

[BC Women's Alliance](#) is a provincial formation of feminist groups in the Canadian women's movement, whose membership represents different constituencies of women. We formed in response to the pandemic's magnifying effects of women's oppression on the basis of sex, race, and class. We fight to overturn the global neoliberal value system and recreate a life-sustaining culture. In 2021 and 2022, we organized a province-wide May Day action *#WomenDemand Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI)* dropping banners with this call to action in communities across British Columbia.

Our session discussed the Alliance's fight to grant women a share of the common wealth and the position from which each member joined this fight.

[Aboriginal Women's Action Network \(AWAN\)](#) asserts that the dual effects of patriarchy and colonialism have resulted in Indigenous women experiencing disproportionate rates of homelessness, child apprehension, suicide, addiction, and resorting to prostitution for economic survival. As numerous inquiries, royal commissions, and reports have pointed out, many of these outcomes could be alleviated by addressing poverty. For these reasons, AWAN believes the implementation of GLI would go a long way in enabling Indigenous women to gain more autonomy over their lives, moving beyond survival mode and reclaiming their place in Indigenous society. GLI can offer more breathing room to rebuild thriving Indigenous communities as an alternative to the current conditions and trajectory for Indigenous peoples - trapped in state-sponsored institutions such as prison, residential schools, foster care, prostitution and homelessness.

[Asian Women for Equality](#) holds the position that Canada has an obligation to offer women viable pathways to economic security. Women overall, and disproportionately immigrant and women of colour, make up a large percentage of the poor, and yet so-called economic development is often built upon women's labour and bodies. Asian Women for Equality has participated in the basic income discussion since 2014. As a feminist organization, they advocate for basic income policy that meaningfully represents the interests of women of colour, who are often simultaneously excluded from the policy table and whose interests such policy purports to serve. Beginning in 2017, Asian Women for Equality began hosting a series of public discussion panels on GLI. These panels were hosted in Canada, abroad, and online, and welcomed 300 attendees, and featured grassroots organizations led by women, Indigenous women, women of colour and immigrant women, environmental justice and sustainability activists, as well as renowned basic income researchers, advocates, and politicians. The influence, leadership and endorsement of affected groups such as women, the racialized, and the poor is vital to bringing a fair, effective, equality-promoting GLI into reality.

[Vancouver Lesbian Collective](#) advocates for a Guaranteed Livable Income as a response to the historic and current hetero-sexism that lesbians and all women face. In a heteronormative society, households are assumed to include men and their incomes. This often disadvantages lesbians because women are still paid less than men across industries and female-dominated professions are generally lower paying. Too many women are stuck in jobs with a boss, co-worker or customer who sexually harasses or discriminates against them, and GLI could relieve women from having to choose between these conditions and economic hardship. Access to GLI could mitigate the economic penalty that so often accompanies the unpaid caretaking responsibilities that women bear the brunt of. Targeting social change on a number of fronts, Vancouver Lesbian Collective sees GLI as a reform to give lesbians the time, economic security, and resources they need to organize on behalf of themselves, other lesbians, and all women.

[Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter](#) campaigns for a Guaranteed Livable Income as a systemic response to the crisis of poverty that they encounter on the frontlines of responding to male violence against women. As feminists and researchers have documented, a lack of economic security increases the vulnerability of women to being attacked in their homes, on the job, on public transit, and on the street. It has also been well established that poverty prevents women from leaving abusive relationships and forces women to stay in poorly paid jobs where they are objectified, exploited, and harassed and that it is a key coercive factor in women resorting to prostitution. With rising costs for basic essentials such as food and housing, women are increasingly requesting financial support to provide for themselves and their children. Due to the current welfare system's punitive, inhumane treatment of those who rely on it and receive too little to meet their needs, Rape Relief argues for a complete transformation of the state's income assistance programs. As economic independence is essential to women's equality and liberty, GLI is a concrete way to increase women's dignity and control over their own lives.

BC Women's Alliance May Day action aimed to mobilize women in communities around our very large province, and to stimulate public debate. We chose a simple tactic that could be replicated easily, even during the pandemic: dropping similar banners with the message: #WomenDemand Guaranteed Livable Income in a recognizable public place, and securing coverage in the local press. Over the two years, roughly fifty women organised to display banners in 32 locations. Their actions were almost always covered in at least one local media outlet, and in 2022 covered by the Canadian national broadcaster's most-listened to radio program in the province.

Below are some snapshots from our 2022 May Day action:



Galiano Island, BC



Nelson, BC



Victoria, BC



Prince George, BC