



THE HOSTED BY Equality fund  
**CONVERSATION:**  
**EMERGENCE**

# Equality fund

BY FEMINISTS, FOR FEMINISTS

**When we move together,  
 we move the world.**

This collective promise fuels every aspect of our work at the Equality Fund, where changemakers from every sector are coming together shift power and resources to feminist movements across the Global South and beyond.

All around the globe, one thing is very clear: the status quo isn't working. So we're betting on a new strategy that liberates our movements from unsustainable models of the past, and accelerates the revolutionary power of women, girls, and trans people everywhere.

Feminist philanthropy is the beating heart in the middle of it all. Intersectional and global, it's a chance to activate our deepest feminist values, work in solidarity with our movements, and challenge business as usual. This is philanthropy with a resolutely feminist lens, and it's key to activating our collective promise.

**Are you ready to move?**

TAKING OFF: THE DAY'S AGENDA	
8:30 – 8:50 AM	Registration
8:50 – 9:00 AM	Our Relations to This Land
9:00 – 9:15 AM	Welcome + Gratitude
9:15 – 9:55 AM	Grounding Community
9:55 – 11:00 PM	Workshop: Finding Your North Star
11:00 – 11:15 PM	Break
11:15 – 12:30 PM	Fireside Chat: Activating the Power of Feminist Philanthropy
12:30 – 1:30 PM	Lunch
1:30 – 2:15 PM	Panel Discussion: When Purpose Drives Policy
2:45 – 3:00 PM	Closing

**OUR FEMINIST FUNDING RESTS ON**

 GENDER-LENS INVESTING	 HIGH-TRUST GLOBAL GRANTMAKING	 POLICY ADVOCACY	 BOLD PHILANTHROPY
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# WORKSHOP: FINDING YOUR NORTH STAR

When you think about your philanthropy, what do you hold sacred? What led you here today—and what will keep you showing up tomorrow? Values are at the core of everything we do, and the guide for everything that's to come. So we start here: a conversation and open space to explore the values that drive and define us. It's that pull in our conscience, the whisper behind our work, the dream of a better world that drives and sustains us. This is a chance to look inside ourselves and reconnect with what brings us here. In the process, we will also strengthen our bonds with each other. When we give voice to our values, we gain new perspectives and connect even more deeply for the journey ahead. We make it possible to take action, together, to bring our values to life. We begin to emerge.



**Roz Lee**  
VICE PRESIDENT, PHILANTHROPY, EQUALITY FUND

Roz has dedicated her life to advancing racial, gender, economic and LGBTQ justice through community organizing, advocacy, political education, and social justice philanthropy. Prior to joining the Equality Fund, she worked at the Ms. Foundation for Women, where she led efforts to support gender and racial justice led by and for women and girls of color, including Indigenous and transgender women and girls. As Director of Social Justice Initiatives at the Arcus Foundation, she created innovative global and national philanthropic initiatives at the intersection of race, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity. Roz is the first-ever Professor of Practice at the Alice Paul Center/Gender Studies and Women's Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania. Roz lives with her spouse and daughter in Harlem, New York.



## FIRESIDE CHAT: ACTIVATING THE POWER OF FEMINIST PHILANTHROPY

Grounded in our values, we will take the discussion deeper, asking how our philanthropy can bring those values to powerful life. We'll learn how philanthropy of the past has often fallen short of its promise to contribute to lasting change. And we will uncover how a focus on justice lights a different way forward—toward reparative giving, balance, and healing—and asks each of us to play an active role. This conversation is about challenging our thinking, confronting our own biases, and imagining new possibilities, so that a new kind of philanthropy might break through as a result.

When we activate the promise of feminist philanthropy, a whole new set of opportunities emerge. The chance not simply to shift resources, but to shift power. To understand—and live—the connections between local, national, and global work in a new way. To move with solidarity and authentic intention and partnership. To make the leap from charity to justice. In this space, vulnerability brings new strength and purpose, and the possibility for true transformation comes into focus.



**Mebrat Beyene**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WISH DROP-IN CENTRE SOCIETY + BOARD CO-CHAIR, EQUALITY FUND

Mebrat is an Eritrean, born in Ethiopia and raised in Montreal. She is a mother, community developer, teacher, and singer. In 2020, Mebrat was awarded the YWCA Women of Distinction Award in the Non-Profit category. As Executive Director of WISH and co-chair of Living in Community, Mebrat supports women and initiatives related to the health and safety of women engaged in street-based sex work. In summer of 2022, Mebrat was appointed to the Province of BC's Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee. Mebrat has worked closely with women and women-serving organizations as a Programs Officer with Status of Women Canada, and served as Executive Director of PeerNetBC. Mebrat is Board Co-Chair of the Equality Fund.



**Kris Archie**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE CIRCLE ON PHILANTHROPY (THE CIRCLE)

Kris is a Secwepemc and Seme7 woman from Ts'qescen, a mother, aunty and engaged community member. Kris is passionate about heart-based community work and facilitating positive change. In all of her roles, Kris works to transform philanthropy and contribute to positive change by creating spaces of shared learning, relationship-building and centering Indigenous wisdom. She is a PLACES Fellow Alum of 2015 with The Funders Network, a board member with Environment Funders Canada and JUMP! Canada and a newly appointed Dialogue Fellow with Simon Fraser University focused on Indigenous ways of knowing and Philanthropy.

# PANEL DISCUSSION: WHEN PURPOSE DRIVES POLICY

Shaping government policy means shaping the future. Whether international or hyperlocal, public policies move resources, set rules, and create opportunities that make dramatic differences in our lives and communities. As a community of changemakers committed to feminist futures, policy advocacy is one of the most potent levers we have to build the world we need. It's where government and philanthropy intersect, and understanding how we can work together is key to unlocking the potential for both.

In this session, we will be joined by the Honourable Minister Harjit S. Sajjan, Canadian Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada. The panel discussion will be guided by Equality Fund Co-Chair, Jess Tomlin, and will include Lisa Wolverton, President of The Philanthropy Workshop Canada, and Manisha Mehta, Program Director for the Women's Rights Program at Wellspring Philanthropic Fund. Alongside Minister Sajjan, they will explore how philanthropic institutions and governments can better work together to support feminist movements and advance feminist change around the world. Together, we will explore the role of private philanthropy in Canada—which has often focused domestically—in supporting women's rights globally. And we will uncover how funders might work even with governments to unleash and sustain the change we believe in, from testing new approaches, expanding outdated notions of risk, and flexing our collective voices.

## ABOUT THE CONVERSATION: EMERGENCE

### WHEN TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO PHILANTHROPY REINFORCE INEQUALITY & KEEP POWER AT THE TOP: WE MOVE.

*The Conversation: Emergence* is one of the Equality Fund's signature programs connecting philanthropists worldwide in a shared commitment to advancing gender equality.

It is rooted in the Equality Fund's core belief that philanthropy is about solidarity and shared purpose: an opportunity for all of us to connect to the deepest part of our personal legacies and actively promote a more just world for everyone.

With work this urgent, everyone has a critical role to play.

**MOVE WITH US.**



## The Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan

**MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
& MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PACIFIC  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF CANADA**

The Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan was first elected as Member of Parliament for Vancouver South in 2015. He served as Minister of National Defence from 2015 to 2021. Minister Sajjan immigrated to Canada from India with his family when he was five years old. He grew up in South Vancouver and benefitted from everything the area's diverse and culturally rich community has to offer. Minister Sajjan has made serving others a cornerstone of his life. He is a former detective with the Vancouver Police Department, a former Lieutenant Colonel with the British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own), and a long-time advocate for youth education and mentorship programs. For 11 years, Minister Sajjan was a member of the Vancouver Police Department, based primarily in South Vancouver. He completed his career as a detective with the gang crime unit. As a member of the British Columbia Regiment, he participated in four operational deployments— one to Bosnia and three to Afghanistan. Minister Sajjan has lived in Vancouver for many years with his wife and two children.



## Jess Tomlin

**CO-CEO, EQUALITY FUND**

In her role as Co-CEO at the Equality Fund, Jess leads an effort to resource women's rights organizations around the world working to change systems, shift power and dismantle barriers. Jess has worked in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Asia for a range of actors including the UN and the World Bank. Prior to her role with the Equality Fund, Jess led the re-creation of the MATCH International Women's Fund— Canada's only global fund for women. Jess was named by the Stevie Awards as 2017's Most Innovative Woman of the Year and is a recipient of the Women of Influence award in 2020.



## Manisha Mehta

**PROGRAM DIRECTOR FOR THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS  
PROGRAM, WELLSPRING PHILANTHROPIC FUND**

In Manisha's current role at Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, she oversees programming focused on advancing gender justice, including supporting feminist movements and funding efforts to end gender-based violence and advance reproductive equity and economic justice. She has over 20 years of senior leadership experience in the social justice field, especially in gender justice. Before joining Wellspring in September 2009, Manisha was the Gender Team Leader at EngenderHealth, an international reproductive health organization. She has also consulted for the Open Society Institute, and was an Associate Professor at the New School for Social Research for several years. A native of Kenya, Manisha has a BA in Economics and Political Science from the University of Texas and a Master of International Affairs from Columbia University.



## Lisa Wolverton

**PRESIDENT, THE PHILANTHROPY WORKSHOP CANADA**

Lisa is one of three owners of the Pacific Investment Corporation, a family-owned real estate holdings and investment company. In addition to several governance roles in the family business, she leads the family foundation as President. The Wolverton Foundation is a Vancouver-based, private family foundation dedicated to elevating exposure to the arts and facilitating artistic programs for those children who would otherwise be excluded from these opportunities. It has facilitated granting with its longtime grantee partner, The Sarah McLachlan School of Music, by providing a permanent home for the school in East Vancouver for over ten years. In addition to the family philanthropy, Lisa is an active philanthropist and impact investor. She also served on the Board of Directors of UNICEF Canada for six years and the Board of Director of Family Services of the North Shore. She is a former member of the President's Council of the International Crisis Group, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing and resolving deadly conflict. She was also a mentor for the Loran Scholarship Foundation of Canada and currently sits on the Council of Advocates for the Freedom Fund, a UK trust that combats modern slavery.

**LET'S  
CONNECT**



**Roz Lee**  
VICE PRESIDENT,  
PHILANTHROPY  
rlee@equalityfund.ca  
917 359 1396



**Vidya Nair**  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT  
vnair@equalityfund.ca  
647 261 1471



**Erin Campeau**  
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER  
ecampeau@equalityfund.ca  
437 922 4616