

We live in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, with unparalleled access to information about families and family life.

# How we make a difference

Information, however, is not the same as *understanding*, and if we want to live in a Canada where families can fully engage and thrive in a caring and compassionate society, we need to understand how families interact with, have an impact on and are affected by social, economic, cultural and environmental forces.

The Vanier Institute of the Family enhances our collective understanding of the diversity and complexity of families and the reality of family life in Canada. We use a broad and inclusive definition of family to capture the full picture, focusing on the important roles families play in the lives of

individual family members and in the communities in which they live. We use a “family lens” to explore a wide spectrum of topics, since there are few things in life that don’t affect – or aren’t affected by – our circles of kinship.

We monitor and report on the changing face of Canada’s families, bringing to light how families and family members manage their many roles and responsibilities in a dynamic and evolving society. We analyze data, synthesize information, organize resources and mobilize knowledge to make it easier for Canadians to learn about families and family life. With accurate observations, we make evidence-based forecasts while anticipating, planning and preparing for the future.

We share our knowledge and understanding in print, in person, online and in the media in both official languages. We continually seek and embrace new and innovative ways to reach out to researchers, educators, students, journalists, service providers, faith and labour leaders, policy-makers and others with an interest in families and family life.

As a teaching *and* learning organization, we put equal effort into researching families and listening to families from coast to coast to coast. We host events to directly facilitate and engage in catalytic conversations, collecting stories from across the country to guide our research.

We reach out to those who study, serve and support families to identify leading and promising practices in communities, organizations and workplaces. We engage in partnerships and collaborations, leveraging talent and resources among organizations and networks to generate quality research.

Decades of experience and commitment have earned us respect among our peers in the voluntary, public and private sectors as a national, independent, reliable and authoritative source of information on matters related to families and family life in Canada. Since our founding more than 50 years ago, we have earned a reputation as one of the country’s thought leaders, generating important conversations around boardroom and kitchen tables alike.

***“The Vanier Institute of the Family can be compared to a Royal Commission established to investigate and learn all there is to know about the families of Canada in a world of change. But since the need for knowledge and study will continue as long as we inhabit the globe, this Royal Commission will never be discharged.”***

– GENERAL THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GEORGES P. VANIER, 1964

