



5

GENDER
EQUALITY



Moderation Team

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SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Event Description

On **June 21, 2021**, Queen's University hosted its first [17 Rooms](#) event, which brought together Queen's faculty, students, and staff to identify next steps for advancing the [UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) at the university.

Participants were divided into 17 virtual rooms, one per SDG, and asked to identify actions **that Queen's University could take in the following 12 to 18 months to advance their specific goal.**

Rooms participants were also asked to identify:

- The most important issues related to their SDG that Queen's should address,
- Connections and common themes amongst these issues,
- How their SDG connects with reconciliation/conciliation, decolonization, and Indigenization,
- How their SDG connects with other SDGs.

Each room had two hours to brainstorm ideas before presenting their recommended actions to all participants. Following the event, each room's moderation team authored a summary report.

Room Participants

Lee Airton	Kathleen Lahey (Moderator)
Tambir Aulakh	Lisa McInerney
Kira Bollen	Camila Mercado (Student Facilitator)
Rachel Castellano	Sara Montgomery
Yunyi Chen (Staff Facilitator)	Kip Pegley
Erin Clow (Moderator)	Heidi Ploeg
Kate Hamill	Wendy Powley
Nenagh Hathaway	
Andrea Hemmerich	

Preamble: Discussion and Principles

The group's understanding of SDG 5 is inclusive and intersectional, and includes racialized, Indigenous and LGBTQ+ peoples and any groups that may face inequalities. Metrics in SDG 5 and all the other SDGs are not limited to specific genders but are to be applied to ensure substantive equality for all those facing inequalities of status and/or outcomes. Gender equality cannot be achieved until women, 2SLGBTQ+ and Indigenous individuals, and all members of vulnerable and marginalized groups are included on equal terms.

There are many systemic barriers to achieving equality at Queen's that cannot be achieved in 12 to 18 months. Many issues related to the SDGs, including gender inequality, hunger, food insecurity, and the lack of affordable housing, are urgent but remain hidden at Queen's because the majority, privileged population sets standards that encourage unprivileged individuals to hide their needs to "pass" as equally entitled members of the community.

Gender equality is interconnected to all the other SDGs as well as the requirements of the international agreements brought within the UN General Assembly umbrella by the 2030 Agenda on equality.

Addressing and challenging the culture at Queen's that disadvantages women and other equity-deserving groups is **an urgent substantive and administrative obligation**. Accommodations and financial assistance are the keys to achieving substantive equality for all members of the community. Intersectional data and micro-level analytic lens must be used when carrying out any of the initiatives discussed below.

Reviewing and changing the language commonly used at Queen's may be necessary to ensure commitment to eliminating gender, and all forms of, inequality. One member of the group noted that the term "equity" is legally an undefined and unenforceable concept, while "equality" is concrete and legally and internationally defined. The UN's 2030 Agenda, binding on all countries, calls for treaty, legal, and functional commitments to meet the standards of achieving factual "gender equality" and "equality among and within all states" and sectors of society.

Proposed Actions

Room 5 brought together 16 individuals from across Queen's University to discuss approaches to addressing SDG 5. The group identified five areas for action.

Action 1: Eliminate gender (and intersecting) inequalities throughout the university, including in teaching evaluation outcomes, rates of promotion, and consistent salary gaps.

To address a culture at Queen's that disadvantages women, BIPOC, 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous, racialized, and other marginalized people, all members of the university (including faculty, staff, and students) must be treated equally and rewarded for their contributions toward achieving the SDGs, including SDG 5.

Faculty and staff performance measurements and salary adjustment policies must be restructured to eliminate gender and intersectional inequalities in outcomes.

Action 2: Extend graduate funding through retroactive "clock-pivoting" for those affected by the pandemic, particularly those affected due to their intersectional identities and those unable to return to Canada.

Extending degree completion times and funding would help students continue or pursue graduate education without suffering unequally from financial hardship caused by the pandemic.

Financial assistance would reduce gender and related inequalities by supporting those most affected by the pandemic, including students with care responsibilities and 2SLGBTQ+, BIPOC, disabled, commuting, and low-income students.

Action 3: Incorporate gender inclusive (neutral) washrooms in every building on campus in adequate and accessible locations.

This action will help make Queen's a safer and more inclusive campus for all, including non-binary and trans members of the community.

Although some faculties have already implemented gender inclusive (neutral) washrooms, it is important to make this a consistent practice across campus. Financial resources would be needed for conversion and/or construction of washroom spaces.

Action 4: Develop free childcare for all in the Queen's community.

Develop free childcare for all in the Queen's community to eradicate care time and costs so that financial, sex/gender, and other considerations do not continue to disadvantage some with respect to earnings and other workplace benefits.

Childcare can help address financial and social barriers so that staff, faculty, and students can take on paid work and/or professional opportunities. This initiative would bring more women to study and work at Queen's.

Students with care responsibilities for children should be able to pursue educational and employment goals as easily as those without care responsibilities or who can easily afford care.

Action 5: Offer community outreach educational workshops and/or launch an educational campaign for students in high school about sexual harassment and consent.

Sexual violence is an ongoing concern at Queen's. Students must learn about consent before entering university, because issues of sexual harassment arise as early as orientation week.

Although orientation includes a presentation on consent, many students do not attend or do not engage meaningfully with the content. This project would benefit Queen's students and the Kingston community.