

CCWESTT Gap Analysis Findings and Recommendations October 2023

CCWESTT's research has concluded there are significant gaps when it comes to achieving gender equity in science, engineering, trades, and technology (SETT) in Canada.

These gaps can be eliminated through the action demonstrated internationally. We identified countries in Europe that followed a strategic planning process and set up legislative and implementation frameworks to achieve gender equality and consider this to be best practice.

While there is work to be done for governments in Canada, a systems change approach can engage all stakeholders in working towards gender equity.

A Systems Change Approach – "It takes a system to change a system."

Rather than identifying the barriers to success for women and gender diverse people in SETT, which are well established and researched (see [Resource Hub](#)), CCWESTT sought to find solutions to these barriers.

To reach gender equity in SETT, CCWESTT suggests a systems change approach of scaling out, up and deep for all stakeholders - not-for-profits, employers, organisations, institutions, and governments.

Scaling Out

Barrier:

Shift focus from 'fixing women' to fit into current unwelcoming SETT cultures.

Solutions:

- Programming to recruit/train male allies to champion gender inclusion
- Humanising and decolonizing SETT fields through education including curricula, addressing outdated social norms of gendered roles within SETT and domestic spheres
- Acknowledging an intersectional approach to knowledge production and dissemination

Scaling Up

Barrier:

Lack of legal obligations and accountability

Solutions:

- Work with governments at all levels to create strategic plans and legal frameworks to advance gender equality using examples such as European countries Iceland and Lithuania

- Build and track Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for equity, diversity and inclusion within organisations, include actionable items such as collecting disaggregated data, transparency, and consequences for not meeting goals

Scaling Deep

Barriers:

Performative allyship and performative equity

Solutions:

- Learning from the lived experiences of SETT students/professionals of all intersectional backgrounds
- Going beyond gestures and words to meaningful action
- Gender equity work IS work and must not rely on unpaid labour to move change forward
- Programming such as mentorship, Equity Resource Groups (ERGs) need to be examined for effectiveness and their reliance on marginalized members

Recommendations:

Strategies to Support Systems Change in SETT

CCWESTT's Recommendations for the Government of Canada

Taking Collaborative Action:

- Work to create the necessary legislative framework and implementation framework to fully implement the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality. To ensure success, leverage partnership with all the provinces and territories in a manner similar to how the Government of Canada worked to bring about language equality between Canada's two official languages, English and French.
- Leverage the previous investments which have established an understanding of systemic barriers to achieving gender equity in SETT workplaces. Identified solutions to systemic issues through nationwide consultations with SETT stakeholders and experts, and incorporated into the Government's strategic plans, action plans, budget plans, operational plans, communications plans, and evaluation plans which have the objective of increasing the number of women who are recruited, retained, and promoted in SETT workplaces.
- Mandate action plans to amend legislation at the federal, provincial, and territorial level, or create new legislation to achieve gender equity in SETT and beyond. Women and Gender Equality Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada should work collaboratively to hold annual FPT meetings with representatives from the federal, provincial, and territorial

governments' Departments of Justice, Councils for the Status of Women, and Human Rights Commissions to establish these action plans.

Measurable Goals & Accountability:

- Develop consecutive four-year strategic plans and the necessary four-year (or two-year) action plans to maximise the country's progress towards the long-term objective of gender equality and the intermediate goals of the action plans.
- Invest in systemic change towards the longterm objective of gender equality, which includes investments outside of Women and Gender Equality Canada. Funding should be more strategically targeted so that the Government can receive the highest possible return on its investment.

Policies & Practices:

- Design all legislation, policies, programs, and services through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus lens – to strengthen its application, scope, quality, and rigour and to ensure a maximum impact of gender-equality outcomes, as recognized by the Auditor General Report.
- Apply the scaling model for systemic change as discussed in this report, and GBA Plus to existing legislation (e.g. the Employment Equity Act) to ensure progress towards equity goals in SETT workplaces and beyond.
- Recognize that work towards gender equity is work and take action to move away from relying on unpaid labour to achieve equity goals. This includes developing more robust and gender-disaggregated performance indicators for unpaid labour, going beyond measuring household care duties and unpaid labour, and including other types such as volunteering and contributing to the community outside the home.

CCWESTT recommendations for not-for-profits, employers, organisations, and institutions

Prioritise Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization (EDID):

- Forefront an equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization mindset.
- Invest (both financially and strategically) in achieving equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization at all levels of your organisation.
- Ensure there is a robust level of engagement, investment of resources, and sponsorship across your institution and hold your institution accountable.

Do the work & be ready:

- Find your paths of influence and capitalise on societal opportunities when societal norms are open to change.
- Understand your stakeholders' (employees and the community/society members you serve) lived experiences, and incorporate a decolonization model

into the work your organisation does by consulting with Indigenous communities where you operate/work.

- Move past preformative equity and allyship to create policy that breaks down the internal barriers that prevent people from being their authentic selves and reaching their full potential.
- Go beyond EDI training and recruitment practices.

EDID work *is* work:

- Adapt a model to move away from unpaid labour – leveraging the SETT community to build partnerships for both financial and human capital opportunities.
- Work with SETT employers/institutions/professional organisations to create partnerships through employee volunteer programs.

Don't start from scratch:

- There are numerous best practices cases. The resource section of this report lists many of these cases. Scale up and out with a foundation of EDID best practices and by creating inclusive policies within the organisation/corporation/institution that put your internal stakeholders first such **as employees, faculty, volunteers, and students.**

Work with Government Bodies to create more robust frameworks, action plans, and legal obligation towards gender equality, such as:

- Audit for and encourage the the design of all legislation, policies, programs, and services of the Government of Canada and provincial and territorial governments to use a Gender-Based Analysis Plus lens – to strengthen its application, scope, quality, and rigour and to ensure a maximum impact of gender equality outcomes, as recognized by the Auditor General Report.
- Audit for and encourage the Government of Canada to apply a scaling model for systemic change as discussed in this report, and GBA Plus to existing legislation, such as the *Employment Equity Act* to ensure progress towards equity goals in SETT workplaces and beyond
- Remind the Government of Canada to recognize that work towards gender equality *is* work and to take action to move away from relying on unpaid labour to achieve equity goals. This includes developing more robust and gender-disaggregated performance indicators for unpaid labour, going beyond measuring household care duties and unpaid labour, and including other types such as volunteering and contributing to the community outside the home.