 41% rank insufficient time for both work and education as a major barrier.

- **ALL RESPONDENTS**:
  - Without a Disability: 39%
  - Newcomer and Recent Immigrant: 42%
  - Indigenous: 41%
  - Without a Disability: 43%
  - Ages 18-34: 45%
  - Ages 35-54: 36%
  - Ages 55+: 34%

- **RACIALIZED**:
  - All Respondents: 42%
  - Newcomer and Recent Immigrant: 36%
  - Indigenous: 9%
  - Without a Disability: 36%
  - Ages 18-34: 9%
  - Ages 35-54: 45%
  - Ages 55+: 46%

- **NON-RACIALIZED**:
  - All Respondents: 42%
  - Newcomer and Recent Immigrant: 44%
  - Indigenous: 46%
  - Without a Disability: 43%
  - Ages 18-34: 34%
  - Ages 35-54: 46%
  - Ages 55+: 34%

“**EDUCATION IN GENERAL IS EXPENSIVE WHEN YOU DON’T EVEN HAVE ANY MONEY LEFT OVER AFTER RENT AND BILLS.**”

“**I NEED TO WORK FULL TIME.**”

“**I HAD TO TAKE CARE OF MY PARENTS AND GET A FULL-TIME JOB.**”
WHAT DID RESPONDENTS SAY WOULD HELP THEM?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance</th>
<th>All Respondents</th>
<th>Without a Disability</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Racialized</th>
<th>Non-Racialized</th>
<th>Newcomer and Recent Immigrant</th>
<th>Established Immigrant</th>
<th>Born in Canada</th>
<th>18-34</th>
<th>35-54</th>
<th>55+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money for education</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<td>Money for living expenses</td>
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<td>37%</td>
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<td>Debt relief</td>
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<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<td>Building self-confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting on-the-job training</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Gaining employment skills</td>
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<td>Career counselling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to stable, affordable housing</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having a network of connections</td>
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<td>Having a mentor</td>
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<td>Day-to-day support</td>
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<td>Learning a skilled trade</td>
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<td>Gaining self-employment skills</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to consistent, affordable childcare</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Something else</td>
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<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
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</table>

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

55% of respondents who did not reach the level of education that they wanted say financial support for education would most help.

ON-THE-JOB-TRAINING

22% 31% 25% 16% 24% 25% 24% 27% 22% 24% 24%
ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT/FAIR WAGE

Only 50% of respondents say their household income covers monthly expenses and allows for some savings. 35% of respondents worry about making enough money to cover their monthly expenses.

- **All Respondents**: 50% cover monthly expenses, 35% worry.
- **Racialized**: 51% cover, 37% worry.
- **Non-Racialized**: 50% cover, 34% worry.
- **Newcomer and Recent Immigrant**: 46% cover, 38% worry.
- **Established Immigrant**: 52% cover, 36% worry.
- **Born in Canada**: 50% cover, 34% worry.
- **Indigenous**: 44% cover, 45% worry.
- **With a Physical Disability**: 16% cover, 47% worry.
- **Other Disability**: 28% cover, 47% worry.
- **Without a Disability**: 54% cover, 32% worry.
- **Identify as 2SLGBTQI+**: 38% cover, 53% worry.
- **Identify as cisgender and heterosexual**: 47% cover, 50% worry.

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- **Racialized**: 51% cover, 37% worry.
- **Non-Racialized**: 50% cover, 34% worry.
- **Newcomer and Recent Immigrant**: 46% cover, 38% worry.
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- **Identify as 2SLGBTQI+**: 38% cover, 53% worry.
- **Identify as cisgender and heterosexual**: 47% cover, 50% worry.
WHAT STANDS IN THEIR WAY?

Only 26% of respondents say they are paid fairly for their experience.

Only 27% of respondents say they are paid equally to their peers.

21% of respondents say they feel taken advantage of at work.

“IT STOOD UP TO A COWORKER AT WORK, HE THEN PROCEEDED TO CALL ME "PRINCESS" TO TRY TO UNDERMINE ME … HE DID NOT RESPECT MY TECHNICAL AUTHORITY AND TRIED TO USE MY GENDER AGAINST ME.”
WHAT DID RESPONDENTS SAY WOULD HELP THEM?

EDUCATION
63% believe more education would help them secure an income that better covers monthly expenses and allows for some savings.

ACCESS TO HOUSING
28% of respondents say it’s difficult to find affordable housing.

OTHER NOTABLE RESPONSES
18% of Black respondents believe they have been passed over for promotion because of their race, compared with less than 1% of non-racialized respondents.

45% of 2SLGBTQI+ respondents have not negotiated their salary/pay: significantly higher than cisgender and heterosexual respondents (24%).

26% of 2SLGBTQI+ respondents have not asked for a raise even though they think they deserve one: significantly higher than cisgender and heterosexual respondents (15%).

41% of 2SLGBTQI+ respondents say they would have a better job if they had more education/training: significantly higher than respondents cisgender and heterosexual respondents (27%).
26% of respondents say there is little money left over once they’ve paid their rent or mortgage.

**WHAT DID RESPONDENTS SAY WOULD HELP THEM?**

**Affordable Housing**
25% of racialized respondents say that access to stable, affordable housing would help them to get ahead or improve their situation, compared to 16% non-racialized respondents.

**Transit Proximity**
17% of racialized respondents and 24% of those who identify as 2SLGBTQI+ say they need housing in or near an urban centre as they rely on public transit, compared to 10% non-racialized respondents, and 11% cisgender and heterosexual respondents.
ABUSE AND ACCESS TO SUPPORT SERVICES

17% of all respondents say they have experienced physical assault or abuse in their personal life.

31% of respondents say they have experienced emotional abuse in their personal life.

Of the 35% of respondents who sought support services, 18% say there was a lack of access, or no relevant services in their area.

Of the 35% of respondents who sought support services, 21% say they didn’t know who to contact.

Of the 35% of respondents who sought support services, 20% say the waitlist was too long.

*Methodology note: subgroup analysis is limited due to the small sample sizes of those who sought support services.