

A Guide to Building Feminist Intersectional Solidarity

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Introduction

Feminist Intersectional Solidarity (FIS) is an important term gaining traction across feminist movements.¹ This guide to understanding and building Feminist Intersectional Solidarity grew out of CRIAW-ICREF's engagement with over 300 women's groups across Canada from 2017 to 2021.² This document provides several actions to advance Feminist Intersectional Solidarity between feminists, feminist organizations, and feminist movements.

In order to foster FIS, the experiences of diverse groups of women must be shared and meaningfully included. Collaborative research, analysis, advocacy, and mobilization strengthen the feminist movement. Building solidarity within and among feminists and their organizations allows knowledge sharing about the impacts of oppressive power systems, and increases our capacity to dismantle and reshape these systems.

Feminists have written for decades about the ways of addressing unequal power distribution and privilege that impact collaborative and collective mobilization³, calling for inequalities to be addressed. Women's groups are not homogenous; neither are their methods of activism.⁴

Jean Fyre Graveline, Métis anti-racist, feminist activist and educator, draws on Indigenous healing methods to demonstrate that, even in our interconnectedness, it is important to recognize varying levels of privilege that affect our ability to work together effectively.⁵

Similarly, Chandra Mohanty urges us to “decolonize feminism” as a means of identifying fault lines, conflict, differences, fears, and containment as barriers to building feminist solidarity.⁶

¹ Sweetman, Caroline (2013). “Introduction, Feminist Solidarity and Collective Action Introduction, Feminist Solidarity and Collective Action.” *Gender & Development* 21 (2): 217–29. doi:10.1080/13552074.2013.819176.

² CRIAW-ICREF's *Building Capacity for Intersectional Advocacy on Women Issues* project (2017-2021)

³ hooks, bell (1984). *Feminist Theory From Margin to Center*. New York: South End Press.; Mohanty, Talpade Chandra (2003). *Feminism Without Borders*. London: Duke University Press.

⁴ Morris, Marika (2002). *Women's Experience of Racism: How Race and Gender Interact*. CRIAW-ICREF. <https://www.criaw-icref.ca/en/product/womens-experience-of-racism--how-race-and-gender-interact>. Yuval-Davis, Nira (2006). “Intersectionality and Feminist Politics.” *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13 (3): 193--209. doi:10.1177/1350506806065752.

⁵ Morris, Marika (2002). *Women's Experience of Racism: How Race and Gender Interact*. CRIAW-ICREF. <https://www.criaw-icref.ca/en/product/womens-experience-of-racism--how-race-and-gender-interact>.

⁶ Mohanty, Talpade Chandra (2003). *Feminism Without Borders*. London: Duke University Press.

Social activist and feminist bell hooks emphasizes that standing in opposition to all forms of oppression reflects in our work, regardless of its focus. hooks also emphasizes the importance of political solidarity in creating a diverse, strong, and united feminist movement to extinguish sexist oppression. She rejects the white feminist model of solidarity as bourgeois, drawing solely from the shared victimization of women; she emphasizes that solidarity must draw on shared strengths, resources, and goals of diverse women. hooks rejects the suspicion, competition, and exclusion fundamental to patriarchy, and advocates critical self-reflection in recognizing that systems of sexism, racism and classism create division among women. The work of feminists is to dismantle these oppressive structures.⁷

This recognition informs our application of Feminist Intersectional Solidarity (FIS) in our work and organizing methods. It is important to acknowledge that the work of advancing universal women's rights is the goal of the feminist movement, transcending individual or group affiliations.

The FIS framework presented here was shaped by a series of regional discussion groups and workshops CRIAW-ICREF conducted with 34 feminist organizations across Canada, as part of the *Building Capacity for Intersectional Advocacy on Women's Issues* project (2017-2021). CRIAW-ICREF recognizes this document and its ideas to be co-created by the women's organizations involved.

Organizations involved in the *Building Capacity* project expressed uncertainty about how to initiate or grow capacity for solidarity with other groups and organizations. They expressed their desire to work collectively, collaboratively, and in solidarity, recognizing it would strengthen their work for women's rights and increase the impact of their advocacy. As a result, *Building Capacity* workshops were designed to allow women's organizations to brainstorm and develop strategies for fostering and strengthening Feminist Intersectional Solidarity (FIS).

Why Feminist + Intersectionality + Solidarity?

Feminist Intersectional Solidarity (FIS) is a useful framework for creating and growing meaningful, equitable, and supportive networks of feminists, feminist organizations, and feminist movements. Feminist movements are diverse, with many voices and multiple challenges. Working in solidarity as feminists means uniting to collaborate to realize more specific, or autonomous aims within the larger movement for gender justice.

⁷ hooks, bell (1984). *Feminist Theory From Margin to Center*. New York: South End Press.

Feminist Intersectional Solidarity encourages fulsome examination of the root causes of inequality, marginalization, and exclusion.

Kimberlé Crenshaw developed the concept of intersectionality as a framework for analysis of the ways in which systems of power interact and produce different outcomes for different groups of women. FIS is grounded in recognizing and analysing the intersectional impacts of patriarchy, white supremacy, colonialism, classism, ableism, and other systems of power on feminists, feminist organizations, feminist movements, and on the power dynamics between and within them.

The collective strength of the feminist movement in Canada is undermined by a weak funding base, limited capacity, the unequal distribution of resources in society, competition, individualism, and isolation. Strong Feminist Intersectional Solidarity (FIS) is about working collaboratively, sharing resources, access, and privilege, supporting all feminists in the work of challenging and transforming power dynamics. FIS fosters resilience within and among feminist organizations to stabilize and strengthen solidarity against division, marginalization, and extinction.

This guide for building Feminist Intersectional Solidarity (FIS) is divided into three sections.

The first section identifies and briefly explains two primary areas of action for building a strong foundation for FIS to thrive and grow: 1) Challenging and Redistributing Power, and 2) Working Collaboratively.

The second section provides examples and suggestions for building FIS, based on these two primary areas and broken into three spheres for individual feminists, feminist organizations, and feminist movements.

Guiding questions to help build Feminist Intersectional Solidarity (FIS) are also found in section two. These questions are offered to spark important discussions and insights into how unequal power relations need to be transformed. Ultimately, these questions will help you and your organization develop your own unique strategies for building solidarity.

The final section of the guide provides an example for collaborative action on a current and timely issue – establishing sustainable and reliable core funding for all women’s organizations.

Two Main Priorities for Building Feminist Intersectional Solidarity (FIS)

Challenging and Redistributing Power

Feminists work to understand and analyze unequal power structures, and to expose the compounded impacts of sexist, racist, heterosexist, and class-based domination systems.⁸ Indigenous and Black feminist scholars and activists, such as Kimberlé Crenshaw⁹, Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Morrill Angie¹⁰, and Patricia Hill Collins¹¹ describe the ways in which white supremacy, patriarchy, ableism, colonialism, and other systems, are represented in feminist thought and movements.

Conditions of inequality can be reproduced within women's rights movements and organizations when priority is given to amplifying the voices, ideas, and experiences of white, wealthy, cis-gender, straight, able-bodied women, effectively silencing the voices, ideas and experiences of marginalized women. The creation of strong and resilient Feminist Intersectional Solidarity (FIS) is necessary for challenging and transforming dysfunctional power structures within the women's movement.¹²

A divide is created when newcomer, Indigenous, Black and/or racialized feminist women's groups are excluded from predominantly white feminist organizations, advocacy groups, and campaigns. Many participants in the *Building Capacity* project reported being excluded from meetings and collective feminist work.

Feminist movements must be centred in intersectionality in order to conduct critical and relevant feminist analysis; this must be reflected in the ways in which we work together. It is vital to develop alternatives to patriarchal and otherwise oppressive systems of thinking. We must ensure that we do not unintentionally reproduce the oppressive structures we are fighting.

Analyzing the impacts of internal power structures on diverse women's lives can lay the groundwork for building FIS between feminists, feminist organizations, and feminist

⁸ Allen, Amy (1999). *The Power of Feminist Theory*. New York: Routledge.

⁹ Crenshaw, Kimberlé (1989). "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 14: 139–67.

¹⁰ Arvin, Maile, Eve Tuck, and Morrill Angie (2013). "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy." *Feminist Formations* 25 (1): 8–34. doi:10.1353/ff.2013.0006.

¹¹ Collins, Patricia Hill (1990). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.

¹² Ibid.

movements.¹³ This means being inclusive and attentive to the contributions and experiences of all women, and deliberately applying intersectional frameworks to how we do our work as feminists in our organizations and in our movements. By transforming and eliminating dysfunctional and unequal power relations between individuals and within our organizations and movements we can have more meaningful and powerful collaborations to affect the change we want to see.

Working Collaboratively

Collaboration is defined as “the situation of two or more people working together to create or achieve the same thing.”¹⁴ Feminist collaboration means working together to develop new ideas and strategies for advocating and realizing equality for all women. Working collaboratively to examine unequal power relations, and develop new and transformative strategies allows feminists to effectively advocate for and achieve their goals.¹⁵ Developing collaborative campaigns, pooling and co-creating resources, co-planning events, meeting regularly to strategize and support each another, all create solidarity and impact, even if individual group mandates differ.

Representatives of many feminist organizations who participated in the *Building Capacity* project spoke about how they were often competing for funding and how this undermines their solidarity. Feminists and their organizations need to guard against competition and instead try to develop practices that reflect a commitment to solidarity and collaboration. These representatives indicated that solidarity and collaboration take many different forms. Many wanted to work autonomously on issues that are unique priorities for them. This did not prevent them from building solidarity with other organizations as the two examples on the following page demonstrate.

It is possible to focus on autonomous organizational priorities at the same time as collaborating with others on a common issue. Building Feminist Intersectional Solidarity can be done by sharing best practices, applying intersectionality, and supporting each other in our advocacy work with a sustained commitment that strengthens collaboration across diverse fields and mandates.

¹³ Weldon, Laurel (2019). “Power, Exclusion and Empowerment: Feminist Innovation in Political Science.” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 72: 127–36. doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2018.05.014.

¹⁴ Cambridge Dictionary. COLLABORATION.
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/collaboration>

¹⁵ Gilbert, R. Melissa, and Michele Masucci (2008). “Reflection on Feminist Collaborations: Goals, Methods, and Outcomes.” In *Feminisms in Geography: Rethinking Space, Place, and Knowledges*, edited by Pamela Moss and Karen Falconer Al-Hindi, 265. Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

The Yukon Women's Coalition brings together grassroots organizations, including the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, the Yukon Status of Women Council, Women's Legal Advocate, Dawson Women's Shelter, and others, to collaborate and address common issues affecting women in the territory. This collaboration has resulted in progressive change and advocacy on many fronts including implementation of recommendations from the 2019 report *Sharing Common Ground* by the Yukon Police Force; amended vehicle for hire bylaws in Whitehorse to address and improve safety for passengers experiencing systemic sexual assault and harassment by cab drivers in the city (2017); and the 12 Days to End Violence Against Women campaign. In an interview with *What's Up Yukon* (2016), Barb McInerney, member of the Yukon Women's Coalition, explained that the Coalition's focus is collaboration, leveraging existing resources in a sustainable way, and creating capacity to "be the water that floats each other's boats." She recognized that this collaborative work also helped to "sharpen [their] analysis of violence against women."

Reference: McTaggart, Fiona (2016). "Barb McInerney." *What's Up Yukon*. <https://whatsupyukon.com/Yukon-Lifestyle/Yukon-people/barb-mcinerney/>

The Tiny House Warriors is a Secwepemc women's collective occupying their ancestral lands in British Columbia's exterior as a protest against the environmental devastation of pipeline infrastructure that threatens their communities. These women, mostly mothers and their children, have come together to assert Secwepemc law and jurisdiction and block access to the Trans Mountain pipeline by building ten tiny houses along the 518km pipeline route. In doing so, they have also addressed the housing crisis in the region in providing homes for Secwepemc women and their children impacted by systemic poverty. The Tiny House Warriors draw attention to the serious threat to community health and safety posed by pipeline infrastructure development. An influx of non-local, mostly male workers to oil and gas infrastructure sites, often referred to as 'man camps,' results in increased instances of gender-based violence and sexual assault against local, predominantly Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit community members.¹ The Tiny House Warriors often work in solidarity with other pipeline protesters, including the Wet'suwet'en First Nation, to resist colonial, patriarchal laws and expansion of the extraction industry.

Reference: National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019). *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>

Ways to Build Feminist Intersectional Solidarity (FIS)

For feminists...

Dismantle systems of power by acknowledging them, continuously educating ourselves, learning from each other, in order to take powerful collective action.

Critical self-reflection, recognition of bias and internalized forms of discrimination, are required. We must be willing to challenge the assumptions we may make about ourselves (i.e. that we are not reproducing harmful systems, that we know all there is to know, etc.) and to engage in an honest and truthful examination of our own privilege related to race, gender, income, class, culture, age, education, ability, etc. We must hold ourselves and others accountable to examine and re-examine power dynamics in our work and in our everyday lives.

Guiding Questions:

- What do Black, Indigenous and racialized feminists say about anti-racism? About reconciliation? About anticolonialism? About racial discrimination they face every day in employment, health, housing, education, income, etc.?
- What do feminists with disabilities say about anti-ableism?
- How are the underlying causes and impacts of poverty a factor in inequality? Which women are experiencing poverty?
- How do we work to alleviate racism, sexism, ableism, colonialism, and other systems that prevent women's advancement and fracture Feminist Intersectional Solidarity?
- How do we create inquiry and examine our own bias and privilege?
- Explore and dissect the emotions and reactions that come up in observing that you may be reproducing systems of discrimination and unequal power relations.

Don't just talk the talk; walk the walk.

Don't practice feminism that is passively 'non-oppressive.' Feminism needs to be actively anti-racist, anti-ableist, anti-transphobic, anti-colonial, and anti-oppressive in general to rebalance power and strengthen messages and demands.

Guiding Questions:

- What concrete anti-oppressive actions can you take to rebalance or redistribute power?

- What strategies for directly responding to discrimination have you identified as most useful?¹⁶
- How can harmful practices arising from oppressive power systems be transformed? How can we apply this in our work and in our everyday lives?
- Are there organizations, coalitions, or networks of feminists you can join or support?
- Can you financially support the anti-oppressive work, knowledge, and expertise of other organizations?
- How can you support anti-oppressive work other than financially?

Listen to what other feminists are saying (and not saying) and actively share the floor to support others' work and views.

The following questions are meant to provide a starting point to consider how to strengthen knowledge-sharing and build mutual understanding.

Guiding Questions:

- Who is talking the most?
- Are certain women's voices privileged, encouraged, or given more space and time than others'?
- Is anyone talked over, dismissed, ignored?
- Do you actively listen when other feminists speak?¹⁷
- Do you offer inclusive space for diverse feminists to come together, meaningfully engage and support each other's work?
- Are there opportunities for you to promote other feminists' or organizations' work and/or amplify their demands?

¹⁶ For more information please see: Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network (2019). Indigenous Ally Toolkit. http://reseaumtlnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Ally_March.pdf; Egale (2019). Tips on How to Practice LGBTQI2S Allyship. <https://egale.ca/awareness/tips-on-how-to-practice-lgbtqi2s-allyship/>

¹⁷ For more information please see: Effective Communication: Barriers and Strategies. Centre for Teaching Excellence, University of Waterloo. <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/communicating-students/telling/effective-communication-barriers-and-strategies>

Build relationships of trust among feminists.

Solidarity and collaboration among feminists are strengthened when relationships are built on trust, and building trust requires time to get to know and understand each other. Feminist Intersectional Solidarity (FIS) builds relationships that are rooted in honesty, transparency, accountability, and commitment, rather than being solely transactional. We need to listen carefully to each other as feminists, collectively oppose oppression, and ensure a future where no woman is left behind.

Guiding Questions:

- Have you reached out to feminists in your area that you haven't reached out to in the past?
- What experience do you have in building trust between people? What did you learn that you can apply elsewhere?
- Do you treat other feminists as equal and valued participants?
- How might you engage in more face-to-face meetings with other feminists?
- Can you schedule regular meetings to facilitate on-going collaboration, knowledge-sharing and to build relationships of trust?

Recognize with compassion that oppressive systems create personal and collective trauma affecting the ways we interact with each other.

As feminist activists, we need to be ever conscious of the impacts of past and present experiences of inequality, trauma and oppression.

Guiding Questions:

- How can we better support each other and hold compassion for each other in our feminist work?
- How can we ensure that we do not cause more harm, and yet continue to hold one another accountable in a context of collective healing?
- In what ways does a trauma-informed approach to feminist solidarity help us better support each other and our feminist aims?

For feminist organizations...

Recognize that there are diverse feminist analyses and perspectives.

While we cannot agree on everything, challenging our assumptions and understandings is integral to feminist analyses and work. Be mindful of the diversity of perspectives that exist on a given issue, and consider them in your decision-making. This allows organizations to be receptive to new and different ways of thinking rather than operating in an “echo-chamber”.

Guiding Questions:

- Do you include women with a variety of perspectives and knowledge as members, staff, volunteers, etc.?
- Do you frequently engage with new and different forms of analyses and knowledge?
- Are you open to new ways of thinking that challenge your current understanding of an issue?
- How can you build a platform that provides equal and inclusive spaces for other feminist organizations?

Find common ground.

While many feminist organizations find it important to maintain distinct and autonomous mandates, there are many ways we can work together to strengthen our capacity to achieve our distinct goals and the ultimate goal of equality for all women.

Guiding Questions:

- In what ways does your organization’s mission and strategy for feminist equality overlap with those of other feminist organizations? How can you stand in solidarity on these issues?
- Can you identify mutual interest in working collaboratively on a goal or campaign?
- Have you identified resources beyond the financial that may be valuable to share and collaborate on? How can your organization assist in strengthening the capacity of other feminist organizations? Can you amplify, share and implement calls to action from other feminist organizations?
- How can you share your knowledge and resources among other feminist organizations for wider dissemination and learning?

Build collective knowledge through collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Work together, co-create and build collective knowledge, rather than consolidating and appropriating. This is especially relevant for larger feminist organizations who may have more capacity to support smaller groups with funding, social capital, knowledge, tools, and resources.

Guiding Questions:

- Are you collaborating with other feminist organizations on research and publications? How can you integrate shared knowledge in your work?
- Are you sharing research and publications from other feminist organizations?
- What possibilities have you considered around working with other feminist organizations?
- Is your organization working in competition with others?
- Can you collaborate with other feminist organizations to co-create and develop projects?

Board of Directors, Staff and Volunteers

Support 'Femtoring' amongst staff, volunteers, and affiliates.

Guiding Questions:

- Have you explored opportunities for knowledge-sharing?
- Do you provide opportunities for staff, volunteers, and affiliates to learn the history of the organization, of the movement, the struggle, etc.?
- Do you explore and provide opportunities to learn and develop new skills and expertise in a variety of areas?
- Does your organization provide feminist intersectional training to all staff, volunteers, and affiliates?

Ensure hiring practices are equitable and that diverse women are equally represented.

Diverse perspectives and expertise build stronger organizations that work effectively towards justice and equality for all women. Challenge capitalist and patriarchal notions of labour and productivity by recognizing all forms of work, including care work, community-building, and volunteering.

Guiding Questions:

- Do you apply a feminist, intersectional lens in considering the needs of staff, volunteers, and board members, who might themselves be experiencing multiple intersecting inequalities? Are you applying such a lens in the hiring policies and process?¹⁸
- Is your staff diverse in a multitude of ways? Is your organization collecting disaggregated demographic/occupational data about staff members?
- Do you consider a variety of skills, life experience, and expertise beyond academic credentials in hiring?
- Do you post vacancies outside of your usual networks?
- Are you developing/implementing affirmative action policies in the hiring and promotion system?
- Are you considering the burden of unpaid care work many women experience in their personal lives and offering support accordingly? (e.g., parental leave, health plans that include family planning, flexible work schedules)
- Are you adequately valuing the work and expertise of women who work casually, such as guest speakers or temporary staff?
- Do you offer stable (vs. temporary, contract) employment positions?
- Are you paying staff a living wage?
- Do you provide equal pay for part-time and full-time work?
- Do you provide health benefits?
- Do you provide pension benefits?

¹⁸ For more suggestions and guidance, see: The Ontario Non-Profit Network. Decent Work for Women Working in Non-Profits. <https://theonn.ca/our-work/our-people/decent-work/decent-work-for-women/>

Events and Meetings

Ensure disability, care responsibilities, gender, cultural, and socio-economic inclusivity in planning and facilitating meetings and events.

Identify in advance which social identity groups will be involved. Identify needed services and supports, and include them in the event budget. Allow adequate time for booking services and supports needed for full inclusion at your event.

Guiding Questions:

- for Disability Inclusivity:¹⁹
 - Are meeting and event spaces physically accessible?
 - Are events held in neighbourhoods that are accessible to all?
 - Are there sidewalks outside of the building?
 - Are there elevators and/or ramps for accessibility?
 - Does the meeting room have enough space to move around using mobility assistive devices?
 - Does the venue have accessible washrooms?
- for Care Responsibilities Inclusivity
 - Is your event or meeting taking place at a time when women are engaging in unpaid care labour – bed time? dinner time? school pick up?
 - Are childcare facilities available?
 - Do you offer reimbursements for child care costs?
- for Gender Inclusivity:
 - Who would benefit or like to participate in the event or meeting you are planning?
 - Would people with diverse marginalized genders (non-binary, Two Spirit, trans and questioning people) identify with the event's topic? Think through the purpose of your event, meaningfully engage with people of marginalized genders when planning the event and be specific in your event description.
 - Are gender-neutral washrooms available?

¹⁹ For further suggestions on creating accommodating and accessible spaces, see CRIAW-ICREF's and DAWN Canada's "Diversity Through Inclusive Practice Toolkit". <http://fnn.criaw-icref.ca/images/publications/41949d448c12f9a3b3055413e3ce04c9.pdf> ; CAWI-IVTF (2015). Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook. <https://www.cawi-ivtf.org/sites/default/files/publications/ei-lens-community-agencies-2015-en.pdf>

- Is your event or meeting open to men? Consider the type of event or meeting you are planning. Is it a fundraising event, an event to raise awareness with allies? Or is it a meeting to share concerns around sexual assault or harassment?
- for Cultural Inclusivity:
 - How will you stay informed and current about cultural inclusivity practices?
 - Have you referred to cultural calendars to ensure the event date(s) avoid conflict with major religious or cultural events or holidays?
 - Have you allocated a venue space as an inter-faith centre or a space where participants can go to pray, meditate, or sit quietly?
 - Have you considered dietary restrictions?
 - Have you included Indigenous groups as members or as part of the planning committee?
 - Have you identified the traditional territory on which the event takes place and arranged to acknowledge the traditional territory at the event opening?
 - If appropriate, have you arranged to have a smudge ceremony or a blessing by a representative of the territory?
 - Have you promoted the event through community groups and organizations that are known to have racially and ethnically diverse membership?
 - Is interpretation made available?
- for Socio-Economic Inclusivity:
 - Is the event or meeting taking place at a time when women are at work? Was ample notice of the event given?
 - Is participation and/or expertise sharing compensated with honoraria?
 - Are reimbursements for travel, accommodations, etc. offered to guests and event facilitators?
 - Is the event easily accessible by public transit?
 - Is there availability of food and refreshment where meetings are held over mealtimes?
 - Is there time allocated for social networking during events, rather than before or after?

For feminist movements...

Avoid the pitfalls of 'professionalizing' feminist activism.

Recognize that diverse women have diverse types of expertise to offer and that there are diverse avenues for women to contribute to the movement.

Guiding Questions:

- Do you create diverse means for women to engage with your organization and its work?
- Has your work been reviewed by feminists from diverse backgrounds? Have you incorporated their suggestions?
- Do you use clear language? How can you avoid using academic experience or jargon that can alienate or exclude others?
- Do you use accessible language when dealing with conflict and finding common ground?
- Have you provided background information to clarify and explain specific terms and concepts?

Ensure all women's voices are represented at the table and that they can contribute in meaningful ways.

Amplify and centre marginalized and underrepresented voices to ensure that their strengths and lived experiences are at the forefront of all decision making.

Guiding Questions:

- Whose table is this?
- Who is currently at the table? Who isn't? Why?
- What are the obstacles to ensuring the inclusion of diverse groups of women?
- Have you implemented review processes to ensure that all barriers to participation are removed?
- Do you intentionally move outside your comfort zone to foster new collaborative and inclusive connections across movements and organizations?
- Have you ensured that no woman's voice is excluded because of language barriers?

Tokenism occurs when an individual is perceived or expected to represent an entire group. For example, a lesbian woman may be expected to speak on behalf of all lesbian women, or a Black woman expected to speak on behalf of all Black women. As a participant in one of our intersectionality workshops pointed out, tokenism can present itself in more nuanced ways, causing individuals to be pigeonholed. For instance, people often make the assumption that immigrants to Canada are only interested in immigration issues. Tokenism also occurs when people are hired to fill a quota rather than recognizing their qualifications and experience.

Reference: Simpson, J. (2009). Everyone Belongs: A toolkit for applying intersectionality (1st ed.). Ottawa: CRIAW-ICREF. <https://www.criaw-icref.ca/en/product/everyone-belongs--a-toolkit-for-applying-intersectionality>.

Build equitable, non-exploitative relationships with other feminists based on reciprocity and mutual respect.

Consult resources to learn how to avoid tokenizing²⁰ in your relationships with other feminists, feminist organizations, and feminist movements.

Guiding Questions:

- Are individuals invited to meaningfully participate, or only to check off a diversity box?
- Have you invited a diverse group of voices to the table rather than relying on a single individual to speak for a group?
- Are marginalized women invited to speak broadly on women's rights and feminist issues, as opposed to speaking only for marginalized women and marginalized women's issues?
- Are women from diverse groups made comfortable to speak about their experiences in multiple cultural settings?

²⁰ For further information on the ways tokenization can occur, see: Kim Ho, Helen (2017). "8 Ways People of Colour are Tokenized in Nonprofits." Revolution. <https://medium.com/the-nonprofit-revolution/8-ways-people-of-color-are-tokenized-in-nonprofits-32138d0860c1>

Foster more intersectional and interdisciplinary work across feminist fields and campaigns.

Feminist work is strengthened when the ideas, perspectives, and experiences of women from diverse organizations and movements are connected and shared.

Guiding Questions:

- Do you notice a tendency for organizations to become 'silo-ed', working separately from other service, advocacy or grassroots organizations?
- Can you eliminate separation by finding common ground and (re)creating networks, strategies, structures?
- Have you explored the ways in which diverse feminist movements can work together across power inequities to fulfill common agendas?

Facilitate transparency, honesty, and accountability.

Foster relationships of meaningful collaboration by co-creating campaigns and strategies, with transparent and accountable decision-making, and focusing on common ground.

Guiding Questions:

- Are you working with other organizations in competition, or viewing each other as allies?
- How do feminist movements collaboratively organize and structure their work, research, and knowledge mobilization?

Conclusion

In order to effectively apply Feminist Intersectional Solidarity in our work and advocacy we must collaborate to dismantle the unequal and dysfunctional power structures within groups of feminists, feminist organizations, and feminist movements. Power must be redistributed so we can work together collaboratively. This allows for shared responsibility and an ongoing commitment to the collective best interests of all women. Examples from the *Yukon Women's Coalition* and *The Tiny House Warriors* provide clear evidence that feminist collaborative action can bring diverse women from grassroots movements together to effectively address women's needs.

In order to create an equal and fair society for all women, we must advocate for proper funding of organizations doing the work, and demand that the people in power work to remove barriers for women. In order to work collectively and create a stronger women's movement, it is important to establish strong partnerships and build feminist solidarity.

Together we are stronger.

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Feminist Intersectional Solidarity Action

Advocating Collectively for Core Funding: One Action We Can Start Today

Decades of funding cuts and backlash have caused many women's rights organizations to drastically scale back operations or shut down altogether. Feminist organizations in Canada have few, if any, paid staff, limiting their capacity to advocate for women. Precarious and insufficient funding results in insufficient staffing, reduced time for research, policy development, outreach, and advocacy vital to the movement. Lack of core funding for feminist organizations renders women's voices silent on key issues impacting their lives, and on society as a whole.

The current funding model is project-based, creating increased competition among women's organizations for scarce resources, government funding and public donations. This threatens Feminist Intersectional Solidarity. Governments at all levels, and indeed many women's rights organizations, are reluctant to address core funding as an issue, at the same time as sexism and devaluing women and their work create increased negative impacts for women. Women's organizations are grossly underfunded, and their staff (predominately women) is underpaid. As a result, women's knowledge and expertise have been undermined.

The principles of FIS can be applied in advocating for core funding. Challenging and redistributing power, working collaboratively, and building solidarity builds our collective capacity to advocate effectively for core funding for organizations that support women and the feminist movement.

Here are some suggestions for collective action that can support the reinstatement of core funding for feminist organizations:

- Advocate and talk about core-funding with others in your network.
- Listen and talk to each other about capacity and needs. Identify and support organizations that are struggling.
- Share your experiences in securing funding and building capacity.
- Share your expertise in grant-writing, your resources and experience with project and financial management, with capacity building, strategic planning and networking.²¹

²¹ FRIDA and AWID (2016). Brave, Creative and Resilient: The Global State of Young Feminists Organizing. page 48-49

- Make other feminist organizations aware of funding opportunities, and assist them to meet with funders.
- Challenge governments to fund different initiatives that would benefit women's organizations, as well as the larger feminist movement.
- Create coalitions and lobby groups to pressure governments and funding institutions to provide core funding for women's organizations.
- Include core funding in all your conversations with funders and policy makers.

Project-based funding is not enough.

In the past five years, the federal government has reinvested significantly in the women's movement. This funding is helpful but rebuilding capacity and forging relationships with government and within the movement takes time and resources. Feminist organizations must support each other, building relationships and trust, to advocate collectively for stable, long-term, core funding.

CRIAW-ICREF heard from several women's organizations who collaborated effectively to secure funding. We have heard from women's organizations working together and in solidarity, despite government and institutional pressure to divide and weaken them.

We must ensure that we advocate for ourselves and for each other. We must demand that resources be allocated equitably and that no woman, or women's organization, is left behind.

Together we can make a difference.

**Share your actions and campaigns with
CRIAW-ICREF and we'll circulate them on our
website and in our newsletter.**

Send them to info@criaw-icref.ca

**Consult our web site to find information
about other women's organizations in your
area.**

www.criaw-icref.ca