

BACKGROUNDER

Women's Voice and Leadership

In June 2017, The Minister of International Development, the Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, announced \$150 million over five years for the Women's Voice and Leadership Program, as part of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy. The program is designed specifically to support the efforts of women's rights organizations and movements in developing countries. This Caribbean funding is the fourth project to be announced under the Women's Voice and Leadership Program.

Astraea and The MATCH Fund Partnership

The MATCH Fund is Canada's only global women's fund, while Astraea is the sole philanthropic organization working exclusively to advance LGBTQ2 human rights around the world.

Both Astraea and The MATCH Fund share a rich history of support to grassroots activists and organizations advancing women's rights and the rights of lesbians, bisexual, and transgender people in the Caribbean region.

Desired goal and Outcomes

The ultimate goal is to increase enjoyment of human rights by women and girls and the advancement of gender equality in the Caribbean, through:

- Improved management and sustainability of local women's rights organizations in the Caribbean, particularly those representing vulnerable and marginalized women and girls.
- Enhanced delivery of programming and advocacy by women's rights organizations to advance gender equality in the Caribbean.
- Increased effectiveness of national and sub-national women's rights platforms, networks and alliances to affect gender-sensitive policy change and policy implementation in the Caribbean.

Proposal Consultations to date

The project builds on consultation with at least 25 leading Caribbean activists, experts and organizations during a field mission to Jamaica, Trinidad, and Barbados. The MATCH Fund team consulted diverse groups addressing violence against women and girls, LBT rights, rural women's empowerment, domestic helper organizing, and HIV/AIDS services and advocacy.

The MATCH Fund team also had substantive conversations with representatives of the Institutes of Gender and Development Studies of the University of the West Indies and other stakeholders in Canada and in the region, and attended a key convening organised by Caribbean activists in March to learn more about their priorities and agendas.

More research and consultations with Caribbean feminist groups will soon take place to further direct the initiative.