

VOW Chapter Toolkit

2021



CANADIAN VOICE OF WOMEN FOR PEACE

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What is VOW?

Established in 1960, the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) is Canada's oldest national, feminist peace group. A non-profit and membership-based organization, VOW holds consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The organization is committed to amplifying the voices of women in peace-building, through the promotion of women's rights, with the wider recognition that women have been, and continue to be devalued and discriminated against.

VOW's voice is often the most outspoken in Canada, not only advocating for the inclusion of women in issues concerning peace and mobilization, but revisiting the inception of the existing peace policies. VOW also assesses a need to promote non-violent means of conflict resolution and security. Furthermore, VOW aims to combat gender-mainstreaming by utilizing critical and transformative feminist policy, to emphasize the implications for women in conflict prevention and management. VOW specifically focuses on amplifying numerous and diverse women's voices to be heard locally, nationally, and internationally on issues concerning the sustainability of peace.

What are VOW's aims, and whom does VOW serve?

VOW serves the general public by placing an important emphasis on educating women, youth, and male allies to recognize how the only avenue to contribute to a sustainable peace is to de-escalate the current culture of violence that emphasizes nuclear disarmament and violent means of conflict resolution. Guided by a respect for learned wisdom, honouring women, and upholding experiential and traditional knowledge, VOW is a consensus-based organization that places a shared emphasis on nonviolence, respect for others, and the earth we share. Above all, VOW prioritizes the value of inclusive peace, which alludes not only to the short-term outcome of security in the absence of war, but the presence of persistent justice.

VOW's associated values include VOW's mission to develop a framework to further support an infrastructure of justice. This is done through empowering the wider community to cultivate a shared perspective of sustainable and long-lasting peace that is only achievable when women can contribute their voice in peace-related issues that affect them.

Peace Issues VOW Tackles

Women & Peace



Why is the inclusion of women so important in peace processes?

The participation of women in peace negotiations has a better likelihood of an agreement being reached for long-lasting peace.

Lasting Peace Agreements

When women have a voice in on-going peace negotiations, there is a higher probability that the peace agreement will be sustainable and long-lasting: 20% more likely to last two years, and 35% to last at least 15 years.



Conflict & Post-conflict National Parliaments

In 2020, the representation of women in domestic politics with legislated quotas is more than 23% (in conflict) and 13% (post-conflict) compared to governments without quotas. This figure rises to 26% in local politics which is three times higher than without quota legislations.

United Nations & Women

- In 2019, there were 27 Gender Advisors and served on 14 UN missions
- In 2019, 7 seven peacekeeping operations and special political missions had women protection advisors
- At end of 2020, there were 10 on-going peacekeeping missions which had gender units



Agreements Reached

In cases where there was a considerable presences of women in peace negotiations, almost always an agreement was reached compared to negotiations that lacked the inclusion of women.



SOURCES:
https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures#_TOC4253574
<https://www.unwomen.org/participation/>



CANADIAN VOICE OF WOMEN FOR PEACE

COVID-19 PANDEMIC: WOMEN, ECONOMY & PEACE

The current global health crisis has severely and disproportionately impacted women. These implications are significantly seen in the economy, and in cases of conflict-affected states.

UNEMPLOYMENT

70%



The pandemic has had severe consequences on both stable and conflict-affected states. In March of 2020 in Canada, women aged 25 to 54 represented 70% of the job cuts while 1 out of 5 women lost a huge portion of their hours.

POLICIES

In 42 conflict-affected countries with data, there have been a total of 417 policies. Out of which, 179 (43%) are directly related to gender. 125 (30%) address violence against women, 47 (11%) address women's economic security and 7 (1.5%) address unpaid care work.

179



UNPAID CARING

7x



Women in conflict-affected and developing states are performing seven times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men during the pandemic. As a result of this, women are unable to participate in the labour market: only 47% of women were able to work compared to 74% of men.

ORGANIZATIONS

30% of Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund local and civil society partners are at risk of dissolving as a direct result of the global pandemic and its effects. This fund helps women in underdeveloped or conflict-affected places.

30%



SOURCES:
<https://www.un.org/en/desa/worldx2%80%99s-women-2020>
https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures#_TOC4253574



CANADIAN VOICE OF WOMEN FOR PEACE

DEMILITARIZE

Why is demilitarization necessary ?

The Canadian government disproportionately spends tens of billions of dollars on the Defence Budget where the money could be spent on sustainable development, justice promotion, public safety or even government services



\$150+ Billion

Canada announced that it plans to buy 15 warships, 88 fighter jets, armed drones and LAVs. At the time, Canada was already in 14th place for highest military spending.



\$1 Trillion

In 2020, Canada's debt will hit \$1 trillion, and the largest government deficit in Canadian history. This is while Canada has agreed to increase its military budget by 70%. Today, the military budget is already 20 times the environment budget.



2%

In 2013, Environment Canada only received 2% of the federal budget. In contrast, Nation Defence received 28% the same year. Other services such as Health Canada and Indian Affairs received 3% and 2% of the national budget respectively.



Sustainability

In 2018, Canada adopted the Agenda for Sustainable Development that highlights 17 goals, 169 targets, and 230 indicators. However, Canada committed only \$60 million over a span of 13 years (approximately \$4.6 annually).

Sources

<http://www.demilitarize.ca/>
<https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#orgs/gov/infograph/financial>
<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate-reports-publications/defence-investment-plan-2018/sse.html>



CANADIAN VOICE OF WOMEN FOR PEACE

How to Start a VOW Chapter

Step 1: Reach out to friends, acquaintances, or any other people who may be interested in forming your peace advocacy group with you!

We suggest gathering a minimum of 3 members. Although this is a relatively low number, a small group of dedicated individuals can achieve great things!

If you are planning on starting a VOW chapter at a school, however, this minimum number may be different depending on which school you are a student of. For example, the University of Toronto requires a minimum of 5 members for a student group to become recognized. Ryerson University, however, requires a minimum of 20 full-time students with at least 3 executive signing officers

Further, some universities may also require that you recruit faculty member(s) as advisors for your group.

Step 2: Review VOW's overarching peace themes to ensure alignment of your vision and goals with VOW National:

VOW focuses on 3 overarching peace themes:

1. **Advocacy:** VOW amplifies the voices of women and advocates for a peaceful world by coordinating solidarity actions and responses calling for a feminist future.
2. **Education** - VOW prioritizes youth engagement, along with the promotion of peace education within its activities, including by hosting annual peace camps across Canada.
3. **Collaboration** - VOW works to develop and maintain relationships with international partners, UN entities, and ensures the full participation of VOW members within UN or international activities, including by the use of VOW's ECOSOC status.

Alongside our thematic principles, our peace priorities are:

- Disarmament and demilitarization
- Gender equality
- Empowerment of women and youth
- Social and environmental justice
- Peacebuilding and human rights

Step 3: Decide on a communications lead (or co-leads), who will be the main correspondent with VOW National

Deciding on a person or persons to take a central role in communicating with VOW National allows for ease of communication. This person(s) will also coordinate meeting times with VOW National. These meetings can be held virtually.

Step 4: Fill out the VOW chapter application form

The application form can be found on the VOW website.
After completing the form, the National Coordinator for VOW will reach out to the communications lead (or co-leads) to schedule an introductory meeting.

Step 5: Meet with the National Coordinator for VOW, Vanessa Lanteigne

Vanessa will provide you with advice on how to organize, operate, and grow your group, as well as on how to amplify your work.

Step 6 (for student groups only): Get recognized by your school

The steps required to get your group recognized at your school can differ from school to school. Research for the procedures specific to your school, and work with your Faculty Advisor if you are in need of more help! Many schools require that you create and hand in a student group constitution.

Step 7: Host regular meetings

Organize a minimum of 4 meetings per year; however, we recommend holding monthly meetings. The more the better! Again, this minimum number may be different if you are creating a student group at a school.

Step 8: Continue to grow your membership base

Advertising your group through social media, pamphlets, and other means can help get the word out about your group. For student groups, club fairs on campus can be great ways to create awareness for your group, and to encourage more to join!

Current VOW Chapters

Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (National Chapter)

Member Information:

- National Co-Chair: Lyn Adamson
- National Co-Chair: Hannah Hadikin
- National Treasurer: Catherine Lathwell
- National Coordinator: Vanessa Lanteigne
- National Board Members: Janis Alton, Kathrin Winkler, Marla Slavner, Oyeyinka Oyelowo, Charlotte Akin, Rana Zaman, Brigid Toole-Grant, Charlotte Sheasby-Coleman, Katrina Leclerc, Ainun Afroza, Greer Donaldson, Violette Khammad

Contact Information:

- Address: 25 Cecil St. Suite #310, Toronto, ON, M5T 1N1
- Email: info@vowpeace.org
- Phone Number: +1 416-603-7915
- Website: www.vowpeace.org
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VOWPeace>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/vowpeace/>
- LinkedIn

Chapter Story:

Established in 1960, the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) is Canada's oldest national feminist peace group. We are a non-partisan, non-profit membership-based organization with consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). VOW values and honours women in all of our diversities and provides women the opportunity to have their voices heard locally, nationally, and internationally on issues concerning peace.



Nova Scotia Voice of Women for Peace (NSVOW)

Member Information:

- National Board Members & Board Representatives: Rana Zaman, and Kathrin Winkler

Contact Information:

- Emails:
 - info@nsvow.org (regarding requests for information)
 - peace@nsvow.org (to contact an organizer)
- Website: <https://nsvow.org>
- Facebook:
 - <https://www.facebook.com/NSVOW>

Chapter Story:

NSVOW is a chapter of VOW which is separately incorporated. The women of NSVOW see a connection between peace, social justice, and respect for our environment. To bring this connection to life, we actively network with other organizations, such as: Nova Scotian Environmental Network, Raging Grannies, Dalhousie's Women's Centre, Physicians for Global Survival, Oxfam, THANS, SMU Women's Centre, and others.

Manitoba Voice of Women for Peace

Member Information:

- Manitoba Provincial Coordinator: Shayne Wong
- Member: Ellen Judd

Contact Information:

- Facebook:
 - <https://www.facebook.com/VOW-Manitoba-106922408027020>
- Instagram:
 - <https://www.instagram.com/vowpeace.manitoba/>

Chapter Story:

VOW Manitoba is a new chapter of VOW which is in the progress of being built. They are in active contact with the national chapter.



New Brunswick Voice of Women for Peace

Member Information:

- National Representative and Provincial Coordinator: Brigid Grant

Contact Information:

Contact the National Office for more info at info@vowpeace.org

Chapter Story:

New Brunswick VOW is a direct chapter of VOW and is not separately incorporated.

Carleton University Voice of Women for Peace

Member Information:

- Coordinator: Elizabeth Curley

Contact Information:

- Email: cuvowforpeace@gmail.com
- Facebook:
 - <https://www.facebook.com/CUVoiceofWomen>

Chapter Story: This is a club within Carleton University.



Student Mentorship

The VOW Youth Ambassadorship Program is an opportunity for high school and university students to learn more about peace-building, gender equality, and the overall mission of VOW. It offers an opportunity for students to become directly involved with the work of the organization, and emerge as a recognized VOW Ambassador.

This Program will be an ongoing opportunity beginning in the summer of 2021. To become a recognized VOW Ambassador, participants must:

- Attend at least two VOW mentorship “Coffee-Talk Sessions”.
- Attend a VOW-led crash course in creating peace-related graphics.
- Design and submit three VOW-related social media or blog posts.
- Design and implement a workshop on a topic of your choice related to VOW themes (which will be recorded and put on the VOW Youtube Channel and associated social media channels).

The VOW Youth Ambassadorship Program is 100 hours in total, beginning in May 2021. Participants will spend fifty hours aiding VOW as an organization, and fifty hours completing the program requirements. All successful participants who complete the program will receive a letter of recommendation from the VOW National Coordinator, as well as a LinkedIn Badge, recognizing specific efforts and achievements. University students, unless otherwise specified, will be expected to complete this program while pursuing an internship/volunteer placement and are strongly encouraged to apply for funding and/or credit for this placement with their university, if funding for an internship opportunity with VOW is approved by an affiliated University program or school.

If you are interested in this program, please fill out the application form that can be found on the VOW website: vowpeace.org