

## **If young women voted, would things change?**

*Girls Action Foundation brings young women together  
to strengthen their political power*

**Montreal, Quebec – April 27, 2011**

The voting rate among young women aged 18 to 24 was only 38.5% in the last federal election (Elections Canada).

To encourage young women to take their power into their own hands, Girls Action Foundation delivers leadership programs for girls and young women and distributes tools like "[Step it Up: A young women's guide to influencing public policy.](#)"

On April 28, 2011, Girls Action Foundation is convening female youth from across Toronto to learn skills and build their confidence to make a difference in their communities. On the agenda: a "jam" or discussion about voting and young women's power to affect politics.

There is plenty of evidence pointing to a significant disparity between young women's and young men's opinions about social and environmental issues.

"There is a lot of talk about the 'youth vote' but this youngest segment of the Canadian voting-age population is more complex when you break it down by gender," says polling expert Angus McAllister. "Time after time, I have seen in national polls that young women tend toward views that favour environmental sustainability and social justice, while young men's attitudes tend toward maintaining the status quo," says the President of McAllister Opinion Research.

Tatiana Fraser, Executive Director of Girls Action Foundation, saw for herself the difference in responses between male and female youth when the organization commissioned a national poll on Canadians' attitudes towards girls' issues, conducted by Vision Critical in January.

"The gender differences in young women's and men's opinions about social issues are striking. For example, 74 per cent of 18 to 34 year-old women and only 45 per cent of young men in the same age group are concerned that men outnumber women four-to-one among Canada's elected representatives. Regarding the fact that two thirds of minimum wage workers in Canada are women, 59 per cent of young men and 87 per cent of young women feel that this issue should be of national concern," stated Ms. Fraser.

For the 2011 federal election, Girls Action Foundation teamed up with Apathy is Boring to support their initiative called I WILL VOTE. "I hope that more young women get the message that they are powerful and voting is one way to express this power," states Ilona Dougherty, Executive Director of Apathy is Boring.

Ms. Fraser adds, "At Girls Action Foundation, we believe that girls and young women are a source for significant social change. If all young women in Canada voted, would the results change? I don't know but I sure would like to find out!"

**About the event in Toronto (media attendees welcome):**

Young Women's Jam on Political Power  
12:15-12:45pm, Thursday April 28, 2011  
215 Spadina Avenue, Toronto (Centre for Social Innovation)

**About Girls Action Foundation**

Girls Action Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting girls and young women to overcome barriers to reach their true potential. Founded in 1995, Girls Action provides girls' empowerment programs as well as bursaries and mentors for young women change-makers. Girls Action operates on a national scale with a local impact reaching over 60,000 girls and young women annually. The 240 member-organizations of the Girls Action Network are found in all provinces and territories. 90% of girls & women participating in Girls Action programs come from marginalized urban, remote and Northern communities.

**girlsactionfoundation.ca**

**[Twitter.com/ girlsaction](https://twitter.com/girlsaction)**

**About the Poll**

From January 28 to January 29, 2011, on behalf of Girls Action Foundation, Vision Critical conducted an online survey among 1,016 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada.

- 30 -

Contact:

**Tatiana Fraser**, Executive Director, Girls Action Foundation  
514-948-1112 or 514-973-3312; [tatiana@girlsactionfoundation.ca](mailto:tatiana@girlsactionfoundation.ca)

**Valérie Plante**, Communications and Network Director, Girls Action Foundation  
514-715-4146, [valerie@girlsactionfoundation.ca](mailto:valerie@girlsactionfoundation.ca)