

Surveying policy priorities: The Saskatchewan women's issues study^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Access online^[2]

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Excerpts from executive summary

This report presents the findings of a two-year academic study on the topic of gender issues, public policy, and public engagement in the province of Saskatchewan, which was conducted between 2016 and 2018. The Saskatchewan-based project reported here was part of a larger pan-Canadian study to test different methods of public engagement on women's issues across the country. The main objective of the Saskatchewan case study was to identify key issues of concern to Saskatchewan residents on the general topic of women's and gender issues, and to obtain participants' recommendations for addressing these issues.

The study used two methods: (1) an open-ended electronic survey open to all Saskatchewan residents; and (2) three follow-up discussion groups, two of which were conducted in-person and one online using WebEx.

In total, 472 diverse Saskatchewan residents participated in the project. Of these, 458 responded to the survey and 14 participated in either in-person or online discussion groups.

The most frequently mentioned issues included: violence against women (including harassment, sexual, and physical violence); mental health care needs; issues affecting Aboriginal women (e.g., violence, justice, sexualization, missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls); poverty; jobs and employment issues (e.g., gendered wage gap, low wage jobs, precarious work); childcare (e.g., cost and availability); the need for affordable housing; and lacking physical/reproductive health services.

A major theme in the study was the interconnection between these issues. Participants noted how their experiences of the issues were linked to broader political, economic, and social structures, such as systemic poverty, economic inequality, sexism, racism, and colonization. The results demonstrate significant ongoing concern about these issues amongst the respondents. Participants expressed a desire for action from governments on issues of social justice and equality. Many reported concerns about insufficient public funding for social services, which ranged from women's shelters to newcomer services to social assistance.

Participants were asked: "If you could work together with the government to make one change right now, what would that change be?"

Key messages for policymakers stemming from this study include:

- a message of concern about ongoing inequality for women and marginalized groups in our province;
- strong support for social justice and equality initiatives;
- the need for government action on equality issues;
- the need for sufficient funding of social services, including front-line services as well as education and prevention; and
- clear information on how to access resources and supports in the healthcare, social services, and justice systems.

Region: Saskatchewan^[4]

Tags: gender equity^[5]

social policy^[6]

women's rights^[7]

Source URL (modified on 27 Apr 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/22/04/surveying-policy-priorities-saskatchewan-women%E2%80%99s-issues>

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