

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Prepared for the Status of Women-funded project, “Action on Systemic Barriers to Women’s Participation in Local Government”

By Willow Samara Allen, Ph.D.

October 2017

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to give an overview of the identified barriers to women’s involvement in local governance and strategies to overcome those barriers. The review is part of a three-year project titled, “Action on Systemic Barriers to Women’s Participation in Local Government”, funded by Status of Women Canada. The collaboration between Women Transforming Cities and the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women involves working within the cities of Vancouver, BC and Surrey, BC to develop effective and sustainable approaches to gender-based inclusion and equity within local governance policies and structures. This literature review will first highlight thematic individual, structural and systemic barriers to women’s involvement in local-level governance, including select examples of approaches used to address them.<sup>1</sup> Second, the review will provide a summary of strengths and gaps in the existing literature, key considerations for the project, and potential ways the project may contribute to the current literature.

## Key Terms

This review is principally informed by a gender-based intersectional lens, founded on the idea women have many interconnected identities and affiliations with more than one social group; as such they experience different forms of privilege and oppression. An intersectional analysis considers how discriminatory systems and practices based on social differences, including: gender, race, sexuality, class, religion, ethnicity, ability, age, and legal status, among others, shape the distinct experiences of women.<sup>2</sup> Utilizing an intersectional analysis enables

---

<sup>1</sup> Although divided into three categories, as per an intersectional feminist analytical framework, it is understood individual and Note – the list of examples is by no means exhaustive, but meant to illustrate the long-standing, as well as emergent and dynamic, work taking place in municipalities, organizations and countries around the world.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this literature review, ‘women’ will include all those who have self-identified in the studies and data collection as women. The term self-identified women is used herein to include all individuals who identify as women, recognizing that gender identities may not align with one’s biological sex. This includes cisgender and transgender women and those who identify on the gender spectrum with the understanding gender can be a fluid identity. Self-identified women is employed to “intentionally

policymakers and other actors to “understand and assess the impact of these converging identities on opportunities and access to rights, and to see how policies, programs, services and laws that impact on one aspect of our lives are inextricably linked to others” (Association for Women’s Rights in Development, 2004, p. 2; also see Status of Women, 2017; City for All Women Initiative, 2015).

Women’s involvement is conceptualized broadly to include women’s participation in all aspects of civic governance and leadership. This means women’s involvement is not confined to formal political processes of voting, supporting and/or running for local election. An expansive definition of women’s involvement addresses how historically women have always been active in local governance through participation in civil society institutions (e.g. churches, schools, community centres).

### **Context**

By the year 2050 the majority of the world’s population will reside in cities (7 out of 10 people). Urban populations are made up of a large percentage of women who remain disproportionately affected by poverty and lack control over resources (UN Women, 2016, p.1). Women’s experiences of the city, local politics and municipal services, are different from those of men and greatly vary between women based on their intersectional identities and geographic location; for instance, women and girls face disproportionate levels of violence and harassment in urban spaces, much of which is underreported (UN Women, p. 2). The UN Women’s report, *Gender Equality and the New Urban Agenda* makes evident that sustainable development of cities is dependent on creating “gender-inclusive and gender-responsive cities”, which involves women’s meaningful economic, political and social empowerment and leadership in city life (UN Women, p.2). Women are experts about the city, and while directly impacted by local politics and active users of municipal services, they are not equally represented in decision-making processes shaping their lives (FCM, 2004).

Globally and in Canada women continue to be under-represented in all levels of government including local politics. For any impactful change and to move beyond “token” forms of representation, a “critical mass” of elected women is required. For this reason the

---

expand the traditional definition of woman to include many who have historically been excluded from women’s space and feminist struggles” (SASHA, para 3, n.d.).

United Nations has called on nation-states to meet a 30% target of female representatives, considered the minimum amount for elected women to represent women's voices and issues (although many argue 50-60% is necessary to actually transform inequitable systems) (Trimble and Arscott, 2003).

Within Canadian municipalities, women currently make up 18% of mayors and 28% of councillors, totalling an average of 26%. According to current data to meet the UN's 30% objective would require the immediate election of 1,408 more women (FCM, 2017). While there is a gap in disaggregated data by race, ethnicity, class, and religion, among others, it is clear visible minority women are more marginalized than their white middle-class counterparts. Visible minority women and visible minority groups more broadly remain significantly marginalized from participation in local government (Siemiatycki, 2011). While commonly assumed women have greater access to political leadership at the local level, this has not been consistently demonstrated in Canada (Tolley, 2011). As migration to cities increases, urban centres are significant places for innovation and change. Municipalities are in a unique position to answer the UN's call for action and become major global leaders in championing sustainable, inclusive and equitable urban spaces for all self-identified women.

## **2. Identified Barriers: Individual, Structural, and Systemic**

### *Individual*

In Canada, women remain overrepresented in low pay employment sectors (women make up 59% of Canada's minimum wage employees), and women who work full-time earn on average 72% of what their male counterparts do. This gap is exacerbated for non-white/visible minority and immigrant women. Racialized women earn 32% less than non-racialized men, Indigenous women earn 26% less than non-Indigenous men, and immigrant women earn 28% less than non-immigrant men (Lambert and McInturff, 2016, p. 7, 8). While conditions have improved somewhat for women since the 1960s with respect to higher education and income levels, gender-based pay gaps persist despite higher rates of education, especially for visible minority women. And women continue to bear a disproportionate responsibility for the majority of home- and child-based labour (Equal Voice, 2007; McInturff, 2014). The perpetuation of gender-based divisions of labour and time are thematically identified as a key challenge to

women running for office since elected office is not considered to be “family friendly,” requiring inconsistent and long working hours and travel, and generally lacking onsite childcare options (Equal Voice, 2007; Godwin, 2010). Similar barriers to women’s advancement in the workplace are identified in the corporate world (Devillard, 2017).

More women are pursuing education and work in the fields of law and business, yet they remain underrepresented in professions traditionally considered appropriate for political candidates. Even when women graduate in traditional political fields, they do not necessarily go on to practice in them, and women who do still face barriers to promotion (Sawer, 2000; Seiferling, 2016). Results from Canadian survey data indicate men are favoured more for promotion during all career stages, and women face the greatest barrier moving from a director to vice-president role. While companies, like some political parties, claim a commitment to gender inclusion and diversity, such commitments do not necessarily result in tangible, concrete plans of action. For instance, 50% of surveyed Canadian companies articulated diversity as a strategic priority, yet only 14% had a business case to support it (Devillard, 2017, p.8).

Women do not tend to have the same types of social capital as men, who have traditionally dominated the political sphere. It is also more probable that men are involved in sporting and business associations where important networking takes place (Thomas, 2013). Without political social connections and networks in professional and business sectors, acquiring the support to run for office is difficult. Moreover, women often do not have the same level of access to financial capital and resources and continue to have lower incomes than men, making it extremely challenging to finance a political campaign (Lambert and McInturff, 2016; Thomas, 2013). Municipal campaigns can be expensive particularly if political party support is not provided, and some provinces have not instituted campaign finance regulations for municipal elections, British Columbia among them (Gavan-Koop and Smith, 2008). For instance, the Vision Party’s campaign totalled \$3.4 million in the Vancouver 2014 municipal election (Howell, 2014). A Canadian study revealed women spend ten percent more in political campaigns owing to home and childcare labour costs, in efforts to challenge negative perceptions of female politicians, and to go against male incumbency (United Nations Development Programme, 2007, p.11).

“Self-confidence” is cited as a key barrier for women in running for elected office. This is attributed in part to a lack of political literacy since women have not generally been socialized to

see themselves as political leaders, nor been taught the skills required to run for office. Patriarchal expectations regarding gender roles and behaviour influence women's low involvement in political life wherein women are not encouraged to be interested in politics or to pursue political careers (Lawless and Fox, 2004).

### *Structural*

Both the presence and absence of political parties at the municipal level can be a hindrance for potential female candidates. Similar to Canadian provincial and federal election processes, some municipalities have political parties and female candidates must successfully present themselves as the best option (again recognizing incumbency is largely male-dominated). Female candidates can face a lack of political party support, even though there is research to suggest strong voter support for female political representatives (Equal Voice, 2007). For instance, Wicks and Lang-Dion (2007) conducted a poll in 2004 that found 90 % of Canadians support having more female elected officials.

There is significant research pertaining to the influence of electoral systems on women's representation. Research suggests the First Past the Post system (FPTP), predominantly used in Canadian municipal elections, penalizes female candidates in part because it benefits incumbent candidates who as noted are largely men (Tremblay and Mevellec, 2013). Proportional representation (PR) systems allow voters to select more than one candidate, making such systems more favourable to the election of a broad range of candidates. Studies of PR systems indicate they have comparatively more female representation overall (bearing in mind specific contextual variables based on location, etc.). Most research on electoral systems is at the federal level, and more research is required to investigate how systems influence women's candidacy at the municipal level (see Bashevkin, 2006; Gidengil and Vengroff, 1997).

### *Systemic*

Patriarchal cultural perceptions of women as subordinate non-political actors in society persist and restrict women's options and interest in participating in local governance. The role of mainstream media and popular culture are thematically referenced in the literature as key sites where common gender stereotypes about women and female leaders are perpetuated. During elections, the media have a significant influence on public perceptions of candidates (Tolley,

2016). Research demonstrates media scrutiny and reporting bias in the representation of female candidates; for instance, women tend to be addressed by their first names that denigrates their professional legitimacy (Godwin, 2010). Media focus also tends to be on women's appearance (e.g., hair, makeup, attire) and private lives rather than their political positions. Contrary to men, women's age can play more of a factor in perceptions of their competency and suitability when running for political office (Seiferling, 2016). Visible minority women must face stereotypes about race and gender, and are portrayed in even more negative ways in the media with references drawn to their appearances, legal status and ethnicity (Tolley, 2016). Stereotypes also continue to reinforce barriers for women once in elected office, which determine and limit their capacity to shape policy (Trimble and Arscott, 2003).

A masculinist political culture in which women experience sexism and marginalization has been cited as a key reason that women are alienated from political life (Seiferling, 2016). Referred to as "an old boys' club", political institutions operate within traditional patriarchal social norms and times, in which women's behaviour is interpreted differently than men's, and women's unpaid labour is not taken into consideration.<sup>3</sup> For example, women may be seen as too aggressive or emotional, while men are considered assertive and rational for similar behaviours. Session times may fall within hours and days that are not compatible with women's unpaid labour obligations and present critical challenges for family and work-life balance, and certainly restrict women's ability to advance their careers (Trimble and Arscott, 2003).

There are similar findings in the corporate sector on preconceived bias towards female leaders and barriers to advancement for women in the workplace. Formal training to challenge gender stereotypes, official procedures to reduce bias in hiring and promotion, and performance evaluations that incorporate more leadership approaches are all recommended as ways to challenge discrimination towards women (Devillard, 2017).

Many scholars and activists identify a lack of political will and commitment to make the systemic changes required to encourage and support women's participation in governance. This is similar to the private sector in which CEO lack of commitment to gender equity in the workplace maintains barriers to women's career advancement (Conference Board of Canada,

---

<sup>3</sup> Even women who may not have such obligations can experience the negative effects of sexism because of assumptions that campaigning and serving in an elected position will take them away from "family commitments" that are seen to be their responsibilities as women.

2002). Political parties (like private companies) need to be proactive in recruiting and supporting women (Lore, Beauvais, and James-Lomax, 2014).

## 2.1 Actions/approaches to address barriers

- *Individual*: education and training for women to run for municipal office, financial and campaigning support, mentoring/networking, recruitment and outreach campaigns.
- *Structural*: Advocating for electoral reform from a FPTP to a PR system<sup>4</sup>; quota systems (formal and informal) for political parties; political party gender parity support and policies to mandate the number of female candidates; amendments to financial regulations at the municipal level so less spending is required; provision of work-life balance policies and practices; on-site quality child-care services/support; creating municipal consultation bodies, committees, and advisory boards for girls and women; women’s offices; and “gender budgeting”.<sup>5</sup>
- *Systemic*: Public education and awareness campaigns (on lack of female political representation, barriers and the importance of women’s involvement), media awareness and literacy, “gender sensitivity” training for political and municipal staff, “gender mainstreaming” training and initiatives.<sup>6</sup> Educational initiatives targeting young women and boys have also been suggested (e.g., promoting gender “sensitivity” and inclusion education into classrooms).

---

<sup>4</sup> Although many municipalities do not have political parties, there are ways to implement preferential voting. The province of Ontario passed legislation permitting the use of preferential voting in the 2016 municipal elections. See <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page11120.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> Gender budgeting is defined as, “a fiscal innovation that translates gender-related goals into budgetary commitments and can help countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals with regard to gender equality” (Chakraborty, 2016, p.2).

<sup>6</sup> “Gender mainstreaming” is defined as “the reorganization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes so that a gender-equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by actors normally involved in policymaking” (Council of Europe, 1999 in Metropolis, 2016, p. 3). Gender Mainstreaming was established as a major strategy to foster gender equality following the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, and adopted in the Beijing Platform of Action (UN, 2006).

## 2.2 Selected Examples

### *Organization initiatives:*

- **Canadian Women’s Voter Congress:** a non-partisan organization that supports women interested in running for political office by teaching them about the political process. Programs include:
  - The Women’s Campaign School, which is the oldest in Canada. Long-term political representatives, organizers, strategists, and communications experts from all political parties share experiences and provide advice on working in political office to any self-identified women interested in running at any level of government (see <http://www.womenvoters.ca/campaignschool2017>).
  - Mentorship Program--links women who are interested in running for political office or learning more about the process with female political representatives. The program is meant to provide potential candidates with networking and mentorship opportunities (see <http://www.womenvoters.ca/mentorship>).
  
- **Equal Voice** is a Canadian national group made up of multi-party volunteers aiming to increase women’s participation at every level of government. Initiatives include:
  - Getting to the Gate: An online campaign school to provide women from all backgrounds with the knowledge and tools required to run for political office (see <http://www.gettingtothegate.com/>). They also offer ‘train the trainer’ opportunities.
  - Deep Roots, Strong Wings: A targeted campaign school, resulting from consultations held with Indigenous women across Canada to identify how to get more Indigenous women into positions of leadership. This campaign school offers guidelines on how to run for office at all levels (band office to federal office). The program addresses the importance of Indigenous women’s representation in formal political decision-making positions (see <http://www.gettingtothegate.com/idx.php?rl=99> for limited information or contact Equal Voice).



- Equal Voice also tracks female candidates, advocates for electoral reform, and does national public awareness campaigns. Equal Voice Regional Chapters and University Clubs have their own initiatives and opportunities for networking and mentorship (see <https://www.equalvoice.ca/programs.cfm>).
- **Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)** has numerous initiatives and campaigns to support their overall objective of getting 30% women's participation in local governance by 2026. In this effort, they have set up multiple programs in Canada (and internationally) to support women's leadership at the municipal level, which include but are not limited to:
  - Getting to 30% Program: This program aims to increase the amount of women in decision-making positions throughout municipal government. The program especially supports women in rural and remote communities to run for elected office and offers campaign training and mentorship possibilities. To reach more women the program is also offered via webinar. FCM states just less than 40% of women who participate in the program go on to elected office (see: <https://fcm.ca/home/programs/women-in-local-government/past-programs/getting-to-30-program.htm>).
  - Head Start for Young Women program: Premised on the notion young women are “the experts of their own realities” and their intersecting identities influence their ability to be active in politics, FCM partners with Canadian communities to connect municipal councillors and women aged 16-24 to give them a voice in municipal government. The program aims to strengthen understanding of the challenges young women face participating in local governance and strategies to address them. The program includes resources for women (see: <https://fcm.ca/home/programs/women-inlocalgovernment/past-programs/headstart-foryoung-women-program.htm>).
  - Diverse Voices for Change: A new initiative to bring together a diverse group of women who participate in local governance. This initiative's objective is to ensure more underrepresented and marginalized women are represented in leadership positions at the local level and to support FCM's mandate of 30%

female representation. To this effect, FCM is partnering with five municipalities (Halifax, Montreal, London, Edmonton, Sioux Lookout), and their elected representatives to involve unrepresented women in municipal decision-making processes. Municipalities will collaborate with local organizations to create policies and practices to inclusively involve more marginalized women.<sup>7</sup> (See <https://fcm.ca/home/programs/women-in-local-government/diverse-voices-for-change.htm>).

- Protégé Program: Aims to get young women aged 18-28 engaged in joining municipal government in leadership and decision-making positions, and supports them to run for elected office. Elected representatives provide shadowing and mentorship opportunities, and participants acquire knowledge of political municipal processes and the positions of female councillors. Based on Toronto's Protégé Program (established in 2008 and evaluated in 2014)<sup>8</sup>, the program includes diverse municipalities across the country, including visible minority and Indigenous communities.<sup>9</sup>
- **POWER Camp National/Filles D'Action:** A Canadian charity focussed on the involvement of young women in local communities. They offer “gender-specific girls programming” that considers the specific needs and issues girls face and aims to increase young women’s civic engagement through community involvement and activism (see POWER Camp National/Filles d’Action, 2006).
- **Collectiu Punt 6 (Spain):** Collectiu Punt 6 is a Barcelona-based feminist organization of urban planners and architects that directly engages women in urban planning through feminist participatory methods. This example deviates from the other initiatives, but is included to highlight community engagement approaches based on feminist participatory models. Communications and engagement strategies to reach out to girls and women, especially from disenfranchised communities, must

---

<sup>7</sup> An evaluation of this program is scheduled for early next year.

<sup>8</sup> For more information about the Toronto Regional Champion Campaign, see: <http://torontoregionalchampioncampaign.blogspot.ca/>.

<sup>9</sup> FCM offers Protégé Program resources including a community and mentor guide, see <https://fcm.ca/home/programs/women-in-local-government/past-programs/prot%C3%A9g%C3%A9-program-/prot%C3%A9g%C3%A9-resources.htm>

be done thoughtfully and respectfully; the alternative community engagement processes shared by *Collectiu Punt 6* may be of interest to municipal actors (e.g. awareness workshops, community mapping, neighbourhood photovoice) (see Ortiz Escalante and Gutiérrez Valdivia, 2015). (Other considerations for community consultation processes to facilitate women's participation include: accountable and transparent information sharing, the provision of childcare and transportation, working with local women's organizations, and utilizing participatory methods and consultation strategies that are gender and culturally appropriate and inclusive, such as: healing circles, arts-based (photovoice) (FCM, 2004; TWCA, 2015)).

*Government initiatives:*

There is variable information on the existing gender equality initiatives in different cities and countries around the world; what is clear is that many states are engaged in some kind of work in the area of gender issues, yet the level of formal implementation is inconsistent, especially in terms of whether gender equality measures are mandated and held accountable through legal and policy means, the degree of advisory and regulatory measures in place, and to what extent resources and budgets are allocated to support gender equality initiatives. The limited number of countries with relatively high representation of women at the local level have *legal gender equality measures in place*. These countries include Sweden with 42% female councillors, attributed to national laws mandating equality measures (quotas and parity), India, in which a 1992 amendment to the constitution mandated 30% of municipal seats for women (resulting in over one million women involved in municipal councils), and France where a gender parity law led to 47% female councillors in the 2001 election (up from 21% in the previous one) (FCM, 2004, p.8). Formal quotas are seen as one of the most effective mechanisms to increase women's descriptive representation. Evidence to support this comes from nation-states which have adopted quotas, including Rwanda, a global leader in female political representation (63.8% of parliamentary representatives in the lower house) (see UN, 2005; UN Women, 2013).

- **Barcelona, Spain's Gender Justice Plan 2016-2020** is the most proactive and comprehensive gender equality plan found in this literature review search and represents

a promising future best practice. The plan identifies a ‘gender justice’ instead of a ‘gender equality’ approach and employs a critical feminist intersectional lens and analysis. The Department for Feminisms and LGBTI is leading the plan’s direction and implementation, and the plan is complemented by other city plans, including the Plan for Sexual Diversity and Against LGBT-phobia. The Gender Justice plan proposes thorough monitoring and evaluation processes, yet is in its early development and outcomes are pending full assessment. (see

<http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dretsocials/sites/default/files/arxiu-documents/plan-for-gender-justice-2016-2020.pdf> and <https://www.metropolis.org/news/2016/12/22/2938>)

This example and others demonstrate the importance of an authority specifically delegated to address diverse women’s equity, and outfitted with secure, permanent funding, resources, and a clear mandate.

- **Edmonton: The Women’s Initiative Edmonton** is a project endorsed by Edmonton’s city council that “fosters and promotes equality, opportunity, access to services, justice and inclusion for women in the city” (Women’s Initiative, 2016, p.1). A unique initiative in Canada, the project aims to incorporate diverse girls’ and women’s perspectives. Established in 2014, The Women’s Advocacy Voice of Edmonton (WAVE) operates under the Women’s Initiative. Using an intersectional gendered approach, they advise city council on municipal matters under WAVE’s mandate to ensure the perspectives and concerns of women from all backgrounds are represented in council affairs. They also support women’s leadership and involvement in municipal life, conduct research, and provide resources regarding gender issues. (See the WAVE’s Strategic Plan 2016-2018 for specific goals and additional information.)
- **The Philippines: The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) Gender Budgeting:** In the Philippines all government bodies are legally required to include gender equality considerations into all work plans, budgets and performance objectives, and to allocate 5% of their budgets to gender equality. The PCW assists government organizations to implement gender equality into their work and budgeting, and provides assessment and evaluation. In the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report 2015, the

Philippines ranked 7 out of 145 countries (see Illo, et al., 2010; Philippine Commission on Women, 2012; World Economic Forum, 2015).

There are other gender mainstreaming projects around the world at the local level (see: <https://unhabitat.org/books/gender-mainstreaming-in-local-authorities-best-practices/>).

*Evaluation of initiatives:*

- Predominant focus on tracking of quantitative data on female candidate nominations and election to office. For example, Equal Voice tracks women in elected office or leadership positions. More data on women’s involvement in local governance is required in general, and in rural areas in particular.
- Challenges with monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming initiatives have been identified, in part due to a deficiency in suitable and adaptable gender equality indicators (UN, 2006).
- Many gender inclusive and diversity inclusion assessment and measurement evaluation tools appear to exist, yet not necessarily many publically available, comprehensive, evidence-based program evaluations. Direct communications with organizations working on women’s political participation have largely confirmed this finding.
- Selected evaluation examples:
  - *Organizations:*
    - **Equal Voice’s “Women in Local Government Getting to 30%: Lessons Learned”** document highlights successes and challenges of their “Getting to 30%” initiative, and includes qualitative participant feedback. See [https://fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Women/FCM\\_Getting\\_to\\_30\\_percent\\_Lessons\\_Learned\\_EN.pdf](https://fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Women/FCM_Getting_to_30_percent_Lessons_Learned_EN.pdf)
    - **The revised Measuring Inclusion Tool (2017)** Welcoming and Inclusive Communities (WIC) initiative. WIC is a partnership between The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Province of Alberta whose objective is to create inclusive diverse communities. The initiative assists municipalities to institute policies that address racism and discrimination. The revised Measuring Inclusion Tool enables municipalities to assess

their progress on issues of inclusion.<sup>10</sup> See <https://auma.ca/news/new-and-improved-version-auma%E2%80%99s-measuring-inclusion-tool-now-available> <https://www.auma.ca/advocacy-services/programs-initiatives/welcoming-and-inclusive-communities/tools-resources/toolkits>

- **European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)** also offers a range of gender planning, monitoring and evaluation tools. See <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools>

- *City*

- **Vienna. Gender Sensitive Statistics.** Based on Vienna's gender equality policy and in particular consideration of the gendered wage gap, this Vienna Statistics Journal issue examines the use of 'gender statistics' or 'gender-sensitive statistics'. Unlike basic disaggregated data by sex, gender sensitive statistics are meant to incorporate more variables to provide an accurate picture of women's lives. The journal issue focuses on considerations for methodology and data collection when attempting to comprehensively account for women's conditions. See <https://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/genderstatistics-english.pdf>

### 3. Identified benefits of women in leadership positions

There are four thematic lines of argumentation for the necessity of women in leadership positions. First, the justice democratic argument posits that as half of the world's population, women deserve representation and an inclusive democratic society cannot exist unless women are represented in elected office and decision-making (Cordenillo, 2017). Second, it is argued women's economic and political empowerment is key to creating sustainable development and inclusion (e.g., peace building, post conflict reconstruction, fighting poverty) (UCLG, 2015; UN, 2015). It is also suggested higher representation of elected female officials in government may

---

<sup>10</sup> Newly established. They confirmed they have no evaluation data yet.

be correlated with lower corruption levels and significant to the creation of policies pertaining to good governance, development, and peace (Dollar, Fisman and Gatti, 1999; UN, 2005).

A third argument thematic in corporate and public sector literature is that women offer “different” leadership styles/approaches and experiences. Female leaders demonstrate effective decision-making, management, and collaboration, as well as greater profitability (The Economist, 2006; Vachon and Lavis, 2013). A large-scale study of the Canadian public service found positive benefits of women’s leadership at senior levels were related to women’s leadership styles described as more collaborative, supportive, and empathetic with employees. The study found female leaders have a positive influence on work culture and government programs (see Morris, 2016).

Greater participation by women in the work force and in corporate leadership positions in particular can generate greater profits and higher GDP growth. A recent report by McKinsey (June 2017) contends that taking concrete action on women’s equality in the workplace could increase Canada’s annual GDP by 0.6%, which could add \$150 billion in 2026. All provinces, especially British Columbia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec could see a growth between 4% and 9% per year (p.2). Research conducted by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) found increasing gender equality creates greater economic growth, leading to more jobs in the EU and higher GDP per capita growth. EIGE also found addressing existing gender inequalities together is more effective than isolating policy areas (EIGE, 2017).

Fourth, it is argued that women are influential in implementing gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming. Women bring “women’s issues” to the forefront, broadly identified as: safety, gender-based violence, childcare, water, housing, and education. For instance, research on women’s representation in local government councils (*panchayats*) in India demonstrates the number of drinking water projects in areas with female-led councils was 62% higher than in those with male-led councils. In Norway, more female representation on municipal councils has been positively correlated with childcare availability (UN Women, 2017; also see Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Bratton and Ray, 2002).

At the same time, Trimble and Ascott (2003) remind us while one popular assumption is elected female officials will represent ‘women’s issues’, in practice women’s policy interests reflect the diversity amongst women, and as such there are no universal “women’s needs”. For actual gender equity in political representation, a diversity of women, especially women from

marginalized communities, must have leadership roles in local governance. Elected women will better represent different women by championing women's perspectives, not only their interests. Moreover, we need to move beyond what we consider 'women's issues' and integrate women's perspectives into all policy areas to consider how each policy impacts self-identified women in different ways. To do this women's perspectives must have legitimacy and be taken seriously, including the expertise diverse women cultivate from their experiences and knowledge of urban space (FCM, 2004; Metropolis, 2016).

#### **4. Trends in the literature**

- As per the Beijing Declaration, there is a considerable amount of literature on the concept of "gender mainstreaming" and case studies on nation-state and city efforts to participate in gender mainstreaming efforts to demonstrate their commitment to the Declaration.
- As women around the world are forced to face high levels of gender-based (and racialized) violence, there is a thematic focus on making cities safer for women. Initiatives are underway to eliminate the harassment and violence women face in urban spaces that limits their movements and opportunities to participate in urban life. The City of Edmonton is one of only a few Canadian cities that are part of the UN Women's Safe Cities program (see UN Safe Cities Global Initiative, 2013; City of Edmonton, 2017; O'Leary and Viswanath, 2011).
- Supporting women running for elected office: there appears to be more focus on descriptive (numerical) rather than substantial representation (going "beyond numbers") to systemic changes in which women have voice, leadership, and influence, especially in traditionally male-dominated sectors (Gavan-Koop and Smith, 2008; Trimble and Ascott, 2003).
- There is much more prevalent literature on the identified barriers to women's involvement and recommendations on practices and policies that should be implemented than on best practices and evidence-based evaluated programs that have been implemented. At the same time, some initiatives are relatively new so perhaps this will grow (still political will and commitment play a role in whether this will be the case).



#### **4.1 Strengths in the literature**

- There is growing attention to women's representation and involvement in decision-making and leadership in public and private sectors, and more literature in these areas.
- There is an increasing amount of work demonstrating the barriers and strategies for women in politics, especially at the national level.
- A range of gender mainstreaming initiatives and recommendations exist, as well as equity and inclusion guidelines, tools and resources for organizations and governments (e.g., CAWI, 2015; FCM, 2004; LeCain, 2016; TWCA, 2016).
- The literature suggests that many nation-states (at various levels of governments) have made commitments to gender equality especially following the Beijing Declaration (whether these commitments result in structural changes will likely vary significantly).
- There are case studies in developing states, especially with major focus on gender-based violence, creating safe cities for women, and addressing conditions of conflict and security (e.g., food and land).
- Many programs and initiatives exist by organizations active in promoting and supporting women's involvement in municipal government (predominant focus on running for and being elected to municipal office).

#### **4.2 Gaps in the literature**

- Best practices/case studies that can be applied directly and most effectively to the two municipalities (e.g., although best practices literature exists on developing countries at the local level, focus may be on water sanitation, election gender-based violence, and land title/inheritance and ownership which does not directly pertain in this case). More studies of Canadian municipalities with relatively high numbers of female elected representatives and leaders are needed.
- Lack of consistent and standardized reporting of women's involvement in local governance on a global scale (UN Women, 2017). There is a particular need for disaggregated data that accounts for race, ethnicity, legal status, and class of women's representation in local governance. We require this data as a foundation to support an intersectional approach to data collection and to create effective strategies and interventions.

- Lack of an intersectional gender-based lens for gender equity analyses, practices and approaches. For example, we see the universal application of ‘women’ and the use of “gender sensitivity” in a distinct amount of the literature (is this a sufficient strategy for systemic change? Is a paradigmatic shift to a critical intersectional approach required?).
- Lack of gender-disaggregated data and limited analysis that includes how intersecting identities affect women’s experiences and outcomes, especially at the municipal level. There is a particular need for more inquiry into racialized women’s involvement in local government in Canada. (Note: the Federation for Municipalities is currently working with a partner organization to consider how to address this data gap.)
- Evidenced-based evaluations: An overview of the literature suggests there are plenty of excellent initiatives and programs to increase women’s representation in government (several of which are highlighted above), yet, many do not have evidence-based evaluations available to measure the impacts of programs, determine areas of necessary improvement, and to share with other organizations to strategically collaborate in their efforts. Lack of resources has been identified as a key reason for the absence of evaluation measures.

## **5. Key considerations/recommendations based on literature review**

- Go beyond “gender sensitivity” training to interventive and competency-based approaches that address systemic patriarchal cultural norms and structures, as well as power dynamics.
- “Flip the script” on the messaging for women and governance from an emphasis on why women should be involved in local government to what it means when they are not. Need to look beyond what are considered individual issues (e.g., lack of self-confidence, lack of political literacy) and efforts to convince women to run for office, to structural changes in institutional practices and organizational cultures to support diverse women, recognizing their needs and experiences are different and impact their access to resources.
- Work directly and collaborate with “subject-matter expert” advocacy organizations already engaged in initiatives to support women, connecting the informal and formal political spheres (this is where we see the most action, e.g., FCM working with cities).

- Consult feminist urban planning literature and stakeholders engaged in women's involvement in urban planning, gender equality, and inclusive cities to consider outreach and recruitment strategies, especially for marginalized women (e.g., Ortiz Escalante and Gutiérrez Valdivia, 2015; Rustin, 2014). Consult corporate literature for company best practices on women's equality measures yielding measurable results (see Devillard, 2017).
- Qualitative interviews are anticipated to be quite informative and will provide data where more formal documentation and evaluation are in deficit. The interviews can also specifically address marginalized women's involvement within the situated municipalities, which can be very beneficial.
- The significance of political (and public) will and commitment, the necessity of men championing women's equity, and multiparty/partisan support for equity initiatives all appear to be very influential in the promise of transformational long-lasting change.
- Approaches to increase women's involvement should address gender-based violence, especially the relationship between violence and marginalization for distinct groups of women. In Canada, Indigenous girls and women face extremely high levels of violence, reported at three times greater than non-Indigenous women (WTC, 2014). Transgender people in Canada also report high rates of violence (Lambert and McInturff, 2016).

## **6. Potential contribution of this project**

- Employment of a multipronged approach in recognition that barriers are intersecting and multifaceted (individually identified barriers are in fact systemic ones; e.g., why do women "lack confidence" to run for office?)
- Employment of an expanded definition of 'involvement' to include not only elected office, but equally important, a focus on systemic changes that hinder women's involvement (e.g., unpaid and under-paid labour, gender-based violence, poverty, insufficient childcare system) and multiple pathways to involve women in local government. Work from the understanding that electing more women to political office is the first of many steps to women's inclusion and gender equity, but it is not the only one.

- Application of an intersectional feminist gender-based lens to all aspects of the project, including: analysis, indicators, evaluation methods, etc. that explicitly address marginalized women.
- Incorporation of participatory consultation and evaluation mechanisms into all initiatives. *The project could contribute to the development of new participatory evaluation methods.*
- Sharing of best practices, lessons learned, and recommendations with a broad range of stakeholders to enrich practice-based knowledge in this area and align efforts.

## **7. Conclusion**

When we employ a gender-based intersectional analysis to self-identified women's involvement in local governance, we recognize 'women' is not a universal category and women experience urban space in different ways. Women, especially marginalized women, often do not have access to the resources they require to be engaged in urban political, social, and economic life.

While gaps in the existing literature exist, Canadian municipalities have enough diverse best practices and sufficient data to become innovative leaders in not only gender equity, but also *gender justice*. Municipalities have an excellent opportunity to show their commitment to sustainable economic and social growth by creating policies and practices that support all women's leadership and involvement in local governance.

## REFERENCES

- Ajuntament de Barcelona. (2006). *Plan for Gender Justice 2016-2020*. Retrieved from <http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dretssocials/sites/default/files/arxiu-documents/plan-for-gender-justice-2016-2020.pdf>
- Association for Women's Rights in Development. (2004). Intersectionality: A tool for gender and economic justice. *Women's Rights and Economic Change*, no. 9, 1-8. [https://lgbtq.unc.edu/sites/lgbtq.unc.edu/files/documents/intersectionality\\_en.pdf](https://lgbtq.unc.edu/sites/lgbtq.unc.edu/files/documents/intersectionality_en.pdf)
- Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA). (n.d.). *Tools and Resources*. Retrieved from <https://www.auma.ca/advocacy-services/programs-initiatives/welcoming-and-inclusive-communities/tools-resources>
- Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA). (2017). *New and improved version of AUMA's Measuring Inclusion Tool now available*. Retrieved from <https://auma.ca/news/new-and-improved-version-auma%E2%80%99s-measuring-inclusion-tool-now-available>
- Bashevkin, S. (2006). *Tales of two cities: Women and municipal restructuring in London and Toronto*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Bratton, K. A., and L. P. Ray, L. P. (2002). Descriptive Representation: Policy Outcomes and Municipal Day-Care Coverage in Norway. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(2), 428–437.
- Canadian Women Voters Congress. (n.d.) *Women's Campaign School 2.0*. Retrieved from <http://www.womenvoters.ca/campaignschool2017>

- Canadian Women Voters Congress. (n.d.). *Mentorship Program*. Retrieved from <http://www.womenvoters.ca/mentorship>
- Chakraborty, L. (2016). *IMF Working Paper. Asia: A Survey of Gender Budgeting Efforts*. Retrieved from <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2016/wp16150.pdf>.
- Chattopadhyay, R. and Duflo, E. (2004). Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India. *Econometrica* 72(5), 1409–1443
- City for all Women Initiative. (2015). *Equity and Inclusion Handbook 2015*. <http://www.cawivtf.org/publications/equity-and-inclusion-lens-handbook-2015>
- City of Edmonton. (2017). *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative*. Retrieved from [https://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/initiatives\\_innovation/united-nations-women-safe-citi.aspx](https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/initiatives_innovation/united-nations-women-safe-citi.aspx)
- City of Toronto. (n.d.). *Toronto Regional Champion Campaign*. Retrieved from <http://torontoregionalchampioncampaign.blogspot.ca/>
- City of Vienna. (2014). Gender-sensitive statistics: Making life's realities visible. *Statistik Journal Wien*, 2, 3-49. Retrieved from [https://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/genderstatistics\\_english.pdf](https://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/genderstatistics_english.pdf)
- Cordenillo, R. (2017, June 6). *Political inclusion is vital to sustainable democracy*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Retrieved from <https://www.idea.int/news-media/news/political-inclusion-vital-sustainable-democracy>
- Devillard, T. et al. (2017). *The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in Canada: Executive Summary*. McKinsey Global Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/globalthemes/gender-equality/the-power-of-parity-advancing-womens-equality-in-canada>

Dollar, D., Fisman, R., Gatti, R. (1999). *Are Women Really the “Fairer” Sex? Corruption and Women in Government*. The World Bank. Policy Research Report on Gender and Development Working Paper Series, No. 4. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/305281468779674425/pdf/multi-page.pdf>

European Institute for Gender Equality. (2017). *Gender Mainstreaming Methods and Tools*. Available at <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools>

European Institute for Gender Equality. (2017). *Economic Benefits of Gender Equality in the European Union Report on the empirical application of the model*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Retrieved from <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/economic-benefits-gender-equality-european-union-report-empirical-application-model>

Equal Voice. (2005). *Getting to the Gate*. Retrieved from <http://www.gettingtothegate.com>

Equal Voice. (2005). *Deep Roots, Strong Wings*. Retrieved from <http://www.gettingtothegate.com/idx.php?rl=99>

Equal Voice. (2007). *Equal Voice: Women in Canadian politics: Backgrounder*. Retrieved from [https://www.equalvoice.ca/pdf/288\\_46709afdc27f.pdf](https://www.equalvoice.ca/pdf/288_46709afdc27f.pdf)

Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (2004). *A City Tailored to Women: The Role of Municipal Governments in Achieving Gender Equality*. Retrieved from [https://fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Women/A\\_City\\_Tailored\\_to\\_Women\\_The\\_Role\\_of\\_Municipal\\_Governments\\_in\\_Achieving\\_Gender\\_Equality\\_EN.pdf](https://fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Women/A_City_Tailored_to_Women_The_Role_of_Municipal_Governments_in_Achieving_Gender_Equality_EN.pdf)

Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (last updated 2016, 7 September). *Head Start for Young Women Program*. Retrieved from <https://fcm.ca/home/programs/womeninlocalgovernment/past-programs/head-start-foryoung-women-program.htm>

- Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (last updated: 2017, 2 February). *Getting to 30% Program*. Retrieved from: <https://fcm.ca/home/programs/women-in-local-government/past-programs/getting-to-30program.htm>
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (last updated 2017, April. 4). *About women in local government*. <https://fcm.ca/home/programs/women-in-local-government/about-women-in-local-government.htm>
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (last updated 2017, 7 July). *Diverse voices for change: A new program for women*. Received from <https://fcm.ca/home/programs/women-in-local-government/diversevoices-for-change.htm>
- Gavan-Koop, D. and Smith, P. (2008). Gendering local governing: Canadian and comparative lessons-the case for metropolitan Vancouver. *Canadian Political Science Review*, 3, 152-171.
- Gidengil, E., and Vengroff, R. (1997). Representational gains of Canadian women or token growth? The case of Quebec's municipal politics. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 30(3), 513-537.
- Godwin, M. (2010). Awaiting the watershed: Women in Canada's parliament. *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, 33(2), 32-37).
- Howell, M. (2015, February 23). Vision Vancouver spends \$3.4 million on campaign. The Vancouver Courier. Retrieved from <http://www.vancourier.com/news/vision-vancouver-spends-3-4-million-on-campaign-1.1772063>
- Ilo, Jeanne Frances I et al. (2010). *Accounting for Gender Results: A Review of the Philippine GAD Budget Policy*. Miriam College —Women and Gender Institute.



- Lambert, B., and McInturff, K. (2016). *Making women count: The unequal economics of women's work*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Retrieved from <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/making-women-count-0>
- Lawless, J. L., & Fox, R. L. (2004). *Why don't women run for office*. *Taubman Center for Public Policy, Providence: Brown University Press*.
- LeCain, E. (2016). *Mayors Guide: Accelerating Gender Equality*. It's Time Network. Retrieved from [http://www.itstimenetwork.org/mayors\\_guide](http://www.itstimenetwork.org/mayors_guide)
- Lore, G., Beauvais, E., and James-Lomax, A. (2014). Opinion: elections yield mixed results for women. *The Vancouver Sun*. Retrieved from <http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Opinion+Elections+yield+mixed+results+women/0413374/story.html>
- Manole, D. (2015). Immigrants in Parliament, including ministers and just announced parliamentary secretaries. *Canadian Immigrant*. Retrieved from <http://canadianimmigrant.ca/news-and-views/immigrants-in-parliament-including-ministers-and-just-announced-parliamentary-secretaries>
- McInturff, K. (2014). *Where are all the women (candidates)?* Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Retrieved from <http://behindthenumbers.ca/2014/09/12/where-are-all-the-women-candidates/>
- Metropolis. (22 December 2016). *Barcelona presents its new master plan for gender justice in Tehran*. Retrieved from <https://www.metropolis.org/news/2016/12/22/2938>
- Metropolis. (2016). *Big Cities and Women: The Importance of Gender Mainstreaming in Local Policies*. Retrieved from [https://www.metropolis.org/sites/default/files/media\\_root/documents/20160120\\_bigcitiesandwomen\\_rev\\_metropolis\\_en\\_rev.pdf](https://www.metropolis.org/sites/default/files/media_root/documents/20160120_bigcitiesandwomen_rev_metropolis_en_rev.pdf)

Morris, M. (2016). *Women's Leadership Matters: The Impact of Women's Leadership in the Canadian Public Federal Service*. Ottawa: Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University.

O'Leary, R., and Viswanath, K. (2011). *Building Safe and Inclusive Cities for Women: A Practical Guide*. Jagori: New Delhi. Retrieved from <http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/5-13-add-building-safe-inclusive-cities-for-women.pdf>

Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. (2015). *Ranked Ballots*. Retrieved from <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page11120.aspx>

Ortiz Escalante, S., and Gutiérrez Valdivia, B. (2015) Planning from below: Using feminist participatory methods to increase women's participation in urban planning. *Gender and Development*, 23(1), 113-126.

Philippine Commission on Women. (2012). *Annual GAD Planning and Budgeting Guidelines: Guide in Completing the GAD Plan and Budget Template*.

POWER Camp National/Filles d'Action. (2006). *Best Practices for Girl- and Young Women Friendly Cities: Towards an International Dialogue*. Retrieved from <http://girlsactionfoundation.ca/files/WUF%20best%20practices.pdf>

Rustin, S. (2014). If women built cities, what would our urban landscape look like? *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/dec/05/if-women-built-cities-what-would-our-urban-landscape-look-like>

SACHA. (n.d.). *What Does Women-Identified Mean?* Retrieved from <http://sacha.ca/resources/what-doeswomen-identified-mean>

- Sawer, M. (2000). Parliamentary representation of women: From discourse of justice to strategies of accountability. *International Political Science Review*, 21(4), 361-380.
- Seiferling, H. (2016). *Running in place: Overcoming barriers for women in Canadian municipal politics*. Masters thesis. Retrieved from <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/16393>
- Siemiatycki, M. (2011). *The diversity gap: The electoral under-representation of visible minorities*. Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement. Retrieved from <http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/rcis/documents/Siemiatycki.pdf>
- Status of Women Canada. (2017). What is GBA+? Gender -Based Analysis Plus. <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-acis/index-en.html> (Resources and training on GBA+ available)
- Thomas, M. (2013). Barriers to Women's Political Participation in Canada. *University of New Brunswick Law Journal*, 64, 218-233.
- Tolley, E. (2011). Do women "do better" in municipal politics? Electoral representation across three levels of government." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 44(3), 573-594.
- Tolley, E. (2015). Visible minority and Indigenous Members of Parliament. *The Samara Blog*. Retrieved from <http://www.samaracanada.com/samarablog/blog-post/samara-main-blog/2015/11/26/visible-minority-and-indigenous-members-of-parliament>
- Tolley, E. (2016). *Framed: Media and the coverage of race in Canadian politics*. Vancouver: BC: UBC Press.
- Toronto Women's City Alliance (TWCA). (2015). *Communities in Which Women Count: The Women's Equality Report Card Project*. Retrieved from [http://www.twca.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/TWCA\\_June\\_2010a1.pdf](http://www.twca.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/TWCA_June_2010a1.pdf)

Toronto Women's City Alliance (TWCA). (2016). *Municipal Literacy Toolkit: A Guide to Help Women and Girls Advocate for Their Rights in Toronto*. Retrieved from <http://www.twca.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/TWCA-Municipal-Literacy-Toolkit.pdf>

Tremblay, M., and Mevellec, A. (2013). Truly more accessible to women than the legislature? Women in municipal politics. In L. Trimble, J. Ascott, and M. Tremblay (Eds.), *Stalled: The representation of women in Canadian governments (19-35)*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Trimble, L., and Arscott, J. (2003). *Still counting: Women in politics across Canada*. New Brunswick: Broadview Press.

UCLG Standing Committee on Gender Equality. (2015). *Women, Leadership and Development From SDG 5 to Habitat III*. Retrieved from [https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/women\\_paris\\_2015-\\_eng-web\\_0.pdf](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/women_paris_2015-_eng-web_0.pdf)

UN Habitat. (2008). *Gender Mainstreaming in Local Authorities – Best Practices*. Retrieved from <https://unhabitat.org/books/gender-mainstreaming-in-local-authorities-best-practices/>

UN Women. (2013). *In Brief: Women's Leadership and Political Representation*. Retrieved from <http://www2.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2013/12/un%20womenlgtembriefuswebrev2%20pdf>

UN Women. (2013). *In Brief: Safe Cities Global Initiative*. Retrieved from [http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publication/2013/12/un%20women-evaw-safecities-brief\\_us-web%20pdf.ashx](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publication/2013/12/un%20women-evaw-safecities-brief_us-web%20pdf.ashx)

- UN Women. (2016). *Gender Equality and the New Urban Agenda*.  
<http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/10/gender-equality-and-the-new-urban-agenda>
- UN Women. (last updated July 2017). Facts and figures: Leadership and political participation. Retrieved from <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures#notes>
- United Nations. (2006). Gender, Water and Sanitation Case Studies on Best Practices. Retrieved from [http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/water/casestudies\\_bestpractices.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/water/casestudies_bestpractices.pdf)
- United Nations. (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development*. Retrieved from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>
- United Nations Development Programme. (2007). *Electoral Financing to Advance Women's Political Participation: A Guide for UNDP Support*. Retrieved from [https://www.agoraparl.org/sites/default/files/gendergovpr\\_elections.pdf](https://www.agoraparl.org/sites/default/files/gendergovpr_elections.pdf)
- United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women. (2005). *Equal Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making Processes, with Particular Emphasis on Political Participation and Leadership*. Report of the Expert Group Meeting Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia 24 – 27 October 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/eql-men/FinalReport.pdf>
- Vachon, D. B., and Lavis, C. (2013) *Women in Leadership: Perceptions and Priorities for Change*. The Conference Board of Canada. Available at <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=5150>
- Wicks, A., and Lang-Dion, R. (2007). Equal voice: Electing more women in Canada. *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, 36-39.

Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton (WAVE). *Wave's Strategic Plan 2016-2018*. Retrieved from [https://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/documents/PDF/WAVE StrategicPlan.pdf](https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/WAVE%20StrategicPlan.pdf)

World Economic Forum. (2015). Global Gender Gap Index 2015 Rankings.