A Word from the President

This has been a wonderful year for Women in Cities International. We grew, we developed new and wonderful partnerships and we continued to demonstrate the usefulness, across the world, of the knowledge and skills involved in building safe and inclusive communities for women and for everyone. It is extremely gratifying to see the growing interest of United Nations agencies - UN-Habitat, UNIFEM and the UN Trust Fund To End Violence Against Women - in questions of women’s urban safety. This has allowed WICI to develop concrete partnerships with groups in Dar es Salaam, Delhi, Petrozavdosk and Rosario in order to continue our work in creating safe and inclusive communities. In the same way, it is gratifying to see that the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC) sees the interest in connecting issues of women’s security with issues of access to basic water and sanitation services.

These same skills and knowledge animate the work we do in Canada - our project at adapting safety audits to the specific needs of Aboriginal women, immigrant women, disabled women and elderly
women connects us to wonderful women and wonderful organizations in Regina, Peel, Montreal and Gatineau. The face to face meetings that we had this year brought our partnerships to life - both links across the world and across the street form the networks that are at the base of WICI. Networking is the way the Board and the staff work - the Board is a far-flung array of individuals who are passionate about the issues of women’s inclusion in building organizations, neighbourhoods and communities that correspond to our values and our visions - and the staff is a small, splendid and dedicated group who spin world-wide webs from Montreal.

We hope that this annual report will be of interest to all our partners, friends and allies in the work of building safe and inclusive communities for women and for everyone - please let us know what you think, what we should be doing and how we can do this together.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Women in Cities International (WICI) is a non-profit network organization, based in Montreal, Canada, that focuses on gender equality and the participation of women and girls in urban development. WICI is dedicated to the identification, study, and dissemination of good practices, tools and intervention models. With its partners, WICI facilitates knowledge-and experience-sharing on the improvement of women’s and girls’ safety and status in cities and communities. WICI specializes in the organization of networking events, the administration of training events, the advancement of technical expertise, and the production of research in order to achieve its goals.

Women’s safety is a priority issue for Women in Cities International. This is because the violence and insecurity women and girls feel everyday is a major barrier to achieving gender equality. Violence and insecurity reduce women’s mobility and restrict their ability to freely exercise full citizenship. This is a direct violation of women’s rights, as established by the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). WICI believes that women’s meaningful participation in urban development is a core requirement in the solution to this issue. Women’s experiences of violence and insecurity can only be addressed when the different needs of women and men are considered in all areas of urban management.

Women in Cities International was established in 2002 after the need for its presence was recognized at the First International Seminar on Women’s Safety, held in Montreal, Canada. WICI’s Board of Directors is composed of scholars and practitioners who have been internationally recognized for their outstanding contributions to gender equality. WICI has over 300 Canadian and international members.

Women in Cities International’s main objectives are:

- To develop an international exchange network on (a) women’s participation in urban development and on (b) the consideration of gender in municipal governments;
- To facilitate the sharing of expertise, training, and good practices;
- To encourage exchange between different actors (women’s groups, nongovernmental organizations, cities and municipalities, academic institutions, private sector institutions, the media, international governments, etc.);
- To promote exchange between local authorities on issues of gender equality and women’s and girls’ participation in urban development;
- To advise local governments, and national and international bodies working in the fields of gender equality and urban development.
Women in Cities International Board of Directors

Caroline Andrew, University of Ottawa  
President

Fran Klodawsky, Carleton University  
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Women in Cities International Staff

Marisa Canuto  
Executive Director

Kathryn Travers  
Analyst and Project Officer

Melanie Lambrick  
Junior Analyst

External Consultants

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Evaluator, Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and Everyone Project

Sohail Husain  
Expert Evaluator, Gender Inclusive Cities: Increasing Women’s Safety by identifying and Disseminating Effective and Promising Approaches to Promote Women’s Access to Public Spaces

Prabha Khosla  
Consultant, Action Research Project on Women’s Rights and Access to Water and Sanitation in Asian Cities

Anne Michaud  
Expert Consultant and Lead Trainer, Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and Everyone Project

Kalpana Viswanath  
Project Director, Gender Inclusive Cities: Increasing Women’s Safety by identifying and Disseminating Effective and Promising Approaches to Promote Women’s Access to Public Spaces
Current Activities and Recent Accomplishments

KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

Women in Cities International uses a variety of methods to promote the exchange of lessons learned, best practices, and skills related to gender equality and the safety and status of women and girls in cities and communities. This year, WICI and its board members have contributed to five main projects and programmes in this area.

ONLINE RESOURCE CENTRE, GENDER INCLUSIVE CITIES: INCREASING WOMEN’S SAFETY BY IDENTIFYING AND DISSEMINATING EFFECTIVE AND PROMISING APPROACHES TO PROMOTE WOMEN’S ACCESS TO PUBLIC SPACES (2009 – 2011)

In order to reach a larger audience and simplify access to the information it possesses, WICI and its partner, Jagori, have begun organizing an Online Resource Centre as part of the Gender Inclusive Cities: Increasing Women’s Safety by Identifying and Disseminating Effective and Promising Approaches to Promote Women’s Access to Public Spaces programme it is administrating. This programme is funded by the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to
Eliminate Violence against Women. The Online Resource Centre aims to bring together different groups across the globe that are working to create gender inclusive cities. Through the process, these groups will be able to share and access up-to-date knowledge and experience. The easy-to-navigate resource centre will offer a variety of information sources and will provide a discussion forum to encourage user participation. It will also contain a list of subscribers, in order to send out relevant information to stakeholders. All site traffic will be monitored to learn more about the online presence of parties interested in gender inclusive cities. Initial discussions and information-gathering for the project are underway, including an online survey to assess the needs of those actors working with data on violence against women. Site development will continue through 2009 – 2011.

**KNOWLEDGE ASSET ON SAFE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS TO LIVE A LIFE FREE OF VIOLENCE (2008 – 2009)**

This project, commissioned by UNIFEM, is an online guide to creating safer cities and communities for women and girls. WICI has been developing the Knowledge Asset in partnership with Red Mujer y Habitat de America Latina. The Knowledge Asset is aimed at women’s and community organizations, municipal governments, public service providers (especially urban planners and public transportation employees), academics and researchers, city managers, and, of course, women and girls. Contents focus on spreading awareness of already-existing tools, publications, and best practices. Information is provided in the areas of public awareness and community mobilization, capacity development, urban planning and design, public transportation, crime prevention and municipal policy, and programmatic design. To date, the initial research and writing for this project is complete and an editing and peer-vetting process is ongoing. The online website should be launched in the coming year.


This international comparative assessment, produced by WICI and published by the UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme and Sida, provides useful information on the implementation of past women’s safety audits and offers new directions for the implementation of future women’s safety audits. The results from this report are intended to fill existing knowledge and evaluation gaps about the women’s safety audit tool. Results are also intended to support the development of a set of guidelines for local authorities who conduct women’s safety audits in the future. Within the report, a literature review and a series of meetings and interviews with international organizations that have used the tool cover best practices, local adaptations, and positive and negative results. A draft version of this report has already been released at the International Centre for
Crime Prevention’s annual colloquium, held in Querétaro, Mexico in November 2008. The English version of Women’s Safety Audits: What Works and Where? is being reviewed by UN-Habitat and will be published shortly. A French translation, generously provided by France’s Délégation interministérielle à la ville, is currently being completed and revised.


This publication, completed in partnership with the Huairou Commission and Red Mujer y Habitat de America Latina, is meant to be the first step towards the development of an international database and directory on best practices in women’s safety. This project involved an overall international assessment of the work and best practices that both governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions have undertaken. Preliminary results were shared at the International Conference on the State of Safety in World Cities, held in Monterrey, Mexico, from 1 – 5 October 2007. After the conference, a second round of surveys was distributed in order to collect more results from Asia and Eastern Europe. The combined data from both rounds of surveys will be available in the coming months, accompanied by expanded case studies and analysis.


WICI board members Carolyn Whitzman, Caroline Andrew and Margaret Shaw, and WICI staff member Kathryn Travers, have finalized their article “The Effectiveness of Women’s Safety Audits”, now published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal, Security Journal. This article examines some of the applications, results, and challenges of the women’s safety audit tool. Results for the article are based on six interviews with organizations in Europe, Africa and Asia, as well as a literature review. Analysis suggest that the women’s safety audit is adaptable to local contexts, is effective in bringing about changes in the physical environment, and raises awareness about the issue of women’s safety among the public and decision-makers.
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

WICI aims to serve as an international crossroads in the field of gender equality and women’s and girls’ participation in urban development. To this end, the organization has continued to work with various international partners on innovative research and on the implementation of practical initiatives. As a result, WICI and its partners continue to build on each other’s experiences and knowledge, as well as sharing strategies and lessons learned.

GENDER INCLUSIVE CITIES: INCREASING WOMEN’S SAFETY BY IDENTIFYING AND DISSEMINATING EFFECTIVE AND PROMISING APPROACHES TO PROMOTE WOMEN’S ACCESS TO PUBLIC SPACES (2009 – 2012)

This programme is funded by the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. It is administered by WICI and is being implemented by four project partners: the International Centre for Information and Network on Crime (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania), Jagori (Delhi, India), the Information Centre of the Independent Women’s Forum (Petrozavdsk, Russia), and Red Mujer y Habitat de America Latina (Rosario, Argentina).

The programme aims to create cities that are inclusive and respect the right of everyone, including women, to live, work and travel without fear and without difficulty. It is doing this by identifying and minimizing factors that cause and perpetuate inequality and exclusion, while supporting policies and programmes that promote the inclusion of women and their “right to the city”. The first stage of the programme focuses on knowledge-generation using the tools of mapping, research and analysis. After this stage is complete, WICI, in partnership with local governments and NGOs, will use this knowledge to implement pilot interventions to reduce women’s and girls’ experiences of insecurity and exclusion. These interventions will also promote public understanding of the rights of women and girls.

WICI hosted a preparatory meeting for this programme in Montreal, Canada in February 2009. Caroline Andrew (WICI President), Elizaveta Bozhkova (Information Centre for the Independent Women’s Forum, Russia), Marisa Canuto (WICI Executive Director), Carmen Griffiths (Construction Recourse and Development Centre, Jamaica), Sohail
Husain (Analytica Consulting Services, United Kingdom), Fran Klodawsky (WICI Secretary), Melanie Lambrick (WICI staff member), Anne Michaud (Expert Consultant, Canada), Martha John Mkupasi (International Centre and Network on Information on Crime, Tanzania), Mará Esther Nazar (Centro de Intercambios y Servicios Cono Sur Argentina (CISCSA), Argentina), Jan Peterson (Huairou Commission, USA), Anastasia Posadskaya-Vanderbeck (UNIFEM Safer Cities Global Programme, USA), Adriana Quinones (UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, USA), Liliana Rainero (Red Mujer y Habitat, Argentina), Margaret Shaw (WICI Treasurer), Kathryn Travers (WICI staff member), Kalpana Viswanath (Jagori and Project Director of the Gender Inclusive Cities Project, India), and Carolyn Whitzman (WICI board member) attended. This meeting allowed representatives from each site to meet each other and share contextual information with the programme team. Also, conceptual understandings about women’s safety, programme design, and monitoring and evaluation processes were discussed. In addition, first year programming goals and a work plan were outlined, with special focus on partnership-building, participatory and academic research methods, the organization and implementation of women’s safety audits, and data analysis objectives.

**ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT ON WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION IN ASIAN CITIES (2009 – 2011)**

This project is being administered by WICI, implemented by Jagori, and funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). It focuses on governance issues and their association with women’s participation in decisions related to water and sanitation in urban slums in Delhi, India. The aim of the project is to adapt and evaluate the usefulness of the women’s safety audit tool in this particular context. The project also involves research about the best ways to modify government structures so that they better meet the needs of women and girls.

A preparatory meeting was held for this project in Delhi in March 2009. Representatives from Jagori attended, including Kalpana Viswanath, Suneeta Dhar, Madhavi Menon, Surabhi Tandon Mehrotra, Sarita, Kailash, and Smita. Expert consultant Prahba Khosla and WICI staff member Kathryn Travers also attended. Additionally, several potential partners and experts from Delhi added their viewpoints, including Gauri Choudhari (Action India), Girija Kumari (Centre for Research and Advocacy, New Delhi) and Adil Ali (Jama Milia University). During this meeting, first year programming goals were set. These goals incorporate local consultations, participatory and academic research, adapting and conducting women’s safety audits, developing mapping methodologies, and data analysis.
This meeting also provided the opportunity for idea exchange between participants and experts, and site visits to their areas where the project will take place. Additionally, Prahba Khosla provided a training on participatory processes and Kathryn Travers provided a safety audit training.
In addition to its work abroad, WICI is also currently working to increase partnerships for national gender equality and women’s safety in Quebec, Saskatchewan and Ontario.

Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and for the Whole Community (2007 – 2010)

WICI is now in its second year of this project, which is funded by Status of Women Canada. The project’s aim is to build partnerships between municipalities and local women’s groups that work with marginalized women. Partnership-building occurs through the joint implementation of strategies to create safer communities for women, including training for and completing women’s safety audits. Safety audits have been conducted in four Canadian communities by different target populations of women: Aboriginal women (Women of the Dawn, Regina, Saskatchewan), elderly women (Centre des aînés de Gatineau, Gatineau, Quebec), disabled women (Action femmes handicapées, Montreal, Quebec), and immigrant and visible minority women (Catholic Cross Cultural Services, Peel, Ontario). At this time, WICI is providing support to each group as they finish conducting their safety audits and make recommendations for change to their municipalities.
In support of this project, WICI held a press conference on March 10, 2009 in Canada’s capital city, Ottawa. During this press conference, WICI president Caroline Andrew and WICI staff member Kathryn Travers joined representatives from each of the four audit groups to raise awareness about women’s safety in public spaces. Gatineau City Councillor, Denise Laferrière, also spoke at the press conference.

In August 2008 and March 2009, WICI organized meetings with representatives from each of the four groups, in Montreal and Ottawa respectively. During these meetings, audit group members received additional training and shared their experiences and lessons learned to date.
WICI is one of two organizations that are the focus of this three-year programme of participatory research, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The goal of the research is to draw generalizable lessons (both theoretical and strategic) on how to engage minority women in urban-based community politics. Minority women are defined as 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. The other organization involved in this research is City for All Women Initiative, a member of the WICI network, whose focus is on inclusive governance and diverse women’s community engagement in the City of Ottawa. Two of the research investigators - Caroline Andrew (School on Governance, University of Ottawa) and Fran Klodawsky (Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University)- are long-standing members of both WICI and CAWI and the third investigator, whose particular expertise is in feminist and reflexive methodology — Janet Siltanen (Sociology, Carleton University) — has not previously been involved with either organization. Our combined expertise means that we are able to draw on feminist discourses of research from both an insider and an outsider perspective.
PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

In addition to spreading knowledge, creating national and international partnerships, and providing technical assistance, WICI has also been represented in several public events this year.

UNIFEM INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON REGIONAL CITIES WITHOUT VIOLENCE, SAFE CITIES FOR ALL, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA (23 – 25 JULY 2008)

The Huairou Commission provided funding for WICI Executive Director Marisa Canuto to participate in this seminar alongside international experts on women’s urban safety from UN-Habitat, UNIFEM, Red Mujer y Habitat de America Latina, AVP Bogota, Centro de Investigaciones y Servicios Cono Sur Argentina (CISCSA), and Red educación popular entre mujeres de America Latina el Caribe (REPEM), among others. Seminar topics included working with government actors, security and gender equity in cities, and successful strategies and interventions that have been conducted in cities.

WOMEN LEADERS ROUNDTABLE WITH ALEXA MCDONOUGH, MONTREAL, CANADA (7 AUGUST 2008)

WICI Executive Director Marisa Canuto attended this roundtable with Halifax Member of Parliament, New Democratic Party representative, Alexa McDonough. During this discussion, Marisa joined local community leaders in a discussion of the challenges faced by women in the borough of Ville-Marie and the City of Westmount, in Greater Montreal. This event was organized by Quebec New Democratic Party representative Anne Legacé Dowson.

TABLE MONTRÉALAISE SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DES FEMMES PRESS CONFERENCE, MONTREAL, CANADA (2 OCTOBER 2008)

As part of the second edition of Journées de la Sécurité urbaine à Montréal (Urban Safety Days) in Montreal, WICI Executive Director Marisa Canuto attended a press conference and launch of the Table montréalaise sur la sécurité des femmes held at the Centre de loisirs communautaires Lajeunesse. During this event, representatives from women’s organizations discussed the importance of women’s groups coming together to exchange about women’s feeling of insecurity and to work towards collectively improving this situation. The upcoming Table montréalaise sur la sécurité des femmes will provide a space for discussion and exchanges on these topics.
CONSEIL DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ URBAINE DE BORDEAUX VISIT, MONTREAL, CANADA (8 OCTOBER 2008)

Fabienne Brugère, president, and Marianna Lefort, mission coordinator, of the Conseil de développement de la communauté urbaine de Bordeaux visited the WICI office to discuss women’s role in cities. They met with WICI staff member, Kathryn Travers and WICI Treasurer, Margaret Shaw. Both organisations expressed interest in further knowledge-sharing and future collaboration.

9TH WORLD CONGRESS OF METROPOLIS, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA (22 – 25 OCTOBER 2008)

WICI board member Carolyn Whitzman participated in the Metropolis International Women Network Forum on October 22, 2008. While there, she attended 14 presentations on diverse subjects relating to women’s equality and access to urban spaces. Presentation subjects included: city management, local action plans, indigenous populations, housing, environment and local governance.

WORLD URBAN FORUM 4, NANJING, CHINA (3 – 6 NOVEMBER 2008)

At this year’s World Urban Forum, WICI board member Carolyn Whitzman spoke at a roundtable on Women and Sustainable Urbanization, organized by the Commonwealth Association of Planners, the UN-Habitat Gender Mainstreaming Unit, and a Chinese women’s organization. She also provided commentary on the UN-Habitat/United Nations ESCAP Urban Safety for the Poor in Asia and the Pacific papers. Additionally, Dr. Whitzman facilitated the workshop “Linking Gender, Local Governance and Violence Prevention”, which was composed of three brief sessions featuring tools and success stories, followed by small group discussion and a workshop-wide question-and-answer session. Finally, Dr. Whitzman spoke at the World Health Organization event, “Cities: Key Players for Reducing the Causes of Health Inequities”.

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRIME 2008 COLLOQUIUM ON WOMEN’S SAFETY, QUERÉTARO, MEXICO (12 – 14 NOVEMBER 2008)

At this colloquium, WICI Executive Director Marisa Canuto presented the workshop “Measuring Violence: A Challenge to Developing Effective Programmes” with representatives from the National Observatory of Delinquency, France; the Women and Development Unit, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; and the University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica. Also, Marisa and expert consultant Anne Michaud presented the workshop “Women’s Safety in Urban Spaces” with representatives from UN-HABITAT-ROLAC; UNIFEM; Red Mujer y Habitat de America Latina; and UN-Habitat’s Safer Cities Programme.

PILOT TRAINING ON CONDUCTING WOMEN’S SAFETY AUDITS IN THE CARIBBEAN, KINGSTON, JAMAICA (18 -19 NOVEMBER 2008)

This event was coordinated by Carmen Griffiths (Construction Development and Resource Centre, Jamaica), Carol
Archer (University of Technology, Jamaica), Lana Finikin (Sistren Theatre Collective, Jamaica) and Arlene Bailey (Fletcher’s Land Parenting Association, Jamaica). At the event, WICI Executive Director Marisa Canuto shared the organization’s knowledge and activities on the women’s safety audit tool with 30 participants from Jamaica, St. Lucia, Barbados, Mexico, South Africa, Grenada, Kenya and Haiti. Marisa discussed the universal applicability of the tool and recounted the successes and challenges of the current WICI project, Creating Safer Cities for Women and for Everyone. Expert consultant Anne Michaud also attended this event to facilitate training, with funding from UN-HABITAT.

**FIRST INTERNAL UNIFEM PLANNING WORKSHOP TO ARRIVE AT CONSENSUS AND A SHARED VISION ON THE PROCESS AND CONTENTS OF THE GLOBAL SAFE CITIES PROGRAMME, RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL (9 – 11 DECEMBER 2008)**

WICI Executive Director Marisa Canuto participated in this workshop with representatives from UNIFEM Headquarters and field offices, as well as lead resource people and impact evaluation experts interested in Safe Cities initiatives. This meeting focused on laying the organizational and ideological groundwork for a Global Safe Cities Programme. Following the event, there continues to be ongoing consultations with other internal stakeholders as well as global, regional and local partners on programme development.

**JOURNÉE DE CONSULTATION DES GROUPES DE FEMMES MONTRÉALAIS (MONTREAL WOMEN’S GROUPS CONSULTATION DAY), MONTREAL, CANADA (11 FEBRUARY 2009)**

WICI Executive Director Marisa Canuto attended this meeting, which was hosted by the Conseil des montréalaises, in order to exchange and network with women’s groups working on the island of Montreal. Alongside 60 representatives from various women’s organisations, Marisa discussed priority issues affecting local women, such as access to employment, housing and transport as well as focusing on women’s health and security. Acting as President of the Conseil des Montréalaises, WICI board member Charlotte Thibault held this consultation in order to match the city’s analysis and actions to the realities and needs of local women.

**WOMEN’S SAFETY: A SHARED GLOBAL CONCERN AFTERNOON SEMINAR, MONTREAL, CANADA (23 FEBRUARY 2009)**

WICI, the International Centre for Crime Prevention, and the City of Montreal hosted this afternoon seminar event. WICI staff member Kathryn Travers presented information on the organization’s work to date with WICI board member Carolyn Whitzman in attendance. In addition, WICI treasurer Margaret Shaw facilitated a round table discussion on women’s safety while Jagori Executive Committee member Kalpana Viswanath presented her work with the Safe Delhi campaign. The audience for this event consisted of ICPC Director General Valérie Sagant, and representatives from the Montreal Police Service, Montreal city councillors, and the Huairou Commission.
OTHER RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS FROM WICI STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS


