

# 2.1 Deepen belonging

**“ Deepen belonging by bolstering human connections and acceptance, especially with 2SLGBTQIA+ and Women, Trans, Non-binary people. This will result in increased personal wellbeing and collective spirit.**

## Context

We vow to deepen belonging by bolstering human connections and acceptance with justice-deserving groups of different backgrounds. Recognizing the intrinsic value of belonging, we aim to create spaces where everyone feels valued and empowered, strengthening both personal wellbeing and collective spirit.

This pledge is especially vital to our work with 2SLGBTQIA+ and Women, Trans, Non-binary people, who have historically faced systemic barriers to full acceptance in their communities. By prioritizing their experiences, we seek to address inequities and cultivate environments where authenticity thrives without fear of discrimination.

As a Trans, Queer, and Women-founded and led organization, we are passionately committed to reinforcing our bonds and fulfilling our promises to these groups in tangible, impactful ways. By doing so, we seek to not only honour our roots but also pave the way for a more equitable and compassionate society.

## Care

Our approach to care for this pledge includes nurturing wisdoms, ecosystems, and platforms that deepen belonging.

## Wisdoms

We will seed care-centered wisdom and knowledge, including:

- **Human-centered learning**

Conduct and share care-centered learning to illuminate the needs and aspirations of 2SLGBTQIA+, Women, Trans, and Non-binary communities, using findings to shape policies and practices that strengthen belonging.

- **Resource creation**

Develop educational materials and toolkits to help organizations, schools, and businesses create safer spaces and address issues like sexism, transphobia, and queerphobia that prevent or obstruct belonging.

- **Storytelling initiatives**

Share narratives from these communities to build empathy and cultivate a deeper sense of belonging.

## Ecosystems

We will cultivate care-centered ecosystems and communities, including:

- **Leadership development**

Offer training, mentorship, and employment to empower 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, Women, Trans, and Non-binary people to thrive in leadership roles.

- **Intersectional advocacy**

Collaborate with other justice-deserving groups (e.g., racialized and disabled communities) to address overlapping challenges and cultivate allyship or mutual support.

- **Crisis support and mental health resources**

Partner with mental health organizations to provide affirming support that enhances personal wellbeing for those facing systemic barriers.

## Platforms

We will incubate and build care-centered actions, tools, and platforms, including:

- **Co-creation activities**

Co-create safe spaces and initiatives with impacted groups that publicly support and celebrate the lives and authentic experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+, Women, Trans, and Non-binary artists and other creatives.

- **Community-building events**

Host regular gatherings, workshops, and storytelling circles that nurture connection, healing, and shared experiences, fostering a sense of belonging and community spirit.

- **Advocacy campaigns**

Publicly speak out against sexism, transphobia, and queerphobia to reinforce belonging and combat discrimination.

## Codicil

Additional notes and reflections about this pledge to be added to this section over time, including ties to caring internal and external practices, impact evaluation, identification of gaps and barriers, unanswered questions, learning insights, and more.

# Internal practices

What are some of the internal practices that we will draw upon to fulfill this pledge? They include ArtsPond's Knowledge Well (wisdoms), Renewal Well (ecosystems), and Care Well (platforms).

## Knowledge Well

For all pledges, our practices for care-centered learning (Wisdoms) are rooted in ArtsPond's Knowledge Well a care-centered guide for deepening wisdom and knowledge with diverse groups in arts and culture. As an alternative to traditional research, it is based on five interconnected stages or streams, including:

- **Knowledge seeking** (grounding wisdom)
- **Knowledge sensemaking** (contextualizing wisdom)
- **Knowledge shaping** (evolving wisdom)
- **Knowledge sharing** (disseminating wisdom)
- **Knowledge stewarding** (respecting wisdom).

## Renewal Well

For all pledges, our practices for care-centered engagement (Ecosystems) are rooted in ArtsPond's Renewal Well, a care-centered guide to unpacking and addressing complex barriers to prosperity and justice. Embracing perspectives from the personal to the planetary, it is based on five interconnected stages or streams, including:

- **Roots** (system causes)
- **Ripples** (global impacts)
- **Responses** (ecosystem reactions)
- **Remedies** (community solutions)
- **Resources** (individual leaders).

## Care Well

For all pledges, our practices for care-centered action (Platforms) are rooted in ArtsPond's Care Well, a care-centered focus for identifying the dreams and demands of diverse communities while co-designing accessible tools and technologies. Expanding our traditional understandings of care, it is based on five interconnected care personalities, including:

- **Careseekers** (beneficiaries of care)
- **Caretakers** (guardians of care)
- **Caregivers** (nurturers of care)
- **Caremakers** (builders of care)
- **Careshapers** (architects of care).

# External practices

What are some of the external practices that we will draw upon to fulfill this pledge?

## Impact practices

What are some of external impact practices that we can draw upon to track and evaluate our impact for this pledge? Among others, these could include Sustainable Development Goals (SDG); Environment, Sustainability, Governance (ESG); Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW); Vital Signs; Equitable Evaluation Framework (EEF); and a variety of qualitative impact frameworks in arts and culture.

## Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

A pledge to deepen belonging is in alignment with SDG 3, 5, 10, and 16.

- **SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing**
  - *Personal wellness*: Focus on enhancing mental health and emotional wellbeing through crisis support, mental health resources, and belonging initiatives.
  - *Community spirit*: Focus on collective wellbeing through events and safe spaces with, by, and for justice-deserving communities.
- **SDG 5: Gender equality**
  - *Empowerment*: Leadership development and advocacy for Women, Trans, Non-binary, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals aligns with promoting gender equity and dismantling systemic barriers.
  - *Intersectionality*: Address overlapping issues of gender identity and discrimination, advancing equality.
- **SDG 10: Reduced inequalities**
  - *Inclusion*: Champion belonging and acceptance for justice-deserving groups, particularly those historically excluded or marginalized.
  - *Advocacy*: Engage in campaigns against queerphobia, sexism, and transphobia, directly addressing systemic inequities.
- **SDG 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions**
  - *Storytelling and advocacy*: Build empathy and inclusion through narratives and public advocacy.
  - *Community-building*: Strengthen social cohesion and trust within and across diverse communities.

## Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG)

- **Social dimension (S)**
  - *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)*: Leadership development, safe spaces, and co-creation programming for justice-deserving groups contribute directly to social impact under ESG frameworks.

- *Mental health and wellbeing:* Collaboration with mental health organizations demonstrates a commitment to the social welfare of stakeholders.
- *Community engagement:* Events and initiatives aimed at fostering connections and addressing systemic challenges reflect responsible social governance.
- **Governance dimension (G)**
  - *Representation and leadership:* As a Trans, Queer, and Women-founded organization, promoting diverse leadership models contributes to innovative governance structures.
  - *Accountability:* Developing toolkits and policies reflects governance transparency and ethical alignment.

## Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW)

- **Community vitality**
  - *Sense of belonging to the community:* Percentage of people reporting a strong sense of belonging to their community.
  - *Social engagement rates:* Number of people participating in events, workshops, or community programs.
  - *Interpersonal trust:* Levels of trust within the community, particularly among historically marginalized groups.
- **Leisure and culture**
  - *Participation in arts and culture events:* Attendance and engagement rates in programs designed for 2SLGBTQIA+, Women, Trans, and Non-binary people.
  - *Accessibility of programs:* Number of programs offering free or sliding scale entry.
- **Healthy populations**
  - *Mental health indicators:* Rates of reported well-being and mental health improvements after program engagement.
  - *Access to support services:* Availability and use of crisis support and mental health resources.

## Vital Signs

## Equitable Evaluation Framework (EEF)

- **Representation**
  - *Leadership diversity:* Percentage of leadership roles held by members of 2SLGBTQIA+, Women, Trans, and Non-binary communities.
  - *Participant demographics:* Representation of justice-deserving groups in programs and events.
- **Access**
  - *Barriers identified and reduced:* Number of reported barriers (e.g., financial, physical, cultural) addressed in actions.
  - *Community feedback:* Qualitative insights on feelings of safety and acceptance within programs.
- **Impact**

- *Advocacy outcomes:* Number and reach of public campaigns addressing sexism, transphobia, and queerphobia.
- *Narrative shift:* Evidence of increased empathy or reduced discrimination in public attitudes, as measured by surveys or media analysis.

## Qualitative Impact Measures

- **Sense of connection**
  - *Social network expansion:* Number of new relationships formed during community-building events.
  - *Loneliness reduction:* Decrease in feelings of isolation among participants, measured through pre- and post-program surveys.
- **Safety and comfort**
  - *Perceived safety:* Percentage of participants reporting they feel safe and accepted in your programs.
  - *Incidents reported:* Number of discrimination-related incidents during events and the resolution rate.

## Gaps and barriers

What are some of the gaps and barriers we anticipate or experience in advancing this pledge?

## Unanswered questions

What are some of the unanswered questions we anticipate or experience in advancing this pledge?

## Learning insights

What are some of the learning insights we anticipate or experience in advancing this pledge?

## Additional resources

What are additional resources that have helped us fulfill this pledge?