



ev equal voice

2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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YEAR IN REVIEW

2019-20 was an incredibly busy year for Equal Voice.

Over the last year, we hosted campaign schools and boot camps across the country, provided training and networking for prospective candidates and campaign staff, made real impact toward gender-sensitive legislatures across Canada, provided analysis on women* in politics, celebrated the highest ever number of women MPs elected, and hosted Daughters of the Vote (DOV), among other achievements. We also had meaningful discussions and consultations with stakeholders, members and supporters, potential partners, and developed Equal Voice's first ever Strategic Plan for the years 2020 through 2024.

Under the leadership of a new Board of Directors we have been working to embed equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) throughout the organization. This has included training for Board members, further reviewing workplace policies and our programs through an equity lens, developing workplace values and a diversity statement, hiring a senior equity advisor, and ongoing regular training on anti-racism and EDI for all staff. We know we have a long way to go – but are committed to learning and unlearning, to ensure EDI and accessibility are at the heart of all of our work.

It has been extraordinary to see the real impacts our programs have on the lives and careers of women across Canada. We saw many of our DOV delegates and campaign school participants run for election, at all levels of government. Over one hundred DOV delegates completed projects, hosted events, and even started entire organizations with the funding we provided through our Rosemary Speirs Leadership grant. In February, we held our first forum on gender-sensitive legislatures, which brought elected officials from across Canada together to discuss how we can elect and retain more women in our political institutions.

In October 2019, a record number of women were elected to the House of Commons – and yet, we are far from gender parity. With 29% of Members of Parliament now identifying as women, we are both encouraged and more motivated than ever. Change in Canada has been slow and incremental, and if we want to see gender parity in our lifetime, we need to act now.

As the 2020 fiscal year came to a close, the global pandemic COVID-19 presented its own challenges. Equal Voice, following advice from Public Health authorities in Canada, quickly ensured that staff and volunteers were able to continue their work from home. Despite the circumstances, we continue to advocate for more women in politics, and to support those already in office. We have watched as women, both in Canada and abroad, have been at the forefront of this pandemic – with so many women showing the world the real positive impact women in leadership can have.

We are incredibly proud of the work our small yet mighty-team accomplished in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, and feel honoured and inspired to work alongside hundreds of volunteers across the country who share our vision that Canada urgently needs more women in politics. However, as much as we know Equal Voice is making an enormous impact, we also recognize that there is still much more to be done, because until women, in all of their diversity, have an equal voice and are truly heard at the decision making tables of this country, our work must continue.

We invite you to join, or continue your work with, our outstanding community of supporters by being an Equal Voice member, getting involved in a Chapter, or by making a donation to support our programs. Together, we can elect more women to all levels of political office.



Eleanor Fast
Executive Director, Equal Voice



Sharmila Setaram
Chair of the National Board, Equal Voice

***Throughout this document, we use the word “women” to mean people who self-identify as women, and to include ALL women representing the diversity of Canada including (but not limited to) diversity of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, ability, and socio-economic background**

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Equal Voice is a multi-partisan organization dedicated to electing and supporting women at all levels of political office. We are the only not-for-profit in North America that works with and engages directly with all political parties to elect more women, at all levels of government.

Thanks to valuable input from members, partners, and stakeholders across Canada, in 2019 Equal Voice developed an ambitious four-year strategic plan that will chart its course as an organization to 2024.

The development and completion of Equal Voices' Strategic Plan is a significant milestone for the organization in 2019. Over the next 4 years, Equal Voice will focus on the strategic directions outlined in the plan to deliver high quality programs and tools to our members and to the public.

Equal Voice's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan is committed to creating a pathway for women, in all of their diversity, to run for elected office. This means not only equipping women who are running with the tools and support they need to succeed, but also creating a political environment conducive to effectively recruiting and retaining women in politics.

STRATEGIC GOALS 2020-2024

1

Equipping women to succeed in politics

2

Retaining women in politics

3

Advocating for representation

4

Building organizational capacity

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We are multi-partisan and work with all political parties to nominate and elect more women.

.....

We are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion, and accessibility in all our work.

.....

We are bilingual and endeavour to incorporate Indigenous languages in our work.

.....

We are national and operate through regional Chapters across Canada.

.....

We are a non-profit, funded through individual donations, partnerships, and grants.

Our full strategic plan can be viewed at [Strategic Plan 2020 - 2024](#).

OUR IMPACT

EV's Social Media Presence

In 2019, Equal Voice continued to grow its group of supporters in different social media platforms:



FACEBOOK
8.2 k



TWITTER
14.3 k



INSTAGRAM
2.5 k

That year, EV also had approx.

1,797,600

Twitter impressions.





DAUGHTERS OF THE VOTE

Daughters of the Vote is an ambitious initiative by Equal Voice that began in 2017 to mark the 100th anniversary of (some) women getting the right to vote in Canada, and the still incomplete journey of women's participation in politics today. Thanks to support from the Department for Women and Gender Equality, and our corporate and philanthropic partners, Equal Voice held a second iteration of this program in 2019.

For the second DOV, which took place April 1-4 2019, Equal Voice brought together 338 emerging young women and gender-diverse leaders to participate in a four-day program consisting of workshops, hands-on training, engaging panels and presentations, as well as opportunities to network with elected officials at all levels of government, from all political parties. Delegates also had the extraordinary opportunity to sit in the House of Commons, make and hear statements from fellow delegates, and engage with the federal leaders of each political party, including the Prime Minister of Canada.

In a participant survey, 72% of the DOV delegates agreed with the statement:

"I believe I will run for office one day"

Through this program, Equal Voice aims to help young women become familiar with Canada's political institutions - so that they are equipped and inspired to participate in the formal political sphere and take action in their local communities.

Interesting facts about the impact of DOV:

3

DOV delegates ran federally in 2019;

1

was elected.

1

DOV delegate ran for MLA in Alberta and was elected.

More than

10

delegates have been hired by MPs, and Minister's offices at the federal level.

Equal Voice's ultimate goal is to ensure women are dynamic and equal participants at every political decision making table in the country.

CAMPAIGN SCHOOLS

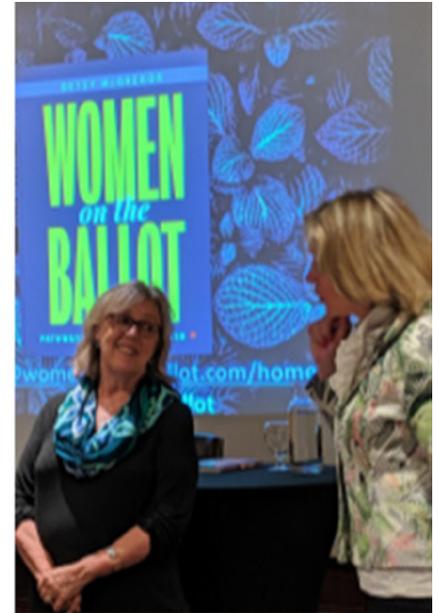
EV's National Campaign Schools for Women are a two-day dynamic program designed to teach current and potential candidates, as well as senior campaign staff, the skills they need to get from nomination to the ballot box.

In 2019, Equal Voice successfully co-hosted three Campaign Schools in Ottawa, Halifax and Vancouver. 2019 Campaign School participants had the opportunity to learn from experienced strategists, campaigners, and elected officials.

"Absolutely loved this event and all the hard work that was put into making it!"

"Great, engaging, inspirational, emotional and supportive environment, Exceeded expectations"

"I appreciate that there wasn't denouncing of men too, just positive feminism"



GUIDEBOOK

In 2019 Equal Voice turned its [Getting to the Gate Guidebook](#) into a dynamic [microsite](#) to help women assess their strengths and experience, identify areas to improve skills, and ultimately help decide where and what level of government to run.

Made possible through financial support from Canadian Heritage and the work of many volunteers and contributors, this online tool aims to support women interested in running for office in Canada.

Whether you've just started to think about it or you've already decided to run, this guidebook can help you get organized, build on your strengths, and get yourself – and a team – ready for your campaign.



DAUGHTERS OF THE VOTE LEGACY EVENTS

Equal Voice was pleased to host five Daughters of the Vote Legacy Events in 2019. DOV Delegates from both 2017 and 2019 gathered in **Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver** to network and collaborate with each other and local elected officials. Through participation in 'speed dating' type discussions, listening to panels, as well as listening to and making presentations on different initiatives, they showed how young women and gender diverse youth today are leading in their communities.



"We need more women -- especially minority and racialized women -- in politics. Great discussion with dynamic future leaders, and a wonderful panel."

(Tweet from Salma Zahid, MP)



"I was thrilled to participate in the Daughters of the Vote Legacy Event hosted by Equal Voice. I learned a lot and was inspired by listening to the stories of these incredible women in politics"



WELCOME BACK RECEPTION

On February 5th, Equal Voice hosted its annual Welcome Back Reception. The energy in the room was incredible, as Members of Parliament, Senators, Government Officials, sponsors, donors, EV members and friends, all came together to celebrate a record number of new and returning women to the Hill.

The event was yet another wonderful opportunity to connect and support Equal Voice's work of getting **more women elected to all levels of political office in Canada.**



CALGARY STAMPEDE 2019

On Sunday July 7, we hosted Equal Voice's 2019 Stampede at the Craft Beer Market in Calgary. The event was a great success and gathered Federal MPs, Alberta MLAs, Calgary and Edmonton City Councillors, members of the general public and our Equal Voice Alberta South Chapter to celebrate women in politics.



OUR CHAPTERS

Equal Voice Chapters are powerful catalysts across Canada. From networking to skills-building events, Equal Voice Chapters actively engage, educate and promote multi-partisan networking, cooperation, relationship building, and mentoring opportunities.

Highlights of EV Chapters Events in 2019 include:

She Governs - Led by Equal Voice **Alberta South** Chapter in partnership with the City of Calgary, the Model Council provided young female leaders an opportunity to represent municipal wards and offered a forum to discuss issues affecting their community.

"It was a great experience and I had a lot of fun today," said 15-year-old participant, Kaylee Scott. "This program definitely makes me want to consider a career in public leadership. I learned there is a lot of work to be done on so many important issues facing us today."

NCR - **"What I Wish I knew"** a panel discussion for women interested in running for office.

Women Lead - organized by Equal Voice **Central Vancouver Island** Chapter, thanks to the financial support from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, this project engages a diverse group of women to inspire a new generation of political and community leaders, and address racist, intolerant attitudes via mentorship, workshops, and ongoing local networking.

"Our Voice, Our Province" - A one-day event hosted by Equal Voice **Saskatchewan** Chapter bringing together people from across the province to have a conversation about women in local politics.

Toronto - **"New Year's Levee"**, "Women in Politics Campaign School", Women in Politics Book Club and Multiple Pop-up panels.

ROSEMARY SPIERS LEADERSHIP GRANT

Over the last year, Equal Voice awarded Leadership Grants to delegates from the 2017 and 2019 Daughters of the Vote Program. Through these grants, young women and gender diverse leaders across Canada designed, developed and implemented advocacy projects in their communities.



To date, 100 projects have been funded through the Rosemary Spiers Leadership Grant. Some of these projects have been featured in the media, and have successfully secured additional funding to keep their initiatives going.



Equal Voice is proud of the impact these young women and their initiatives have had in their communities - whether by organizing a youth mental health conference for underserved groups, raising awareness in rural communities about education opportunities, starting a soccer training for Muslim women, or producing a talk-show that supports newcomers looking to enter the Canadian labour market.



"When I saw that I had an impact, it made me more resilient and stronger as an individual. I am in a place to mentor people and being a role model to them, it makes me a better individual and I am eternally grateful"

**- Amira Shousha,
2019 DOV delegate**

Delegates who have completed their projects all agree that through their leadership and work, they have gained project management skills and had a chance to create real opportunities in their communities while meeting new people and developing their networks.



"Daughters of the Vote and the Leadership Grant have inspired me to use my connections to help lead my community to advocate for important issues such as ending violence against women"

**- Andrea Strathdee,
2017 DOV delegate**

SYSTEMIC CHANGE

To increase the number of women entering and staying in Canadian politics, it is fundamental to remove some of the systemic barriers that contribute to the under-representation of women.

By removing barriers and promoting proactive policies that both allow and encourage women to succeed in politics, we can shorten the time it will take to achieve gender parity in Canada's various levels of governments.

Through our Systemic Change Project, Equal Voice worked with key stakeholders to identify and address some of the barriers and challenges within Canada's Legislatures at the provincial, territorial, and federal levels. Funded by the Department for Women and Gender Equality, this 36-months project worked with elected officials and experts to:

- Identify barriers and opportunities for women in politics;
- Make policy recommendations to Parliament and provincial legislatures;
- Propose policy and procedure changes to mechanisms of how legislatures function;
- Prepare the [Gender-Sensitive Legislatures Report](#) to support others in creating inclusive legislatures.



Highlights:

- Equal Voice was able to unite elected officials from a variety of backgrounds and viewpoints and parties to create real policy changes.
- Most legislatures now have modernized harassment policies, and Equal Voice's advocacy was instrumental in attaining this shift across Canada.
- Elected officials often sought out Equal Voice's support to draft policies, convene stakeholders, and provide briefings on how to help move change forward.

FORUM ON GENDER SENSITIVE LEGISLATURES

On February 20, 2020 we were pleased to share, for the very first time at the Forum on **Gender Sensitive Legislatures**, the vision of Equal Voice's [Gender Sensitive Legislatures Report](#), outlining the work we have done on this important topic. The Forum was an important milestone, and an opportunity to deepen the conversation about the challenges women face, as well as an opportunity to hear the inspiring success stories from elected officials who have championed the cause and made effective change.

Featuring panels of elected officials from across Canada and a Keynote from the Right Honourable Harriet Harman, QC, MP, (United Kingdom), EV's **Forum on Gender Sensitive Legislatures** brought together elected women from across the country and from all levels of government to focus on identifying solutions and opportunities for action.



EQUAL VOICE & THE 2019 FEDERAL ELECTION

In 2019 Equal Voice played a leadership role in advocating for women's representation in the context of the federal election. In the months leading to the election, we put forth a variety of initiatives to help more women get elected such as hosting campaign schools across the country, the second iteration of Daughters of the Vote, and the Power in Parity portal - the first site of its kind in Canada listing all women candidates running federally and including links to each woman's respective website.

Equal Voice also led the conversation in the media (pre and post-election) as the country's subject matter expert on women in politics, and had an outstanding reach both in media and on social media networks.

The data pulled from Monday's election by Equal Voice shows that women now hold 33 percent of seats picked up by the Liberal Party, 18 percent of Conservative seats, 37.5 percent of seats for both the NDP and the Bloc Québécois, and 66 percent of Green seats."

CTVNews.ca

equal voice

Canada's global ranking for elected women: 54th

88 WOMEN ELECTED IN 2015

26% 74%

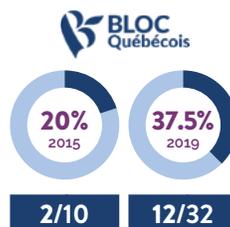
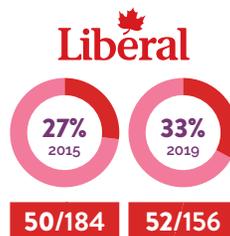


98 WOMEN ELECTED IN 2019

29% 71%



Percentage of Women Elected Federally



#elxn43

With 98 elected women, Canada has reached 29% representation in the House of Commons



EV conducted over 50 media interviews and received over 177 million media impressions in over 3 countries, positioning the organization as a leading source for relevant data, notable analysis, advocacy and insight on the participation of a record number in Canadian history of women candidates.

"We had a record number of women candidates running in this election, which we hoped would have translated into a higher number of women elected. We are nonetheless encouraged to see these gains."

Eleanor Fast, Executive Director of Equal Voice.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

As always, Equal Voice is grateful for the support and partnership of our incredible donors, sponsors and supporters, who share our vision that Canada urgently needs more women in politics. Our success in 2019-2020 was only possible thanks to you. Thank you for your support of Equal Voice.

FACEBOOK



Government of Canada
Gouvernement du Canada





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To learn more about how you can support and get involved with Equal Voice, please visit our website:

https://www.equalvoice.ca/membership_plans

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