My City, My Safety!
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It is with great pleasure that Women in Cities International presents our latest publication “My City, My Safety!”, a project developed with young Montrealers between 2011 and 2013. This youth-led initiative would not have been possible without all our participants, so thank you to the thirty-three young people who took part. Because of your enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment, this project was a great success. The project would also not have been possible without the generous support of our funder, Status of Women Canada—thank you for your guidance and your ongoing commitment to our organization. We would like to thank all the Advisory Committee members who contributed their knowledge, experience, and support: Portia Larlee (CKUT Radio); Katherine Hébert-Metté, Brigitte Chrétien and Yasmina El Barbati Jimenez (Table Concertation Jeunesse Côtes-des-Neiges and Tandem NGD); Jade Goldfarb (YWCA of Montreal); Karine Chayer (l’Association des femmes handicapées de Montréal); Dr. Steven Edwards (Student Leadership – iLead 21); Sara Ortiz Escalante (Propia Consultores); Maya Rolbin-Ghanie and Bianca Muggyeni (2110 Centre for Gender Advocacy); Linda Laushway (Salt Spring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse); Arwen Flemming (Digital Literacy Project); Liz Miller (Mapping Memories); Ashanti Rosado (Inter-Tribal Youth Centre); Jessica Blair (Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Students’ Society); Jenn Gorham (Fredericton Sexual Assault Crisis Centre); Dana Leon-Guerrero (Sexualization Protest: Art Resistance Knowledge); and Gavin Sheppard (The Remix Project). Thank you to the participating schools: FACE School (Fine Arts and Core Education), École Saint-Laurent – Édifice Cardinal and École Saint-Luc. Throughout the project, individuals from diverse organizations generously contributed their knowledge, experience, and support: the youth workers at the Parc Avenue YMCA, the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve YMCA, Jeunesse 2000 and La Maison des Jeunes Côtes-des-Neiges; Nantali Ndongo; Olivier Tsai; Jonathan Lesage-Cotnoir; Emily Koehler-Lemaire; Michael O’Shea; Anuradha Dugal, Trisha Taneja, Nicholas Bautista Beauchesne and Karine Projean. A big thank you to all our amazing consultants who contributed to the development and facilitation of activities on urban development and citizen-based art projects. Thank you for helping us use media, photography, film, poetry, spoken word and performance arts: Olivier Lapierre, Fanie St-Michel (with Conscience urbaine), Simone Lucas, Berekhyra Yergeau, Farah Fancy and Daniela Finna (of le Groupe Herencias). Thank you to Vanessa Mercier for your enthusiasm, as well as for having so generously given us your time and a space to facilitate a workshop as part of the Youth Inclusion Program at the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve YMCA. Thank you to Charlotte Thibault (from the École National d’Administration Pubblic) for your support in conducting the gender-based analysis. Thank you to Marie-Marthe Cousineau, Marie-Hélène Cigna, and Sarah Cissé for your very thorough participatory evaluation of My City, My Safety! Thank you to the many organizations that helped us by sharing your tools and insights, and for offering us various trainings, as well as a space for our teen participants to showcase their media projects: the Girls Action Foundation and Karine-Mygrianie Jean-François; the Société des commerçants du Village and Bernard Plante; Equitas—International Center for Human Rights Education, in particular Ruth Morrison and Élise Voyer; the Benedict Labre House; Action Femmes Handicapées (Montréal); Karine Chayer, Laure Péres and Selma Kouidri; the Conseil Jeunesse de Montréal; LOVE Quebec (Leave Out Violence); Olivier Tsai and Léa Kabiljo; the YWCA, in particular Aimee Louw; and the Quebec Public Interest Research Group at Concordia. A very, very big thank you to those of you who helped bring this project to reality by introducing us to your students: youth animator Jacques Archambault and ethics teacher Louise Blanchette from FACE; specialized educator Christine Noël from École Saint-Laurent – Édifice Cardinal; and ethics teacher Sylvie Tardif from École Saint-Luc. Finally, a huge thank you to the FACE girls for their contributions to this publication: Anaïs L., Anaïs G., Dania, Olga, Alexandra, Rebecca and Virgine!
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Introduction

Blueprint Project: Engaging Youth in Preventing Violence Against Girls and Women

In 2011, Women in Cities International (WICI) received funding from Status of Women Canada for the development of a Blueprint Project: Engaging Youth in Preventing Violence Against Girls and Women. Between 2011 and 2013, the project was implemented with groups of girls (and some boys) aged 13 to 17 in three Montreal high schools: FACE, Saint-Luc, and Saint-Laurent – Édifice Cardinal. The project was monitored and evaluated by an external team from the University of Montreal, using participatory evaluation techniques. This publication “My City, My Safety!” provides a descriptive account of the project, in the hope of making the knowledge and experience gained accessible to individuals, organizations and institutions wishing to enrich or begin work with young people.

The objective of My City, My Safety! was to help participants identify issues related to girls’ sense of safety and inclusion within their communities. The initiative sought to support them in the creation of their own projects to engage and sensitize other youth, while building their confidence and enriching their leadership skills. The project empowered participants by helping them express their views and validate their expertise as public space users. Moreover, it provided a platform for them to share their ideas and opinions, with the ultimate goal of designing safer and more inclusive cities for girls and young people in general.

The first phase of the project consisted of a series of workshops, including women’s safety audit walks, focus group discussions, leadership training, and the use of media. All of these workshops were intended to help participants build skills and share knowledge, which they could then use to engage other youth and raise awareness. At the end of the project, WICI was able to build on the experience and tools developed with the three core groups to organize an intensive workshop in partnership with the Youth Inclusion Program at Montreal’s Hochelaga-Maisonneuve YMCA.

This publication describes the interventions and some of their impacts on participants and their communities, as well as the obstacles, achievements and the lessons learned.
The workshops

The first phase of *My City, My Safety!* consisted of a number of workshops to introduce specific concepts, tools, and methodologies to the young participants. These workshops were adapted to the interests and realities of each of the groups involved in the project, and to the thematic areas they felt were important. For example, workshops were developed around the themes of urban development, profiling, and homelessness, among others. Focus group discussions were also used and helped create safe spaces where the participants felt able to express themselves freely on issues close to their hearts.

Other workshops included creative exercises to allow participants to imagine and work toward the creation of ideal cities inspired by the needs of their communities. The project allowed each group to take its own approach to developing a vision. For example, while one group used artistic activities to imagine an ideal city, the same exercises led another to create and develop sketches on bullying and homophobia.

While the project was adapted to address the unique situation of each of the different groups, three types of activities were carried out in each school, forming the common thread of *My City, My Safety!* These were: women’s safety audit walks (WSA), engaging youth through the use of media tools, and leadership and facilitation training. These activities are summarized in the following section.
THE METHODOLOGY AND ITS ADAPTATION

Origins

The women’s safety audit walk (WSAs) was first developed by the Metropolitan Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) in Toronto, Canada in 1989. Subsequently, the approach has been adapted and used across Canada and internationally. In 1993 the Programme Femmes et ville – Ville de Montréal (Women and Cities Program of the City of Montreal) produced a guide on women’s safety walks, which detailed the principles of safe urban development and infrastructure from a women’s point of view. In the current project, this guide inspired the development of girl-centered WSAs conducted around the city.

The WSA tool can be used to achieve a number of objectives. Primarily it assists in assessing a neighbourhood in terms of participants’ sense of safety, through the identification of reassuring or unsafe elements in that environment. The observations made during a walk can then be used to lobby government departments for change, and to create partnerships to redesign urban public space. As part of the My City, My Safety! project, WSAs were also used to sensitize participants to their surroundings and to the possible impacts on their daily experiences. Further, WSAs were a valuable way to empower participants and increase their leadership skills, encouraging them to consider solutions to the problems identified, organize and lobby for change, and perhaps lead their own WSAs in the future.
The first step: identifying the walk itinerary through the use of cartography

As a first step, subjective mapping exercises were used to help the participants begin thinking about their environments, gather data on their feelings of security and inclusion (or lack of), and identify a useful focus for the WSAs. Subjective mapping is a participatory tool, which asks participants to visually represent their neighbourhood using artistic materials. Subjective maps give facilitators information on a neighbourhood from the perspective and lived reality of the participants. For My City, My Safety! participants drew their daily routes to school, home and work; the places they liked or avoided; the types of activities offered to young people; and sites of significant experiences. From here, the places avoided by most students were identified as good sites to conduct their WSAs. This was the first time that WICI has used subjective mapping as an approach to identify the kinds of locations and specific sites for conducting a WSA, based on issues and concerns important to participants. These adaptations were a central contribution of the My City, My Safety! initiative in developing a youth-tailored WSA methodology.

During the walks

In the original WSA methodology, participants note their observations on a checklist outlining the principle characteristics of a safe urban environment. They also take pictures of good and bad examples of urban infrastructure, while walking the mapped route. Since WSAs were primarily used as awareness-raising and as a capacity-building tool in My City, My Safety!, it was decided that taking notes was not always necessary. During the first walks, some participants took notes which were used to feed future discussions. Other groups, however, preferred taking pictures to identify and map items of interest. Since My City, My Safety! promoted diverse approaches, students were encouraged to pursue the methods which were most significant to them.
**After the walk**

In the original methodology, immediately after the walk, a list of observed problems and possible solutions is compiled by participants, taking care to note the exact coordinates of the problems (street, building number, etc.). Subsequent meetings determine the next steps, develop recommendations, and decide to whom suggested solutions could be addressed, and which partnerships might help realize the desired changes. Partnerships can be created with municipalities, transport authorities, business owners, residents, etc. They can also be established prior to the WSA, with the partners invited to take part in and observe the walks and subsequent discussions. Final recommendations are presented to the relevant stakeholders, and follow-up is ensured through the organization of meetings and media campaigns.  

The original WSA approach built partnerships with the aim of bringing about change in urban infrastructures that contributed to women’s insecurity. For *My City, My Safety!* the objective was to raise awareness about the issues identified through the WSA among other youth and the wider community, including the impact of insecurity, violence, and lack of inclusion of youth in public spaces. Therefore, partnerships were created with other NGOs and community actors to help in awareness-raising, community engagement, and in building participants’ capacities. The creation of partnerships was also pursued when participants expressed a specific interest in particular activities or concerns. For example, the partnership created with the Benedict Labre House in Montreal allowed young women from FACE School to take part in lunchtime discussions with people who had experienced homelessness.

Interventions developed by the young people included the creative use of media to raise awareness among their peers and local communities. One group created a giant box covered with photo montages, another a magazine made for girls and by girls, and the third group created a school-based theatre performance. The community partnerships also allowed participants to reach out to other youth and spread their message with greater ease.

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1 See *Together for Women’s Safety*, WICI, 2010 for more detailed information on the women’s safety methodology.
Using media tools to engage youth

In a world where life seems increasingly fast-paced and packed with responsibilities and opportunities for entertainment, engaging in a new project is not always easy, especially when you have to lead the project in question!

For this reason, engaging youth through media tools was one of the most important aspects of My City, My Safety! Any medium—whether photography, performance arts, video-making, or spoken word—was celebrated and supported as long it was chosen by participants.

The use of creative tools is an excellent way to encourage young people to participate in projects and for them to engage actively with their communities. It also presents opportunities for expression that are quite different from those used in mainstream school settings. For example, the use of photography during WSAs can serve as an alternative means of expression.

Using media tools is also very valuable when it comes to spreading the message beyond the core group of participants. The next section highlights the complementary tools that were used to build girls’ capacity to be leaders among their peers.

“Sometimes it was hard, staying late after school, even if it was fun and original. But also, we didn’t always know what to expect... There was some sort of mystery around the activities which made us want to find out more...”
Participant, 15 years.
Facilitation and leadership training

Integrating leadership skills in all activities

One of the objectives of My City, My Safety! was to enable participants to engage with other young people and expand awareness on the issues of safety and inclusion in cities. To reach this objective, all the workshops developed by WICI emphasized integrating knowledge with action, in order to promote initiative and leadership skills. As the project developed, the young people were able to use their new skills to organize WSAs, develop media interventions, or animate specific public activities. Much of this was accomplished in partnership with other NGOs or artists.

Targeted training

In partnership with Leave Out Violence (LOVE) Quebec, a one-day workshop was developed to offer targeted training to all project participants. The goal of the training was to give participants the tools needed to facilitate and lead their own activities using photography and role-playing as means of creative expression. At the end of the day, all participants had facilitated their own activities, using their new mediation and leadership skills.

“I really enjoyed the LOVE training, it taught me how to speak in front of an audience, how to animate workshops, techniques to break silences, and to face unease ... Now I recognize when my teachers use this trick!”
Participant, 16 years.

These skills were solicited throughout the project, and it is very likely that the participants will continue to build on them throughout their lives. A chronology of the full My City, My Safety! project is outlined below, and a detailed description of the workshop activities appears in the Annex.

The following sections of this publication describe the activities undertaken by each of the project groups, and highlight some of the impacts of the project on the participants and the local communities involved.
Presenting the Project to the FACE girls (Sept)

First WSA with FACE girls (Nov)

Needs assessment and gender-based analysis to identify participants' priorities (Dec)

Designing the FACE girls' project (Mar)

Facilitation and leadership training (July)

Finalizing the photo montage (May)

Production of video for Girls Action Foundation National Day of Action (Jan)

Lunchtime discussion on safety and inclusion with formerly homeless men (Feb)

Lights, Camera, Action! (Apr)

Nomad Box, done! (June)

Leading a workshop at the YWCA Summer Space Day Camp for girls (Aug)
Journées de la culture in Montreal (Sept)

First workshops with École Saint-Laurent – Édifice Cardinal and École Saint-Luc participants (Nov)

WSAs with Saint-Laurent and Saint-Luc participants (Nov)

completion of FACE mural (Mar)

Spoken word performance at École Saint-Luc (Dec)

Production of “Why Women?” Magazine (Jan)

“Why Women?” Magazine launch (Feb)

Civic Engagement Week at École Saint-Luc (Apr)

Closing party! (May)

2012-2013
“We don’t have enough power to change the world, but when we see something unfair happening in the street, we’d like to be the president’s daughter to be able to do something... It’s hard, really hard. But as a group, then things can change!”
Participant, 16 years.

Although urban development projects abound in Montreal and elsewhere, it is very rare for young people, especially girls, to be consulted about urban design initiatives. This is unfortunate, since adolescent girls in all their diversity have very unique experiences of urban public space. They have to juggle between wanting to discover and participate in urban opportunities, staying out without adult supervision, and negotiating their presence in neighbourhoods where, for a lot of people, teenagers are synonymous with trouble.

It is in this context that WICI met the first twelve recruits, young women from FACE School, who were committed participants for the full two years of *My City, My Safety!* Over the months, the girls took part in a number of activities, including a subjective mapping exercise, the development of a questionnaire to assess their needs in terms of security and inclusion, and several women’s safety audit walks in the neighbourhoods they frequented on a daily basis.

Through these WSAs, the girls identified several issues affecting their sense of safety and feelings of inclusion in Montreal’s downtown area, including general maintenance and the social use of space. Whether it was the total absence of garbage cans around their school or the sorry state of sidewalks that turned their Montreal walks into extreme sports, the girls acquired a greater sensibility to the urban environment in which they live and how it affects their lives. Building on this experience, they started to reflect on the different ways a city could be more inviting and better address their needs. This reflection led to discussions about their thematic priorities which included homelessness, protection of the environment, and the right to the city.

A testimony to the FACE girls’ participation in the project can be viewed at the following link: www.youtube.com/femmesetvilles.
The first interventions

Their first interventions were planned and implemented as part of the Girls Action Foundation National Day of Action. Instead of celebrating Valentine’s Day every 14th of February, the Foundation celebrates young women throughout the country who take part in initiatives to change the world. For this occasion, a collective ‘love letter’ is compiled based on a series of community-based actions undertaken by groups of young women and girls throughout Canada. In 2012, the girls from FACE School proposed a day full of activities which the Foundation supported.

The Vox Pop

In honour of young Canadian activists, the FACE girls participated in the collective love letter with their first awareness-raising media project: a Vox Pop video realised in collaboration with the Director of Montreal-based NGO Conscience Urbaine, Fanie St-Michel. The video is available here: www.youtube.com/femmesetvilles. In their Vox Pop, each young woman presents a word to the camera that conveys her reasons for participating in the project, making this the first link between her newly-acquired knowledge and the development of a media-based awareness-raising campaign.

Demystifying homelessness

As a result of their WSA experience, the FACE girls identified homelessness as increasing their feelings of insecurity when navigating downtown Montreal. In discussion with the project facilitators, it was decided to plan a lunchtime exchange with people who had experienced homelessness. In this way it was hoped to learn more about the lived realities of people who are homeless.

Thanks to the existing partnership between WICI and the NGO Action femmes handicapées (Montréal), a new partnership was developed with the Benedict Labre House. This organization provides shelter and essential services to people who are homeless staying in the downtown area. The group also organizes lunchtime discussions to raise awareness about homelessness and poverty in Montreal. Following this meeting, the young women from FACE learned that people who have lost their homes are also victims of insecurity, discrimination, and harassment—just like adolescent girls.

2 A Vox Pop is a short video highlighting a specific issue.
3 See Women in Cities International website for details about the project Together for Women’s Safety! Creating Safer Communities for Marginalized Women and Everyone.
A new women’s safety audit walk

The girls’ participation to the 2012 National Day of Action ended with a new WSA along Boulevard de Maisonneuve, Émilie-Gamelin Park, and Rue Ste-Catherine, into the Beaudry Metro station, another area the girls had identified as unsafe. From dark corners and hiding spaces, to a park filled with winter light installations made inaccessible by snow and ice, to inspiring quotes hanging from street lights, nothing escaped their scrutiny. The observations from their first WSAs, the thematic workshops, and this action-packed National Day of Action, inspired their final media project: The Nomad Box.
To make the transition from theory to action, the young and dynamic Montreal-based urban design specialist Olivier Lapierre was invited to speak to the group. He had organized several innovative projects to help citizens engage their local communities in reclaiming public space, and always in fun ways. Lapierre’s workshop helped the girls identify possible solutions to the obstacles they noted during the WSAs. Since the solutions were to involve raising awareness, they took the form of youth-led media-based projects.

During this workshop, the girls began by imagining an intervention, the tools and actors necessary to carry it out, and drew up a plan. Having considered murals and a compass-like light system to guide pedestrians through Montreal, the girls finally decided on a mobile installation to showcase photo montages, which would allow visitors to “come into their universe”.

Accompanied once again by Fanie St-Michel from Conscience urbaine, they went into production mode. The girls reclaimed their right to hang out, loiter, be themselves, and have fun safely in Montreal by playing music, sitting in folding chairs, and having a picnic. They filmed and took pictures of their event to illustrate their visions of safer and more equitable cities, where social justice, environmental concern, play spaces, diversity of users, and accessible infrastructure can all coexist. The girls then created a photomontage based on these activities as their community awareness-raising project: the Nomad Box.
Raising awareness in their community

As its name implied, the Nomad Box, made out of corrugated plastic, moved around a lot, in spite of its size (6 x 6 feet), its hexagonal shape and its weight. Its first stop was FACE School, where the girls presented their work and animated an activity with their classmates as part of their ethics class.

The box was officially unveiled to the public at the intercultural library of Côte-des-Neiges, attended by the girls’ families and WICI partners. It also appeared during the Village commercial fair and Montreal’s “Aires Libres” event in July and August 2012. Pictures taken during the WSA conducted in that neighbourhood were featured in the box; this brought the girls full circle, showcasing their ideas in spaces that had inspired them. Basking in attention, they simultaneously concluded the Nomad Box was not wind proof...

The Nomad Box also took part in Ruepublique’s “Journée des bons voisins” (Good neighbours’ day) to celebrate World Car Free week in the Mile-End neighbourhood of Montreal. A parking space was transformed into a mini-park where the Box was displayed, drawing the curiosity of parents and children.

October 11th, 2012 was the first International Day of the Girl. For this occasion, the Women’s Y of Montreal organised an exhibit showcasing girls’ realities from all over the world, and the many initiatives girls take part in to make their communities safer, more welcoming, and equal. The FACE girls’ Nomad Box received a spotlight during the show.

Finally, on November 11th, 2012, the girls and their box took part in Art and Action, an exhibit organized by QPIRG Concordia at the university, alongside other works of art inspired by social and environmental justice issues.
L’île de Montréal et le parcours de la boîte Nomade

The Nomad Box’s journey across the Island of Montreal

*Miland = Mile End
Facilitation at a summer camp

Our group of FACE girls grew from being audience members, to creators and then to facilitators. Following their leadership training, they put their knowledge into practice by facilitating activities at the Women’s Y Summer Space, a leadership camp for girls.

Catering to girls between the ages of 10 and 14, the camp featured activities aimed at developing leadership skills and self-confidence. One of its objectives was to help prevent all forms of violence affecting girls, through artistic activities, dance and sport, as well as workshops producing videos, documentaries, and music. One of the themes touched upon was girls’ safety. The young leaders from FACE prepared two days’ worth of activities in July and August 2012 to introduce urban safety to the young campers through creative activities and WSAs. The “Ideal City” drawings resulting from observations and pictures taken during a WSA would have made Alice in Wonderland enthusiasts proud!

The girls also led a simple yet effective activity to embellish public space: all that was needed was rainbow chalk, some concrete, and 15 girls. Games and impermanent art are good ways for young people to reclaim their right to the city, and to send a message that a place should be accessible to everyone. Their drawings showed that young people used the space, and that children and their families were welcome. As the FACE girls made clear, these efforts can greatly contribute to feelings of safety for youth.

“What I preferred? The walks we did during Journées de la culture. To talk to all the neighbourhood people, to ask the opinions of people who are personally affected by safely accessing the train tracks and the obstacles created between Rosemont and the Plateau, especially women] that, I really liked. It’s nice to see that there are engaged people in this neighbourhood, it’s encouraging!”
Participant, 16 years.
Montreal’s Journées de la culture

In partnership with Conscience urbaine, the girls animated two workshops during the 2012 Journées de la culture (Culture days). They led a thematic women’s safety audit on issues of safety and accessibility in the Plateau-Mont-Royal and Rosemont boroughs, where train tracks cut through the two neighbourhoods complicating travel between them. The girls’ workshop activity attracted a diverse crowd: urban designers showed up, as did landscape artists, students, a mother with her stroller, an elderly woman, and a representative of Tandem, the city’s support program for citizen-based initiatives for crime prevention.

During the walks, the girls shared their knowledge and experience about how the urban environment impacts their daily travel, about the potential obstacles to their participation in urban life, as well as their sense of safety and inclusion. The diversity of expertise represented in the group resulted in a rich sharing of ideas and knowledge. The young leaders took pictures of the event which were subsequently used by Conscience Urbaine to present the workshop recommendations to elected officials: the girls, along with their supporters, lobbied for safer walkways and easier access across the train tracks.

Passing on the torch: the FACE Mural

The girls finalized their participation in My City, My Safety! with a work of art. Their initiation to urban development sparked their interest in creating a mural. A beautiful mural can make any boring or ugly space instantly more inviting, attracting more people, who in turn make the space feel safer.

The girls organized many follow-up and planning meetings for the “mural committee” and persuaded their school administration to let them beautify a selected wall. The girls then decided on a legacy to leave the next FACE generations, painting quotations to inspire other young people to become leaders.

From Françoise Sagan, Maya Angelou, to Janis Joplin, the girls illustrated the words of great women (and men!) who inspired them. They named their mural “The Fountain of Words.” The mural project was selected and supported as one of the community actions of the Girls Action Foundation’s 2013 National Day of Action. Although it represented the end of their project, it was only the start of their community engagement.
In the Outremont neighbourhood of Montreal, at École Saint-Laurent – Édifice Cardinal (Saint-Laurent School, Cardinal Building), six young women were looking for an interesting project to fulfill their internship requirements.

At the invitation of their teacher Christine, WICI developed and organized a number of activities with them over the course of six months. They started with a subjective mapping exercise to better understand what they liked or disliked about their neighbourhood. While their school is located in Outremont, most of the girls involved in the project live in the nearby suburb of Ville Saint-Laurent.

“In the whole project that we did there was always something special. At one point, we had to draw our city, with stuff we didn’t like or did like, or things we would like to see. Then we had to create our city or village, that would be perfect for us. It was really something fun. Another day, we went to a university and took pictures. We had to take pictures of things we wanted to change, for example, violence, racism, violence against women, violence against children, etc. It was really super, they were super experiences. We also played different games and I really liked it.”

Participant, 15 years.
Outremont—a centrally-located, and relatively wealthy residential and commercial neighbourhood—has a very different demographic profile from the less well-off, ethnically and culturally diverse Ville Saint-Laurent. This contrast makes for tension between the two realities the girls navigate on a daily basis. The girls selected a location for their WSA in Ville Saint-Laurent around the Côte-Vertu Metro station and the local McDonald’s, two of the girls’ common hangouts and meeting points.

The subjective mapping and WSA activities helped the girls identify several themes for further exploration which inspired their media project. Notably, in the absence of spaces for youth to hang out, the girls find themselves in public spaces where they face racial and youth profiling on the part of both police and residents. These challenges are further compounded by sexual harassment.
"It really allowed for me to express certain things... which I wasn't able to communicate by myself before. I was able to do it in this magazine."

Participant, 15 years.
In the initial project workshops, visioning exercises were held to help the girls imagine a perfect city, where women and girls would be free to go where they chose, without having to worry about the suspicious stares of adults, the police, or even the cost of goods. They dreamed of a city where there would be freedom of speech, where they would be able to travel comfortably, dressed as they pleased, without being judged or harassed. This search for freedom of speech, movement and access was a constant theme throughout the girls’ reflections on their Montreal experiences.

The girls decided to focus on writing and poetry as mediums for their project. A partnership was established with a Montreal-based artist and youth worker, Berekhya Yergeau, who specializes in spoken word, improvisation and leadership.

After exploring a number of options, the girls decided to create a magazine that would celebrate their personalities, artistic talents and vision of a world without violence against women and girls.

In the following weeks, the girls worked hard to create drawings, photos, and texts on gender-based violence, freedom of speech, and relationships. The magazine was given a name: “Why Women?”. Within it, the girls had gathered a collection of illustrations, poems (including a yet-to-be-released Creole rap), photo montages and manifestos (including a piece on youth “swag” to denounce profiling and stereotyping. For those unfamiliar with the concept, “swag” describes a stylish attitude or getup).

The discussions that emerged from the creative process were just as important and cathartic as the end product, both for participants and project staff. As the project unfolded, the need for freedom of expression became greater. The creative workshops also helped develop a safe space where girls could speak freely.

“Why the word ‘Why Women?’ because there are so many words said about women that are really inappropriate, it gives women a bad image. When you see a woman, treat her right. Not like some dirty dog. When guys...the only thing that they do is look at your body, but that’s not what you should look at. You have to look at what the person is inside, but them, they don’t see that.”
Participant, 15 years.
“When I distributed the magazine at the metro, there was a man who came and said he was really impressed. I was touched because he said ‘I have a wife, and I respect her. You are good students because you are doing this. I am Canadian, and I am proud that in my country there are young people who do these projects.’ It really touched me. I said: ‘thank you sir!’ he said: ‘no, no, no. Thank you and thank you to your friends who made this book.’ and I was like ‘Wow!’ It was really something super. He took the magazine and said: ‘Can I have another? I will pass it along to my friends,’ so I said ‘Of course! Go for it!’”
Participant, 17 years.

Spreading the message through the magazine

The magazine “Why Women?” resulted from the process of experience, reflection and expression that the young women of Saint-Laurent underwent during their participation in My City, My Safety! Not only is their magazine “made by the Saint-Laurent girls, for girls,” it is also an excellent awareness-raising tool. The girls presented and distributed it to other students within the school. The magazine was also showcased during the 2013 Art in Action! exhibition at Concordia University. The complete electronic version of the magazine can be accessed on WICI’s website, www.womenincities.org (in French only).
The march

The magazine was launched and distributed at the Côte-Vertu Metro station in the Ville Saint-Laurent neighbourhood on the 28th of February 2013, celebrating the young women’s reclaiming of significant spaces defining their daily experience. Around fifteen or more young women yelled slogans such as “Your mom... she’s a woman,” turning the usual insult on its head, and proudly held up placards such as “What would you do without women?” Without a doubt, the Montreal Metro staff will not forget them anytime soon.

Friends also joined their peaceful march around the Metro, to demand more respect for women and girls, and the end of harassment and racial and youth profiling. The young women exercised their leadership skills by leading the event and sharing their stories with inquisitive community members.

Speaking Rights

Through a new WICI partnership with Equitas, a non-profit organization that works for the advancement of equality and social justice through transformative human rights education, the young women from Saint-Laurent were able to take part in the Speaking Rights program and build on their experience and creativity. This program encourages the active participation of youth in exploring human rights issues and identifying strategies to combat discrimination and exclusion, while promoting respect for diversity. Since the girls’ magazine project fulfilled the program objectives (as a youth-led initiative that helped them express their concerns about issues close to their hearts), Equitas decided to support a new project undertaken by the Saint-Laurent girls. This enabled the young women to develop a new initiative in their school and community.
École Saint-Luc (Saint-Luc School) in Montreal has an ongoing Civic Engagement Mediators program. The school’s ethics teacher and leader of the program, Ms. Sylvie Tardif, invited WICI to meet the group of fifteen boys and girls in October of 2012. The mediators program is designed to promote respect for civic responsibilities and promote good behavior in the school, especially during lunchtime and recess.

Every year, the Civic Engagement Mediators create a civic engagement project to raise awareness in the rest of the school on issues that are important to them. The project can touch on themes of safety and inclusion of all members of the school and neighbourhood, as well as on issues of respect towards their communities in general.
The 2012-2013 cohort was invited to participate in *My City, My Safety!* The group was a perfect match for the final year of the project. This was also a great opportunity to involve both boys and girls in this initiative to promote inclusive and safe urban spaces for women, girls, and everyone.

Over the next six months, the Civic Engagement Mediators participated in collective and individual cartography exercises, a women’s safety audit walk in their neighbourhood, and explorations of different forms of public intervention among their peers. Farah Fancy, a choreographer who specializes in movement therapy, assisted them in their creative projects.

The mediators soon identified the themes that were important to them, and that they wished to explore through awareness-raising initiatives in their school and their community:

- Safety and maintenance at school
- Cyber-bullying
- Safety and maintenance in neighbourhoods
- Homophobia
- Youth and racial profiling

To explore different ways of conveying these themes using theatre and movement, WICI and Farah Fancy prepared a series of workshops that would encourage participants to find creative ways of expressing their opinions and messages.
The students took part in improvisation activities to explore feelings such as shyness or aggressiveness, and situations such as bullying and homophobia. These exercises allowed the mediators to probe the different obstacles that adolescents can face in public spaces or at school. For example, they staged a scene between an ‘aggressor’ and ‘victim’, some playing the role of a crowd encouraging a fight, others trying to intervene or act as witnesses. The scenarios were all silent, conveying meaning through body movement.

These exercises led to discussions about bullying, how words—just like fists—can be used for violence, and how the victim is often made to carry the blame, especially if she is a girl.

By participating in the improvisation exercise as actors and directors, and exploring the dynamics of a violent confrontation without actually being in one, the young people were able to explore their own realities from new perspectives. They were confronted with their own perceptions and realized how easy it was to skew reality to match idealized versions of the facts. They agreed that, in real life, when a conflict escalates in public, the victim is outnumbered, and few people are ready to intervene.

Against Cyber-Bullying – A Spoken Word Performance

One of the school interventions developed by the student mediators began with a simple writing exercise. They wrote down:
- Five words to describe the perfect non-violent city
- Five words to describe violence and,
- Fifteen words related to one of the four themes they had chosen:
  - For each theme, five words to describe the theme, five to describe the feelings of someone living that situation, and five suggesting possible solutions.

Once the words had been written down, rearranged, and repeated, the participants read them out over a beat that they had created in an earlier workshop. Without realizing it, they had created a spoken word performance.

These improvisation and theatre techniques enabled the group to develop and perform their spoken word project to unsuspecting friends and peers in December 2012. To the beat of a tam-tam and with a grand entrance, they performed their much appreciated spoken-word piece on cyber-bullying in the crowded cafeteria, and later in the school hallways.

The spoken word performance signaled the beginning of their campaign to end all forms of bullying and disrespectful behavior at their school and in their community, culminating in the Week of Civic Engagement in April 2013.
“We made all that noise so that they [the students at Saint-Luc] would listen to us, to get their attention and so that they would understand the message that we want to make on cyber-bullying. They must try to understand that as well, and not tie everything to our role as Civic Engagement Mediators!”

Participant
After meeting many people working in the field of youth-empowerment in Montreal, WICI was invited by a youth worker, Vanessa, to take part in a project at the YMCA in the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve neighbourhood of Montreal. Working on the Youth Inclusion Program (YIP) at the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve high school, she had created a lunch-hour group for girls with additional activities at the YMCA, after realizing that most participants in the YIP program were boys. She invited the WICI team to co-host a workshop with her girls group.

During her meetings with girls living and hanging out in the area, Vanessa found that many of them did not feel safe, and experienced different forms of exclusion in public space. This inspired the day-long workshop organized for the girls to help them rediscover and reclaim their neighbourhood. Before the workshop was even properly introduced, three young women who lived or spent most of their time in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve began talking about their daily “hochelagan” experiences of neighbours, public transportation, favorite places and activities, and the things they did not like.
The subjective cartography exercise helped map the different resources available to youth in the neighbourhood. The participants pinpointed a number of unsafe areas, such as a bike lane and parks they tended to avoid. Subsequently, the girls led the workshop facilitators on a women’s safety audit walk of their neighbourhood. They took pictures of places and objects they thought positive or negative, using green and red photo frames to designate their feelings. The young women later displayed these photos in the space used by other young YIP participants.

Despite the time limitations of the workshop, the participants gave positive feedback, and appreciated the space and encouragement given to share their opinions and experiences. For WICI, it was a great opportunity to further adapt the project tools and activities for a targeted intervention, and one which led to a spontaneous creative project.
This section highlights the importance of creating partnerships in order to effectively engage girls and boys on issues regarding their safety and inclusion in the city. Some important challenges were faced in ensuring that the project remained youth-led. However, the impact on participants in being able to assume leadership roles and participate meaningfully is one of the main successes of the project.

Recruitment

One of the biggest obstacles encountered during the planning phase of My City, My Safety! was the recruiting of participants. This also gave rise to one of the most important lessons learned: it is crucial to make—and to maintain contact with—key personnel in targeted schools in an action project such as this.

In the initial stages of the project, several youth resource and recreation centers were approached to undertake activities, but the ad hoc nature of youth attendance made long-term collaboration unfeasible. It was only after developing tools and gaining experience by working with students during the project’s first year, and by joining with existing programs (the YIP and Summer Space, the YWCA’s camp for girls) that WICI was able to carry out its planned community-based interventions.

The development of activities in the school setting also presented other opportunities for learning, which highlighted the importance of reconciling project and school objectives. When students were getting school credit for their participation, ensuring that the objectives of the project and of the school were similar was even more important. Students’ school and extra-curricular commitments add other layers of difficulty when organizing activities, and can diminish the likelihood of a 100% attendance rate for all workshops.

The importance of partnerships

For WICI, the development of My City, My Safety! was an opportunity to extend its network of partners in Montreal. For this project, it was essential to build ties with high schools, but also with other stakeholders working with youth on similar issues in the city. The recruitment of participants, the adaptation of WICI’s tools, and the sharing of best practices and experiences on workshop facilitation for youth would not have been possible otherwise.

Creating partnerships also makes developing a sustainable, durable, and effective initiative more likely. For example, the development of leadership and animation workshops with the NGO LOVE enabled My City, My Safety! to be extended to include the YIP partnership. Additionally, the support of the Girls’ Action Foundation allowed WICI to build its capacity and organize two consecutive interventions for the National Day of Action for girls across Canada. The training offered by Equitas helped WICI staff to adapt its activities to the needs of different groups, and enabled the young women of Saint-Laurent to participate in the Speaking Rights program.
Knowledge sharing with consultants and institutional partners also allowed WICI to develop new tools and expertise in working with adolescents. Workshops organized by Equitas and the Girls Action Foundation enabled WICI staff to discuss obstacles such as the recruitment of participants or boosting attendance rates with other facilitators.

Other partnerships that allowed for the exchange of tools, best practices, and information included links with the Girl Guides of Quebec, the Benedict Labre house, Action femmes handicapées (Montréal), CKUT Radio and the 2110 Center for Gender Advocacy, Montreal's Tandem and in particular their project on hyper sexualisation, the Canadian Women’s Foundation, the YWCA of Montreal, the Société des commerçants du Village, and Ruepublique.

_Talking about an interaction with a police patrol during a women's safety audit walk_ “I explained to them the My City, My Safety! project, I said: ‘...we are young people, but we are not necessarily people who will hurt others or do illegal things.’ Sometimes, we are just here, and the police pass by... they don’t pass by to look at adults with their kids, they pass by to look at us, to look at what we are doing. I explained that to them, and they were saying, ‘Oh, we understand.’ Yeah, they also understood our version, our point of view, and it was really cool. At least, they were understanding our points of view, and what we meant to say.” Participant, 15 years.

**Tool adaptation**

During _My City, My Safety_’s two-year span, over forty activities and workshops were implemented with different groups of girls and boys. These activities were adapted to their identified needs, and were monitored and evaluated. The project’s workshops and tools were continuously improved through replication with other groups. For example, the WSA tool evolved considerably over the course of the project, allowing for greater creative freedom and adaptation to suit the needs of the young people involved (such as favouring photography over check-list note-taking).

**Promoting youth-led initiatives**

Another challenge WICI faced during the project was handing over leadership to youth participants. To ensure this objective was fulfilled, it was necessary to move quickly from structured activities to more flexible approaches, which would encourage participants to take the lead in planning interventions and choosing media projects. It was important that the interventions came from the girls themselves and reflected their interests.

This was a difficult objective to attain in a short two-year period. It takes considerable time to share information and concepts relating to urban development, public space and pre-existing social norms, and safety and exclusion of girls and young women. Before the young participants could carry the project forward, WICI had not only to share this knowledge with them, but also develop and maintain a trusting and open relationship, and support their activities.
Building participants’ leadership and facilitation skills was crucial to making them feel empowered and confident enough to take the project into their own hands. Finally, it was necessary for WICI and its partners to maintain a balance between offering interesting and enriching activities to sustain interest, ensuring participation and retention, and keeping the project structure flexible and open enough to welcome and adapt to new ideas.

The lesson learned here is that any project that truly aims to be youth-led has a better chance of fulfilling this objective if it is developed over a long-term period. In addition, there must be solid preparation including consultations with partners, adaptation of tools, and research and monitoring. It was important to be attentive to each group’s needs and encourage them to express their ideas in safe, non-judgmental spaces.

To validate their points of view and ensure that the young people would take the projects into their own hands, their input was also integral to project evaluation.

**Participant-driven project evaluation**

The evaluation of *My City, My Safety!* was continuous, and sought to involve participants as much as possible. Data was collected after each activity using questionnaires which asked the participants to share their experiences and opinions. Using multiple-choice and open-ended questions, participants were asked their views on the activities and to make suggestions for changes. WICI staff also wrote detailed accounts following each workshop.

An external team from the University of Montreal analyzed and synthesized the data gathered throughout the project, and organized confidential discussions with all the youth groups and WICI staff members. These discussions allowed the project evaluators to ask focused questions and evaluate activities, objectives, and the impact of *My City, My Safety!* on the participants. The participative evaluation process was, in itself, an additional tool to empower the girls by validating their expertise.

**Creating a safe space**

The presence of the WICI staff at Saint-Laurent high school was seen by the girls as helping to create a privileged space in a school where girls were a minority. This was just one example of how the project contributed to creating safe spaces for young women to express themselves.

While the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence cannot be achieved without the participation of men and boys, having a girls-only space to speak, reflect, and share experiences about things that uplifted them or made them unhappy was very important. They shared their questions, stories and their ambivalence about romantic relationships. The project helped to validate their pain and anger about the injustices they felt they had experienced. In turn, these spaces made it possible for girls to nurture their own visions of better worlds.
Reflections, lessons, and impact

The young people themselves shared some of the things they had learned through their participation in the project. Many themes emerged from their individual experiences including discrimination against women, belonging to a minority ethnic group, and age discrimination. Some said they were aware of the physical and verbal violence women faced, and the disrespectful images of women sometimes used by the music industry. Participating in the project also helped girls reflect on their sense of being stigmatised as adolescents, young women, or both. Some felt they did not ‘belong’ and that other people were bothered by them, or their actions. Whether it was because of their gender, clothes, or age, access to public space was restricted and attitudes towards them often negative. Several participants said that they were subject to profiling and felt the police were always “suspicious” of them. A strong recurring theme was the lack of safe, accessible and inexpensive spaces where youth could hang out and be themselves.

The project also had a significant positive “personal” impact on many participants who said they felt more self-confident, empowered, and better able to express their ideas and opinions. They had a feeling of independence and pride at being able to express their true feelings without necessarily wanting to please others. These were the overarching observations made following focus group discussions. Some participants were also able to increase their social support networks. As suggested above, the workshops created very special opportunities for girls to be among themselves (in the case of FACE and Saint-Laurent high-schools), sharing their thoughts and expressing themselves openly.

Impact of the interventions

Through a variety of interventions, participants had the opportunity to interact with and sensitize not only other young people, but also community members, to some of the issues they faced in their social milieus. The magazine launch orchestrated by the Saint-Laurent girls at the metro station demonstrated to the local community that young people could initiate positive activities, and reminded them that young people also faced discrimination and that violence against women was still happening and needs to be denounced. The Nomad Box’s travels also made it possible for many Montrealers in different neighbourhoods to reflect on the obstacles that affected these young women’s urban experience and sense of safety.
CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The three main youth groups which participated in My City, My Safety! and helped develop workshops were very different from one another and diverse within themselves. This multiplicity helped to enrich the project. It provided WICI with an opportunity to adapt its tools and activities, and build its capacity to respond more specifically to participants’ interests and needs. The girls living in Ville Saint-Laurent, a multicultural suburb of Montreal, identified and faced quite different problems from those experienced by the girls at FACE school located in downtown Montreal, for example. The collective experience of each group resulted in an array of thematic areas reflecting their concerns, and a variety of suggested solutions. The geographic, social and cultural diversity of the school neighbourhoods and opportunities to visit others also enabled the participants to reach a wide range of Montreal’s very heterogeneous communities through their interventions. In each case they were able to meet the project’s objective of promoting safer, more inclusive cities free of gender-based violence, and for a diversity of girls and women.

The level of after-school engagement was also very different from group to group. In spite of this, all participants benefited from their experiences to varying degrees. In all cases there was considerable creativity in the solutions devised to respond to the concerns they identified, and they gained confidence and leadership skills by actively organizing and leading community initiatives. For the young women at FACE the project was an opportunity to tackle new topics such as homelessness and inclusion, and the accessibility of public space. For the girls from Saint-Laurent, the project allowed for trust to be built between them and greater freedom of expression on personal concerns, which they were able to extend to a broader concern about discrimination, exclusion and violence against girls and women in the community. For the Saint-Luc Civic Engagement Mediators, the workshops enabled them to acquire new skills and knowledge which they used to very creative effect in their live theatre performances to raise awareness about bullying and exclusion and the civic responsibility of individuals.
The My City, My Safety! project resulted in active engagement with groups of girls – and some boys – living in a diverse urban environment, in the adaptation of existing participatory tools, and the building of new creative partnerships with local artists, urban specialists and NGOs. The adaptation of the women’s safety audit walk to a young public, for example, included the introduction of subjective mapping, and more playful ways of eliciting young women’s experiences of urban life, encouraging them to share their expertise, and sensitising them to their environments. These approaches were so successful that they have subsequently been applied in some of WICI’s international projects with girls. The WSA remains the key participatory data collection tool for eliciting groups’ experiences of security and inclusion in urban space, enabling participants to build new capacities and skills in terms of identifying problems and solutions, while validating their individual experiences. Partnerships with youth workers specializing in the arts also allowed WICI to expand the range of activities offered to participants, and to enrich the project with the creative expertise and wealth of experience they offered. The limited duration of the two-year project was just enough time to foster these relationships, and to adapt and improve WICI tools for a young population. The project also provided some valuable lessons about the challenges of working with young people in a school-based environment, with apparently increasing demands for attention and time, and how these can be overcome. For WICI and all those concerned with the safety of women and girls and the creation of gender-inclusive cities in Canada and elsewhere, these are valuable lessons and outcomes.
# ANNEX

## Ice-breakers

### Here’s my City!
A discussion on elements of the urban environment, on where participants went the day before and how they got there. The goal was to have them reflect on places they liked and the reasons why they preferred some places over others. *(Adapted by Emmanuelle Paris-Cohen and Simone Lucas for Women in Cities International.)*

### One, two, three
In pairs, participants count to 3 at least three times, alternating between each other. At each new level, they must replace the 1, 2, and then the 3 by a sound or a movement. It’s a dynamic activity, which can help wake up sleepy participants. *(Adapted from the Speaking Rights toolkit, by Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education.)*

### Intro Bingo
The goal of this activity is to get participants to get to know one another and realize that, even when they think they know someone, they can never know him or her completely. Each participant uses a chart with different statements written in each box. The participant must find someone who fits the description written on the chart, and mark the person’s name in the corresponding box. He or she must try to fill out a straight line in the chart as soon as possible.
*(Adapted from the Speaking Rights toolkit, by Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education.)*

### The Question Ball
The goal is for participants to say their names, present themselves, and respond to questions that fall beneath their thumbs when they catch the ball, which has questions written all over it. *(Adapted from the leadership and facilitation workshop by LOVE Quebec.)*

### Journalist Exercise
Participants pair up with people they do not know very well and ask their partners questions in order to then present them to the rest of the group. *(Adapted by LOVE Quebec during the leadership and facilitation training.)*

## Activities to discuss and reflect on themes

### Reasoning Activity
Participants are challenged to join 6 points with no more than four lines without lifting their pencils, in three minutes. The exercise seeks to show participants that they can think for themselves, be creative, and go ‘outside the box.’ *(Adapted by Farah Fancy from the Group Herencias.)*

### The Human Knot
The group divides in two teams. Participants form a circle and take each other by the hand to form a human knot. The two teams compete to undo the knot as fast as possible. The goal is for participants to realize that accomplishing a task requires communication and team strategizing.
*(Adapted by Farah Fancy from the Group Herencias.)*

### Three-legged walk
In teams of two, participants tie their legs together. As soon as they are finished, all the teams line up, and all must tie themselves together, so that each participant is tied to someone on either side. All together, the participants must walk in different directions. This exercise aims to develop strategies of support and identify group leaders.
*(Adapted by Farah Fancy from the Group Herencias.)*

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*The summary descriptions of workshops included in this Annex were reproduced from the project evaluator’s report.*
### Meditation on the Ideal City
With the help of a visioning exercise, participants had to imagine their ideal city, which would answer their needs and dreams. This activity aimed to identify youths’ specific ideas for building more inclusive cities. (Adapted from “Creative Tools: Civic Engagement of Young People” by the International Institute for Child Rights and Development.)

### Let’s Speak Rights!
Participants have to identify 5 topics (among a predetermined list of themes) that they would like to talk about. These are then posted on boards with four other categories, which correspond to the people with whom the participants would like to talk about the topics: my parents, my friends, people from my school or community, or my specialised educator. This exercise’s aim is to identify the themes most important to the participants, which could later be integrated into the media production. (Adapted from the Speaking Rights toolkit, by Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education.)

### On a Tight Rope
Participants carry out an exercise where everyone shares his or her opinion on different statements. Before sharing, each participant has to place a post-it on the wall where sheets with the statements have been placed beforehand. The distance between the post-it and the statement should represent the degree to which the participant agrees with the statement. (Adapted from the Speaking Rights toolkit, by Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education.)

### Photo Activity
Each participant has to take a picture of herself and, on a separate piece of paper, write something about herself that no other participant knows, such as a defining moment in her life. The activity asks the participants to associate the experience with the right person, by attaching it to a corresponding picture. The goal is to explore the difficulty of putting oneself in another person’s shoes, and to understand that everyone’s experience is very different. (Adapted by LOVE Quebec.)

### Visioning Exercise
During a visioning session, participants have to imagine something they would like to share with the whole world. They then have to take a picture that represents or symbolises what it is they wish to share, and also write their statement on the picture. (Adapted by Olivier Tsai, from LOVE Quebec.)

### Activities based on the women’s safety audit walk

#### Draw me a Safety Principle
The goal of this exercise is to introduce the different safety principles typical to a safe and inclusive urban environment for girls, women, and the entire community. The group was separated into two teams, and, one after the other, every youth had to draw a security principle that the rest of her team would later have to guess based on the image. (This activity was adapted from the Speaking Rights toolkit, by Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education.)

#### Drawing the Flower
Writing down the different places, events, and activities participants identify as positive in Montreal. Participants draw a flower, each petal representing a participant. Each girl has to fill her petal with the places, events, and activities she likes. Every participant then shares what she wrote, and then all the common words are written in the flower’s center. (Adapted by Melanie Lambrick.)

#### Guessing Activity on the most Loved or Hated Places
Ask all participants to write on a piece of paper the place she most loves, or the place she most hates in Montreal and why. They then place the folded papers in a bowl. Finally, each participant has to pick a paper and guess who wrote it. (Developed by the FACE girls.)
**Draw me a Maple Tree**
The goal of this exercise is for the youth to understand what a subjective drawing is, by asking them all to draw a maple tree, and comparing everyone’s results. Through this activity, participants are made to reflect on how all the drawings that emerge are different, yet represent the same thing and are all valid. This activity precedes the subjective cartography. (Adapted by Simone Lucas for Women in Cities International.)

**Subjective Cartography**
The subjective cartography consist in having participants draw on a blank sheet the neighbourhood in which they live, all the routes they use, the places that are significant to them, their landmarks, sites of defining moments, off-limit places, etc. This process should lead to the recognition of positive and negative aspects of the urban space being mapped out. Through further discussions about the neighbourhood, an itinerary is chosen for the walk. (Adapted by Emmanuelle-Paris Cohen for Women in Cities International.)

**The WSA**
The women’s safety audit walk is a participatory tool that allows for the gathering and analysing of significant information on participants’ experiences and perceptions of safety in public spaces. (Adapted from the Women’s Safety Audit Walk by METRAC and from the Programme Femmes et ville – Ville de Montréal.)

**Scavenger Hunt Style WSA**
Identify stops on an itinerary in advance. During the walk, at each predefined stop, two teams of participants have to find as many negative and positive safety factors as they can, as in a scavenger hunt. Finish the activity in a park or playground, compare answers, and debrief. End this activity with a fun exercise to “reclaim public space” through temporary street art, making chalk drawings on the ground. (Adapted by the FACE girls.)

**Picture-taking Activity During the WSA**
Have participants pair up. Each pair will have one camera and a double-sided red and green frame. Participants can photograph both the positive and negative elements that they find, framing them in red if negative, green if positive. The pictures will then be used to create a montage. (Adapted from the toolkit «Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth, A Manual for Participation,» by D. Driskell.)

**The Identities game**
At the end of the itinerary, or at a predetermined spot, participants play the “identities game,” in which each participant receives a card with an identity on it (an old woman, a 14 year old lesbian, etc.). To reflect upon the different urban realities that exist for different people, the participant has to imagine being in the same place through her character’s eyes. (Adapted by Simone Lucas for Women in Cities International.)

**Group Cartography**
Group cartography allows participants to capture their urban experiences in creative ways, share their visions, and communicate their hopes and desires regarding safety and inclusion with decision-makers. Through group cartography, it is possible to compile individual experiences into a collective one. Two options are proposed: 1) the group can use pictures taken during the walk to reimagine these spaces should they have magic wands, or 2) draw or collage photos, messages, and impressions on a giant neighbourhood map. (Adapted by Emmanuelle Paris-Cohen and Simone Lucas for Women in Cities International.)
Activities to inspire the creation of media and community projects

The «Vox-Pop»
Participants have to make a three-minute video. The medium was chosen by participants in an earlier workshop. Each girl chooses a word that expresses her reason for participating in My City, My Safety!, writes it on a sheet of paper, and reads it in front of the camera. The video content is inspired by questions already explored:
- Why are you participating in My City, My Safety!
- Have you become more conscious of your environment?
- What impact did the project have on you?
- What impact do you wish to have?
- Do you think girls’ experiences of urban space differ from boys?
(Adapted by Fanie St-Michel from Conscience urbaine.)

Brainstorm on Profiling
Each participant receives three post-its on which she has to write three words relating to profiling. Each girl has to stick her post-its onto a blank sheet, creating categories with the post-its of other participants. Everyone then discusses the content and categories to identify an issue to focus on to create a poster on profiling. (Adapted by Emmanuelle Paris-Cohen and Simone Lucas for Women in Cities International.)

Identifying the Design
Identifying the design concept is done using a brainstorm during which participants have to write a maximum number of words, concepts, events, tools, or places that can then serve as ideas to improve the quality of public space. They can come up with problems they wish to remedy, places to be appropriated for interventions, etc. Everyone then chooses a number of post-its and imagines an idea with prospective tools necessary to carry it out, as well as important actors. This activity introduces participants to project planning. (Adapted by Olivier Lapierre.)

Planning a Creative Intervention
Participants have to focus on the content of their media creation, and more specifically, on the message to transmit through their media project. Participants complete a “project guide” in groups of twos or threes. They have to answer the questions What? (theme), How? (material, set-up), Where? (the place) and When? (at what time of day, date). They also have to specify message content:
- Describe the positive and/or negative elements of the place selected.
- Describe a situation where they feel good or uncomfortable in public space.
- Specify how they will implement the creation, or illustrate a place or situation to highlight its positive or negative aspects.
(Adapted by Fanie St-Michel from Conscience urbaine.)

Gibberish Call-Out
Participants have to repeat sounds and words by using different intonations, following the facilitator’s lead. The goal is to introduce participants to different voice techniques. (Adapted by Farah Fancy of Groupe Herencias.)

The Field Dance
Participants have to execute a series of movements symbolizing the repetitive tasks conducted by fieldworkers. Then, they have to add the gibberish call-out practiced in the previous activity. The goal is to introduce different movement techniques to participants. (Adapted by Farah Fancy of Groupe Herencias.)
**Stepping**
In teams of twos, participants have to perform a rhythm using only their bodies; they must then teach the rhythm to the rest of the group. The end result is a combination of all the teams’ rhythms. This activity is meant to practice the use of movement and body for sequencing. (Adapted by Farah Fancy of Groupe Herencias.)

**Group Rhythm Exercise**
As participants gather into a circle and take one another’s hands, each person has to pass a rhythm to her neighbour by squeezing her palm, until the rhythm finds its way back to the person who originated it. (Adapted by Farah Fancy of Groupe Herencias.)

**Spoken Word Exercise**

**Part 1: describe a world without violence**
This exercise consists in separating a sheet of paper into two columns, and writing in the left one ten verbs describing violence (for example, “to hate”, “to steal”, “to beat”). On the right hand side, participants write five verbs describing a violent-free world (for instance “to laugh”, “to reflect”).

**Part 2: key words and feelings**
Among themes identified by the participants, each participant should choose one and write it in the right hand column of her sheet. Then below, each must write five words that relate to that theme. For example, in the case of cyber-bullying, the words “isolation” or “sadness” could be written. Below, each participant has to write five feelings related to that particular situation.

**Part 3: solutions**
At the bottom of the right hand column, each participant has to write five verbs representing solutions to the problem or theme identified in part 2 of the writing exercise.

**Part 4: significant words**
As the last step of the writing exercise, each participant has to choose, among the words in the right hand column, the one most significant to her. She must then write it in a space between each of the previous word groups, and then five times at the end of the sheet. The result forms the chorus of her spoken word piece.

**Part 5: spoken word**
As the group reproduces one of the rhythms invented in a previous exercise, one volunteer reads out her fifteen words with the significant “chorus” word. This reading is done as a spoken word, with the instruction to speak like a gospel preacher. (Adapted by Farah Fancy of Groupe Herencias.)

**Acting Piece on Aggressiveness and Shyness**
Participants have to play out two feelings: aggressiveness and shyness, without using words. She must first perform the feeling in a normal way, followed by a subtle way, and finally in an exaggerated manner. (Adapted by Farah Fancy of Groupe Herencias.)

**Silent Theatre**
As two participants play out the bully and victim, the rest of the group has to side with either one or the other and either engage in a fight or help the victim. The whole piece must be played out in slow motion, without words. Participants then take turns. Two participants at a time can play the role of Directors, giving feedback to their friends from outside, neutral points of view, to make the scenes more realistic. (Adapted by Farah Fancy of Groupe Herencias.)
Training, facilitation, and leadership activities

The Code of Honour
Each participant must identify a value, rule, or principle she deems important during group activities to create a code of honour that will be referred back to in case of problems. (Adapted by LOVE Quebec.)

Training on Facilitating Workshops
Using different role-plays, facilitators from LOVE presented the qualities a good facilitator should have to lead a workshop. (Adapted by LOVE Quebec.)

Workshop Facilitation
Participants were grouped into four-person teams and had twenty minutes to prepare an activity on the theme that was attributed to them. Each group had to facilitate the activity with the other participants and then receive feedback. The workshops conducted by the youths were taken from the Speaking Rights toolkit from Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education:
- The Blind Circle: Participants had to close their eyes, and following the facilitators’ directions, form a big circle.
- Draw me a Right: In this exercise, each participant had to draw a “right” and have her other teammates guess what it was.
- One Step Forward: This activity was on the theme of accessibility and different realities. Each student received a secret identity and had to take one step forward or not depending on whether or not the statement read out by the facilitator applied to her character.
- Cinderella gets new Shoes: Participants tell a new version of the Cinderella story. Each player continues the story when a ball is thrown to them.
- How Violent: Participants had to discuss and classify different statements according to the categories “tough,” “peaceful,” “violent,” or “very violent.” Then the facilitators discussed and debriefed. (Adapted by LOVE Quebec during the leadership and facilitation training.)

Developing a Sketch
- Choose characters
- Every participant notes the character she wants to play in the sketch, without sharing her answer
- Practice the sketch silently
- Participants can use the characters they developed to improve the sketch from the theatre exercise.
- Discussion, debrief, and further development of the sketch
- Participants decide on the message they wish to transmit via their sketch and form the message. The content of the sketch is fleshed out. (Adapted by Farah Fancy of Groupe Herencias.)

Brainstorm around the WOMEN Acronym
For every letter in the word WOMEN, participants suggest corresponding words to describe their visions of women. This activity inspired the content of the Saint-Laurent girls’ project, “Why Women?” (Adapted by Berekhya Yeargeau.)
My City, My Safety!