



SDG 5: Gender Equality System

“Building effective cross-sector partnerships across SDGs initiatives for Gender Equality”

Case Study



SDG 5: Gender Equality System

“Building effective cross-sector partnerships across SDGs initiatives for Gender Equality”

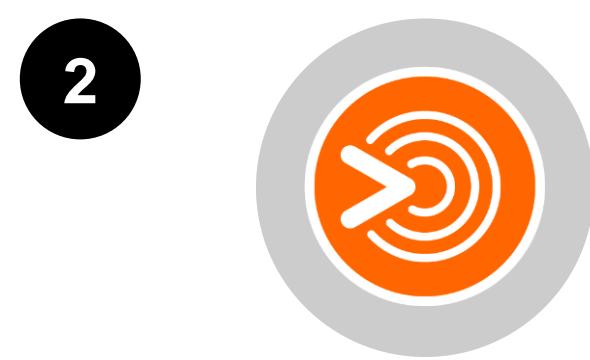
Objectives

The Gender Equality System Map was created to foster awareness and knowledge transfer in and around the gender equality system, specifically in relation to SDG 5 in Canada, and its cross-impact on other SDGs.

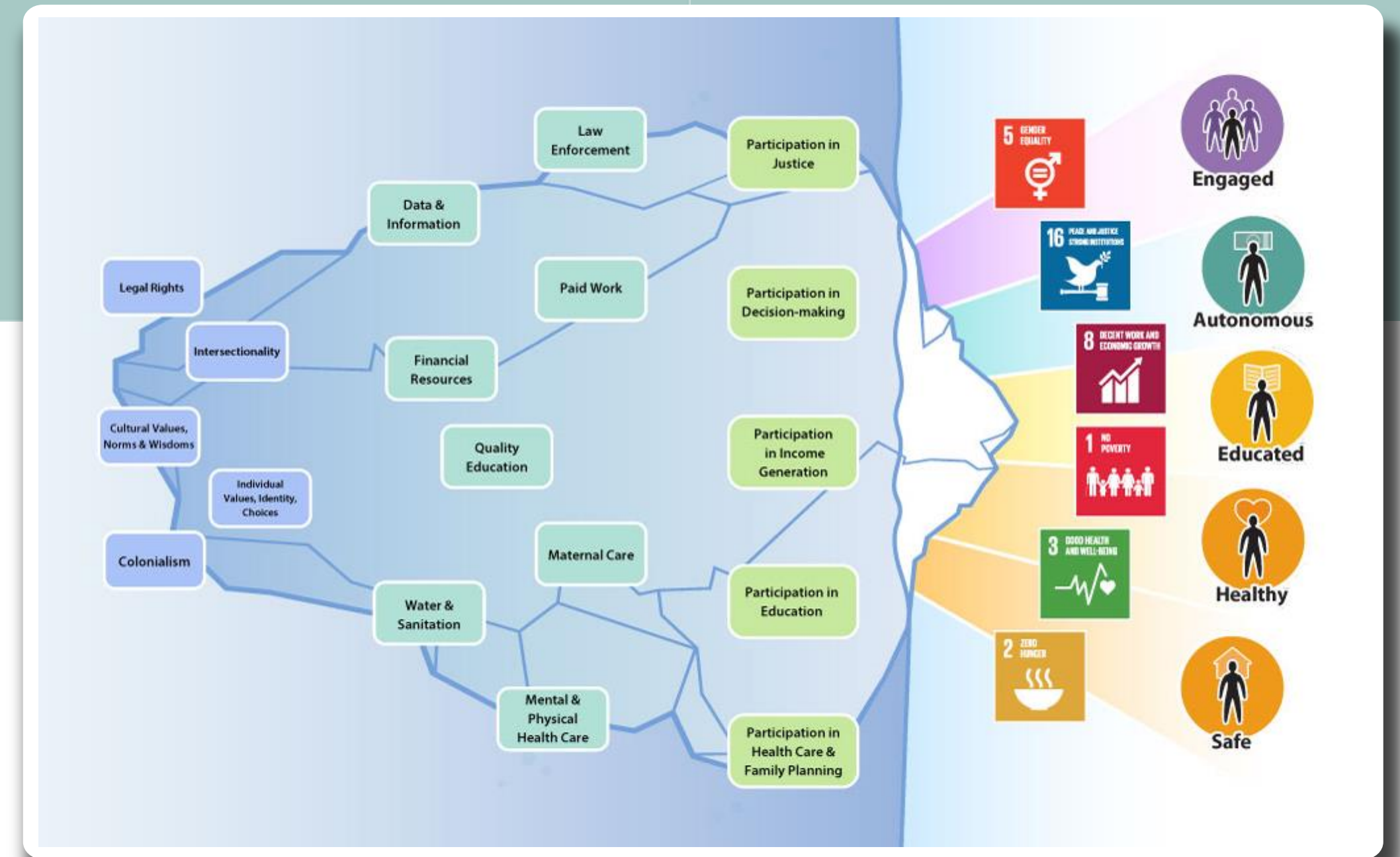
The main focus of the project was to:



Engage critical stakeholder groups in a **participatory and collaborative system mapping process**. This process was designed to facilitate the sharing of ideas, expertise, experiences and local knowledge and **build the relationships** and sense of commitment for **effective social action**.



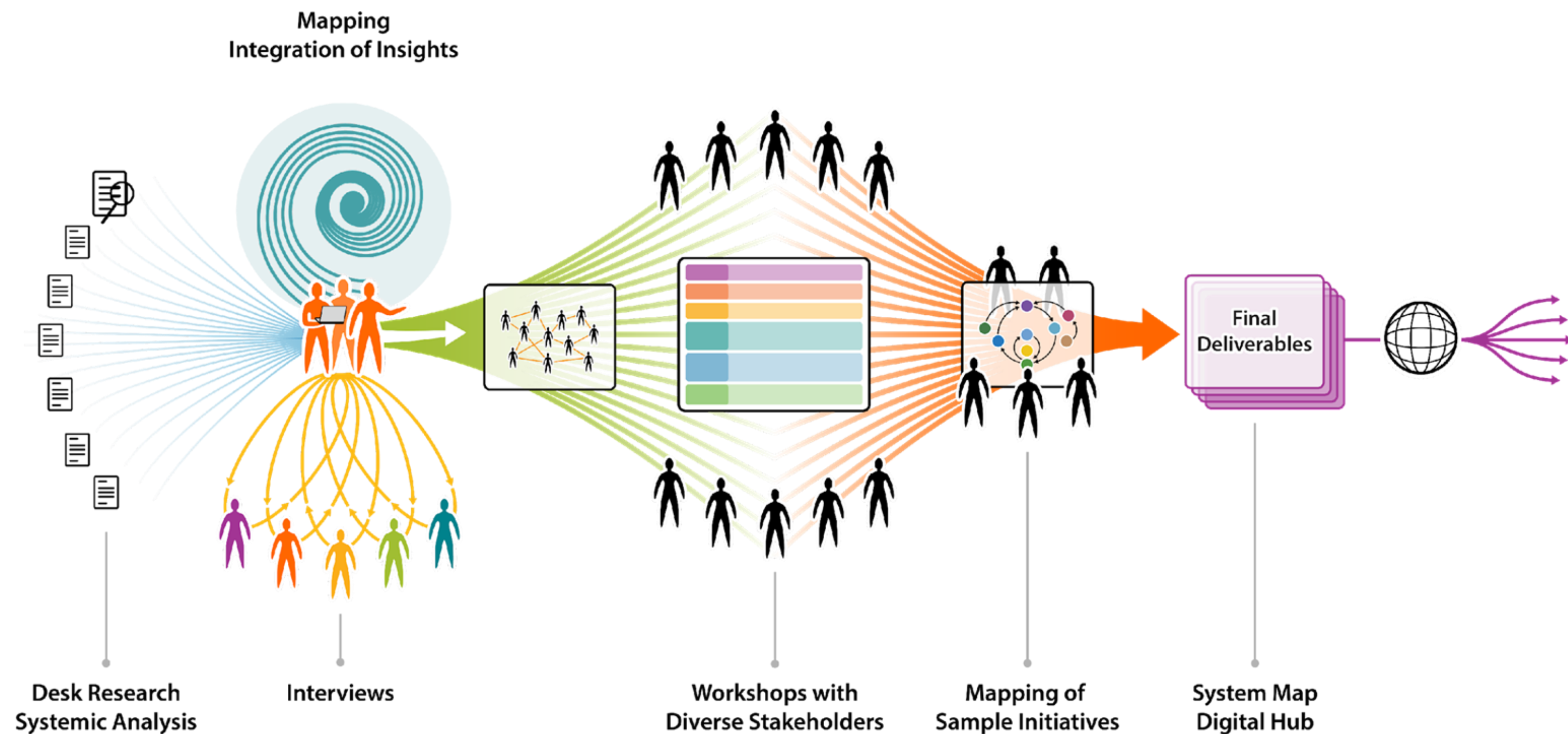
Map sample SDG 5 initiatives by engaging stakeholders and researching current and proposed activities to confirm they are **systemic in their approach** and designed to **achieve maximum impact**.



Funding



This work was funded by a grant from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Funding Program, through the Employment and Social Development department of the Government of Canada. The goals of this program are to build awareness of the 2030 Agenda, increase partnerships and networks, advance research, and further Canada’s implementation of the 2030 Agenda.



Process

Starting with research and systemic analysis, the focus very quickly turned into engaging critical stakeholders. We interviewed and workshopped with experts, civil society organisations, private business and relevant communities to bring those multiple perspectives into consideration.

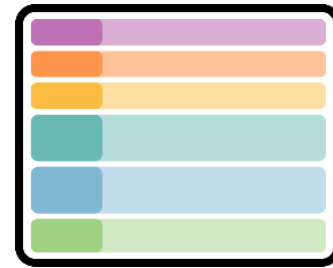
The system map was created after this period of research and analysis, tested and refined through an iterative process of expert stakeholder engagement (online interviews and workshops) to ensure its completeness, accuracy and usefulness as an engagement and educational tool.

The cross-sector workshops were also valuable opportunities for stakeholders to connect with actors outside of their immediate network. Through system exploration, and by sharing ideas, experiences and expert knowledge of specific areas, these engagement sessions created a shared understanding of the system and sparked opportunities for future collaboration.

We mapped two examples of the impact of Canadian initiatives, working with the respective organisations to confirm that their initiatives would:

- Be systemic in their approach and desired outcomes; addressing root causes rather than symptoms
- Engage appropriate levels of stakeholders necessary to realise the desired shifts
- Identify barriers or gaps that could decelerate the Government of Canada's implementation of the 2030 Agenda
- Ensure that the changes they are driving are at a minimum coherent across the initiatives, and at best synergistic in their impacts
- Identify key intersection areas with other SDGs and potential opportunities and risks.

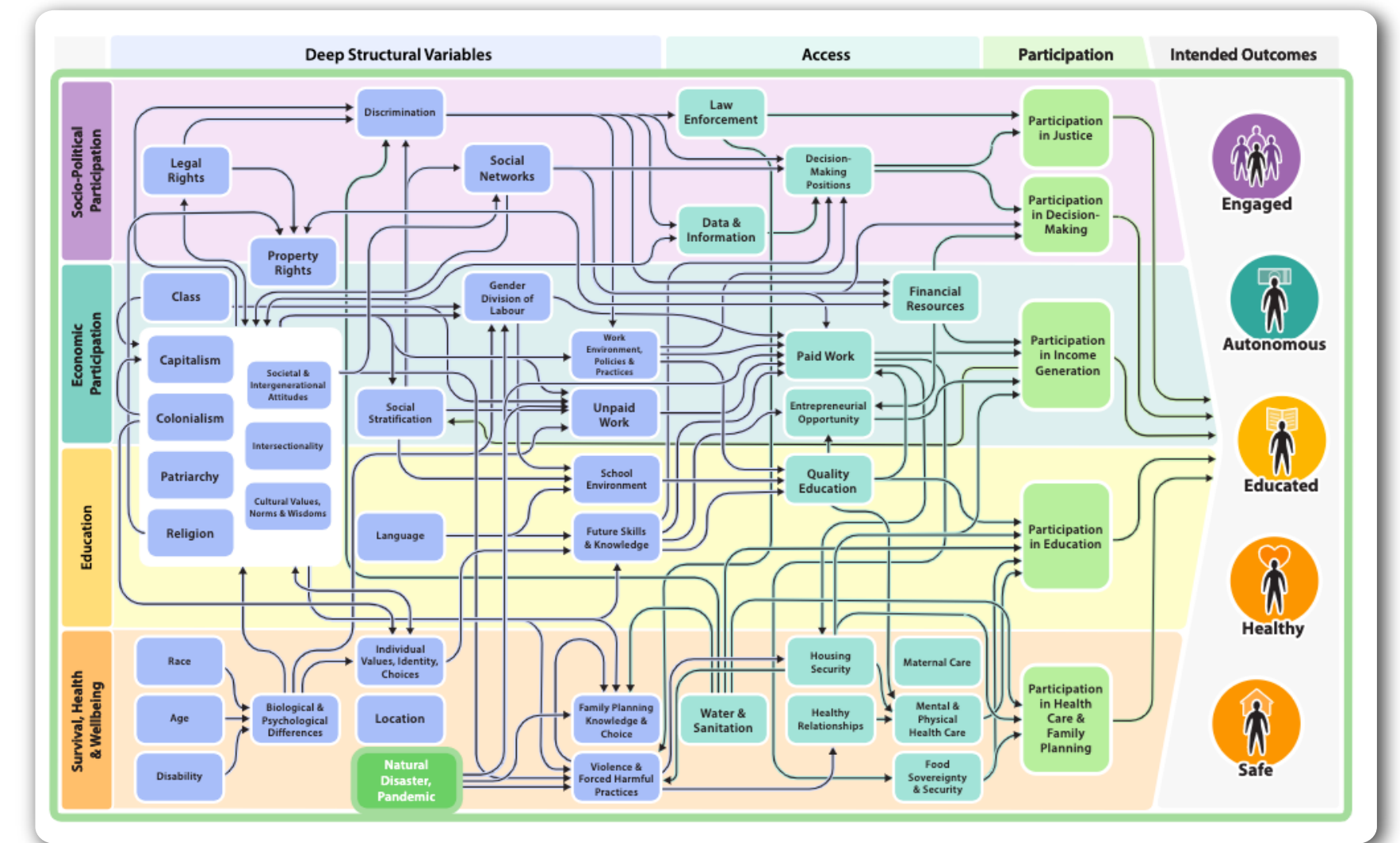
Deliverables



An **interactive system map and digital hub** made available for the broad SDG community of change agents. The map captures a **detailed overview** of the gender equality system, along with **map layers and narratives** to help users explore specific aspects of the system.



Critical stakeholders from across the system engaged in **two rounds of workshops and interviews**. These conversations were supported by the map, to help stakeholders identify **how their work and specific initiatives create impact in the system** and to **explore possible leverage points**.



The base map

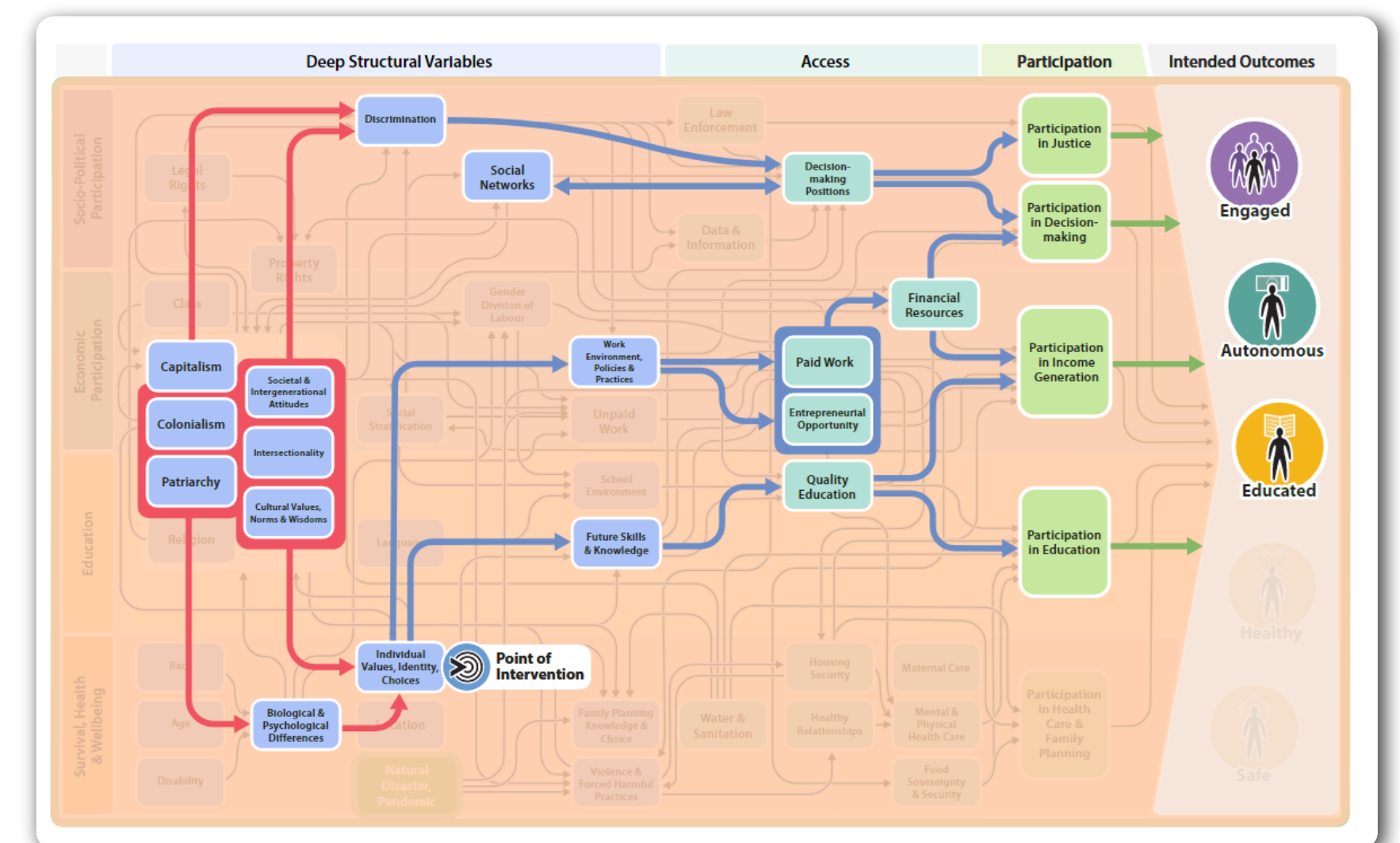
Sample initiative: Minerva Project



Two sample SDG 5 initiatives mapped to explore and visualise the systemic impact of their approach. This systemic examination of initiatives allowed organisations to get a better understanding of the overall influence of their work – direct and indirect, intended and unintended - and to ensure that their approach was designed to maximise impact.



A digital hub provided a public **collaboration and educational tool** for diverse groups to use to better understand and accommodate different perspectives.





Key Insights

1. Deep structural changes pay off

Tackling ‘deep’ variables creates the strongest and broadest benefit across SDGs.

Stakeholders learned how deep structural issues cascade to impact a range of other areas - including those seemingly ‘unrelated’ to gender inequality – which highlighted the benefit that comes from interventions that respond to, and influence, these deep variables.

For example, when looking at *policies* to eradicate the gender pay gap, we saw that efforts to address *societal attitudes* towards gender and gender division-of-labour would reduce the pay gap as well as reducing inequality in many other areas; e.g. access to quality education, access to financial resources, etc.

2. A bigger and brighter spotlight is needed

Cultural norms and societal attitudes towards gender are the core variables driving gender inequality, while the pervasiveness of these attitudes and their social costs are broadly underappreciated. To challenge Canadian mindsets about gender we need a bigger, brighter spotlight, we need to engage the community in deeper conversations, we need to increase awareness and understanding of these issues.

3. No one can be left behind

A heightened focus on cross-sectional understanding and interventions reveals the systemic inequalities experienced by racial minorities. Layering racial discrimination onto a system of gender bias creates dramatic inequalities for minority women. This also reinforces the importance of incorporating gender equality into the programme for indigenous reconciliation.

Next Steps

This collaborative mapping process produced a rich and valuable tool, which can be used to support further conversations – for collaboration, funding and decision making. We look forward to working with organisations interested in expanding their systemic understanding and designing more effective initiatives.

1. Mapping additional initiatives

Using the map to plot the perspectives and activities from different initiatives can enable more systemic and efficient approaches, while reducing wasted effort. We can work with organisations to examine their initiatives and planned activities to assess how they address the key structural issues.

2. Leveraging the platform for multi-stakeholder collaboration and education

Stakeholders value the ability of the digital platform and maps to visually capture the complexity and interconnectedness of the variables affecting gender inequality, and their effect on other SDGs. The platform can be a powerful tool for supporting cross-sector conversations and collaboration. The maps can also be used in learning environments - whether the traditional classroom, the workplace, government or civil society.

For more information:

<http://nexial.co/maps/sdg5>

Contact us: info@nexial.co