

# INCREASING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN Municipal Decision Making

Strategies for More Inclusive Canadian Communities

The FCM Increasing Women's Participation in | Municipal Consultation Processes Project | September 2004



Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Decision-making Processes:  
Strategies for More Inclusive Canadian Communities

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During the past year, I have been involved with FCM's project to increase women's participation in municipal consultation processes.

With the support of Status of Women Canada, the project sought the perspective of municipal governments, women's organizations, and more than 600 women in six diverse communities across Canada on how to increase women's participation in local government. This report is the fruit of that project.

The project's success and the enthusiasm it has generated demonstrate how important municipal government is for women. It also indicates the great responsibility municipalities have, as the order of government closest to people, to provide leadership in the areas of inclusiveness and gender equality.

This report outlines the project's research findings and recommendations for action. Important work remains to be done to ensure that everyone in our communities has an opportunity to take part in municipal decision-making. We have excellence to share, new partnerships to forge, and capacity to build. More inclusive municipal processes will lead to more responsive local governments that reflect the communities they serve.

On behalf of FCM, I would like to thank Status of Women Canada for funding the project and for partnering with us to increase women's participation in municipal government. Our thanks also go to FCM's Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee for sponsoring this project, to the members of the National Steering Committee for their guidance and support, and to the municipalities and individuals who contributed to making this project so successful.

Sincerely,



Ann MacLean  
President

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF FCM CANADIAN WOMEN IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE



The FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee is pleased to present this document as the result of its first national partnership project.

Even now, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, gender equality issues remain an area of concern.

The FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee was formed in 1999, as a response to the concerns of men and women holding elected office across the country. There was an expression of concern about the need to develop strong municipal councils, to develop teams that would work cohesively and inclusively on issues that were challenging municipalities.

Local government remains the order of government closest to the people. When it comes to municipal decision making, men and women are equal in their experiences, concerns and talents, and are equally valuable to the entire decision-making process. Where there are differences, these occur as a result of gender isolation, values, social norms and their respective roles in the community. Although we share a common concern for issues such as roads, parks, housing, transportation and health, each person experiences these differently.

How can we ensure that the diverse experiences and needs of people are addressed in our municipal decision-making processes?

How can we ensure that both men and women have equal opportunities to effectively participate in local governance, both during the election process and at the municipal council table?

This preliminary study is an important step on the road to identifying some of the barriers, limitations and challenges to equal participation in the municipal decision-making process. It is an important first step to bringing forward recommendations that will plan for improved governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

With the conclusion of the study, our challenge is to receive these recommendations and to respond by initiating actions that build a strong and healthy future. A future that is inclusive of all our citizens.

Respectfully,

Joan Lougheed  
Chair, FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee  
Member of the Project Steering Committee and Project Working Group

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Terms that require definition are used throughout this report:

### 1. Gender

Gender is the culturally specific set of characteristics that identifies the social behaviour of women and men and the relationship between them. Gender refers not simply to women or men, but to the relationship between them, and the way it is socially constructed. Because it is a relational term, gender must include women and men. Like the concepts of class, race and ethnicity, gender is an analytical tool for understanding social processes.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. Gender Mainstreaming

The Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) proposed gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for the reduction of inequalities between women and men. Gender mainstreaming is “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including legislation, policies, and programmes, in any area and at all levels.” It is a call to all governments and other actors to promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming and to include a gender perspective in all policies and programs so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Gender Equality and Gender Equity

Gender *equality*, equality between men and women, entails the concept that all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender *equity* means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

### 4. Gender-disaggregated Data

The collection of data that is disaggregated or “broken out” by gender/sex is a policy and planning tool that gives visibility to women’s work and contributions. Data is collected separately for both genders and provides accurate information on the differences between women and men, and any inequalities that exist. Statistics and indicators that are gender disaggregated can be used in municipal planning, policy development and evaluation in areas such as budgets, housing, transportation and social services. In addition, gender-disaggregated data is important to ensure that women’s work in the informal or unpaid sectors is included in decision-making processes.

### 5. Consultation Processes

Consultation processes in this study include the formal and informal ways in which municipalities seek input, opinion and information from citizens. It also includes formal and informal ways in which municipalities provide information to the public about plans, policies and programs.



## 6. Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) involves systematic inquiry, in which those who are experiencing a problematic situation in an organization or community participate collaboratively with trained researchers to decide the focus of knowledge generation, to collect and analyse information, and to take action to improve their situation. By recognizing the value of knowledge possessed by practitioners, community members and citizens, PAR bridges local knowledge with scientific knowledge to generate new understanding, which can directly contribute to action that improves the situation at hand. PAR promotes broad participation in the research process and supports action leading to a more just or satisfying situation for stakeholders.<sup>4</sup>

## 7. Marginalized Women

In this study, the term 'marginalized women' refers to women who have limited status, influence, power or voice in their community. Women in this study were marginalized due to the following reasons: lack of economic or employment status (including low income, unemployed or underemployed, social assistance recipient, sex trade worker), visible minority, ethnic or cultural minority, religious minority, Aboriginal or Inuit, immigrant status, disability, sexual orientation, age (older women, younger women) or a combination of these and/or other factors. This study made a conscious attempt to invite the participation of marginalized women and to seek input from women who are often excluded from the public participation process in Canadian communities.

## INTRODUCTION

In June 2003, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) launched a one-year research project with funding from Status of Women Canada. The purpose of the project was to contribute to changing municipal consultation practices and policies, so that the full diversity of Canadian women would have a meaningful voice in the decisions affecting their daily lives. Over the past months, the project has carried out research on a national level and involved women in six Canadian communities through local participatory action research projects. This summary report presents an overview of the project findings and recommends a national strategy to strengthen women's involvement in public participation and bridge the current gender gap in Canadian municipal processes.

## BACKGROUND

FCM's prime mission is to advocate and promote strong, effective and accountable municipal government in Canada and work internationally within a global network for policy development and advocacy on municipal issues and priorities.<sup>5</sup> As a member of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) and signatory to the Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government, FCM recognizes that local government is the order of government closest to citizens and, therefore, is in the best position to involve women in making decisions that concern their living conditions and make use of their knowledge and capabilities in the promotion of sustainable development.

The IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government supports:

- Strengthening efforts to make equal the number of women and men in decision-making bodies in all policy areas.
- Applying the mainstreaming principle by integrating a gender perspective into all policies, programs and service delivery activities in individual local governments and their representative associations.
- Looking at new ways to ensure women are represented and actively participate by formal as well as informal means in local governance.
- Working for changes of attitudes related to gender issues by raising awareness within the education system and within the structure of local government.
- Working with other actors of society to accomplish goals of the IULA declaration.<sup>6</sup>

IULA (now United Cities and Local Governments), along with the United Nations, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the European Union, has developed comprehensive policies and plans of action to address historic inequalities between women and men and to support gender equality. These include the development of knowledge networks, strategic alliances to advance gender equality, gender mainstreaming for all policy and program development, and the promotion of sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis.

FCM, through its International Centre for Municipal Development (ICMD), is highly regarded internationally for its work on gender equality. It has actively supported increased gender equality in municipal processes through initiatives and publications such as *Gender and Municipal Development: Guidelines for Promoting Women's Participation in Partnership Program Activities* (1996) and *A City Tailored to Women* (1997, expanded and revised in 2004). In addition, Canadian initiatives such as *Femmes et Ville International*, based in Montreal, have garnered international attention for groundbreaking work in the area of women's safety and inclusion.

In 2002, a knowledge-sharing workshop on gender equality was organized by FCM-ICMD, which attracted 50 international and Canadian participants. The workshop led to the following questions, and resulted in the current project.

- 1) How are women participating in Canadian municipalities and what barriers do they face?
- 2) What needs to be done to increase women's participation?

## THE RESEARCH APPROACH

The Increasing Women's Participation project used both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather data:

- 152 FCM member municipalities took part in a national survey on women's participation;
- Leaders from 20 women's organizations were interviewed and a workshop was held with the Canadian Congress of Muslim Women at its national conference;
- FCM Board and staff participated in consultations, and two workshops were held with the FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government committee;
- A Strategic Planning workshop was held with a small group from the FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee (CWMG);
- Review of literature;
- Participatory research at the following six community sites:

<b>Cowichan Valley, British Columbia</b> (The Cowichan Women Against Violence Society)	<b>Saskatoon, Saskatchewan</b> (City of Saskatoon, Community Services Department)
<b>Halifax, Nova Scotia</b> (Halifax YWCA)	<b>Iqaluit, Nunavut</b> (Qullit Nunavut Status of Women)
<b>Thunder Bay, Ontario</b> (Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre)	<b>Montreal, Quebec</b> (The Women's Y of Montreal, YWCA)

The **FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee** acted as the governance body for the project. An eighteen-member **National Steering Committee** developed the research framework, recommendations for national strategies and tools to increase women's participation, and a five-member **Working Group** provided direction and support to the Project Coordinator. FCM-ICMD managed the project.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

### 1. Canada is losing ground with countries around the world

- With only 21.7% women in elected local government office, Canada falls behind many South American, African and European countries.
- Gender mainstreaming, the incorporation of gender equality in all stages of policy making, is a statutory requirement for member states of the European Union but rarely used in Canada at the municipal level.
- Canada now ranks 37<sup>th</sup> of 181 countries on the Inter-Parliamentary Union Table on Women in National Parliaments (2003).

## 2. Women are under-represented in most municipal processes

- The majority of councils surveyed (86%) did not have equal representation of elected women on council. 14% reported having no women on council.
- Higher numbers of women participate on Advisory Committees, but women from diverse groups (including visible minorities, disabled, immigrants, other) are very poorly represented.
- Women participate at higher levels in municipal consultation processes than as elected officials or committee members, but are still under-represented; diverse groups of women are not well represented.

## 3. There is a need for more information about municipal governance and ways for women and municipalities to access and share information

- Women identified the lack of information about municipal government as a serious obstacle to participation.
- Canada has no central clearinghouse for information about women and municipal government, participatory government or best practices.

## 4. Significant barriers to participation were identified

- Municipalities and women's networks may not have established working relationships.
- Municipalities do not actively reach out to involve women in consultation processes.
- Lack of practical support for women (including childcare, transportation, timing of meetings).
- Lack of support from the municipality for more inclusive policies and practices.
- Family responsibilities and lack of time because of women's paid and unpaid work.

## 5. Marginalized women face more serious systemic barriers to participation

Women who are marginalized because of race, ethnicity, poverty, immigration status, age, sexual orientation or disability participate in municipal processes at low levels and often do not vote. Systemic barriers to participation appear to shut many marginalized women out of participation in their local government:

- Racism and discrimination.
- Sexism.
- Language barriers.
- Politics are viewed as a "man's game" or an "old boy's network".
- Marginalized women do not have a voice or influence in their community.

There is a need for more training and awareness-raising activities for municipal staff and elected officials in the areas of racism, gender and anti-oppression work.

## 6. Women are actively involved in their communities but may have given up on municipal government as a way of making change

- Women choose to work outside of municipal processes because they feel they can be more effective and exert more influence. Women with limited time want to work where they can make a difference.
- Inuit women reported that the municipal system does not reflect Inuit values or traditions.
- Women believe that their voices go unheard and that their participation does not lead to meaningful change.
- Women's organizations reported that where municipal governments only focus on infrastructure – and not on the social services that are important for women and their families – women choose not participate.

**7. Municipalities, women and women's groups agree that there are clear benefits for communities and municipalities when women participate fully**

- Inclusion pays off. From an economic standpoint, it maximizes the potential of everyone in the community.
- In general, women practise more collaborative styles of working that benefit decision-making and inclusive processes.
- Increased participation creates more opportunities for women to take leadership roles within their communities.
- Increased knowledge leads to better services, more efficient use of resources and more informed decision making by elected officials.
- Increased community support for municipal decisions.
- Municipalities are more effective in meeting the needs of women and their families when women participate in decision making.
- Women are a resource and have skills and knowledge to offer their communities.

**8. Policies and practices for gender mainstreaming and inclusive participation are not commonly used in Canadian municipalities**

Canada has developed excellent gender mainstreaming tools (for example from Status of Women Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA) but these tools do not appear to be adapted or used in the municipal context.

**9. Partnerships between municipalities and women's organizations are extremely effective but remain a largely untapped resource**

- Women's organizations are a potential resource for municipalities, as well as provincial/territorial and national associations.
- The study identified effective and successful partnerships that could be used as best-practice examples for other communities.
- Women's organizations have access to networks of women who can be enlisted to support municipal governments around shared goals or projects.
- Women's organizations can provide municipalities with access to expertise and tools in areas of consultation, inclusive participatory processes, policy development, as well as gender and anti-racism training, leadership development and research.

**10. Effective and inclusive consultation processes lay the foundation for successful partnerships and joint projects**

- Women's organizations reported that successful consultation processes are the first step for successful partnerships and joint projects.
- Women in the community sites reported that positive experiences with municipal consultation processes (including the experience of being heard in a fair and open process that has good accessibility, is respectful and safe, in a comfortable setting and accountable) encouraged them to become more involved in the municipal decision-making process.
- The consultation processes used during the community research were effective methods of reaching women who usually do not participate. These processes included focus groups, workshops, information sessions, workshops with women and municipal officials and partnership approaches.

### 11. Leadership development and mentoring are needed to enhance participation

- Aboriginal, Métis, Inuit, immigrant and marginalized women reported that they need skills development and leadership training to participate successfully in municipal processes.
- Elected women need campaign schools, mentoring programs for newly elected women and support networks.
- Marginalized women said that successful role models, together with the presence of women “like them” in municipal processes, are powerful motivators for participation, especially for young women.

### 12. Municipalities and women’s organizations need tools, training and resources to increase women’s participation

- Information Tools and Links to national and international information sources.
- Policy Templates and Models on gender mainstreaming and inclusion.
- Consultation Tools and Processes that take into account women’s needs and realities.
- Tools for Partnership Building.
- Leadership, Mentoring and Skill Development.
- Best Practices, Case Studies and Lessons Learned.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS

### 1. A National Strategy to Increase Women’s Participation in Municipal Processes

Canada needs a new vision and a national strategy that will help women become fully involved in municipal decision-making processes.

The goal of the national strategy is:

**To maximize opportunities for the involvement of women in municipal processes so that women are able to attain equal levels of participation with men by:**

- Making gender equality in municipal consultation and decision-making processes a priority for action in Canada.
- Taking coordinated action to address the systemic and practical barriers to full participation in municipal consultation and decision-making processes that women experience, especially marginalized women.
- Building effective partnerships and coalitions between local governments, national and grassroots women’s organizations.

This new approach could involve different players:

- FCM and member municipalities.
- The FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee.
- Provincial and territorial municipal associations.
- Municipal councillors, especially women councillors.
- Women’s organizations at the national, provincial and community levels.

## 2. An Action Plan that Includes Four Components

### *Leadership*

FCM would provide national leadership to increase women's participation in municipal processes by working with partners and members to develop and implement a new vision and goals for full inclusion by:

1. Developing a national vision for Canada based on the IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government.
2. Setting national goals for the equal participation of women in municipal processes.
3. Managing data and statistics on the participation of women in municipal processes nationally and within FCM.
4. Reporting annually on progress towards national goals.
5. Supporting member municipalities to achieve the goal of increased women's participation.
6. Modelling gender mainstreaming in FCM policy development and consultation practices.
7. Setting up and supporting internal mechanisms to guide and sustain the implementation of the National Strategy.
8. Initiating partnerships with federal, provincial and community organizations and funding bodies.

### *Information and Communication*

FCM and its partners in the National Strategy would develop national and community mechanisms to bridge the information gap between women and municipal government, and make information on municipal governance, municipal processes, best practices, public participation and gender equality accessible, where:

1. FCM would act as a National Information Clearinghouse.
2. Municipalities would provide information at the community level.
3. Women's organizations would provide information on municipal processes and support information linkages between women and their municipalities.

### *Inclusive Policies and Practices*

FCM and its partners in the National Strategy would develop and implement a model Gender Inclusive Policy and Practice Framework for municipal consultation and decision-making processes. The key elements for this strategy would be:

1. Integration of Gender Mainstreaming in policy development and review.
2. Development and testing of model templates, policies and practices for gender-inclusive consultation and decision making, which would build on work undertaken in the current report.
3. Development of tools for gender-disaggregated data collection and reporting.
4. Development of a National Report Card on inclusivity.

### *Partnerships*

FCM and members would use the National Strategy as an opportunity to develop and support new partnerships between women's organizations, municipal governments and their provincial/territorial associations, around the shared goal of increasing women's participation in municipal consultations and decision making. This would be accomplished by:

1. Creating a Steering Committee to guide the National Strategy.
2. Reviewing opportunities for new partnerships at the national and local levels.

### 3. Recommended Implementation Plan for a National Strategy

#### *In the Short Term*

- Distribution of the *Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Decision Making* report to FCM members, women's organizations and project participants, and posting the report on FCM's web site.
- Presentation of recommendations for a National Strategy to FCM's Board by the FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee.
- Adoption and approval of a Strategic Plan and new terms of reference for the FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee, which would expand its mandate and support the implementation of recommendations from the final report.
- Approval of a National Strategy by the FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee and FCM's Board of Directors.
- Establishment of a Steering Committee to guide the National Strategy.
- Preparation and submission of proposals for funding for the implementation of a National Strategy.
- Development of an FCM National Clearinghouse web site on women and local governance.

#### *In the Longer Term*

- Implementation of specific projects to increase women's participation, including:
  - National workshops in four diverse communities to design model policy and consultation templates, training tools and gender-disaggregated data-collection tools;
  - Development of training tools on gender mainstreaming, gender awareness and inclusivity;
  - Development of a model policy framework for inclusive municipal participation processes (templates for policy and practice).
- Review of FCM policy for gender mainstreaming and inclusion.
- Development of Report Card on Inclusivity.
- Organization of a national conference on Women and Local Government.
- Training workshops on gender mainstreaming, gender-disaggregated data collection, gender and inclusion.

## CONCLUSION

The FCM Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Consultation Processes project provided a forum for meaningful discussion at the national and community levels around the broad topic of Canadian women and municipal government and inclusive consultation processes.

The final report, a companion Resource Kit to increase women's participation in municipal processes, and detailed reports that outline the specific findings and action plans from the six community projects are available on FCM's web site at [www.fcm.ca/wg](http://www.fcm.ca/wg)



In June 2003, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) launched the Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Consultation Processes project, with funding from Status of Women Canada. The purpose of the project was to contribute to changing municipal consultation practices and policies, so that the full diversity of Canadian women has a meaningful voice in the decisions that affect their daily lives.

The project asked municipal politicians and staff how municipalities involve women, how they listen and respond and what structures and policies shape their consultation strategies. It heard from national, provincial and territorial women's organizations across the country about their experiences with municipal governments, successful partnerships and suggestions as to how women and women's organizations might be involved more fully to address the needs of the community.

Participatory action research in six diverse Canadian communities heard directly from women about the barriers and facilitators to participation they experience, and noted their suggestions as to how municipalities might successfully access the knowledge and expertise of women in their communities. The community site research obtained important information and project recommendations from women who often go unheard due to their race, Aboriginal status, ethnicity, immigration status, poverty, sexual orientation or disability.

The FCM Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Consultation Processes project provided a forum for meaningful discussion at the national and community level around the broad topic of Canadian women and municipal government and inclusive public participation.

Three central themes emerged:

1. **Inclusive, meaningful and accountable consultation processes at the community level are an effective and powerful link between women and municipal government.**  
The way in which a municipality consults in the community determines what expertise is brought forward, who has input into the decision-making process, and what needs decision makers will meet. When women are absent or limited actors in municipal consultation processes, they are left out of the decision-making process. Inclusive consultation practices enrich municipal decision making and are the foundations on which partnerships and joint initiatives can be developed.
2. **Policy – or the lack of it – shapes consultation practices and women's involvement in municipalities.**  
When municipal planning and service delivery are based upon the premise that women and men are basically the same, have similar needs, interests, realities, economic status and lived experiences, there is no need to have consultation processes that successfully engage women. When the differences between men and women's realities are acknowledged, then it is critical for good local decision making that municipal governments use policies and practices such as gender mainstreaming, the collection of gender-disaggregated data and consultation processes that fully include women.
3. **Beliefs and values shape the policies, planning and consultation processes in municipalities.**  
Beliefs about the place of women in society, the value of women's input, their right to full participation, the differences between women and men and the importance of full inclusion can have a profound impact on whether or not women in their diversity are welcomed in municipal processes and

their input valued. The presence of racist and/or sexist beliefs and values in municipal processes creates barriers to women's full participation and hinders the development of inclusive municipal policies and practices that enrich municipal decision-making processes.

When the project's National Steering Committee reviewed the data obtained from the six community sites and the national research, two central questions arose:

- 1. Do we need changes in consultation processes so that they become more inclusive or do municipal structures themselves need to change to become more inclusive?**
- 2. How do we make the full inclusion of women in municipal processes a priority for municipal governments, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and with women in communities?**

This report presents findings and recommendations from the national and community-based research. Women are passionately interested and involved in their communities. The findings from the research provide some insight into why women do not participate in municipal processes to the extent they would like to, and what steps can be taken to increase their participation.

The research shows that there is a need for a comprehensive, coordinated national strategy to:

- Increase women's participation in municipal processes;
- Ensure information and resources can be shared;
- Bridge the gender gap that is the current status quo in Canada; and
- Create inclusive approaches to public participation.

A *Resource Kit* to increase women's participation in municipal processes has been prepared as a companion document to this report. In addition, each of the six community sites prepared detailed reports that outlined the specific findings and action plans from the local research. The Project Final Report, Resource Kit and Community Reports are available at the FCM website [www.fcm.ca/wg](http://www.fcm.ca/wg)

One of the greatest strengths of local government is its position as the order of government that is closest to the people. Municipal government is accessible and directly involved in the provision of services that have a daily impact on the lives of citizens. Its activities affect both men and women in ways that are fundamental to satisfying their basic needs and quality of life. Municipal government forms the base of the Canadian democratic system. It is widely recognized that good municipal government is inclusive and relies on the input and involvement of its citizens to meet the diverse needs and realities of all community stakeholders.

Canadian municipalities are facing new challenges and pressures, as a result of the downloading of responsibilities and the cuts to provincial and federal programs and services. Homelessness and increased poverty levels for women, children, seniors and immigrants plague many communities across the country. Municipalities are struggling to maintain their infrastructure and quality of life with limited resources. Investments in both the physical and social infrastructure of communities are required, and a new financial deal for communities is needed to fund these investments.<sup>7</sup>

As a result of downloading and decentralization, municipalities are becoming a more important order of government. Canadians have underestimated the importance of municipal policy and services in general, and the gender dimensions of these services in particular.<sup>8</sup>

Canadian organizations concerned with gender equality are also beginning to shift their focus from provincial/territorial and federal governments and consider the impact of municipal decision making on women's lives. Municipal governments need to explain more clearly the importance of municipal services to daily life. The gender dimensions of this are crucial if municipal governments are to build the kind of public support they will need to leverage better financial arrangements from provincial and federal governments.<sup>9</sup>

## THE FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES (FCM) AND WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

FCM's prime mission is to advocate and promote strong, effective and accountable municipal government in Canada and work internationally within a global network for policy development and advocacy on municipal issues and priorities.

Founded in 1937, FCM deals with the federal government on policy and program matters that affect the interests of all municipal governments. It operates principally through consultation and a strong system of working committees and task forces. All provincial/territorial associations are members of FCM and therefore have direct input in whatever issues and objectives are pursued.<sup>10</sup>

*The systematic integration of women augments the democratic basis, the efficiency and the quality of the activities of local government. If local government is to meet the needs of both women and men, it must build on the experiences of both women and men, through an equal representation at all levels and in all fields of decision making, covering the wide range of responsibilities of local governments.*

(IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government)

*The demographic changes brought about by immigration and the financial stresses caused by the 'downloading' of responsibilities highlight the need to pay attention to issues of inclusion and diversity.*

(Clutterbuck and Novick).

FCM is a member of United Cities and Local Governments (formerly IULA) and signatory to the IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government, and therefore supports:

- Strengthening efforts to make equal the number of women and men in decision-making bodies in all policy areas;
- Applying the mainstreaming principle by integrating a gender perspective into all policies, programs and service delivery activities in individual local governments and their representative associations;
- Looking at new ways to ensure women are represented and actively participate by formal as well as informal means in local governance;
- Working for changes of attitudes related to gender issues by raising awareness within the education system and within the structure of local government;
- Working with other actors of society to accomplish goals of the IULA declaration.<sup>11</sup>

#### FCM CANADIAN WOMEN IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

The Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee was founded in 1999 in Halifax, NS, by a group of elected women and men with shared concerns about the challenges that women faced within municipal government. Although resources are limited, the committee has initiated one-on-one mentoring, an annual scholarship, piloted a successful campaign school for women in municipal government in Ontario, and holds an annual forum on Women in Municipal Government at FCM's Annual Conference.

In 2003, the Committee launched the *FCM Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Consultation Processes* project. Committee members have taken an active role on the project Steering Committee and Working Group. In addition, the project has provided an opportunity for the committee to reflect on its role within FCM, and engage in strategic planning to support the implementation of recommendations from this project. A draft Strategic Plan (that includes a revised and expanded committee mandate) and a detailed plan for the implementation of recommendations from the project will be presented for discussion at the FCM Board Meeting in fall 2004.

#### WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Since the mid 1970s, there has been an unprecedented rise in the importance accorded to gender issues in international forums and Conferences.

The extent of the success in integrating women's and gender issues in international and national agendas is attributable to the strong leadership exercised by the United Nations and by Northern European and Canadian donors, who have acted as catalysts to strengthen the capacities of other governments and NGOs.<sup>12</sup>

*"The empowerment of women and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, whether rural or urban, are fundamental to sustainable human settlement."*

(IULA 2001)

The following presents a brief overview of some of the international and national developments on gender issues:

<p><b>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</b> United Nations Convention adopted in 1979. Canada signed on in 1980 and ratified the Optional Protocol in 2002.</p>	<p><b>Huairou Commission, 1999</b> “Our Best Practices” campaign.</p>
<p><b>The Beijing Platform for Action, 1995</b> Commitment of 189 Nations at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women to support women’s empowerment, guarantee women’s human rights and achieve gender equality.</p>	<p><b>Policy on Gender Equality, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), 1999</b> Gender and Equality Policy developed in 1999 to support the achievement of equality between women and men to ensure sustainable development.</p>
<p><b>Habitat Plan for Action, 1996</b> Declaration at the United Nations’ Conference on Human Settlements in Istanbul, which urged municipal associations to accord women equal access and participation in municipal decision making.</p>	<p><b>Australian National Framework for Women in Local Government, 2001</b> A national approach to improve women’s representation in local government. Australian Local Government Women’s Association.</p>
<p><b>European Union Amsterdam Treaty, 1997</b> Makes the elimination of inequalities and the promotion of equality between women and men a central principle in all public policy making and activities at the local authority level within the European Union.</p>	<p><b>United Cities and Local Governments, 2004</b> International organization established as a result of the fusion of IULA and the United Towns Organization (UTO).</p>
<p><b>Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government, International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), 1998</b> Adopted by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.</p>	

Research on women and government points to the need for a “critical mass” of women elected to government so that public policy and processes can be shaped to provide governance that is more responsive to women.<sup>13</sup> A study of women elected to the New Zealand House of Representatives found that around 15% representation in a political body overall will allow women a voice but it takes a far greater proportion of women throughout the different arms of legislatures to change policy outcomes and the political culture.<sup>14</sup>

Increasing the number of elected women is not enough. It is necessary to develop additional strategies to engender the political agenda:

1. Identify women’s needs;
2. Formulate strategies for increasing the capacity for leadership;
3. Implement government-level gender advocacy, organized women’s caucuses to promote women’s leadership and national commissions on gender equality;
4. Active collaboration between women in politics and women’s organizations in civil society.<sup>15</sup>

## CANADIAN INITIATIVES

The following list sets out some recent Canadian initiatives that have contributed to women's participation in municipal decision making:

### 1. *FCM and the International Centre for Municipal Development*

FCM, through its International Centre for Municipal Development (ICMD), has actively supported increased gender equality in municipal processes. This began in 1996 with the publication of *Gender and Municipal Development: Guidelines for Promoting Women's Participation in Partnership Program Activities*, followed by *A City Tailored to Women: The Role of Municipal Governments in Achieving Gender Equality* in 1997 (in collaboration with the City of Montreal's *Femmes et ville* Program). In 2002, ICMD held a two-day knowledge-sharing workshop on Gender Equality and Local Governance, which brought together over 50 international and Canadian participants.<sup>16</sup>

In 2004, ICMD, in collaboration with the City of Montreal's *Femmes et ville* Program and with support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), will publish an updated and expanded version of *A City Tailored to Women*, with new information on Canadian and international activities to increase the participation of women in municipal government processes.

### 2. *City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) – Initiative : Une ville pour toutes les femmes (IVTF) – Ottawa*

This is the second phase of a participatory action research project based on a partnership between community-based women's groups and the City of Ottawa. Both projects have been funded by Status of Women Canada. The first phase, Women's Access to Municipal Services in Ottawa, had focus groups with diverse groups of women to propose improvements to women's access to services and employment. The second phase builds on the first and aims to promote decision-making practices that are inclusive, women-friendly and respectful of diversity. The project is to begin training women on municipal government and effective lobby strategies in the fall of 2004.<sup>17</sup>

### 3. *Femmes et Ville International*

Canada has made important contributions to international work through the Montreal-based *Femmes et Ville International*, which held the first International Seminar on Women's Safety in 2002. The seminar resulted in the *Montreal Declaration on Women's Safety*, which makes specific appeals to cities and municipalities to put local safety policy, planning and practices in place, provide opportunities for women's involvement; increase the participation of women in decision making, allocate municipal funds to gender equality, ensure transparency and accountability in municipal administration, and develop international cooperation and exchange of best practices.<sup>18</sup> ([www.femmesetvilles.org](http://www.femmesetvilles.org))

### 4. *Women and Municipal Government in Quebec*<sup>19</sup>

The province of Quebec has taken concrete actions to increase the participation of women in municipal processes.

1. In 2002, Status of Women Quebec launched its five-year *A égalité pour décider* program (Decision making: a matter of equality) with annual funding of \$1,000,000, aimed at increasing the number of women sitting on local and regional decision-making bodies.

2. *Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie*, in conjunction with the *Union des municipalités du Québec* (a Quebec municipal association) will offer a summer school for aspiring women candidates in preparation for the 2005 municipal elections. ([www.femmes-politique-et-democratie.com](http://www.femmes-politique-et-democratie.com))
  3. Both Quebec municipal associations, the *Union des Municipalités du Québec* (UMQ) and the *Fédération québécoise des municipalités* (FQM), play key roles in increasing the representation of women on council and in municipal processes, as well as creating an environment that is favourable for women's full participation.
  4. Founded in 2000, the Network of Montérégie Elected Women Representatives (*Réseau des élues municipales de la Montérégie*, RÉMM) comprises all women mayors and councillors in the Montérégie region. The network provides training and support for women candidates and elected members, collects data on women in local government, advocates for collective issues and works with municipal associations to raise the number of women in municipal politics.
  5. Quebec City was the first municipality in the province to set up a *Femmes et Ville* Commission (Women in the City) and has been joined by similar commissions in Rouyn-Noranda, Lévis, Sorel-Tracy and Salaberry-de-Valleyfield.
5. ***Increasing Women's Participation in Electoral Processes***  
Women's organizations in Canada promote women's participation in electoral processes through initiatives and projects:
1. **YWCA Edmonton** completed a four-phase project, *One Woman One Vote*, to assist women to become active participants in shaping the public agenda, by increasing their participation in election activities and seeking public office. ([www.onewomanonevote.org](http://www.onewomanonevote.org))
  2. The **Canadian Women Voters Congress** offers a non-partisan Women's Campaign School in Vancouver, BC, as well as a networking forum for women involved or interested in politics. ([www.canadianwomenvoterscongress.org](http://www.canadianwomenvoterscongress.org))
  3. **Equal Voice** is a voluntary multi-partisan organization that is dedicated to achieving equal political representation in all parties and all orders of government. ([www.equalvoice.ca](http://www.equalvoice.ca))

# THE PROJECT RESEARCH FRAMEWORK



## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this one-year research project was to contribute to changing municipal consultation practices and policies, so that the full diversity of Canadian women would have a meaningful voice in the decisions that affect their daily lives.

Specific objectives included:

- To equip municipal governments with information, tools and strategies that would assist them to develop and implement public participation processes involving the diversity of women in their communities;
- To make recommendations to FCM and participating local municipalities for action to strengthen women's involvement in public participation processes;
- To develop national and local partnerships that would strengthen the capacity of municipal governments to involve women, and the capacity of women's organizations to participate in municipal consultation and decision-making processes.

## PROJECT GOVERNANCE

The FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee acted as the governance body for the project.

A broadly representative 18-member **National Steering Committee** provided guidance, advice and direction over the course of the project. The membership of the Steering Committee was drawn from across Canada, and included representation from the FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee, FCM staff, academic advisors, Canadian women's groups and the site coordinators from the six community research sites. The National Steering Committee met twice in Ottawa for intensive two-day workshops:

- In September 2003, to detail the research framework and methodology;
- In March 2004, to review the national and community site findings and to develop recommendations for action and for the development of the *Resource Kit*.

In addition, five members of the Steering Committee formed a Project Working Group to provide the project coordinator with day-to-day direction and support. (See Appendix A for a list of Steering Committee and Working Group members.)

## THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The national and community site research focused on the following questions:

1. How do women participate in municipal processes?
2. What public participation policies and practices do municipalities have in place?
3. What barriers to participation do women experience in municipal consultation processes?
4. What would make it easier for women to participate in municipal consultation processes?
5. What are the benefits for the community when women are fully included in municipal consultation processes?
6. What strategies, policies, processes or tools would most helpful to increase the participation of women?



## THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research included both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection for the national and community site research. As the research unfolded, the close collaboration, information sharing and cooperation between the six Community Sites, the Project Coordinator, and the members of the National Steering Committee ensured a high level of consistency in the way the research was conducted at the local and national level throughout the project.

### 1. Research Strategies

The project used five main strategies:

- Building and strengthening partnerships;
- Research into gender-inclusive public participation processes in Canadian municipalities;
- Participatory action research at six diverse Canadian community sites;
- A collaborative and inclusive approach to developing action plans;
- Creation of tools to effectively involve diverse women in municipal processes.

### 2. Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research was used at each of the six Community Sites to include women directly in the design of the research (as informants) and in the development of action plans. In addition, the principles of action research were used to develop the research framework, as well as themes, recommendations and tools from the national and community site data.

### 3. National Research<sup>1</sup>

**(a) Literature Review:** The literature review included a review of documents on: gender; gender equality; women and local government (both nationally and internationally); tools, toolkits and processes; women and governance; FCM policy and programs, national and international research on women and governance, women and power, participatory research; consultation policies and practices; national statistics on women and governance; women and public policy; policy development; national and international structures and organizations concerned with women, women and governance, and women's rights. An annotated bibliography is posted on the FCM website at [www.fcm.ca/wg](http://www.fcm.ca/wg).

**(b) National Survey:** A national survey of 1074 FCM member municipalities was conducted in the fall of 2003. A total of 152 municipalities participated in the national survey. The national survey gathered information from senior municipal staff on the participation of women in elected positions, on advisory committees and in community consultation processes, as well as barriers to participation, the existence of policies and practices on participation, gender analysis, gender training and best practices. The survey responses provided detailed information from a broad representation of geographic areas, sizes and types of communities, regions and demographics, throughout Canada.

#### **(c) Consultation with Women's Groups:**

- A workshop was held with at the annual conference of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women and the workshop design was later used in the community site research.

<sup>1</sup> The research tools (workshop design, survey tools, interview guides and Community Research Information package) are posted on the FCM website at [www.fcm.ca/wg](http://www.fcm.ca/wg)

- In-depth telephone interviews were conducted with leaders from 20 Canadian women's organizations, representing diverse women's groups at the national, provincial/territorial and local community-based level from all regions of Canada. The participants and their organizations are listed in Appendix B.

**(d) Consultation with the FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee**

The members of the Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee provided information for the project through:

- Workshops at regular committee meetings, held at FCM Board meetings in September and November 2003, and in March 2004;
- A strategic planning session (April 2004) with a small sub-committee, to develop an implementation plan for the recommendations from this report.

**(e) Consultation with FCM Board and Senior Staff**

Twelve interviews were completed with FCM Executive Officers, the Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Infrastructure, senior staff and FCM members of the Project Steering Committee. The structured telephone interviews gathered feedback on a summary of findings from the national survey and the consultations with women's organizations. (See Appendix C for the list of participants.)

## COMMUNITY SITE RESEARCH

Following a national call for expressions of interest for the project, six community sites were selected. The following is a short profile of the sites:

**Cowichan Valley, British Columbia.** The community-based organization *Cowichan Valley Safer Futures* carried out the project. The organization has an impressive history of community-based research and tool development. The District of North Cowichan is a rural community on Vancouver Island with a population of 70,000. The project focused on engaging diverse groups of women who often experience barriers to participation: women with disabilities, women of colour, aboriginal women, older women, lesbians and poor women.

**Halifax, Nova Scotia,** was the site of a project carried out by the YWCA of Halifax. Halifax, on Canada's eastern seaboard, is one of Canada's oldest cities. The YWCA has strong linkages with the African-Canadian community in Halifax, as well as with immigrant and visible minority women's groups. It provides services and support for women in the city, and has close ties with municipal government. The Halifax YWCA is linked through its national organization to a national project to increase women's participation in municipal election processes, called *One Woman One Vote*.

**Iqaluit, Nunavut,** was a unique project in a small, remote, northern city of 7,000, which is also the capital of the territory and the only urban centre in Nunavut. The *Qullit Nunavut Status of Women Council* carried out the project with the support of the mayor and women's groups in Iqaluit. There was strong interest in improving the participation of Inuit women, as well as diverse women who are typically excluded from public consultation. A community meeting about the project forged links between women's groups, the government of Nunavut, municipal officials, the Federation of Labour, and the Iqaluit Regional Women's Committee. The project focused on work with Inuit women and research was conducted in Inuktitut and English.

**Saskatoon, Saskatchewan**, is a mid-sized urban centre surrounded by rural prairie landscape. Saskatoon has the highest number of Aboriginal people living in an urban area in Canada and is an increasingly multi-ethnic community. The City of Saskatoon Community Services Department, through its Race Relations Committee, carried out the project. It focused on improving the participation of Aboriginal and Métis women, as well as immigrant and culturally diverse women, in municipal processes. The City of Saskatoon has excellent linkages with diverse women's groups and excellent in-house participatory research capacity. The project was well supported at the city, university and community levels. In addition, the project received funding from the Workforce Participation Initiative Program of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

**Thunder Bay, Ontario**, is a mid-sized city that serves a large regional population, spread over thousands of kilometres that includes fly-in communities in the north. The Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre carried out the project. The Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre has an excellent background in research, women's services and advocacy for women in northern Ontario. The project focused on reaching marginalized women not involved in municipal processes, including Aboriginal women, women of colour, disabled women and poor women in the Thunder Bay area.

**Montreal, Quebec**, is one of Canada's largest urban centres and is the site of a community project carried out by the Women's Y of Montreal. This project involved the francophone community in Montreal and diverse immigrant and visible minority women, whose second language was English. The project had the support of the City of Montreal, and the Women's Y of Montreal has a long history of supporting women-centred community action. It is an organization capable of reaching out to culturally diverse and immigrant women in the city. This bilingual project built on best practices for inclusion and participation of women that are now well established in Quebec and reached out to diverse cultural groups of women in the city.

#### **Participants in the Community Site Research:**

In total, 364 women completed surveys for the two sites that conducted them. 321 women participated in workshops, focus groups or interviews held at all six sites. A total of 685 women participated directly in the project's community site research.

An overview of the community site methodology can be found in Appendix D. Detailed final reports from each of the community sites are available on the FCM web site [www.fcm.ca/wg](http://www.fcm.ca/wg)

## **DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS AND TOOLS**

A summary of data from literature, the national survey and national consultations, and overviews of the site work were presented to the Project Steering Committee at a two-day meeting in Ottawa in March 2004.

The Committee identified broad themes under the headings of participation, barriers, benefits, policies and practices and tools, and developed recommendations and action items.

The Project Coordinator prepared a draft report and a draft resource kit for review by the Project Working Group and members of the Steering Committee, then completed the final report and accompanying resource kit.

*"Are we talking about bringing more women to the table, or changing the shape of the table?"*  
(Project Steering Committee member)



## 1. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### 1.1 Canada's Position Internationally

Canada has a reputation as a world leader in human rights, gender equality and models of local governance. However, Canadian municipalities have lost ground internationally in terms of increasing women's participation in local government.

In March 2003, the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) launched the global program on Women in Local Decision-making with the creation of a major new global database, which provided information on the status of women that are elected or appointed leaders across the globe. Their February 2004 newsletter noted that Latin America and Africa are leading the world in the number of women councillors, with higher numbers of women than Europe.<sup>20</sup>

The following chart outlines how Canada compares to other countries:<sup>21</sup>

Country	Women	Country	Women
Costa Rica	73%	Ghana	30%
Chile	48%	South Africa	29%
Sweden	42%	Dominican Republic	28%
Nicaragua	34%	United Kingdom	27%
Bolivia	34%	<b>Canada</b>	<b>22%</b>
Uganda	33%	France	22%
Finland	31%	Belgium	22%
Colombia	30%	Honduras	22%
Venezuela	30%		

Canada is also losing ground internationally in terms of elected women in the federal government. In 2003, Canada ranked 37<sup>th</sup> of 181 countries on the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Table on Women in National Parliaments*.<sup>22</sup>

### 1.2 Comparison of Elected Women in the Three Orders of Canadian Government

The levels of participation by women in elected positions are almost the same in all three orders of government in Canada: federal, provincial/territorial and municipal.<sup>23</sup>

2004	Municipal	Provincial/Territorial	Federal
Women Elected	21.7%	20.5%	20.6%

A breakdown of women's participation as elected members and city managers in Canadian municipalities by province and territory is attached as Appendix E.

### 1.3 Women in Canada: How They Participate in Municipal Decision-making Processes

The data collected in this study shows that women participate at much lower rates than men in municipal decision making, while women from diverse groups (visible minorities, Aboriginal, disabled, immigrant, other) are very poorly represented.

*"The municipalities are 'over here' and women in communities are 'over there'. We need to connect them."*

(Steering Committee member responding to project findings.)

The following data on participation by women in municipal decision-making process was collected from 152 diverse Canadian municipalities:

#### 1.3.1 Women's Participation as Elected Members

The overwhelming majority of councils surveyed (86%) did not have equal representation of elected women on council:

- 14% reported having **no women** at all on council
- 32% reported having one woman on council
- 40% of municipalities had more than one woman but less than 50% on council
- 13% reported having 50% or more women on council
- <1% reported having no men on council

When asked about representation on municipal councils by women from diverse groups, the results from the survey show an even more serious gender deficit:

- 1% of elected women are from visible minorities and
- <1% are disabled and <1% are immigrant women council members.

#### 1.3.2 Women's Participation on Municipal Advisory Committees

More women participate on Advisory Committees but women from diverse groups (such as visible minorities, Aboriginal, disabled, immigrant, other) are very poorly represented.

- 80% of municipalities reported having no diverse women on advisory committees.
- Women from diverse groups make up only 3% of the total representation on municipal advisory committees.
- The gender make up of advisory committees ranges from no women to 50% representation of women to men.
- The average gender make up of advisory committees is 64% men to 36% women.

#### 1.3.3 Women's Participation in Municipal Consultation Processes

Although 95% of the municipalities that responded to the survey did not collect statistics on the number of women attending consultations, municipalities provided estimated levels of participation:

Participation by women at consultation processes:

- 7% estimated attendance of over 50% women in consultation processes;
- 50% estimated attendance between 35%-50%;
- 24% estimated attendance between 15%-35%;
- 19% estimated attendance less than 15% women.

Estimates of representation by diverse women at municipal consultations were much lower:

- 42% of municipalities reported that diverse groups of women were not well represented at consultations;
- 34% reported that they were somewhat represented;
- 24% reported that diverse women were very well or extremely well represented at consultations.

### ***1.3.4 Consultation Approaches***

Municipalities reported that the following three consultation approaches were the most effective in attracting women as participants:

- Public Meetings (95 responses)
- Open House (66 responses)
- Advisory Committees (60 responses)

## **2. WOMEN'S ACCESS: BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION**

Data on barriers to women's participation in municipal decision making was collected from several perspectives: municipal governments, the FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee, women's organizations and from women at the six community sites.

### **2.1 Barriers Identified by Municipalities**

The top 5 barriers identified by municipalities in the national survey:

1. Municipalities and women's networks do not have established working relationships;
2. Municipality does not reach out to involve women in consultation processes;
3. Lack of practical supports for women (e.g., childcare, transportation);
4. Not enough information available to women about municipal services;
5. Lack of support from the municipality for more inclusive policies and practices.

In addition to these five major issues, municipalities noted the following additional barriers to participation:

- Women are not taught to be leaders;
- There has been no analysis of why women are not well represented;
- Women have busy lives, family responsibilities, lack of time;
- Small town mentality that says women don't belong in politics;
- Distance;
- Lack of women's groups in the community;
- Technical culture – roads, wastewater and water are main issues;
- No recognition within the municipality of existing challenges;
- Women are not interested in participating.

### **2.1.1 No barriers to participation**

Some municipalities (17) responded that there were no barriers to women's participation in their communities. A closer look at the data indicated that some of these municipalities had high rates of participation in consultations (over 50%). Surprisingly, however, municipalities with low or poor rates of participation also reported no barriers. This may indicate a lack of awareness of the challenges that women face or a lack of interest from these municipalities to improve women's participation.

## **2.2 Barriers Identified by the FCM Women's Committee**

Members of the FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee identified barriers for women's participation in consultation processes in their communities:

- Lack of information about municipal processes;
- Lack of role models;
- Practical issues (e.g., daycare, transportation, money, access);
- No gender equality policies.

The Committee members also listed the barriers that the Women's Committee had experienced within FCM:

- Lack of human and financial resources;
- Passive resistance to the committee;
- Not anyone's priority;
- Lack of clear information about the Committee, especially concerning meeting times and locations;
- Need to legitimize the work at the FCM Board table;
- General lack of awareness that this is a serious committee.

## **2.3 Barriers Identified by Women's Organizations**

The national consultation with women's organizations identified specific barriers to participation for marginalized women in Canada:

- Language is a hindrance for francophone women in Ontario, for immigrant women, and for Métis and Aboriginal women;
- Abuse is a barrier for women's participation in the north. A women's organization reported that 70% of Inuit women are abused and in these situations women don't lift their heads or speak out;
- Women's lack of education and confidence is a barrier to participation;
- Lack of influence and status – women have no standing in the community;
- Lack of money – women are more likely to be poor than men. Money is a huge obstacle at all levels and has kept women and other groups out of municipal politics;
- Lack of time – women do paid and unpaid work and have limited time to participate in consultations;
- Immigrant women face challenges within their own communities. One women's group said that women need to speak up, demand things, and see themselves as taxpayers;
- Attitudes and beliefs about the role of women create barriers. It is perceived that women do not have a role and that a woman speaking up is unwelcome.

## 2.4 Barriers Identified at the Community Sites

Barriers to participation reported most frequently by women at the six community sites were:

- Lack of time and energy due to the competing responsibilities of home, family, work and, for some women, sheer survival;
- Practical obstacles such as the timing of meetings, their inaccessibility for disabled women, transportation issues, lack of childcare, lack of money;
- Lack of information about municipal processes and services, and/or information that is full of technical language and jargon;
- The complexity and formality of the system is often combined with intimidating space or requirements for presentations;
- Lack of faith that women can make a difference and frustration with political systems;
- A sense that their voices are unheard;
- Sexism;
- Racism;
- Language barriers;
- Barriers for young women (e.g., no role models, input not sought out or valued).

*“When women are more aware of the effect of local government decisions and of the whole structure on people’s lives, they will become more interested and involved.”*

(Cowichan Focus Group)

*“What has emerged from the research is a clear indication that there are gaps between the efforts of local governments to involve the public in decision-making processes, and the ability or willingness of many women to be involved. At the risk of over generalizing, the research indicates that women who experience multiple barriers in life also experience the greatest challenges to participation in civic processes.”*

(Cowichan Valley Report)

## 2.5 Systemic Barriers to Participation – Women Marginalized in their Communities

All six sites reported that women who are marginalized because of race, ethnicity, economic status, immigration status, age, sexual orientation or disability participate in municipal processes at low levels and often do not vote. However, these women are very often involved in community groups or initiatives to address issues that concern them and their families. Marginalized women at all six sites reported lack of support, lack of representation, social isolation and discrimination.

These findings are similar to those reported in a recent qualitative study that looked at the impact of municipal policy and services on low-income women in Toronto. Although women and racialized women are much more likely to be poor, the study notes that policy analysts, social development researchers and community advocates have tended to view poverty and its accompanying social problems in a generic terms. The lack of understanding of systemic barriers created by race and gender means that the particular position of women, and of women of colour, remains absent or obscured in reports, campaigns and decision making. It also ignores the mounting evidence that systemic inequalities mean that women, people of colour and immigrants are the poorest Torontonians.<sup>24</sup>

*“In the corridors of political power at City Hall, there is little discussion of issues facing poor women, let alone the mounting numbers who are women of colour and immigrant women. They are rarely, if ever, considered in decisions on community programs, policies and spending priorities. In recent years, maps, statistics and reports used by City Councillors to set policy have become decidedly gender neutral and fail to detail the widening gaps for, and among, different groups of women.”*

(If Low-income Women of Colour Counted in Toronto.)<sup>24</sup>



### 2.5.1 Snapshot: Systemic barriers

The Community Site research in Iqaluit and Saskatoon focused on the experiences of marginalized women in the two communities. Their reports provide a wealth of information about the impact of sexism and racism on women, and the barriers they experience participating in municipal processes. (See web site for full reports). The following snapshots present some key issues identified in the reports:

#### *Iqaluit*

Iqaluit is the capital of Nunavut, a rapidly growing and changing community with a largely Inuit population. Municipal government is a governance structure brought to the community by white southern (Qallunaat) men. The first municipal council was formed in 1964 and in 1974, the community was recognized as a town. All of the participants in the site research were Inuit women. They reported that for many women, municipal government is either irrelevant to their daily lives or is experienced as a system fraught with cultural, language and gender barriers.

*"There's a lot of apathy about municipal politics. There's just nothing in municipal or even territorial politics that reflects Inuit beliefs. It's really a Western-built system."*

(Iqaluit participant)

Language barriers were identified as a barrier for unilingual Inuit, even though municipal meetings are conducted in both Inuktitut and English and translation is available. One woman said that Inuktitut is always an add-on, an afterthought, when it is needed at the basic service level.

Women at the Iqaluit site noted that politics is still seen as a male domain in Iqaluit and that the priorities of Inuit women are best advanced in other ways. Women, who are interested in giving back to the community or who act as community care-givers, are so involved with other organizations and boards that there is simply no time to give to municipal politics. Inuit women identified racism and sexism as serious obstacles to their participation in municipal processes.

Women reported that politics is seen as a male-dominated activity and that sexism is present in the society, the council and within the administration. Traditionally, women and men had very specific roles in Inuit society and men were regarded as the leaders. Inuit women in the study said that sexual harassment of women was very common; it was used to push women down when men were threatened by women's ability to do work as well as – or better than – they could. One former councillor felt she had to use other non-Inuk male councillors to advance her agenda. The man would put forward a motion for her, as it was then more likely to be accepted by elder male Inuk councillors. Women also reported intimidation from non-Inuk developers, who complain that women are not qualified to ask questions or make decisions about major development issues.

*"If women speak out at public meetings, they experience 'oppression' or intimidation, because it's assumed that they shouldn't be participating in key political discussions."*

(Iqaluit Site Report)

Participants suggested that a different physical structure at city council meetings, with chairs in a circle instead of a head table, and beginning meetings with the traditional lighting of the qulliit (soapstone oil lamp) would make city council more inclusive and less intimidating for Inuit women.

### *Saskatoon*

The site research in Saskatoon comprised four sets of focus groups involving Aboriginal women (more than 50 per cent of the participants), as well as immigrant, refugee and visible minority women. The data was sorted into four main themes to identify the main obstacles to women's involvement in municipal affairs:

- The lack of supports and representation, the social isolation and discrimination faced by marginalized women;
- Lack of person skills and confidence;
- Structural considerations related to gender and the style of operations;
- Lack of information and transparency concerning city politics.

Women identified racism and discrimination as obstacles to participation in municipal processes, citing examples of discrimination by the police, city councillors and city services. They said that the lack of representation for aboriginal women and women of colour on the police commission and city boards was disturbing. Despite a policy that city committees be made up of 50 per cent men and women (1996), women felt underrepresented and stated that they were not given opportunities to participate in a meaningful way. Women recommended that city committee meetings be chaired by women and minority men half of the time.

*"Males need to be educated. Men have to do their homework about women's issues and the lives of women... they do intimidate us."*  
(Saskatoon Workshop)

Women stated that they would like to see anti-racist, cross-cultural and gender training for all city service workers, as well as public education about sexism in the workplace. They suggested that the City practice more outreach with marginalized people, especially to teach and mentor younger generations.

Fear was often cited as an issue that prevented women from participating. Women identified increased anxiety or a reduced feeling of safety, due to the following issues: lack of self esteem, discrimination, men who put women down, sexism, fear of speaking in public, women who are too critical of each other and a culture that remains too patriarchal.

*"We need a new format for how meetings take place, so people can feel safe and valued for their contribution and be acknowledged and not judged. When men have meetings it is always a competition about who has the best ideas, but we need more cooperation and supportive forums about working together."*  
(Saskatoon Focus Group)

Women suggested that advocates or mentors help marginalized women break their social isolation. They also suggested that municipalities invite women's groups or work through women's organizations to reduce fear and increase participation. Women reported that city meetings, consultations and Council were male-dominated and unfriendly. They suggested that the City use alternative, less-formal meeting formats such as round table discussions, which are similar to Aboriginal talking circles and more conducive to involvement and meaningful participation.

### **2.5.2 Summary**

The national survey and site research in six Canadian communities make it clear that women are not participating at the levels that they want, and that a large number of women from diverse or disadvantaged groups are excluded from meaningful involvement in municipal processes in their communities.

## 2.6 Barriers Created by of a Lack of Faith in Political Processes

One of the more disturbing findings from the research consultations was the widespread lack of faith that women expressed in municipal governments, and politics as a whole, in Canadian society.

The community site research indicated that the more disadvantaged or marginalized women were as a result of their race, colour, immigrant status, socio-economic status, sexual orientation or age, the more disillusioned they were about politicians and political processes as an avenue for positive change in their lives.

Some community sites had difficulty involving women in the project, as women felt it would be a waste of their time, or could see little evidence of any sincere interest in changing the way politics at any level is conducted.

Leaders of women's organizations that worked on or with municipal committees expressed frustration at the tight controls placed on women's committees and race relations committees by municipalities. They noted that municipal governments rarely consult with women's organizations at the community, provincial/territorial or national level and impose terms of reference that make change and progress difficult.

This lack of faith in political processes was not only expressed by women and women's organizations. When the Project Coordinator presented this project to the Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee at the FCM Board meeting in Windsor, Ont., several elected women stated that more research into barriers to women's participation was not necessary; what was required was political action on known barriers.

Elected women noted:

- Women were tired of being asked about known barriers when so little was done by any order of government to address them;
- Concern about the impact on women and their children of cuts to government funding, as well as the downloading of responsibilities for social services to municipalities without funding; issues that were not being addressed by any order of government;
- Concern that the research project could actually intensify the lack of faith that women have in municipal government and municipal politicians if FCM and member municipalities did not take tangible measures to address barriers revealed by the project in a positive fashion.

*African Nova Scotian focus group participants said that nothing ever results from their participation, that city leaders do not care about the community and "never do anything for us."*

(Halifax Focus Group)

*"There is a certain amount of sexist bias in the municipal government body that has limited consultation. Municipalities are interested in women entrepreneurs for the tax base, but not in women doing unpaid work and not in consulting with women about social issues like homelessness. You have to go to great lengths with municipalities to get consultation with women on their issues."*

(Interview, Women's Organization)

## Summary

Despite the level of dissatisfaction that was expressed, many women remained hopeful that the system might evolve to accept and even promote the kind of respectful, holistic and non-partisan system to which they aspire. There is a sense among some women that ‘times are changing’ and that we are seeing a shift in the role of local government, a shift in representation of women on councils, and a slight movement towards considering bringing social issues onto agendas.<sup>25</sup>

## 3. INCREASING WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPAL DECISION MAKING

### 3.1 Why Women Participate in Municipal Processes

Women involved in the community site research in Montreal and Halifax provided details of the reasons for their participation in municipal decision-making processes:

- *As a quest for information*  
Women stated that they want to become informed on a specific matter. Women that stay at home to raise children are isolated from information; they reported that participation in municipal information sessions offered a solution to breaking this isolation and thus expanding their knowledge. Women also use consultation processes to gather information, preparing themselves to participate in issues of concern at a later date.
- *To contribute ideas and opinion, and to influence decision makers*  
Women said they wanted to contribute their ideas and be heard by municipal decision makers. Some women were highly sceptical about the results or about how much citizens are able influence politicians, but others had positive outcomes and felt that their voices had been heard. Women said it was their civic duty to participate, but that women were “not used” to doing so.
- *As a supporter or candidate in municipal politics*  
Participation levels were higher at the Montreal site, where over half of the participants had participated in a least one municipal consultation and many had two or three experiences. Women at this site, who had participated in municipal consultations, were very positive about women’s progress and attributed this to the increase in community organizations that promote and encourage women’s participation.
- *To share their information and expertise*  
Women’s participation is valuable and important: women have a different perspective on issues and bring a different awareness of what takes place in communities.
- *To act as role models for their children and in their communities*  
When women participate, they talk about their participation at home. As a consequence, their children hear about politics and are better informed. When women are seen to be actively involved in municipal processes by other women, they are encouraged to get involved as well.

- *To make change in their communities*

Involvement can create change. Women who are community leaders agreed that women's participation can bring about greater change. It can empower more women to participate, help create a sense of community and improve the quality of life for all citizens. They also felt that councillors need women's input to make good decisions.

### 3.2 Increasing Women's Participation: Why are we talking about this in 2004?

The national and community site consultations often began with questions about the need for the research project. The questions revealed a general lack of knowledge about the level of women's participation in Canadian municipal processes. Some municipal governments and women in the community sites expressed a lack of interest in the project or only became interested and supportive as the project unfolded. Several communities had difficulty getting their local governments to participate or support the project, and two communities had difficulties getting women in their communities to come out to consultations.

When the Increasing Women's Participation project began, gender equality was not flagged as a priority concern at the national or community level. Interest and awareness in women's full participation grew as the project unfolded, but the initial phase prompted the following question: Why are so few people talking about the need for gender equality and the full participation of women in Canadian municipalities in 2004?

*"The benefits of participation are clear, but this has not meant that women are included, and it hasn't spurred action to increase participation. Women's involvement is new territory for both women and men in municipal politics... Addressing the difficulties and barriers posed by women's roles and role definition has been driven underground in Canada, as though all of these issues have been dealt with."*

(Interview with FCM Board member)

The findings from the research suggested that the answers to this question are complex:

- Canadian municipalities are struggling with a multitude of issues and concerns as the result of downloading, new mandates, financial and resource shortfalls and increased expectations from the public. Inclusive practices and gender equity may have been pushed aside because of current pressures and new challenges faced by municipal governments.
- Municipal governments were often described as "old boy's networks" by respondents in this study. Municipal governments that come from this tradition may be stuck in the status quo, accept that low or no representation by women is "normal" and be reluctant to make change to increase women's participation.
- A frequently voiced theme in this study was that women have the right to vote and participate, therefore they are equal and no other action is necessary. Equality for women is thereby limited to equality under the law and does not include addressing barriers to full participation. Some respondents said that action to increase the participation of women is in fact "undemocratic" or would signal an unfair response to women as a "special interest group".
- Women involved in Canadian politics say that it is still a "man's game" and recount the perils associated with treading on masculine turf. The legacy of sex and race discrimination in Canada's voting laws lingers, while age-old attitudes about a woman's proper place continue to shape women's experience in politics.<sup>26</sup>

- This study found that connections between women and women's organizations and municipal government are not well developed. Women and grassroots organizations tend to work more closely with the provincial and federal orders of government and are only now turning their attention to opportunities for work and partnership with municipalities. There may not be community-level pressure on local governments to address low participation levels.
- There appears to be a general assumption that, over time, there will be a more or less steady increase in women's share of electoral positions and that no strategic action needs to be taken. While this was the case in the 1980s and 1990s, these numbers have now stalled or are dropping, posing an "Electoral Glass Ceiling" for women in Canada.<sup>27</sup>
- Women and women's organizations have been hit hard by deficit-fighting governments, the loss of social programs and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor in Canada. Poverty has a gender and a colour in Canada, with increased poverty for women, Aboriginal people, visible minorities, immigrants and the disabled. It is more difficult for women and their advocates to work for equality and inclusivity when the struggle for survival takes precedence.<sup>28</sup>
- Although the participation of women in elected positions is well below parity in all orders of government, FCM statistics on women as city managers indicate that, in most provinces, women are represented fairly in decision-making areas where employment equity legislation is in place.
- The number of women legislators is an important indicator of social and political change for Canadian women. The continued under-representation of women in all orders of government reflects a profound democratic deficit in Canada, and there is clear evidence of a downward trend.<sup>29</sup>

#### 4. POLICIES AND PRACTICES ON WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN MUNICIPAL PROCESSES

The response to the national survey indicates an absence of policy and practice to formally include women in municipal processes. Without a policy and practice framework, women are more reliant on the good will or leadership of individuals in municipal governments for inclusive public participation processes. The lack of a policy and practice framework, combined with the absence of training or expertise on gender analysis, the collection of gender-disaggregated data or the use of gender tools, does appear to be related to lower participation levels for women, and marginalized women in particular, in municipal decision-making processes.

##### 4.1 Findings from the National Survey

The National Survey of municipalities provides a snapshot of the use of policies and practices that support women's participation in municipal processes:

###### 4.1.1 Policies on Public Participation

- 24% of respondents had a policy statement on public participation (72% had no policy and 4% did not know).
- 5% of municipalities reported having a policy statement with recommendations for the inclusion of women in consultation processes.

- Less than 1% of municipalities reported having policy with specific recommendations for the inclusion of women from diverse groups in consultation processes.
- 13% of municipalities reported that they had policies, programs and services that take into account the different needs of men and women in the field of crime prevention.

#### 4.1.2 Use of Gender Tools and Training

- 4% of municipalities always used gender assessment tools.
- 3% of municipalities used gender assessment tools most of the time.
- 20% used tools some of the time.
- **63% never used gender assessment tools** and 10% did not know.
- 10% had training available on gender analysis for elected officials and 9% had training for staff.
- 81% did not have training for elected officials and 80% did not have training for staff.
- The most commonly used gender tool reported was an equal opportunity program for hiring (47%).
- 6% of municipalities used women's safety programs.
- Fewer than 5% of municipalities used targeted consultations with women's organizations, women's safety audits, women's advisory committees and diversity advisory committees.
- One municipality reported using Gender Impact Assessments.
- No municipalities reported collecting gender-disaggregated data.

## 4.2 Recommendations from the Community Sites and Women's Organizations on Policy and Policy Development

Research from the community sites and input from women's organizations call for the development of policies and processes, which engender municipal policies and practices to involve women formally in the decision making that affects their lives in their communities.

- Women are actively involved and interested in their communities.
- Women have a strong desire to make their communities a better place in which to live.
- Women value fair process, open and accessible government, as well as a holistic approach to community.
- Women's reasons for participation revolve around a strong desire to improve and or contribute to community or strong feelings about a particular topic.
- Women who were involved as elected officials reflected a history of being involved in community, through schools and community organizations.

*Women at a Thunder Bay focus group suggested that the local women's centre hold an all candidates meeting or forum so that women have the opportunity to meet and discuss municipal issues during elections on a more informal basis.*

(Thunder Bay Report)

### 4.2.1 Community Site Recommendations

The following recommendations for municipal policies to support the inclusion of women in municipal processes come from the Cowichan Valley site report:

- Review and establish policies/practices for consultation to include criteria and benchmarks for inclusivity and accessibility of local government processes;
- Evaluate consultation policies and practices to assess their inclusivity;
- Ensure that, wherever possible, information is disaggregated for gender, income, geography and other relevant socio-economic factors;
- Develop criteria and checklists as part of decision-making/briefing processes;

- Ensure that information and education on inclusivity and gender analysis is provided to elected officials and staff as part of orientation processes;
- Work with relevant community organizations on an ongoing basis to provide feedback and input into consultation processes;
- Develop a supportive framework to provide assessment and guidance.

#### *4.2.2. Recommendations from Women's Organizations*

Women's organizations stressed that when it comes to participation in municipal decision-making processes, women have equality in theory but not in practice. They noted a need for new policies and processes to:

- Address the barriers to participation for women;
- Set targets for increased participation; and,
- Value women's contributions, perspectives and ways of working.

Women's organizations suggested municipal policy development for FCM and local municipalities:

- Development of a new vision for local government, and more inclusive democracy with broad stakeholder involvement in local decision making;
- Consultation policies for inclusion of local provincial and national women's organizations to access their knowledge, resources and networks;
- Development of principles to guide municipal decision making, including principles of sustainability that include social justice, equity, transparency, accountability, respect for ecosystem limits, meaningful participation, long-term vision and planning;
- Gender mainstreaming policy development: look at the implications of all policy on both women and men. Do not take a narrow definition of women's issues. Focus on "community issues" and use an analysis that researches the impact of policy, planning and decisions on both women and men;
- Make structural adjustments to include women on municipal committees, boards and staff, with a target of 50% representation by women;
- Gender analysis and gender responsive budget processes;
- Policies to support skill development and leadership development for young women, poor women, Aboriginal and Métis women, women of colour and immigrant women;
- Policies to support inclusive consultations that ensure that women's participation takes place, that their input is meaningful and brings results, and that their participation is ongoing and not dependant on a single person (such as a progressive mayor) or a particular political climate;
- Policies that set out women's participation as a measure of success for municipal processes;
- Policies that ensure municipalities have women and men, trained and supportive of a gender perspective, and knowledgeable about gender analysis and the collection of disaggregated data.



### 4.3 Policy Development at FCM

The consultation with Board and senior staff at FCM included discussion on policy development at FCM. Several important points were raised:

- FCM does not create policy for member municipalities, nor tell member municipalities how to develop policy. FCM does share models and engage in knowledge-sharing practices with members. There is an opportunity for FCM to play a central role in knowledge sharing around the issue of women in local government;
- FCM's International Centre for Municipal Development (ICMD) has adopted a Gender Policy, for use in FCM's international development projects;
- Neither FCM nor ICMD has a gender specialist on staff, but this may be something to look into;
- FCM is focused on policy issues at the national level. Gender issues and the lack of women's participation has not come forward as an issue or been part of discussions with the membership. The issue would need to come forward in order to be considered for policy development;
- FCM does use templates and views policy through several "lenses" (i.e., a rural lens or economic lens). A gender lens could be added as part of the policy review, if this were wanted;
- FCM could develop objectives and a work plan to take the IULA declaration and integrate it into FCM committees, so that it becomes part of the culture of the FCM Board.

*"The lack of women's involvement needs to be acknowledged as a problem"*

(Interview with FCM Board Member)

## 5. INCLUSIVE CONSULTATIONS TO INCREASE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

The national and community site research found that it was possible to bridge the gap between municipal government and women by implementing effective consultation processes in communities. Women's organizations with a record of joint projects with their municipal government noted that successful involvement in consultation lays the groundwork for working together and brings people together to work in partnership.

### 5.1 Key Factors for Inclusive Consultations with Women

The community site research made recommendations for inclusive consultation processes that increase women's participation:

- Provide information about consultation opportunities in plain language to women and women's organizations, informing them of how they can be involved and what will happen with their input;
- Use various ways of getting information to women (i.e., web site, newspaper, media, information to women's networks);

*"Not knowing when municipal decisions are happening or why they are happening is a very strong deterrent to involvement. Reading about decisions in the paper after the City has met is not an incentive to get involved."*

(Thunder Bay focus group)

- Wherever possible, hold consultation meetings where women gather already, in settings that are accessible and comfortable for women;
- Make full use of the partnerships with local women's organizations to access their networks and expertise and reach women who are marginalized in the community;
- Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women, especially marginalized women, to ensure they are included;
- Provide practical supports to help women attend meetings (i.e., transportation, childcare, food and buildings that are accessible for the disabled);
- Consult in the language that women are most comfortable using;
- Ensure that the information-gathering process is safe for women, that it is respectful and uses plain language;
- Consider having women from women's organizations assist with the facilitation or design of the information-gathering process;
- Focus groups and workshops where women are provided with information and have an opportunity to give information. Kitchen-table meetings, talking circle style meetings were also suggested;
- Use the information women provide and follow up with decisions that are reached, so women know that their input is valued and used.

*"It is important to increase participation in urban politics in order to decrease alienation. It should feel like home."*

(Halifax student focus group)

When women are comfortable and know that their input is valued, they are able to participate fully in consultations. Inclusive consultation processes that work well for women are the basic building blocks for involving women in other municipal processes.

## 5.2 Defining Women's Issues and When Municipalities Consult with Women

The national and community site research brought forward questions and discussion on when municipalities should consult with women, and how women's issues are defined.

The research found that women are excluded from municipal processes, or choose not to become involved, when:

- Municipalities define their mandate narrowly, as meeting the infrastructure needs of communities (such as roads, water, sewers, and/or economic development) and do not include social infrastructure that has an impact on families and communities;
- Municipalities define women's issues narrowly, as those concerned with childcare, women's safety or employment equity, and do not recognize that women are interested in and affected by all municipal decisions;

- Municipalities maintain a “gender neutral” approach to planning and policy development that does not consider the different needs of women and men, and the different ways that decisions have an impact on women and men in communities;
- Municipalities do not seek input from women or women’s organizations, and do not include them as stakeholders in decision-making processes;
- Women’s organizations define the role and responsibility of municipal government narrowly, and do not advocate, engage or create partnerships at the municipal level around issues that have an impact on women in their communities;
- Municipalities presume that women’s issues will be addressed without resources, training and/or awareness;
- Municipalities consult with women and women’s organizations, but fail to act on recommendations or concerns.

*“New forms of democracy will only emerge when participation is happening – the same old men are not going to come up with the new ideas for democracy... People are a wealth of resources, they are not a “pain in the butt” and that attitude is bad for the country. We are not tapping into the resources that exist.”*

*(Interview, Women’s Organization)*

“Women’s issues” or, more precisely, a gendered analysis of these issues (such as housing, transportation, public safety and social services) have been quite peripheral to Canadian mainstream urban planning, governance, and academia. Municipalities and women’s organizations need to look closely at the impact of municipal decisions on both women and men, and include both women and men equally in this decision making.<sup>30</sup>

### 5.3 The Role of Municipalities and Municipal Associations to Increase Women’s Participation

Women’s organizations stressed the need for leadership from FCM, municipal associations and municipal governments to create a new vision of full inclusion in communities across the country:

#### *Leadership*

- FCM leadership to support more democratic municipal government, increased inclusion of women, Aboriginal women, visible minorities and women who are marginalized in their communities. Leadership for the development of a new vision for local government, and a more inclusive democracy, with broader stakeholder involvement in local decision making.
- Leadership by the FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee, with a new role and mandate within FCM. The committee works for the full inclusion of women, as defined in the IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government, and to support the attainment of equal participation levels for women and men in all Canadian municipal processes.<sup>31</sup>
- Leadership by municipal councillors, and especially by women councillors, to facilitate the emergence of new ideas and practices that are more democratic and participatory.

### *Mentor, Support, Raise Awareness*

The FCM Women's Committee articulated a vision and a role for elected women to increase the participation and support the full inclusion of women in all municipal processes:

- Elected women have a role as mentors and coaches to increase women's participation in municipal processes;
- Elected women have a role to support the development and creation of local advisory committees;
- Elected women have a role to raise the awareness of women in their communities about the importance of their participation. They also have a role to communicate with the media to raise awareness of women's issues and participation;
- The FCM Women's Committee has a role within FCM to:
  - Coordinate national initiatives with international initiatives under the IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government, to fulfil Canada's national obligations as a member of IULA (now United Cities and Local Governments);
  - Provide FCM and member municipalities with information and recommendations in the areas of gender equality and citizen participation, so that women attain equal levels of participation with men;
  - Support women's leadership in municipal processes through mentoring, training and education;
  - Provide leadership and expertise for FCM, FCM committees, and member municipalities on gender equality, women in municipal governance, inclusive practices, women's leadership, and inclusive approaches to civic participation;
  - Work with national, provincial/territorial and community partners to accomplish the goals of gender equality and inclusive citizen participation;
  - Promote and celebrate women's achievements and excellence;
  - Undertake projects and activities that will lead to gender equality and inclusive citizen participation;
  - Acquire the resources needed for sustained change to increase women's participation and implement inclusive practices.

### **5.4 Increasing Women's Participation: the Role of Women and Women's Organizations**

Consulting with women's organizations provided an opportunity for some organizations to learn more about municipal governance. Several organizations had not "thought about" working with or focusing activities on municipal government, because they had traditionally worked with the provincial/territorial or federal orders. The interview process itself prompted some organizations to consider the potential for advocacy and partnerships at the municipal level. It also produced a list of ways that women's organizations could support increased participation:

- Getting information to women;
- Advocacy at the municipal level;
- Making women's participation in municipal processes a priority for women's organizations;
- Building partnerships with municipal government – opportunities to improve the lives of women in their communities;
- Developing linkages between FCM and national women's organizations;
- Investing in women's leadership;
- Developing networks of support for women in government;
- Taking responsibility to learn more about municipal government;

*"We can access specific information about issues at the local level. For example: What are the housing issues for Métis women? We can access our networks for this information."*

(Interview, Women's Organization)

- Organizing training and information sessions for women on municipal government structures, and processes and voting;
- Inviting municipal councillors to community events, to meet women and learn about the organization.

Women's organizations have traditionally focused on the provincial and federal orders of government to advocate and work for women in their communities. Several women's organizations in this research recognized the need to refocus energy and resources to develop their relationship and partnerships with municipal government, as well as to inform the women they work with about the importance of participating in municipal processes.

## **6. PARTNERSHIPS: MUNICIPALITIES AND WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS**

Twelve of the 20 women's organizations that participated in consultations reported some level of participation with municipalities. These consultations had brought about various levels of satisfaction, ranging from 'very satisfied' to 'unsatisfied'. Eight organizations had not shared any work (partnerships or consultations) with municipal government.

### **6.1 Ways Women's Organizations Work with Municipalities and Municipal Associations**

- Consultations at the local, regional, provincial and national level
- Municipal committee and advisory work, and working together with municipal councillors on community boards (for example, child welfare)
- Provide information and training for municipal employees on violence in families, safe communities, women and leadership
- National week without violence campaign
- Provide community services, such as homeless shelters, shelter for abused women, recreational services, employment services
- Provide training and resources on sexual harassment, violence against women
- Presentations and workshops on getting women involved in municipal politics
- Research and policy development on women's access to services
- Joint project to develop affordable housing
- Joint project with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for a summer school for potential women candidates in the 2005 Quebec municipal elections

Respondents said that they were a potential resource for municipalities and provincial and federal associations, but most reported they had limited opportunity to explore or develop partnerships. The exception to this finding was in Quebec where women's organizations have worked closely with municipal associations.

Women's organizations are an "untapped resource" in areas of improving women's participation, accessing information in the community, providing expertise and research knowledge, policy and programs development, implementation of new programs and community responses.

Partnerships require that the municipality acknowledge the need to work with women's organizations, as well as municipal staff that are supportive and willing. Participants suggested that a municipal staff person should be assigned to make connections and that municipalities need to take the initiative.

## 6.2 New Ways for Women's Organizations and Municipalities to Work Together

Women's organizations provided a large number of recommendations on ways they can work with municipal governments and their associations:

- City purchases expertise and training tools from community partners to train staff and for policy development. Women's organizations as "knowledge experts" (in areas such as gender, violence, racism and diversity);
- Partnerships possible with Women's Studies programs to access well-trained students and a body of research;
- Participation on women's committees, partnership committees and working groups to address issues and create action plans;
- Municipalities and FCM can reach out to women's organizations and their networks and have policy go through a respected policy process, based on grassroots participation, then the policy is respected and supported;
- Women's networks could be enlisted to support municipal governments with their presentations to provincial and national government. National women's organizations have the expertise and knowledge to write letters and make effective presentations;
- Women's organizations can organize workshops, conferences, publish documents and bring testimony forward. They are networked and non-partisan, with good recognition in large and small communities. A resource with a high level of expertise for municipalities;
- Women's organizations can provide information, background on issues, action plans and protocols, and tools for use in the community;
- Mentorship programs within the community – mentoring immigrant women with people in power;
- Women's organizations can partner with more municipal governments to develop innovative strategies and projects to address community needs;
- Women's organizations can help municipal government engage and consult with young people.

*"We have the established policies, which have gone through a respected policy process, based on grass roots participation. Municipalities and FCM should be reaching out to organizations like the Women's Council, so they can back the municipal positions up. We can write letters of support for municipalities, if municipal governments were willing to initiate contact, and enlist the support of the Women's Council. We have access to a network of women that could be enlisted to support municipal governments with their presentations to provincial and national government."*

(Interview, Women's Organization)

Women's organizations suggested that municipalities and women's organizations consider what the definition of a "partnership" is. Many respondents did not call their work with municipalities "partnerships", although it was a partnership structure and function. They recommended a look at a continuum of partnerships, from informal to formal to legal, that share structures to clearly involve both parties.

*"With municipal governments, the decision makers are in the room. You can get to people and meet with people...it is a real process and much less of a labyrinth."*

(Interview, Women's Organization)

They also need municipalities to appreciate the limited funds and staffing levels that confront most women's organizations in Canada today. Women's organizations will need support and resources from municipal governments or provincial/national associations to partner effectively.

Some women's organizations said they have concentrated on municipal politics because they see municipalities as "one of the principal entry points for women."<sup>32</sup> Others have focused on municipal partnerships because municipal governments are the most accessible form of government, a finding that supports the notion that local government is the order of government closest to the people.

## **7. THE BENEFITS TO COMMUNITIES WHEN WOMEN ARE FULLY INCLUDED**

There are clear benefits for municipalities, women and communities when women fully participate in municipal processes. There was broad agreement from all participants in this study on the positive impact of full inclusion.

- Inclusion pays off. From an economic perspective, it pays off to maximize the potential of everyone in the community. Inclusivity can be related to the quality of life in a community and the overall competitiveness of a community.
- Women practice more collaborative styles of working that benefit decision-making and inclusive processes.
- More participation creates more opportunities for women to take leadership roles in their communities.
- More knowledge comes forward, so there are better services and a more efficient use of resources.
- More informed decision making by elected officials.
- Increased community support for municipal decisions.
- Municipalities are more effective in meeting the needs of women and their families.
- Women are a resource and have tremendous value to add to their communities. Every time women are not involved in a process, something is wasted.

- Women's organizations play a role in communities that municipalities cannot. When they participate, the municipality benefits from the leadership, credibility, networks, resources, access to resources and influence they bring to the table.
- Women's organizations have a good sense of the pulse of the community or women and children, which they can bring to the municipality for more proactive planning.

## **8. TOOLS TO INCREASE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION**

An important part of this project was to collect information from municipalities, women's organizations and women in communities about the types of tools that are needed to increase participation or have worked well in the past. There was a high degree of agreement from all participants in the research, both at the national and community levels, about the tools that Canadian municipalities need to improve levels of participation by the full diversity of women in their communities. Recommended tools and strategies, as identified by municipalities and women's organizations, are:

### **8.1 Information Tools and Links**

- FCM act as an information clearinghouse and link for information about how FCM works, municipal structures and processes, women in municipal government, gender, gender mainstreaming, training, consultation processes, partnerships, knowledge building, and policy development and international developments.
- FCM provide information through a site on its web site dedicated to women and municipal governance, links to other websites, regular publications, as well as at conferences and Board Meetings.
- Annual FCM Report Card on Women in Municipal Government based on data collected nationally.
- Municipalities act as an information clearinghouse at the community level for women's organizations and women on how municipalities work, municipal consultation structures and processes, and how to get in touch with municipal government and councillors. Information provided through web sites, publications, workshops and networking with women's organizations.

### **8.2 Policy Templates and Models**

- Model Gender Policy
- Gender Lens
- IULA Declaration on Women in Local Government
- Inclusive Public Participation Policy Models
- Women's Safety Programs
- Women's Advisory Committees
- Gender Equity Action Plans

### **8.3 Tools for Intentional Outreach**

- Consultation and participation processes
- Designs for inclusive processes (workshops, focus groups, etc.)
- Reaching out to marginalized women
- Setting inclusion goals



#### **8.4 Tools for Partnership Building**

- Model Partnership Framework or “Road Map”
- Consultation and Dialogue

#### **8.5 Knowledge and Capacity Building Tools**

- Training tools for gender awareness and sensitivity
- Training tools to address sexism and racism
- Report card on inclusion
- Leadership for women
- Mentoring tools
- Collection of gender-disaggregated data
- Tools and training on listening and communicating
- Training on addressing barriers to participation
- Campaign school for women interested in municipal government

#### **8.6 Best Practices, Case Studies, Lessons Learned**

- Success stories from Canadian communities (partnerships, policy and practice)
- Lessons learned from project consultation processes
- Best practices from Canadian and international sources



## 1. Canada is losing ground with countries around the world

- Canada, with 21.7% women elected in local government, falls behind many developing and developed countries.
- Gender mainstreaming, or the incorporation of gender equality in all stages of policy making, is statutory requirement for member states of the European Union, but is rarely used in Canadian municipalities.
- Canada now ranks 37<sup>th</sup> of 181 countries on the Inter-Parliamentary Union Table on Women in National Parliaments (2003).

## 2. Women are under-represented in most municipal processes

- The majority of councils surveyed (86%) did not have equal representation of elected women on council. 14% reported having no women on council.
- Higher numbers of women participate on Advisory Committees, but women from diverse groups (visible minorities, disabled, immigrant, other) are very poorly represented.
- Women participate at higher levels in municipal consultation processes than as elected officials or as committee members, but are still under-represented and diverse groups of women are not well represented.

## 3. There is a need for more information about municipal governance and ways for women and municipalities to access and share information

- Women identified the lack of information about municipal government as a serious barrier to participation.
- There is no central clearinghouse for information about women and municipal government, participatory government or best practices in Canada.

## 4. Significant barriers to participation were identified

- Municipalities and women's networks may not have established working relationships.
- Municipalities do not generally reach out to involve women in consultation processes.
- Lack of practical supports for women (for example, childcare, transportation, timing of meetings).
- Lack of support from the municipality for more inclusive policies and practices.
- Family responsibilities and lack of time because of women's paid and unpaid work.

## 5. Marginalized women face more serious systemic barriers to participation

Women who are marginalized because of race, ethnicity, poverty, immigration status, age, sexual orientation or disability participate in municipal processes at low levels and often do not vote. Systemic barriers to participation appear to shut many marginalized women out of participation in their local government:

- Racism and discrimination
- Sexism
- Language barriers
- Politics are viewed as a man's game or an "old boy's network"
- Marginalized women do not have a voice or influence in their community
- There is a need for more training and awareness raising for municipal staff and elected officials in the areas of racism, gender and anti-oppression work.

6. **Women are actively involved in their communities, but may have given up on municipal government as a way of making change**
  - Women choose to work outside of municipal processes because they feel they can be more effective and exert more influence. Women with limited time want to work where they can make a difference.
  - Inuit women reported that the municipal system does not reflect Inuit values or traditions.
  - Women reported that their voices are unheard and their participation does not lead to meaningful change.
  - Women's organizations reported that when municipal governments focus on infrastructure only, and not on the social services that are important for women and their families, women choose not to participate.
7. **Municipalities, women and women's groups agree there are clear benefits for communities and for municipalities when women participate fully**
  - Inclusion pays off. From an economic perspective, it pays off to maximize the potential of everyone in the community.
  - Women generally practice more collaborative styles of working that benefit decision-making and inclusive processes.
  - More participation creates more opportunities for women to take leadership in their communities.
  - More knowledge comes forward, which leads to better services, more efficient use of resources and more informed decision making by elected officials.
  - Increased community support for municipal decisions.
  - Municipalities are more effective in meeting the needs of women and their families.
  - Women are a resource and have skills and knowledge to offer their communities.
8. **Policies and practices for gender mainstreaming and inclusive participation are not commonly used in Canadian municipalities**

Canada has developed excellent gender mainstreaming tools (e.g., Status of Women Canada, CIDA) but these tools do not appear to be adapted or used in municipal contexts.
9. **Partnerships between municipalities and women's organizations are extremely effective but are a largely untapped resource**
  - Women's organizations are a potential resource for municipalities, provincial/territorial and national associations.
  - The study identified effective and successful partnerships that could be used as best practice examples for other communities.
  - Women's organizations have access to networks of women who can be enlisted to support municipal governments around shared goals or projects.
  - Women's organizations have expertise and tools in the areas of consultation, inclusive participatory processes, policy development, as well as gender and anti-racism training, leadership development and research that municipalities can access.
10. **Effective and inclusive consultation processes lay the foundation for successful partnerships and joint projects**
  - Women's organizations reported that successful consultation processes are the first step for successful partnerships and joint projects.

- Women in the community sites reported that positive experiences with municipal consultation processes (i.e., experience of being heard, fair and open process, accessible, respectful and safe, comfortable setting, accountable, etc.) encouraged them to become more involved in municipal decision-making processes.
  - Consultation processes used in the community research (focus groups, workshops, information sessions, workshops with women and municipal officials, partnership approaches) effectively reached women who did not usually participate.
- 11. Leadership development and mentoring are needed to enhance participation.**
- Aboriginal, Métis, Inuit, immigrant and marginalized women reported that they needed skill development and leadership training to participate successfully in municipal processes.
  - Elected women need campaign schools, mentoring programs for newly elected women and support networks.
  - Marginalized women said that successful role models, and the presence of women “like them” in municipal processes, are powerful motivators for participation, especially for young women.
- 12. Municipalities and women’s organizations need tools, training and resources to increase women’s participation.**
- Information Tools and Links to national and international information sources.
  - Policy Templates and Models on gender mainstreaming and inclusion.
  - Consultation Tools and Processes that take into account women’s needs and realities.
  - Tools for Partnership Building.
  - Leadership, Mentoring and Skill Development.
  - Best Practices, Case Studies and Lessons Learned.

# NEXT STEPS: A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO INCREASE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPAL PROCESSES



## 1. A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO INCREASE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPAL PROCESSES

Canada needs a new vision and a national strategy to help involve women fully in municipal decision-making processes.

The goal of the national strategy is:

To maximize opportunities for the involvement of women in municipal processes in order for women to attain equal levels of participation with men by:

- Making gender equality in municipal consultation and decision-making processes a priority for action in Canada;
- Taking coordinated action to address systemic and practical barriers experienced by women, and by marginalized women in particular, to full participation in municipal consultation and decision-making processes;
- Building effective partnerships and coalitions between local governments, and national and grassroots women's organizations.

This new approach could involve different players as follows:

- FCM and member municipalities are the governance organizations with the influence and ability to provide an inclusion framework, which would support the implementation of gender mainstreaming and inclusive participatory practices, and develop partnerships with national women's organizations;
- The FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee has the national position to support the development of national policy, strategies and projects to increase women's participation;
- Provincial and territorial municipal associations have the ability to support policy development, training and mentoring;
- Municipal councillors, and especially women councillors, have the opportunity to facilitate the emergence of new ideas and practices that are more democratic and participatory, and make links at the community level with women's organizations and women;
- Women's organizations advocate at the national, provincial and community levels for increased participation, provide leadership training and information for women on municipal processes, and partner where possible with municipalities.

## 2. AN ACTION PLAN THAT INCLUDES FOUR COMPONENTS

### Leadership

FCM would provide national leadership to increase women's participation in municipal processes by working with partners and members to develop and implement a new vision and goals for full inclusion by:

1. Developing a national vision for Canada based on the IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government;
2. Setting national goals for the equal participation of women in municipal processes;
3. Managing data and statistics on women's participation in municipal processes, nationally and within FCM;
4. Reporting annually on progress towards national goals;

5. Supporting member municipalities to reach goals of increased women's participation;
6. Modelling gender mainstreaming in FCM policy development and consultation practices;
7. Setting up and supporting internal mechanisms to guide and support the implementation of the National Strategy;
8. Initiating partnerships with federal, provincial and community partners and funding bodies.

### **Information and Communication**

FCM and partners in the National Strategy would develop national and community mechanisms to bridge the information gap between women and municipal government and make information on municipal governance, municipal processes, best practices, public participation and gender equality accessible where:

1. FCM would act as a National Information Clearinghouse;
2. Municipalities would provide information at the Community level;
3. Women's Organizations would provide information on municipal processes and support information linkages between women and their municipalities.

### **Inclusive Policies and Practices**

FCM and its partners in the National Strategy would develop and implement a model Gender Inclusive Policy and Practice Framework for municipal consultation and decision-making processes. The key elements for this strategy would be:

1. Integration of Gender Mainstreaming in policy development and review;
2. Development and testing of model templates, policies and practices for gender-inclusive consultation and decision making, building on work undertaken in the current report;
3. Development of tools for gender-disaggregated data collection and reporting;
4. Development of a National Report Card on Inclusivity.

### **Partnerships**

FCM and members would use the National Strategy as an opportunity to develop and support new partnerships between women's organizations and municipal governments and their provincial/territorial associations around the shared goal of increasing women's participation in municipal consultations and decision making. This would be accomplished by:

1. Creating a Steering Committee to guide the National Strategy;
2. Reviewing opportunities for new partnerships at the national and local levels.

## **3 . R E C O M M E N D E D I M P L E M E N T A T I O N P L A N F O R A N A T I O N A L S T R A T E G Y**

### **In the Short Term**

- Distribution of the current report to FCM members, women's organizations and project participants, and posting the report on FCM's web site.
- Presentation of recommendations for a National Strategy to FCM Board by the FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee.
- Adoption and approval of a strategic plan and new terms of reference for the FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee that expands its mandate and supports the implementation of recommendations from the final report.

- Approval of a National Strategy by FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee and FCM Board of Directors.
- Establishment of a Steering Committee to guide the National Strategy.
- Preparation and submission of proposals for funding for the implementation of a National Strategy.
- Development of an FCM National Clearinghouse web site on Women and Local Governance

#### **In the Longer Term**

- Implementation of specific projects to increase women's participation including:
  - National workshops in four diverse communities to design model policy and consultation templates, training tools and gender-disaggregated data-collection tools;
  - Development of training tools on gender mainstreaming, gender awareness, inclusivity;
  - Development of a model policy framework for inclusive municipal participation processes (templates for policy and practice).
- Review of FCM policy for gender mainstreaming and inclusion
- Development of Report Card on Inclusivity
- Organization of a national conference on Women and Local Government
- Conduct training workshops on gender mainstreaming, gender-disaggregated data collection, gender and inclusion.



At the beginning of this report two questions were asked:

**1. Do we need changes in consultation processes so they are more inclusive, or do municipal structures need to change to be more inclusive?**

The findings from this study indicate a need for both process and structural changes within municipal governments and their associations to increase the participation of women and to ensure that women in their full diversity have a voice and a role in municipal decision-making processes.

**2. How do we make the full inclusion of women in municipal processes a priority for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, municipal governments and with women in communities?**

The study confirms the importance of municipal government for women and it provides FCM, municipalities and women's organizations with information and strategies to bridge the current gender and democratic deficit that exists in many Canadian communities.

Making women's participation a priority is not optional. Municipalities need the skills, resources, knowledge and collaborative approach women bring to decision making in their communities. Women and men must have equal opportunities and equal access to decision making and services in order for communities to flourish and meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

There is a great deal of work to be done to ensure women participate equally and fully in the decision-making processes of local governments in Canadian communities. The Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Consultation Processes project offers strategies to improve gender equality in Canada and more inclusive approaches to public consultation processes. The results of this project can be considered as the first phase of a national strategy to support the inclusion of women in their full diversity in the order of government that is closest to them.



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**APPENDIX A: NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
(TITLES AS AT PROJECT INCEPTION)**

<p><b>Elisabeth Arnold</b> Ottawa City Councillor (until Nov.2003) Project Working Group member</p>	<p><b>Carrie Elrick</b> Community Site Rep. Iqaluit, NU</p>
<p><b>Joan Lougheed</b> Burlington City Councillor FCM Board member Chair, FCM Women’s Committee Working Group member</p>	<p><b>Barbara Cottrell</b> Community Site Rep. Halifax, NS</p>
<p><b>Caroline Andrew</b> University of Ottawa, Femmes et Ville Project Rep. Working Group member</p>	<p><b>Debbie Harrison</b> Community Site Rep. Montreal, QC</p>
<p><b>Anne Michaud</b> City of Montreal Femmes et Ville Project Rep.</p>	<p><b>Kim Hagarty</b> Community Site Rep. Thunder Bay, ON</p>
<p><b>Renée Giroux</b> FCM staff with ICMD Working Group member FCM Project Management</p>	<p><b>Verna St. Denis with Cindy Hanson</b> Community Site Rep. City of Saskatoon, SK</p>
<p><b>Ann MacLean</b> Mayor, Town of New Glasgow, NS FCM First Vice-President</p>	<p><b>Terri Dame</b> Community Site Rep. Cowichan Valley, BC</p>
<p><b>Pam Montour</b> National Aboriginal Women’s Association Executive Director</p>	<p><b>Sonia Bitar</b> Changing Together: A Centre for Immigrant Women, Edmonton, AB, Executive Director</p>
<p><b>Paulette McCarthy</b> Past Councillor, Nanaimo, BC Working Group Member</p>	<p><b>Gail Teofilovici</b> YWCA Canada CEO</p>
<p><b>Louise Poirier</b> Councillor, City of Gatineau, QC FCM Women’s Committee member Union des Municipalités du Québec</p>	<p><b>Barbara MacDonald</b> Feminists for Just and Equitable Public Policy Nova Scotia</p>
<p>This project was coordinated by <b>Colleen Purdon</b></p>	

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS WITH WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Type of Organization	National	Regional	Community-based
Anglophone or Bilingual	YWCA, Elaine Teofilovici, CEO (Steering Committee member) National Council of Women of Canada, Catherine Laidlaw-Sly, ED Women and the Environment International, Prabha Khosla Equal Voice, Rosemary Speirs Canadian Women's Studies Association, Barbara Crow, Editor	Council on the Status of Women PEI, Kirstin Lund, Chair (Community Site Applicant) (PEI)	Ottawa, Women's Access to Municipal Services Project (ON), Caroline Andrew Fernie Resource Centre BC rural, Debbie Johnson (Community Site Applicant) Women Plan Toronto (ON), Reggie Modlich
Aboriginal, Métis, Inuit	National Aboriginal Women's Organization, Pam Montour (Steering Committee) Métis National Council of Women, Sheila Genaille	Pauktutit Inuit Women (NU), Jennifer Dickson, ED	Yellowknife – Women's Voices in Leadership NWT, Marsha Argue (Community Site applicant)
Francophone		<i>Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie</i> (QC), Elaine Hémond, Community Site applicant <i>Table féministe francophone de concertation provinciale de l'Ontario</i> (ON), Anne Molgat	Montreal – Programme <i>Femmes et ville</i> (QC), Anne Michaud (Steering Committee member)
Visible Minority/ Immigrant	National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women, Anu Bose, ED (Community Site Applicant) Congress of Black Women of Canada, Fleurette Osborne, Past President (Community Site applicant)		Edmonton, AB Changing Together, Sonia Bitar ED (Steering Committee member)
Young Women	Power Camp National, Rachel Gouin		
<b>Total (20)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>

## APPENDIX C: CONSULTATION WITH FCM BOARD AND STAFF

### Participants in the Consultation (titles as at time of consultation):

- Mayor Yves Ducharme, FCM President
- Mayor Michael Coleman, FCM Second Vice-President
- Councillor Russ Powers, FCM Third Vice-President
- Alderman John Schmal, FCM Immediate Past President
- Councillor Michael Phair, FCM Standing Committee on Social Infrastructure
- Councillor Joan Lougheed, Chair, Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee
- Paulette McCarthy, past Councillor and FCM member, Nanaimo, BC, Steering Committee member
- Elisabeth Arnold, past Councillor and FCM member, Ottawa, ON, Steering Committee member
- James Knight, Chief Executive Officer, FCM
- Louise Comeau, Director General, Policy, Advocacy and Communications, FCM
- David Cohen, Director, Economic and Intergovernmental Policy, FCM
- Brock Carlton, Director, International Centre for Municipal Development, FCM

## APPENDIX D: OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY SITE METHODOLOGY

Community Site	Scan of Local Municipal Processes	Community Survey	Focus Group/ Workshop	Total Participation
Halifax, NS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scan of “What exists in the Halifax Regional Municipality”</li> <li>• Data collected on: Policies on public participation; Structure of regional government; Roles of council and staff; Structure, committees, membership; Public participation methods</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 focus groups</li> <li>• 60 participants</li> <li>• Representation: African-Canadian, immigrant, low-income, student, youth, community leaders, street workers</li> </ul>	60
Montreal, QC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of Provincial initiatives to promote women’s participation in municipal processes</li> <li>• Inventory of municipal consultation processes</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Francophone women, immigrant women, visible minority women, younger Anglophone women, all income-levels. Total 52</li> <li>• Consultations in French and English</li> </ul>	52
Thunder Bay, ON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of public communication and consultation policy and practices</li> </ul>	54 surveys completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 focus group</li> <li>• 3 participants</li> </ul>	57
Saskatoon, SK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scan of City of Saskatoon’s Consulting processes, public participation plan, review of policy</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 focus group</li> <li>• 46 participants</li> <li>• Aboriginal women (&gt;50%), immigrant women, refugees and visible minority women</li> </ul>	46
Cowichan Valley, BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scan of 4 local municipalities and regional government</li> <li>• Data collected on: local government function, structure, committees, formal and informal consultation processes</li> </ul>	310 returned surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 focus groups</li> <li>• 126 participants</li> <li>• Representation: young women, seniors, low income women, First Nations, immigrant women, rural women, and women with disabilities</li> </ul>	400 respondents (352 women)
Iqaluit, NU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scan of municipal government, history, structure, committees, consultation processes, gender make up, language of business and involvement of Inuit and Inuit women</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 focus groups</li> <li>• 29 participants</li> <li>• Inuktitut and English</li> <li>• 5 key informant interviews</li> <li>• Representation: Inuit women (100%) representative of the community</li> </ul>	34
<b>Total</b>		<b>364</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>685</b>





**APPENDIX E: ELECTED OFFICIALS AND CITY MANAGERS IN FCM DATABASE**  
(by province and by sex)

March 2004

	Alberta		British Columbia		Manitoba		New Brunswick		Newfoundland		Nova Scotia		Northwest Territories	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Heads of Council	54	291	37	147	9	188	13	90	53	230	6	52	6	18
%	15.7%	84.3%	20.1%	79.9%	4.7%	95.3%	12.6%	87.4%	18.7%	81.3%	10.3%	89.7%	25%	75%
Councillors	359	1 146	337	846	124	870	117	408	362	949	77	313	51	78
%	23.8%	76.2%	28.4%	71.6%	11.5%	88.5%	22.3%	77.7%	27.6%	72.4%	19.7%	80.3%	39.5%	60.5%
City Managers	161	184	34	150	97	100	52	51	211	72	10	48	9	15
%	46.7%	53.3%	18.4%	81.6%	49.2%	50.8%	50.4%	49.6%	74.6%	25.4%	17.2%	82.8%	37.5%	62.5%

	Nunavut		Prince Edward Island		Quebec		Saskatchewan		Yukon		Ontario		Canada	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Heads of Council	4	19	15	60	101	1070	57	388	62	749	2	7	419	3 309
%	17.4%	82.6%	20%	80%	8.6%	91.4%	12.8%	87.2%	7.6%	92.4%	22.2%	77.8%	11.2%	88.8%
Councillors	51	90	94	252	1 771	5 881	664	2 170	514	3 285	13	26	4 534	16 314
%	36.2%	63.8%	27.2%	72.8%	23.1%	76.9%	23.4%	76.6%	13.5%	86.5%	33.3%	66.7%	21.7%	78.3%
City Managers	4	19	39	36	620	551	162	283	525	286	2	7	1 926	1 802
%	17.4%	82.6%	52%	48%	52.9%	47.1%	36%	64%	64.7%	35.3%	22.2%	77.8%	51.7%	48.3%

<sup>1</sup> Status of Women Canada. *Gender-based Analysis: A Guide for Policy-Making* Working Document. Ottawa, Status of Women Canada. September 1998: 3

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO. *Gender Equality and Equity*. Unit for the Promotion of the Status of Women and Gender Equality. May 2000: 5.

<sup>3</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO). *ABC of Women Worker's Rights and Gender Equality*. Geneva. 2000: 48.

<sup>4</sup> Deshler, D., and N. Grudens-Schuck. "The Politics of Knowledge Construction", in *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education*. Eds. A.L. Wilson and E.R. Hayes. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Series. 2000: 592-611. and Greenwood, D.J. and M. Levin, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*. Thousand Oaks. Ca. Sage Publications. 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Jacques, Marlène (ed.) *Local Government in Canada*. Ottawa. Federation of Canadian Municipalities – International Office. September 1999: 11-12.

<sup>6</sup> International Union of Local Authorities (IULA). *Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government*. The Hague. 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Federation of Canadian Municipalities. *A New Deal for Community Prosperity and Well Being* FCM. January 2004: 4-5.

<sup>8</sup> Lang, Catherine and Toby Goldberg. *Vibrant Communities: Gender Analysis Resource Review and Gender Analysis Case Studies*. March 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Correspondence with Dr. Caroline Andrews, Project Steering Committee member.

<sup>10</sup> Jacques, Marlène (ed.) *Local Government in Canada*. Ottawa. Federation of Canadian Municipalities – International Office. September 1999: 11-12

<sup>11</sup> International Union of Local Authorities (IULA). *Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government*. The Hague. 1998.

<sup>12</sup> *Engendering the Political Agenda: The Role of the State, Women's Organizations and the International Community*. United Nations Publications. 2000.

<sup>13</sup> Federation of Canadian Municipalities. *Knowledge-sharing Workshop on Gender Equality and Local Governance*. Federation of Canadian Municipalities – International Centre for Municipal Development. September 2002: 24-29.

- <sup>14</sup> Grey, Sandra. "Women and Parliamentary Politics: Does Size Matter? Critical Mass and Women MPs in the New Zealand House of Representatives." Paper for the 51st Political Studies Association Conference. Manchester. 2001.
- <sup>15</sup> Staudt, (1995); Abzug and Kelber (1993) in *Engendering the Political Agenda: The Role of the State, Women's Organizations and the International Community*. United Nations Publications. 2000.
- <sup>16</sup> Federation of Canadian Municipalities. *Knowledge-sharing Workshop on Gender Equality and Local Governance*. Federation of Canadian Municipalities – International Centre for Municipal Development. September 2002: 24-29.
- <sup>17</sup> "City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)." Unpublished Training Plan. Ottawa, 2004
- <sup>18</sup> Femmes et ville International, <[www.femmesetvilles.org/english/sets\\_en/set\\_declaration\\_en.htm](http://www.femmesetvilles.org/english/sets_en/set_declaration_en.htm)>
- <sup>19</sup> From a document prepared by Kim Cornelissen for FCM, and a draft of *A City Tailored to Women*, prepared by Ann Michaud. 2004.
- <sup>20</sup> IULA. "Women in Local Decision-making." February 2004 Newsletter <[www.congres-fmccu-iula.paris.fr/en/prog\\_monday.htm](http://www.congres-fmccu-iula.paris.fr/en/prog_monday.htm)>
- <sup>21</sup> IULA. "Women in Local Decision-making." Database. March 2003 <<http://www.cities-localgovernments.org>>
- <sup>22</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union. "Table on Women in National Parliaments." 2004 <<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/planactn.htm>>
- <sup>23</sup> Parlinfo. "Women – Current Provincial and Territorial Party Standings." Library of Parliament – Information and Documentation Branch. 23 Apr. 2003.
- <sup>24</sup> Khosla, Punam. *If Low-income Women of Colour Counted in Toronto*. Community Social Planning Council of Toronto. 2003: 7-9.
- <sup>25</sup> "Cowichan Valley Final Report." prepared by Terri Dame for FCM's "Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Consultation Processes" project. April 2004.
- <sup>26</sup> Trimble, Linda and Jane Arscott. *Still Counting Women in Politics Across Canada*. Peterborough. Broadview Press. 2003: 2.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 2

<sup>28</sup> Lang, Catherine and Toby Goldberg: *Vibrant Communities – Gender Analysis in Community-based Poverty Reduction: A Report on the Gender and Poverty Project*. March 2004.

<sup>29</sup> Trimble, Linda and Jane Arscott. *The Stalled Electoral Project*. March 2004.

<sup>30</sup> Whitzman, Carolyn. “The ‘Voice of Women’ in Canadian Local Government.” in *Urban Affairs: Back on the Policy Agenda*. Eds. Carolyn Andrew et al. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press. 2002.

<sup>31</sup> Purdon, Colleen. “Draft Strategic Plan for the FCM Canadian Women in Municipal Government Committee.” Unpublished document. May 2004.

<sup>32</sup> The FCM Increasing Women’s Participation in Municipal Consultation Processes Project. Interview with *Table féministe*. February 2004.







