



THE POWER OF COALITIONS



- Territory Acknowledgment** **3**
- A Project in Review** **4**
- Our Mission and Values** **5**
- Who We Are - Membership Snapshot** **6**
- Equal Futures 2022 and 2023** **7**
- Creating Lasting Impact - Tools and Resources** **8**
 - a. Combating Systemic Challenges 9
 - b. Areas for Sector Strengthening 9
- Reflections and What’s Next** **11**
- Appendix** **12**
 - Appendix i. Key Membership Highlights 12
 - Appendix ii. Equal Futures 2022 and 2023 14
 - Appendix iii. Advisory Committee List 19
 - Appendix iv. Summit Partners 19

Territory Acknowledgment

The Equal Futures Network acknowledges that Indigenous peoples are the traditional guardians of Turtle Island, on the land also known as Canada. We recognize their long standing and ongoing relationship with this territory, which includes unceded and traditional land, and acknowledge our duty to walk with and alongside reconciliation and decolonization efforts.

We recognize that keepers of traditional Indigenous knowledge can be found in every community.

We believe that as settlers on this land, we have a responsibility to continually engage along our journey to meaningfully enact allyship, to reassess and reconsider our positionality in the spaces we occupy, and to use our voice to speak out against systemic injustices experienced by Indigenous peoples.

Reconciliation is an ongoing process, requiring unlearning colonial practices, history and relearning our shared past, present and future. We are committed to working in partnership to pursue a more inclusive, collaborative and respectful path forward grounded in the [94 Calls to Action](#) from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).

Please find our full acknowledgment [here](#).

A Project in Review



Rallying around the collective efforts of past and present gender equality and women's¹ empowerment movements, the [Equal Futures Network](#) has spent the past three years working in partnership with the Gender Equality (GE) community in Canada by connecting organizations, agencies and civil society partners at local, national and international levels. Through the power of coalition building, Equal Futures has built a unique network of over 530+ organizations who are committed to sharing knowledge, resources and expertise, and has worked in partnership to accelerate progress for gender equality and social justice in their communities to ensure equal futures for all.

The past few years have highlighted the precarious position of rights for women and gender diverse communities. From the [rollback of abortion rights in places like the United States to anti-LGBT laws coming in to effect in Uganda](#), there has been a concerted and relentless attack on the rights of some of the world's most marginalized communities. According to UN Women, at the current rate of progress, it will take [286 years for the world to achieve gender equality](#). Nearly halfway to the 2030 endpoint of the Sustainable Development Goals, this is a disheartening statistic and demonstrates the urgency for the GE ecosystem to come together and advance shared goals and collective action for gender equality around the world.

As we evaluate the influence of the Equal Futures Network on the GE landscape, it is important to acknowledge the time, expertise and energy of organizations, agencies and individuals who have been doing this work for decades. In particular the work of Indigenous peoples and communities who, since time immemorial, have been

the traditional keepers of knowledge and protectors of the land and water and whose work has played a crucial role in advancing and promoting gender equality and human rights.

We are so proud to have undertaken this work these past few years and look forward to sharing its impact. The purpose of this report is to highlight some of the key findings we have uncovered through our engagement with the Network and partners and the tools, resources and other key takeaways we have developed to support the GE ecosystem in their work. In addition, we will also use this report to highlight the work of the Equal Futures Network over the past two years and impact through our key deliverable, [Equal Futures: A Gender Equality Summit](#).

At our core, we believe that effective coalition work has the ability to advance meaningful engagement across the GE ecosystem and build authentic partnerships, create spaces to share knowledge as well as amplify the work, stories and voices of our members. Together, we can build greater coherence to strengthen the impact of our work and create an equal world for women, girls and gender diverse people both here in Canada and around the globe.



¹ When we refer to women we are referring to women in all their diversity.

Our Mission & Values



Our Mission

The Equal Futures Network works in partnership with experts and representatives from diverse communities with unique perspectives to accelerate progress for gender equality and social justice within Canada, harnessing local momentum and connecting it to the work being done on a global level.

Our Values

The Equal Futures Network is committed to advancing gender equity, equality and women's² rights while promoting the health, rights and well-being of all through feminist means. We strive to emphasize and embody feminist values³ throughout all of the work that we do. Our membership will uphold individuals, collectives and organizations that work within women's or other social movements that promote and work towards the inclusion, safety, equality, justice, rights and dignity of women, girls, adolescents, 2SLGBTQ+ people, BIPOC communities and people with disabilities. We will be a space that aims to inspire, uplift and support our communities and we commit to living our values throughout all the work of the Equal Futures Network.

² When we refer to women we are referring to women in all their diversity.

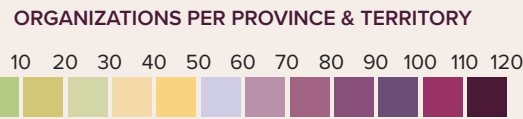
³ Please see our full values statement on our website: <https://equalfuturesnetwork.ca/about/values/>

Who We Are - Membership Snapshot

532 MEMBERS

Over the past few years we have worked to build a network that represents the diversity of work being done to advance gender equality and social justice in communities across Canada. Currently, our membership has grown to **532 members** with representation from every province and territory (see [image 1](#)) and who work in English and French. The uptake for this project within the community of gender equality and social justice organizers continues to inspire us to work harder, dig deeper and continue to push for a more gender just and inclusive world. Please see [Appendix i](#) for more key membership highlights including location, scope of work and community details and organizational composition.

Image 1. EFN Membership



Equal Futures 2022 & 2023

(2022-23) Summit Attendance **700**

('22 & '23 Summits) Social Media Engagements: **1,660**

Youth Bursaries: **41**

Community Consultations: **5**



Overview

The Equal Futures Network has focused on supporting the GE ecosystem in their pursuit of driving progress for gender equality from coast-to-coast-to-coast by solidifying our role as a part of the collective effort convening the overall GE movement through a variety of different engagement and capacity strengthening opportunities. In particular, the past few years have focused on bringing together the GE sector through our flagship events, Equal Futures [2022](#) and [2023](#), by convening discussions, sharing best practices and challenges through our on-going engagement at our community events and incubator sessions and finally, by amplifying the work of our members and partners to communicate their impact and work with a broad range of stakeholders.

strong connections between organizations. Over the course of two years, the summit brought together over **700 people**, both in-person and online, to discuss the pertinent issues impacting their GE work, to strengthen capacity, and to create opportunities for networking and a platform to share their expertise on a national scale!

The work leading up to and during the summits regularly engaged with Network partners and the broader GE community, creating spaces and touchpoints for them to feed into the process, build partnerships and foster spaces to design an inclusive and participatory event. For example, beginning in early 2022, the Network hosted five incubator sessions, five community consultations and connected with our network via social media to build coherence, interest and engagement for the summits. Creating intentional and safe spaces to engage with our community helped to guide decisions around the themes and programming content for the summits, the location for Equal Futures 2023 and brought a solutions-oriented focus to both of these events.

The Gender Equality Summits - Equal Futures 2022 and 2023 were the culminating moments of ongoing coalition building. They were developed to deepen the breadth and depth of our engagement with our members and to lay the groundwork for their collective and collaborative work to advance gender equality from coast-to-coast-to-coast. These summits provided a platform to amplify a diversity of voices and opinions, with a targeted focus on those who experience historic and ongoing marginalization and created an opportunity to build coherence around common goals while building

Find more details, key metrics and takeaways from Equal Futures 2022 and 2023 in [Appendix ii](#) of this report!



"I'm impressed, says @JadePichette in closing day 1 of #EqualFutures2023 conference, noting the many excellent, thoughtful & challenging conversations we've had today. Huge thanks to @EqualFuturesCA - it's an honour to be here & learning so much."



Creating Lasting Impact - Tools and Resources

Throughout the course of this project we have had the opportunity to observe and hear the diverse challenges impacting the gender equality ecosystem and have pulled those together beside in the Feedback Summary.

This summary outlines the broad systemic challenges and areas where the sector needs strengthening in order for the GE community to be able to deliver more impactful, comprehensive and effective programming and services to move the GE needle forward.



In response to these challenges, we have developed a **variety of different tools, resources and key takeaways** that we hope will not only strengthen and support the work of our Network members and the broader GE movement but also determine priorities for the years to come while mobilizing different stakeholders and partners.

Since we have learned a lot while building the Equal Futures Network – specifically around coalition building and working in partnerships, advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility and reconciliation all through an intersectional lens – we are happy to share our organizational lessons learned, best practices and other tools we have developed to support our members growth and development in these areas! On the following page, you will find a brief overview of our work or journey in each area and a link to the associated tool that will provide you with an additional resource that can be scaled and applied to your own work.

Feedback Summary

Equal Futures Network: Systemic Challenges

1. Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility
2. Advancing Equity by Incorporating Intersectionality
3. Combating Anti-Black Racism
4. Advancing Reconciliation and Decolonization

Challenges:

- No standardization around requirements of anti-racist, decolonial approaches to this work across the sector
- Risk of performativity/tokenism
- Soft advocacy

Equal Futures Network: Areas for Sector Strengthening

1. Coalition Building
2. Working in Partnership
3. Data Collection and Research

Challenges:

- Siloed work is still prevalent in the sector
- Lack of representation of diverse communities at a policy/key decision making level
- Critical data gaps across GE work

a. Combating Systemic Challenges

As a Network we see the challenges and threats that the GE community faces at the systems level and how this impacts the very work that is being driven forward by our members everyday. Throughout the building of the Network, we have focused strongly on how we are showing up in this space and building a truly inclusive Network that is representative, as much as possible, of the depth and breadth of the GE community driving forward progress for gender equality from coast-to-coast-to-coast.

Built deeply into the framework of the Network and visible throughout our partnership and engagement practices is our commitment to increasing the visibility of intersectionality within the sector. That means incorporating various feminist perspectives, in particular, Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+ and youth communities, including key principles and voices to ensure reconciliation and decolonization are present in all Network activities and acting as a space that prioritizes breaking down systemic barriers to empower our members overall. Throughout our journey of building this Network we have learned a variety of lessons around DEIA and Reconciliation, creating a values system that strengthens the feminist scaffolding of our organization, building authentic relationships with our partners and avoiding tokenism in our GE work that we want to share with you!

TO ACCESS THESE RESOURCES PLEASE FOLLOW THE LINKS BELOW:

1. [Building Feminist Frameworks Checklist](#): How to build feminist frameworks for organizational excellence.
2. [Best Practices for Building Authentic Relationships](#) and how to avoid tokenism/performatism in GE work.
3. [Strategic Engagement Plan](#) with highlights on how to build authentic, reciprocal relationships with a variety of different partners.

b. Areas for Sector Strengthening

In addition to the broad, systemic issue areas that impact the GE ecosystem we have also identified various areas within the sector that are hindering progress towards gender equality. These are set in a context that doesn't prioritize strong cross-sectoral engagement and partnerships and where there are critical data gaps across GE work and research which hinder policy and advocacy efforts. The purpose of the Equal Futures Network in particular has been to create mission alignment within the sector and to break down the silos of work that exists between sectors, regions and languages in order to create opportunities for participatory action and collaboration.

Despite our efforts, siloed work is still highly prevalent within the sector with a noted lack of representation of diverse communities at policy and key decision-making levels. As a result, it is of paramount importance that coalition building and Networks like ours create local, regional, national and global links that strengthen networks to unite partners and leaders who are committed to advancing gender equality and social justice in communities around the world. We have been steadfast in our commitment to amplify the work of grassroots communities who are leading the way for advancing GE upwards and outwards and ensuring that we are playing a key role in convening the right partnerships to engage strategically across all levels and sectors. Only then can we ensure equal futures for all!

At the core of our work are the partnerships we have developed and the lessons we have learned about what it means to be a **good partner**.

We hope that the tools and resources linked below will support you to take a look at your place in dismantling these systemic challenges and support you to strengthen the sector by building meaningful, cross-sectoral partnerships that will ultimately deepen the depth and breadth of our work as we collectively push for real change.

From Our Network



“Starting off Equal Futures 2023 Summit in Whitehorse, Yukon featuring Sydney Piggott as MC! Every 2 years Equal Futures Summit will rotate to rural, remote, or Northern communities - great practice to ensure access to opportunity is accessible to all!”



“Powerful & intimate opening of day 2 of Equal Futures 2023 from the amazing Brandi Morin, journalist and survivor asking us: “*What will you do with your power?*”. Thank you Equal Futures youth bursary for the opportunity to attend!!”

“Listening to a powerful panel discussion on how to build partnerships in advancing gender equity in rural and northern communities at the Equal Futures Network 2023 summit.”



Reflections & What's Next



The success of this initiative could not have been achieved without the incredible support of our funders, members, partners and the Advisory Committee⁴ who have all leaned in, lent us knowledge and shaped us into the best version of ourselves. In particular, this project would not have been possible without the financial support of the department of [Women and Gender Equality \(WaGE\)](#) and our partners from the 2023 summit⁵. A big thank you to everyone who has helped us along the way, we wouldn't be where we are today without you!

movement, creating spaces for authentic partnerships to thrive and for co-creative and collaborative ideas to be born while amplifying knowledge and expertise to echo out across the sector. We will live and uphold our values and commitments to membership and will not become complacent in our journey to achieve a more gender-just world. Finally, we commit to continually engage throughout our journey to be better listeners, better learners and better partners to our membership. We look forward to undertaking this journey with you –

As we grow, some things will never change! We commit to continually being a space that strives to inspire, uplift and support our communities. We will continue our efforts to play a key role as conveners for this

THANK YOU!

⁴ Please see [Appendix vi](#), for a full list of our Advisory Committee

⁵ Please see [Appendix vii](#). For a full list of our summit partners

APPENDIX I. Key Membership Highlights

Location

The majority of the Network’s membership remains concentrated in central Canada (45%), as Ontario and Quebec (25% and 20%) have the highest Network members. Following this, 26% of members are located in Western Canada and 13% in Atlantic Canada. Additionally, 29% of organizations identify as pan-Canadian, meaning they operate in communities across the country and/or have a national reach with their programming.

Given the location of the [2023 Gender Equality Summit](#) in Whitehorse, Yukon we saw a slight increase in members from the North who now make up **3%** of Network membership.

Scope of Work

This information showcases the depth and breadth of our memberships work to advance gender equality in their communities. The majority of members’ work focuses in (see [image 2](#)):

- ▶ Education/Workshops: 57%
- ▶ Advocacy/Campaigns: 44%
- ▶ Frontline Service Delivery/Support Services: 35%
- ▶ Gender-Based Violence: 27%
- ▶ Empowerment: 23%
- ▶ Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR): 14%
- ▶ Network Organizations: 13%
- ▶ Research/Academia: 12%
- ▶ Entrepreneurship/Social Enterprise/B-corp: 11%

Image 2. Scope of work

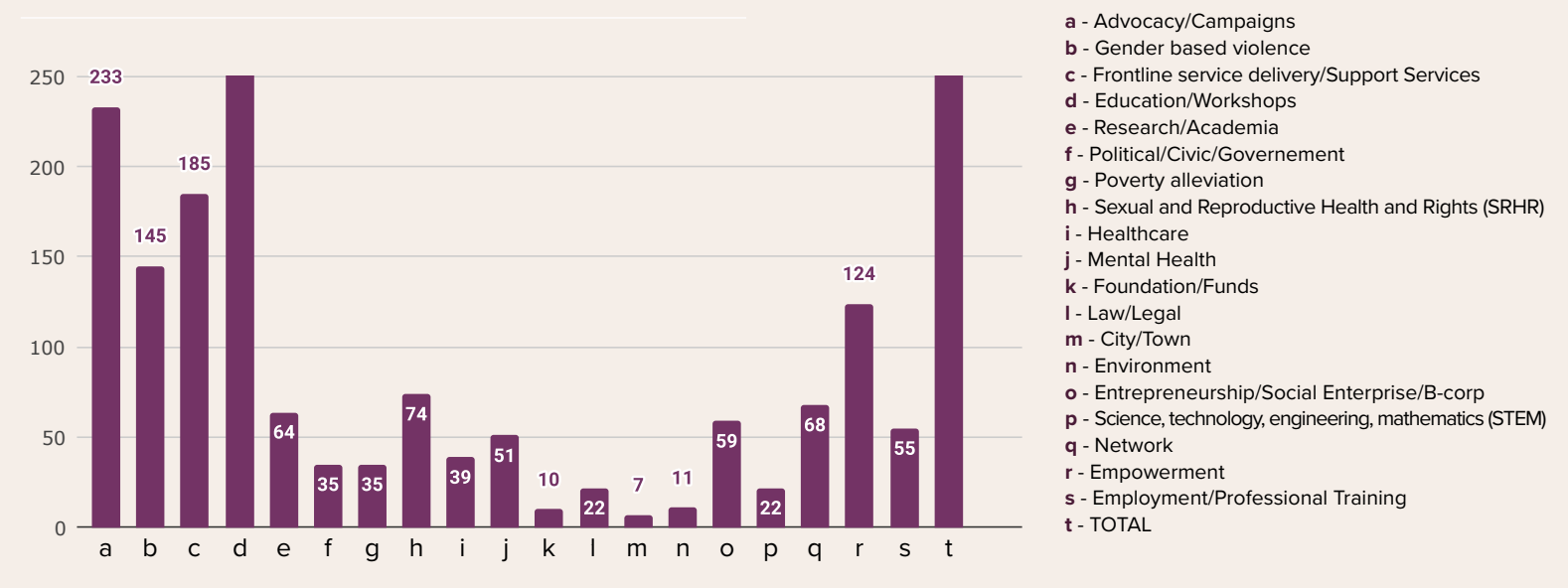
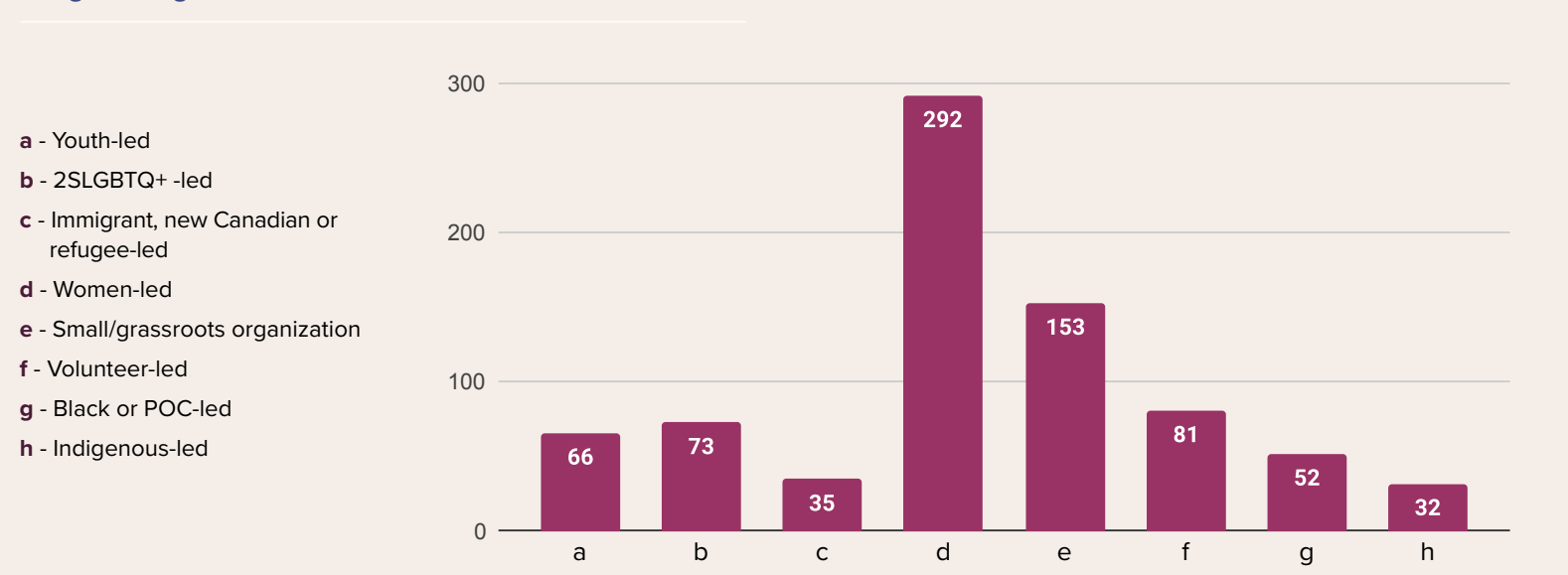


Image 3. Organizational Structure



Community Details and Organizational Composition:

Members across the country work with a variety of communities and have diverse organizational structures. In fact, of our 532 members:

- ▶ 311 organizations work with or deliver programming to BIPOC communities;
- ▶ 291 with youth and;
- ▶ 289 with 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

Given the focus of the [2023 Gender Equality Summit](#) on Rural, Remote and Northern people, perspectives and partnerships we have also seen an uptick in the amount of new organizations joining the Network who work with these communities. 172 organizations have identified this as an area of focus for their work.

Additionally:

- ▶ 96% of our members identify as women-led;
- ▶ 29% identify as small/grassroots organizations;
- ▶ 12% are run by youth (under 30) and;
- ▶ 6% as Indigenous-led.



APPENDIX II. Equal Futures 2022 and 2023

The groundwork for the summits was rooted in our partnerships and engagement with GE sector partners in order to integrate their key issue areas and priorities into summit plans, in particular our programming, speakers, theme and location and to this from a feminist, participatory model. To ensure this process was as inclusive as possible, the Equal Futures Network engaged with a variety of key partners, community organizations and other stakeholders from within our Network and the GE ecosystem more broadly. It was important for us to not only design an event that was responsive to our members but also create a unique learning and engagement experience for both in-person and virtual attendees. As a result, through the Advisory Committee, periodic environment scans, membership gap analyses and community consultations we were able to assess whose voices were being heard and who was not yet included and took those findings to develop a Strategic Engagement Plan that furthered our commitments to building a diverse Network with reciprocal, community-based partnerships.

Equal Futures 2022

The inaugural summit took place on unceded Algonquin Anishinaabe territory, on settler maps known as Ottawa, Ont. from June 7-8, 2022. Over the course of two days, we welcomed over 300 gender equality champions, leaders and partners from across the country joined us, both in-person and online to mark this important event. Participants represented the depth and breadth of the work being undertaken to advance gender equality in communities across Canada and around the world.

Through the theme “*Collaboration, Collective Action and Community*”, the summit featured a variety of programming, including practical workshops, high-level panels and discussions and networking opportunities for participants to build connections, strengthen capacity, share expertise and establish the collective actions to pave the path forward for advancing gender equality across the country and around the world.

Highlights from the summit included: the keynote address and Indigenous solidarity workshop facilitated by Shanese Steele; opportunities to unpack intersectionality and racial equity, spotlighting the universality of Sustainable Development Goal 5 - gender equality - while establishing local to global connections within our work; a candid reminder from the Honourable Maryam Monsef about the need for rest and recovery in the movement, and the excitement for further collaboration and community building within the sector! Opportunities for Equal Futures Network members to share their work to summit attendees, known as Knowledge Spotlights, were also a big hit as they helped build community and establish partnership opportunities amongst attendees.

After the summit, we shared a feedback survey with attendees and learned that 73 per cent of respondents identified as satisfied with the Summit, with 24 per cent of those indicating that they were very satisfied. All respondents (100 per cent) indicated that their knowledge increased at least a bit with 30 per cent of them indicating that their knowledge increased a lot. Other top learnings included the themes of intersectionality, inclusion, local to global connections and the importance of rest and

recovery within the movement. Of note, 83 per cent of respondents indicated that they met someone who they would like to collaborate with in the future while attending the Summit, which further supports the purpose of our work convening the GE movement and creating spaces for new, reciprocal partnerships to flourish.

TOP THEMES:

- ▶ **Indigenous solidarity**
- ▶ The importance of **collaboration** within the sector
- ▶ **Inclusion** – moving beyond representation and dismantling binary systems
- ▶ **Intersectionality** in practice – the need for more diverse voices in the room, how lived experience should be valued as expertise, further understanding power and privilege on the individual and organizational level
- ▶ **Local to global** connections within gender equality work
- ▶ The need for **rest and recovery** within the movement

Recommendations for Equal Futures 2023 include the integration of the following themes and topics: **climate change**, **gender-based violence** and **economic empowerment**. In terms of structure, respondents wanted to see **more time for networking** and the **exploration of new partnerships** as well as **shorter panel discussions** and **more practical workshops and training**. Additionally, they would also like to see the **inclusion of more diverse voices** such as trans and gender diverse people, Francophone communities, Inuit and Metis communities, people with disabilities, and more perspectives from youth, grassroots, and frontline workers. This feedback was important in shaping the work plan, partnership and program development for Equal Futures 2023 and was considered very carefully throughout every step of the process.

Equal Futures 2023

Following-up on the success of the inaugural summit in 2022, Equal Futures 2023 worked to deepen engagement with key sector partners within the GE ecosystem and create spaces to highlight the work of those who are typically left out of the mainstream conversations, work and funding for GE advancement. In particular, a targeted focus on rural, remote and Northern communities was brought through the summit and was the reason why the summit location was chosen to take place on the traditional territories of Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, also known as Whitehorse. The Network wanted to take the opportunity and use our power to create a concentrated effort on showcasing the incredible work of these communities and bring the summit here.

Through the theme, "*People, Perspectives and Partnerships*", the 2023 summit centered on the diversity of experiences of remote, rural and Northern communities and highlighted the unique challenges they face for advancing gender equality and social justice. Equal futures for everyone, everywhere, can only be achieved through collaboration, collective action, and establishing communities to uphold and push our collective work forward.

Over the course of two days, we welcomed attendees from every province and territory, both in-person and online. Participants represented the depth and breadth of the work being undertaken to advance gender equality in communities across Canada and around the world, and were able to take in a variety of programming including practical workshops, high-level panels, in-depth peer-to-peer discussions and networking opportunities.

Highlights from the summit included the opening welcome and keynote addresses by Ta'an Kwäch'än Council Chief Amanda Leas, Minister Ien and Brandi Morin; panel discussions that focused on highlighting

and amplifying the knowledge, expertise and challenges faced by communities in remote, rural and Northern communities in leadership, finance, food systems and gender based violence; sessions that unpacked intersectionality and equity while highlighting queer joy and leadership; and, finally, conversations and learning opportunities around reconciliation and what this process looks like when undertaken in a meaningful way.

Responding to feedback from 2022, the desire for more spaces for networking and community-driven conversations, we included **6 Curated Conversations** which created inclusive spaces for participants to delve into pertinent topic areas related to advancing GE and to share their thoughts, challenges and solutions emerging from their work or personal experiences.

The post-summit survey was completed by 52 attendees and 70 per cent of respondents identified that they were satisfied with the summit (25 per cent of those indicating that they were very satisfied), and 95 per cent of respondents indicated that their knowledge increased (31 per cent of them indicating that their knowledge increased a lot). Some highlights that respondents shared from the summit were the curated conversations, the community dialogue on GBV and the keynote speakers. Some of the key learnings taken away centred on continuing to build relationships and reconciliation into the GE movement, addressing GBV as a national emergency and how different the experiences and realities of rural, remote and northern organizations are compared to those working in more urban areas. Other top learnings included the themes of intersectionality, inclusion, local to global connections and partnership development. Moving forward, respondents would like to see practical examples and opportunities about how to move this work forward and opportunities to build and work through some of these problems together.

Reflecting on the feedback and recommendations collected from Equal Futures 2022 event survey, we were able to meet or exceed these recommendations in every area:

1. **Summit Focus/Panels:** integrate the following topics: *climate change, gender based violence and economic empowerment*.
2. **Summit structure:** provide more time for networking and the exploration of new partnerships as well as shorter panel discussions and more practical workshops and training.
3. **Panelists/Speakers:** include more diverse voices such as trans and gender diverse people, Francophone communities, Inuit and Metis communities, people with disabilities, and more perspectives from youth, grassroots, and frontline workers. In particular, our Indigenous engagement increased 16 per cent (from panel participation to attendees) compared to last year's summit which spoke to the concentrated effort that we made to create safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces for our Indigenous participants.



As the **Equal Futures Network** continues to grow, we look forward to building on the momentum of Equal Futures 2023 and creating spaces to push the needle forward for gender equality in Canada and around the world! We learned much from the second year of hosting this event, both in logistics and programming, and we are committed to continuing to learn from our community members and incorporating their valuable insights into our work.



APPENDIX III. Advisory Committee List

Julia Anderson (Co-Chair) Chief Executive Officer, CanWaCH

Genesa Greening (Co-Chair) Chief Executive Officer, Vancity Community Foundation

Cleche Kokolo Youth Representative, CanWaCH Youth Working Group

Angela Marie MacDougall Executive Director of Battered Women's Support Services Association (BWSS)

Jenny Nam Executive Assistant To the President & Chief Executive Officer, YVR

Hani Rukh E Qamar Youth Representative, CanWaCH Youth Working Group

Sam Rockbrune Executive Director Kawartha World Issues Centre (KWIC)

Sydney Piggott Senior Social Impact Manager, Shopify

APPENDIX IV. Summit Partners

 Women and Gender Equality Canada Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

 Yukon Period Pantry

 YUKON FIRST NATION SELF-GOVERNMENT mappingtheway.ca

CRITERION INSTITUTE

PRIDE AT WORK CANADA  FIERTÉ AU TRAVAIL CANADA

 Lojiq Les Offices Jeunesse Internationaux du Québec

 radar media

 sieccan Sex Information & Education Council of Canada Conseil d'information & d'éducation sexuelle du Canada

 DIGNITY NETWORK CANADA RÉSEAU DIGNITÉ CANADA

 YUKON WORDS

A  CanWaCH Initiative

Equal Futures NETWORK



RÉSEAU Avenir égalitaire

"TOGETHER WE CAN BUILD GREATER COHERENCE TO STRENGTHEN THE IMPACT OF OUR WORK AND CREATE AN EQUAL WORLD FOR WOMEN, GIRLS AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE BOTH HERE IN CANADA AND AROUND THE GLOBE."

