

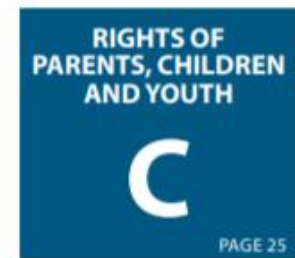
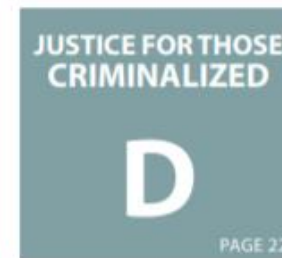


Overview of the COVID-19 BC Gender Equality Report Card

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her and they/them)
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(she/her)

West Coast LEAF

COVID-19 BC GENDER EQUALITY REPORT CARD



Thanks to our collaborators

Webinar host:  COURTHOUSE
LIBRARIES | BC

Report Card dialogue hosts:



Coalition Against
Trans Antagonism



Thanks to our collaborators

Project funders:



And many research volunteers
and community reviewers!



BC Gender Equality Report Card


- Education and advocacy tool
- Goal: Hold the BC government accountable to respecting the human rights of women &/or trans, Two-Spirit, non-binary, gender non-conforming people
- Our work towards a more gender-inclusive Report Card
 - Shift from CEDAW Report Card, 2009-2018

BC Gender Equality Report Card

- Explores BC government action, inaction, and harmful action in six issue areas:
 - Access to justice
 - Economic security
 - Freedom from gender-based violence
 - Health care
 - Justice for people who are criminalized
 - Rights of parents, children, and youth
- Guided by community dialogues
- First published in May 2020

Special COVID-19 Edition

- Assesses how the BC government's pandemic response has impacted gender justice in 2020
- Why the focus on COVID-19?
 - The pandemic has deepened injustices and has disproportionately impacted gender-oppressed communities
 - Amplify community activism and commentary
- Published December 2020



COVID has exposed and shone a giant spotlight on how our society is so stratified and unequal.

This pandemic has really shown all the cracks we have in our system and the real lack of accessibility.

Methodology

- Dialogues with the Trans Supper Club at PACE, the 2Spirit Collective at UNYA, and Coalition Against Trans Antagonism (fall 2019)
 - Insights about the six issue areas
 - Collage art and notes on flip chart paper
- Presented themes and research questions from dialogues to research volunteers
- 2nd meeting with each community group re: data validation, grading, knowledge mobilization



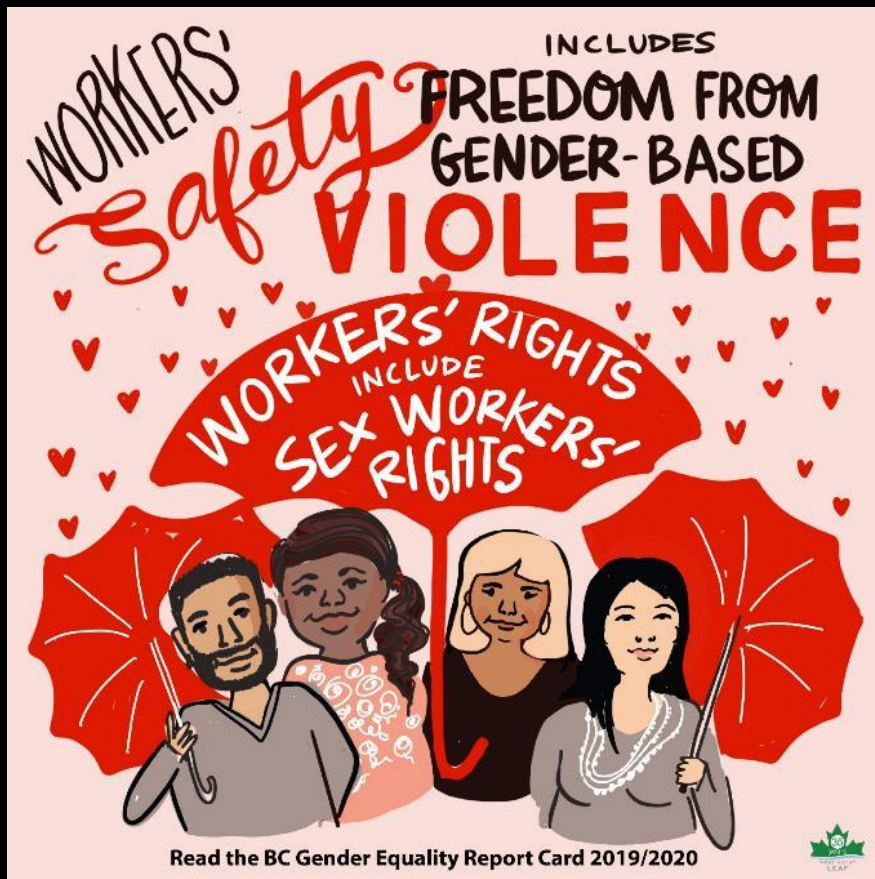
YOUR BODY.
YOUR RIGHT.
YOUR POWER.

bias



JUSTICE

I'm mad



Social media images by Sam Bradd, Drawing Change
Access all 8 images + social media toolkit on our website!

Methodology

- Themes from last year's community dialogues informed first round of volunteer research for COVID-19 BC Gender Equality Report Card
- Two more dialogues with each community group for data validation and grading
- Draft sections sent to community reviewers for both Report Cards

Grading

- Grades reflect how much effective action BC has taken in the time period covered
- Done collaboratively with dialogue participants, volunteers, and community reviewers

A	SIGNIFICANT ACTION TAKEN. ON THE RIGHT TRACK.
B	CONSIDERABLE ACTION TAKEN. NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT.
C	SOME ACTION TAKEN. NEEDS CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT.
D	VERY LIMITED ACTION. NEEDS SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT.
F	TOTAL INACTION OR HARMFUL ACTION.

Grades – COVID-19 Report Card

**ACCESS TO
JUSTICE**

D

PAGE 7

**ECONOMIC
SECURITY**

B-

PAGE 10

**FREEDOM FROM
VIOLENCE**

C

PAGE 15

**HEALTH
CARE**

C-

PAGE 18

**JUSTICE FOR THOSE
CRIMINALIZED**

D

PAGE 22

**RIGHTS OF
PARENTS, CHILDREN
AND YOUTH**

C

PAGE 25

Access to Justice – Insights

“The whole [legal system] is a barrier intentionally!”

“The current system does not bring real solutions or closure to anyone involved.”

Access to Justice – Impacts

- A survey of low-income people in BC found that:
 - 36% of legal problems in the last 3 years were caused or worsened by the pandemic
 - Of those who thought more legal help would have led to a better outcome, 57% said more availability of services during the pandemic would have helped
 - Women less likely than men to believe that the legal system is essentially fair and effective at solving problems
- Income is strongly gendered!

Access to Justice – Why D?

- Shift to online legal services and proceedings, without universal access to technology and clear info to navigate changes, increased inequalities for:
 - People living in poverty
 - Indigenous communities
 - People in rural and remote areas
 - People without a lawyer representing them
- Family law legal help pilot program fell far short of the need (especially with spike in family violence)

Economic Security – Insights

“Trans sex workers who had to stop working and didn’t have any income [. . .]. Others had to keep working—more and more risky and precarious.”

“\$300 extra a month makes my life a little more bearable.”

Economic Security – Impacts

- 16% of women in BC lost jobs from February to May (a third more than men) – more job loss for solo parents, people who recently immigrated, people under 25
- Economic recovery has left behind racialized people, youth, Indigenous people off reserve, and women
Trans and non-binary people face severe underemployment in BC
- 61% of people with disabilities in Canada struggling to meet at least one essential need in spring 2020

Economic Security – Why B-?

- A higher grade because of the large number of positive steps in the areas of shelter and housing, employment, and financial/social supports
 - 3 pages of actions vs. 1 page for most sections
- **BUT** most measures are temporary and do not address the root causes of poverty and inequality
 - Just before publication: \$300 supplement to income assistance, disability assistance and Senior's Supplement to be cut in half for January-March

Economic Security – Why B-?

- Many positive steps leave behind those facing the most severe poverty and oppression, for example:
 - Government supports have been largely out of reach for sex workers, although these workers have lost significant income
 - Rent freeze excludes people in rent-geared-to-income BC Housing units
 - Rental supplement excluded people on income assistance

Economic Security – Why B-?

- Many positive steps leave behind those facing the most severe poverty and oppression, for example:
 - Sick leave added to *Employment Standards Act* is unpaid - not an option for many
 - Temporary pay boost for essential workers excluded child care workers and people working public-facing jobs in essential businesses like grocery stores (often racialized women)

WOMEN and RACIALIZED
PEOPLE KEEP SOCIETY
GOING – DURING THE
PANDEMIC AND
ALWAYS

THEY DESERVE
**FAIR and EQUAL
PAY**



Read the BC Gender Equality Report Card 2019/2020



Freedom from Gender-Based Violence – Insights

“People feel trapped in their living situations/cohabiting with abusive partners.”

“The need for crisis supports needs to be able to continue to evolve with people’s realities.”

Freedom from Gender-Based Violence – Impacts

- Intimate partner violence increased 20-30% across Canada in the early months of the pandemic
- 1 in 5 Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people faced intimate partner violence
- Queer and trans people face high rates of harassment and discrimination online
- Anti-Asian hate crimes spiked to 7x the 2019 rate in Vancouver in the early months of the pandemic

Freedom from Gender-Based Violence – Why C?

- \$10 million for community-based sexual assault services over three years
- Lack of funding designated for Two-Spirit, trans, and Indigenous-led supports for survivors
- Still lack of comprehensive health supports for survivors (e.g. counselling and forensic nurse examiners across BC)
- Need for services that are inclusive for sex workers

Health Care – Insights

“COVID is piling on exacerbating factors for trans people who already deal with so much (restricted access to hormones, postponement of gender-affirming health care appointments, surgeries - all derailed). I’m sure people are still wondering what’s happening and are quite stressed.”

“A lot of trans and gender non-conforming people use in order to survive life and survive COVID, and so this is just doubling down on marginalized people.”

Health Care – Impacts

- Increase in drug toxicity deaths
- Intensified barriers in access to medical care for Indigenous people, particularly those giving birth
- New barriers to reproductive choice
- Suspension of gender-affirming health services, and lack of clear updates for those waiting
- Stringent visiting restrictions in long-term care without adequate communication with residents and loved ones

Health Care – Why C-?

- Hard-won move to make a safe drug supply available by prescription, yet barriers remain
 - Gendered barriers to harm reduction services
- Bill-22 a backwards step for the human rights of youth, especially those who are Indigenous and/or marginalized based on gender
- Still no action to cover prescription contraception despite new barriers to reproductive choice

GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE SAVES LIVES

LET'S MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL WHO NEED IT



Read the BC Gender Equality Report Card 2019/2020



Justice for People Who Are Criminalized – Insights

“Let’s not confuse the need for more training with a need for more money in the hands of the police.”

“Total mismanagement [in provincial prisons] re: COVID, not to mention day-to-day stuff.”

Justice for People Who Are Criminalized – Why D?

- Worsening trend of people awaiting trial outnumbering sentenced people in BC prisons
 - Harms of incarceration are gendered
- First Nations Justice Strategy important and addresses violence against Indigenous women and girls, but:
 - No focus on needs of Two-Spirit, trans, and gender-diverse Indigenous people
 - Lacks strong financial support from BC government

Justice for People Who Are Criminalized – Why D?

- Despite calls to depopulate prisons, BC took only tiny, short-lived steps for early release
- Reduction of visits to prisons and programming for criminalized people – gendered impacts
- People held in “induction units” upon entering custody = solitary confinement by another name
 - Concerns about disproportionate use of segregation for Indigenous, Black, and other racialized people, and for people with mental illness

Rights of Parents, Children, and Youth – Insights

“If you are waiting for a diagnosis [of a child] or do not have a diagnosis, you are not eligible for the funds, but the caregiver stress is still there.”

“House youth individually, or at least have enough housing that youth have the option of having their own room if that’s what they want.”

Rights of Parents, Children, and Youth – Impacts

- Closure of schools and daycares has increased unpaid caregiving (strongly gendered)
- Isolation has harmed the mental health and safety of young people in BC
 - Representative for Children & Youth reports 16% increase in critical injury investigations
 - Kids Help Phone reports 70% increase in calls in BC

Rights of Parents, Children, and Youth – Why C?

- Important financial supports to keep licensed child care providers afloat and assist parents with the costs of child care
 - But no coordinated strategy to guarantee child care for every family needing it
- Failure to prioritize family connectedness during the pandemic for children and youth in government care

Using the Report Card

- Use it to inform:
 - Research
 - Letters and submissions to government
 - Frontline and legal services work
 - Media work (e.g. articles, interviews, letters)
 - Conversations in your community
- Share the social media images
- Please give credit to community dialogue groups and creators of the other sources cited in the Report Card

Budget Submissions

Use the Report Card findings to back up your recommendations for BC's spending priorities for pandemic recovery and beyond. Examples:

- Anti-violence services led by and for Indigenous and Two-Spirit, trans, and gender-diverse communities
- Universal cost coverage for contraception

Budget Submissions

Wise Practices

- The more specific the better
- Focus on 1 - 3 recommendations (they hear from hundreds of people and organizations)
- Think about what could make the most difference for folks
- Share what you know (you are the experts)

Questions?

Image credit:
Camylla Batani at
Unsplash



Thanks for joining the webinar!

Hope you'll stay in touch!

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