



The Most Vulnerable

Part 1: Government of Canada

Taking an intersectional approach to upholding refugee rights in policy-making.

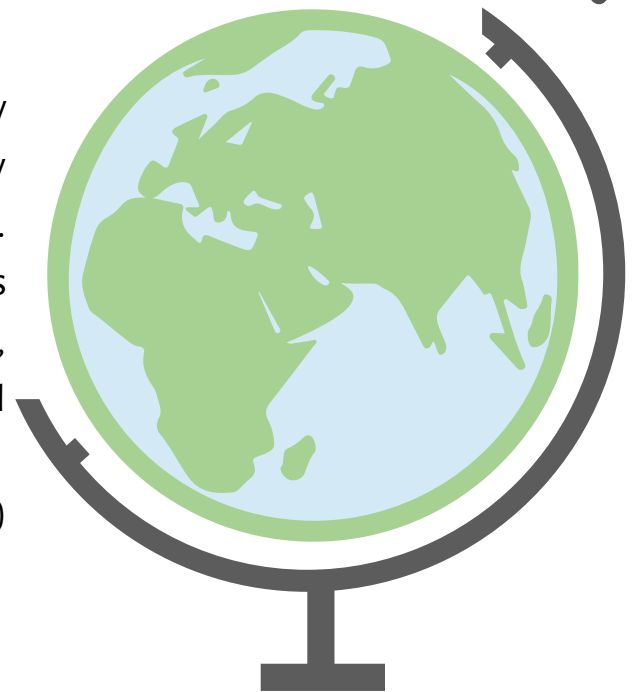
In 1995 the [Government of Canada](#) introduced a gender-based analysis approach aimed at furthering gender equality. This concept has been expanded into the government's more widely known [GBA+](#) initiative.

[GBA+](#) serves as an analytical process in recognition that policies have differential effects on people based on their sex. The 'plus' element of this analysis is utilized to indicate a level of intersectionality. Specifically, it is meant to showcase that experiences vary beyond just biological sex. This is where factors including, but not limited to, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and disability come into play.

(Source: [Status of Women Canada](#))

There are other occasions where intersectionality appears to be on the radar as well, particularly through Canada's role as an international ally. Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy is aimed at targeting women and girls, the poorest, and the most vulnerable as a response to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

(Source: [Global Affairs Canada](#))



When it comes to domestic policy, there are instances where [GBA+](#) has successfully resulted in an intersectional approach to policy. In 2018, [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#) launched the [Visible Minority Newcomer Women \(VMNW\)](#) pilot program. This initiative was developed to address barriers faced by racialized, newcomer women when entering the labour market, including discrimination based on both race and gender.

(Source: [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#))

It is clear that the government can take active steps to address inequity by way of an **intersectional approach** to **policy-making**. As such, it is **imperative** that such **methods of analysis** are **entrenched** within government departments and **routinely** used as a **consistent** part of **policy development**.

Policies must be **developed** in **conjunction** with the **representation** and **consultation** of **diverse peoples** whose **lived experiences** provide immense **value** through **well-informed decision making**.

Innovative policies and programming ought to be **continually developed** to **advance** the needs of **the most vulnerable**. **Targeted** policy-making that supports the **intersectional** lives of refugees is still desperately needed. Government must step up to ensure that the rights of all refugees are regularly being upheld.

Recommendations



1

Treat intersectionality as a non-negotiable, consistent, and imperative piece of gender-based analysis. Focusing on biological sex while relegating intersectionality to the all-compassing “plus” serves to prioritize equality only for cis-het, able-bodied, white women. Ensuring an intersectional approach is entrenched into policy-making rather than optional is important in the specific case of refugees in Canada. These are predominantly racialized individuals and often womxn and girls with complex identities fleeing dangerous circumstances that require specific support initiatives.



2

Intersectionality must be comprehensive and intertwined throughout the policy development process. It is not enough to perform a post-policy analysis. While there is value in collecting evidence-based data, it becomes useless when there are no efforts to create tangible policy changes based on those analytical results. The collection of this data becomes risky and problematic when it has the potential to be used against persecuted communities. In advocating for meaningful change, there needs to be a human rights-based approach from governments that protects the vulnerable from being exploited.



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Read the full report: "[The Most Vulnerable](#)"

Available at: cpj.ca/most-vulnerable

Interested in meeting with [CPJ](#) about refugee rights issues?

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