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BLOG

COVID-19 RECOVERY: AN ACTION PLAN FROM FEMINIST LEADERS ACROSS METRO VANCOUVER

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

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On May 14, 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, YWCA Metro Vancouver convened a conversation with a group of women leaders from our region. Our goal was to share what we are seeing and learning about the impact of the pandemic on our organizations and our communities, particularly women. Out of this conversation came a set of critical recommendations.

We offer these recommendations with urgency and further offer our insight into developing a plan for economic recovery that places the needs of women and girls in the centre, rather than at the margins.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A GBA+ (Gender-Based Analysis, plus “race”, ability, social-economic status, sexual orientation, legal status etc.) approach underpins public policy and spending related to pandemic recovery BC, informed by a diversity of voices.



Black Lives Matter and Idle No More.

- 3.** Decision makers should engage women and those facing gender-based marginalization, women-led organizations and equity-seeking groups in their recovery planning. Please offer us direct, accessible ways to provide input and invite us directly into your conversations.
- 4.** Governments resist a retreat into a conservative, austerity approach where equity and social justice are seen as distinct from a sustained and meaningful economic recovery. Equity and social justice must not come second to economic recovery.
- 5.** Stable and substantial funding is earmarked for non-profit and charitable organizations, which not only engage women through their workforce, but also serve thousands of women and children across the province.

WHAT WE OFFER DECISION-MAKERS

- To be a resource, be available to decision makers for insight, information and thoughtful input into recovery planning.
- To develop further observation and analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women.

KEY ISSUES

We appreciate the quick and decisive response from government to flow support to the broad community. In fact, this crisis has reminded us that our governments can be nimble and responsive. However, the fragility of our social infrastructure, the inbuilt biases and inequities and the enormous holes in our safety net have been revealed by the pandemic. We see three key issues that have emerged:

- 1.** The COVID-19 pandemic has and will continue to have a disproportionate impact on women and people marginalized on the basis of gender. This impact deepens significantly for poor women, racialized women, Indigenous women, senior women, LGBTQ2S+ women and women with disabilities. An approach to emergency response and recovery planning that is gender-responsive, and that takes into account these intersecting layers of discrimination, is necessary to reach those most impacted and those who have the least access to resources.
- 2.** Poverty in BC is gendered and COVID-19 is deepening it. Given that women are concentrated in jobs and sectors hardest hit by the pandemic, and make up the majority of part-time and minimum wage workers, we are extremely concerned about the period when supports and subsidies come to an end. We anticipate an even deeper economic impact on women who have lost their jobs and income sources. We may face a push to reduce public spending and introduce austerity. This would further challenge our public systems and could impoverish civil society and the non-governmental organizations that safeguard and advance equity—during a time when we anticipate demands for our services to increase.



and income replacements have largely missed women working in the cash economy, meaning that resources have not been distributed to the most marginalized people in our society.

ALIGNMENT WITH FEMINIST AND EQUITY SEEKING ORGANIZATIONS

Our recommendations are based on research and our collective frontline experience and align with a groundswell of public opinion calling for a just, equitable, truly optimistic recovery from the pandemic. These include:

- YWCA Canada: [A Feminist Approach to COVID-19](#)
- YWCAs of Alberta: [Recommendations for Economic Recovery](#)
- Feminists Deliver: [A Feminist Economic Recovery Plan for COVID-19](#)
- Canadian Women's Foundation: [Resetting Normal: Funding a Thriving Women's Sector](#)
- Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women: [Building Bridges, not Walking on Backs](#)

ABOUT US

This group has insight into the gendered impacts of COVID-19 from a wide range of perspectives and experiences. We see that the effects are intersectional, in other words, compounded and greater for poor women, newcomer women, racialized and Indigenous women and others who experience discrimination.

- We serve women from across the social strata—from CEOs and small business owners to caregivers, women who work unpaid in the home and women working in the sex trade. Some of these women are celebrated, some are criminalized, some are made invisible, and all have been negatively impacted by the pandemic.
- As leaders, we know that women can contribute to a strong, just economic recovery. As employers and entrepreneurs, they are more likely to pay living wage and more likely to provide sick leave. Organizations that include feminist leaders at the top are more likely to succeed and to navigate risk.
- Together we offer a strong understanding of the intersecting impacts of identity, ability, class and gender, and can help inform a GBA+ analysis for a pandemic recovery action plan.

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- Tina Strehlke, CEO (Minerva Foundation for BC Women)
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We respectfully acknowledge that this work was created on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the Coast Salish people, including the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.



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