

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



Action Canada
for Sexual Health & Rights

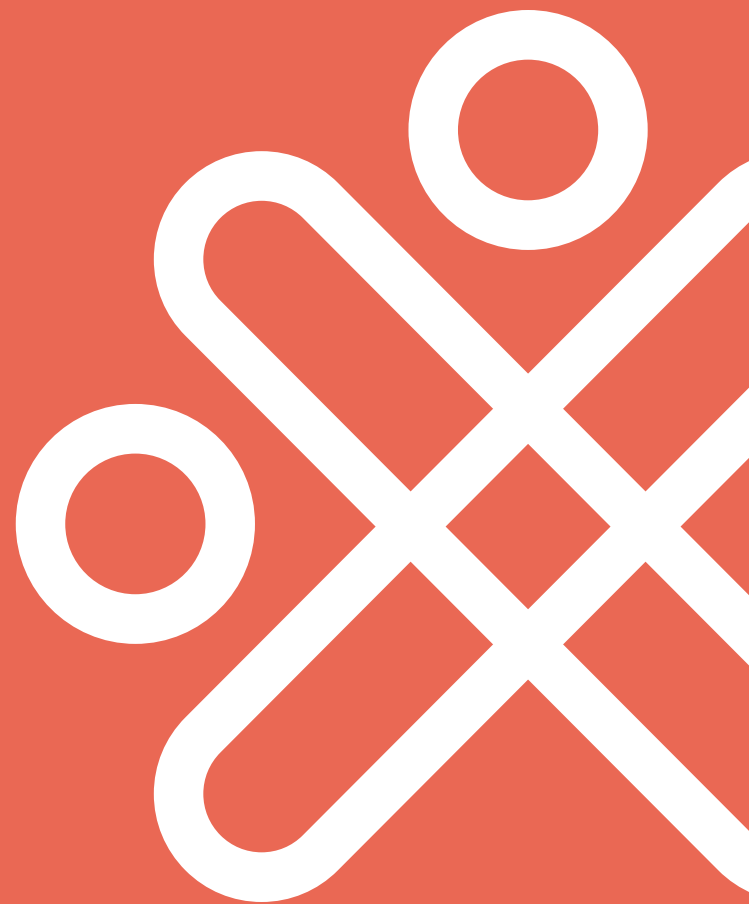


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A Note from the Executive Director

DEAR FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS,

To say that 2020 was a year of upheavals would be an understatement. On top of a global pandemic, we at Action Canada also navigated major internal changes.

In January, we rang in the new year in our brand-new office. In February, Sandeep Prasad, Action Canada's first Executive Director, announced his departure. A few weeks later, like the rest of the country, our whole team moved our operations to our kitchen tables, living rooms, and bedrooms, where we set to work to understand emerging gaps in reproductive and sexual health services during a pandemic. Amidst that, several new board members joined us, four new babies were born to staff members, many new faces came onboard, and our staff joined CUPE Local 2722.

It was not an easy year, but the Action Canada team rose to the occasion thanks to your support! As we have moved into our new fiscal year, we have continued to call for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) to be at the centre of the coronavirus pandemic response—at home and abroad.

In times of crisis, sexual and reproductive health needs do not go away—they only become more pressing. This work would not be possible without the loyal support of engaged supporters like you. It is an honour and a pleasure to work alongside you in a movement for sexual, reproductive, and gender justice.

In solidarity,



Frédérique Chabot, **Acting Executive Director**

A Note from the Board Chair

DEAR FRIENDS,

This past year, we all faced many challenges and changes in our communities. Sexual health service providers adapted to a new health care reality. Reproductive rights advocates across the world rose to respond to regressive anti-choice policies. An unprecedented number of us took to the streets to call for racial justice.

The Action Canada Board of Directors was no exception in 2019-2020. We added seven new members to our ranks who bring expertise in senior management, governance, and SRHR advocacy. We also oversaw the hiring process to select Action Canada's new Executive Director during a global pandemic.

With our new vision and strengthened capacity, Action Canada is well-positioned to grow our national and global presence on SRHR advocacy. We continue to be grateful to you, our community of supporters, for continuing to fight for sexual and reproductive health and rights for all.

We look forward to the future of our work together.

Respectfully,



Cathy Steven, **Action Canada Board Chair**

Highlights of Our Year

About Action Canada

Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights is a progressive, human rights based charitable organization committed to advancing and upholding sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Canada and globally.

Our Mission

People everywhere have control over and are able to decide freely upon all matters related to their sexuality, reproduction, and gender, including their sexual and reproductive health.

What We Do



24/7 Direct Support and Stigma-Free Information:

A 24-hour Canada wide toll-free Access Line, accurate health information online, and resources for educators and health professionals



Engaging Policymakers and Promoting Rights:

Advocating in Canada and globally for access to safe abortion, comprehensive sexuality education, gender equality, and 2SLGBTQI+ rights

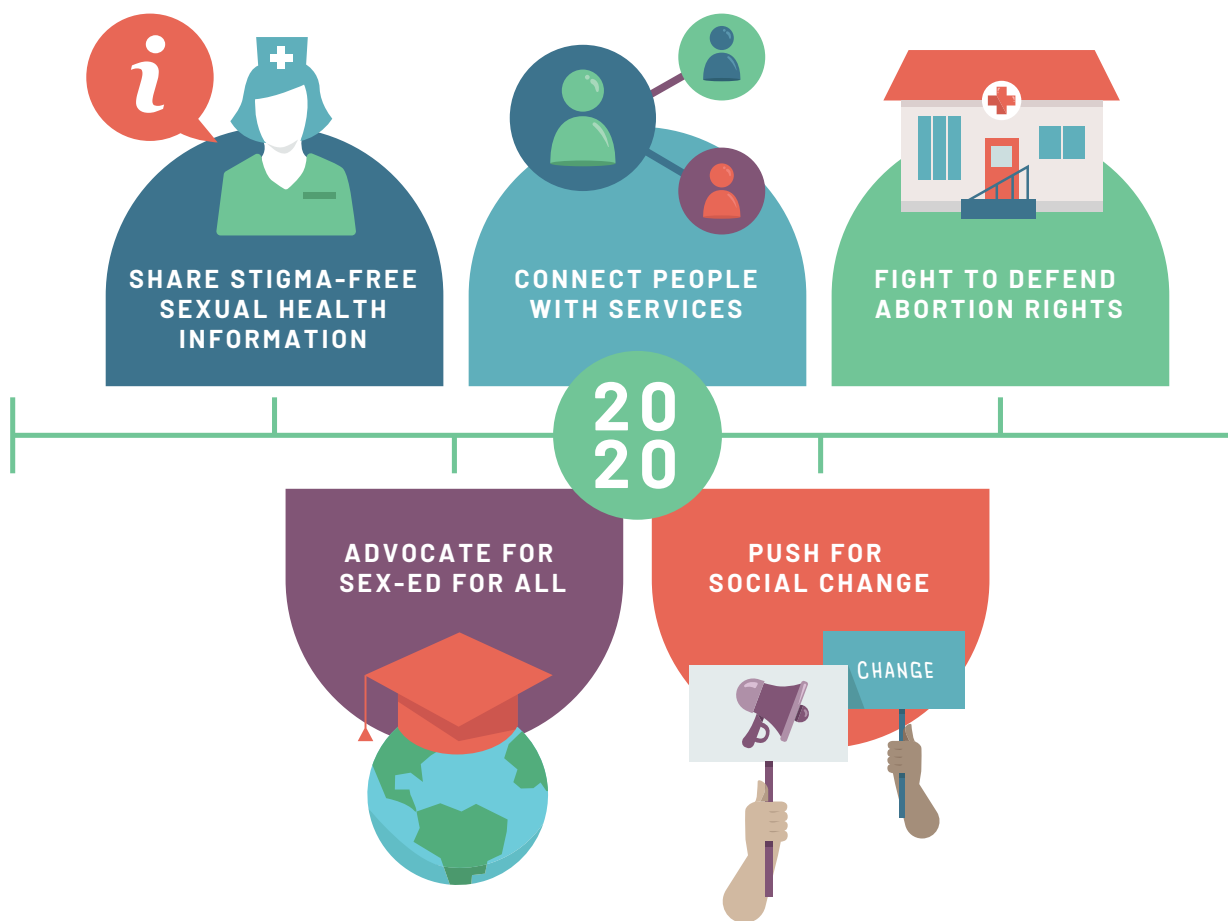


Collaboration and Movement Building:

Working with health care providers, human rights defenders, and feminist leaders from all regions of the world to push for change

A Year at Action Canada

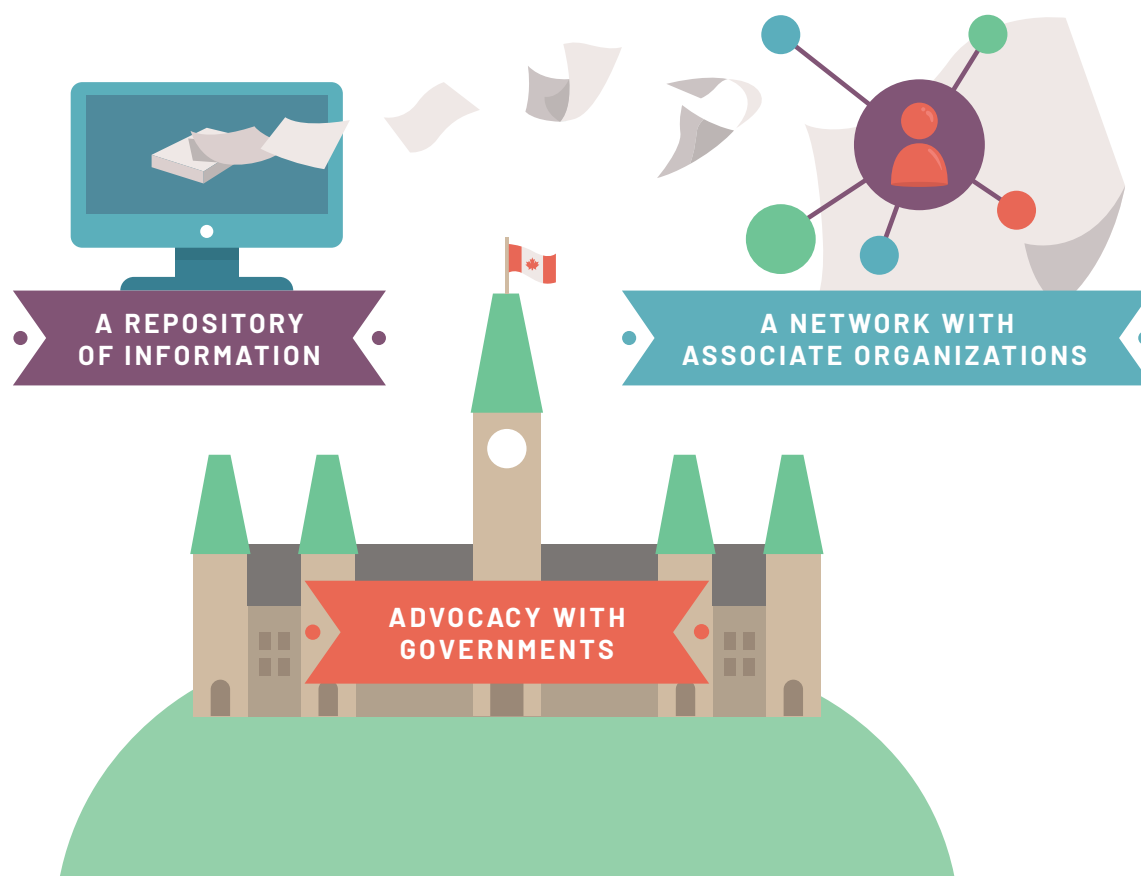
In the first months of 2020, we moved into our new headquarters office in Ottawa, celebrated our 5th anniversary, published our five-year strategic plan, and a few months later, said goodbye to our first Executive Director Sandeep Prasad. This big change happened against the backdrop of massive global change—the coronavirus pandemic and the beginning of a growing movement for racial justice. Throughout, we continued to share stigma-free sexual health information, connect people with services, fight to defend abortion rights, advocate for sex-ed for all, and push for social change to realize sexual and reproductive health and rights for all.



COVID-19 + SRHR

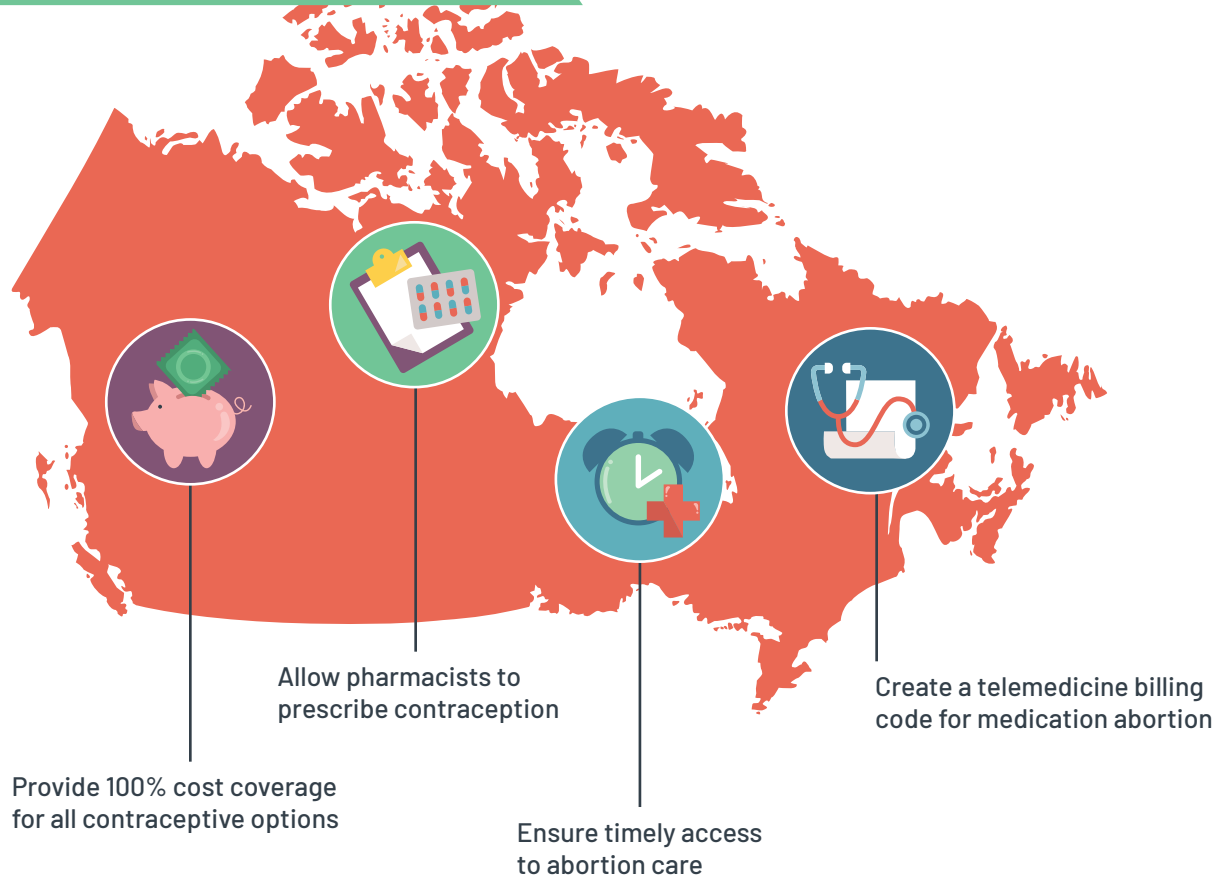
The coronavirus pandemic changed how we access, learn about, and advocate for abortion care, STI testing, contraception, and other sexual health services. It has shifted how people have sex, date, get health care and work, and raise their families. And we know it is having the deepest impact on the most marginalized communities.

We worked quickly in the spring to create a repository of information about the pandemic and abortion, pregnancy, birth, and sexual health. We built a network with associate organizations across the country and the National Abortion Federation to give a place for providers to share emerging information and to build a better rapid advocacy plan through the different phases of the pandemic. We advocated with governments of all levels to meet their human rights obligations by ensuring people can still access the essential sexual and reproductive healthcare they need during the pandemic.



Advocacy

We called on all provinces and territories to:



Internationally, we called on Global Affairs Canada to adopt a feminist approach in its response to the pandemic and for Canada to stay the course on its commitment to SRHR. COVID-19 is having a critical impact on the provision of essential sexual and reproductive health services around the world, with health systems stretched to their limits, travel restrictions limiting access to services and commodities, and resources—including staff, supplies, and equipment—being diverted. Our goal is to make sure Canada continues to prioritize SRHR on the global stage.

Election 2019—The personal is STILL political

Election 2019 was an important time to push back against anti-choice rhetoric and change the under-resourcing and stigmatization of SRHR in healthcare, by decision-makers, and in law and policy.

We called on all candidates and parties to fight for:



Abortion
Access Now



Comprehensive
Sex-Ed for All



Universal
Pharmacare



Sex Work
Decriminalization



Global Leadership
on SRHR

IMPACT



200k
reached on
social media



400 organizations
and individuals signed
onto the statement
calling for sex work
decriminalization



Hundreds of Canadians
reached out to their
candidates and MPs
on abortion rights



Commitments from
4 of Canada's top
political parties
to SRHR

Abortion Rights and Access

Abortion Caravan 50th Anniversary

In May, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the “Abortion Caravan”—the convoy of activists, advocates, and brave women who travelled from Vancouver to Ottawa to protest the criminalization of abortion in 1970. We hosted a virtual conversation in collaboration with the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada and the National Abortion Federation Canada featuring some of the original Abortion Caravan participants and author Karin Wells to mark the day and worked with academics and advocates to publish material reflecting on the changes in abortion rights from then to now.

Real Access for All

Abortion was decriminalized in 1988—but that doesn’t mean everyone in Canada has access. We published the new *Access at a Glance: Abortion Services in Canada*. This overview of abortion care in Canada shows where and what care is available, along with information safe access zones, crisis pregnancy centres, and health care ratios. Knowing the barriers people who can get pregnant face across the country strengthens our work to push for better laws, policies, and programs at the federal, provincial, and territorial level.

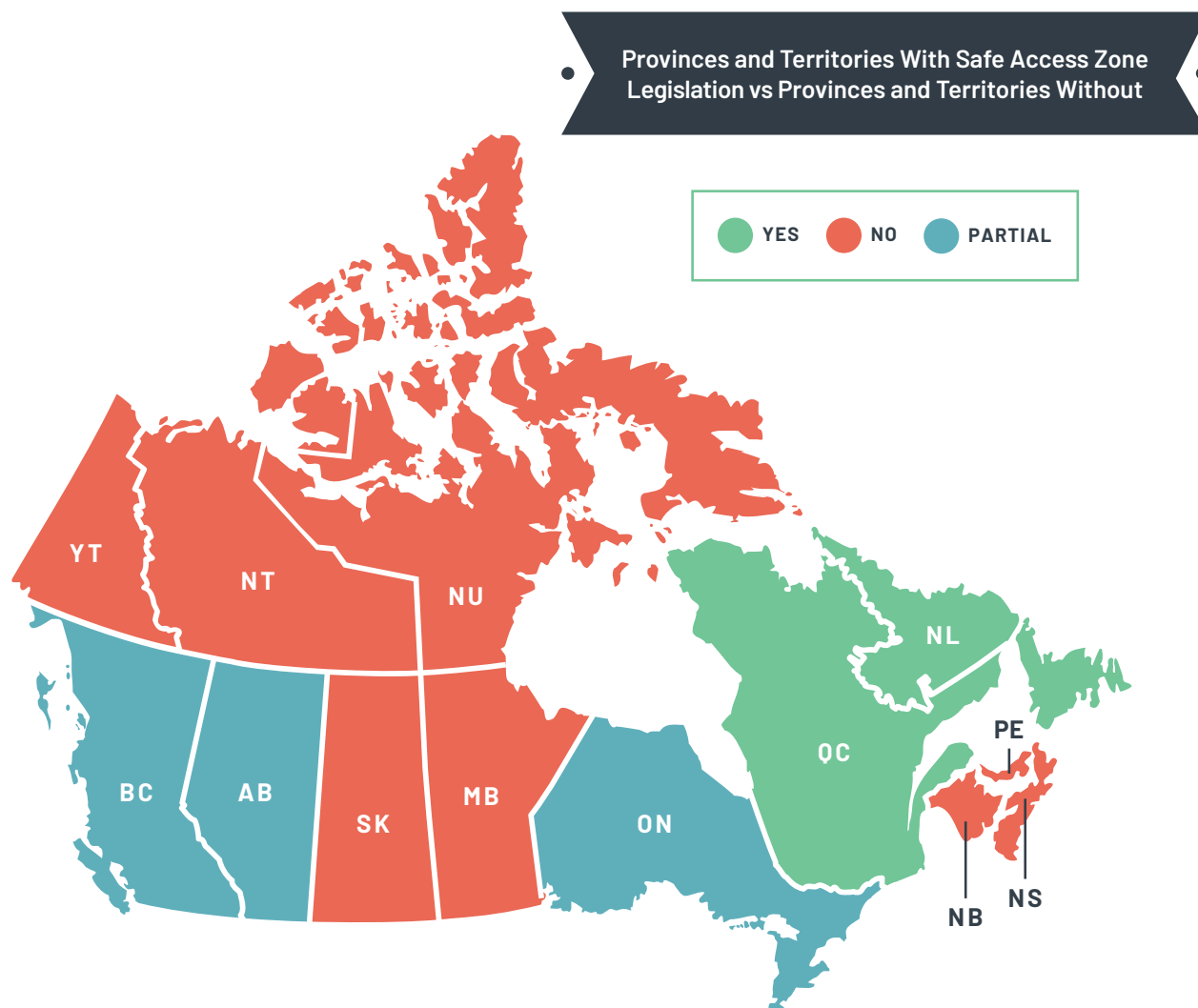


Anti-choice and regressive populist movements everywhere are putting us all at risk and we must unite to fight. Abortion is one frontline in attacks against women, LGBTQ2 folks, migrants, youth, poor folks, people living with disabilities, people of colour. Restricting or denying abortion access has always disproportionately impacted the most marginalized. We will leave no one behind.



Commit to Resist

A number of candidates in the 2019 election campaigned on promises to restrict access to abortion both in Canada and globally through Canada's development assistance. To fight back, Action Canada launched *Commit to Resist*, a campaign to stand up for abortion rights. With support from 100 organizations and over 1,370 individuals across the country, our collective efforts proved instrumental in preventing a backslide on abortion access.



Sex-Ed

Sex-ed saves lives. It's a fact: sex-ed done right is life changing and builds communities that are healthier and safer. It is also the human right of every young person in Canada. That is why we launched our #SexEdSavesLives campaign in collaboration with advocates, teachers, students, and other leaders to build a movement for comprehensive sex-ed for all.

The State of Sex-Ed

Not all sex-ed is created equal. What are students learning and who is teaching them? What is sex-ed like in Nova Scotia versus Alberta?

To start a deeper national conversation about sexuality education, Action Canada published our *State of Sex-Ed* report. This one-of-a-kind publication analyzes the state of sex-ed across provinces and territories in Canada, featuring stories from young people speaking to their sex-ed experiences and a snapshot of the curricula in each province and territory.



Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Week

Each year to mark SRH Week, we campaign to raise awareness around sexual and reproductive health and highlight resources designed to improve community health. In February 2020, we shared the message: Sex-ed Keeps Us Healthy. The week launched with a blog post by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, Dr. Theresa Tam.

Sex-ed is important to our health and tackles the root causes of negative health outcomes. Sex-ed shapes a culture of equality where everyone can thrive free from violence and discrimination and gives us the skills to nurture healthy relationships. We talked about sex-ed and health with a podcast, blog, webinar, social media toolkit, myth-busting graphics, and more content for everyone who cares about sex-ed.



Advocacy on the Global Stage

Canadian Leadership on SRHR

In the face of global crisis and rising anti-rights attacks, Canada's leadership on SRHR must be resilient. Through the *Future Planning Initiative*, Action Canada worked with elected and unelected officials to ensure Canada's support for SRHR is feminist and rights-based—including for the most neglected areas of SRHR, like safe abortion care, adolescent SRHR, family planning, and SRHR advocacy.

HIGHLIGHTS:



SWOP Launch 2020: In collaboration with UNFPA, we held a virtual event in collaboration to launch their newest report on harmful practices



ICPD25: Action Canada headed to Kenya for a summit to commemorate 25 years since the global community recognized the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights as a development issue and push for bold commitments to SRHR funding around the world



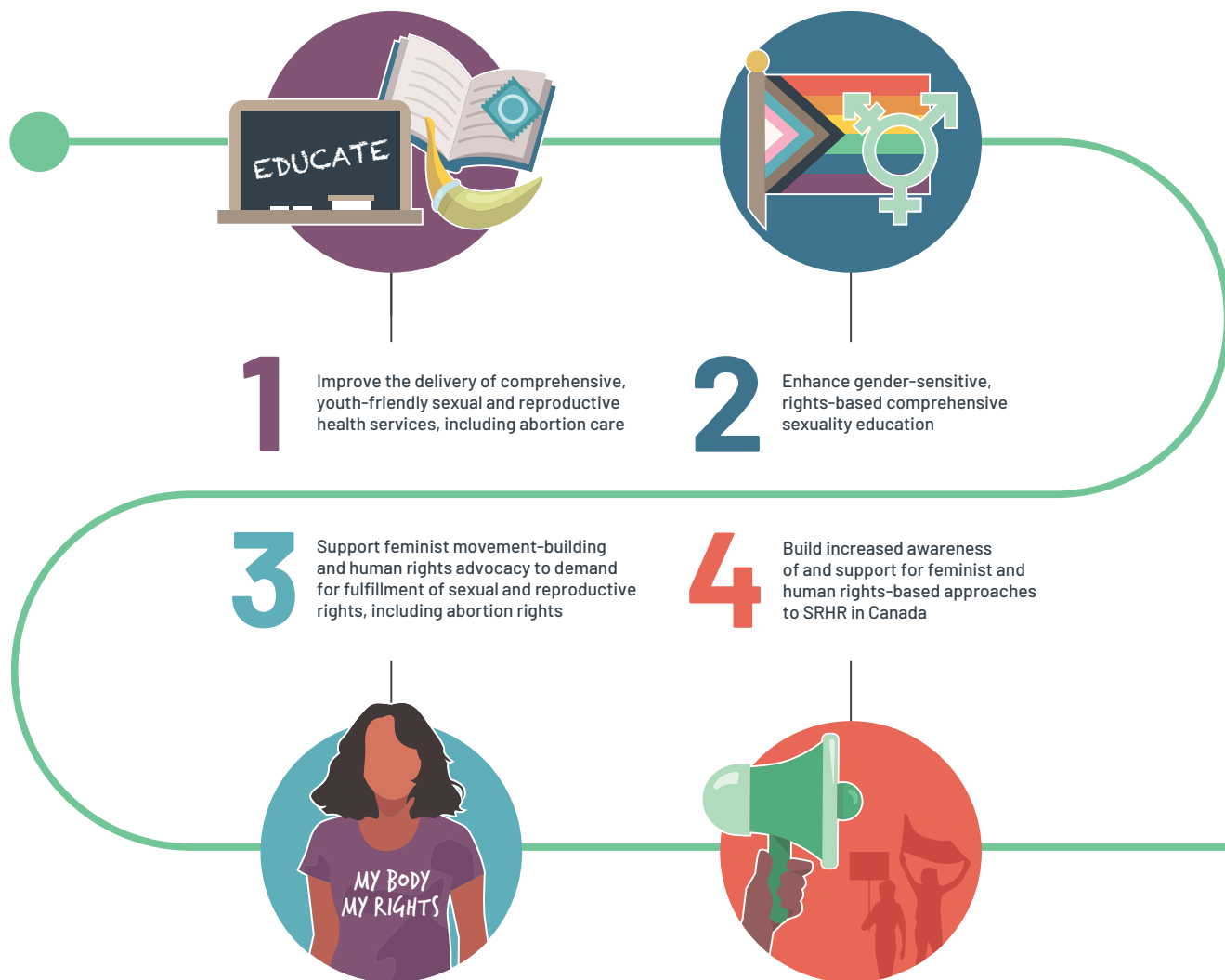
Anniversary of Canada's commitment to global SRHR: We marked the first anniversary of Canada's annual investment of \$1.4 billion in development assistance, with \$700 million per year allocated to the most neglected areas of SRHR, by calling for robust accountability to track progress



Feminist Funding: Action Canada brought together feminist activists from around the world to analyze trends in how SRHR funding and create a guiding report with recommendations for funders

Rights from the Start

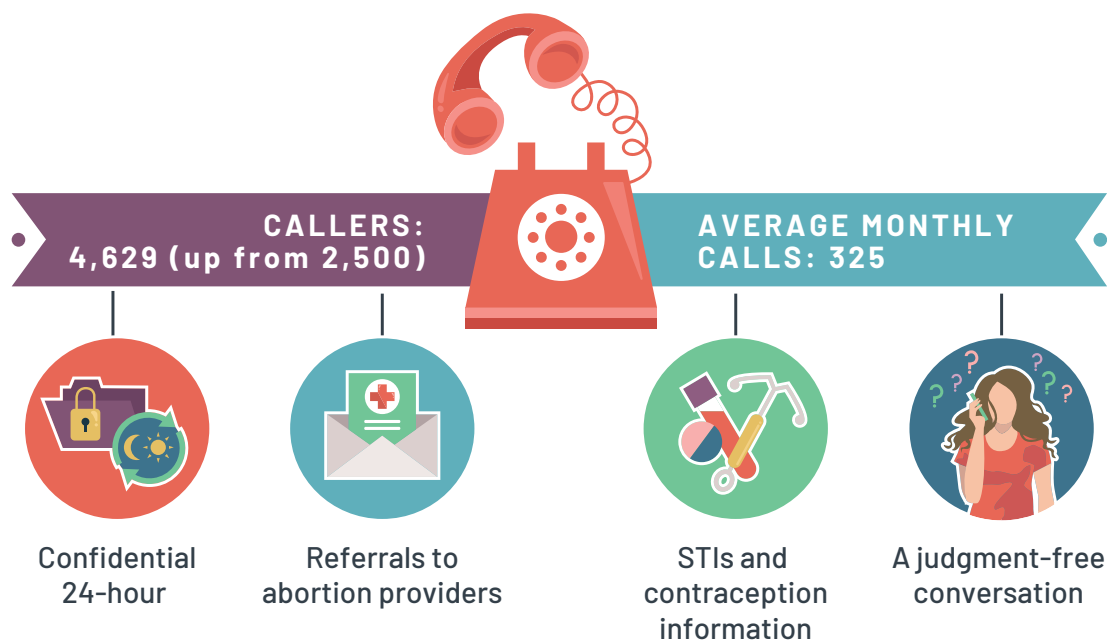
With funding from Global Affairs Canada, Action Canada launched *Rights from the Start*, a four-year project in partnership with International Planned Parenthood Federation Western Hemisphere Region and national and regional partners in four countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through cross-regional cooperation the project will:



Access Line and the Emergency Fund

Access Line

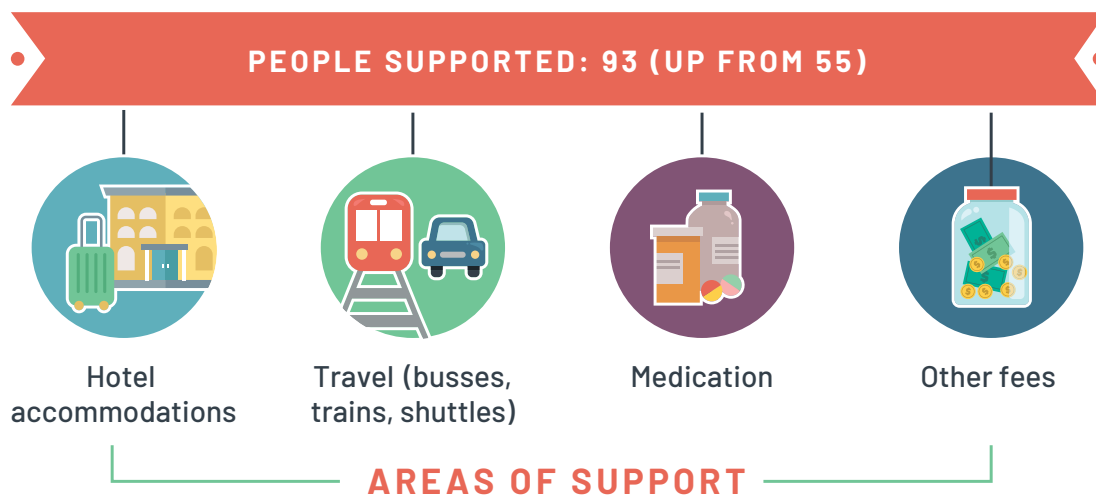
Action Canada's Access line is a confidential 24-hour countrywide toll-free number providing referrals and stigma-free information related to sexual and reproductive health to people across the country. Our staff and volunteers provide callers with referrals to abortion providers, information on where to get tested for STIs and contraception, or a judgment-free conversation to weigh their different pregnancy options. This year, we added more staff to the Line and continued to build our capacity to reach more callers. In the face of the pandemic, calls skyrocketed—with a record 573 calls in April—and cases became more complex.



We revamped our training program for volunteers to reflect the growing number of calls on STI testing, safer sex, and pandemic-related questions, deepened our partnership with the National Abortion Federation, brought on six new volunteers, and moved to a new online phone service.

Norma Scarborough Emergency Fund

Over 70% of Access Line callers who are looking to get an abortion face major barriers, like travel costs. These barriers are even greater for people who lack provincial health coverage, live in poverty, or have uncertain immigration status. The 100% donor-funded Emergency Fund lets us help get the care they need by covering transportation, medication, accommodation, and other related costs.



Action Canada gives a special thank you to Bev Chernos for her generous support that grew our capacity on the Access Line and made sure people in Canada had access to accurate sexual health information and referral during the pandemic.

Campaign: Get Tested Once a Year

Action Canada's Get Tested Once a Year campaign, generously funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, continued with a new campaign growing awareness of STI testing for racialized young people in the Greater Toronto Area. Our ads about where, how, and why to get tested were seen over 14 million times, reaching 242,559 people on Instagram and Facebook, 474,342 on YouTube, and 586,596 on Snapchat. Young people who saw the campaign were more likely to hold a positive attitude toward STI testing, with newcomer youth even more likely.

Sexual Rights Initiative

The Sexual Rights Initiative (SRI) is a coalition of national and regional organizations based in Canada, Poland, India, Egypt, Argentina, and South Africa that work together to advance human rights related to sexuality at the United Nations. Action Canada holds the Secretariat, working with Akahatá, the Coalition of African Lesbians, CREA, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, and the Federation for Women and Family Planning (Poland). The SRI team, based out of Geneva:

- ✓ Published *Rituals and Resistance: Sexual Rights in the Second Cycle of the UPR*, the newest report on SRHR and the UPR process
- ✓ Participated in the 42nd, 43rd, and 44th Human Rights Council sessions and the 34th and 35th sessions of the Universal Periodic Review
- ✓ Updated and managed two sexual rights and policy databases to assist advocates, policymakers, UN agencies, and diplomats in their sexual and reproductive health and rights advocacy at national and international levels
- ✓ Continued advocacy for the rights to bodily autonomy and comprehensive sexuality education at the international level
- ✓ Mobilized civil society support for safe abortion everywhere and gave the Joint Civil Society Statement on International Safe Abortion Day in Geneva on behalf of 353 organizations and 534 individuals

This past year, the SRI also supported Action Canada in preparing for Canada's review before the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights. Both reports highlight areas where the Government of Canada is failing to meet its obligations to meet the human rights of people in Canada to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health across provinces and territories.



Reproductive justice is achieved when all people are able to enjoy their right to bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive self-determination.



Awards + Scholarships

Bentley Awards

The Bentley Awards of Excellence help grow sexual health innovation in Canada with an annual monetary prize to leaders in the field through the generous support of sexual health champions, Helen and Fred Bentley. Each year, this legacy gift allows us to recognize the creative, ground-breaking programs from groups across the country.



SHORE Centre

SHORE Centre's Mother Daughter Health Program provides 6- to 8-week workshops on healthy relationships, sexual health, birth control, safer sex, gender, mental health, and much more to build trust and deeper communication between newcomer mothers and daughters.



Planned Parenthood Newfoundland and Labrador

The OUT In The Woods camp gives 2SLGBTQI+ youth with an opportunity to connect and develop strong support networks through an inventive program based on harm reduction and trauma-informed learning.



Getting Our Message Out

Traditional Media

MEDIA COVERAGE:



137 Articles



6 TV and Radio appearances



4 Op-eds

FEATURED IN:

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

TORONTO STAR



CBC Radio-Canada



DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA:



Facebook:

4,873,886 impressions,
3,319,293 people reached



Instagram:

94,966 impressions,
73,286 people reached



Twitter:

912,500 impressions



Website Visitors:

236,498

SNAPSHOT: What is SRHR?

Sexual and reproductive health and rights impact all aspects of our lives. It's about the decision about your body, but it's also about how we treat each other, see each other, and respect each other, and how we work towards realizing human rights for all. We launched our newest video to connect SRHR to everyday experiences for over 2,000 viewers.



Fundraising and Finance

Our Supporters

Institutional Donors

Our partnerships with institutions across Canada and the world make our critical work on sexual health and rights possible. Through our STI testing campaign, generously funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, we have reached millions of young people in Canada with evidence-based sexual health information and resources. We are also grateful to Global Affairs Canada for funding our new Rights from the Start project.



Global Affairs
Canada

Affaires mondiales
Canada



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

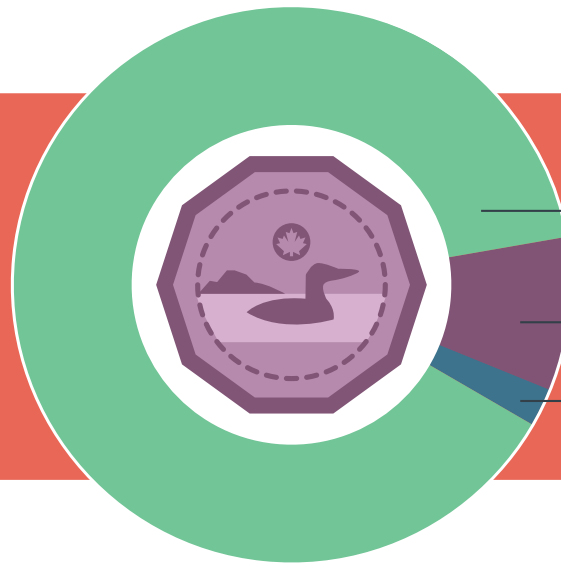
Individual Donors

From coast-to-coast-to-coast, our donors are part of a global, growing movement. From supporting our direct work through the Access Line to giving us the unique resources to fight for systemic change, the generosity of Action Canada donors makes our work possible every day.

Major and Legacy Donors

Legacy and major donors support our most needed areas of work. Amplifying a global movement, Action Canada's legacy and major donors power our shared vision of a world where every person controls their sexuality, reproduction, gender, and health, where every choice is based on consent, and where all people can lead healthier, happier lives.

**FOR
EVERY
DOLLAR
YOU
GIVE**



Expenses (\$)

- Charitable Activities (89¢)
- Management (9¢)
- Fundraising Activities (2¢)

Our Financials

Revenues (\$)	
Global Program Grants	\$ 1,834,208
Domestic Program Grants	\$ 1,096,991
Donations to Domestic Health & Policy Programs	\$ 481,698
Other Income	\$ 76,768
Scholarships and Awards	\$ 16,600
Total	\$ 3,506,265

Expenses (\$)	
Charitable Activities	\$ 3,080,872
Management	\$ 318,344
Fundraising Activities	\$ 77,776
Total	\$ 3,476,992





Who We Are

Board of Directors

Cathy Steven, **Chair**

Dr. Pierre M. LaRamée, **Vice-Chair**

Prof. Jennie Abell, **Treasurer**

Meena Peruvemba

Julie Delahanty

Shalini Konanur

Dr. Roopan Gill

Gabrielle Bouchard

Lynne Raskin

Topaza Yu

Candice Lys

Volunteers

Much of our work would not be possible without the commitment of our volunteers—including our 24-hour, 7-days a week Access Line, which provides confidential, judgment-free support to people across the country.

Jess Danforth

Nimerta Dhami

Marla James

Heather Jones

Lyne Jrade

Gillian Kyle

Coral Maloney

Liz Mochrie

Amanda Moss

Angelique Patton

Laura Salamanca

Jo Scofield

Kinneret Sheetreet

Robyn Schwarz

Julie Vautour

Krysta Williams

Staff

The team is made up of passionate individuals with a diversity of experience working on sexual health and rights across issues, movements, and networks at the local, national, and international levels. It is their hard work and dedication that drive each and every one of Action Canada's many accomplishments.

Sandeep Prasad,
Executive Director

Tara Henderson,
Director of Fundraising

Rosario Castro,
**Office Coordinator and
Fundraising Assistant**

Lesley Hoyles,
Director of Operations

Merry Sun,
Chief Finance Officer

Wisliana Jean-Francois,
Finance Officer

Wen Qian,
Finance Assistant

Ani Colekessian,
**Director of Communications
(Leave)**

Laura Neidhart,
**Director of Communications
& Government Relations
(Interim)**

Kathryn Carruthers,
Web and IT Coordinator

Lorna Mungur,
**Communications and
Social Marketing Officer**

Frédérique Chabot,
**Director of Health Promotion/
Acting Executive Director**

Britt Neron,
Health Promotion Officer

Makeda Zook,
**Health Promotion and
Education Officer**

Sarah Kennell,
**Director of Government
Relations (Leave)**

Darrah Teitel,
**Campaigns Officer
(Leave)**

Marian Nur,
**Campaigns Officer
(Interim)**

Sarah Hedges-Chou,
Development Policy Officer

Meghan Doherty,
**Director of Global Policy and
Advocacy**

Diana El Richani,
**Institutional Grants
Coordinator**

Daniela Marin Platero,
**Project Coordinator,
Rights from the Start**

Carrie Shelver,
Director, Geneva Office

Pooja Badarinath,
**SRI Advocacy Advisor,
Special Procedures and
Knowledge Translation**

Juan S. Jaime P.,
**SRI Advocacy Advisor,
Treaty Monitoring Bodies**

Emeline Dupuis,
SRI Program Assistant

actioncanadashr.org



**Action Canada
for Sexual Health & Rights**

