



# Women in Cities International

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Annual Report 2014-2015





## A Word from our President



WICI President  
Caroline Andrew

I am writing this message at the very beginning of December 2015 looking back on the year of April 1 2014 to March 31 2015 and it does seem like a new beginning. Without exaggerating the impact of the Canadian federal election of October 19, 2015 there is a feeling of having turned a corner. Canada has decided to play a more socially progressive role, both domestically and internationally. For an organization like WICI this can only be good news. We will see how this plays itself out as hopes are huge and finances are much more limited.

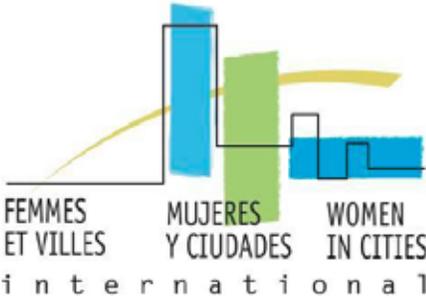
At the same time it is important and exciting to demonstrate all the things that WICI accomplished between April 1 2014 and March 31 2015. And our accomplishments are all about our staff, Board members, consultants, interns and volunteers and, of course, our partners. Building safe and inclusive cities for the full diversity of women and girls involves building partnerships and WICI has certainly done this. As you read the Annual Report our partners are everywhere and this is because that is the way to make lasting change in cities across the world; giving women and girls more voice in municipal government and in civil society, doing better policy, educating and informing decision-makers, bringing people together to discuss, plan, strategize and act, working at all levels from global to local and back to global.

So happy reading and many thanks to everyone who contributes to the joy of being associated with WICI.

Caroline Andrew,  
WICI Board Chair

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# The Year's Highlights (2014-2015)

WICI was invited to the 7th World Urban Forum (WUF7) that took place in Medellin, Colombia, from April 7th to 11th 2014, under the overarching theme “*Urban Equity – Cities for Life*”. During the event WICI gave a presentation on “Achieving Urban Equity in Development with and for Adolescent Girls” with the collaboration of two girls from Kampala (Uganda). Based on the findings of the joint programme *Because I am a Girl Urban Programme* with Plan international and UN-Habitat, the presentation explored the challenges of urbanisation and safety that girls have to face, and discussed the opportunities for them to become agents of change.

WICI also participated in a panel of experts organized by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) showcasing successful Canadian strategies to revitalize cities and create more sustainable and socially inclusive communities.

WICI participated in a safety walk in Medellin “Safe Cities for Women” (“Ciudades seguras para las mujeres”) as part of the WUF7. The walk was organized by the Woman Secretariat of Medellin (“Secretaria de la Mujer de Medellin) and Red Mujer y Habitat America Latina (RMH) in the neighbourhood of Moravia with city officials, representatives from UN-Habitat and UN Women and grassroots women.

Together with UN-HABITAT, UNODC, ICPC and EFUS, WICI also took part in the *Global Network on Safer Cities (GNSC)* meetings “Towards Safer Cities + 20” that took place before WUF7 (April 5th and 6th). This was an opportunity for key partners to discuss promising practices to create safer cities, and develop key elements that should be included in the forthcoming UN Guidelines on Safer Cities in preparation for Habitat III.





As part of the on-going project *Where are the Women and Girls?*, funded by Status Women Canada, WICI invited girls from the Barclay Elementary School in the Parc-Extension neighbourhood of Montreal to participate in two workshops during Anti-Street Harassment Week (first week of April). In partnership with Girls Action Foundation, these theatre and social cartography workshops were designed to stimulate girls' reflection around issues of insecurity in public space and how their neighbourhood could be made safer.



With other local Quebec organisations (Femmes autochtones du Québec, YMCA Québec, Centre d'Aide aux Familles Latinos-Américaines etc.) WICI participated in a panel organized by Girls' Action Foundation on "Girls' Leadership" on May 28th. They explored the challenges and cultural barriers to girls' empowerment, sharing best practices and initiatives to include girls in their programmes and support their leadership. As an outcome of this panel, WICI invited girls from the Barclay Elementary School (Montreal), part of the *Where are the Women and Girls?* project, to take part in a workshop on self-esteem, independence, and autonomy in their private and public lives.

Given the importance of social media coverage especially for raising-awareness about the work of organizations such as WICI, staff took part in a training session offered by Molotov Communications in June. The workshop examined how different social networks platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn etc.) can best deliver our messages.

On June 5th, WICI hosted a 'happy hour' discussion (5-7pm) about urban safety issues in Parc-Extension (Montreal) at the cooperative Café Artère, as part of the *Where are the Women and Girls?* project. Local residents were invited to share their daily experiences of insecurity, and collectively think about ways to improve their sense of safety. Participants took part in three focus group discussions to explore issues of i) harassment, ii) night-time and iii) urban design. Overall, it was agreed that women and girls' citizen participation was key to successfully addressing these issues.



WICI met with Mary Deros, Borough Councillor for the district of Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension (Montreal) on July 21st to discuss the *Where are the Women and Girls?* project. She supported the idea of creating citizens' committees where women and girls could meet with elected officials and local groups to discuss the issues of safety in their neighbourhood. It was agreed the initiative was a great way to enhance women and girls' empowerment and improve their participation in local decision-making, as well as address the problem of a lack of dialogue and coordination among local partners and residents in Parc-Extension.

In order to mark the *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women* on November 25th, WICI participated in a "Speak Out!" kiosk at the University of Concordia (Montreal). While launching the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign", we were happy to inform students about our work and initiatives to eliminate violence against women and girls in public spaces. Many students showed great interest in our organization and signed up as new members.



In collaboration with the City of Montreal, WICI launched the Needs Assessment Report on women and girls' real and perceived sense of insecurity in the district of Parc-Extension on December 4th. The report was the result of research over a year, the first stage of the *Where are the Women and Girls?* project. The media launch was followed by a community consultation with residents of Parc-Extension, Montreal police (SPVM), journalists, and representatives of the local authorities. Participants shared their views and experiences of insecurity in the neighbourhood, calling for the implementation of citizens' committees to discuss these issues and supporting women and girls' public participation.

As part of the *Because I am a Girl Urban Programme*, two curriculum training modules for government stakeholders, and transit staff and authorities were developed by WICI. Their aim is to raise awareness around the issues of gender equality and girls' safety and inclusion in their city. The modules were piloted by WICI in January (12-16<sup>th</sup>) in Delhi (India), with the support of Plan International, prior to finalising and disseminating the materials to all country offices involved in the programme (Hanoi, Viet-Nam, Kampala, Uganda, Lima, Peru and Cairo, Egypt).





In February, WICI was sub-contracted by UN-HABITAT to facilitate a series of partners' consultations on the UN Guidelines for Safer Cities. Using Fast Talk methodology, the findings from the consultations will aid UN-HABITAT in the drafting of the new guidelines expected to be adopted at Habitat III in 2016.

WICI presented the findings from the '*Where are the Women and Girls?*' project to the Conseil des Montréalaises on February 25th, at the Library of the Plateau (in Montreal). It was a good opportunity to reflect on the gendered use of public spaces, the role of women in the city and their participation to decision-making processes, in particular in relation to their sense of safety.

Lastly, WICI attended the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York City in March, celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth International Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. With the collaboration of its partners Action Aid, Plan International, Jagori, the Huairou Commission and Red Mujer y Habitat de America Latina, WICI co-animated a panel on "Overcoming the challenges and gaps in achieving the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: recommendations for a post-2015 agenda for gender inclusive safe cities". WICI also participated in a side event organized by UN-Habitat addressing the "Opportunities and challenges for empowering women in public space". Both panels were an opportunity to jointly reflect on the challenges of creating safe and inclusive cities and decreasing violence against women and girls in public spaces. They also highlighted best practices at the local level for empowering women and girls to make their cities safer, and demonstrated the benefits of multi-stakeholder partnerships. Drawing from over 10 years of experience in implementing safe cities programs, the panel put forward a number of specific recommendations for the Habitat III New Urban Agenda, and the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals.



## Research and Collaboration

### *Global Baseline 'Because I am a Girl Urban Programme'*

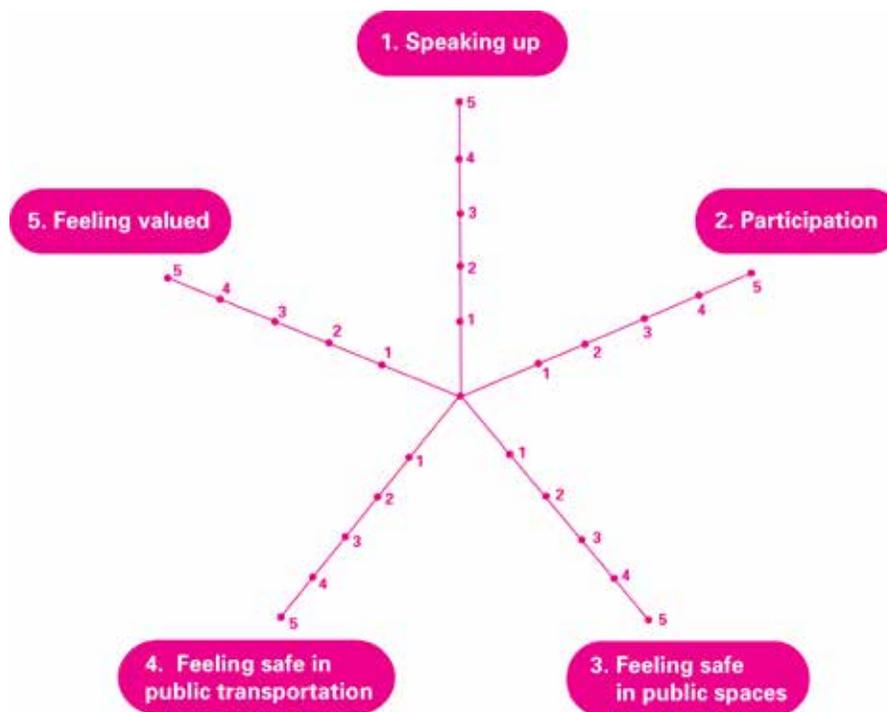
In 2014-2015, WICI completed a global baseline compiling the results of baseline studies conducted in Kampala (Uganda), Hanoi (Viet-Nam) and Delhi (India). These used four participatory research tools to collect qualitative and quantitative data related to girls' safety and inclusion from various stakeholders, including adolescent girls, community members, and government officials. The four tools were: i) Key Informant Surveys to provide information on how key public officials and community leaders view girls' safety and participation in local governance; ii) Policy Review to analyse existing national and local policies relevant to girls' safety; iii) Girls' Empowerment Star to allow adolescent girls and boys to articulate their safety concerns<sup>1</sup>; and iv) Street Surveys to gather the perceptions of adult men and women about girls' safety in urban spaces and on transportation systems. Data collection tools were consistent across all cities but locally adapted to ensure cultural sensitivity. They were also consistent with the programme's three levels of change which include: government and institutions, communities and families, and girls and boys themselves. Several key findings revealed that a majority of girls across all cities do not feel safe in public spaces, or when using transportation services, and seldom participate in governance that relates to their safety.

#### Key Findings:

- In Kampala, 45% of girls reported sexual harassment when using public transportation services.
- In Delhi, 96% of adolescent girls do not feel safe in the city.
- In Hanoi, 36% reported that they seldom had access to emergency services (notably the police).

<sup>1</sup> The Girls' Empowerment Star (GES) allowed adolescent girls to rate their safety, inclusion and empowerment in their city according to a set of five pre-determined factors represented by a five-branches' star.

The global baseline aims to address a gap in research and programming pertaining to adolescent girls' safety in urban spaces. Girls tend to be ignored in programming aimed at "youth" or "women". The main objectives of the global baseline study were to measure the progress made in the programme's implementation; generate information that can serve as a benchmark and tool for developing monitoring and evaluation indicators; and to inform the next phase of the programme in addressing norms and attitudes that encourage discrimination and violence against women and girls at institutional, community and individual levels.



In 2012, Plan International, UN-HABITAT and Women in Cities International launched the *Because I am a Girl Urban Programme* to build safe, accountable, and inclusive cities with and for adolescent girls in all their diversity. The programme is being piloted in five cities around the world over five years (2012-2017): Cairo, Delhi, Hanoi, Kampala, and Lima. Through this programme, it is expected that girls' safety and access to public spaces will increase; girls' active and meaningful participation in urban development and governance will increase; and girls' autonomous mobility in cities will increase.

## *'Where are the Women and Girls?'*

The project *'Where are the women and the girls?'* (2013-2015) was funded by Status Women Canada. It sought to engage with a diversity of people from the Parc-Extension neighbourhood in Montreal, to understand how public spaces are experienced differently by women, men, girls and boys, and at different times of the day. In particular, the project sought to understand the factors that hinder a women's sense of safety and to develop and implement a strategy to increase real and perceived safety in the neighbourhood and to promote women's use of public spaces.

The project focused on feelings of insecurity and the perception of safety and exclusion of women and girls in public spaces, using gender-based analysis and a mixed-methods process of semi-structured interviews, document analysis, questionnaires, non-participatory observations and workshops and activities. Two safety-audit walks were completed in the data gathering phase, and a number of workshops held with women and girls. Considering the uniqueness of the Parc-Extension neighbourhood with its very multi-cultural population, the research yielded many interesting results, creating a clear picture of women and girls' safety in public spaces, and ways to reduce gender-based violence in the neighbourhood. It also identified some of the challenges of working in local communities and with other local organizations. WICI collaborated with several local community organizations who validated the findings as both pertinent and reflective of the local situation. The results of the research were shared with local partners and the municipality and other sectors. The project underlines the particular issues facing the Parc-Extension neighbourhood, and recommends a number of courses of action including citizen committees, which could contribute to increasing the level of perceived safety in public spaces, and encouraging women and girls to participate in public decision-making.

## *WICI's contribution to ICPC's International Report 2014*

WICI contributed to the *Fourth International Report on Crime Prevention and Community Safety* launched by the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC) in November 2014 in Palermo, Sicily. This bi-annual report provides an overview of global crime and prevention-related trends. WICI's contribution accompanied the chapter on "Intimate partner violence against women". The contribution addresses the issue of women's safety in public spaces, and argues that gender-based violence as a result of gender inequality is not only omnipresent in the domestic sphere but also in the public sphere and they are closely linked. Building on its own work and the work of its partners over the last thirty years, WICI reaffirms the need to engage women and girls in the process of reducing all forms of violence against women and creating safer cities and gender inclusive urban spaces.

## Capacity Building

### *'Because I am a Girl Urban Programme' Training Materials*

With the collaboration of Plan International, WICI developed training materials for beneficiaries and various stakeholders involved in the *Because I am a Girl Urban Programme*, including a module for adolescent girls, one for government officials, and a third for transit staff and authorities. Training modules focus on girls' safety and inclusion in urban settings, with the objective of empowering adolescent girls, and raising awareness among government stakeholders and transit authorities on the issue of sexual harassment in public spaces and on public transport. The expected outcomes of these gender-sensitivity trainings are to increase the capacity and willingness of institutions, government stakeholders and transit actors to address gender-based violence, promote girls' safety in their cities and increase girls' participation in local governance. Trainings for adolescent girls are intended to raise their understanding of their right to safety, and build their leadership skills to participate in decision-making processes regarding urban safety issues.

### *'Where are the Women and Girls?' Citizen's Committee*

The final assessment report on the *Where are the women and the girls?* project revealed the existence of institutional gaps in civic participation of women and girls in the Parc-Extension neighbourhood of Montreal. As a result WICI proposed the formation of a citizen's committee, which would be mandated to listen to and respond to the needs and priorities of local women and girls. The citizen's committee is a platform for the local women to gather, collaborate and voice their opinion while reinforcing ties and promoting mutual support. The pilot phase of the citizen committee project used an empowerment model within a supportive framework where the local women selected the issues they deemed important to target. The project aimed to forge sustainable bonds between the women of Parc-Extension, local community associations, and borough officials. Secondly, the committee incorporated the issue of gender safety in public space into the working agenda of active community organizations. It was hoped that engaging the community would ensure the sustainability of the project in the future.

The project '*Where are the women and the girls?*' (2013-2015), funded by Status Women Canada, seeks to engage with a diversity of people from the Parc-Extension neighbourhood in Montreal, to understand how public spaces are experienced differently by women, men, girls, and boys at different times of day. In particular, the project seeks to understand the factors that hinder a women's sense of safety, and develop and implement a strategy to increase real and perceived safety in the neighbourhood and to promote women's appropriation of public spaces.

## Technical Assistance

### *Technical Working Group on Gender and Safer Cities*

In March 2015, and on behalf of partner organizations, WICI officially launched the Technical Working Group on Gender and Safer Cities. The objective of this Technical Working Group is to support UN-Habitat's work on safer cities for women and girls and to ensure it continues global leadership surrounding these issues. The TWG is intended to provide strategic guidance and technical support to UN-Habitat's Safer Cities Programme and coordinate a network of experts to clarify the linkages between gender, safety and urbanization. It is also designed to provide guidance to UN-Habitat with regard to large global processes such as Beijing +20, Habitat III and the implementation of the SDGs to bridge the gap between the gender equality agenda and the New Urban Agenda, reaffirming that gender and safety are cross-cutting issues.

### *Partners' Consultation on UN Guidelines for Safer Cities*

In February WICI began work on the first stages of a *Partners' Consultation towards UN Guidelines on Safer Cities* for UN-Habitat. The overall aim is to inform UN-Habitat of the range of views and areas of concern raised by safer cities partners on the crucial components for urban safety, as they develop new UN Guidelines on Safer Cities. The new guidelines are closely aligned with the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 11 'Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.' The guidelines and SDGs are part of the preparations for Habitat III in Quito, Ecuador in 2016, where a New Urban Agenda will be adopted to provide guidance on urban issues for the next 20 years.

The consultations are being held with a diverse range of stakeholders from different regions, including city administrators, urban safety and crime prevention experts, international and community-based women's organizations, youth representatives, and youth engagement specialists. Tools for the consultation include individual interviews, an online survey, and finally a series of moderated 'Fast Talk' discussions with representatives from key stakeholder groups to explore some of the themes and issues raised in greater depth.

## Action Aid Report on Women's Safety

WICI collaborated with Action Aid to produce the *Women and the City Report III*, as part of Action Aid's *Global Safe Cities Programme* being implemented in 13 different countries. This report summarizes the key findings of seven baseline studies conducted in Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Liberia, Nepal, South Africa and Zimbabwe in the year 2014, complementing studies of women and girls' safety conducted in six other countries. Using the "right to the city" approach <sup>2</sup>, the report compares and analyses findings across the seven countries on four main themes: 1) Women and girls' perceptions and experiences of violence in public spaces, such as sexual harassment and assault; 2) Women and girls' access and perceptions of State and Community Service Organisations' services dealing with Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG); 3) Community attitudes towards VAWG and its 'normalisation'; and 4) Women and girls' recommendations for making their city safer.

Drawing on the experiences and recommendations of women and girls themselves (2,542 were involved in total), the report concludes on the necessity to: improve urban infrastructure and integrate gender sensitive public services into municipal city planning; provide adequate and gender-responsive community safety and justice services, address institutional sexism in police services; raise awareness in the community and with service providers on issues of sexual harassment and assault; and build women and girls' capacity to advocate for their rights. The study was conducted using an intersectional approach, making sure that the voices of the more excluded women and girls are included.

Building on the findings from the previous six-country studies, this report aims to inform and guide international agencies, governments and policy makers in setting and implementing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) <sup>3</sup>, UN Women's Beijing +20 Platform and UN-Habitat's New Urban Agenda. It seeks to influence urban governance at all levels towards adopting a gender sensitive and inclusive approach, holding state services and municipal authorities accountable.

<sup>2</sup> "The Right to the City" asserts that everyone has the right to have access to public space and decision-making processes around public space. According to the Global Platform for the Right to the City, this right is defined as an "equitable use of cities according to the principles of sustainability, democracy, equity and social justice". It is a requirement for creating gender inclusive cities.

<sup>3</sup> In particular, the report focuses on Goal 5 "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" and Goal 11 "Makes cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".



## Awareness Raising

There are several meaningful ways to raise public awareness around the issues of gender equality and urban safety. For example, in the momentum for Habitat III, WICI has had the opportunity to advocate for sustainable and gender-sensitive urbanization during major international meetings and conferences. WICI reaffirmed the universal relevance of well-planned, equal and inclusive cities during the World Urban Forum in Medellin in April 2014. With the collaboration of its partners, WICI called for a gender inclusive post-2015 development agenda during the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2015. Both events were an opportunity for WICI to showcase its work, such as the *Because I am a Girl Urban Programme*, offering some reflections on how to meet the challenges of a growing urbanization for adolescent girls and women.

During the International Anti-Harassment Week and the Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls, WICI organized workshops to raise awareness on the issue of sexual harassment and gender-based violence in public spaces. Interacting with a wide range of actors and providing gender-sensitive training to key stakeholders during the *Because I am a Girl Urban Programme* helped WICI advocate for gender equality and inclusion of women and girls in decision-making at various levels of competence. It was also important for WICI to raise women and girls' awareness on their ability and power to become leaders of change during the *Where are the Women and Girls?* project.

Finally, WICI values the use of social media to advocate for the improvement of women and girls' safety in their city. WICI has noticed an important increase in the number of followers on its Facebook page, and strives to enhance its visibility on its social networks by sharing and posting pertinent information related to safer cities' work.

## Our Collaborators and Funding Partners

### Collaborating Institutions

- Action India, Delhi, India
- Action Aid
- Action des femmes handicapées (Montréal), Montréal, Canada
- Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada
- Catholic Crosscultural Services, Peel, Canada
- Centre des aînés de Gatineau, Gatineau, Canada
- CISCSA, Cordoba, Argentina
- Huairou Commission , New York, USA
- Information Centre of the Independent Women's Forum, Moscow, Russia
- International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, Montréal, Canada
- International Centre for Research on Women, Washington, USA
- Jagori, Delhi, India
- Plan International, Surrey, England
- Women of the Dawn, Regina, Canada
- University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia
- University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

### Funding Partners

- AusAID
- CITYNET
- Department for International Development (DFID)
- Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst - EED
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
- Government of Canada – International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
- Government of Canada - Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)
- Government of Canada – Status of Women Canada
- Interchurch organization for development cooperation (ICCO)
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP)
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
- United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (UNTF) •

## Publications and Media

- April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014: 1 hour live radio program about WICI on RFI
- May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014: radio program about the '*Where are the Women and Girls?*' project and relating issues of women's safety and inclusion in Montreal on CKUT
- November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014: Jennifer Robert-Colomby (senior analyst) was interviewed on behalf of WICI for an article published in Journal La Presse, addressing the issue of sexual harassment in Montreal. <http://www.lapresse.ca/vivre/societe/201411/28/01-4823463-harcelement-de-rue-vulnerables-a-montreal.php>
- December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014: Media launch of the Needs Assessment Report for the '*Where are the Women and Girls?*' project at the Council Chambers of Parc-Extension-Saint-Michel-Villeray (Montreal).
- December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014: Two articles in Metro newspaper (Montreal) relating the media launch. See: <http://journalmetro.com/local/villeray-st-michel-parc-extension/actualites/692299/briser-lisolement-des-femmes-de-parc-extension/> and <http://journalmetro.com/local/villeray-st-michel-parc-extension/actualites/692285/les-femmes-ont-peur-a-parc-extension/>

## The WICI Team

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