

IMPACT REPORT 2023-2024

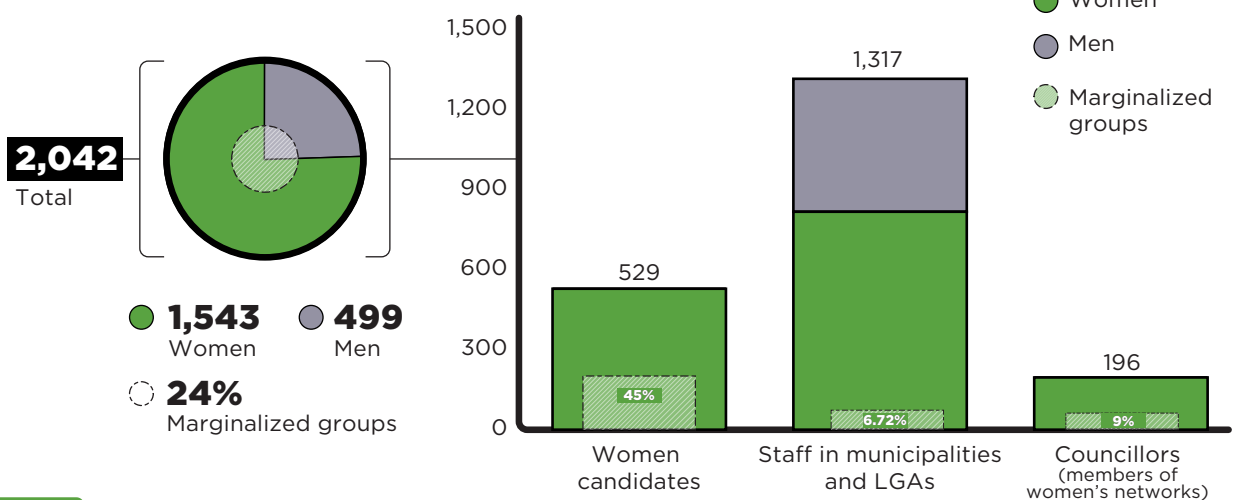


Partnerships for Municipal Innovation—Women in Local Leadership (PMI-WILL)

The Partnerships for Municipal Innovation—Women in Local Leadership (PMI-WILL) project is a transformative initiative running from 2021 to 2027. Funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and implemented by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) in partnership with five Local Government Associations, PMI-WILL operates in five countries across two continents: Benin, Cambodia, Ghana, Sri Lanka, and Zambia. The project is dedicated to fostering gender equality by increasing women’s participation in local governance and enhancing the capacity of municipalities to deliver inclusive, gender-responsive services.



Local Government Participants in 2023



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Building on past successes, 2023-2024 delivered significant impact with tangible results. An impressive 76% of project participants across all five countries were women, with 24% from marginalized groups. Over 500 women candidates received training for upcoming elections, with nearly half representing marginalized communities. More than 1,200 local government staff (63% women) were trained, further strengthening inclusive governance. Of the 196 women councilors trained, 29% came from marginalized groups, underscoring the project's commitment to strengthen women's diverse leadership in local government.



Increased Participation and Election of Women



- ✓ A midline evaluation conducted a year after women received training for **Cambodia's** 2022 local government election highlighted significant improvements in their leadership skills, in areas such as conflict management, understanding the responsibilities of an elected official, and communication. They became more proficient in the use of social media and personal branding, though resource mobilization remained a challenge. Overall, the evaluation underscored the success in strengthening essential leadership skills and noted a positive shift in the environment for women as leaders.
- ✓ In **Ghana**, 324 potential women candidates were identified and trained in electoral processes, resource mobilization, and campaign strategies and 79% were successful in the 2023 local elections. There was a slight increase in the percentage of women elected from 3.8 to 4.1 %, with larger gains made in the number of women appointed from 21 to 27 %. Some of the women trained by PMI-WILL who were not successfully elected nevertheless were appointed.
- ✓ In **Savalou, Benin**, the REFELA network of women elected officials trained 53 young women and formed a network to help nurture their dream of being in local politics and prepare them to compete in the 2026 elections.



“I have benefitted greatly from all the FCM workshops, especially the one held at Tamale. It really motivated me to contest the 2023 district assembly elections after being an appointee for two consecutive times. I am happy to be an elected member now and grateful to FCM.”

Honorable Faustina Agetera, Assembly Member, Gwenia, Upper East Region, Ghana. Sadly Hon. Faustina passed away in September 2024.



Building Women's Leadership Skills & Improving the Enabling Environment

- ✓ In the third year of the project the training and sensitization of more than 170 Gender Desk Officers and more than 160 administrative staff from five assemblies in **Ghana**, including marginalized areas such as Jirapa and Savlugu, fostered a stronger commitment to inclusive governance. Equipped with relevant information, better understanding, and skills on gender mainstreaming and inclusion, Gender Desk Officers are now driving sustained progress toward gender equality across the Northern, Middle and Southern regions of Ghana. A gender audit of five assemblies revealed critical gaps, such as a lack of gender-responsive policies and gender mainstreaming often limited to token female representation. With their training, these officers are actively promoting gender equality and social inclusion, empowering women—especially from marginalized groups—to take on more active and influential roles in local governance.
- ✓ **Cambodia** made significant strides in promoting gender equality within local government administration by successfully integrating men as allies. Male counterparts learned about allyship and how to effectively advocate for and implement gender-responsive policies. These efforts have already begun to reshape local administrations, creating a more inclusive environment that actively supports women.
- ✓ Through a Training of Trainers approach, FSLGA equipped a pool of trainers in five provinces to integrate gender considerations into budgeting and governance, fostering greater inclusivity and contributing to the achievement of key Sustainable Development Goals. This milestone is significant, as 90% of senior administrators across the country have never received any gender training, according to a study of Management Development Training Units completed by PMI-WILL.

“Gender issues were not prioritized, and there was a lack of awareness among officials about the importance of gender inclusivity in governance. This led to policies and services that did not adequately address the needs of all community members, particularly women and marginalized groups. This comprehensive training was much more valuable for us as this highlighted the process and the fundamentals practically.”

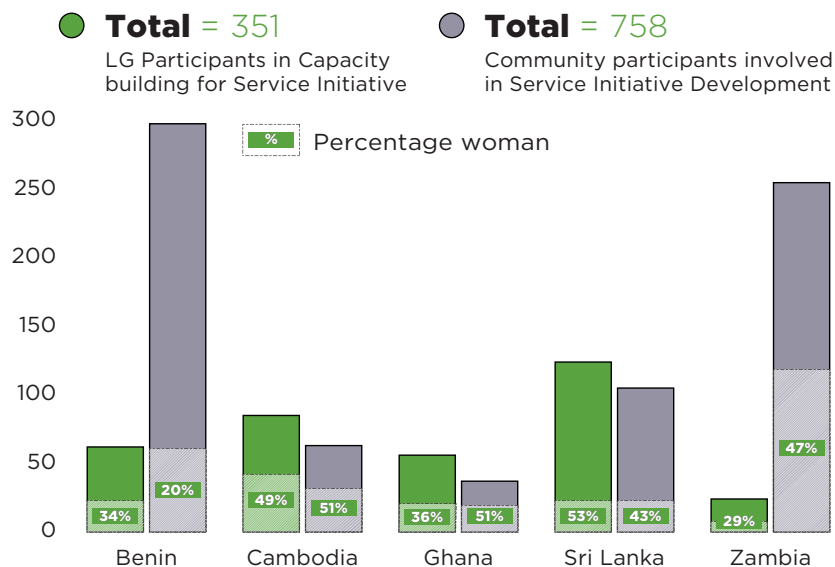
**Pradeshiya Sabha,
Secretary of Manmunai
Southwest, Sri Lanka**



Building Capacity for Gender-Responsive & Inclusive Local Government Services

Capacity building and engaging women and marginalized groups has laid the foundation for local governments to advance more inclusive and gender-responsive services for their communities. In the third year of the project, with support from Canadian municipal volunteers and local experts, PMI-WILL enhanced the capacity of 25 local government partners on gender-responsive and inclusive local government services. Stakeholder mapping ensured community engagement, and our five LGA partners produced a guide on conducting community consultations using focus group discussions, scorecards, surveys and interviews to assess satisfaction with municipal services. The guidelines emphasized inclusive safe spaces to encourage women and marginalized groups to share their concerns, ideas, and experiences. More than 750 community members (44% women) and many representing marginalized groups participated in the consultations. Consequently, all 25 local governments developed their service improvement plans, each with a specific initiative to be implemented next year.





“I cannot put into words how incredibly transformative and eye-opening this experience has been for me. I was especially impressed by the improvements already being made in Ghana’s local governments regarding female representation and the important role male allies are playing in this area. That being said, this is a journey, and one day Ghana will have balanced representation at all levels of government—something we in Canada are also striving to achieve.”

**Councillor Sameera Ali,
Town of Milton,
Ontario, Canada**



Peer-to-Peer Collaboration & Knowledge Exchange

Seventy-eight representatives, over 80% women, engaged with international influencers by attending regional and global networking events. At the Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group in Morocco, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) in Rwanda, and the United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC) in China, participants exchanged experience and perspectives on gender issues in the local government space.

The CIB [Gender Knowledge Hub](#), launched in 2023 houses Knowledge Products developed with support from PMI-WILL including a Practical Toolkit for Mainstreaming Gender in Local Government Associations, a Handbook for women aspiring to become Assembly Women in Ghana and a Manual for Provincial Training Units in Sri Lanka on Gender Responsive Budgeting and Women’s Leadership. Webinars hosted by the Gender Hub and PMI-WILL featured 50 inclusive best practices from Canadian municipalities, while another featured women elected officials, change makers, and gender equality advocates from PMI-WILL countries who shared their journeys and proudest initiatives for empowering women.

At the UCLG ASPAC Congress and meeting of the Standing Committee on Women in Local Governance, PMI-WILL organized an innovation corner on “Women Trailblazers and Innovators in Local Governance.” Posters from six countries showcased best practices for increasing women in decision-making and securing government support to promote women’s leadership. PMI-WILL featured the results of its research on barriers faced by women local government candidates and administrators.

PMI-WILL supported five participants to attend the CLGF Congress in Rwanda: two elected officials from Zambia (LGAZ), two representatives from Ghana (NALAG), and the Executive Director of our Sri Lankan partner (FSLGA). They led a session on Gender Equality for Resilient Local Communities and joined the Commonwealth Women in Local Government (ComWLG) Network.

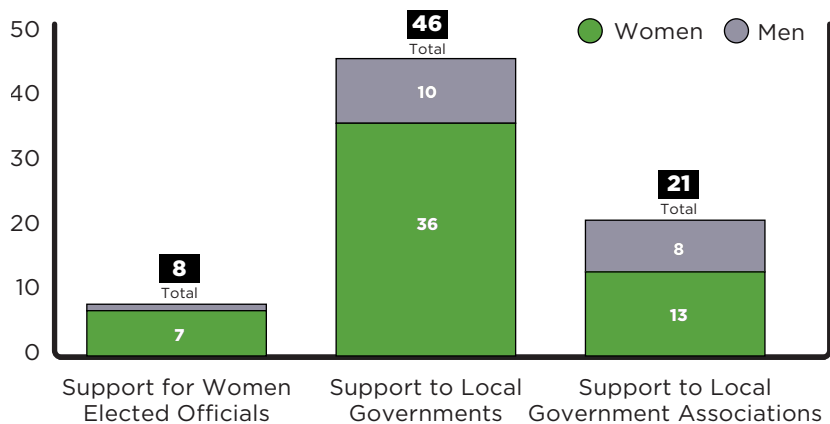




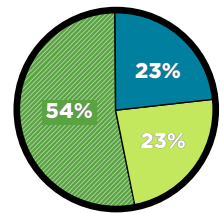
Canadian municipal engagement

The partnerships forged with Canadian municipalities, and provincial and territorial associations, have tremendously impacted our local government partners in all five countries.. Peer-to-peer learning opportunities have cemented the impact we have recorded in the last fiscal year. In 2023-24, the project facilitated an increase in exchange visits, with 19 overseas trips organized, involving a total of 75 Canadian municipal practitioners (56 women). Additionally, the Canadians participated in 80 meetings with international peers, both in-person and virtual, sharing their experiences and gaining valuable exposure to municipal practices in our partner countries.

Canadian municipal engagement in peer-to-peer activities



Canadian municipal engagement



- Provincial/Territorial Associations
- Regional counties
- Municipalities

The PMI-WILL project showcased remarkable flexibility, quickly adapting when the cholera outbreak in Zambia required a transition from in-person meetings to virtual formats. This seamless adjustment ensured continued engagement with local governments and sustained momentum in project activities. The networks and relationships established through these exchanges are expected to have a lasting impact, continuing to enhance local governance and foster long-term international collaboration.



“The experience was incredible; it was very enriching to meet these exceptional women who are striving to make changes in their communities. Even though the training topic was not easy to digest, the participants managed to have fun while receiving relevant information (at least I hope so). Seeing women engage in politics in such a patriarchal society is both inspiring and makes you put your own challenges into perspective. I feel like I am leaving with more than I brought when I arrived.”

Isabelle Miron, Councillor, Ville de Gatineau, Quebec, Canada

PMI-WILL Local Government Partners



After three years of activities, PMI-WILL has continued to make a significant impact: it has strengthened the network of change agents at the local and national levels, advocating for greater recognition and participation of women in local politics. The project has also enhanced the capacity of local governments to deliver more inclusive and gender-responsive services to their communities, helping to build a more equitable future for all.

PMI-WILL Canadian Partners

Provincial/Territorial Associations:

Association of Municipalities of Manitoba (AMM)
 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
 Local Government Management Association of British Columbia (LGMABC)
 Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA)
 Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM)

Regional Counties:

County of Middlesex, ON
 MRC D'Argenteuil, QC
 MRC Marguerite D'Youville, QC
 Halton Region, ON

Municipalities:

Cobourg, ON
 Collingwood, ON
 Comox, BC
 District of Squamish, BC
 Edmonton, AB
 Kitchener, ON
 Municipalité de Bolton-Est, QC
 Nouvelle Arcadie (former Village de Rogersville), NB
 Truro, NS

Global Networks

Capacity and Institution Building Working Group of UCLG

United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific

Commonwealth Local Government Forum

PMI-WILL Local Government Association Partners



ANCB



FSLGA



LGAZ



NALAG



NLC