

Canadian girls experience sexism early and often according to new report by Girl Guides of Canada

Experiences with sexism occur most frequently while playing sports and online

Toronto, October 24, 2018 – Although an overwhelming majority of teens in Canada believe that men and women should be treated equally in all areas based on their competency and not their gender (98 per cent of girls; 95 per cent of boys), a new nationwide survey of girls and boys aged 12-17 commissioned by [Girl Guides of Canada](http://www.girlguides.ca) (GGC) reveals a very different picture, particularly for girls. The survey, conducted by Ipsos in September 2018 on behalf of GGC, asked key questions about attitudes and behaviours related to gender inequality, sexism and feminism. To read the full report, go to www.girlguides.ca/LetGirlsGuide.

Girls are two times more likely than boys to say they've experienced sexism (43 per cent vs. 21 per cent) and are significantly more likely to say that gender inequality has impacted their lives (35 per cent vs. 20 per cent). Further, their experiences with inequality start early: teens report noticing gender inequality in their lives for the first time at around 11 years of age on average, with more than half of girls (54%) saying they first noticed it between the ages of 10 and 13.

Young Canadians recognize that gender inequality is still a reality in 2018; 69 per cent of girls in Canada said they believe there is currently gender inequality in terms of social, political and/or economic rights in Canada. Boys were significantly less likely than girls to agree, but still more than half (60 per cent) said they believe that there is currently inequality between boys/men and girls/women.

"The results of the survey are sobering but not surprising," said Jill Zelmanovits, CEO of Girl Guides of Canada. "The impact of gender inequality on girls and women is real and it's significant. We know from previous studies that girls who expect to be treated unequally can be dissuaded from pursuing their passions. The good news is by giving girls the space to have these tough conversations, we can give them the tools to grow their confidence and reach their full potential."

On the Field and Online

While girls are more likely than boys to say they have been treated unequally or unfairly because of their gender overall (35 per cent for girls vs. 21 per cent for boys), these feelings of inequality are particularly pronounced in two key areas: on the sports field and online. One quarter (27 per cent) of girls say they're treated worse than boys in sports or gym class, while 15 per cent of boys say they're treated better. One quarter of girls (24 per cent) also say they're treated worse than boys on the internet, including over social media, while 14 per cent of boys say they're treated better online.

The study also found that stereotypes about gender persist. Thirty-one per cent of boys and 18 per cent of girls said they believe that boys are more capable than girls in activities like learning math and science, playing sports and taking on leadership roles.

“I think it was early elementary when I was told that I could not be as good at math as the boys were and I was singled out for being too different and not girly enough,” said Emily V. of the Girl Guides of Canada National Youth Council.

Gender inequality also shows up for girls in the workplace during adolescence. In a related Ipsos study conducted on behalf of Girl Guides looking at summer employment experiences for Canadian boys and girls between 12 and 18 years of age, boys earned \$3.00 per hour more, on average, than girls for full-time work.

Positive Signs

While the survey showed that there is work to be done to fully realize gender equality between girls and boys in Canada, it also demonstrates positive trends. Most teens support gender equality in principle and recognize that inequality currently exists between girls and boys. A majority of both girls and boys (81 per cent and 76 per cent, respectively) recognize the importance of giving girls access to spaces dedicated to girls and women.

When it comes to sexual harassment and violence, 80 per cent of girls and 71 per cent of boys believe the #MeToo movement is a positive development and there was near-unanimous approval for teaching consent in the classroom: 92 per cent of girls and 93 per cent of boys agree that it is important for students to learn about consent in school.

“Gender inequality is deeply unfair, and girls feel it,” said Zelmanovits. “And they don’t just feel gender inequality when they are in university or in their professional career; this study shows us how early it starts to affect girls in Canada. As members of society, it is our job to try and fix that. If you are a parent or teacher or coach, or if you have a young person in your life, you need to listen to their experiences. You need to be aware of how you speak and realize that what you say and do matters to young people. Consider if you are part of the reason that one in three boys, and two in ten girls, think that boys are more capable than girls in a variety of activities.”

About Girl Guides of Canada

[Girl Guides of Canada–Guides du Canada](#) (GGC) empowers every girl in Guiding to discover herself and be everything she wants to be. In Guiding, girls from 5-17 meet with girls their own age in a safe, inclusive space to explore what matters to them. With programming options ranging from innovative STEM activities to outdoor adventures and discussions on mental health and healthy relationships, girls in Guiding can customize their experience to dive into the topics relevant to them. GGC is where girls take the lead, put their ideas into action and jump into awesome activities – all with the support of engaged Guiders who are committed to positively impacting their lives. Guiding is all about supporting girls as they take on challenges and grab hold of every opportunity that comes their way.

About the Survey

The survey was commissioned by Girl Guides of Canada through Ipsos as an online poll of 1,203 girls and boys in Canada aged 12-18 between September 5 and 17, 2018. Participants were able to self-identify as girls or boys. Weighting was employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the population of girls and boys aged 12-18 according to the most recent Census data. A sample of this size yields a margin of error of ± 3.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error will be larger for data that is based on sub-groups of the total sample.



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