



Women in Cities International

Annual Report  
Activities and Achievements 2007-2008

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## About the organization

**Women in Cities International (WICI)** is a non-profit organization based in Montreal whose mandate is to create, distribute, and exchange information world-wide regarding issues relating to the security of women and girls, gender equality, and the role of women in cities.

Its main objectives are to:

- Promote and organize the sharing of expertise and training activities, the use of good practices, and international seminars and conferences;
- Develop an international exchange network on women's participation in the development of cities and communities, and the inclusion of a gender-based approach to municipal planning and management;
- Promote local exchange of such topics within and between communities;
- Encourage exchange among diverse role-players (women's groups, non-governmental organizations, cities and municipalities, researchers, the private sector, the media, international agencies, etc) by producing and disseminating cutting-edge materials in user-friendly formats; and
- Advise local and national governments as well as international organizations on gender issues and the importance of mainstreaming gender in the management of cities and communities.

## Board of directors

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KATHRYN TRAVERS, project officer

## Current projects

### “Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and for Everyone”

The project “Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and for Everyone” is funded by Status of Women Canada and aims to build partnerships between local women's groups working with marginalised women and their municipalities by implementing safety approaches to create safer communities for marginalized women. The main activities are to:

- Develop and provide training on the development and implementation of safety audits (four women's organisations located across Canada will participate and will each have a target group: Aboriginal women, elderly women, disabled women, immigrant women and visible minorities);
- Implement 3 safety audits in each of the four communities in Canada with the respective target group;
- Provide training on the implementation of safety approaches in partnership with municipalities and to improvements recommended by the women
- Draft and disseminate a report on findings of the project, specifically on the experience and adaptation of safety approaches to the four different groups of women

The local four women's groups involved are:

- Action femmes handicapées (Montréal, Québec) - [www.afhm.org](http://www.afhm.org)
- Centre des aînés de Gatineau (Gatineau, Québec) - [www.centredesainesdegatineau.qc.ca](http://www.centredesainesdegatineau.qc.ca)
- Women of the Dawn (Regina, Saskatchewan)
- Catholic Crosscultural Services (Peel, Ontario) - [www.cathcrosscultural.org](http://www.cathcrosscultural.org)

The first phase of the project, which focuses on providing training on women's safety audits, has commenced and will be completed by mid-May. Training materials were prepared and finalised in English and in French for all the participants.

## Planning for the next WUF Participation

Women in Cities International has submitted a networking session proposal for the IV World Urban which will be held in Nanjing, China, 3-7 November 2008 around the theme *Harmonious Urbanization: The Challenge of Balanced Territorial Development*. Following on from several workshops organized by Women in Cities International at the third World Urban Forum, this event will

bring together government officials and community activists who are working together to improve community safety and prevent violence against women at the local level.

The key objectives from the networking session are as follows:

- Networking between local violence prevention initiatives from all five continents, including an enhanced understanding of 'who is doing what where'.
- Outlining principles of best practice on organizing for women's safety at the local level
- Developing a research and action agenda on gender, local governance and violence prevention for the next two years.

### **"Women's Safety Audits: What Works and Where?"**

Funded by UN-Habitat Safer Cities, Women in Cities International is undertaking a comparative evaluation study of women's safety audits. The aims of the research would be to:

1. Identify what works in what contexts, and what are the challenges internationally in the use of women's safety audits as a tool to prevent urban violence, and to empower and increase women's involvement in governance.
2. Identify what kinds of concrete outcomes result from the use of safety audits, both in terms of design changes and in strengthening women's involvement in local planning and governance.

Preliminary research has been compiled by Carolyn Whitzman, Caroline Andrew, and Margaret Shaw, including examples from Canada, Russia, Tanzania, the UK, and South Africa and will soon be published for the *Security Journal* special issue on women's safety and security.

### **"International Base-Line Survey on Women's Safety"**

Women in Cities International (WICI) is working on the development of a international database and directory on women's safety practices. WICI and UN-Habitat-LAC have been commissioned by the UN-Habitat Safer Cities Program and the Huairou Commission, to conduct a global assessment of the on-going work and successful practices organizations and institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, have developed. Preliminary results were shared at the International Conference on the State of Safety in World Cities 2007 in Monterrey, Mexico from October 1st - 5th, 2007, and a first draft of the report has been completed and is available for download from the WICI website.

#### **IV Regional Competition on Women and Friendly Cities: Safer Cities for Women and Girls in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Caroline Andrew represented WICI and acted as a jury member for the IV Regional Competition on Women and Friendly Cities: Safer Cities for Women and Girls in Latin America and the Caribbean. The awards ceremony for this competition was held in San José, Costa Rica on March 6, 2008 and hosted by the national UN Habitat Office. The awards ceremony simultaneously acted as an important networking session, bringing together women's groups from the region and internationally to share experiences and build partnerships.

#### **Studying and Learning from Women in Cities International**

Fran Klodawsky is leading a three-year research study titled "Learning through difference: multi-scalar forms of feminist organizing", funded through Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Caroline Andrew and Janet Siltanen (Sociology, Carleton University) are the co-investigators. WICI is one of two feminist organizations that will be the focus of this research. Its purpose is to examine the potential for feminist community organizations to play a key role in engaging minority women in urban-based political activities, both in Canada and internationally. The other organization that we will study is City for All Women Initiative (CAWI), one of WICI's member organizations. By minority women, we mean women who are regarded as 'other' due to various markers of identity such as income, class, 'race', sexual orientation, immigration status and/or ability, by privileged and powerful actors in mainstream organizations. Key elements of our research involve speaking with a range of women who have been involved with WICI, and also, listening to your reactions to our draft reports about the research. For more information about this initiative, please contact Fran Klodawsky at [fran\\_klodawsky@carleton.ca](mailto:fran_klodawsky@carleton.ca).

#### **Participation in conferences/seminars/meetings**

ANDREW, Caroline. (2008) 'Women in Cities International: Organizing by Global-Local 'Scale-Skipping' Metropolis Conference, Halifax, April 4.

ANDREW, Caroline. (2008) 'Interscalar Strategies around the Organizing for Women's Safety' International Political Science Association, Montreal, May 2.

ANDREW, Caroline. (2008) 'Globalement, Localement: Deux Versions' Société québécoise de science politique, Montréal, 8 mai.

KLODAWSKY, F. 2007, "Homes First or Rights to the City for Chronically Homeless Women' Reflections from Ottawa", Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, San Francisco, April 19

KLODAWSKY, F. 2007, Identity, Visibility and Homelessness: Rethinking Rights to the City, Presentation to Syracuse University Department of Geography Seminar Series, April 27<sup>th</sup>

SHAW, Margaret. 2007. 'Innovative Women's Safety Interventions: Discussion of women's safety assessment conducted in partnership between the Huairou Commission & the Safer Cities UN-Habitat Programme'. International conference on the state of safety in world cities. Monterrey, Mexico. October 1-5.

WHITZMAN, C. and PERKOVIC, J. (2008), "Women's Safety Audits and Walking School Busses: the Diffusion/ De-fusion of Two Radical Planning Tools", Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning/Association of European Schools of Planning Joint Congress, Chicago, July.

## Publications

ANDREW, Caroline (2008) ' Women in Cities: New Spaces for the Women's Movement?', in Sandra Grey and Marian Sawyer, *Women's Movements: Flourishing or in Abeyance*, Routledge.

KLODAWSKY, F. (2007) " 'Choosing' participatory research: partnerships in time-space", *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 39, pp. 2845-2860.

WHITZMAN, C. (2008) *The Handbook of Community Safety, Gender, and Violence Prevention*. London: Earthscan.

WHITZMAN, C. (2007) Gender, Fear of Crime and the Challenge of Creating Safer Space, *Environment and Planning A*, 39, pp.2715-2732

WHITZMAN, C., ANDREW, C., and SHAW, M. (2008). "The Effectiveness of Women's Safety Audits," *Security Journal* special issue on women and safety

WHITZMAN, C. (2007) "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner: long-term feminist planning initiatives in London, Toronto, Montreal, and Melbourne," *Planning Theory and Practice* 8(2), pp. 203-225.

WOMEN IN CITIES INTERNATIONAL. (2007) *Towards Women Inclusive Cities. Safe and Healthy Cities for Women: Sustainable Partnerships for Local Action: Summary of 4 networking events*, World Urban Forum, Vancouver, June 2006

WOMEN IN CITIES INTERNATIONAL AND LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN AND HABITAT NETWORK (2007). *Global Assessment on Women's Safety. Preliminary Survey Results*. UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme and Huairou Commission.