

Project Name: Building the Equality Fund Story

Time Frame: Phase 1 - November 2020 - October 2021

Deadline for Proposals: November 3, 2020

BACKGROUND

This is a historic moment in the global fight for equality. Women's organizations and movements in Canada and around the world are on the frontlines of change—holding the line, demanding equality and driving transformation. The opportunity has never been greater to boldly invest in their brave work to build a more equal world together.

The **Equality Fund** is a groundbreaking collaboration that will deliver new momentum for women's movements across the globe. The Equality Fund will drive the cultural, economic and political changes required to make global gender equality a reality. We will shift power and resources to local organizations and leaders on the frontlines of building and sustaining a more gender equal world. We will mobilize philanthropic and investment capital, in Canada and beyond, and build a brighter, more equitable future for everyone, everywhere. The Equality Fund is made possible in partnership with the Government of Canada.

Over the past year, the Equality Fund has been committed to the careful, behind-the-scenes work of creating a community for uncommon partners to align around one common purpose. From women's funds to financial institutions to venture capital firms to community foundations, these partners bring unprecedented expertise, diversity, and collaboration to a single goal: designing and building the largest self-sustaining fund for women in the world.

CONTEXT AND OPPORTUNITY

At the Equality Fund, our core purpose is to unlock new capital in order to unleash the full power of feminist movements worldwide. By challenging and transforming traditional approaches to development, philanthropy, and investing simultaneously, we are creating a new model for sustainable investment in gender justice organizations for lifetimes to come.

The more audiences who understand our model, the more support and momentum we will bring to feminist movements everywhere. In every moment, but especially in this one, it is imperative that we reach far beyond familiar allies, language, and networks to reach new audiences who are interested in supporting women's rights but need a compelling and comprehensible entry point to join us. It is time to translate the inherent promise--and complexity--of our model into a simple yet powerful invitation that meets other funders and influencers where they are.

As we help audiences understand *what* the Equality Fund is doing to radically shift power and resources to intersectional feminist movements, we simultaneously reinforce *why* these movements are essential to our shared future and illuminate *how* others can join us in this urgent work. The result can bring new funders, allies, partners, and momentum not only to the Equality Fund, but to our collective table for years to come.

Now, just as the wider world is witness to the power of feminist movements, our own work is quickly bearing fruit, with a wide array of upcoming milestones and key announcements—as well as growing set of partner spokespeople—to anchor a meaningful and powerful communications strategy.

In order to fully utilize these assets and opportunities moving forward, **we must first build a baseline understanding of who we are and how our model works.** Even as we plan for tailored outreach to audiences as varied as venture capital firms and grassroots activists, **we must first ensure that all of our audiences can explain and advocate for our model in plain, powerful, and common language that everyone can understand.**

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The priority objective of this work is to create a suite of core tools that enable us—and our many partners and allies—to clearly introduce and communicate the Equality Fund model across diverse audiences.

Our model is new, and we need to invest time and focused effort to clarify exactly what our model does, what fundamental problem we are solving for, how we are different from others, and how it all works in a clear and compelling way.

It is not enough to call for more resources, or even to champion feminist movements generally, although both will be essential. We also need to create informed advocates for the Equality Fund model itself: a radical new approach that can exponentially expand resources—and power—for feminist movements in a way that has been impossible in the past. With this in mind, our strategy will always seek to advance two goals simultaneously:

- Elevate the power and promise of feminist movements as the changemakers we need to address the most pressing problems of our time, and spotlight the barriers standing in their way.
- Increase understanding of and support for the Equality Fund model among diverse audiences as a new way to break through these barriers and ensure feminist movements can access the power and resources they deserve to build the world we need.

This is the two-part story—capturing both the problem and the solution—that we want to tell consistently and strategically over the next year, aligning and positioning our organizational milestones, announcements, voices, and tools in service of one clear and comprehensible narrative for change.

AUDIENCES

As a first step to realizing the potential of our model, we believe it is essential for funders, donors, investors, and idea shapers to more fully understand who we are, what we do, and how to join us. We must communicate with multiple audiences across philanthropic, investment, and social justice spheres—and targeted, industry-specific communications materials will be essential in this effort. As such, the first phase of our communications effort will prioritize:

- Thought leaders, influencers and funders in philanthropy, global development, women’s rights, policy, finance and investment.
- In all cases, efforts to target “reach” segments of these audiences will be essential: those who hold a growing interest in feminist movements but lack familiarity with our field, our common language, and common assumptions.

SCOPE OF WORK

We seek a communications agency that combines world-class skills, knowledge of human rights movements, a nuanced analysis of power, and an ability to translate feminist frameworks and language into accessible yet powerful messaging for wider audiences.

We are looking for a partner who can play a critical translation function—one that excels at simplifying messaging and creating compelling values-driven content paired with smart and tailored execution. The firm will work alongside us in a staggered way, allowing us a chance to assess progress and ensure our communications goals are being met.

As outlined below, the first phase of our effort will focus on educating our audiences about our model, how it works and how to join. Once that foundation is in place, we will consider a second phase of engagement.

PHASE ONE

- Develop clear, compelling, widely accessible, and powerful language to unpack and explain our model, how it works, and its promise for the future.
- Test this language with key stakeholders to ensure it works across industries and audiences as a baseline to build core understanding of our model, and to build from in the future.
- Utilizing this language, produce compelling collateral products for use by the Equality Fund, its partners, and allies, including:
 - A 3-4 minute video explainer
 - Visual model/infographic
 - A two-page overview
 - Ensure consistency across EF website and social media platforms
 - More detailed, industry-specific content tailored to philanthropy, individual donors, activism and investment
 - Case study and examples of impact
 - Presentation deck

**We are open to creative and strategic feedback on this list and to suggestions for collateral products that can help meet our objectives.*
- Capture and share the voices of our collaborative partners through compelling video, in order to demonstrate the rising tide of new voices committed to financing feminist futures, especially from sectors that are newer to these movements. Create a chorus of new voices speaking to the potential of the EF model.

TIMELINE

Request for proposal issuance	October 13, 2020
Deadline to submit written questions to EF	October 16, 2020
Responses to written questions from EF	October 20, 2020
Deadline to submit Proposal to EF	November 3, 2020
Interviews with shortlisted firms	November 9-13, 2020
Selection of bidder / notification to unsuccessful bidders	November 18, 2020
Contract award	November 20, 2020
Kickoff, stakeholder interviews	November 2020
Strategy development, testing and refinement	December 2020 - January 2021
Strategy execution commences, including rolling product development	January 2021 - March 2021

BUDGET

The budget for the first phase of this effort must not exceed \$150,000 CAD exclusive of HST. At the end of phase one, we will assess progress and refine next steps toward a second phase.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The objective of this Request for Proposal is to identify a communications team that will provide the best overall value to Equality Fund. While price is a significant factor, other criteria will form the basis of our award decision, as more fully described below.

1. Responsiveness to the requirements set forth in this Request for Proposal.
2. Relevant past performance and experience of the firm or individual consultant.
3. Samples of work or references of two previous clients for whom similar work was performed.
4. Cost, including an assessment of level of effort.
5. Identification of the consultant(s) who will be engaged on the project and a short bio for each outlining their experience in this field.
6. Demonstration of capacity to produce communications products in French.

Voluntary Disclosure: The Equality Fund implements gender-responsive procurement practices, actively seeking to maximize support for women's organizations and suppliers working to advance gender equality. We believe that expanding and diversifying our pool of suppliers is a powerful tool to build a more competitive and robust supplier base. The ultimate objective of our feminist approach to procurement is to ensure that EF is able to thoughtfully consider whether it has, or can find, suppliers who are aligned with the mission of advancing gender equality, while at the same time meeting the need for timely delivery of high-quality goods and services at competitive prices. We believe that it is possible to seek value-alignment with our suppliers, as well as our investments and programming.

We invite respondents to provide information which will allow us to assess if your organization is mission-aligned to ours. This relates to both internal structure, practices and policies, as well as how you operate in the world. Internal examples include policies and practices related to diversity, equity and inclusion; the proportion of the leadership team and/or staff who are women, Indigenous, LGBTIQ, visible minority and/or disabled; transparency and commitment to equal pay; and the use of flexible work arrangements. External examples include careful consideration of how your business practices (including the services you provide or the goods you produce) can and do support the rights of women, girls, and LGBTQI people and a more equitable world. Additional elements include positive role models in advertising/promotions materials, joint work with equality-seeking women's organizations, advocacy initiatives, and other impact-oriented initiatives.

We encourage all respondents to share information on mission alignment to gender equality. Responses do not need to be lengthy, but we appreciate any information you choose to share.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should be 10 pages or less, submitted electronically in PDF format to Mathura Karunanithy at mkarunanithy@equalityfund.ca. Questions are welcome and must be submitted to Mathura Karunanithy no later than October 16, 2020. Written responses will be provided within 24 hours.