

Girls Action on GIRLS AND THE MEDIA



Media plays a big role in shaping and reinforcing societal values, identities and beliefs about girls. Rather than blaming the media for negative stereotypes, GIRLS ACTION FOUNDATION believes in giving girls and young women the tools and space to question media messages and create their OWN media.

MEDIA WATCH: SOME DATA ON FEMALE YOUTH IN CANADA

Today's girls face conflicting messages from media images;



THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO BE



liberated & traditional

AT THE SAME TIME.



MAGAZINES

are the only medium where girls and women are **over-represented**.

BUT

the focus is primarily on dating and appearance.³

"The media gets freaked out when we talk about our bodies the way we want. It's more sensational to blame girls and freak out than to listen to girls. You know, us girls with our naïveté and good looks, luring in predators everywhere. It must be our fault."

- Sarah, Montreal, Why Girls? Why Media & Pop Culture?

Canadian girls in Grades 6-10 with a healthy body weight...

25%



think they are **'too fat'**

13%



feel they are **'too thin.'**⁵

Women of colour are hardly ever represented in the media.

When they are, depictions often involve violence and hypersexualization

offering racialized girls a negative & stereotypical version of their identity.²

STOP THE PRESS

Girls aren't just victims of pop culture, they are out making their OWN media:

**PODCASTS
BLOGS
VLOGS
ZINES
VIDEO**

"As indigenous women, women of color and queer/trans women, we find ourselves playing different parts of 'I' in our daily lives as we juggle the demands

of being women, mothers, lovers, friends, students, daughters, granddaughters - very much like two hands playing one piece on a piano. We struggle to remain,

remember and be true to our heritage while living in a world bent on belittling or misrepresenting us and our experiences. This zine will be a space where we can represent ourselves!"

- Syahidah Ismail, Girls Action Foundation Leadership Grant Recipient who created a zine for indigenous women, women of colour and queer/trans women.

THEY ARE RAISING QUESTIONS AND FINDING ANSWERS

- Who created the message?
- What techniques are used to attract my attention?
- What lifestyles, values and points of view are included in the message? What's missing?
- Why was this message sent?
- Would other people read this message differently than me?

The GIRLS ACTION FOUNDATION Approach

Applying popular education. Girls can think for themselves! Supporting girls to questions media messages and use critical thinking skills equips them for life!

Focusing on the positive: girls can still enjoy media and pop culture while questioning mainstream messages.

Finding and celebrating realistic and empowering images of diverse girls and young women.

HOW Girls Action Can Support YOU to Take Action

Provide girls and young women with the knowledge, tools, and information they need to navigate and use a variety of media safely. Here's a good place to start:

- Read this media primer Create Some Buzz: Media Kit 101: girlsactionfoundation.ca/en/blog/media-kit-101
 - Check out our zines in the Girls Action Resource Centre to inspire your own ideas: girlsactionfoundation.ca/en/resource-center
 - Start your own blog or contribute to Kickaction.ca, our on-line space for girls' and young women's' issues.
 - Start a girls group in your community where girls can create their own media - photography, radio, video, zines. Read up on on facilitating girls' spaces: girlsactionfoundation.ca/en/amplify
- Why Girls? Find out more about issues related to Media & Pop Culture for girls: girlsactionfoundation.ca/en/why-girls



Additional Resources

Disseminate sources of alternative media to girls and young women you interact with - here are a few good ones:

- ✓ Shameless Magazine - independent voices girls and trans youth: www.shamelessmag.com
- ✓ Racialicious (US-based) - a blog about the intersection of race and pop culture: www.racialicious.com
- ✓ Check out your local community radio or community television station for on-air and behind the scenes opportunities.

Get media literate! Visit:

- ✓ Keep it Real: Media Literacy Manual by Youth Action Network: www.youthactionnetwork.org
- ✓ Media Smarts: Canada's Centre for Media and Digital Literacy: www.mediasmarts.ca
- ✓ Feminist Media Project: www.feministmediaproject.com
- ✓ Media Action Média: www.media-action-media.com

References

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 2 Nancy Signorelli, "A Content Analysis: Reflections of Girls in the Media," The Kaiser Family Foundation and Children Now (April 1997).
 3 John G. Freeman et al., "The Health of Canada's Young People: A Mental Health Focus (Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada, 2011).
 4 Meenakshi Gigi Durham, "Constructing the 'New Ethnicities': Media, Sexuality, and Diaspora Identity in the Lives of South Asian Immigrant Girls," Critical Studies in Media Communication 21, 2 (June 2004);
 5 Dionne P. Stephens, and Layli D. Phillips, "Freaks, Gold Diggers, Divas, and Dykes: The Sociocultural Development of Adolescent African American Women's Sexual Scripts," Sexuality & Culture 7, 1 (2003); Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW), Women's Experience of Racism: How Race and Gender Interact (Ottawa, 2002).



GIRLS ACTION
FOUNDATION

Founded in 1995, GIRLS ACTION FOUNDATION is a charitable organization that supports the empowerment, leadership and healthy development of girls and young women across Canada. In collaboration with a network of 300 community partners, Girls Action reaches 60,000 girls and young women annually. Our work is to inspire girls and young women to reach their potential and create change.