Policy Report

Is Canada's Foreign Policy Really Feminist? Analysis and Recommendations

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This policy report argues that, in order to deliver on its promise, the Government of Canada should carry out its Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) as a comprehensive and holistic approach, in conjunction with other cognate initiatives that pertain to security and defence., This approach should also be consistent with the intersectional lens of Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) policymaking, which has been mainstreamed across federal departments and agencies. In so doing, we assess Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy by answering three questions: "**What** is Canada's FFP and what are its goals ?," "**Who** participates in crafting Canada's FFP?," and "**How** is the FFP implemented?".

Our analysis suggests that, in its current state, Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy would be improved by more rigourously meeting GBA+ criteria, defined by Global Affairs Canada (2017) as an assessment of "how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives." While the policy report proposes concrete recommendations toward this goal, it also encourages foreign and defence actors to reflect on fundamental gender equality principles and considerations that get lost in the face of results-oriented policy approaches aimed for the short term.

WHAT

- Canada's FFP should further clarify what a "feminist" foreign policy actually entails from the Canadian government's perspective. Canada's FFP, as it is currently defined, is too limited in scope, and reproduces siloed, unhelpful divides between foreign policy, security and defence, human rights, and development. A feminist approach should bridge those divides, and requires a holistic, cross-sectoral approach.
- The broader aims of pursuing a feminist foreign policy are underspecified. In its current state, the focus on the link between a FFP and greater efficiency in delivering development, democracy and security has led to unintended consequences because it does not recognize the intrinsic value of diversity and inclusion. We elaborate on these points below.

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WHO

- The pursuit of the feminist policy is primarily deployed in official, state-to-state channels that are not conducive to the realization of its objectives at the ground level. This must be accompanied by sustained engagement with civil society organizations and in venues where the state is but one actor among many (or absent altogether).
- Relatedly, Canada's FFP does not make enough room for meaningful engagement of the variety of relevant stakeholders for this policy agenda. A FFP is by definition collaborative and inclusive but which local non-state stakeholders are consulted matters in the design of FFP initiatives.
- Canada's FFP should make more room for the recognition of diverse forms of expertise and agency. FFP objectives can lose their focus through government jargon and high-level declarations. Further academic and CSO engagement would be desirable in this regard, to better connect FFP principles with the pursuit of gender equality goals and outcomes.

HOW

- Canada's FFP remains, in our view, too symbolic and performative, as well as top-down in design and implementation.
- Instead, a feminist foreign policy should be designed and implemented in a way that is flexible enough to allow context-sensitive programming across various regional, national, and societal settings.
- Canada's FFP is heavily focused on the short term, paying insufficient attention to the linkages between short, medium and long-term objectives. It also stands in tension and contradiction with other aspects of our foreign and security policy, hence the need for a more holistic vision, to identify and resolve these discrepencies.

As we discuss in further details below, failing to address these limitations promptly would effectively hamper the Canadian government's ability to mitigate the risk of counterproductive effects and negative unintended consequences that will prove increasingly hard to reverse over time. Some of these potential adverse effects are directly tied to the feminist agenda; others pertain to foreign and security policy objectives where the link with feminist – and gender-sensitivity more broadly – objectives may not be self-evident but still significant.

1. What: The Scope and Goals of Canada's FFP

Introduced in 2017 by the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Canada's feminist foreign policy claims to take an 'explicitly feminist approach to [...] foreign policy and international development to target gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls' (Lamensch 2020). According to Global Affairs Canada, the feminist foreign policy "recognizes that fostering rights-based, open and inclusive societies, where all people, regardless of their gender, can fully benefit from equal participation in economic, political, social and cultural life, is an effective way to build a safer and more prosperous world" (GAC website).

The Scope of Canada's FFP

Beyond this statement, nowhere does the Canadian government explicitly define the 'feminist' adjective in its Feminist Foreign Policy. Where it comes closest is in Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), which states that "A feminist approach to international assistance recognizes that the

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promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls require the transformation of social norms and power relations" (GAC website). However, the priorities that Global Affairs Canada identifies in public documents and interventions generally endorse rather than reform or challenge the neoliberal underpinnings of the international order. This introduces a fundamental tension between policy objectives from a feminist standpoint, because a FFP that does not seek to change hierarchical power relations in the international order cannot open meaningful and sustainable possibilities for transforming and overcoming inequalities and marginalizations that directly result from neoliberal practices. While such tension is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon, ways to mitigate it should be seriously considered. Indeed, a focus on women's inclusion and empowerment as individuals without more transformative global policy is unlikely to offset, let alone change, hierarchical structures that contribute to the marginalization of women and other underrepresented or disadvantaged groups.

<u>Recommendation</u>[2]: *While working on women's inclusion and empowerment, the Canadian government should also consider changes that need to be brought to institutions that perpetuate the marginalization of women and underrepresented or disadvantaged groups.*

A feminist approach to diplomacy also starts by listening to those at the margins of society. Here, Canada has been at the forefront of promoting women and girls' rights, as well as gender equality in conflict-affected countries and beyond. This is one area where the Canadian government has adopted an activist stance. It has advocated the cause of women's rights and spoken up in defence of women at risk in their native countries, sometimes at a cost to its diplomatic relations. It has also made tangible commitments in support of this agenda. In particular, the new Equality Fund will indeed enable local women's organizations in conflict-affected countries to carry out their mediation and peacebuilding work. These successes can inform how Canada's FFP is deployed in other domains, while paying attention to the specificities of each context.

The Goals of a Feminist Foreign Policy

Canada reckons that a feminist foreign policy will bring more efficiency and productivity to overcome poverty and to bring about sustainable development and peace. The problem with this understanding is twofold: the focus on efficiency borders on instrumentalism and does not recognise that gender equality and diversity are values worth pursuing in their own right; in so doing, Canada's FFP as it is currently framed puts high (gendered) expectations and responsibilities on the shoulders of women and marginalized communities, unwittingly reinforcing gender stereotypes.

As per Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), women and girls are powerful agents of change who "have the ability to transform their households, their societies and their economies". Fostering gender equality, the FIAP states, will deliver strong economic growth, increasing the global gross domestic product by as much as $12 trillion in a single decade, it will also help cut down worldwide levels of extreme poverty by 12 percent and will reduce chronic hunger by as much as 17 percent, providing help and hope to as many as 150 million people around the world (GAC website). Whether this is intended or not, the FIAP thus links women's inclusion with social and economic improvements. While the case may sometimes need to be made to convince otherwise reluctant governments and societies to consider the advantages brought about by gender equality, such an approach runs the risk of weakening the normative values of equity and diversity, which should be seen as ends in themselves.

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[2] A detailed list of recommendations can be found at the end of the text.

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<u>Recommendation</u>: *Canada has tended to present the case for inclusion as the smart thing to do rather than the right thing to do. While instrumental logic may be needed to convince reluctant parties, it is important for Canada's FFP not to lose sight of the importance of the normative values of equity and diversity, which should be pursued as ends unto themselves.*

The government of Canada frames increasing women's participation in peacekeeping as an operational effectiveness issue. Women in peacekeeping missions are said to present practical advantages, including being able to search other women at checkpoints, to gain easier access to both local men and women, and to serve as role models to local women and girls. Yet, to date, <u>there is no proven connection</u> between an increase in uniformed women peacekeepers and operational effectiveness, partly because the effects are hard to trace and measure, but also because they will likely not be observable in the short term. Many of the arguments to this effect are normative and based on gendered and <u>misleading assumptions</u> about women's qualities and attributes, rather than <u>reflecting an assessment</u> of their actual roles and functions within peace operations.

Canada's FFP puts an <u>extra burden</u> on the shoulders of uniformed women whose presence in peacekeeping missions is expected to help alleviate the emotional burden of dealing with survivors as well as contribute to policing the behaviour of their male colleagues, supposedly dissuading them from committing sexual misconduct by their very presence. Similarly, the emphasis on women as agents of peace in their communities, including in the context of peace processes, puts additional (and unfair) responsibility on women while lifting it away from the men, who remain the main perpetrators of gendered violence in conflict.

While centering women's agency is important, there is also <u>a risk</u> that doing so unwittingly reproduces gender stereotypes, and prevents transformative change at the community level. Indeed, most of these expectations <u>are rooted</u> in common assumptions that women are peaceful, naturally inclined to and capable of specific interpersonal tasks, notably as emotional caregivers or as systematic champions of women's issues in general, notwithstanding the context. These assumptions ignore instances of violence perpetrated by women, and let us add, for the sake of their own interests, not merely those of manipulative men.

Canada's FFP similarly unwittingly reinforces gender stereotypes when it states that "evidence shows that women tend to spend more of their incomes in ways that directly benefit their children, improving nutrition, health and educational opportunities for the next generation." While data may support such statements, they fail to account for the structural conditions that create such realities and shape women's agency, including through gendered socialization of both women and men. Most importantly, relying on such narratives to justify FFP boxes women into specific behaviours and sets conditions on their inclusion and participation, when these conditions and expectations are not imposed on men.

<u>Recommendation</u>: *As its initiatives and programs centre women's agency, Canada must take due care to avoid unwittingly reproducing gender stereotypes, thus setting conditions on their inclusion and participation.*

2. Who: Identifying and Engaging with a Wide Range of Stakeholders

A feminist foreign policy is by definition inclusive and collaborative. It is also keenly aware of power asymmetries and how they can hinder cooperation. Since 2017, the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has taken a number of steps to reestablish bridges to civil society and experts both within and

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outside academia. Indeed, an array of societal actors were consulted in the lead up to the launch of Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and of the Elsie Initiative. More efforts should be deployed to engage with diverse stakeholders in various locales of the "Global South." While we wish to acknowledge the importance of civil society consultations that occured under the banner of G7 meetings, the Women's foreign ministers' 2018 meeting in Montreal, the Vancouver Peacekeeping UN Conference, the Media Freedom conference and Equal Rights Coalition, the lack of consistent and sustained engagement with non-Western stakeholders in the regions and locales where this foreign policy is pursued risks overlaying Canada's FFP with paternalistic, Western-centric overtones, creating unnecessary and avoidable resistance that may, in some instances, have little to do with the core of a feminist agenda itself. Given Canada's limited global engagement to date as well as the impact of decisions to close a number of Canadian embassies or reduce their staff, particularly in the Global South, attempts to deploy a FFP will require the Canadian government to bridge its expertise, resources, and programs with partners who are already invested, or are at least interested (no doubt due to a mix of strategic and normative factors) in developping and/or implementing feminist foreign policies and/or national action plans on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

In the Asia-Pacific, beyond "Western" champions engaged in regional discussions on WPS (such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States), Japan and Indonesia are the most vocal players, although others, such as Malaysia and Singapore, might be picking up speed. There is, however, a great deal of resistance to WPS from other governments who are wary of the implications of paintaing issues of gender equality with a security brush and perceive it as yet another Trojan horse for unwanted intervention in domestic affairs. Still, ASEAN and related institutions where it exercises "centrality", such as the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Regional Forum (where Canada is a member) have adopted statements and other initiatives on WPS that open up new entry points. A similar momentum is observable in regional non-governmental expert and civil society networks. In the Middle East, Canada has supported Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority as they took important first steps. In Africa, regional organizations such as the African Union, the East African Community, and the South African Development Community have taken the lead on the development of pro-women tools and policies, whereas some countries have been more proactive than others in the prioritization of feminist approaches to foreign, development, and security policy.

The growing consensus that a gender-sensitive approach to foreign and security policy is a necessary marker of "cool kids" in the global cafeteria of international politics provides new opportunities for Canada to contribute to collective peer pressure, lead by example, and provide support to other champions and "norm entrepreneurs," governmental and non-governmental, in constructive ways.

<u>Recommendation</u>: *Canada's FFP must make provisions for how to best engage with states newly committed to a feminist or gender-based approach to politics, development, and security. Deepening involvement with these partners can help them chart their own way forward towards a FFP while consolidating Canada foreign policy objectives. Canada should also be more mindful of sources of resistance and concerns about the Western/liberal overtones of the FFP and related constructs such as Women, Peace and Security, and develop strategies to mitigate such concerns.*

The promotion and implementation of Canada's FFP agenda abroad requires extending the scope beyond a state-centric approach. While feminist and gendered approaches to issues that inform our foreign policy remain unfamiliar, and in some cases threatening, to other states, a myriad of societal actors have been doing this work from the ground up long before Canada even considered developing a feminist foreign policy. These bottom-up efforts have played a major role in opening up mindsets and spaces at the government level so that this "new" agenda could mushroom there as well. Thus,

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implementing Canada's FFP abroad necessitates the identification of and a sustained partnership with actors and spaces where the agenda can be pursued by and with non-state actors, such as experts and civil society. For the time being, Canada has mostly relied on its international NGO partners to connect with these actors and spaces. However, feminist research warns against assuming that Western- and gender-based NGOs will necessarily truthfully relay the opinions and priorities of their partners in the Global South. Canada needs to use direct formal and informal channels and have eyes and ears on the ground to identify these bottom-up, local origin points and find ways to incorporate and support these perspectives and efforts. This type of engagement is poised to change traditional power structures, which is needed to set the conditions for long-term, sustainable peace and security.

<u>Recommendation</u>: *The promotion and implementation of Canada's FFP agenda abroad necessitates the identification of, and a sustained partnership with, actors and spaces where the agenda can be pursued by and with non-state actors. Canada needs to increase its capacity to identify these local origin points, directly link up with them and find ways to incorporate and support these perspectives and efforts.*

The language used to specify foreign and security policy objectives is in itself constraining the realm of possible action in sometimes unpredictable and unintended ways, with implications for the kind of stakeholders that end up being included. For instance, the "Women, Peace and Security" language, while it is now familiar to civil society actors that are engaged in peacebuilding work, remains foreign and in fact, attracts suspicion from a broader array of feminist and other NGOs working on issues pertaining to human rights, climate change, maternal health, and other development issues. In addition, WPS has been taken up more naturally by elite CSO actors in Global South capitals who are already well connected with and immersed into Western networks, debates, and partnerships on security, humanitarian intervention and peacebuilding. By contrast, grassroots organizations and community actors, who take on much of the groundwork of fostering tolerance, trust in inter-communal relationships, and supporting peace processes in ways that contribute to the WPS agenda, have not adopted this language, and for two main reasons. First, UN language is often seen by these actors as elitist, paternalistic, conservative, and Western-centric. Second, many of these actors either consider "security" to be, at worse, the language of government, often used to justify policies that restrict civil liberties or even threaten the very lives of activists and the communities with whom they work or, at best, outside the scope of their expertise and mandate. In turn, many of the civil society actors that deal directly with peace and (human) security have not yet incorporated gender considerations into their advocacy and substantive work, nor do they identify as feminist organizations. This is often due not to a lack of interest, but to a lack of material and human resources. Indeed, many CSO organizations involved in this work remain male-dominated, while gender dossiers will tend to be assigned and carried, first and foremost, by women staff and activists, sometimes in addition to their previous workload. While in many cases, the realization of this gap is acknowledged, these actors are not as well-equipped (yet) to pursue explicitly feminist objectives as feminist and/or women organizations that stay away from "peace and security". While both sides of this civil society divide are populated by relevant stakeholders, the language of "feminism", "WPS", and even "foreign [but also "security" or "defence"] policy" in itself, especially when these terms are used in isolation, risk preventing our ability to identify and incorporate these various perspectives into policy design and implementation.

<u>Recommendation</u>: *When engaging with stakeholders, Canada ought to pay attention to the language it uses and to conduct an assessment of the manner in which this language is likely to be received and perceived, with a view to ensuring that it does not exclude important stakeholders. Further, Canada should envision ways to support stakeholders beyond capacity-building, given that limitations often come not from a lack of interest or even expertise, but of appropriate financial and human resources.*

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3. How Is Canada's FFP Implemented?

In its current form, Canada Feminist Foreign Policy is unlikely to achieve its objectives because 1) it has followed an 'add women and stir' approach, 2) it reproduces siloed, unhelpful divides within foreign policy domains, such as security, human rights, and development, instead of holistically, in cross-sectoral, and less Western-centric ways, and 3) it has privileged symbolism over process.

Canada's FFP Is Limited in Scope, Tilted toward an "Add Women and Stir" Approach

The Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, which aims to increase the number of women Blue Helmets, has been a flagship project of Canada's FFP. While increasing the meaningful participation of uniformed women in UN operations is a laudable goal, a feminist security and defence policy must go beyond increasing numbers of women in uniform and dismantling barriers preventing recruitment of female bodies to security institutions. The issue is twofold: on the one hand, and as discussed above, an instrumentalist logic underpins the need to increase the number of women in uniform. Second, since most peacekeeping troops on the ground are recruited from countries of the Global South, these countries are being pressured to quickly introduce gender-sensitive policies to accommodate women at a much faster pace than countries in the Global North. The result is rather unfeminist: uniformed women from the Global South are quickly integrated in the military but assigned gendered functions where they are believed to better deliver, such as assisting female survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and they are put under increased pressure to carry the burden of security by delivering on gender-sensitive UN mission targets. Nowhere in the process is there real appreciation of the biases and additional labour demands that women face, particularly in the military but also at home prior to being deployed, nor is there deep understanding of the local and international contexts in which troops are deployed. The GBA+ perspective implied in Canada's Elsie Initiative should reorient its efforts in support of socialisation and training before sending uniformed women from the Global South to serve in peacekeeping missions where they are asked to carry a double burden and typecast in gendered roles, in addition to the pressures that follow them on site when proper support systems are not in place back home. Moreover, the Canadian Armed Forces' ongoing sexual misconduct crisis, a clear failure when it comes to gender integration and inclusion, as well as other pervasive problems that echo similar issues than those discussed here in relation to Global South partners, casts a shadow on Canada's legitimacy as the instigator of the Elsie Initiative.

<u>Recommendation:</u> *We recommend supporting the design and implementation of long-term gender-sensitive security sector reform through incremental changes to transform the masculine-dominated culture of the armed forces, and facilitate the integration of women and the acceptance of female military personnel's skills and abilities at all decision-making levels.*

A Feminist Foreign Policy Cannot Work in Silos

A FFP is holistic in its approach and requires feminist principles to guide all foreign policy decisions. That is currently not the case in Canada. For example, while the Canada Equality Fund will provide funding for women mediators in West Africa, Canada has also supported the extractive industry sector through Export Development Canada. Several extractive industry companies have not respected the rights of indigenous populations, have put in peril the food and economic security of rural women, and have distorted the work of these women mediators. This disconnect between sectors and initiatives can result in the concurrent implementation of incompatible policies. For example, rural women in Liberia have been given negotiation skills training so that they can negotiate with extractive industries companies

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and engage in alternative revenue-generation workshops because they can no longer exploit and sell the cassava plantations they have been cultivating for generations. Short of reconsidering support for the expansion of extractive industries in the country, such skills training is more akin to cooptation than 'empowerment'. Likewise, the inconsistency of Canada's support to Yemeni women peacemakers with the Trudeau government's decision to resume the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia has also been widely decried.

Recommendation: *Security and defence policies and economic development policies cannot be separated if inconsistencies and contradictions are to be avoided.*

Further, the peace and security components of a feminist foreign policy cannot be properly promoted and implemented abroad, and in specific regions and states, without more attention paid to prior, existing understandings of what "security" means and how it is defined in various sectors. Where the intersection between gender and security, for instance, is a relatively new and in many ways still unfamiliar focus, it is necessarily interpreted through the prism of cognate concepts. One such concept is "human security," which carries perceived Western-centric overtones in many contexts, particularly in its more narrow (and politically sensitive) understanding as "freedom from threat" and its association with the more sensitive and interventionist elements of the "responsibility to protect" principles.

Some of Canada's partners' resistance to gender mainstreaming in policy, or the WPS agenda specifically, has less to do with the substance of the agenda (although this is part of the equation) than a hyper vigilance to its origins and the identity of its champions. Whether this caution is legitimate or misplaced, without a proper anchoring in local security discourses and practices, combined with support to actors already involved in designing and promoting gender-based policies at the intersection of security and development, Canada's feminist agenda abroad cannot succeed. It cannot be promoted through a one-size-fits-all approach either.

Canada's feminist foreign policy must likewise recognize the limits of the militaristic components of the WPS agenda. These primarily serve to reinforce the capacity of actors and sectors that, in many contexts, actually produce insecurity for marginalized segments of society, including women, but also indigenous peoples, the LGBTQ2 community, and other minority groups. In addition, a militarized approach to gender, peace and security will necessarily face resistance in sectors and contexts where security has traditionally been defined in "non-traditional" (from a Western perspective) and comprehensive ways that underscore its intimate relationship with development. In Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific, for instance, this connection between security and development has been central to how government, expert, and civil society milieux alike approach foreign and security policy from their very inception.

While remaining cognizant of the negative connotations associated with 'human security' in some contexts, adopting an explicitly broader definition of security would allow Canada to include non-militarised forms of security (food security, environmental security, health security) and to take into account how different stakeholders understand (in)security, how they are tackling those insecurities, and what they need to feel more secure. For example, access to sexual and reproductive health services are key to women and girls. In developing countries with not so many resources, maternal health services are those that suffer the most from the lack of funds. In cases of a pandemic or a serious viral disease, the healthcare system gets distorted because all the local resources are transferred to combat the disease. There are studies that show how the maternal mortality rate in Sierra Leone was increasing at the same pace as the cases of Ebola as maternal healthcare services and other gynecology services were no longer available. In countries with access to resources, sexual and reproductive health can also be an important

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security issue as an increasing number of countries have sought or are seeking to limit access to pregnancy termination.

Recommendation: C*anada should pay attention to the manner in which its partners and other stakeholders understand security. It should also acknowledge and seek to offset the fact that the militaristic aspects of its WPS agenda serve to reinforce the capacity of actors and sectors that, in many contexts, actually produce insecurity for marginalized segments of society, including, but not limited to, women.*

A FFP Is as Much About Process as It Is About Substance

The manner in which Canada's FFP is currently being implemented deserves critical examination. As it stands, Canada will need to clarify its approach to building partnerships at home and abroad, to clarify the temporal dimension of its FFP interventions and to reconsider the manner in which it evaluates progress.

Building Partnerships

When one looks at the patterns of Canada's international involvement, these have been largely driven by alliance politics, economic interest or demands tied to its membership within international organizations. Maintaining and developing more diverse partnerships at home and abroad is a condition for success.

At home, Canada's FFP can and should serve to foster whole-of-government, but also, whole-of-society responses with the next iteration of the National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security. We should note that the appointment of an Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security with a civil society background is an encouraging development, however. Abroad, building partnerships with actors with varying degrees of respect for feminist principles is a balancing act. First, the Government of Canada will need to outline guiding engagement and intervention principles that promote and uphold human rights. This does not mean that Canada goes it alone, but that decision-making and coalitions be driven by FFP principles first and foremost. Canada may find 'natural' partners in Sweden, France, Mexico and Luxembourg, to start, given that they have also adopted so-called feminist foreign policies, in one form or another. Second, it will also need to step out of its established patterns to build institutionalised partnerships with partners in the Global South. Third, Canada must also articulate its feminist objectives when pursuing diplomatic relations with countries such as Saudi Arabia, as well as countries such as Hungary, Poland, and Kenya which do not respect women's rights and gender equality. Here as well, there is a need to fund and listen to those at the margins. Fourth, Canada should not neglect engagement with countries who have expressed concerns about FFP objectives, including those that connect with WPS.

Recommendation: *As it builds the partnerships that are essential to the success of its FFP, Canada must outline guiding engagement and intervention principles that promote and uphold gender equality. It must also build new partnerships, particularly in the Global South and articulate its feminist objectives in engagements with countries that either express concerns about FFP objectives or simply do not respect women's rights and gender equality.*

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Bridging the Short, Medium and Long Term

Identifying, tackling and transforming the power relations and structural inequalities that have stood in the way of women's inclusion and gender equality takes time. Short-term initiatives to include women must be complemented with longer-term initiatives to change the mentalities of societies, including socialization programs and a focus on education. But foreign policies seldom survive changes in government. While there is generally cross-party agreement on Canada's FFP, there remain significant differences in the ways in which different Canadian federal parties understand the priorities associated with it. In other words, care must be taken to ensure that the focus of Canada's FFP does not drastically change with changes in government. An important step in this direction was taken when Parliament approved the principle of multi-year funding which, according to the Report to Parliament on the Government of Canada's Official Development Assistance 2017-2018 provides Canada's partners with a degree of assurance for planning purposes and flexibility to respond to changing conditions on the ground.

Recommendation: *Because women's inclusion and gender equality require structural transformations, a FFP must cast a long temporal shadow. It must complement short-term initiatives with longer-term structural efforts.*

Reconsidering Performance-based Assessments

Because structural changes are long-term processes, assessment methods that borrow the logic of results-based management are bound to fail both the ambitions of Canada's FFP and the expectations of Canada's FFP partners. The current Performance Measurement Framework Template, with its indicators and mostly quantitative measures, is ill-suited to trace change in power relations and to really assess the increase in individual empowerment of beneficiaries of Canada's FFP programs. Performance-based assessments also illustrate the ways in which some results get quantified and therefore "count," while other difficult to measure effects of policies go undocumented and unnoticed. What gets measured also "depends on which problems seem politically important". The choice of quantitative measures and indicators can measure, for example, how many women were present at a certain meeting, how many uniformed women are deployed to a UN peace mission, or how many workshops on relevant topics were held. However, they do not give information as to whether and how women's voices were taken seriously, or whether uniformed women are expected to use 'feminised' skills and perform 'gendered' tasks such as liaising with the local population, especially local women and girls. When qualitative descriptions are included in assessments, they tend to accompany, explain and illustrate with examples the "hard facts" produced by quantitative indicators. This is important because only certain practices and short-term results are made visible.

Second, although the use of performance-based assessments is commonly believed to provide a neutral and impartial assessment, as well as a universal benchmark for comparison, the selection of particular indicators and measurement tools has consequences. For example, if GAC would like to measure the impact of its Feminist International Assistance Policy on "the poorest and most vulnerable people", this category will include people as varied as widows, people with disabilities, young, elderly, etc. which are very different from each other, resulting in an analytical process which is at odds with the methodology promoted through GBA+. Furthermore, the indicators and measurements are oriented towards the designation of "best practices" and implicit performance standards through the presentation of success stories of those "vulnerable women" who outperformed the rest. These judgements will in turn be used to make decisions on which country or on which community we should invest in the future, leaving behind the foundational inclusive values upon which a FFP is enacted.

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<u>Recommendation</u>: *Because results-based assessments cannot capture changes in power relations or structural inequalities, nor can they adequately assess an increase in individual empowerment, Global Affairs Canada should develop more sophisticated and appropriate ways of assessing change.*

In conclusion, this policy report has drawn on GBA+ analysis to review Canada's FFP and found it wanting. Canada's 'add women and stir' approach is ill-suited to address the power asymmetries and the structural inequalities that underpin women's exclusion and gender inequity. For Canadian FFP to respond to the hopes of its supporters, a serious effort at definition, inclusivity and thoughtful implementation is required.

Listed Recommendations

1. While working on women's inclusion and empowerment, the Canadian government should also consider changes that need to be brought to institutions that perpetuate the marginalization of women and underrepresented or disadvantaged groups.

2. Canada has tended to present the case for inclusion as the smart thing to do rather than the right thing to do. While instrumental logic may be needed to convince reluctant parties, it is important for Canada's FFP not to lose sight of the importance of the normative values of equity and diversity, which should be pursued as ends unto themselves.

3. As its initiatives and programs centre women's agency, Canada must take due care to avoid unwittingly reproducing gender stereotypes, thus setting conditions on their inclusion and participation.

4. Canada's FFP must make provisions for how to best engage with states newly committed to a feminist or gender-based approach to politics, development, and security. Deepening involvement with these partners can help them chart their own way forward towards a FFP while consolidating Canada foreign policy objectives. Canada should also be more mindful of sources of resistance and concerns about the Western/liberal overtones of the FFP and related constructs such as Women, Peace and Security, and develop strategies to mitigate such concerns.

5. The promotion and implementation of Canada's FFP agenda abroad necessitates the identification of, and a sustained partnership with, actors and spaces where the agenda can be pursued by and with non-state actors. Canada needs to increase its capacity to identify these local origin points, directly link up with them and find ways to incorporate and support these perspectives and efforts.

6. When engaging with stakeholders, Canada ought to pay attention to the language it uses and to conduct an assessment of the manner in which this language is likely to be received and perceived, with a view to ensuring that it does not thus exclude important stakeholders. Further, Canada should envision ways to support stakeholders beyond capacity-building, given that limitations often come not from a lack of interest or even expertise, but of appropriate financial and human resources.

7. We recommend supporting the design and implementation of long-term gender-sensitive security sector reform through incremental changes to transform the masculine-dominated culture of the armed forces, and facilitate the integration of women and the acceptance of female military personnel's skills and abilities at all decision-making levels.

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8. Security and defence policies and economic development policies cannot be separated if inconsistencies and contradictions are to be avoided.

9. Canada should pay attention to the manner in which its partners and other stakeholders understand security. It should also acknowledge and seek to offset the fact that the militaristic aspects of its WPS agenda serve to reinforce the capacity of actors and sectors that, in many contexts, actually produce insecurity for marginalized segments of society, including, but not limited to, women.

10. As it builds the partnerships that are essential to the success of its FFP, Canada must outline guiding engagement and intervention principles that promote and uphold gender equality. It must also build new partnerships, particularly in the Global South and articulate its feminist objectives in engagements with countries that either express concerns about FFP objectives or simply do not respect women's rights and gender equality.

11. Because women's inclusion and gender equality require structural transformations, a FFP must cast a long temporal shadow. It must complement short-term initiatives with longer-term structural efforts.

12. Because results-based assessments cannot capture changes in power relations or structural inequalities, nor can they adequately assess an increase in individual empowerment, Global Affairs Canada should develop more sophisticated and appropriate ways of assessing change.

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