TOGETHER
FOR WOMEN’S
SAFETY

CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES FOR MARGINALIZED WOMEN AND EVERYONE
Dear friends –

It is with enormous pleasure – and heartfelt thanks to a multitude of people – that I introduce Women in Cities International / Femmes et villes international’s report on our project ‘Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and for Everyone’. The project, funded by Status of Women Canada, focused on adapting safety audits to the particular needs of different groups of women, living in different communities in different regions of Canada. So the central actors in this report are the women of Regina, of Gatineau, of Peel and of Montreal (going from the smallest city to the largest) and the organizations that they have built, nourished and developed – Women of the Dawn Counselling Centre, Le centre des aînés de Gatineau, Catholic Crosscultural Services, and Action des femmes handicapées (Montréal). The unrelenting work and dedication of each of the project leaders must also be gratefully acknowledged: Ivy Kennedy (Regina); Michèle Osbourne (Gatineau); Berna Bolanos, Sandra Bergantim, and Mevish Sheikh (Peel); and Célia Missigbèto, Wassyla Hadjabi and Karine Chayer (Montréal). We also wish to extend our collective thanks to Anne Michaud for her role in doing the training and for her ability to transmit her passion for the creation of safe and inclusive communities.

Also central to the project is the wonderful staff of Women in Cities International (WICI). Our Executive-Director, Marisa Canuto, and our Senior Analyst, Kathryn Travers, were the leads on this project but all the WICI ‘collective’ play a role – so thanks also to Karine Chayer, Melanie Lambrick and the members of WICI’s Board of Directors who continue to be a very active working Board. Thanks also to Status of Women Canada for their ongoing support and particular thanks to our project officers who made this a pleasant and productive relationship.

We learned a great deal during this project and the lessons are detailed in the report. I only want to touch on a couple of them which have, we believe, important policy relevance. The first is the enormous positive energy and learning generated by the four groups getting together – exchanging experiences, both of successes and failure, learning about each other and about the resiliencies (and the challenges) of being women who are Aboriginal, elderly, recent immigrants and visible minorities and living with disabilities. Peer learning is a powerful force and facilitating groups getting together across the size and diversity of Canada is good public policy. Another concrete result of the meetings was an increase in the intersectional character of the projects – the groups consciously thought about diversity, having had the opportunity of learning about the concrete life challenges of others. The meetings did build bridges of greater understanding across diversity, across regions, across languages – and building bridges of greater understanding is good public policy.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this report and that you will get in touch with us www.womenincities.org / www.femmesetvilles.org with your comments, suggestions and ideas. This report is one small piece in the wonderful work being done by people across Canada and across the world to build safer and more inclusive communities for women and girls and therefore for everyone. Women in Cities International is proud to be part of this worldwide movement and we are proud to present this report as part of this challenging – and exciting – work.

Caroline Andrew,
President, Women in Cities International.
# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................................................................................5  
ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT ..................................................................................................................6  
SIX PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN FROM WOMEN’S POINT OF VIEW ......................................................................................7  
THE WOMEN’S SAFETY AUDIT METHODOLOGY ................................................................................................................8  
WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES IN PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT ..........................................................................................8  
ABORIGINAL WOMEN DOING SAFETY AUDITS IN REGINA ...............................................................................................10  
ISWÉWAK WANISKAWAK (WOMEN OF THE DAWN) .............................................................................................................10  
ELDERLY WOMEN DOING SAFETY AUDITS IN GATINEAU .................................................................................................14  
THE CENTRE DES ÂINES DE GATINEAU ............................................................................................................................14  
IMMIGRANT AND VISIBLE MINORITY WOMEN DOING SAFETY AUDITS IN PEEL .....................................................18  
CATHOLIC CROSSCULTURAL SERVICES ............................................................................................................................18  
WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES DOING SAFETY AUDITS IN MONTRÉAL ...........................................................................22  
ACTION DES FEMMES HANDICAPÉES (MONTRÉAL) .............................................................................................................22  
ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT ......................................................................................................................28  
PARTICIPANT PROFILE ...........................................................................................................................................................29  
ADAPTING THE WOMEN’S SAFETY AUDIT METHODOLOGY .................................................................................................31  
ADAPTING THE WOMEN’S SAFETY AUDIT PROCESS .............................................................................................................32  
ADAPTING THE WOMEN’S SAFETY AUDIT CHECKLIST .........................................................................................................36  
THE IMPACT OF INCLUSIVE ADAPTATION PROCESSES ........................................................................................................37  
LESSONS LEARNED FROM ADAPTING THE WSAS ................................................................................................................37  
LEVELS OF PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION WITH THE ADAPTATION PROCESSES .................................................................39  
IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS: CAPACITY-BUILDING, EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP .......................................................41  
EMPOWERMENT ......................................................................................................................................................................42  
BUILDING CAPACITY ............................................................................................................................................................43  
ASSUMING LEADERSHIP ROLES ...........................................................................................................................................46  
WHO TO ENGAGE AND WHY: THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS IN WSAS .................................................................48  
BUILDING AND MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS .................................................................48  
SOME BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIPS ...........................................................................................................................................50  
THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS ................................................................................................................52  
CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE ORIENTATIONS .....................................................................................................................53  
APPENDIX 1 - INTERVIEW GRID ............................................................................................................................................55
"Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and Everyone" was a project funded by Status of Women Canada and implemented by Women in Cities International (WICI) over a three-year period (2007 – 2010). The project was implemented locally in four Canadian cities by community-based organizations. Each organization worked with a target group: Aboriginal women, elderly women, women with disabilities, and immigrant and visible minority women. This project aimed to build partnerships between local organizations working with groups of women whose views are often marginalized and their municipalities. Partnerships were formed through the joint implementation of safety approaches to create communities that are more considerate of and responsive to the needs of women and girls.

Women in each of the cities took part in a 14-hour intensive training session led by an expert consultant on the development and execution of women’s safety audits (WSA). As the various phases of the WSA were implemented, WICI provided more targeted training to the groups on such topics as organizing press conferences, building local partnerships, and presenting their recommendations.

The four groups then implemented three women’s safety audits walks in their respective cities and worked to raise awareness about the project and about the use of safety approaches for women-led community improvements. Specific complementary activities included the organization of workshops with women, press conferences, meetings with local stakeholders, poster campaigns, and community forums. The groups were also given the opportunity to meet with one another at least once a year. The peer learning allowed the women to exchange ideas and to be inspired by the experiences of the others. This was particularly important when discussing the challenges the various groups have faced and how they had worked to overcome them. Knowing that the project is pan-Canadian and that they are not alone always helped to reinvigorate the process and instil a sense of resolve among participants.

The groups were successful in mobilizing a total of 123 women across Canada to participate in the implementation of this project (33 women in Peel, 19 women in Montreal: 15 women in Gatineau, and 56 women in Regina). Of these, 41 participants and project leaders were interviewed to assess the impacts of the project and their views shape this report.

The overall purpose of this publication is to document the experiences of four community-based women’s organizations in adapting participatory safety approaches to make communities safer for the women who live there, particularly those whose opinions are often marginalized. The report showcases the processes of adapting the women’s safety audit methodology to four specific groups of Canadian women and highlights building partnerships between community-based organizations, municipal governments and other key local stakeholders. The impact these processes have on communities and individuals is also explored. Finally, the report discusses the lessons learned from each of the cities where the project was implemented; including the successes and challenges each has experienced as they work towards implementing the recommendations identified during the women’s safety audit walks.

The report draws from the experiences of Women in Cities International and four implementation partners in carrying out this pan-Canadian project. Elderly women, Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, immigrant women and those from visible minorities were all called upon to share their expertise about the elements of the built environment that cause them to feel unsafe in specific spaces. They were then asked to propose solutions to urban decision-makers and stakeholders for making those spaces feel safer. Each site had a minimum of 15 women take part in implementing the project, meaning that a total of 123 women across Canada actively worked to enhance safety in their communities.
ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

Women in Cities International\(^2\) is a non-profit organization based in Montréal. The organization serves as an international exchange network on issues related to gender equality and women’s participation in city development. Women in Cities International leads many projects at the international, national, and local levels with the objective of increasing women’s safety and involvement in the community. These projects focus on the topics of urban safety, local governance, civic participation, and gender equality. Women’s safety is a priority area for action, and the organization promotes tools and strategies to improve the safety of women and girls in cities, by using and adapting tools such as the women’s safety audit walks, for example.

As the project initiator, Women in Cities International offered ongoing support and guidance to the four groups of women across Canada who participated in this initiative. The local implementation partners are: Women of the Dawn Counselling Centre of Regina (Saskatchewan), Centre des aînés de Gatineau (Québec), Catholic Crosscultural Services of Peel (Ontario) and Action des femmes handicapées Montréal (Québec). The groups were each given the general objective of building partnerships with their municipalities and/or different partners to implement safety approaches that take into account the specific reality of the group of women they are working with by adapting the women’s safety audit methodology to respond to their needs.

The Importance of Working with Marginalized Women on Safety Issues

This pan-Canadian project addresses women who experience multiple forms of discrimination and who are especially vulnerable to the negative effects of insecurity, isolation, and violence. Violence against women and feelings of insecurity have numerous effects on the physical and mental health of women, and as a result impact their economic and social development. Women’s well being, their quality of life, their participation in urban life and their ability to achieve equality are directly linked to their experiences and feelings of safety. Women who feel safe are more likely to participate and contribute to community life.

Violence against women affects all women but marginalized groups of women are doubly vulnerable, typically experiencing greater exclusion than other groups of women. Furthermore, mechanisms to include the voices of those particularly marginalized women are not well developed. These women often face safety concerns that are directly related to their particular needs and realities. Le Centre des aînés de Gatineau work with elderly women who face safety challenges on a daily basis, some due to the loss of their physical and mental autonomy. Action des femmes handicapées (Montréal) work closely with women with disabilities who face particular security and safety issues. Specific mobility and communication barriers make them more vulnerable in crisis situations. Women of the Dawn work with Aboriginal women to address the daily challenges they face such as poverty, racism and violence. Catholic Crosscultural Services and its partners, the Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse\(^3\) and the Peel Committee on Sexual Assault, work with women’s groups that offer specific services to immigrants in the region who are also more vulnerable in terms of safety. This project, therefore, aims to raise awareness among the wider community members about the particular realities of these women.
SIX PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN FROM WOMEN’S POINT OF VIEW

Each group was tasked with completing a minimum of three safety audit walks. The women’s safety audit walks were developed by the Metropolitan Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) in Toronto, Canada in 1989. Subsequently, the programme Femmes et ville - Ville de Montréal published a women’s safety guide which included the six principles of design from women’s point of view. These principles were used by participants to accomplish their audits in the framework of this pan-Canadian project.

Know where you are and where you are going (signage, signals, and orientation);

See and be seen (visibility, lighting, and hiding places);

Hear and be heard (rush hour and peak circulation, social use of space);

Be able to get away and get help (formal and informal surveillance and access to emergency services);

Live in a clean and welcoming environment (design, access, and maintenance);

Work together (community participation by the appropriation of public spaces).

Since then, the women’s safety audit methodology has been widely disseminated and implemented in many cities internationally by local women’s groups, cities, and international organizations including UN Habitat. Some research has also been done to assess the effectiveness of the methodology as it was used in different cities around the world.


**THE WOMEN’S SAFETY AUDIT METHODOLOGY**

Women’s safety audit walks are used to evaluate feelings of insecurity by identifying the elements in specific spaces within a city that enhance or reduce sense of safety among users of those spaces. First, the women collectively identify an area where they do not feel safe and decide on a schedule and itinerary for doing the audit. Generally, a group of ten to thirty women actively take part in the process and participants are divided into smaller teams of about four to six. Most of the women assume specific tasks such as, note-taking, tape recording observations, leading the walk, and photographing both the good and bad examples they observe on the walk. With the help of a checklist with the principles of design from women’s point of view, the women record their observations.

After the walk a follow-up meeting is organized with participants to draft a list of the problems they observed and the solutions they recommend, taking care to indicate the precise location where problems were observed (address, intersection, etc.). When possible, participants also identify the specific people to whom the recommendations should be addressed. Additional meetings are then scheduled to develop an action plan for presenting and implementing recommendations and for building new partnerships. Partnerships can be built with a variety of urban actors including: the municipality, public transport services, business owners, residents, community organizations, crime prevention organizations, the police, researchers, urban planners, architects, etc. Ideally, these partnerships have been initiated even before the women’s safety audit process begins. In that case, existing partners are invited to participate in the project by observing the women’s analyses and procedures. After the walks, recommendations are sent to the appropriate urban decision-makers and the women follow up with telephone calls and emails, or by organizing meetings and disseminating information about their courses of action.

**WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES IN PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT**

This report aims to share the experiences of the women who took part in this pan-Canadian project of adapting the women’s safety audit methodology, including both the successes and challenges that were encountered along the way. This experience goes well beyond the typical understanding of women’s safety approaches. It has given these women a voice that has allowed them to be heard loudly and clearly, to share their opinions, their visions and dreams, and to become, in their own way, experts in their safety.
This final report therefore aims to:

- Explain the methodology used to document the experiences of project participants;
- Outline the women’s safety audit process in four cities: Regina, Gatineau, Peel and Montréal;
- Explain the process undertaken to create safer communities with the help of the municipality and other partners;
- Demonstrate the impact of the project on participants in terms of strengthening capacities, empowerment and leadership;
- Identify some of the successes and challenges of this innovative project, including follow-up and sustainability.

Since the project was built on the principles of participation and inclusiveness, it was imperative that this report reflects this. Current project leaders Ivy Kennedy (Regina), Berna Bolanos (Peel), Michèle Osbourne (Gatineau) and Karine Chayer (Montréal) were asked to submit summary reports to describe how the project was unique to their city. No two cities are alike and the groups all experienced challenging periods when implementing the project.

The summaries provide glimpses of the reality on the ground, as they were experienced in the four cities. Each of the groups had specific reasons for wanting to embark on this journey. For Regina, it was a means of raising awareness about all of the missing Aboriginal women in Canada, who now number over 500. For the women in Peel, it provided recent immigrants with an opportunity to take ownership of their new communities and allowed CCS to expand the scope of its work on violence against women and girls (VAWG) by encompassing the public realm in addition to the private. The women in Gatineau used the project to strengthen their social network and reassert their right to use public spaces for recreational purposes. For the women in Montréal, the project allowed them to demonstrate that women’s safety requires being able to go about their daily routine without fear that inaccessible spaces and situations may prevent them from doing so.
Women of the Dawn Counselling Centre was created in 1993 to offer a variety of support services to Aboriginal women, by Aboriginal women. Women’s safety has always been a priority issue for the organization, though their work seeks to address diverse daily issues that women in the community face, including poverty, prostitution, racism, and violence. Specifically, Women of the Dawn engages in a variety of activities including: offering counselling services, advocacy, mediation, career counselling and planning, crisis intervention and referral services for women. Emphasis is placed on favouring self-reliance for their Aboriginal community.

The North Central Community in Regina is the community with the highest concentration of Aboriginal people. In January 2007, the community was designated by Macleans’s Magazine\(^7\) as being the worst neighbourhood in all of Canada. It is a community where people generally do not feel safe and where there is a lack of services, activities and opportunities for the community. Other Regina residents avoid going to North Central, and even the community police station closes before dark. The issue of safety for women is a major one, not only for Saskatchewan, but across Canada.
This project was seen as being instrumental in helping the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal women in particular. It is also innovative because issues around safety for Aboriginal women are often overlooked, even at the national level. Furthermore, although there is increasing awareness of the number of missing Aboriginal women in Canada, the response is still lacking. For Women of the Dawn, raising awareness about the missing women, with a view of provoking government investment and response, has been a priority for the last few years.

**Recruiting Participants**

Women of the Dawn developed a number of posters about the women’s safety audit that were placed throughout Regina to raise awareness about the project and to recruit participants to join in the process. One of the challenges has been sustaining relations and momentum with the women who took part in the walks. Some of the women who took part are not in regular contact with Women of the Dawn so it has been a challenge to keep them engaged and informed of the follow-up to the walks in which they were involved. Other obstacles, including addiction issues among participants, staff, and/or their family members, have interrupted some women’s consistent participation. In some cases this involves a generation gap where grandparents are raising grandchildren while the mothers’ and fathers’ struggle to overcome addictions. This was the case with some of the women who participated in the process.

Women of the Dawn also worried that Aboriginal women might be wary of participating in a project with WICI since the Aboriginal Community is Regina is very protective and are not always open to outsiders questioning them. Women of the Dawn therefore worked hard to introduce cultural elements to the process so that participants would feel that it was now a safety tool that was made for Aboriginal women.

Due to the hard work and determination of Women of the Dawn and their volunteers, the participants were willing to become involved in the project.

**Using the Women’s Safety Audits to Raise Awareness about Missing Aboriginal Women**

Until recently, Women of the Dawn concentrated on helping Aboriginal women and their families in areas such as counselling, family violence, advocacy and related issues. About five years ago, the issue of missing Aboriginal women became a priority issue. This project began at the same time that Women of the Dawn was advocating for government agencies to create a task force for the missing Aboriginal women and calling for greater government investment (provincial and national) for Aboriginal women’s programming, so the timing was good. Even though some investment has now begun, it is primarily around intimate family violence, so this project fills a void by looking at women’s safety in public spaces, which is important.

It was crucial that the community in Regina saw that Women of the Dawn was concerned with the issue of women’s safety, and that they wanted to ensure that women were safe on the streets, whether they were Aboriginal or not. A woman should be able to walk down the streets and not be afraid, and they wanted to create a safe place for the children in the community to live. There was a definitely need to educate the public to the fact that there were 500 missing Aboriginal women in Canada. The issue required immediate attention and this project was useful for engaging the community in Regina on issues around the safety of Aboriginal women and girls.
After completing two audits, the third women's safety audit walk was scheduled in December 2008, but when a local Aboriginal girl went missing, the group decided to postpone the walk and assist the family who came to Women of the Dawn for support and assistance. The walk was rescheduled for the end of January 2009, and the family of the missing girl, as well as the ward councillor, accompanied the group on the safety audit walk. On the day of the walk, Women of the Dawn and the family of the missing girl organized a press conference before heading out to raise awareness about the importance of women's safety in Regina. The walk succeeded in attracting some media attention as a result, and 45 participants took part in the walk.

**Doing Women’s Safety Audits in Regina**

Since the participants in Regina were Aboriginal women, they decided to concentrate all three of the women’s safety audit walks in the North Central neighbourhood, described above. In addition to being an area populated by Aboriginal peoples, it is underserviced, unsafe, and youth gangs occupy the streets. People who live in the communities often live in poverty and in the midst of violence. The women did not feel safe walking in the neighbourhood alone, so as a strategy of increasing their sense of safety, Women of the Dawn had T-Shirts made to identify walk participants. This gave them a greater sense of collective safety.

Women of the Dawn also organized Community Forums where both community members and supporting organizations were invited to participate by sharing their knowledge and concerns for the community. The meetings served as the opportunity for discussing details such as project awareness for community members, and the initial steps that were to be taken. The Forums also allowed for collective decisions to be made about dates and specific routes for the walks.

Prior to the walks, participants met with project leaders who prepared them by sharing some common safety precautions. They provided participants with a brief description of North Central and the streets they would be auditing. They also advised the women that there would be no breaks, so it was best to stretch, drink water, and use the washroom before starting the walks. After the walks, participants met at a local restaurant to have supper and debrief.
Solidifying Partnerships with the Media and the Municipality

This was the second project that Women of the Dawn had completed with WICI, thanks to funding by Status of Women Canada. The first project focused on building partnerships with municipal stakeholders, so the group was able to sustain and strengthen the ties they had already made, notably with the municipality, through this second project. Women of the Dawn now has a good reputation and is well-known by the city of Regina. Since it was clear from the beginning that North Central would be the focus of the women’s safety audits, the organization was able to identify and engage key players from the start, including the city councillor representing the Ward. Letters were drafted to invite key community partners to join in the process. Having the city councillor participate helped Women of the Dawn feel that the city really did care about the safety of Aboriginal women.

Women of the Dawn also realized that media engagement would be key to implementing the project successfully in Regina. The media showed an interest as early as the initial training session when they came to interview the project leader and the expert who provided the training on women’s safety audits. The group also succeeded in persuading the media to document the women’s safety audit walks, and CTV News aired a story about the walks for two consecutive days after the second walk in June 2008. For the third walk, in the company of the missing girl’s family, several other news outlets came to document the process, including CTV, Global News, the Leader Post, CBC and Rawlco Radio.

Recommendations

Since Women of the Dawn had maintained open lines of communication with the municipality, they were able to share their preliminary findings and recommendations with them before the formal official presentation, where they requested that the recommendations be implemented. Partners from the city pointed the organization to previous work undertaken in Regina, suggesting that it would serve as a good base for strengthening their case. Specifically, the group learned that the City of Regina had previously undertaken some work to assess the potential for applying principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). They found that the recommendations from the walks mirrored those in the CPTED report. In addition to recommendations that focused on environmental factors, such as signage and lighting, and health risks associated with the presence of used needles and condoms, the women who undertook the walks in Regina noted that longer-term recommendations that focused more on social development were needed in North Central. Services such as after school programmes for youth could help to change the social fabric of the community, making it safer for Aboriginal women and their families, and providing alternative outlets for young people. People are afraid to help when they see something happening. In general, the community needs to acknowledge the problems it is facing and begin to address them. Regina developed a local support committee for the recommendations phase of the project. They have also contacted a number of other organizations and local leaders to inform them of the safety audit process and the recommendations. It was important to keep local stakeholders informed of the process.
THE CENTRE DES AÎNÉS DE GATINEAU

The mission of Le Centre des aînés de Gatineau is to offer seniors a space that favours their autonomy and offers them a support system founded on a network of volunteers (centredesainesdegatineau.qc.ca). The organization’s objectives are to break isolation and loneliness, and to assist the elderly to develop their autonomy, initiative, sense of responsibility, creativity, and well-being, all while providing them with a sense of belonging. The Centre offers a variety of programmes and activities to a mixed clientele aged 50 and older.

The Centre des aînés de Gatineau was approached by Dr. Caroline Andrew, President of Women and Cities International, to participate in this project. As 70% of the centre’s clients are women, the centre proudly agreed to participate.

The Importance of Working With Elderly Women

As people age, they often decrease their activity and become more sedentary. This is especially the case for elderly women, who face isolation due to common fears of public spaces which they consider to be less safe and less adapted to their specific needs. The principal mission of the Centre des aînés de Gatineau is to promote an environment that fosters empowerment and independence among elderly people through a self-help and volunteer network. Thus the principles contained within the women’s safety audit methodology are perfectly consistent with the organization’s mandate.

This project enabled female clients to vocalize their own safety needs and expectations. It also enabled participants to actively take part in planning a safer environment that offers better lighting, increased visibility and decreased areas for attackers to hide. As a result of these activities elderly women, whose needs as a group are rarely considered, built partnerships with their municipality to help create a safer city for everyone. The changes made to public places as a result of this project can be directly linked to a better quality of life for Gatineau citizens.

Recruiting Participants and Choosing Areas to Audit

Since this project required participants to walk through different areas for varying lengths of time, women were recruited from the Centre’s walking club. During the initial training session, 14 participants learned about the women’s safety audit process and increased their knowledge about urban safety.

The participants with the facilitator and a representative from Women in Cities International during the initial women’s safety audit training session.
Since many participants were avid walkers, they unanimously agreed that the popular walking area around Lac-Beaucamp should be audited. This site is located in the heart of the municipality in a densely wooded park. Many of the participants who had walked there reported feeling unsafe and, before the project, did not want to use the trails on their own despite the fact that the site is very beautiful.

At the time of the training session, Lac-Beaucamp city councillor Mr. Aurèle Desjardins told participants that the municipality had just voted to implement a general plan that included the comprehensive redevelopment of Lac-Beaucamp Park within a three-year timeframe. In the first year, 1.2 million dollars was to be invested to make changes to the beach and the park’s public building (in which toilets, a changing area and other amenities are located). A second phase would follow to redevelop trails, including signage and parking areas. By choosing the Lac-Beaucamp area as an audit site, this group recognized that they would be able to take full advantage of the circumstances and could include their safety audit recommendations in the area’s redevelopment plan.

Participants conducted two safety audits in Lac-Beaucamp Park’s huge 492-acre territory. The first safety audit took place in June 2008 on the beach and around the public building. The second safety audit was conducted in September 2008 and included walking trails and the parking area.

This group also decided to audit the underground parking garage of the Maison du Citoyen (local community centre). Participants reported that the garage is very dark and unsafe. As a result of their concerns, many women in the group said that they avoided the community centre and were not able to take advantage of the services it offers. A women’s safety audit was conducted in the Maison du Citoyen parking garage in November 2008.

Building Partnerships and Support

The municipality’s response to the work of the women in Gatineau was exceptional, with nearly all invited representatives taking part in safety audit activities. Mr. Desjardins, a city councillor, expressed the municipality’s support by stating that this project was well received in the region because Gatineau wants to become an inclusive and safe city for everyone. According to Mr. Desjardins, the Centre des aînés de Gatineau was entrusted with this project because of its excellent reputation and broad influence at the local and provincial level.

Throughout the project, the Centre also had the opportunity to work closely with many representatives from different public institutions. A female police officer accompanied the group during all three safety audit walks. Municipal employees were also deeply involved and very helpful. Other city actors who worked on this project included: a criminologist, site managers, community development officers and the city representative responsible for universal accessibility.
Media Participation

In 2008, participants were invited to discuss their work on CBC Radio in order to spread awareness about women’s safety issues among the general public. Three articles on the project were also published in La Revue, a popular daily newspaper in Gatineau.

In addition, participants contributed regular columns to l’Étincelle, the Centre des aînés de Gatineau’s newspaper. They also reported on project developments and kept other clients informed by contributing to the Centre’s annual reports.

Implementing Recommendations

Participants presented three reports to their municipal leaders. During their presentations, participants recommended specific changes that should be made in the city based on safety audit findings.

The recommendations made concerning Lac-Beaucamp Park were particularly successful in generating change. As mentioned above, the municipal council had approved a general plan just before the safety audit project was launched, with resources allocated to developing the park’s infrastructure. Many elements that participants recommended for improvement were upgraded within the year. For example, play areas in the park have been completely redeveloped; they have been moved away from barbeque sites to more shady areas of the beach. The play areas are now more practical for parents because they are surrounded by benches and picnic tables that offer ample opportunities for supervision.

The park’s beach was also redeveloped according to safety audit recommendations. A sidewalk was added to allow people with disabilities, parents with baby strollers and people with mobility impairments to safely access and enjoy the beach. Landscaping details such as the addition of greenery and the use of stone for the sidewalk makes the park more beautiful and welcoming. Also, the addition of a lawn area helps to make the beach more comfortable for elderly women.

A second round of improvements for the park (including walking trails and parking lot areas) is scheduled for the fall of 2010. At that time, it is expected that further recommendations from the women’s safety audits will be implemented.
Participants also had success with their recommendations concerning the Maison du Citoyen underground parking garage. Mr. Yvon Fournier, chief of organizational security for municipal property, was very receptive to the audit group’s ideas and pledged to include the participants’ recommendations in the report he was to submit to the City of Gatineau on improving the design of the garage. Mr. Fournier reported that he was delighted to receive the recommendations from a group of elderly women who had specific knowledge of changes needed to accommodate their needs.

**Work that Yields Results!**

This project has already enabled older women to make their voices heard, since many concrete changes have been made in Gatineau’s public spaces as a result of their recommendations. However, the benefits of this project extend even further in that it has allowed participants to become more involved in their community. The group is very optimistic and believes that their remaining recommendations will be implemented during the upcoming months for the benefit and safety of elderly women and everyone.
Immigrant and Visible Minority Women doing Safety Audits in Peel

CATHOLIC CROSSCULTURAL SERVICES

The Peel Committee on Sexual Assault (PCSA) and the Peel Committee against Women Abuse (PCAWA) were involved in developing the project proposal that was eventually implemented in the city of Mississauga under the management of Catholic Cross Cultural Services (CCS) Peel. CCS is a non-profit agency that provides a wide range of services that aim to assist immigrants and refugees integrate into their cities, including violence against women counselling services. CCS currently offers services in more than 30 languages and welcomes all newcomers without discrimination.

Why Include the Voices of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women?

The issue addressed in the project was the safety and sense of safety of women whose voices are often marginalized in Canadian communities. The assumption is that violence against women affects all women but doubly marginalized groups of women are particularly affected. For example, immigrant women face barriers including language, little or no family or social support system, being new in the country, or being a family without status in Canada. The women in Peel were thus tasked with engaging immigrant and visible minority women to undertake women’s safety audits in their communities. These groups of women experience greater exclusion than other groups of women, and mechanisms to include their voices are not well developed.

A number of immigrants carry with them to Canada the sense of insecurity they lived within their country of origin where many had been exposed to danger, violence and/or were victims of crimes. For many, the fear of being (re)victimized limits their freedom, restricts their movement, and hinders their ability to get enjoyment out of daily activities. People should be able to go where they want free of fear, especially in their own neighbourhood. The experience of working with a diverse community in Peel has enhanced awareness and understanding among participants, showing them that people can have very different safety experiences. The sense of safety that women feel in their homes or on the street is unique to them.

Recruiting Participants

The project leaders invited women clients of their Violence against Women programme to be participants in the project. They advertised throughout their centre and through other local agencies that offered settlement services to immigrants. These outreach strategies were successful in recruiting women from diverse backgrounds and ages, including seniors, to be part of the WSA training and walks. Eighteen women attended the training and several stayed on for the follow-up meetings. These meetings were collective efforts to complete a local safety questionnaire and to identify the locations for the WSA walks. They also gave the women the opportunity to share ideas and knowledge from the training.
Keeping the women engaged and active throughout the project was a challenge, as some secured full-time jobs, some had childcare responsibilities to tend to, and others attended evening classes. Several who remained active brought in new participants to learn more about the project and shared their experience in social groups, in religious institutions, and with groups of seniors. The Peel group was successful in this second wave of recruitment, and requested a second and intensive training session on implementing and undertaking a safety audit walk for the new participants. The trainer provided an adapted training session for these new women, and the walk itself immediately followed this. The expert accompanied the participants on the walk.

Although the women who participated in the walk were from Brampton and Mississauga, they decided to concentrate their efforts in Mississauga in order to consolidate them. All of the women shared a strong view that this kind of project should be undertaken in all of the areas of the Peel Region.

Many of the women who participated in the WSA training were eager and enthusiastic about the implementation of the audit. The women did express their concerns about doing the audit in smaller groups, having decided to audit high-risk areas where they did not feel safe. They were also concerned about carrying out the audit late in the evening when it was dark outside. The women employed strategies to respond to these concerns, including forming groups of no less than eight women, larger than most walks, wearing identifiable clothing, carrying whistles and ensuring that at least one person in the group had a cellular phone. They also had t-shirts made to identify the WSA walk participants and instil a sense of solidarity among the group.

Doing Women’s Safety Audit Walks in Peel

This project was the first of its kind in the Region of Peel, which has a population of over one million and continues to experience rapid growth. Almost half of all people who live in the Peel Region, which encompasses three municipalities: Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon, are immigrants.
The first walk was completed in August 2008 in a local park. The women engaged with the users of the space and found that their cultural diversity was advantageous, since many of the people they approached did not speak English so the volunteers acted as interpreters. This allowed local voices to be included in the audits. Lack of signage and access to emergency services stood out as factors that made the space feel unsafe. The second walk took place in February 2009 near a shopping mall where the area is ill maintained and people do not feel safe. The third walk in June 2009 was in a low-income area with subsidized housing and a shopping complex with an underground parking garage where women did not feel safe. Youth loitering in the area increased levels of fear among participants. On all three walks the age range of participants varied from 20-65 and included women who were refugees, immigrants, and from diverse cultural backgrounds. The Peel group has had to face many language barriers due to the diversity of the immigrant women participating. Nevertheless, they have successfully found interpreters within the group which has enabled every woman to participate fully.

Engaging Key Players in the Region of Peel

Following the acceptance of the project, both PCSA and PCAWA did a brief presentation to representatives of the Region of Peel. They explained that this project serves to remind us that feeling unsafe and experiencing violence are factors that inhibit many women in Peel, especially those from marginalized groups, from fully participating in, and contributing to the development and economic sustainability of their communities. In addition, experiences of poverty, homelessness, social exclusion, isolation and various forms of overt or systemic discrimination are compounding barriers for many residents in Peel, particularly women and their children. The purpose of the presentation was to urge representatives of the Region to acknowledge and address the issue of women’s safety and well-being in the community, by expanding the
focus of its Strategic Plan to include and integrate ‘gender’ as an organizing principle. This request was successful and was honoured by the Region. The women in Peel succeeded in engaging the media, and Rogers’ Television documented one of their walks and reported it on the local news broadcast.

After the three walks, participants said that they now had a greater awareness not only of the area they are in and potential sources of danger, but also of the role that they must play as citizens to protect the community as a whole. The women developed a greater sense of personal responsibility and took initiative to engage with city workers to make other areas of Peel safer. For example, one of the women talked directly with city workers and told them about lights being out on the corners of the block where she lived and asked if there was anything they could do. They took an interest, responded quickly and checked to make sure that all the lights on that block were working properly.

The Impact of the Project on the Organization

The Catholic Crosscultural Services employees who work in the Violence against Women (VAW) programme were all encouraged to participate in the project, and several did. For many, participating in the WSA process was the first time that they had addressed women’s safety concerns in public areas. They now say that they learned a lot and that their involvement has had a big influence on the work that they do in the VAW programme. They have a broader understanding of women’s safety and are better able to counsel their clients as a result of their participation in the project.
ACTION DES FEMMES HANDICAPÉES (MONTRÉAL)

Action des femmes handicapées (Montréal) was founded in 1986 by women who sought recognition of the specificity and needs of women with disabilities (www.afhm.org).

The organization’s mission is to work in solidarity with other groups to promote the autonomy of women with disabilities and their full and free participation in social, cultural, political, and economic life. Over the years, the organization has come to be recognized for their expertise on the topic of violence against women with disabilities.

Action des femmes handicapées (Montréal) (AFHM) worked on this project for three years to make their city safer and more universally accessible. More than 15 women who have disabilities participated in this project, exercising their right to participate in the life of their city. With the support of many partners, AFHM was able to raise awareness about the importance of working on women’s safety issues WITH women who have disabilities, and on issues linked to women’s safety.

The following is an overview of true teamwork, FOR and especially BY women with disabilities. These participants had been whole-heartedly committed to the well-being, high quality of life, and safety of all women.

Safety for Women with Disabilities

Every day, women who have disabilities face obstacles that make having an active life difficult and unsafe. Women with disabilities tend to be more isolated and experience more violence than other women. They are also at greater risk of being assaulted than are men with disabilities. Therefore, the safety of women with disabilities is a very important topic.

There is a danger that projects concerning the safety of women with disabilities can turn into projects about the victimization of women with disabilities. This has not been the case in the “Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and for Everyone” project. Rather, it has prioritized women’s capacity to take charge of their own safety, based on their vision of a safer and more accessible community for women and for all. Moreover, this project gave women who have disabilities a voice, and allowed them to be heard rather than underestimated.

Universal Accessibility and Safety

For women with disabilities, safety goes hand-in-hand with universal accessibility. Safety, in this sense, encompasses a broader meaning because it is not only about avoiding acts of violence. It also means moving around without impediments, and being able to access the city alone at any hour, without constraint. By integrating the concept of universal accessibility into the “Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and for Everyone” project, AFHM participants raised public and decision-maker awareness about the importance of safe access to and barrier-free accommodation of services adapted to their needs and abilities.

Project Organization

The Montréal group had four project managers in three years. This constant state of change could have undermined project implementation. However, project partners and especially participants effectively kept the work moving forward. For this group, the greatest challenge and the greatest success has been maintaining the active involvement of participants in directing and carrying out all activities, from safety audit walks to media event preparation to implementing recommendations.
Overall, more than 60 meetings took place during the project’s implementation. At these meetings, participants’ ideas and opinions shaped decisions on key issues such as the choice of sites to audit, the prioritization of recommendations, and the selection of publicity tactics. These meetings contributed to the very essence of the project, providing a space for a participatory process of empowerment, where women with disabilities could build or strengthen confidence in themselves.

Roles and tasks were assigned based on participants’ interests and talents, and according to their specific abilities. The women’s safety audit methodology was adapted numerous times over the course of the project to suit participants’ needs. This process added richness to the work and allowed participants to appropriate the women’s safety audit practice.

**Accomplishing Women’s Safety Audit Walks**

In order to reach as many participants as possible to ensure the success of this project, numerous AFHM invitations were extended by email and telephone. In order to recruit new participants, other tactics were used such as: spreading news through word-of-mouth and distributing and displaying posters near the sites where safety audit walks were scheduled. This was accomplished with the help of partners located in the area.

The group decided to hold all safety audit walks in the Montréal city borough of Ville-Marie so that all stakeholders, partners, and recommendations would be centralized. Participants conducted audits in the Saint-Jacques, Sainte-Marie and Peter McGill districts. Three safety audit walks were conducted, with different teams auditing different routes on each walk. Each safety audit walk had an average of 20 women and partners who participated. The group decided to conduct walks under different kinds of conditions, in order to provide a well-rounded understanding of the state of women’s safety in the area. Thus, audits were conducted both during the day and after dark and during different seasons, including winter when snow and ice were present.

The first safety audit walk took place in June 2008 around the perimeter of Université du Québec à Montréal (UQÀM). Participants chose this site because many of them are UQÀM students who had previously experienced a sense of insecurity in the area, attributed in part to the presence of many people who are homeless and street youth. The second safety audit walk took place in March 2009 in the area around the Frontenac metro station; for this walk the borough councillor participated as an observer. Finally, in June 2009, a third safety audit walk took place near the Atwater metro station in a park that was identified as unsafe because it had appeared dilapidated and abandoned for several years. The women also wanted to exchange with the Aboriginal women who were homeless and often in the park.
Creating Partnerships
One of the largest benefits of this project has been the formation of partnerships between participants and other actors who have been part of the local support committee. Over the course of the project, many different partners helped the AFHM group build the groundwork for a safer and more accessible city. Specific partners include:

- The City of Montreal (city councillors, employees, special advisors);
- Tandem Ville-Marie East and West (Montreal-based citizen support programme for action on urban security);
- Consciente urbaine (community organization that creates awareness and action on social issues using art);
- Audiotopie (artist cooperative);
- Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (City of Montreal Police Force);
- Association des étudiants handicapés de l’UQÀM (Association of students with Disabilities at the University of Quebec in Montreal);
- Regroupement des activistes pour l’inclusion au Québec (Activist Coalition for Inclusion in Quebec);
- Regroupement des usagers du transport adapté et accessible de l’île de Montréal (Coalition of Adapted Transit Users on the Island of Montreal);
- Éco-Quartier (Montreal-based environmental action organization);
- A criminologist;
- A safety expert;
- An urban planner.

This project also provided participants with the opportunity to create artwork using photography and sound. Photographic portraits were made by Consciente urbaine of AFHM participants in unsafe or inaccessible places. In presentation settings, the portraits are accompanied by an audioguide created by Audiotopie.

Media Involvement
The AFHM group was able to secure media support throughout the project and their work has been the subject of a few articles. Notably, the Westmount Examiner, a neighbourhood newspaper, published an article with the title "Disabled Women Participate in Local Safety Audit."10 Also, after a participant attended in a press conference organized by Tandem, Journal 24 heures published an article titled, "Montréal, ville sécuritaire?"11 in which she was cited.

On October 2nd, 2009, AFHM also organized a successful public event where many high profile guests were present. The theme of the event was « Lorsque sécurité et accessibilité universelle vont de pair... les femmes handicapées ouvrent la voie! » (When universal accessibility and safety go hand in hand...women with disabilities lead the way!) Several representatives from political parties attended, including three representatives from Union Montréal, and three representatives from Projet Montréal (including party leader, Richard Bergeron). As the event was organized during Montréal’s municipal elections, it provided an ideal opportunity for participants to share their observations about urban safety with the public and politicians. However, despite strong efforts on behalf of participants and partners, no media representatives attended the event.
Implementing the Recommendations: Teamwork!

In order to continue the participative process and generate/implement recommendations, participants formed three working groups (one for UQÀM, one for the City of Montréal and one for public transit officials). Women in each working group completed various tasks such as drafting letters, verifying information about specific locations, etc. Each working group also devised action priorities for recommendations, which were then validated by the AFHM group as a whole.

AFHM had the opportunity to share its work with numerous partners and organizations. For example, the group gave a presentation at the School of Criminology at the Université de Montréal, at the Table des groupes de femmes de Montréal (Council of Montreal Women’s Groups), and at a Ville-Marie borough meeting. As a result of these presentations, some changes were implemented in the borough of Ville-Marie. Typically, in order to implement recommendations, a lengthy process of phone calls, research, forwarding requests to partners, and drafting support letters is required. However, some changes were more easily accomplished. For example, in Montreal a new ‘311’ telephone service was launched. Citizens are now able to call the service and make complaints or requests, each of which receives a file number. AFHM participants were able to use this service to make recommendations related to things like repairing sidewalks or replacing burnt out light bulbs. Having a file number for each request submitted considerably facilitated any follow-up tasks.
Rapid results were also obtained from Bell Canada when participants requested modifications to two phone booths located near UQÀM. The company removed the phone booth doors so that women who are dependent on a powered mobility device now have safe access to the telephone.

Some changes required more time and effort. It was decided that participants would ask the Société de transport de Montréal (STM), the city's public transit authorities, to move the para-transit stop. At the current location, lighting is insufficient and surrounding architecture creates an isolated area where it is difficult to be seen and heard. This para-transit stop is rarely used by students, and serves mostly as a gathering place for homeless persons and street youths. The entrance to the location the group is recommending already meets universal accessibility standards (no steps or differences in level, a common entrance for everyone, automatic doors). It also has a large window, an emergency telephone, and a security guard. At the time of publication, the process of requesting that the para-transit stop be moved was underway, with the support of AFHM partners. Everyone involved in pushing for the implementation of this recommendation was hopeful because it was a cost-effective modification in line with STM's universal accessibility policy.
Some recommendations made by this group involve raising awareness about the safety of women who have disabilities. A media event was organized to meet these recommendations. In collaboration with *Regroupement des activistes pour l’inclusion au Québec* (RAPLIQ) (a coalition of activists for inclusion in Québec), participants also organized and took part in a two-day event on the subject of universal accessibility. Representatives from RAPLIQ and AFHM handed out documents to passers-by and merchants in order to raise awareness about the importance of inclusion, universal accessibility, and safety. Additionally, AFHM decided to create a symbol for women’s safety that could be displayed in shop windows allowing merchants to show solidarity with their cause. Finally, after the first women’s safety audit walk was completed, many women at AFHM expressed their concerns about having to be in close proximity with homeless men. It has been decided that a day will be organized to bring the women with disabilities and homeless men together to break down stereotypes and increase sensitivity and awareness about their respective realities.

**Challenges Ahead**

Many other recommendations have been submitted to responsible authorities and AFHM participants were still awaiting responses at the time of publication. While the current project coordinated by Women in Cities International may be over, it is seen as only the beginning for *Action des femmes handicapées* (Montréal). The true challenge will be to ensure follow-up and implementation of recommendations, while aiming for universal accessibility everywhere.
Assessing the Impacts of the Project

This report is based on information collected during the “Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and for Everyone” project. In order to assess and evaluate the progress and achievements of the project, a number of approaches were used. To accurately describe and understand the experiences of the women who participated in the project, an exploratory qualitative approach has been used. In addition to consulting relevant literature, two methods were used to collect information: semi-directed interviews and participant observation.

Semi-directed interviews were conducted using a structured introduction and an interview grid. Separate thematic grids were used for project participants and project leaders (see Appendix 1). It should be noted that the interview process allowed participants to have an additional medium through which they could speak about subjects which are important to them such as women’s safety, empowerment, and adaptation of the project according to their specific needs. This process ensured the further communication and validation of participants’ opinions and ideas.

In total, 41 project leaders and participants were interviewed: 12 from Gatineau, 14 from Montreal, nine from Peel and six from Regina. A special effort was made to represent a diversity of views from each regional group. It was decided to end the interviews when the statements given by the interviewees no longer provided any new information, other than anecdotal. The principle of ‘empirical saturation’ was therefore respected13.

Project leaders in each of the sites contacted interviewees to set up times for the interview. Meetings were held in a quiet location agreed upon by the interviewers and interviewees. Each interview lasted between 25 minutes and two hours.

All interviews were recorded to facilitate verbatim transcription. NVivo 8, a qualitative data analysis software, was used to create a thematic coding tree. Each interview was first analysed individually and adjustments were made, when needed, to the interview grid (vertical analysis). Afterwards, a second analysis was done in order to compare interviews within the same group (comparative intra-group analysis). A final analysis was performed in order to compare the groups themselves (comparative intergroup analysis)14. Citations that have been translated appear in their original language in the endnotes sections of this report.

The authors’ involvement in the project also facilitated research by providing the opportunity for participant observation during safety audit walks, meetings, and trainings. In addition to the interviews, the authors’ drew on information from various sources including pertinent literature, email exchanges, meeting minutes, reports submitted to Status of Women Canada, and project leaders’ reports. These were useful for contextualizing the statements of interviewees.
PARTICIPANT PROFILE
The following figures illustrate the age, ethnic origin, and the main disability of participants interviewed.

Figure I
AGE OF PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED

The average age of participants of the project who were interviewed was 67 years (median: 69 years) in Gatineau; 45 years (median: 43 years) in Montréal; 41 years (median: 44 years) in Peel; and 41 years (median: 49 years) in Regina. The women’s ages ranged from 17 to 72 years.
Table I
ETHNIC ORIGIN OF PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada (Aboriginals)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada (non-Aboriginal)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2
MAIN DISABILITY OF WOMEN INTERVIEWED IN MONTREAL

- Motor and/or neurological: 54%
- Auditory (no sign language): 31%
- Auditory (sign language): 8%
- Visual (complete or partial impairment and amblyope): 7%
Adapting the Women’s Safety Audit Methodology

“One of the main objectives of the project "Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and for Everyone" was to adapt the women’s safety audit methodology to be used by specific groups of women in Canada, namely elderly women, Aboriginal women, women with disabilities and immigrant and visible minority women. In each case, participatory mechanisms were employed to engage participants to be active in the adaptation process. Engaging participants from the start means that they will feel more ownership over the end result – an adapted tool. They will also be more comfortable when undertaking the women's safety audit walks as they will have already become familiar with the process and the checklist. Women’s safety audits should be adapted to appeal to the entire group, making them an accessible tool that can be used by all women and girls. In the framework of this project, several process adaptations were introduced in the four cities, taking into account the requirements of the diverse groups.

Given the nature of the group in Montréal, women living with disabilities, extensive adjustments were introduced by the participants to ensure that the methodology was accessible for these women in all of their diversity. Consequently, this chapter includes a subsection on adaptation for accessibility. This means that the experience of the Montréal group in this chapter is disproportionately documented when compared with the three other sites.

This chapter describes the adaptation process in Regina, Peel, Gatineau and in Montréal. The various procedural changes, intended to make the tool more meaningful for the community who would be using it will be described. Specifically, the chapter focuses on the changes that were made to the training schedule, cultural adaptations, and adaptation of the WSA to include principles of universal accessibility. It then describes how the WSA checklist can also be adapted according to who will be using it and where the audits are to be done. Some impacts of using an inclusive adaptation approach are shared. Next, the lessons learned, challenges and suggestions for future adaptations are discussed. And, finally, we look at the degree of satisfaction reported by the project participants.

"The way that we were asked to do it, and the things we were asked to do were things that we, as older women, were capable of doing. We were never asked to do something only young people could do. They did not ask the impossible from us. They arranged it so that it would be adapted to us. That is what I liked about the project." – Florence, Gatineau

16
17
ADAPTING THE WOMEN’S SAFETY AUDIT PROCESS

The WSA process requires time to implement and WSA organizers must take care to make additional adaptations to the process throughout the entire implementation phase. This means that project organizers must be open to change and able to see what is working or not. It is important to solicit constant feedback from participants in order to get their points of view on what should be adapted for future meetings and walks. For this to happen, the women participating in the audit process must feel that their feedback will be welcome and accepted without fear of judgement and without having to defend their feelings and experiences.

The Montréal group made conscious efforts to ensure that they were open to integrating changes and adaptations to the approach as they went along. They soon realized that the women worked more effectively when they were in small groups. WSA walk groups were therefore kept small to encourage active participation by all. Sub-groups were also strategically organized to maximize the diversity of the women’s perspectives, following the rationale that a woman who uses a wheelchair will naturally have different safety concerns from a woman with a hearing impairment, so if there were three groups, each group would include at least one woman with a visual disability. Roles were also assigned according to the capacity of the women to complete the task. Deviating from the previous walks, co-animators led the third WSA walk in Montréal, when it was determined that having one person lead was not effective. Co-animation gave the women a greater sense of confidence in taking leadership. Smaller group size was maintained throughout the recommendation phase as well, as the larger group split up to concentrate their efforts on a single urban decision-making body (e.g. the city of Montréal, public transit officials, etc).

Adapting the Women’s Safety Audit Training

It was clear as early as the initial training session that the implementation partners had succeeded in mobilizing dynamic groups of women who shared their thoughts on adaptation requirements from the beginning. For example, the women with disabilities in Montréal requested that "meetings not last six hours, for certain persons, it is too much," so the training was adapted and provided over four half-day sessions instead of two days of intensive training. This was because many suffer from fatigue as a side effect of medication or illness and require more time to assimilate new concepts. This means that intensive full-day training sessions would have had a negative impact on the integration of the training components. A project leader in Montréal explained that the women with disabilities work at a different pace and "whether you like it or not, the project only advances as fast as the women can." In another example, when the women from Peel mobilized several women who were not part of the initial training session, the trainer condensed and adapted the training curricula so that it could be offered in a half-day training session. This condensed session was then provided to new recruits so that they would have the opportunity to integrate the WSA process and principles prior to going on their first WSA walk.
Cultural Adaptations of the WSAs

Women’s safety audits must be adapted to reflect the culture of the women who are going to do the audits. This means making changes to the WSA process to make it meaningful for the users of the tool, as for instance with the language used when explaining the WSA methodology to participants.

In Regina, the principle focus in adapting the WSA process was to ensure that it was culturally relevant to the participants. Drawing from Aboriginal traditions, the project leader in Regina explained that, “we made sure we had an Elder to open up the prayer (...),” going on to describe “in our values and our culture and (...) we really focus heavily on our spirituality.” The women in Regina therefore also made sure to include elders in the circles organized to symbolize the opening of the audits. The circles also provided the women with a space to collectively pray before beginning the walks.

Inspired by the women in Regina, who open and close their meetings and walks with everyone standing in a circle and sharing their thoughts, circles were introduced in the training sessions in all four cities, simultaneously serving as a reminder to the groups in Peel, Montréal and Gatineau that the project was pan-Canadian.
“In our culture you can’t really wear certain kind of clothes, right. So even when you approach someone you have to sort of be a certain way, speak a certain way. So we had a lot to look into before we did the audits. So I think that way we contributed in bringing a more broader, diversified approach to the audit.” – Anh, Peel

In Peel, a group composed of immigrant, refugee and visible minority women, had to make sure that cultural diversity was taken into account and celebrated. The women in Peel embraced the challenge and a project leader explained that in their outreach, “one of the basic steps we took was to (...) let them [the women] know that the WSA was going to be focused on women of visible minority.”

Since the women come from diverse backgrounds, common cultural themes, such as the inclusion of Elders and the incorporation of circles that their Aboriginal counterparts in Regina introduced to the WSA, were not as obvious in Peel. Instead, efforts had to be made to make the women feel comfortable in participating actively regardless of cultural barriers. The most obvious barrier the group could face was language, and it was successfully overcome, allowing all participants to express themselves freely – “I was reading the questions in Urdu and then she was answering in Urdu and I was writing them down in English,” explained one of the project leaders.

Case Study:
Peel - Using Food to Bridge Cultural Differences

To help bridge the cultural differences, the Peel project leaders decided to organize dinners with all of the participants before going on the women’s safety audit walks. This proved to be an important adaptation that helped to break down barriers, break isolation, and encourage exchange, which in turn built trust and rapport among participants. This also allowed the leaders to review the walk trajectory, principles of women’s safety, and enable women to volunteer for the various roles to be filled during the walks, such as leader or note-taker. Groups were also formed to maximize the potential for every woman to feel comfortable participating, for example by having other people who spoke their language in their audit group.
Adaptation for Accessibility

The women in Montréal worked to transform the women's safety audit tool into one that could be used by and for women regardless of the nature of the disability they are living with. Virtually every facet of the WSA process had to be rethought, expanded, adapted and repackaged. Responding to the needs of individuals with diverse disabilities has been an ongoing challenge and has required patience and sensitivity on the part of the other participants as well as the project leaders. For example, determining a meeting place for the walks was difficult, as a number of factors had to first be satisfied, including the location of the nearest designated drop off location for their the para-transit service and adapted toilet facilities. The room itself had to meet the requirements of universal accessibility. This means, for example, that the entrance door must be accessible for women with limited mobility to be able to enter the space using the same entrance as everybody else. The presence of an attendant was essential for some of the women and a participant explained, “the attendant helps us, gives a sense of security.”25 Another spoke about the challenge of satisfying distinct adaptation requirements: “You have to be conscious that not all women with disabilities have the same physical capacities for walking or the same cognitive capacities. So, in other words, how can we ensure that the group is complete enough so that we are capable of doing a good (safety audit) walk and generating good comments? Have someone regularly assigned to take notes, bring the recorder - hold it, and make it work. Also having someone who can take photos, which is not evident for the majority of us.”26

A number of other process adaptations were introduced to try to address multiple barriers that some of the participants are living with. Here are some examples of adaptations that were made for women with visual impairments:

- Documents were drafted and printed using the font Verdana 13.5 to make it easier for women with limited visual impairment to read;
- Women with visual impairments also used tape recorders during the WSA walks to record their observations, instead of noting them on paper;
- Documents were sent ahead of time in Word format, allowing them to use a computer-based auditory programme to review the documents before meetings. One participant explained that receiving the documents ahead of time “allowed me to put myself in the context and allowed be to participate in advancing the project.”27

“I learned more and more that yes, it is true, universal accessibility equals safety.”24 – Lorraine, Montréal
ADAPTING THE WOMEN’S SAFETY AUDIT CHECKLIST

The adaptation of the women’s safety audit checklist to reflect the particular needs of each of the groups of women implementing the methodology (that is, elderly women in Gatineau, Aboriginal women in Regina, women with disabilities in Montreal and immigrant and visible minority women in the Peel Region) was built directly into the training sessions. Specifically, the women were invited to go through the WSA checklist all together and step-by-step, to decide whether the elements on the basic checklist presented during the training session were relevant for them. They worked together to add or delete elements from the checklist and decide whether the language used was appropriate (i.e. culturally relevant, not too technical). This allowed for a collective and inclusive adaptation process and produced a checklist that the participants were familiar with and comfortable using.

Though the women who participated in the WSAs in Gatineau are quite active given their age, they were also aware that many of the challenges facing an aging population relate to diminishing physical capabilities, and so accessibility became a central point of consideration in their WSAs. The groups in Regina and Peel also developed a greater sensitivity to the needs of women with disabilities, and questions around the ease of access of various spaces were included in their own WSA walk and/or checklist. All groups therefore considered a number of factors related to accessibility of the space that were not present on the basic checklist. The group in Montréal, experts of how safety and accessibility issues are intertwined, added a number of additional items to the checklist to encompass these issues. Consideration of things such as the presence of automatic doors, adapted and accessible public telephones, longer lights for pedestrian crossing, and auditory crossing signals are examples of some of the new elements that were introduced in their WSA checklist.

Adapting the Checklist to Suit the Space: Auditing the Lac Beauchamp Park in Gatineau

Many of the women who participated in the WSA project from Gatineau are part of a walking group. These women are quite active and decided to audit a park where they did not feel safe and hoped that the changes resulting from the audits would help to increase their sense of safety walking there afterwards. The WSA checklist was adapted to take into account the particular characteristics of the park, to consider factors, such as whether there were obstructions on the trails (e.g. overgrown roots). Several other elements of the checklist were omitted, as they were not considered to be relevant for the park. The experience of actually using the checklist on the walk led participants to see that it could, in fact, have been adapted more fully. One woman spoke to this “the document could have been cut down quite a bit,” referring specifically to the section on signage that she felt was much too detailed given that they were auditing a park.
THE IMPACT OF INCLUSIVE ADAPTATION PROCESSES

“It is a project for women and by women” – Sarah, Montréal

The inclusive approach to the adaptation process had a strong positive impact on the participants. Interviews in all four cities pointed to the importance of having a platform to express themselves, having their experiences validated and being listened to. The project allowed some women to break their isolation. One participant in Gatineau explained that she felt that "women actually used your project to express themselves. It was a double edged sword, if you like, we responded to your project, but to our needs." Several other women in Gatineau said that it gave them the opportunity to develop friendships with the other participants.

An explicit effort was made to ensure that the WSA process remained participatory and that the women felt ownership over it. One project leader in Peel explained, “their participation was their voice, not necessarily our voice, we were just helping [them] through the process.” A participant in Montréal summed up the approach saying, “this is what we mean by a collective effort. What can we do so that a project can be adapted collectively?”

It was clear during the interviews that the participants felt that they have been given a chance to state their opinions and suggestions and that they were listened to. The women felt included in the process of adaptation, which was ongoing throughout the project. A woman in Gatineau simply said, "it was the voice of women, it was the 'me' the 'I'." Another, when asked whether she felt her voice was listened to in the adaptation process stated, "I was not only listened to but they anticipated my needs. That was good."

In Regina, the women integrated the principle of inclusivity more broadly to engage with and include the voices of women working in the sex trade in the area where the audits were organized. They felt that the audits could help to ensure the sex trade workers' safety as well and that they probably knew the streets more fully than most.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM ADAPTING THE WSAS

Although the process of inclusive adaptation described above clearly yielded positive results, several women, particularly those from Montréal, were not completely satisfied with the adaptation of the WSA process as they experienced it. Much work was done in Montréal to take into consideration the diversity of the group and to respond to the spectrum of participants’ needs and realities in a way that was respectful and that maximized the potential for their meaningful inclusion and active participation. Levels of satisfaction varied, however.
Consider Intersecting Identities

One of the main criticisms the participants had about the adapted audit was that it was adapted with a specific and singular target group in mind in each of the cities. A woman in Regina, for example, suggested that the project should be expanded to “focus on everyone, not just Aboriginals since whites get victimized too.”35 Ironically, although this project centred on including the voices of women who are often excluded from local decision-making processes, some women complained that some of their other characteristics were not taken into consideration and reflected in the WSA.

Take the women in Montréal for example, disabilities aside, the group is diverse and includes immigrant women, and young and elderly women – essentially representing three out of the four groups of women working on this project. Adaptation in Montréal centred on accessibility and some participants felt that their experience would have been enhanced had there also been more cultural adaptations. One woman felt that her status as a young woman was overshadowed by her disability, and while adaptations for her physical disability were good, having more young women with disabilities would have brought a different perspective to the project. Another felt that since the focus was on her disability, her identity as an immigrant was ignored. In spite of this, she felt that her identity was, in fact, something that she contributed to the project – “I found it interesting to also bring to the project my being poor sighted, a mother and an immigrant.”36

Adaptation Challenges in Montréal

When asked about whether the adapted process responded to their needs, some women said that they were very satisfied - “All my needs were met,”37 “I found that this project really, really took account of my disability;”38 or pointed to specific instances where they felt that adaptation was evident - “I found that the safety audit walks were very adapted,”39 “a formidable effort was made with respect to communication tools,”40 others felt that their needs were not fully responded to.

Several women, having now completed the women’s safety audit process were able to point to the problems they faced and, in some cases, suggest further adaptations to respond to those problems. For example, one participant, when thinking about the meetings said, “as a person with a hearing impairment, my needs were not always satisfied in the meetings because often, I could not hear. If someone leaned over I could no longer read the lips of the person speaking. But, it is because it is an invisible disability [sic].”41 Another said that although she appreciated receiving the maps electronically ahead of time, she was frustrated that when the maps were printed from the Internet, the writing was too small for her to read. Suggestions for future further adaptations include: having an audio recording of the checklist for visually impaired women, using pictograms instead of relying on text, and having a parallel project for Anglophones in Montréal.
Can Money Buy Solutions?

A few women suggested that more financial resources could have helped them overcome some of the frustrations they felt in terms of adaptation for accessibility. One woman complained that interpretation for women with auditory limitations was not systematically provided, due to the high associated cost, and suggested that this may have limited the participation of hearing-impaired women. The first project leader has a visual impairment and recounted the frustration she felt when her computer crashed and there were not enough funds to buy her a new one equipped with the software she required. Because of her nationality status, she was not eligible to apply for an adapted computer. Women in Cities International eventually succeeded in having a computer equipped with the appropriate software donated to the project. Finally, two other women suggested that private cars should have been hired for the women to avoid the problems associated with adapted transportation, such as drivers arriving either too early or too late.

Levels of Participant Satisfaction with the Adaptation Processes

Levels of satisfaction with the adaptation process considered only the satisfaction among the 35 participants interviewed, exclusive of the six project leaders. All in all, the women participants from all four cities overwhelmingly said that they were satisfied that the women’s safety audit process in their city took into account their particular requirements and realities as Aboriginal women, immigrant and visible minority women, elderly women, and women with disabilities.

Figure 3
Satisfaction with Adaptation of WSA Methodology

- Satisfied (30 participants)
- Not satisfied or no response (5 participants)

Specifically:
- Three out of five participants in Regina explicitly affirmed that they felt that the WSAs had been adapted to take into account their reality as Aboriginal women;
- All 11 participants who were interviewed in Gatineau explicitly affirmed that they felt that the WSA methodology had been adapted to their reality as elderly women;
- Cultural adaptations were central in Peel, and 5 out of 6 participants explicitly affirmed that they felt that the audit process was adapted to suit their realities as a group from diverse backgrounds;
- Eleven out of 13 participants interviewed in Montreal agree that efforts were made to ensure that the project was adapted to suit their reality as women living with disabilities.
Here is an example of a telephone that is adapted to be accessible for people with limited mobility (i.e. no doors, the phone is lower for people to be able to reach it) but it is placed on a step, effectively rendering it inaccessible! Since the adaptation checklist was adapted in Montréal, these factors were noted by the women on the WSA walk and the photo taken to illustrate the problem they observed.

**FIVE THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN ADAPTING A WSA CHECKLIST:**

1. **Is the language meaningful and accessible to the participants** (eg. culturally-relevant, not too technical, simple to read, not too long or wordy, helpful visual representations, etc.)?

2. **Thinking about the area that you will audit, are there any specific elements that may not already be considered in the checklist?** For example, if you are auditing a park, as the women in Gatineau did, you may consider asking questions that are specific to the park such as – ‘Is there signage that indicates how long this trail is or how difficult is it to follow?’

3. **Thinking about the area that you will audit, are there any specific elements that are on the checklist but that are irrelevant for the area you will audit?** For example, if you are auditing an underground parking garage, you can remove questions about overgrown trees or bushes that act as visual barriers or that obstruct light.

4. **Is the format of the checklist appropriate for users?** Is the font big enough that it is easy to read? Is there enough space for the note-taker to write comments and note specific addresses? Is the number of elements on the checklist balanced (i.e. not so few that important elements are overlooked but not so detailed that participants focus more on the checklist than on the area they are auditing)?

5. **Thinking of your particular needs and realities, are there any questions that are missing from the WSA checklist?** For example, the women in Montréal added a series of questions around accessibility so that, in addition to asking whether there were working public telephones, they would also ask is it possible to reach this telephone (eg. is the height appropriate, is it on ground level).
Impact on Participants: Capacity-building, Empowerment and Leadership

Some of the most important outcomes documented in the interviews clearly point to the fact that the different participants, initially enlisted due to their status as ‘marginalized’ women, felt that the project brought them a sense of empowerment. It validated their experiences, and strengthened their capacities – including their leadership skills. Seeing the amount of work generated by each site as well as their unflinching ability to rise above obstacles clearly points to the fact that they are anything but ‘marginalized’. The fact that the project was being implemented over a period of three years was an important factor. It enabled this sense of empowerment to grow, as it gave them the time to take ownership of the tools provided, to develop their skills, and to nurture new partnerships and friendships, breaking the isolation many had experienced previously.

This chapter explores the impact that participating in the women’s safety audit process has had on the various participants, both individually and collectively, throughout the project. Having their experiences and feelings validated by others, including local decision-makers, was a big part of this empowerment. The women sharpened their skills and increased their knowledge of urban safety problems and solutions. Some were able to integrate what they had learned into their current jobs. Finally, the project provided women with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills, being proactive in liaising with the community and with local decision-makers to make their city safer for everyone.

“This project made me realize once more that it is I who have the power to change things. I am re-appropriating the power I have and am exercising this power by making recommendations.”

- Rosalie, Montréal
Defining Empowerment

“Firstly, empowerment occurs at different levels. Individual empowerment is when the individual, for example me, feels that they have control over their life, over what I do in my life, or my existence, I also to have the power to act locally, in my condition and in my environment. Empowerment at the community level is when an entire community positions itself in such a way that is has strength in its actions, in its everyday life, and in its environment.

It is really to be able to assert your power and for me this is a key theme. It is a magnificent theme, which I love! Especially at the community level, I would say that community empowerment is very powerful. Every community, even the community of disabled women, whether they are conscious of it or not, has its strengths and yes, its weaknesses, but does have many strengths, assets and its own knowledge to share. All of this knowledge can be mobilized towards addressing key issues for the community.”

– Lorraine, Montréal

EMPOWERMENT

The WSA process stems from the premise that women are experts about their own safety and their own safety concerns. They are thus the people best positioned to speak to these concerns and to propose appropriate solutions. Belief in this expertise is extremely important to the empowerment process, simply put by one woman “What I brought was the credibility of my reflections.” The audit process provides women with a platform to express themselves and to articulate their safety concerns. Engagement with municipal stakeholders is also an integral part of the process and allows women, to speak and be listened to. “This allowed us, a group of women who are often marginalized, to assume our place in the process of social change by proposing concrete solutions.” Participants almost unanimously see being part of the WSA process as being a positive and empowering experience.
Validating Women’s Experiences

An important factor enabling participants to benefit from the WSA process is the provision of a space where they are free to express themselves without feeling judged, to share concerns, experiences, thoughts and ideas. One woman recalled that she stood up in front of the WSA group and told them about how she had been assaulted. The collective experience helped to reinforce the confidence of individual women – “from the empowerment of the women that's how I was empowered.” “The safety audit was...made me feel more powerful in the sense that I was helping more women,” “seeing all (...) these women all come together to make, First Nations people, women and Aboriginal women or even the (...) non-Aboriginal women, (...) women in general (...) be safe.”

Having their safety experiences accepted as legitimate by people outside the WSA process, such as media or municipal officials, was also an important and validating experience for the women. “We were listened to by the municipal decision-makers. Even the mayor was involved a little, the police, many people got involved, even municipal councillors.” The media engagement also opened the door for the women to talk about their involvement in the process with other people. Notably, one woman described how her friend called to say that she saw her on Rogers television and another recounted how her son and daughter-in-law had seen her picture in the newspaper. In both cases, the participants found that their friends and family were both impressed and interested and asked them to explain the project to them in detail.

BUILDING CAPACITY

Being involved in the women’s safety audit process allowed the women to build their capacity in a number of new areas. Interviews confirmed that the initial training sessions provided them with the knowledge and tools necessary to undertake WSAs. The various phases of the WSA process require the women to draw from different skill sets. Subsequent
training sessions were offered on topics such as building and sustaining partnerships, presenting recommendations, and engaging with the media.

Having the women participate in media-related events, such as press conferences, proved to be a challenging validating task. One such event was organized in Ottawa with representatives of the women in each of the four cities. The women received training on how to present themselves at press conferences and worked collectively to develop and refine each of their speeches. The Montréal group subsequently organized a press conference in Montréal and the women also received training on how to do so. One participant, who was active in both press conferences said, “For me, it was the role of spokesperson that gave me the most. I have a disability, yes, and a speech impediment, but that’s all right. I am capable of surpassing the limits and speaking at an event in front of 2000 people (laughing).” 53

**Knowledge Gained is Knowledge Shared**

Most of the interviewees spoke about the knowledge they gained from having taken part in the WSA process. They developed their auditing skills and learnt how to identify and articulate the factors in the built environment that made them feel unsafe. By the same token, they also learned how to look at a space and suggest changes that would make them and all users of the space feel safer. Many said that after completing a WSA walk, they integrated the women’s safety principles and began systematically assessing the spaces that they are in: “after the first walk, I started noticing, anywhere I go, I was always looking at things that need to be changed to be safe: like lightings or you know, schedule timings on buses or anything like that.” 54

For some, however, this increased awareness made them feel less safe as they were more aware of the factors that could be improved, while others were empowered by the knowledge and said, “I feel safer than before.” 55 Several women also spoke about how they shared this knowledge with their friends and family: “I have now understood that when you learn something, you must share it.” 56 Some project leaders in Peel and Regina acknowledged that they had developed computer skills as a result of this project, having had to do research and develop PowerPoint presentations.

*Media event organized by the WSA participants in Montréal during municipal elections.*
This project was implemented with four different groups of women – those who identify as being Aboriginal, elderly women, immigrant and visible minority women, and women with disabilities, each with their own concerns. The opportunities for face-to-face exchange between the groups meant that they developed an increased awareness and sensitivity to others, which was reflected in the integration of broader safety concerns, such as accessibility issues, into their own audits. Even within the Montréal group, the women spoke of increased awareness of the others’ accessibility and safety needs: “it allowed me to see the difficulties that persons with other types of disabilities experience,”58 “it made me really aware that there are a lot of things that are really a difficulty for people with challenges (...) and how difficult it is to get around in a city ‘cause there are so many things that aren’t accessible. I knew that before, but it was more evident after doing something like this,”59 and “it also opened me to other people’s experiences, their reality. As women with disabilities, there is not one of us who experiences the same things. It made me discover the others’ realities.”60 The project leader in Montreal also said “It made me really understand that safety is not just not being attacked or feeling safe. For women with disabilities it is much more. It is daily and concerns basic needs.”61

Some of the women in Regina revealed that after doing a walk themselves, they took it upon themselves to recruit their friends and family to join the other two walks. This allowed them to share what they had learned from the WSA process with the new recruits. One participant from Regina brought her teenage...
“We shouldn’t limit [ourselves to the services that we provide so far] but we can expand and do more and that has been very helpful. Within the VAW (violence against women programme), we are talking more about how to involve the community as well, to be part of different projects. It’s not only us saying this is what we can provide to you but, embrace them as well, to be part of any change you can do within the community, that is more powerful. Citizens feel much better if they are contributing, if they are part of it rather than receiving a service, right. So, it definitely has been an expansion to our programmes and, of course, to the agency as well.”

– Gloria, Peel

granddaughters to a WSA walk and said “now I’m gonna be a role model to them” and another felt that “when others see you doing it, you get others’ involved by sharing information. They will follow.” Similarly, some of the other CCS employees in Peel invited their clients to join the WSA walks. As one woman said, at a certain point on the walk “I noticed that (the client) was looking at me and somehow I was showing her, you know, what to do, what to do to be aware.” Overall, having gone through the WSA process, interviewees were eager to share their knowledge and experience with others, so that they too could be empowered. “Because I have more knowledge for what I’ve learned and I can share with these people: I can use my power to empower these people.”

Enhanced Work Capacities

Several of the participants in Regina and Peel commented that their participation in the WSA process has had a direct and positive impact on their work. Many are employed as counsellors, social service or outreach workers. They explained that it broadened their approach to women’s safety.

For some participants, taking part in the women’s safety audits has had an impact on their career orientation: “This was a stepping-stone for my career – now I am training to be an addiction counsellor. It helped to decide my career path. Knowing I will make a difference – has had an impact on my career and on my community participation. I want to see more happen.” The project leader in Montréal, a criminologist said “the project made me more aware and broadened the horizon on crime prevention and the principles of planning from the point of women.” In addition, one participant in Peel who was actively involved in the WSA process now works for Catholic Crosscultural Services, the implementation partner in Peel, and a yoga instructor in Gatineau who participated in the project said that working with other elderly women inspired her to change her clientele – “I have decided to offer my yoga courses exclusively to the elderly.”

ASSUMING LEADERSHIP ROLES

Many of the women from the different sites said that the WSA process provided them with opportunities for developing or strengthening their leadership skills. Since the WSA walks are undertaken by small groups of four to six, opportunities for participation are maximized.
Various roles are assigned to group members that allow them to feel that they are leading part of the walk. Their roles include animator, photographer, and note-taker. Additional activities that are part of the process, such as engaging the press and municipal officials also gave the women the chance to take on the role of representing their group. One woman in Montréal felt that she assumed a leadership role when she facilitated communication between the two French-speaking groups and the English-speaking group on the third WSA walk in Montréal.

Furthermore, the innovative character of the project in adapting the WSA methodology to meet the needs of four specific groups of women, something that had not been done before, increased their sense of leadership. The same was true when the WSA methodology had never previously been used in a city. A project leader in Peel, for example, explained that since no WSA walks had even been completed in Mississauga, they felt that they were the leaders for the region. This sentiment was felt less clearly in Gatineau, however, where some of the elderly women who did the WSAs in Gatineau did not self-identify as leaders and several even said “I am not a leader,” despite their active ongoing participation in the WSA process.

Several interviewees concluded that the process of being involved in implementing the adapted WSAs in their cities actually changed the way they saw themselves as leaders. “The project taught me that leadership can still mean being strict and organized, but it is also being able to leave space for others (...) it reminds me to reach out to the women so that they can express themselves freely, and feel comfortable.”

FIVE THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR MAXIMIZING THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF WSAS ON INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS

1. **Accept every participant’s experiences and feelings, even if you do not agree with them.** This creates a safe space for women to speak and feel validated. Remember that everyone has unique perceptions and no two people live the same experience in the same way.

2. **Promote active participation, bearing in mind participant’s abilities and comfort levels.** For example, not everyone will want to take the role of ‘leader’ on the WSA walk, accept this and do not force anyone to take on a role that they do not want. Doing so can dissuade the woman from continuing.

3. **Encourage collective decision-making and allow the participants to shape the process.** Make sure that all participants have a say in decisions, from what time to meet or what space to audit. The project should be theirs’ as the audits are intended to make the spaces they use feel safer for them.

4. **Have faith in every woman’s expertise and ability to participate and contribute to the WSA.** As this project has shown, even women whose voices are often marginalized can rise against all odds to ensure that their voices are finally heard and have a real impact in their community.

5. **Recognize the participants’ contributions and celebrate all successes.** It is important to acknowledge everyone’s contributions to the project and emphasize the impact that they are having as a collective. It is important to take the time to celebrate all successes, no matter how small. This is not only in terms of recommendations, but in all aspects of the WSA process (eg. engaging new partners, speaking to the press, etc.).
Who to Engage and Why: the Importance of Partnerships in WSAs

Developing and sustaining partnerships with local decision-makers is key to successfully undertaking women’s safety audits. It is recommended that groups planning on doing women’s safety audits begin building partnerships early on in the process. This puts partners in a privileged position of learning about the WSA process and knowing when and where the WSA walks will happen. Keeping them informed of the process is also a way of maintaining their support, particularly when it comes time to present the findings and recommendations coming out of the walks. The ongoing partnership and involvement of partners in the WSAs speaks to their investment in the process which often means that they are more inclined to want to see the recommendations implemented, as it demonstrates that the partnership bore fruit and was successful.

This chapter will describe the strategies used by each of the four implementation partners in building partnerships with local stakeholders. This includes highlighting the importance of identifying strategic partners and keeping them involved throughout the WSA process. The benefits of partnerships will then be explored, using concrete examples from the project to illustrate the advantages that come with maintaining strong partnerships. The chapter will then look at the potential for partnerships to be sustainable and will identify some of the challenges to sustaining these relations. Finally, a five-point checklist of things to consider when building and sustaining partnerships is presented for readers to keep in mind in the context of their own work.

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

The process of undertaking WSAs allowed the participants to forge new partnerships with influential people and groups in their respective cities. The groups did some scoping to identify the different players in their city who work on issues around gender equality, crime prevention, urban safety and development, and who would be good to engage in the framework of the project. Many women said that this process gave them the opportunity to become aware of all of the work that is already being done. “I now know a lot more about women’s issues and urban safety, and know many key urban safety actors in the city of Montréal.”

“We had a partnership before [with the City of Regina] but now it’s more of a working partnership which is good.” – Irene, Regina
Be strategic when choosing your partners

When developing partnerships, it is important to be strategic about who you choose to build a partnership with. In Montréal and Regina, for example, the city councillors that were engaged represented the areas where their WSA walks took place. The leader in Regina explained that it was “good in getting our city councillor involved. And he really does care for our ward. And that’s where a lot of our Aboriginal people live so I’ve had a good experience working with the municipality.”

When it comes to presenting the recommendations that come out of the WSA walks, it is important to engage the people who have the power to see that the recommendations be implemented, namely, the people to whom the recommendations will be presented. By involving them in the process, they are aware of the work that is happening and of the intention behind the recommendations – that is, to make the community safer for women and for everyone. As the project leader in Peel put it “I’m going to have to start making partnerships and start making connections and knowing who to call and, from that person, who do you recommend. I know it’s not going to be easy but, do I have the resources? Yes, absolutely.”

Engage Partners Beginning with the Project Development Phase and Creating Local Support Committees

Groups were invited to engage local stakeholders as soon as possible. The groups in Regina and Gatineau were successful in getting city councillors to come to their centres during the WSA training sessions to meet Anne Michaud, the expert consultant who led the training sessions, and the representative from Women in Cities International, to gain a better understanding of the project that would be unfolding in their cities. In Gatineau, the city councillor even stayed and attended part of the WSA training sessions.

Each of the four groups was also encouraged to develop local support committees. Committee members should agree to be contacted periodically to provide support and guidance to the group undertaking the WSAs. Support committees are useful for identifying and linking groups to the people responsible for the eventual implementation of the WSA recommendations, providing feedback on the presentation of recommendations, and sharing information, such as where there is money earmarked for development.

It is advantageous to make use of existing contacts as partners or to help facilitate links with new groups. It is not just the project leaders who have contacts. It can therefore be useful to ask participants whether they have any contacts or existing links that could be useful in supporting the WSA process. This will encourage the women to be involved in the partnership-building phase. Having the participants engage with the partners can be an empowering and validating process when they see that local stakeholders are interested in the work they are doing. One woman explained how after she learned more about the new partners, she was able to facilitate new partnerships with other groups as well: “As a partner, it gave me ideas. For example, my husband works for a housing committee organization that tries to reach residents, and all that. I told him: why don’t you reach them through the Tandem offices (crime prevention professionals working for the City of Montréal in each of the boroughs) who I got to know through our project. Therefore I made the links.”
Who were some of the partners?

- Elected officials and municipal representatives (Gatineau, Montréal, Regina)
- Criminologists (Gatineau, Montréal)
- Police officers (Gatineau, Montréal, Peel)
- Urban planners (Gatineau, Montréal)
- People working for universal accessibility (Gatineau, Montréal)
- Crime prevention professionals (Gatineau, Montréal, Peel, Regina)
- People working on women’s safety and gender equality (Peel, Regina)

SOME BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIPS

Developing new partnerships also helps to break down barriers and promote mutual understanding between groups: “I discovered a side of the police that I did not know before; they are ready to help you,”77 “with the Ville de Gatineau (City of Gatineau) now when I’m on the street, you can talk to and they ask of how things are going, about the survey we did and the walking group. So yes, I feel that I’m part of the Ville because I know who those people are. I can relate what they do for the Ville. It makes it nice.”78 Some women also said that they would be able to call on their new partners for assistance: “I think I am able to call them if I need something and ask them;”79 “If I need something, I do not know what, maybe if I see a hole in the park, in a bicycle path or something, maybe I would go see those people, and the criminologist (...) probably, yes, I will to go to see those people.”80
In Gatineau, the women had decided to do their walk at a local park and the city councillor “came to our first meetings and shared with us that a budget had been voted on to allot some millions of dollars and that the first phase would be for the beach at the lake and the chalet.” The women in Gatineau recognized that this greatly enhanced their chances of seeing their recommendations implemented, as money was already earmarked for improving the space. The group then involved other relevant actors in the walk, including the park manager. In the end, it was the partners who were calling the women asking for their recommendations so that they could include them in the development plans.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS CAN LEAD TO NEW PROJECTS

The organization Conscience urbaine et Action des femmes handicapées (Montréal) decided to partner in order to develop a media campaign on universal accessibility, within the framework of the project “Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and for Everyone”.

In this project, the role of the artists from Conscience urbaine is to give a voice to these marginalized women through an urban intervention in the form of a public photographic and auditory installation. The collective Audiotopie was chosen to create the auditory installation. The proposed project aims to be a common piece of work developed by these two groups of artists and will be disseminated by a walk which incites participants to live an audio and visual experience that takes account of the daily challenges faced by women with disabilities as they move through the city. This work will be further developed in 2010, thanks to the funding support received from Canada’s Council for the Arts.

THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

One of the biggest challenges when it comes to partnerships is being able to sustain them. During the WSA process, engagement with partners waxes and wanes at various stages, with the final stage – the implementation of recommendations – being the most critical. It is therefore important to keep partners informed about the process as a way of keeping them engaged. “The fact that we go to meetings here and there, it allows for partnerships to endure. When Tandem invited us to their press conference, we went, we even invited them to our Christmas party this year. We try to maintain these links.”

Women of the Dawn, the implementation partner in Regina, had previously been part of another project with Women in Cities International, also funded by Status of Women Canada, on building partnerships between local women’s groups and municipalities. The partnership-building process in Regina had thus begun before this project, but was sustained through this project. Similarly, some participants from Montréal suggested that a way of sustaining partnerships would be to engage them to do another project: “These will be good contacts if we develop other projects related to safety, accessibility. It does not stop here.”

A big challenge to sustaining partnerships is staff changes and turnovers. When partnering with municipal officials, for example, elections could mean that someone else has replaced your contact person and you will have to develop a new partnership with that person, as was the case in Gatineau. Staff turnover with one of the partner agencies in Montréal was also a challenge as the primary contact person left. Although her replacement remains engaged, much effort had to be devoted to rebuilding the partnership. Another woman in Montréal expressed her concern that partnerships would not be sustained past the life of this project as the project leader would be leaving the organization and she was not confident that the women volunteers would take it upon themselves to work to sustain the partnership.

FIVE THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUILDING AND SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

1. **Be strategic – think of the area you will audit and identify the people who could be influential and instrumental in helping you have your recommendations implemented** (e.g. local business associations, the city councillor for the area, organizations based in the area, etc.)

2. **Maintain your contacts, even if their responsibilities change.** Your contact can help you by linking you with their successor. Your contact’s new responsibilities may coincide with your work and this is a good way of building a new partnership with a new agency or organization.

3. **Keep your partners engaged.** Send your partners updates about the work that you are doing. This will help you maintain your ties with them and keep you on their radar. It is particularly important to share all successes with your partners, even the small ones.

4. **Join in the implementation of recommendations.** Another way of sustaining partnerships and ensuring that the recommendations coming out of the WSA walks are respected is asking the decision-makers responsible for the eventual implementation of the recommendation(s) to be part of the oversight committee.

5. **Develop a strategy for sustaining your partnerships and for following up on recommendations.** Your strategy should include clear instructions for how to do this and should appoint specific roles and responsibilities to different people.
The diverse makeup of each of the groups, and between the groups, is the real richness of this project. Differences among participants’ first languages, ages, ethnic identities, places of residence, and abilities provided the basis for unique and touching stories of ideas and experiences of women’s safety in Canada. Most of the women had never before taken part in activities linked to women’s safety. The awareness that similar work was being done simultaneously in four cities across Canada helped to validate the experiences of each and gave them courage and drive to confront challenges head on. Safety concerns facing each of the groups and in each of the cities were extremely diverse, but underlying all of them was the drive to make their city safer for the women and girls who live there, and the rest of the community.

Being involved in the implementation of women’s safety audits has clear positive impacts on the individuals who participate. They are given the opportunities to meet other people, share their experiences and feel as though they are not alone. They are listened to and provided with a platform from which they can assert their right to their city, their neighbourhood and the spaces they use. The women can learn, share, and build their capacity to engage with local stakeholders and feel as though there are contributing to making their city a safer

“I think a lessons that I’ve learned is don’t underestimate the women that are out there; just because, some of the women, the way they came in and I was a little apprehensive, I was like yeah, these women what are they going to do: would they be able to do it; would they be able to understand; there were a lot of questions going through my mind. [The other leader] was like, we have to get it done, and I was like, (...) what if they don’t show up and, if it doesn’t go through and, but the way they all come together and they pulled it off and it sort of made me realize and learn that, you know, put some faith in the women that our out there – whether they be clients or past victims or whoever, because there is a lot of strength out there, in a lot of the women. It was a good lesson learned that way.” – Anh, Peel
place. This active engagement on the part of the individual participant also allows them to harness a sense of leadership and empowerment about their ability to see change happen.

While a plurality of recommendations emerged in each of the cities, and implementation naturally occurs at different paces in each of the sites, it is clear that the project has been successful in having women engage with their municipality, the media, local stakeholders, and other members of the community of issues around women’s safety. In Regina, this meant finally being able to discuss the issue of the missing Aboriginal women in Canada. In Gatineau, this meant rupturing isolation and encouraging elderly women to speak about their safety experiences in the city – for many, this was the first time in their long lives that they had been able to discuss such things. For Peel cultural barriers were overcome and immigrant and refugee women had the chance to shape their new communities, gaining ownership and a sense of belonging. For Montréal, women with disabilities were able to explore the ways in which accessibility and safety are intricately linked and how accomplishing daily tasks can be challenging when those elements are not present.

The potential and the utility of the women’s safety audit methodology has undoubtedly been enhanced and the voices of women who are too often excluded from the decisions that affect their community, including in past safety audit projects, have now had the chance to have their voices heard. Their insightfulness and the creativity of the solutions they proposed clearly speak to the importance of their future inclusion and it is our hope that this report will demonstrate the ease with which that can be made possible.
OPENING QUESTION: I would like you to tell me about your experience in participating in the project.

1. Context of the project
   ▶ Please describe the project in your own words.
   ▶ How did you hear about the project? How did you come to participate in the project?
   ▶ What was/is your motivation to participate in the project?
   ▶ What was/is your expectations of the project?

2. Adaptation and organization
   ▶ Do you feel that the project was adapted to take into account your reality and specific needs as an (Aboriginal, disabled, elderly, immigrant/visible minority) woman? Please explain.
     ▶ If so, please describe.
     ▶ If not, how could this be improved in the future?
   ▶ Do you feel that you had a say (your voice was heard) in how the project was adapted to your specificity?
     ▶ If so, please describe how so.
     ▶ If not, why do you feel that your voice was not heard?
   ▶ If you took part in another women’s safety audit walk in the future, what further adaptations would you make to better suit the needs as an (aboriginal, disabled, elderly, immigrant/visible minority) woman?
   ▶ How did you find the organization of the women’s safety audit walks since the beginning of the project?
   ▶ How did the organization of the women’s safety audit walks change from one to the next?

3. Civic participation and partnerships
   ▶ Did your participation in this project affect your participation in your community? Please explain.
   ▶ Did your participation in the project affect, or not, your interaction with the municipality (city)? Please explain.
   ▶ Did you forge any new partnerships as a result of having taking part in this project? Please explain.
     ▶ If so, do you think that these partnerships can be sustainable and viable in the future? Please explain.
     ▶ If so, how will you work to ensure that these partnerships are sustained after the project comes to term? Please explain.
   ▶ How can the organization take a proactive role in providing future support?

Closing question to revisit the themes once more: is there anything else that you would like to share with me about the adaptation of the women’s safety audits, the organization of the project, or your civic participation?
4 Empowerment, capacity-building and leadership

- How did your being involved in the project affect you? (How did you benefit from being part of the project?).
- What would you say you got out of participating in the project?
- What would you say you brought to the project?
- Did your participation in the project affect your leadership skills?
  - If so, please describe using concrete examples to illustrate.
- Did your participation in the project affect your sense of empowerment?
  - If so, please describe using concrete examples to illustrate.
- Did you have a, or more than one, specific role (responsibilities) to play during the women’s safety audit walks? Please explain.
  - If yes, how did you feel about assuming these roles during the safety audit walks? Please explain.

5 Impact of the project

- How do you think the project has or will have an impact on your community?
- How do you think the project has or will have an impact on safety in your city?
- In your opinion, has or will this project play a role in crime prevention? Please explain.
- How do you think the project has or will have an impact on the media in your city?
- How do you feel that the implementing organization will ensure that there will be a sustainable impact in your community after the project finishes?
- How do you see the follow-up to the recommendations (implementation of) after the project?

Closing question to revisit the themes once more: do you have anything else to share with me about the impact of the women’s safety audit walks?

6 Changes and awareness

- Did the project respond to your expectations? How? Please explain.
- Did your participation in the project change, or not, your conception of a safe city (for women and for everyone)?
- How would you describe your sense of safety at this stage of the project compared with how you felt at the beginning of the project?
- Did the project sensitize you to the specific needs of different groups of people? Please explain. (Aboriginal, disabled, elderly, immigrant/visible minority).
- What do you remember from the project? That is, what is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of the project?

Closing

Before finishing, is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience in participating in the pan-Canadian project on women’s safety audits – Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and for Everyone?
1. These numbers include both participants and project leaders.
2. For more information, visit: www.womenincities.org/ www.femmesetvilles.org
4. Developed by the Programme Femmes et ville – Ville de Montréal
12. It should be noted that participants’ socio-demographic profiles were also established during the interviews, though these were recorded as a separate questionnaire that is not included in this report.
15. Only the women interviewed in Montréal acknowledged having one of more disabilities during the interview process.
16. Interview GW001 with a participant in Gatineau. Original citation : «La façon que ce qu’on nous demandait de faire, c’est des choses que nous, étant plus âgées, on était capables de faire. Ils ne nous ont pas demandé quelque chose que rien que des jeunes pourraient faire. Ils ne nous ont pas demandé l’impossible. Ils ont arrangé ça pour que ça s’adapte à nous. C’est ce que j’ai aimé du projet».
17. All names have been changed in order to protect the identity of the interviewees.
18. Interview MW011 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation: «les rencontres ne durent pas six heures, pour certaines personnes c’est trop».
19. Interview ML001 with a project leader in Montréal. Original citation: «le projet, veux, veux pas, ça avance au rythme auquel les femmes handicapées peuvent le faire».
20. Interview RL001 with project leader in Regina.
21. Interview PL003 with one of the project leaders in Peel.
22. Interview PL003 with one of the project leaders in Peel.
23. Interview MW008 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation : «J’ai de plus en plus appris que oui, c’est vrai, accessibilité universelle égale sécurité».
24. Interview MW003 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation: «la préposée ça nous aide, ça c’est un sentiment de sécurité».
25. Interview MW003 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation: «Il faut être conscient que c’est pas toutes les femmes handicapées qui ont les mêmes capacités physiques de marche et les mêmes capacités cognitives. Donc, c’est de dire, comment on fait pour que le groupe soit assez complet pour qu’on soit capable de faire une belle marche et de rassembler des bons commentaires, avoir quelqu’un habituellement qui s’occupe des notes, de prendre l’enregistreuse, de le tenir, le faire fonctionner. Aussi, d’avoir quelqu’un qui peut prendre des photos, ce qui n’est pas évident pour la majorité d’entre nous». 
27. Interview MW007 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation: «me permet de me mettre dans le contexte et j’ai une façon plus participative de faire avancer le projet».

28. Interview GW008 with a participant in Gatineau. Original citation: «le document aurait pu être aminci beaucoup».

29. Interview MW006 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation: «C'est un projet pour elles et par elles».

30. Interview GW004 with a participant from Gatineau. Original citation: «les femmes se sont servies de votre projet justement pour s'exprimer. Ça été une lame à deux tranchants si vous voulez, on a répondu à votre projet, mais à nos besoins».

31. Interview PL002, with project leader from Peel.

32. Interview MW011, with a participant from Montréal. Original citation: «c'est qu'on parle d'un effort collectif. Qu'est-ce que collectivement on peut faire pour que collectivement un projet soit adapté?».

33. Interview GW004 with a participant from Gatineau. Original citation: «c’était la voix des femmes, c'était le moi, je».

34. Interview MW007, with project participant from Montréal. Original citation: «non seulement ça été entendue, mais ils ont anticipé mes besoins. Ça c'était bon».

35. Interview RW004 with a participant in Regina.

36. Interview MW010 with a participant from Montréal. Original citation: «Je trouvais intéressant d’apporter aussi mon côté de personne mal voyante, de maman et d’immigrante».

37. Interview MW002 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation: «Tous mes besoins étaient comblés».

38. Interview MW007 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation: «je trouve que ce projet là a été vraiment, vraiment tenu compte de mon handicap».

39. Interview MW010 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation: «Je trouvais que les marches exploratoires étaient très adaptées».

40. Interview MW011 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation: «un bel effort qui a été fait par rapport aux outils de communication».

41. Interview MW001 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation: «mon problème d’audition qui n’a pas été très satisfait dans ces réunions là. Parce que souvent je n’entendais pas, quelqu’un se penchait je ne voyais plus les lèvres de la personne. Mais c'est parce que c'est un handicap invisible».

42. Interview MW007 with a participant from Montréal. Original citation : «Ce projet là m’a permis encore une fois de comprendre que c'est moi qui a le pouvoir de faire changer les choses, je me réapproprie le pouvoir que j’ai et je l’exerce ce pouvoir là dans le sens qu’on peut faire les recommandations par la suite».

43. Original citation: «Premièrement, l'empowerment est de différents niveaux. L'empowerment individuel c'est que l'individu (...), mettons moi, a le sentiment d'avoir une emprise sur sa vie, sur ce que je fais, sur ma vie, sur mon existence et aussi d'avoir un pouvoir d'agir au niveau de ma localité, ma condition, mon milieu de vie. Pis l'empowerment au niveau des communautés, c'est le fait qu'une communauté toute entière se positionne de telle sorte que ils peuvent avoir un pouvoir sur leurs actions, sur leur quotidien et sur leur milieu de vie. C'est vraiment une prise de pouvoir et pour moi, c'est un thème clé là. C'est un magnifique thème que j'adore! Surtout au niveau des communautés. Je dirais que c'est très puissant l'empowerment des communautés. C'est aussi l’inconscient que chaque communauté, même la communauté des femmes handicapées a ses forces, a oui ses faiblesses mais oui a beaucoup de forces, de connaissances qui lui sont propres. Faque toutes ces connaissances-là peuvent être mobilisées pour des enjeux clés, pour la communauté».

44. Interview MW007 with a participant from Montréal. Original citation: «ce que j’ai apporté, c’est la crédibilité de mes réflexions»

45. Written exchanges with a project leader in Gatineau. Original citation: «Cela nous permettra, en tant que groupe de femmes souvent marginalisées, de prendre une place dans le processus de changement sociétal par la proposition de solutions concrètes»

46. Paraphrased from interview MW011 with a participant from Montréal.

47. Interview PW001 with a participant in Peel.

48. Interview RL001 with a leader in Regina.

49. Interview RW005 with a participant in Regina.
50. Interview GW003 with a participant from Gatineau. Original citation: «On est entendues par les têtes dirigeantes de la ville. Même le maire s’est impliqué un peu, les policiers, plusieurs personnes se sont impliquées, même des échevins.»

51. Paraphrased by Interview PW006 with a participant from Peel.

52. Paraphrased by Interview GW004 with a participant from Gatineau.

53. Interview MW008 with a participant from Montréal. Original citation: «J'avoue que c'est comme le rôle qui m'a le plus apporté personnellement, être porte-parole. (...) J'ai un handicap, oui, j'ai une difficulté d'élocution oui, mais c'est pas grave, je suis capable de dépasser toutes les limites pis d'aller au devant d'une scène devant 2 000 personnes (rire).»

54. Interview PW003 with a participant in Peel.

55. Interview GW011 with a participant in Gatineau. Original citation: «je me sens plus en sécurité qu’avant.»

56. Interview GW011 with a participant in Gatineau. Original citation: «Maintenant je me rends compte que quand tu as quelque chose que tu sais, que tu as appris, il faut que tu le partages».

57. Interview MW010 with a participant from Montréal. Original citation : «Personnellement ça ma fait une conscientisation. Une conscientisation par rapport à mon environnement, mon environnement immédiat, mon environnement citadin et tout ça. L’importance de pouvoir m’approprier ma ville, mon quartier. L’importance à ce qu’il y ait une accessibilité universelle. À comprendre ce que c’est un sentiment de sécurité, ce que c’est que la sécurité dans une ville. Comment ça doit être. Comment ça doit être adapté une ville pour que tout le monde se sente en sécurité.»

58. Interview MW012 with a participant from Montréal. Original citation: «ça m’a permis de voir les difficultés auquel les autres personnes qui ont d’autres types d’handicap sont confronté »

59. Interview MW004 with a participant from Montréal.

60. Interview MW006 with a participant from Montréal. Original citation: « Aussi ça m’a apporté l’écoute des autres membres, la réalité des autres. Parce que comme femme handicapée, il n’y en n’a pas une qui vit les mêmes choses. Ça m’a fait découvrir la réalité de d’autres.»

61. Interview ML001 with a leader from Montréal. Original citation: «Ça m’a vraiment fait prendre conscience que la sécurité, ce n’est pas (...) quand tu te fais pas attaquer et tout ça, mais pour les femmes handicapées, c’est ben plus, c’est au quotidien, c’est concernant des besoins élémentaires.»

62. Interview RW003 with a participant from Regina.

63. Interview RW004 with a participant from Regina.

64. Interview PW005 with a participant from Peel.

65. Interview PW002 with a participant from Peel.

66. Interview RW004 with a participant in Regina.

67. Interview ML001 with a leader in Montréal. Original citation: «ça m’a ouvert le projet, l’horizon de la prévention de la criminalité du point de vue des femmes. (...) sur les principes de l’aménagement». 

68. Interview GW004 with a participant in Gatineau. Original citation: «j’ai décidé d’offrir mes cours de yoga seulement aux aînés ».

69. Interview MW011 with a participant from Montréal.

70. Interview GW006 with a participant from Gatineau. Original citation: «je ne suis pas un leader». 

71. Interview GW007 with a participant from Gatineau. Original citation: «je ne serais pas capable de l’être».

72. Interview ML001 with a project leader in Montréal. Original citation: «Ça (le projet) m’a appris que le leadership c’est quand même être rigide, être organisé, mais être capable de laisser la place (...) ça me fait penser de tendre, de donner la main aussi aux femmes pour qu’elles puissent s’exprimer librement, se sentir à l’aise». 

73. Interview MW008 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation: «Je connais aussi maintenant beaucoup plus le monde des femmes, le monde de la sécurité urbaine, tous les acteurs clés en sécurité urbaine à la ville de Montréal».

74. Interview RL001 with a project leader in Regina

75. Interview PL001 with a project leader in Peel
60. Interview MW010 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation: «en tant que partenaire, ça m’a donné des idées (…), par exemple, moi mon mari travaille dans (…) un organisme pour comité de logement et tout ça puis pour essayer de rejoindre les résidants et tout ça, je lui ai dit : pourquoi tu ne rejoins pas les Tandems moi j’ai connu ça avec notre projet. Donc j’ai relié les choses».

77. Interview GW007 with a participant in Gatineau. Original citation: «J’ai découvert un côté de la police que je ne connaissais pas. Ils sont prêts à t’aider».

80. Interview GW009 with a participant in Gatineau. Original citation: «Si j’avais un besoin, je ne sais pas, peut-être si je voyais une lacune dans un parc, dans une piste cyclable ou quelque chose, peut-être que j’irais voir ces gens-là et la criminologue (…) probablement que oui, j’irais voir ces gens-là».

81. Interview GL001 with a project leader in Gatineau. Original citation: «est venu à nos premières rencontres, il nous a fait part qui avait un budget qui avait été voté de quelques millions pour la plage du lac et le chalet dans une première étape».

82. Interview ML001 with a leader in Montréal. Original citation: «Le fait d’aller à des rencontres ici et là, ça fait que…les partenariats peuvent durer et tout ça Quand Tandem nous a invité à leur conférence de presse, on est allées, même pour le party de Noël cette année, on les invite. On essaye de garder les liens».

83. Interview MW010 with a participant in Montréal. Original citation: «Ça va être des bons contacts pour développer d’autres projets qui seraient en relation aussi avec la sécurité, l’accessibilité. Ça ne s’arrête pas là».

84. Paraphrased from interview ML001 with a project leader in Montréal

85. Paraphrased from interview MW005 with a participant in Montréal