

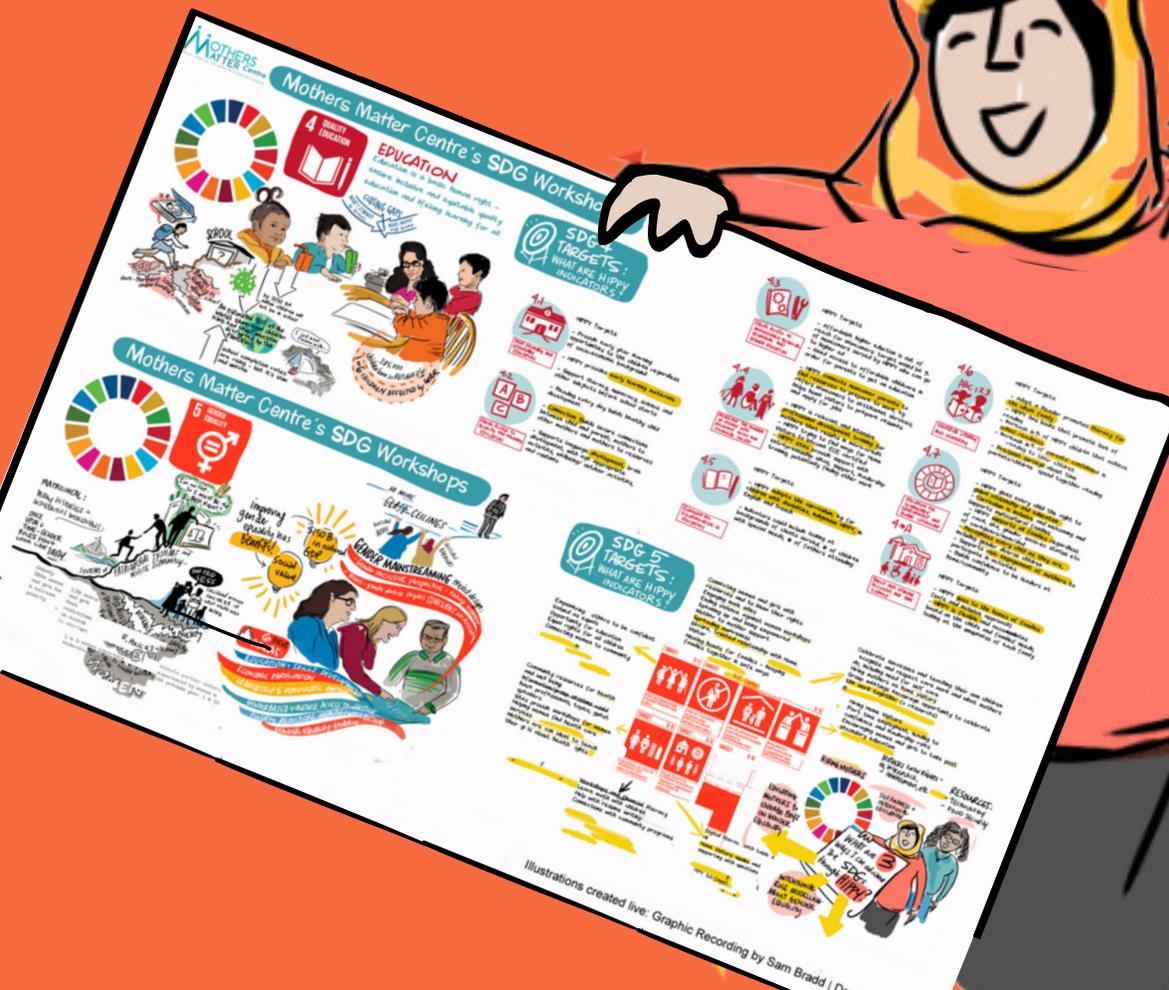


# FINAL REPORT

February 28th, 2024

## WOMEN'S INSIGHT PROJECT (WIP)

A social innovation program by the Mothers Matter Centre





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# INTRODUCTION

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The Women’s Insight Project (WIP) operated from 2021 to 2023, facilitated by the Mothers Matter Centre and its program partners: the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISS of BC), the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society (VAFCS), the Aboriginal Mothers Centre Society (AMCS), the Muslim Food Bank, and the Al Mustafa Academy. This initiative received funding from the Government of Canada through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) unit of Employment and Social Development Canada.

WIP aimed to empower isolated, vulnerable, and low-income women from indigenous, newcomer, and racialized communities by enhancing their capacity and confidence to lead community-level changes. Participants identified SDG gaps within their communities using a participatory action approach and designed and implemented community-led solutions. The project emphasized intensive community involvement and bottom-up approaches to ensure inclusivity and empower isolated women to become leaders driving change within their communities.

Operating on a train-the-trainer model, the project delivered training to empower women and guide project development to address SDG gaps at the community level. Partners recruited and trained racialized low-income women, enabling them to research and analyze data on SDG knowledge gaps within their communities. Subsequently, these women collaborated with the organizations and other relevant stakeholders to pilot projects addressing identified SDG gaps.

Through structured capacity building, racialized and low-income women have been empowered to lead research and identify SDG gaps within their communities. Participants emerge as leaders within their communities, spearheading the design and implementation of projects to bridge these gaps and advance the 2030 Agenda locally. The WIP aims to catalyze positive change and contribute to advancing Canada's SDGs within local communities by empowering women to become agents of change and providing them with the necessary tools and resources.

# OBJECTIVES

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The WIP aims to empower socially excluded and diverse women's communities by developing and implementing tools and training programs that advance Canada's SDGs. The WIP addresses SDG knowledge gaps within these communities through the WIP and fosters collaboration for impactful change.

## WIP APPROACH

**Developing and Applying Tools:** Creating resources, information, and tools for training programs to advance sustainable development in and across socially excluded and diverse women's communities.

**Capacity Building:** Developing the capacity of our SPOs and project staff through a comprehensive train-the-trainer model. This model will equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively deliver the WIP training and guide project development in their communities.

**Empowering Low-Income Isolated Women:** Engaging 45 low-income isolated women in theory and practice sessions to build their research capabilities. This included training on SDG data analysis, enabling them to identify knowledge gaps within their communities. Participants designed and piloted programs that addressed these SDG gaps, fostering collaboration with external organizations for broader impact.

**Piloting Policy and Programs:** Partner with external organizations to support the design and implementation of pilot policies and programs to address SDG gaps identified by women in their communities. A collaborative approach ensures that initiatives are informed by local insights and needs, increasing their effectiveness and sustainability.

**Creating Scalable Resources:** Knowledge sharing and lessons learned from the WIP serve as a repository of strategies and good practices for engaging excluded women's groups in SDG-related initiatives. By sharing knowledge and techniques, WIP aimed to inspire similar efforts in other communities, which has been proposed as WIP Phase 2 to ESDC to amplify the impact on a national scale.

## IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE

In 2021, the Mothers Matter Centre developed four modules in a trainer-to-trainer and project-participant format. These modules included understanding SDGs, participatory action research theory and practice, identification of SDG gaps at the community level, and the theory behind policy and program design (**Figure 1**).

With a diverse audience in mind, the guides were developed with adult learning principles and written in plain English. The guide deviated from the conventional ‘formal classroom’ model and was modelled to increase learners' engagement to facilitate higher retention rates. The guides enable women to reflect on their experiences, journeys and community life to understand the SDGs and Participatory Action Research (PAR) concepts. The hands-on curriculum supported them in feeling confident and well-prepared to take on their projects to identify SDG gaps at the community level. In addition, the participants found the modules helpful in identifying allies and collaborators in their projects.



**Figure 1: Inter-group SDG Awareness Meeting**

Given the operational context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the WIP partners transitioned their training sessions to a virtual format. Consequently, adjustments were made to the curriculum's delivery methodology to suit Zoom's virtual environment.

The partners were steadfast in recruiting participants for the project by reaching out to existing clients at their organizations' communities in general, community centres, other local service providers, and their networks to promote the program for client recruitment. Posters, brochures and social media posts were used to spread the word at the community level. Partners interviewed interested applicants and explained the project overview and its expectations.

Participants from Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 created and implemented six projects throughout the three-year term. Cohort 1 included VAFCS, ISSofBC, and the Al-Mustafa Society, while Cohort 2 included ISSofBC, AMCS, and the Muslim Food Bank. The project enabled two cohorts of Indigenous, newcomer, and racialized women to work within the WIP framework to create social change by advancing SDGs at the community level. This means 45 vulnerable and underrepresented women transformed into leaders to lead the change they wanted to see within their communities.

The women's groups also established partnerships with other organizations to facilitate their training and implement their innovation projects. Examples include Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood, Marpole Community Centre, Britannia Community Centre, SPARK BC and many more.

Furthermore, graduates of the program remain engaged with various organizations, including but not limited to the Muslim Food Bank, City of Vancouver, Neighbourhood Houses, YMCA, YWCA, Downtown East Side Women's Centre, Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House, UBC Indigenous Programs, Vancouver Community College, Helping Spirit Lounge, Native Education College, Pacific Association for First Nations Women, Atira, Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, and Vancouver Native Housing.

# COHORT 1

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## MÉLANGE

Mélange partnered with the Mount Pleasant Neighborhood House (MPNH) to offer accessible or affordable programs promoting mental health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, sustainable communities, and peace. The group addressed challenges newcomers face in Vancouver, particularly the lack of spaces for cross-cultural interaction and integration into Canadian society. Their mission was to create a welcoming environment for individuals to connect, organize, and learn, fostering a sense of belonging in the community.

Mélange targeted multiple SDG objectives with several initiatives. Under SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-Being, Mélange sought to combat isolation and nurture social connections, learning, self-expression, and emotional support to bolster mental health and overall well-being. Mélange tackled SDG 4 - Quality Education by informal, interdisciplinary, and creative learning platforms, fostering critical thinking, artistic appreciation, and self-awareness. In advancing SDG 5 - Gender Equality, Mélange's programs are spearheaded by women, empowering immigrant women within the community. As a group composed of multicultural women, Mélange believed that SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities was significant in assisting newcomers to preserve their cultural heritage while integrating into their new environment and fostering inter-community connections. Lastly, under SDG 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, Mélange's programs advocate for equal appreciation of diverse cultures, faiths, and languages, promoting inclusive societies and participatory engagement while upholding transparency.

Committed to providing diverse activities tailored to refugee and immigrant women, Mélange offers programs such as the Self Love Circle for Women, Canadiana Movie Nights, Let's Dance Together sessions, Inside Art workshops, the Reading Women Book Club, and an annual fair. Mélange's efforts reached approximately **59 community members** in total.

The Inside Art Expression Group offered a platform for artistic exploration and social bonding through free art creation sessions and discussions on various topics. This group garnered significant interest from the community, with eight weekly sessions attracting approximately **9 active participants** consistently. Participants engage in diverse forms of expression, including painting, collage, poetry, body movements, colouring, and sculpture, allowing them to explore and connect with their inner thoughts and emotions. Through these creative outlets, individuals gain a deeper understanding of themselves, improve communication, and alleviate anxiety and loneliness. It's a transformative experience where self-expression becomes a powerful tool for personal growth and fostering connections with others.

The Reading Women Book Club attracted around **15 participants** who found solace and a sense of belonging by expressing themselves in their native languages (**Figure 2**). It offered opportunities for language improvement, cultural exchange, and literary exploration by highlighting the works of women writers. The club established alliances with other reading groups to explore authors resonating with the migrant experience. Partnering with a group in Mexico, the club alternated between English and Spanish readings. Additionally, the group pursued collaborations with other groups at the MPNH, such as those reading in different languages to expand options. The club also sought to collaborate with the public library network and the Library Champions program to increase accessibility. Their goal was to provide texts in Spanish and English, with the assistance of translators, to facilitate inclusivity and engagement.



**Figure 2: The Reading Women Book Club**

The Let's Dance Together sessions fostered connections among **20 to 25 participants**, uniting them through the universal languages of music and movement and promoting community and inclusion. Dancing is a fun and informal avenue to meet others in a welcoming environment, offering physical and mental exercise. Mélange was inspired to integrate and encourage participation from diverse socio-cultural communities through the joy of dance and rhythm.

The Self-Love Circle for Women acknowledged the significance of self-care and spiritual development, offering meditation and mindfulness exercises across eight sessions. This circle elevated self-awareness, self-care, and self-love through guided meditation, sharing experiences, and instructional sessions. Participants are encouraged to support each other within the group. By the end of the program, attendees cultivated a deeper understanding of themselves, learned strategies to navigate uncomfortable emotions, and gained insight into the importance of self-forgiveness, self-appreciation, and self-love.

Canadiana offered a monthly movie night featuring Canadian films and documentaries, followed by engaging discussions with guest speakers, allowing newcomers to learn more about Canada's history, culture, and politics in an enjoyable setting. Canadiana became a regular fixture in Mélange offerings, typically seeing participation from **7 to 10 attendees**, providing a welcoming avenue for cultural exchange and entertainment.

The annual Find Your Tribe Fair facilitated connections between newcomers and organizations, potential clients, and like-minded individuals, promoting networking and community engagement in the new city.

Mélange's initiatives provided a judgment-free space for self-expression, learning, and social connection, catering to individuals aged 18 and above without discrimination based on background or beliefs and united multicultural groups to form a sense of community.

## MUSLIMA SOCIETY

In Al-Mustafa, **20-25 young Muslim girls** participated in activities for community change, rock climbing, public speaking and self-esteem building. The WIP empowered the participants, and they appreciated its positive impact on their skill development and overall outlook toward life and society. The participants took pride in addressing their community's needs by participating in this project.

During summer break, participants prepared meals and distributed food to the unhoused population in the Downtown Eastside. The experience served as a reminder of Vancouver's disadvantaged population, and the girls were eager to provide their time and effort to help the less fortunate (**Figure 3**).

Under SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, the participants aimed to ensure access for all to safe, inclusive, and accessible green and public spaces. The participants mobilized to clean up their local community park on a hot summer day. Not only did the participants pick up trash and responsibly sorted the different types of trash collected into recycling, compost, and garbage (**Figure 3**).



**Figure 3: Muslima Society**

The girls learned various rock-climbing skills and techniques, equipment checking, and maintenance and safety associated with the sport. Rock climbing is typically a co-ed activity, challenging Muslim girls' cultural appropriateness. However, by participating in private group lessons exclusively for girls, the group could enjoy a fun and distinctive experience. By the end of the 6 weeks of the WIP, many participants could rely on each other and had overcome some fear of heights. The difference from the first to the last session was quite noticeable in the participants' boost in skills and confidence. The facilitator was amazed to see the participants encouraging each other and trying more complex maneuvers and levels.

The public speaking and self-esteem-building workshops significantly improved mental health objectives and increased their confidence in their Muslim identity. Participants learned techniques to appear more confident when speaking in public and engaged in daily habits to enhance their mental well-being and boost self-esteem. Even after the first session, noticeable improvements were observed in each participant, with further gains in confidence by the end of the series. Participants acquired skills in precise speech delivery, proper posture, effective use of body language and hand gestures, tone modulation, and speech structure. Additionally, there was a focus on building self-esteem through practicing "I am" statements and journaling about gratitude, daily achievements, and sources of happiness. By practicing "I am" statements, participants feel confident in their self-identity and believe in themselves. Despite initial nervousness, all participants enjoyed the activity and expressed satisfaction with their progress.

Through the WIP, the Muslima Society feels motivated to take on leadership roles in the future so that this initiative can continue for the next group of youths in various ethnic communities. The facilitator observed that the project implementation was successful and believes it can be sustainable over time due to the excitement and encouragement from the community.

## SAGE NATION

Initially partnering with VAFCS, the MMC mobilized women and facilitated SAGE Nation directly, aiming to address gaps in support and services for Indigenous youth aging out of foster care or living independently in Vancouver's Downtown East Side. This initiative focused on Sustainable Development Goals 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being), and 10 (reduced inequalities). The gap was identified through semi-structured interviews, stakeholder focus groups, community mapping, and discussions with various community members.

Overall, SAGE Nation provided vital support to **10 youths, 4 elders, and 3 single mothers along with their 4 small children (a total of 21 individuals)**. Recognizing ongoing demand, they addressed waitlisted clients by collaborating with the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre to ensure continued support until SAGE workers could offer assistance.

Partnering with the YMCA, SAGE Nation established a youth hub to hold cultural and life skills-focused events, partnering with stakeholders to provide Indigenous activities and support transitioning out of foster care or accessing services. They equipped youth with essential life skills tailored to urban living, such as searching for suitable roommates, budgeting effectively, grocery shopping on a budget, applying for income assistance, conducting job searches, filing taxes, applying for market rentals, scheduling appointments, finding a family doctor, ensuring food security, accessing affordable Wi-Fi, and improving credit scores.

Beyond the Youth Hub, SAGE Nation planned activities include creating a community walking map, conducting surveys, holding focus groups addressing gaps affecting youth, establishing themselves as a non-profit, securing a space in Vancouver, and engaging Indigenous influencers for cultural circles. SAGE Nation also incorporated Indigenous cultural practices to foster a sense of identity and connection to Indigenous heritage for the Indigenous population in Vancouver amidst the challenges of urban life. SAGE Nation empowers Indigenous peoples by providing resources, skills, and support networks to lead safe, healthy, and independent lives.

SAGE Nation consistently achieves significant milestones. A successful board meeting established crucial policies for Respite staff. The organization facilitated intake sessions with youth and seniors requiring support, offering comprehensive navigation assistance for accessing essential services such as child care, funding options, cultural services, and adoption consultations. They actively made referrals to external organizations for advocacy, legal representation, and further cultural services as needed.

In a significant development, the Health Sciences Association of British Columbia (HSABC) invited SAGE Nation to participate in the upcoming 2023 homelessness count. Accepting the invitation, SAGE Nation committed to contributing to the project and pledged to coordinate closely with HSABC to determine staffing requirements and the schedule for the count.

## COHORT 2

### EAGLES IN SPIRIT

When the AMCSA announced the WIP information session and program through an email campaign, they received a more than half response rate. Community members and partners expressed their enthusiasm for a social transformation opportunity that brought Indigenous women together to address issues within the SDGs that concerned them.

Participants mobilized from the AMCSA chose to name their group Eagles in Spirit. Eagles in Spirit concentrated on supporting over **30 urban Indigenous men**, particularly single fathers, who were underserved by existing community services (**Figure 4**). By providing unique spaces and fostering collaboration among community organizers, Eagles in Spirit addressed the needs of this overlooked demographic. Instead of focusing solely on mothers, they addressed their community's lack of support for single fathers.

In addition to supporting single fathers, the Eagles in Spirit built community capacity by incorporating Indigenous cultural practices and teachings. Eagles in Spirit carried out drum-making and healing circles to promote fathers' holistic growth and transformative change. Although the project did not accommodate formal surveys due to participant capacity, its impact was evident in the increased support provided.



**Figure 4: Eagles in Spirit**

## FACES

Fellowship Advocacy and Culture Equality and Self-Care (FACES) was a group mobilized by the ISSofBC. The projects, developed by women, supported **72 newcomers** in combating social isolation and building a community of connection. Participants developed deeper bonds with each session, often leading to enduring friendships in Canada. FACES targeted SDGS's 3-Good health and well-being, 4-Quality Education, 5-Gender equality, 8-Decent work and economic growth, 10-Reduced inequalities, 16-Peace, justice and strong institutions, and 17-Partnership for the goals.

Among the workshops delivered, the Watercolor sessions provided a low-barrier avenue for newcomer women, with four sessions held at the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House (MPNH) and another four at the ISSofBC location, impacting over **40 women** who found solace and relaxation in the artistic journey. Many participants returned every week to continue their art journey because they found it healing and relaxing.

Similarly, the Self-Esteem and Movement workshops catered to the Spanish-speaking community, initially focusing on refugee women at MPNH before expanding to include women from various immigration backgrounds at ISSofBC. Transitioning from exercises centred on self-esteem and emotional well-being to movement-oriented activities, these workshops fostered personal growth and empowerment. Delivered at MPNH, it was focused on refugee women only and was designed to be 4 sessions with **16 participants** in attendance. As the group had a waiting list, they also offered another one at ISSofBC, which opened to women of different immigration statuses. After exercises on self-esteem and working with their emotions, the same group moved on to a second workshop involving movement. The idea was to have a holistic approach engaging the mind, emotions and body.

Additionally, the Zumba sessions embraced a holistic approach to wellness, engaging participants' minds, emotions, and bodies through dance and relaxation techniques, benefiting **16 participants**.

## MUSLIM FOOD BANK

The project focused on two Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Goal 3 - Good Health and Well-being, and Goal 5 - Gender Equality, to enable Muslim women to maintain good health through physical education while providing a culturally appropriate learning environment.

The Muslim Food Bank group established a safe and supportive space where women could acquire self-defence skills. Over **36 women** participated in self-defence sessions and other health initiatives, all delivered with cultural sensitivity. Various self-defence techniques were offered, customized to meet the safety needs of Muslim women, taking into account individual factors such as size, strength, and prior experience. The organization provided personalized support and monitored each woman's progress in mastering these skills. The goal was to empower women with the knowledge and abilities to enhance their safety and confidence, enabling them to defend themselves against threats, abuse, or violence.

Furthermore, the Muslim Food Bank group expressed deep concern regarding the challenges faced by vulnerable groups, including single mothers and Indigenous communities, particularly in a wealthy country like Canada. The organization remained committed to maintaining connections with Indigenous women counterparts, fostering ongoing collaboration and joint initiatives to address local SDG disparities and alleviate the struggles experienced by marginalized communities. Recognizing the hardships endured by single mothers, the group assembled food and care packages to provide support, while also extending aid to Indigenous communities in the Downtown Eastside during severe weather conditions. Driven by a shared concern for marginalized groups, the organization pledged continued collaboration with Indigenous women's groups to tackle local SDG disparities.

## OUTCOMES DISSEMINATION

### WIP VIDEO

All six cohorts of women were awarded certificates upon completing the training. A WIP video was recorded to document the knowledge acquired and the projects implemented and scaled up over the years. To view the WIP video, please visit: <https://youtu.be/CfA6yi-3eGM?si=pZEG1VFTyV7xkC9V> or refer to the video below (**Figure 5**).



**Figure 5: WIP Video**

### NATIONAL SDG EVENT

The "Community-led Solutions: Building Capacity and Bridging Sustainable Development Goal Gaps" event, co-hosted by the Mothers Matter Centre and the Future of Good, on November 14, 2023, served as a crucial platform to assess Canada's progress toward achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the midpoint of Agenda 2030. While Canada ranks highly on the Human Development Index, persistent disparities among newcomers, refugees, and Indigenous communities underscore the need for targeted efforts to bridge SDG gaps.

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To promote the event, the Mothers Matter Centre team contacted SDG organizations and SPOs to inform them of the webinar. The Mothers Matter Centre also partnered with Future of Good to post social media posts to spotlight the webinar (**Figure 6**). The Mothers Matter Centre received **135 RVSPs** for the event.



Figure 6: SDGs Webinar Social Media Posts

The event featured speakers including The Honourable Minister Jenna Sudds, Nora Fyles, Pashtana Durrani, and Lauren Ravon, and insightful discussions from the fireside chat panellists, Yusra Qadir, Julia Anderson, Angie Mapara-Osachoff, and moderator, Thi Dao.

Minister Jenna Sudds emphasized the Canadian government's commitment to the SDGs, the importance of local solutions to global challenges, and the need for long-term, sustainable funding. Nora Fyles highlighted the essential role of community-led organizations in addressing local challenges, mobilizing communities, and nurturing individual capacities. Pashtana Durrani passionately advocated for girls' education as a fundamental human right, shedding light on the political manipulation of this issue and her remarkable efforts to empower Afghan girls through technology and education. Lauren Ravon advocated recognizing care work's central role in addressing social, economic, and gender inequalities. The fireside chat panellists emphasized the pivotal role of community organizations in driving progress toward the SDGs, the need for sustained government support, and the importance of inclusivity in policy design.

These insights highlighted the significance of community-led action, government collaboration, and gender equality in advancing the SDGs. The event encouraged knowledge exchange, fostering cooperation between SDG experts, government representatives, women's rights advocates, and community workers to drive positive change, ultimately steering Canada closer to achieving the SDGs and fostering a more inclusive and equitable future.

While Canada ranks highly on the Human Development Index, persistent disparities among newcomers, refugees, and Indigenous communities underscore the need for targeted efforts to bridge SDG gaps. The "Community-led Solutions: Building Capacity and Bridging Sustainable Development Goal Gaps" event was an invaluable platform for dialogue, learning, and collaboration. The insights shared by remarkable speakers, panellists, and participants underscored the significance of community-led action, government collaboration, and gender equality in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Canada.

The event's outcomes encouraged knowledge exchange and fostered partnerships among SDG experts, government representatives, women's rights advocates, and community workers. While Canada ranks highly on the Human Development Index, persistent disparities among newcomers, refugees, and Indigenous communities underscore the need for targeted efforts to bridge SDG gaps. These collective efforts are pivotal in steering Canada closer to achieving the SDGs and fostering a more inclusive and equitable future.

As we reflect on the event's rich discussions and recommendations, we are inspired to continue our shared journey towards a better Canada—one that upholds the principles of sustainability, social justice, and gender equality. Together, we can make a lasting impact and work toward a brighter, more equitable future for Canadians.

To access the webinar videos, please visit: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-nleAxsZj-YKDZq4lOH7PffryQoINLWL&si=aJ0xIKs3cGcEEFPI>, or refer to the video below (**Figure 7**).



**Figure 7: SDGs Webinar Video Playlist**

## NATIONAL SDG EVENT

The SDG Workshop for HIPPY Coordinators was a two-day training program that equipped coordinators with knowledge and resources related to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The workshops enhanced **33 HIPPY Coordinators'** grasp of the SDGs and their alignment with the HIPPY and SMART programs, emphasizing their global significance. Participants recognized the intricate link between their HIPPY program efforts and the SDGs, highlighting how their work locally contributes to these global goals. Facilitators delved into intersectoral themes addressed by HIPPY, clarifying its role in advancing the SDGs in Canada. The workshops highlighted the SDGs' importance to the HIPPY program and its role in Canada's pursuit of these goals.

On the first day, the workshop delved into how HIPPY is interconnected with the SDGs, employing various tools like videos and quizzes for a deeper understanding. Breakout sessions allowed for engaging discussions and presentations, and the day wrapped up with a focus on intersectionality and a visionary exercise—a graphic recorder provided live drawing demonstrations during the sessions (Figure 8).



Figure 8: SDG Day 1 Workshop

Day two commenced with a recap of the previous day's activities. Participants then delved into SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality), dissecting their targets, indicators, and the contributions of HIPPY through video presentations, centimetre exercises and discussions. At the end, coordinators were given an action plan template to identify three tangible ways to promote SDGs through the HIPPY program. The workshop concluded with a recap and a forward-looking discussion, shaping the path ahead.

During the deep dive into SDG 4, which focuses on Quality Education, the Mothers Matter Centre discussed the concept of education, including formal and informal knowledge, its role in shaping the future, and the need for equitable access to educational opportunities for all (**Figure 9**). A video presentation highlighted the challenges faced by children in South Sudan and prompted reflections on the importance of education as a form of protection.

Shifting to SDG 5, Gender Equality, the workshop examined historical gender roles and emphasized empowerment for women and girls (**Figure 10**). Discussions covered gender discrimination, violence, and safeguarding women's rights, spotlighting Canada's efforts, including education and political equality. Gender mainstreaming, considering both genders' interests, was highlighted. Specific SDG 5 targets, like ending discrimination and recognizing unpaid care, were discussed, brainstorming on how HIPPY supports these goals through resources, male engagement, and women's empowerment. Overall, the sessions highlighted how HIPPY aligns with SDGs, empowers women, and promotes gender equality via early childhood education and community support.

Quality learning outcomes were emphasized, highlighting the necessity of aligning what students learn with their future needs and the needs of their communities. Participants also delved into alarming statistics related to child mortality and the impact of conflicts and the COVID-19 pandemic on education.

Throughout the workshop, various methodologies and tools, including presentations, videos, centimetre quizzes, breakout rooms, and visual illustrations, were used to engage participants. Coordinators were able to learn about SDGs, their roles in advancing SDGs through the HIPPY program, and how they could further advance SDGs in Canada.

# Mothers Matter Centre's SDG Workshops



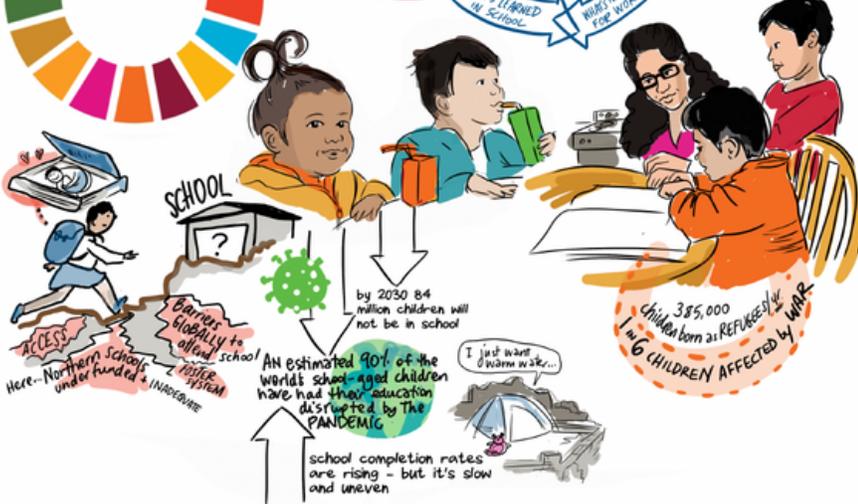
## 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



### EDUCATION

Education is a basic human right - ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all

CLOSING GAPS  
WHAT'S LEARNED IN SCHOOL? → WHAT'S NEEDED FOR WORK?



### SDG 4 TARGETS: WHAT ARE HIPPY INDICATORS?

#### 4.1



**FREE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**HIPPY Targets:**

- Provide early year learning opportunities to the children regardless of socio-economic background
- HIPPY provides **early learning materials**
- Support literacy, numeracy, science and other subjects before school starts
- Reading every day builds healthy child development

#### 4.2



**EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION**

**HIPPY Targets:**

- **Connection:** Builds secure connections between child and parent; mothers to other mothers and mothers to resources
- Supports language development, brain development, with age appropriate activities, wellbeing/ outdoor activities, and routines

#### 4.3



**EQUAL ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

**HIPPY Targets:**

- Affordable higher education is out of reach for newcomers; target would be % of newcomers served by HIPPY who can go to higher ed
- Need access to affordable childcare in order for parents to get an education
- HIPPY connects newcomer parents to find resources to prepare to work, eg refers newcomers to settlement services; helps home visitors to prepare resumes and apply for jobs

#### 4.4



**INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH RELEVANT SKILLS FOR FINANCIAL SUCCESS**

**HIPPY Targets:**

- HIPPY is relevant and intensive professional development training for mothers that results in micro-credit
- HIPPY trying to find ways for Home Visitors to become ECE certified
- HIPPY sites provide support with entrepreneurship ideas, support, leadership training, potentially finding other work

#### 4.6



**UNIVERSAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY**

**HIPPY Targets:**

- Adopt a Reader promotes **literacy for the whole family**
- HIPPY has books that promote love of reading
- Increase in % of HIPPY children that achieve **school readiness**
- Increase in % of parents' confidence in reading to their children
- Pre/post surveys about time parents/children spend together reading

#### 4.7



**EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**

**HIPPY Targets:**

- HIPPY gives every child the right to **global citizenship and education**
- Curriculum is inclusive and welcoming and supports multicultural families
- HIPPY supports all families regardless of race, sex, gender, socio-ec status etc of caregivers/mom/dad
- **Recognizes every child as they are, including gender diverse children**
- Supports civic engagement of mothers to participate in activities
- Builds confidence to be leaders at home/community

#### 4.5



**ELIMINATE ALL DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION**

**HIPPY Targets:**

- HIPPY adapts the curriculum; eg for children with disabilities, indigenous HIPPY, in English and French
- Indicators could include looking at backgrounds of clients served, # of children with special needs, # of fathers attending

#### 4 → A



**BUILD AND UPGRADE INCLUSIVE AND SAFE SCHOOLS**

**HIPPY Targets:**

- HIPPY goes to the homes of families (safe and inclusive approach)
- HIPPY is flexible and accommodates based on the child's and families' needs, looking at the uniqueness of each family

Figure 9: SDG Day 2 Workshop, Goal 4

# Mothers Matter Centre's SDG Workshops



## SDG 5 TARGETS: WHAT ARE HIPPY INDICATORS?

Empowering mothers to be confident  
Valued as equals  
Opportunity for education  
Equal rights for all children  
Connecting women to community

Community resources for health and well being  
Information/group sessions could have professionals, topics, guest speakers  
Sites provide workshops for women  
Helping women find health care services  
Mothers are confident to teach their girls about health rights

Workshops and financial literacy  
Learn math with children  
Help with resume writing  
Connections with community programs

Digital literacy with tablets  
HIPPY 3.0 (app)  
Home Visitors guiding and supporting with questions

TARGET 5-1	TARGET 5-2	TARGET 5-4	TARGET 5-5
END DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS	END ALL VIOLENCE AGAINST AND EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS	VALUE UNPAID CARE AND PROMOTE SHARED DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES	ENSURE FULL PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING
TARGET 5-6	TARGET 5-A	TARGET 5-B	
UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS	EQUAL RIGHTS TO ECONOMIC RESOURCES, PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AND FINANCIAL SERVICES	PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH TECHNOLOGY	

Celebrate successes and teaching their own children  
Recognize and respect care work and what mothers do, including need for self care  
Hiring mothers as home visitors  
Group meetings encourage opportunity to celebrate the work together (+ resources)

Hiring Home Visitors  
Part time employment, leading to confidence and leadership roles  
Encouraging women and girls to take post-secondary education



Figure 9: SDG Day 2 Workshop, Goal 5

# LESSON LEARNED/SUCCESS STORIES

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## COMMUNICATION

Throughout the WIP, project managers from partner organizations convened in regular management check-ins and project advisory committee meetings to foster experience sharing and the exchange of insights. This open communication and coordination level supported a shared understanding of project activities and timelines among partners. Meetings helped create synergy and enhanced room to learn from each other's experiences.

## PARTICIPANT RETENTION

Although the WIP was initially set up for 1 cohort of participants spanning over 2 years, the Mothers Matter Centre quickly realized that there should be two cohorts of women, with one cohort each year. 2 years is a long-term commitment for many of the participants in the WIP. Since employment and child caring schedules can change, the Mothers Matter Centre and partners realized it was practical to decrease the time commitment needed for the project.

## HYBRID TRAINING DELIVERY MODEL

"Most of our training has been done remotely. However, we delivered one training workshop for the participants with lunch, which was very successful. We plan on having more in-person training workshops moving forward as it creates more personal connections among the participants." (Facilitator, Al-Mustafa)

The hybrid training delivery model has proven effective, allowing partners to continue training despite COVID-related restrictions while facilitating in-person meetings in compliance with government guidelines. A hybrid training delivery model has retained participants to balance their professional and personal responsibilities alongside their project commitments.

## **HONORARIUMS TO ENGAGE VULNERABLE AND ISOLATED WOMEN**

Participants need to receive honorariums for their time in social innovation projects. Free time is a privilege and luxury that many low-income and racialized women cannot afford. Women are confronted with inflation, the cost of living, and the affordability crisis - especially in BC. Most women need to work and care for their children. To be able to design and implement programs to support communities from the bottoms-up approach, participants need to be fairly compensated for their time.

## **FLEXIBILITY WITHIN THE BUDGET**

WIP partners aimed for transparent expectations and adaptability within the allocated budget. In community projects, overcoming challenges to ensure inclusivity and active engagement is crucial. Building and sustaining connections, motivating participants, demanding time, and nurturing these relationships can impact project timelines. Consequently, partners emphasized the need for budgetary flexibility to accommodate delays, allowing the smooth transition of unspent funds to the subsequent fiscal year.

Furthermore, the responsibility of fund distribution to participants lay with the organizations, resulting in a prolonged process for women to access the funds. This required participants to actively communicate, follow up, and obtain approval for expenditures. A more efficient approach would be to transform the allocated funds into grants, directly placing financial resources into participants' hands for immediate utilization. This streamlined method would enhance the efficiency of the disbursement process, empowering participants to engage in project activities readily.

## **LOWER INNOVATION PROJECT BUDGET**

The Mothers Matter Centre and partner organizations found that a lower innovation project budget would encourage participants to spend money on their innovation project. Participants were eager to design projects, but it was challenging for them to implement them. Since the participants mainly came from low-income backgrounds, many hesitated to spend much money from limited exposure to such resources.

## **INTER-GROUP INTERACTIONS**

To foster greater networks and connections, 8 cross-learning events between the groups (4 for each cohort) were facilitated. These events united the women across all three partners and provided a space for connection, experience sharing, and knowledge mobilization. These exchanges were always inspirational as the women could find common threads in their life journeys to talk about and get to know each other better despite coming from different contexts and cultures.

These events also proved to be a platform to support the Indigenous groups in sharing their stories and culture with the Muslim and newcomer women's groups. The women understood and appreciated the role and ways of the Indigenous community more as a result of their exposure and interaction.

## **IMPORTANCE OF GROUP ENGAGEMENT MATERIALS**

The success of our meetings and group engagements depends on certain crucial elements that should consistently remain in our programs. This includes childcare services, assistance with transport costs, and the active involvement of facilitators. Childcare services are essential for individuals with caregiving responsibilities, ensuring their participation by addressing diverse needs. Incorporating childcare support into our programs allows us to accommodate participants and foster inclusivity. Similarly, addressing transport costs is vital to removing obstacles for those facing financial constraints in attending meetings. Implementing solutions to ease transportation burdens reflects our commitment to accessibility and equal opportunities for everyone involved.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA UPSKILLING**

The AMCS discovered that social media would be effective for planning and conducting outreach for community engagement. Equipping partners with social media skills would support them in the process of sharing their initiatives and the work they do. It may also inspire other social media users to take on projects or actions to advance Canada's SDGs.

## **TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY-LEVEL SOCIAL CHANGE**

"I am really impressed with the work the ladies put into each lesson we learn. Despite each lady going through some tough family life experiences, they still show up to learn. To see the excitement that they can be involved in bringing some change to their community is exciting to see." (Facilitator, VAFCS).

The WIP project has significantly contributed to community understanding of addressing SDG gaps at the local level. Participants are enthusiastic about instigating change, which serves as a driving force for their motivation. A total of 6 community-led projects were self-identified, developed and implemented.

In addition, the WIP empowered many participants from low-income backgrounds to transform community-level social change. The WIP promoted creativity and freedom to design a community project, allowing these women to reclaim the power of decision-making that will impact the lives of others in need.

## EXTERNAL EVALUATION

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The complete external evaluation was conducted by Verapax and attached as Annex 1 to this report. Some excerpts from the evaluation are pasted below:

- 1 The structured, culturally safe, women's centred, and training and supports designed and delivered by MMC and partner SPOs influenced knowledge gain about the SDGs and applied PAR among active participants.**
- 2 The tangible resources and organizational support developed and delivered by MMC and partner SPOs, enable participants to proactively become leaders of collective projects that address SDG gaps within their local community.**
- 3 Participation and action-oriented engagement of women from the target communities in the advancement of the UN SDGs Agenda was enabled by adaptative leadership slips and design in the WIP.**

- Immediate and intermediate differences self-reported by women who participated in Cohorts 1 and 2 are in line with the desired outcomes by the WIP. The structures developed by MMC and the key partner SPOs (outputs), enabled the participation of women from the target communities to build their capacity and knowledge (immediate and intermediate outcomes), and, consequently, lead collaborative social innovation projects (intermediate and long-term outcomes) that respond to SDG gaps at the community level.
- The difference in WIP influenced the women who actively participated in the cohorts suggests that the initiative by MMC and the partner SPOs met its ultimate goal: women from the target communities became changemakers actively engaged in advancing the UN SDG Agenda 2023 at the local level.

# The Women's Insight Project (WIP)

Overview of key findings from an evaluation.  
End of Project Report.



"The WIP helped women understand that without these [SDG] goals the world would be 'in much more trouble'."

WIP PF Cohort 2

"I say the long-term impact or result of Women's Insight is us. Having this dream as a group that we can be a nonprofit, a society working for the community. We are getting a certificate to become a society. And that, like, the intermediate results for us is we are doing outreach, work, our offices in the core area of the community. Yeah, we want to work with the sustainable development goal we see in our community which is help for youth aging out of care, and then looking at the other gap of elders needing support aging well, and then also being open to other things such as respite. And well be there's an opportunity to partner with other agencies like the to partner with other agencies and, and provide workshops and training for you. I'm looking forward to everything else that's going to be coming our way."

SAGE participant Cohort 1



The structured, culturally safe, women's centred, and training and supports designed and delivered by MMC and partner SPOs influenced knowledge gain about the SDGs and applied PAR among active participants.



## +75%

The overall rate of active engagement from the direct beneficiaries enrolled in Cohorts 1 and 2 with the WIP.



The tangible resources and organizational support developed and delivered by MMC and partner SPOs, enable participants to proactively become leaders of collective projects that address SDG gaps within their local community



Participation and action-oriented engagement of women from the target communities in the advancement of the UN SDGs Agenda was enabled by adaptative leadership and design in the WIP.

Self-reported change at the beginning and by the end on Knowledge, Attitude, and Behaviour influenced by the WIP at the cohort level.

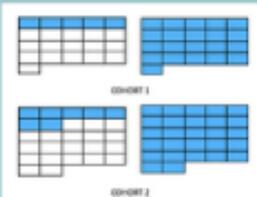


Fig1: SDG-related knowledge gain

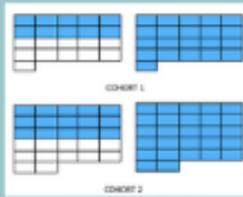


Fig2: Change in attitude/feelings about the SDGs

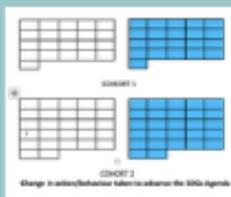


Fig3: Increased action taken by beneficiaries at advancing the SDG

Findings from the insights volunteered by the WIP staff and by women in cohorts 1 and 2, in addition to data from reports by project management we corroborated, strongly suggest that the WIP met its goal of influencing understanding and action on the UN SDGs, at the community level, and the organizational level.

External Evaluator Lead. Verapax 2024.

## CONCLUSION

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The WIP participants engaged and reported transformative outcomes through the training and implementation of projects. The participants noted an enhanced understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals, gaining deeper insights into global challenges and their interconnected nature. This understanding empowered them to feel agency and belong within their community, fostering a stronger connection to their surroundings. Furthermore, having access to resources and the autonomy to implement community-driven programs without constraints, they experienced profound empowerment. This empowerment translated into increased confidence in identifying community support needs and taking decisive actions to address them. Consequently, their involvement led to tangible improvements within their communities, reflecting a cycle of empowerment, community cohesion, and proactive engagement in local development efforts.

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