

Feminist scorecard 2021: Accelerating a feminist COVID-19 recovery ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpted from description and introduction

Description

The 2021 Feminist Scorecard is part of an Oxfam Canada annual series. It assesses the steps that the federal government has taken over the past year to make progress on women's rights and gender equality. Given the far-reaching impacts of the COVID-19 crisis over the past year, the 2021 scorecard focuses on the government's actions to help Canada and the world respond to and recover from the pandemic.

The scorecard focuses on ten policy areas. Each area is rated using a traffic light range – red, yellow, green – indicating very little, some or significant progress made in that specific area.

The COVID-19 crisis demanded strong leadership. The government responded with swift action and a massive influx of resources to address the social and economic fallout of the pandemic. However, the response has exposed serious gaps that are particularly profound for the most marginalized communities.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

Green means:

Significant Progress

Yellow means:

Some Progress

Red means:

Little Progress

Introduction

2020 was a year of unprecedented challenges for people in Canada and around the world. COVID-19 has disrupted every aspect of life and required government interventions of a scale and scope not seen in decades. The coronavirus knows no borders and does not discriminate, but, in a world marked by extreme inequality and injustice, there is no question that some people have been hit harder than others have. In every country around the world, the poor and marginalized have been more impacted by the social, economic and health impacts of the pandemic. It is no coincidence that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted women, especially those who belong to Black, Indigenous or racialized communities, (im) migrants and refugees, women living with disabilities and members of the 2SLGBTIQ+ community.

Millions of women are filling the ranks of essential workers, but women have also seen the most significant job losses and are dropping out of the workforce due to increased care responsibilities. The feminist movement in Canada was quick to respond, analyzing the differentiated impacts of the pandemic and calling for an intersectional feminist response to COVID-19, and rejoicing when the government committed to a feminist, intersectional COVID-19 recovery in the September Speech from the Throne.

Feminist Scorecard 2021 is the fifth edition in this Oxfam Canada series. Considering the far-reaching impacts of the pandemic, this year's scorecard focuses on the government's actions to help Canada and the world respond and recover from the pandemic. The scorecard provides a snapshot of the government's actions since the start of the pandemic in March 2020 until February 2021 to assess the degree to which it has advanced gender equality and applied an intersectional feminist lens in response and recovery measures. The scorecard ranks the government's response along 10 policy areas: global development, representation and leadership, genderbased violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights, poverty, care work, conflict and crisis, the rights of Indigenous women, climate change and extractive industries, jobs and pay equity, and taxation.

There is no doubt this has been a challenging year for the government. The crisis demands strong leadership; the government responded with swift action and a massive influx of resources to address the social and economic fallout of the pandemic. As lockdown measures were put into place to slow the spread of the virus, the government was quick to respond with historic investments in social protection and other emergency benefits to prevent people, having lost their jobs and livelihoods, from falling into poverty. The government was also quick to recognize the impact of lockdown measures on women's safety and worked with women's groups to ensure shelters and sexual harassment centres had the resources to adapt their operations and scale up intake. Canada responded to global calls to action to scale up humanitarian response, provide debt relief for the poorest countries and invest in the COVAX vaccine facility.

However, the response has exposed gaps that are particularly profound for the most marginalized, including Indigenous, racialized and (im)migrant women, members of the 2SLGBTIQ+ community, women living with disabilities and refugees. Women have dropped out of the workforce in droves bringing women's labour force participation to the lowest it has been in 30 years. Economic security for women and gender-diverse people must be a priority, and investments in women-majority sectors and child care will be imperative to advancing gender equality and preventing an unnecessarily slow and uneven economic recovery.

As the world moves from response to recovery, it is clear that more has to be done to ensure no one is left behind. The government has an opportunity to strengthen its intersectional feminist analysis and build a path for recovery that ensures women in all their diversity are heard and seen as partners. This will require more women and gender-diverse people in leadership and decision-making spaces and better disaggregated data collection and analysis on the impacts of the pandemic. COVID-19 has shown us what is possible if there is political will. Let us learn from this crisis as we collectively look ahead to tackle the biggest challenges faced by humanity: extreme inequality, displacement and conflict, and the climate crisis.

Region: Canada ^[4]

Tags: economic recovery ^[5]

family policy ^[6]

feminist ^[7]

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