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WOMEN'S LEGAL
EDUCATION & ACTION FUND
FONDS D'ACTION ET D'ÉDUCATION
JURIDIQUE POUR LES FEMMES

May 3, 2022

Letter from our Executive Director and Board Chair: A gender-inclusive update to LEAF's mandate

To LEAF supporters, partners, and friends,

We are very happy to share the news that we have officially updated [our mandate](#) to be more gender inclusive. In doing so, we are ensuring that our work continues to adequately capture the gender equality issues that arise in Canadian society.

Understandings of gender in Canadian society have shifted since LEAF first established its purpose in 1985. A range of diverse gender identities have progressively gained recognition in wider social spheres, and people are increasingly publicly identifying at many different points along the gender spectrum. At this point in time, it is clear that women are not the only group of people who encounter gender-based discrimination.

LEAF strives to engage in gender equality advocacy that appropriately reflects present-day Canadian legal and social issues. That is why LEAF's Board of Directors, in consultation with our member branches, recently voted to update our mandate. LEAF's mission and mandate is now the following:

LEAF is a national charitable organization that works towards ensuring the law guarantees substantive equality for all women, girls, trans, and non-binary people.

“Women” includes both cisgender and transgender women. Our updated mandate now explicitly includes non-binary people and all trans people, rather than only trans women as before.



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What does this mean in practice? It means that as we continue our work to advance the rights of women and girls, we can now also consider new opportunities for law reform, litigation, or public education that centre non-binary and trans people. Any such new projects will be undertaken in partnership and allyship with non-binary and trans communities.

This update marks the culmination of a year-long project that engaged LEAF stakeholders on many levels. LEAF staff, board members, and branch members received training in trans inclusion and came together on numerous occasions to discuss the best path forward. We are grateful to all of our stakeholders for their hard work in bringing us to this point. And we are enormously grateful to you, our supporters, for encouraging us and for giving us feedback as we engaged in this process. For more information about what this update means, please see our [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

We look forward to further celebrating this exciting work with you at our Equality Day Gala on May 31 – tickets are [now on sale!](#)

As we move forward, we know that this is just the beginning of our work to meaningfully advance equality rights for trans and non-binary people. What we have achieved in name, we must continue in action. We look forward to sharing those actions with you.

Pam Hrick
Executive Director & General Counsel

Kerry Lynn Okita
Chair of the Board of Directors