

A Formative Evaluation of the Civic Participation Training of the City for All Women Initiative

Prepared for:

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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context and Objectives

This report provided the results of a formative evaluation on the City for All Women Initiative's (CAWI) Civic Participation Training program conducted by the Centre for Research on Community and Education Services in collaboration with CAWI in 2008. Three Civic Participation Training workshops have been offered, and the evaluation collected information from various stakeholders on how the program has been implemented and how it could be improved.

Methodology

The methodology involved two focus groups of Civic Participation Training participants, and interviews with City of Ottawa managers (n = 2), Ottawa City Councillors (n = 5), past and present Action Team mentors (n = 3), community organizations (n = 2), Steering Committee members (n = 4), and two CAWI participants (n = 2).

Results

Key findings emerging from the evaluation included:

Level 1 - Reaction

- Overall, the stakeholders believe that the Civic Participation Training is relevant.
- To extend the training to other women with specific needs, women mentioned the importance of accessibility, inclusion, addressing language and translation, and research into their needs.

Level 2 – Learning

- There were many impacts on the personal and professional lives of women, including increased awareness, confidence and empowerment. They gained knowledge in many areas, such as civic engagement and municipal politics, they developed skills in communication and leadership, and they had exposure to different cultures.
- Aspects of training that enhanced learning included the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills from the training, location of training, various methods employed, and support of others.
- Aspects that limited learning were the lack of opportunity to practice leadership skills, language barriers, issues around timing, and the quantity of information in each session.
- Stakeholders offered many suggestions on how to improve the training, focusing on the structure and content of the training.

Level 3 – Taking Action

- Women took the training to the community through advocacy, the education of others, empowerment of the women who complete the training, and applying the training to their job.
- Challenges to diffusing learning to the community included lack of communication between CAWI and community organizations, lack of support from some community organizations, lack of a follow-up mechanism, and other needs taking priority.
- Women were involved in different advocacy campaigns to address specific municipal issues, communicated with City staff, committees and City Councillors, presented deputations, provided feedback to the City, and had contact with the media, among other activities.
- Factors that helped women take their views to City decision-makers were the increased skills, confidence, empowerment, and knowledge gained from the training, along with the support of others.
- Factors that hindered women from bringing their views forward were other priorities in their personal and professional lives, time constraints, lack of confidence, lack of support, and difficulties with communicating in English.
- Suggestions for the Action Teams were increased communication, continued learning during meetings, increased involvement of trainees, a focus on action, increased publicity and recruitment, continued support of CAWI members, and future evaluation.

Level 4 – Results

- Women from CAWI have brought attention to issues relevant to the community and women, making Council consider and debate these issues. CAWI has informed Councillors' decisions.
- City practices and processes that hindered women's concerns from being heard and addressed were access to information, the environment at City Hall, the format required for public feedback, and other priorities at Council.
- CAWI can make women's voices heard more effectively by the City by relationship-building and contact with City staff and Councillors. Councillors provided specific suggestions on preparing deputations in terms of content and presentation. CAWI should work to increase its visibility in Ottawa.

Recommendations

Civic Participation Training Workshops

1. Participants indicated that they could benefit from further knowledge and training in certain areas. **It is recommended that the content of the Civic Participation Training sessions be extended to include further information on communication skills, leadership skills and how to engage the media and make your message heard using the media.**
2. Participants were interested in more experiential training during the workshops. **Therefore, it is recommended that the training delivered by the mentors emphasize skills and ensure that participants have adequate time and opportunity to practice these skills.**
3. To ensure that mentors are adequately prepared to take on the responsibility of mentoring an Action Team, **it is recommended that CAWI continue to work with community organizations to identify appropriate mentors who have the knowledge and resources to fulfill this role.**
4. CAWI needs to continue to do research to maintain the quality of the program. **In order to use the best practices in teaching women knowledge and skills, it is recommended that CAWI staff (Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator, or Education Coordinator) continue to do research into and apply adult educational methods.**
5. With continued monitoring of the Civic Participation Training and the Action Teams, CAWI will be able to identify the strengths that it should maintain as well as improvements that it can make. **Therefore, it is recommended that CAWI staff develop surveys to obtain this information and have CAWI members complete them regularly.** The Steering Committee can examine this feedback, determine how to integrate the feedback in the Training and Action Teams, and implement the recommendations. CAWI could also solicit feedback regarding the mentors and then provide this feedback to mentors so they can adjust to the needs of the Action Team members.
6. Several CAWI participants expressed frustration with the system in place for the translation of the training session content. The CAWI leadership indicated that steps have been taken to improve the translation, ensuring that the translation is complete, but does not affect the momentum of the training. **As translation was a common concern raised by women during the evaluation, it is recommended that CAWI seek feedback specifically on the translation process and how to improve it as part of the recommended ongoing evaluation of the Civic Participation Training.** Monitoring whether training participants are satisfied

with the translation process will allow the Steering Committee to determine whether further changes are required as well as provide suggestions for doing that.

Action Teams

7. **To continue to develop the skills of CAWI members and increase the attendance at the Action Team meetings, it is recommended that training in specific skills be provided during the Action Team meetings and that guest speakers be invited to present during Action Team meetings.**
8. **To encourage participation in the Action Teams, it is recommended that CAWI work on creating a welcoming environment for participants. This can involve providing snacks and beverages to increase comfort of participants.**
9. **To facilitate the participation of Action Team members, it is recommended that participants be consistently compensated for the transportation and childcare costs that are required to attend the meetings and activities. CAWI should ensure that women are aware that funds are available to cover the cost of transportation and childcare and develop a way of making the compensation accessible.**

Making Women's Voices Heard

10. **To foster good relationships with community organizations and understand their mandates, CAWI should continue to develop and maintain open communication with the community organizations that send their members to the Civic Participation Training. In order to inform community organizations about CAWI, it is recommended that CAWI develop a flyer or information sheet outlining its achievements to provide to community organizations.**
11. **It is recommended that CAWI hold an Annual General Meeting. Representatives from the community organizations could be invited to attend an Annual General Meeting to find out more about CAWI and how they could continue to partner with CAWI.**
12. **CAWI needs to ensure that women take their learning from the Civic Participation Training back to their communities. Therefore, it is recommended that CAWI solicit regular feedback by surveying community organizations on this issue.**
13. **CAWI could also assist women in applying the training within their communities. It is recommended that CAWI work with women and community organizations to identify specific, concrete ways that will facilitate women bringing their training back to their community and their community organization.**

14. CAWI needs to work on increasing its visibility within Ottawa. **Therefore, it is recommended that CAWI increase its exposure in the media by periodically sending out press releases and making representatives available to the media for commenting on municipal issues as they arise.**

15. **In order to increase its visibility and publicize the Civic Participation Training workshops, it is recommended that CAWI provide short information sessions to women throughout Ottawa, giving them information to increase their knowledge of how the City works and how they can express their views to the City decision makers.**

16. City staff and Councillors emphasized the importance of ongoing contact. They also indicated their willingness to meet and work with members of CAWI to discuss current issues, deputations, and City reports. **Therefore, to ensure that women's voices are heard at the municipal level, it is recommended that women from CAWI maintain contact with City Councillors, City staff, and advisory committees.**

General

17. **It recommended that the CAWI Steering Committee review the evaluation recommendations, determine which ones to implement, and develop action plans to put them in place.**

B. SOMMAIRE

Contexte et objectifs

Ce rapport présente les résultats d'une évaluation formative du programme de formation en participation citoyenne de l'Initiative : une ville pour toutes les femmes (IVTF), effectuée en 2008 par le Centre de recherche sur les services éducatifs et communautaires, avec le concours d'IVTF. Trois ateliers de formation en participation citoyenne ont eu lieu, et l'évaluation a été effectuée grâce à l'information recueillie auprès de diverses parties prenantes sur la mise en oeuvre du programme et les améliorations possibles.

Méthodologie

La méthodologie repose sur deux groupes de discussion constitués de participantes à la formation en participation citoyenne et sur des entrevues avec des gestionnaires municipales (n = 2), des conseillers, conseillères, de la Ville d'Ottawa (n = 5), des mentores (anciennes et actuelles) d'équipes d'actions (n = 3), des représentantes d'organisations communautaires (n = 2), des membres du comité directeur (n = 4), et deux participantes d'IVTF (n = 2).

Résultats

Les principales constatations ressortant de l'évaluation sont les suivantes :

Niveau 1 – Réaction

- Globalement, les intéressés croient que la formation en participation citoyenne est pertinente.
- Les femmes ont mentionné que pour rendre la formation accessible à d'autres femmes ayant des besoins particuliers, les facteurs importants sont les suivants : l'accessibilité; l'inclusion; la langue et la traduction; la recherche sur leurs besoins.

Niveau 2 – Apprentissage

- Il y a eu plusieurs effets sur la vie personnelle et professionnelle des femmes, y compris un accroissement de la sensibilisation et de la confiance et un renforcement des moyens d'action. Elles ont acquis des connaissances dans différents domaines comme l'engagement civique et la politique municipale; perfectionné des compétences en communication et en leadership; et côtoyé d'autres cultures.
- Les aspects de la formation qui ont amélioré l'apprentissage comprennent l'occasion de mettre en pratique les connaissances et les habiletés enseignées; l'emplacement de la formation; la variété des méthodes employées; et le soutien des autres.

- Les aspects qui ont gêné l'apprentissage sont le manque d'occasions de se servir des compétences en leadership; des préoccupations linguistiques; le choix du moment pour la tenue de la formation; et la quantité d'information présentée à chaque séance.
- Les intéressés ont offert plusieurs suggestions, centrées sur la structure et le contenu de la formation, visant l'amélioration de la formation.

Niveau 3 – Passer à l'action

- Les femmes ont transporté leur apprentissage dans la communauté en utilisant la promotion, l'éducation des autres et le renforcement du pouvoir des femmes qui terminent la formation, et en mettant leurs nouvelles connaissances en pratique dans leur travail.
- Les défis qui ont empêché l'enseignement de se rendre dans la communauté sont le manque de communication entre IVTF et les organisations communautaires; l'insuffisance de soutien de la part de certaines organisations communautaires; l'absence de mécanisme de suivi; et la priorité accordée à d'autres besoins.
- Entre autres activités, les femmes ont participé à différentes campagnes de promotion abordant des préoccupations municipales particulières; communiqué avec le personnel de la Ville, avec les comités et avec les conseillers, conseillères, municipaux; présenté des députations; formulé des commentaires à la Ville; et établi des contacts avec les médias.
- Les facteurs qui ont aidé les femmes à présenter leur point de vue aux décideurs municipaux sont les compétences élargies, la confiance, le renforcement des moyens d'action et les connaissances, tirés de la formation, ainsi que l'appui des autres.
- Les facteurs qui ont empêché les femmes d'exprimer leur point de vue sont les priorités dans leurs vies personnelle et professionnelle; des contraintes de temps; le manque de confiance; le manque de soutien; et des difficultés à communiquer en anglais.
- Les suggestions faites aux équipes d'action sont des communications plus fréquentes; un apprentissage continu pendant les réunions; une participation accrue des stagiaires; un accent sur l'action; une meilleure publicité; un recrutement plus intensif; le soutien continu des membres d'IVTF; et une évaluation future.

Niveau 4 – Résultats

- Les femmes d'IVTF ont attiré l'attention sur des préoccupations touchant la communauté et les femmes, obligeant le Conseil à considérer et à débattre ces questions. IVTF a éclairé les décisions des conseillers et conseillères.
- Les pratiques et processus de la Ville qui entravent l'écoute et la considération du point de vue des femmes sont l'accès à l'information; l'atmosphère à l'Hôtel de Ville; les mécanismes de rétroaction publique; et les priorités du Conseil.

- préparation des députations, relativement au contenu et à la présentation. IVTF devrait travailler à augmenter sa visibilité dans la ville d'Ottawa.

Recommandations

Ateliers de formation en participation citoyenne

1. Les participantes ont indiqué qu'elles pourraient tirer avantage de connaissances plus approfondies et de formation complémentaire dans certains domaines. **Il est recommandé que le contenu des sessions de formation en participation citoyenne soit enrichi d'informations supplémentaires dans les domaines suivants : techniques de communication; compétences en leadership; comment obtenir la collaboration des médias; et comment faire entendre votre message en passant par les médias.**
2. Les participantes ont démontré un intérêt pour davantage de formation expérientielle durant les ateliers. **Il est donc recommandé que la formation dispensée par les mentores mette l'accent sur les compétences et veille à ce que les participantes aient du temps et des occasions convenables pour mettre ces compétences en pratique.**
3. Pour faire en sorte que les mentores soient suffisamment préparées à assumer les responsabilités de mentorat d'une équipe d'action, **il est recommandé qu'IVTF continue à travailler avec les organisations communautaires pour identifier des femmes mentores compétentes, qui possèdent les connaissances et les ressources pour remplir ce rôle.**
4. IVTF doit continuer ses recherches afin de conserver la qualité du programme. Afin d'utiliser les meilleures pratiques lors de l'enseignement de connaissances et de compétences aux femmes, **il est recommandé que le personnel d'IVTF (la coordonnatrice, la coordonnatrice adjointe ou la coordonnatrice d'éducation) continue les recherches dans le domaine des méthodes d'éducation des adultes et mette ces méthodes en pratique.**
5. Grâce à une évaluation continue de la formation en participation citoyenne et des équipes d'action, IVTF pourra cerner les qualités qu'elle devrait conserver ainsi que les améliorations qu'elle peut apporter. **Il est donc recommandé que le personnel d'IVTF produise des sondages pour obtenir cette information et demande régulièrement aux membres d'IVTF de les remplir.** Le Comité directeur peut étudier cette rétroaction, décider de la façon de l'intégrer dans la formation et dans les équipes d'action, et mettre en œuvre les recommandations. IVTF pourrait aussi demander des commentaires sur les mentores, puis fournir cette rétroaction aux mentores pour qu'elles puissent s'ajuster aux besoins des membres des équipes d'action.
6. Plusieurs participantes d'IVTF ont exprimé une frustration relativement au système actuel de traduction du contenu des sessions de formation. La direction d'IVTF a indiqué que des mesures ont été prises pour améliorer la traduction pour faire en sorte

que celle-ci soit complète sans qu'il y ait d'effet sur l'élan de la formation. **Étant donné que la traduction était une des préoccupations courantes des femmes dans l'évaluation, il est recommandé qu'IVTF demande explicitement, dans le cadre de l'évaluation continue de la formation en participation citoyenne, des commentaires sur le procédé de traduction et des suggestions pour l'améliorer.** Un suivi concernant la satisfaction des participantes sur le processus de traduction permettra au Comité directeur d'évaluer si d'autres changements sont requis, et fournira des suggestions pour ce faire.

Équipes d'action

- 7. Pour continuer à développer les compétences des membres d'IVTF et à augmenter les présences aux réunions des équipes d'action, il est recommandé qu'une formation portant sur des compétences particulières soit offerte pendant les réunions des équipes d'action, et que des conférenciers, conférencières, soient invités à venir faire une présentation pendant les réunions.**
- 8. Pour encourager la participation aux équipes d'action, il est recommandé qu'IVTF s'efforce de créer un environnement accueillant pour les participantes. Par exemple, des collations et des boissons pourraient être offertes pour améliorer le confort des participantes.**
- 9. Pour faciliter la participation des membres des équipes d'action, il est recommandé que les participantes soient systématiquement dédommagées pour les coûts de transport et de garde d'enfants requis pour assister aux réunions et aux activités. IVTF devrait s'assurer que les femmes ont connaissance du fait que des fonds sont disponibles pour couvrir ces frais, et trouver une façon de rendre la compensation accessible.**

Faire entendre les voix des femmes

- 10. Pour favoriser de bonnes relations avec les organisations communautaires et comprendre leurs mandats, IVTF devrait continuer à favoriser et maintenir une communication ouverte avec les organisations communautaires qui envoient leurs membres à la formation en participation citoyenne. **Pour renseigner les organisations communautaires sur IVTF, il est recommandé qu'IVTF produise un prospectus ou une fiche de renseignements décrivant ses réalisations et mette ce document à la disposition des organisations communautaires.****
- 11. Il est recommandé qu'IVTF tienne une assemblée générale annuelle. Des représentants, représentantes, des organisations communautaires pourraient être invités à une assemblée générale annuelle pour en apprendre davantage sur IVTF et découvrir comment continuer leur partenariat.**

12. IVTF doit s'assurer que les femmes transportent leur apprentissage de la formation en participation citoyenne jusqu'à leurs communautés. **Il est donc recommandé qu'IVTF sollicite régulièrement une rétroaction en questionnant les organisations communautaires à ce sujet.**
13. IVTF pourrait aussi aider les femmes à mettre leur apprentissage en pratique dans leurs communautés. **Il est recommandé qu'IVTF travaille avec les femmes et les organisations communautaires pour trouver des façons précises et concrètes de faciliter l'acheminement de l'apprentissage des femmes vers leur communauté et leur organisation communautaire.**
14. IVTF doit s'efforcer d'augmenter sa visibilité dans la ville d'Ottawa. **Il est donc recommandé qu'IVTF augmente son exposition médiatique en envoyant périodiquement des communiqués de presse et en mettant des représentantes à la disposition des médias pour émettre des commentaires sur des questions municipales pertinentes.**
15. Afin d'augmenter sa visibilité et de publiciser la formation en participation citoyenne, **il est recommandé qu'IVTF offre de courtes séances d'information aux femmes dans toute la ville d'Ottawa, et leur fournisse des informations pour améliorer leur compréhension du fonctionnement de la Ville et des façons d'exprimer leur point de vue aux décideurs municipaux.**
16. Le personnel de la Ville et les conseillers, conseillères, municipaux ont souligné l'importance d'un contact continu. Ils ont aussi fait connaître leur disposition à rencontrer des membres d'IVTF et à travailler avec elles pour discuter d'affaires courantes, de députations et de rapports municipaux. **Il est donc recommandé, afin de veiller à ce que les voix des femmes soient entendues à l'échelon municipal, que les femmes d'IVTF maintiennent le contact avec les conseillers, conseillères, le personnel de la Ville et les comités consultatifs.**

Général

17. **Il est recommandé que le Comité consultatif d'IVTF examine les recommandations découlant de l'évaluation, détermine lesquelles mettre en oeuvre et établisse un processus pour les mettre en application.**

C. CITY FOR ALL WOMEN INITIATIVE: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The City for All Women Initiative – Initiative; une ville pour toutes les femmes (CAWI-IVTF) was created in 2004 to ensure that the issues and concerns relevant to women of diverse backgrounds were considered by City decision-makers and research the best practices on how to achieve this aim. The goal of CAWI is to strengthen the capacity of the full diversity of women and their organizations to work with the City of Ottawa to create a more inclusive city. Since June 2004, CAWI has been recognized as a city-community partnership.

In 2004, CAWI conducted a survey of 29 community organizations to explore the experiences and concerns of diverse women in Ottawa. This survey indicated that many women and community organizations felt excluded from City decision-making (CAWI - IVTF, 2004). As a result of the survey, CAWI developed a Civic Participation Training to respond to the needs of the Ottawa community.

The goal of the training is to ensure that women and community organizations can bring their views forward to Ottawa City Hall. In order to meet this goal, CAWI has offered three sets of Civic Participation Training sessions, in 2004, 2006, and 2007. All of the training was provided bilingually as all handouts were provided in English and French, and English and French translations of the discussions and presentations were provided orally.

The first set of training sessions in 2004 was a day and a half long workshop attended by 37 participants, including four mentors, and focused on the City budget. The second set of training sessions involved four full day workshops held on weekdays between April and December 2006. The focus of this training was the municipal election and the City budget. Twenty eight women participated, including four mentors.

The most recent set of training sessions, which was held between April and November 2007, also involved four full day workshops. The content of the training sessions focused on City priority setting and the City budget. Forty one participants were involved in the training, including six mentors. Some participants have attended more than one set of training sessions.

The training sessions were attended by women recruited through different community organizations representing the diversity of women in Ottawa. These community organizations were each asked to identify two women to send to the training sessions with the understanding that women will take their learning from the training back to the organization. The participants have included women from communities that are under represented among municipal decision-makers, including women who are Aboriginal, immigrant, visible minority, living with disabilities, francophone and living in poverty.

During the trainings, four Action Teams were established to continue to engage women, allowing women to put their learning from the training into action and supporting them in taking action at the municipal level. These Action Teams were Safe and Affordable Housing, Employment and Training, Services in French, and Safety and Crime Prevention. The mentors coordinated the organization of the Action Teams. In the context of the Action Teams, women were involved in activities to make their voices heard at City Hall, such as presenting deputations to City Council.

Status of Women Canada provided funding to CAWI beginning in 2004, offering two grants and transitional funding. The Ontario Trillium Foundation provided funding for the 2006 and 2007 trainings. Funding has also been provided by United Way since June 2007 and the Ottawa Community Foundation provided CAWI with a one-time grant in May 2007.

D. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Three sets of Civic Participation Training sessions, including two 4-day workshops, have been conducted. Some feedback has been sought from participants. However, there has not been a comprehensive or systematic evaluation of the training involving different stakeholders. This evaluation sought feedback from various stakeholders, including CAWI participants, mentors, Steering Committee members, City Councillors, City staff, and community organizations. The evaluation is being conducted to provide feedback to CAWI on how to improve the Civic Participation Training. This information will be helpful in the development and implementation of future trainings.

According to Kirkpatrick (2006), there are four levels to consider when evaluating training programs. These levels include 1) reaction to the training, 2) learning from the training, 3) behaviour, or actions, that occurs as a result of the training, and 4) the results of these actions. The Civic Participation Training sessions were evaluated according to these four levels.

The following are the evaluation questions according to each of these levels of evaluation.

Level 1 – Reaction

- Is the training relevant?
- How can we better address the interests or needs of specific groups of women (women with physical disabilities, visible minorities, Francophones, new Canadians, Aboriginal)?

Level 2 – Learning

- What impact has CAWI had on participants' personal lives?
- What did participants learn from the training?
- What aspects of training helped learning?
- What aspects of training hindered learning?
- How can the training be improved?

Level 3 – Taking Action (Behaviour)

- Are women taking their training back to their community?
- What challenges might prevent women from taking their training back to their community?
- Are women taking their views to City decision-makers?
- What helped women's ability to take their views to City decision-makers?
- What hindered women's ability to take their views to City decision-makers?
- How can the Action Teams be modified to increase participation?

Level 4 – Results

- What impact did the civic engagement of women from CAWI have on City decision-makers?
- What in the City process and practices hinder women's concerns being heard and addressed?
- How can CAWI make women's voices heard more effectively at the municipal level?

E. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

In keeping with the focus on empowerment and skill development inherent in CAWI (Klodawsky, 2007), a participatory methodology was employed during the evaluation of the Civic Participation Trainings. Three members of the CAWI, along with a Practicum Student from the Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services at the University of Ottawa, conducted the evaluation. All CAWI members were given the opportunity to provide their input on the evaluation questions and methodology during a presentation to CAWI members at an Action Team meeting held prior to the beginning of the evaluation.

Several methods were used to collect information on the evaluation questions, including focus groups, interviews with stakeholders, and reviewing program documents, including a 2007 Final Report to the Status of Women Canada.

Two focus groups were conducted with CAWI members in June and July 2008, one held in English and the other in French (see Appendix A for Focus Group Protocol). The first was attended by one observer and nine women who had participated in the

trainings, including 4 mentors. All of the trainings had been attended by at least 3 of the focus group attendees. The second focus group involved two Francophone CAWI members, who had attended the 2006 and 2007 training sessions.

Eighteen interviews were conducted during the evaluation in June and July 2008 (see Appendix B-G for Interview Protocols). Interviews were held with two City of Ottawa managers, five Ottawa City Councillors, three past and present Action Team mentors, two community organizations (and an additional organization provided some written feedback), four Steering Committee members (plus two others who were interviewed in other capacities), and two CAWI participants, who were interviewed individually to provide more in-depth information regarding the impact that the Civic Participation had on a personal level.

F. EVALUATION FINDINGS

Level 1 – Reaction

Relevance of the Training

CAWI participants and mentors agreed that the content of the Civic Participation training is relevant to their needs. It provides a good match with the knowledge, understanding, tools, and skills that participants require to make their voices heard at the municipal level. The training also addresses diversity, thus it is relevant to different groups of women.

Addressing the Needs and Interests of Diverse Women

CAWI aims to be inclusive and involve women of diverse backgrounds in the Civic Participation Training. CAWI members, mentors, and Steering Committee members provided several suggestions on how to better address the needs and interests of women from diverse backgrounds, such as women with physical disabilities, visible minorities, Francophones, new Canadians, and Aboriginal women.

Accessibility

In terms of meeting the needs of diverse women, there were suggestions such as ensuring the accessibility of meeting and training locations for seniors and women with disabilities.

Language

Francophone women noted that they enjoyed training and meeting with Anglophone women so they could be exposed to their views and understand their concerns. However, the translation in sessions from English to French was a concern as they noted that the translation often seemed rushed and lacked the full content of the English discussion. Providing a more thorough French translation or having additional

translators were two suggestions to address difficulties with translation. Another idea to address this concern was to implement separate English and French training sessions, and possibly adding training sessions in other languages as training expands in the future.

Inclusion

Inclusion was important with respect to ensuring that the materials and training session were pertinent to women coming from a wide range of backgrounds. It was also suggested that having more planning done by women from different backgrounds would increase the sense of ownership of these women toward the training.

Research

Continued research into the needs of diverse groups of women, such as those with disabilities or New Canadians, will be helpful in further meeting and continuing to meet their needs. This could involve approaching and consulting with organizations that work with specific groups to ask their advice or establishing a mechanism as part of CAWI so people can do research to identify the needs of different groups. Addressing the issues that are currently relevant to the specific groups of women could also help in ensuring that they benefit from the training.

Level 2 – Learning

Impact of CAWI on Participants

CAWI members and mentors spoke of many ways in which CAWI's Civic Participation Training has benefited them. These impacts included increased awareness, confidence and a sense of empowerment, positive effects at work, and the development of new relationships.

Increased Awareness

Women reported that they became more aware on various levels. They learned about the experiences of other groups. With this awareness came a desire to give more back to the community. One reported a newfound passion for politics, and now she now keeps herself updated on local and global politics. Women gained knowledge of politics and issues affecting women, and a deepened understanding of how the City works and how they can express their views.

Increased Confidence and Empowerment

Women described increased confidence as a result of the training. This confidence involved feeling less afraid to express an opinion and feeling confident to speak in front of a large group of people. Women reported feeling capable and believing that their experience, views, and opinions are important. The training gave the “opportunity to women to feel they are someone, can do what they want, they can fly.” They believed that they could make a difference through their voices. Specifically, women felt

empowered to speak out for women's issues and gained the courage to speak in front of municipal Councillors, and one woman reported that she "felt reborn."

Women described a strong emotional connection to the training, using words such as life changing and indicating that "CAWI is inside my heart, part of my life." Other women described the impact of the Civic Participation Training in the following ways.

"I participated in the Civic Participation and I have learned that I can make a difference by helping women from various communities to have their voices heard."

"As a newcomer, it allowed me to feel I can impact the City and make a change."

"As an immigrant, it changed my view of the City, empowered me, allowed me to be more proactive, understand my position in this society."

"Je suis capable de faire des choses je n'étais pas capable il y a 6-7 ans. Il m'a ouvert la porte...le tour des autres femmes pour passer par la porte."

Positive Effects at Work

For some women, the CAWI training was applicable to their jobs and they integrated their learning from CAWI to their approach at work and took on new challenges because of their experiences with CAWI. Another woman reported that her learning from the CAWI training was an integral part of how she obtained her new job, "I got a job and, I believe due to my high confidence, I did great in my job interview. Earlier, I got nervous even to hand over my resume."

Development of New Relationships

The training gave women the opportunity to meet new women who they might not have met otherwise and share their experiences with them. This sharing was described as rewarding and empowering. One woman indicated that she learned to listen deeper.

What Participants Learned

Women who had taken the Civic Participation Training described learning about many different topics, including city politics, civic engagement, communication, culture, and leadership.

City Politics

The trainings covered a broad range of topics and the findings reflected that diversity. Many women spoke of their increased knowledge of municipal politics as an area of learning. This learning included: 1) the municipal political system, 2) different municipal issues 3) how to raise awareness of issues at City Hall, 4) the three parts of government (municipal, provincial, federal), 5) the budget, 6) how to manage a budget, 7) City programs (employment and training), 8) how Council operates, 9) importance of community awareness of the municipal political process.

Civic Engagement

The participants reported that one of the skills they learned was how to speak out and make their voices heard on behalf of their communities. They gained the knowledge that they can make their voices count and can have an impact. The participants became aware that they have the right to be involved in the City and to “open doors for women.” The training provided women with a sense of empowerment and the knowledge that they can achieve their goals, with one participant stating that CAWI has “empowered me, allowed me to be more proactive, understand my position in this society.”

Communication

Women also reported that they learned communication skills during the training. These skills included how to contact and meet with City Councillors. They also gained public speaking and presentation skills, including speaking in front of Councillors, as well as writing skills.

Culture

With the opportunity to meet women from diverse backgrounds, women indicated that they learned about different cultures.

Leadership

Women learned leadership skills through role modeling, and the program enhanced their management and leadership skills, as well as providing leadership resources.

Other

Women had the opportunity to get Canadian work experience and information on employment. Enhancement of interpersonal skills was a gain for another woman. Women also learned how the media works.

Aspects of Training that Helped Learning

CAWI members and mentors identified several aspects of the training that enhanced learning. These aspects were the opportunity to apply the training, having guest speakers, the location of training, the methods used, and the support provided.

Applying training

Learning was enhanced by the opportunities available to participants to put the knowledge and skills that they learned during the training sessions into practice. Women did public presentations to Council, which are known as deputations, they went to committees, and engaged in action using their learning from the Civic Participation Training.

Guest Speakers

Having guest speakers, such as City Councillors, come to the training was reported to be useful.

Location

All of the workshops included at least a visit to Ottawa City Hall and Council Chamber. Half of the 2006 training was held at City Hall and the 2007 training was conducted there in its entirety. Women appreciated the opportunity to see the Council Chamber and felt it was helpful to do the training at City Hall, “in the hub.”

Method

The visual tools used to present some information, such as the depiction of City Council, made that information clear and understandable. That facilitators presented information using different modalities (visual, auditory), which assisted the participants in understanding the information by taking into account different learning styles.

Support

Women noted that having support from other women in CAWI was important. It was helpful knowing that other women had similar goals and they supported one another in reaching those goals. Women also benefited from learning about the experiences of other women and other groups.

Aspects of Training that Hindered Learning

CAWI members and mentors identified aspects of training that hindered learning, such as language, the timing of the sessions, and the quantity of information.

Language

Language was identified as a concern in a few cases. Some felt that the language used in the training was geared to women with well-developed language abilities. There was also concern regarding the translation. In addition to concerns about whether the French translation captured all of the English discussion, some women felt that the translation increased the length of the sessions and affected the momentum and dynamics of the training. Women’s interest and attention appeared to diminish while the translation was occurring.

Timing of Sessions

Time was a hindrance in several ways. The training sessions were felt to be long. At times, the sessions started late and it would be preferable if they began and ended on time. The time between training sessions was also a concern. Some of the sessions were perceived as too far apart in time. When the sessions were a few months apart, participants felt there was a loss of momentum.

Quantity of Information

The training sessions covered a lot of material and some participants felt that some of the sessions included too much information. As a result, the sessions were tiring for participants and facilitators.

Other Hindrances

One difficulty with ensuring that the training is applicable to all participants is that participants have different needs and interests, thus some information or components of training may be less relevant to some participants. One woman noted that the content of the training was repetitious. Transportation was also a concern for some.

Improving Training

The stakeholders have provided many different suggestions for improving the Civic Participation Training workshops.

Clarity of Information

The training would be clearer if the presentation of the training content was simplified and more accessible to women who are less familiar with English. The focus of the training should also be clear.

Education

The City staff and Councillors believed that education on the current municipal political situation, the rights of citizens, and the role of Councillors was important. However, none of the CAWI participants suggested further political education as an improvement, suggesting that the training addresses this topic adequately.

Facilitation of Participation

To ensure that women are able to participate in the training, it is important to look case-by-case to see what women need to facilitate their participation, such as an honorarium, the cost of transportation, or childcare.

Feedback for CAWI and Continued Evaluation

To ensure that the training continues to meet the needs and interests of the participants, CAWI should continue to evaluate the Civic Participation Training and seek feedback from the participants. The feedback would help identify aspects of training that participants enjoy as well as areas of training that should be added.

On the first day of training, women could be asked to identify their needs and interests, so CAWI can be aware of them and try to address them. Women could also bring feedback from the communities back to CAWI. With this continuous evaluation and feedback, the Civic Participation Training can be upgraded to meet the changing needs of the participants and the changing political environment in the City of Ottawa.

Feedback for Participants

In order for participants to benefit further from the training, the participants could have more time to meet with the facilitators for feedback. This feedback could provide them with more information on how to improve various skills.

Guest Speaker

Women were interested in having more guest speakers come to the trainings. These speakers could be individuals who have been involved in action in the City through organizations, such as Better Ottawa or 20/20. These presenters could speak about their experiences, providing knowledge, new ideas, and inspiration to the CAWI trainees. These speakers could also be people who have experienced an issue first-hand so they can inform the trainees of their experiences. The guest speakers could be resource people, or Councillors. They could be individuals from different cultural backgrounds. The speakers should include both men and women, providing different perspectives.

Media Training

Media training was identified as an important topic to address. Women would like to have knowledge of ways to make their voices heard through the media. They suggested that individuals who work in the media be involved in the training and be invited as guest speakers.

Mentors

The selected mentors should be resourceful, so they can contribute to CAWI. Qualities that were thought to be important for mentors include an in-depth knowledge of the area that they are mentoring, skills in facilitating meetings, and skills in facilitating and assisting women in bringing their views to the City.

New Methods

Some new methods of providing information and practicing skills were suggested. The training should be interactive, allowing participants to be actively involved. Generally, women were interested in learning in small groups. One idea was to have a panel discussion on a relevant issue. The panel could include presentations and discussions conducted by guest speakers, followed by questions from the CAWI participants. CAWI could organize a conference so participants could learn about an issue, ask questions, and practice public speaking. A forum could also be held to talk about issues that are relevant to municipal politics.

New Topics

Women indicated that they were interested in having new workshops developed for returning participants. Several new topics for this training were suggested including information on different cultures, getting to know the specific Councillors, affordable housing, how to do job searches, and maintaining employment. Women were also interested in developing skills for working in the Action Teams, such as facilitation skills, including running a meeting and setting an agenda, and learning conflict resolution to

address difficulties that may arise within a team. Another suggestion was to develop a workshop for women interested in seeking a position on the City Council.

Outreach / Shorter Training

CAWI should reach out to different communities. In order to offer the training to women who cannot commit as much time to the training, it was suggested that CAWI could offer a shorter, one-day workshop. CAWI could go into the community to offer these workshops. Outreach education in the community would also make CAWI more visible and more women would become aware of the organization.

Participant Involvement

The involvement of the participants in the design and implementation of the training was another suggestion for improvement. Women should be involved at the planning level to increase their ownership of the program. To get further support and direction from the trainees, an advisory committee could be developed. Women could be involved in identifying the concerns and issues for the training to address.

Recruitment

In order to recruit more women from the community, there should be an increased focus on marketing. For example, CAWI could use flyers to advertise. Many more women could benefit from the Civic Participation Training, if they were aware of it. During the recruitment and selection process, CAWI should ensure that new participants are motivated to continue their involvement with the Action Teams and CAWI after the completion of the training.

Relaxed Environment

Some women may feel uncomfortable joining the training, so it is important to ensure they feel comfortable and included.

Skill-Based Training

To make the training hands-on and relevant, skills-based training was identified as important. This training could involve practicing skills, such as presentation skills, rather than focusing only on transmitting information didactically. With an opportunity to learn and practice, women will be able to gain concrete skills. Women would also like to ensure that there will be adequate opportunity for the mentors and the participants to apply their knowledge and skills.

Communication Skills. Women expressed a great deal of interest in further training on communication skills. They were interested in learning methods to get their message out. Public speaking was of particular concern, with women wanting the opportunity to practice these skills as well as to receive feedback, so they can continue to refine these skills. In order to be prepared to answer the questions that are asked by the Councillors following deputations, women wanted to practice improvising responses to questions. Another recommended addition was the use of communication tools, such as using statistics or designing a PowerPoint presentation.

Leadership Skills. Women explicitly reported that they felt that it would be important to continue to develop their leadership skills.

Student Involvement

University students who are not currently aware of how the City works could be targeted for involvement in the training. These university students could be trained in civic engagement. In turn, the university students could provide presentations at the high school level to students, so the high school students can become aware of municipal politics and how they can become civically engaged.

Timing of Training

The time between the sessions could be reduced to maintain the momentum of the training. For instance, the summer break could be eliminated.

Level 3 – Taking Action

Diffusing Training to the Community

CAWI members, mentors, Steering Committee members, and community organizations identified several different ways in which women are diffusing the training they receive from CAWI back to the community, including through their advocacy efforts, participating in the education of others, contributing to the empowerment of community members, and applying the training in their work at a community organization.

Advocacy Efforts

One primary way in which communities are benefiting from CAWI is that women from CAWI are advocating for others at the municipal level, particularly for those who are unable to speak out for themselves. For example, one participant is doing advocacy for women from diverse backgrounds for better integration.

Education of Others

The CAWI trainees are motivated to share their learning with other women. After completing the training, CAWI participants educate other women in the community about what they learned including how the City works. Women also have the opportunity to exchange information with women involved in different organizations.

Empowerment

After the training, the participants, who are members of different community organizations, are empowered, helping them to do more within their communities. One organization commented that the training “brings new strengths back to [organization].”

Application of Training in Work

In other cases, the training is explicitly taken back to community organizations. One participant noted that her participation in CAWI is encouraged by her Executive Director at her community organization, and she is expected to bring her learning back to the organization. Ways in which learning from the training has been integrated by the employees of community organizations include planning workshops that provide public education on making people aware of their power to be engaged as citizens and how to speak for themselves and their community.

Other Comments

While there are several ways in which training benefits communities and community organizations, it was noted that there is still a need for more women participating in CAWI to take their training back to their communities.

Challenges in Diffusing Training to the Community

CAWI mentors and community organizations described several challenges that impede women from diffusing their learning to the community.

Communication between CAWI and Community Organizations

Communication between CAWI and the community organizations was seen as important as some organizations were not very aware of CAWI or did not have current information about CAWI. One way of increasing communication is for CAWI to maintain communication with the organization's executive director or chair so s/he has adequate information about CAWI. Along with contacting heads of organizations, CAWI could engage the middle managers, as some are not well-informed about CAWI. CAWI could also provide organizations with an annual action plan highlighting the involvement of mentors. Along with ensuring that organizations have information about CAWI, CAWI could also be more aware of community organizations. For example, by understanding the values and mandates of different organizations CAWI can identify strategies to work with them. Establishing a good relationship with community organizations may result in increased support for CAWI members from these organizations.

Support from Organization

One organization was perceived as not providing adequate support to the CAWI participant who was part of the organization. This lack of support could be due a lack of experience with CAWI or lack of interest on the part of the organization or managers.

Follow Up

There is currently no follow-up mechanism to ensure that women are taking their training back to their community organization. With no monitoring of this issue at the organization or CAWI, it is difficult to determine and ensure that the communities and organizations are benefiting from the training.

Other Needs

Some women who participated in CAWI are currently involved in trying to meet more basic needs in their lives and are not able to become involved with politics. Other women are not able to become involved in the training at all as other needs are more primary. Others have other responsibilities that require their time, making it difficult to find time to be involved with the political process.

Women Taking Views to City Decision-Makers

The women who have completed the Civic Participation Training have been active in taking their views to the City decision-makers in many different ways.

Involvement in Different Municipal Issues

CAWI members have been engaged in several different advocacy campaigns. These advocacy campaigns have been geared to raising awareness of different issues at City Hall, such as public health, childcare, employment, housing, and Francophone issues.

City Awareness of CAWI

The City Councillors and City staff reported that CAWI is well-known, has a good reputation, is respected, and familiar at City Hall. They are aware that CAWI has been involved in local political issues and the budget. The City staff also has a positive impression of CAWI. Several of the City staff and Councillors mentioned that the peach scarves worn by CAWI members attract their attention.

Communication with the City

A City staff member reported that strong linkages exist between City staff and CAWI. The City has had many communications with CAWI, such as CAWI sending communications to the City to inform them of their support on specific issues. One staff member has gone to CAWI meetings in the past. Women from CAWI have also been involved with presenting at committees, such as the Community and Protective Services committee. Another woman has been involved on a committee as a reserve. Women have also been in contact with City Councillors in different venues. They have presented their views at Council and they have had individual meetings with Councillors to discuss the budget and their presentations.

Deputations

The CAWI members have made a number of deputations to Council, with five deputations in 2004, seven deputations in 2005, four deputations in 2006, and six in 2007. Four deputations had been presented in 2008 by the end of August. These deputations are well-received and perceived as clear and well-prepared. Along with the deputations, CAWI members have detailed their concerns in presentation notes. The deputations have attracted the attention of the Councillors and let Council know that there are groups that support specific issues.

Feedback

CAWI provides feedback to City decision-makers on different levels. The feedback has addressed topics including family and women's issues, and provided the Councillors with information about community concerns and needs. Specifically, CAWI members have made their presence known at budget consultations. They have provided an evaluation of the budget, along with specific feedback on this issue. CAWI also provides decision-makers with feedback from women from diverse backgrounds who are not typically involved in municipal politics. This allows the Councillors to hear the voices of women they do not typically hear from.

Media

Another way in which CAWI members have made their views public is through the media. Women have been involved in press conferences and speaking to the press.

Other

Women from CAWI have also been involved in making their views known by attending City Council. As outlined in the 2007 Final Report to the Status of Women Canada, women from CAWI were involved in the municipal election process. Six women worked on a candidate's campaign, women attended 15 candidate meetings and asked questions at those meetings, and CAWI members were interviewed by the English and French media. The Action Team members identified questions and met with three mayoral candidates to pose these questions. Women were also involved in distributing 2000 brochures on why women's votes count.

What Helped Women Take Their Views to Decision-Makers

CAWI members, mentors, Steering Committee members, community organizations, and City Councillors identified different factors that helped women bring their views forward to City decision-makers.

Confidence and Empowerment

As a result of the training, women "feel more confident and more knowledgeable about their city. They feel they can actually have a say that makes a difference." This increase in confidence and empowerment resulted in women feeling less afraid to express their opinions and having the courage to speak in front of Council. A Councillor also noted that women are becoming empowered through the training and presented to Council confidently. Commitment on the part of CAWI members was also key in helping them bring their views to Council.

Knowledge and Skills from Civic Participation Training

Having knowledge of the political system, civic participation, and local issues assisted women in bringing their views forward. This increased knowledge of politics was viewed as important preparation. Women have learned of their right to be involved in the City and to “open doors for women.” They also gained knowledge of how to make their voices count and learned that it is feasible to do so.

The CAWI Civic Participation Training helped participants develop skill sets that were useful in bringing their views to City Council. They improved their communication skills, in terms of speaking publicly and speaking to City Councillors. They also enhanced their management and leadership skills, partly through the role modeling of mentors. After learning these skills, women then had the opportunity to apply them when expressing their views to City decision-makers.

Support

During the process of bringing their views forward, CAWI members received support from various sources. The women supported one another. They received the necessary support from CAWI for the preparation of deputations and CAWI wrote many of the presentation notes for Council meetings and the media. Mentors also provided support. Some of the Councillors are also positive toward CAWI and give their support when necessary.

What Hindered Women from Taking Their Views to Decision-Makers

CAWI members, mentors, Steering Committee members, community organizations, and City Councillors described barriers that hindered women from bringing their views to City decision-makers.

Communication Skills

Delivering the message effectively was one concern of some women. Difficulty with language was also a challenge for some women.

Other Priorities

Many of the CAWI participants have other responsibilities and demands on their time such as their job, which limit their ability to be involved in the municipal political process. One often-mentioned other responsibility was child care. These family demands decrease women’s opportunities to participate in civic engagement. Other women have more basic needs to look after and do not have the time or means to get involved with municipal politics.

Lack of Confidence

Women reported that staying calm during the deputation and facing questions were challenges they encountered when taking their views to City decision-makers. Initially, a lack of confidence made one woman feel nervous. Some were less confident

because of their language abilities or knowledge of the issue under discussion. Others may not have felt prepared or confident enough to reply to questions. Some women may not have felt confident because they had little experience and opportunity to engage in similar activities in the past.

Lack of Support and Information

Some organizations offered less support to their CAWI members. Without support, it can be challenging for CAWI members who are employees of organizations to get permission to attend events. Women may also feel a lack of support from society to become involved in political issues. Other women lacked the information that they required to bring their views forward.

Time Constraints

The time commitment required in order to make their views known to decision-makers was a hindrance for some women. Women are busy with other commitments, as described above. The upfront work of establishing and maintaining contact with City staff and Councillors requires time. The short timeframe that was often given for preparing deputations was also challenging, especially for women who feel that they require more practice and experience before they will be able to write deputations efficiently. Along with writing the deputations, the short notice also made it difficult to communicate with women regarding deputations. The last minute notice about CAWI activities, such as attendance at City Council, made it difficult for women to be involved in the presentations because of prior engagements or difficulty getting approval from a workplace to attend on short notice.

Modifications to Action Teams

CAWI participants provided many suggestions regarding possible modifications to the Action Teams.

Childcare

Given that childcare was a concern of many women, some suggestions were made to address this issue. Arranging on-site childcare and allowing women to bring their babies and children was one idea. Another was to cover the childcare fees of women attending the Action Team meetings.

Communication

It was suggested that CAWI have frequent communication with community organizations and CAWI members and provide them frequently with updated information. In order to allow members of community organizations to be maximally involved with CAWI, it is important to keep management of community organizations involved and aware of CAWI activities and time commitments. For example, mentors and participants could be assisted in creating an action plan and timeline regarding CAWI activities to submit to management to avoid conflict with other work activities.

Creating a communication plan with participants could be helpful. At the beginning of training, CAWI could identify the best way of communicating with each CAWI participant (i.e., phone, e-mail, regular mail).

To further support the mentors, the mentors could be invited to the Steering Committee to exchange information and get suggestions from each other and the Steering Committee members.

Continued Learning

Women indicated that the Action Team meetings would be more practical if they continued to receive training during these meetings. Women may be interested in continuing their involvement if there was an emphasis on capacity building. For example, women could take time to practice skills or get further information and tips. This skill-based learning would allow women to gain something concrete from attending the meetings. Another suggestion was to have invited guest speakers so women can obtain information and advice from others. Individual meetings with mentors could also be arranged.

More Action

Women are interested in taking action and achieving concrete goals. They would prefer a more action-oriented approach.

More Information on Political Issues

There were suggestions that CAWI continue to update women regularly about the municipal government, recent changes in government, and current issues. In this way, they could further understand how issues might affect them.

More Information on Action Teams

To ensure that women are aware of the different Action Teams, women could be provided with information about the respective teams before joining one. The mentors could give them an overview of the team, the issues that the team addresses, the roles and responsibilities of the members of the team, and expectations for team members. As part of this orientation, it was suggested that all team members receive a timeline and activity plan at the beginning of the year.

Participant Involvement

The Action Team meetings and activities could be used as an opportunity for women to enhance their leadership skills by having responsibilities delegated to them. They could be provided with more opportunity to give direction to the team and be involved in activities, such as preparing and writing their own presentations. If the members were given more responsibilities, they might feel increased ownership of the program.

Publicity and Recruitment

CAWI members felt that it is important that CAWI do more publicity to inform women in the community about CAWI and to continue recruitment. One suggested technique was to create a photo album documenting CAWI's activities to use as a recruitment tool. Another suggestion for recruitment was to have interested new women join the Action Teams to get a sense of what they do, become interested, and then attend the training.

Relevant Issues

To maintain the interest of CAWI members, and ensure that the Action Teams are addressing issues that are relevant to women, CAWI members could be encouraged to identify the areas of interest that they feel passionate about and the concerns and issues they would like to address. Along with identifying issues, they could work in prioritizing the issues to be addressed. The action that CAWI takes could also take into consideration the current political trends, local and community concerns, or address practical, need-based issues.

Seek Feedback

To continue to adapt to the changing demands and needs of participants, CAWI should conduct regular evaluation to identify areas for improvement in the Action Teams. Once areas for improvement are identified, those issues should be attended to.

Structure of Action Teams

It was suggested that CAWI attempt to maintain two mentors for each Action Team. In terms of the French- and English-language teams, one suggestion was for a French and an English team for each issue. Another idea was for simply having two teams, a French team and an English team. CAWI could also explore if women are interested in other Action Teams, such as ones for childcare or the environment. Community-based Action Teams were suggested. If the Action Teams are defined by specific neighbourhoods, this might eliminate some of the difficulties that women face regarding transportation to the team meetings.

Support

To reinforce their commitment and encourage others, the most involved participants could be recognized and rewarded. Another way of supporting participants would be to identify whether women have any other needs that inhibit their participation that CAWI could address by covering the cost of transportation or providing an honorarium.

Women indicated that CAWI should continue to develop an environment where women can rely on and assist each other. Women could be invited to share their previous experiences and discuss new ideas. Women could discuss the challenges that they face and they could work together to develop ways to address them. Team exercises could be used to build more collective feeling among CAWI members. Creating a more fun, relaxed environment could be done during meetings and could assist in maintaining

women's enthusiasm. More social events and food could contribute to a relaxed environment and a budget for entertainment may be beneficial.

Preparation Time

As previously mentioned, CAWI participants reported that they require adequate time to prepare for a deputation. The short deadline that was often given for preparing deputations was challenging to meet as women require more practice and experience before they will be able to prepare the deputations quickly.

Level 4 – Results

Impact of Women's Civic Engagement

According to City Councillors, City staff, CAWI members, and Steering Committee members, CAWI members are having an impact at Council in different ways.

Raising Awareness

The City Councillors reported that deputations presented by CAWI members have caught their attention. The collectiveness of CAWI, their effective presentations, and peach scarves also draw the attention of the Councillors to CAWI and the concerns of CAWI members. According to one Councillor, CAWI is listened to at Council as CAWI is perceived as reasonable and effective. CAWI is also perceived by Councillors as engaging in positive work, and the organization is well-known to Councillors and staff.

Debates

Another impact of CAWI has been its influence in having Council discuss or debate certain issues.

Informing

With the Deputations and presentation made by CAWI, the Councillors are getting updated about community concerns and needs. Some City Councillors reported that CAWI has informed their decisions. One Councillor has picked up on CAWI's recommendations and included them in reports.

City Process and Practices that Hinder Women's Concerns Being Heard and Addressed

CAWI members, mentors, City Councillors, and staff identified city processes and practices that hinder women from having their concerns heard and addressed.

Access to Information

CAWI members suggested that women may not have the information they require to make their views known and they may be unaware of how to access it. Although it is possible to access reports by the City, the reports are perceived as complicated, which may prevent people, especially those less familiar with English, from easily accessing this information.

Environment at City Hall

City staff and Councillors noted that the gender balance on Council is skewed toward men and as a result there can be a lack of awareness of women's issues. They reported that Councillors do not always consider the impact of their decisions on specific groups, such as visible minorities or people with low income. As well, the environment may not always be as welcoming to women. It was reported by CAWI members that during deputations some Councillors could be aggressive in their questioning of a presenter if the presenter was less prepared or confident. The attention and interest levels of the Councillors in an issue were also of concern at times. It appeared at times that some Councillors were not listening. It was suggested that this was more problematic for deputations in French.

Format of Public Feedback

The format of public feedback was challenging as many women did not feel confident about speaking publicly at City Hall. Another aspect of the format that was reported as challenging was the 5-minute time limit on deputations, as there was not always enough time for women to express their opinions.

Other Priorities

It was indicated that several of the Councillors do not consider women's issues when making decisions, rather, there tends to be an over focus on finances. Also, other groups are trying to get the attention of the Councillors at the same time as CAWI, presenting other issues that may distract the Councillors from the concerns of CAWI members.

How CAWI Can Make Women's Voices Heard More Effectively

City Councillors, City staff, Steering Committee members, and mentors provided numerous suggestions regarding ways in which CAWI can make women's voices heard more effectively at the municipal level.

Accountability

A City Councillor suggested that in order to increase confidence in CAWI, the organization should ensure that it is accountable by demonstrating what it is accomplishing. CAWI should also clarify its community base (i.e. who it represents) to give the organization more strength and support.

Contact with the City

Advisory committees. It was suggested by a City Councillor that CAWI members maintain a connection and communication with the advisory committees. They can go to the advisory committees to put issues on the advisory committees' agendas.

City Staff. Continued contact with City staff would also be beneficial, according to City staff and Councillors. City staff and Directors are willing to work with CAWI and meet to provide background information on an issue, to give advice on what to present, and to discuss the content of reports before they are released.

Contact with Councillors. Personal contact with the Councillors is also important, although one Councillor noted that CAWI already does that well. Before presenting a deputation, CAWI members could choose a few supportive Councillors to speak with in advance for 5-10 minutes. One Councillor suggested sending the deputation prior to the meeting. Then the Councillor could then ask questions following the deputation at Council to generate interest. There was also a suggestion to contact Councillors from across the political spectrum and to focus on less supportive ones by engaging them and getting their point of view. To help Councillors understand an issue, give them the context of CAWI's perspective. Invite the Councillors to participate in different forums, so they can understand the community issues through direct involvement, as well as better understand CAWI's mandate. They could also be invited as resource people to the training or to Action Team meetings.

Deputations

The City Councillors and staff provided a few suggestions for deputations. One suggestion to capture the Councillors' attention was that, rather than reading the presentation notes, a presenter should summarize a few key points and then "speak from the heart," i.e. discuss the impact of an issue on the presenter. The speaker should be able to answer questions from Councillors. The same speaker should not present different deputations for different groups, such as presenting one deputation for CAWI and then one behalf of another community organization.

Identifying Issues

CAWI members and City Councillors noted the importance of maintaining an awareness of the issues of City Hall by staying updated on political and budget issues. Another suggestion was to explore whether there are systemic issues that keep women out of municipal politics, such as the environment on Council or the time commitment. To identify the issues that are relevant for women, CAWI members should be encouraged to come up their concerns and issues to be addressed.

Increased Visibility

CAWI members indicated that they could increase the organization's visibility in different ways. One was to create pamphlets or flyers highlighting CAWI's accomplishments, which could be given to organizations so they can see what CAWI has accomplished. City staff suggested that CAWI could also participate at fairs on City services.

Another way of presenting CAWI's messages is through media exposure. Raising awareness of CAWI would allow CAWI to become more of a public voice. Different types of media could be used to create public awareness of issues. In order to do that it would be important for CAWI participants to learn how to package a message and to establish a strong relationship with the media. When CAWI engages in an initiative, CAWI members should inform the media. They could also write a letter to the editor about relevant issues.

Raise Awareness of Women's Issues

To make women's voices heard, City staff and Councillors suggested that CAWI needs to continue to persistently bring issues forward and put pressure on Council, so these issues are considered during decision-making. CAWI should continue to take initiative to raise the awareness of the politicians so they consider women and vulnerable groups. CAWI should emphasize the issues that seriously impact women.

Realistic Expectations and Specificity of Concerns

City Councillors noted that organizations presenting to Council must be realistic about their requests. The deputation should focus on issues related to the Council agenda and that are within the mandate of the City. CAWI should also ensure that their message is consistent. To allow the Councillors to clearly understand an issue, it is important to pick a focused issue to address and present a few clear points for the Councillors to consider, rather than presenting on a broad issue. An issue-based presentation that includes concrete suggestions and examples allows the Councillors to understand what they can do to address an issue. Also, presenters should support their views; for example, show the value of a program and why it should be accessible.

Training for Women

CAWI members noted that they need to be prepared emotionally, mentally, and information-wise before presenting a deputation. CAWI members and City Councillors noted that continued training for women will help them prepare for this activity.

Relationship Building

A City Councillor observed that when CAWI members consider different approaches to raising awareness they should take into account the possible impact of the approach on their long term relationships with decision-makers. They should question whether an approach could create problems or affect relationships in the future.

CAWI should build relationships and work with other organizations and groups on issues that are relevant to both. Agreeing on common goals and working together would give these requests more strength. For example, they could work with community centres across the City.

F. CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the stakeholders believe that the Civic Participation Training is relevant, addressing the topics that are required to enable women to make their voice heard by City decision-makers. To better meet the needs and interests of specific groups of women, such as women with physical disabilities, visible minorities, Francophones, new Canadians, and Aboriginal women, the stakeholders discussed the importance of accessibility, inclusion, addressing language and translation, and continued research into the specific needs of these women.

Women described the many impacts that the Civic Participation Training has had on their personal lives. These included increased awareness, confidence, and empowerment. The training has affected their professional lives, and they spoke of the benefits of meeting and sharing their experiences with previously unknown women. Through the Civic Participation Training, participants have gained knowledge of municipal politics and civic engagement, developed skills in communication and leadership, and had exposure to women of different cultures, among other benefits. Some aspects of the training that enhanced learning included the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills learned in the training, the location of training, the various methods employed, and the support of other women. However, there were also some aspects that hindered learning, including the lack of opportunity to practice leadership skills, language concerns, issues around timing, and the quantity of information presented in each session.

The stakeholders offered many suggestions regarding improvements to the training. Some of these ideas involved ensuring the clarity of the information and facilitating participation by providing compensation if other needs, such as the cost of childcare, prevent participation. CAWI should continue to seek feedback and evaluate the Civic Participation Training, as well as provide feedback to the participants so they can

further benefit from the program. Participants were interested in having guest speakers, more media training, and they provided suggestions of new topics. Stakeholders indicated that the CAWI trainers should continue to develop new methods to teach information and skills, focusing particularly on skill-based learning, especially in terms of communication and leadership skills. Participants were interested in being involved in the design and implementation of training. There were some suggestions regarding the delivery of the program, including offering outreach and shorter training sessions and adjusting the timing of the training so there are no months-long periods between sessions. Stakeholders suggested increasing recruitment, including the involvement of university students, and creating a relaxed environment during training.

Women are taking their training to the community in several ways, although there is still a need for more women to apply their training to their communities. The ways in which they are bringing the training back include through advocacy, the education of others, empowerment of the women who complete the training, and applying the training to their job. Some challenges that prevent women from taking their training to their communities were the lack of communication between CAWI and community organizations, the lack of support from some community organizations, the lack of a follow up mechanism, and other needs taking precedence.

The women involved in the Civic Participation Training have been active in making their views known to City decision-makers in many ways. They have been involved in different advocacy campaigns to address specific issues, communicated with City staff, committees and City Councillors, presented deputations, provided feedback to the City, and had contact with the media, among other activities. When asked what helped them take their views to City decision-makers, women described the increased confidence, empowerment, knowledge, and skills that they gained from the Civic Participation Training. They also mentioned the support from other CAWI participants, the CAWI staff, mentors, and Councillors. However, there were also factors that hindered them from bringing their views forward, such as other priorities in their personal and professional lives, time constraints, lack of confidence, lack of support, and difficulties with communicating in English.

The stakeholders offered many ideas about possible improvements to the Action Teams. One suggestion was increased communication with organizations and CAWI participants, including providing women with more information about the Action Teams before they join one. Women were also interested in continued learning, including using the Action Teams meetings to learn and develop new skills and receive more information on current political issues. They noted that the Action Teams should be more action-oriented and were interested in having more opportunities to take on responsibilities to enhance their leadership skills. However, women mentioned that they do require more time to prepare deputations. Women could also be more actively involved in identifying the issues for Action Teams to address. There was an identified need for increased publicity and recruitment. The structure of the Action Teams and need for continued

support of CAWI members, including childcare, were also discussed. CAWI should continue to seek feedback from participants on areas of improvement for the Action Teams.

When the women involved with CAWI brought their views to the City, they had an impact on several levels. They brought attention to issues relevant to the community and to women, making Council consider and debate these issues, and Councillors reported that CAWI has informed their decisions. At the City-level, there were some practices and processes that hindered women's concerns from being heard and addressed. These included access to information, the environment at City Hall, the format of public feedback, and other priorities at Council. The stakeholders provided numerous ideas of ways in which CAWI can make women's voices heard more effectively by the City. Relationship-building and continued and increased contact with the City staff, Councillors, and advisory committees were strongly emphasized. Specific suggestions were offered regarding deputations. The interviewees also discussed the importance of having realistic expectations, identifying specific concerns, and being aware of current issues. CAWI should work to increase the organization's visibility, continue to focus on raising awareness of women's issues, and continue to provide training to women.

G. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following are recommended:

Civic Participation Training Workshops

1. Participants indicated that they could benefit from further knowledge and training in certain areas. It is recommended that the content of the Civic Participation Training sessions be extended to include further information on communication skills, leadership skills and how to engage the media and make your message heard using the media. The Education Coordinator would develop the content and the mentors would be involved in delivering it during the training workshops.
2. A focus on skill-based learning at the training and Action Team levels was repeatedly mentioned. Participants were interested in more experiential training during the workshops. Therefore, it is recommended that training delivered by the mentors emphasize skills and ensure that participants have adequate time and opportunity to practice these skills.
3. As the facilitators of the Civic Participation Training and the Action Teams, mentors play a key role in the delivery of the training. To ensure that mentors are adequately prepared to take on the responsibility of mentoring an Action Team, it is recommended that CAWI continue to work with community organizations to identify appropriate mentors who have the knowledge and resources to fulfill this role.
4. CAWI needs to continue to do research to maintain the quality of the program. In order to use the best practices in teaching women knowledge and skills, it is recommended that CAWI staff (Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator, or Education Coordinator) continue to do research into and apply adult educational methods.
5. On-going evaluation of the different components of the Civic Participation Training and the Action Teams is important. With continued monitoring, CAWI will be able to identify the strengths that it should maintain and improvements that should be made as well as improvements that it can make. Therefore, it is recommended that CAWI staff develop surveys to obtain this information and have CAWI members complete them regularly. The Steering Committee can examine this feedback, determine how to integrate the feedback in the Training and Action Teams, and implement the recommendations. Feedback on the Civic Participation Training should be obtained partway through training and at the end of training by the CAWI staff and mentors. CAWI could also solicit feedback regarding the mentors and then provide this feedback to mentors so they can adjust to the needs of the Action Team members.

6. Several CAWI participants expressed frustration with the system in place for the translation of the training session content. The CAWI leadership indicated that steps have been taken to improve the translation, ensuring that the translation is complete, but does not affect the momentum of the training. As translation was a common concern raised by women during the evaluation, it is recommended that CAWI seek feedback specifically on the translation process and how to improve it as part of the recommended ongoing evaluation of the Civic Participation Training. Monitoring whether training participants are satisfied with the translation process will allow the Steering Committee to determine whether further changes are required as well as provide suggestions for doing that.

Action Teams

7. To continue to develop the skills of CAWI members and increase the attendance at the Action Team meetings, it is recommended that training in specific skills be provided during the Action Team meetings and that guest speakers be invited to present during Action Team meetings.
8. To encourage participation in the Action Teams, it is recommended that CAWI work on creating a welcoming environment for participants. This can involve providing snacks and beverages to increase comfort of participants.
9. Although the resources are available to compensate women for childcare and transportation fees, women do not always receive this money, possible due to lack of awareness of the availability of the funds or because a consistent, reliable method of providing the compensation has not been developed. To facilitate the participation of Action Team members, it is recommended that participants be consistently compensated for the transportation and childcare costs that are required to attend the meetings and activities. CAWI should ensure that women are aware that funds are available to cover the cost of transportation and childcare and develop a way of making the compensation accessible.

Making Women's Voices Heard

10. To foster good relationships with community organizations and understand their mandates, CAWI should continue to develop and maintain open communication with the community organizations that send their members to the Civic Participation Training. In order to inform community organizations about CAWI, it is recommended that CAWI develop a flyer or information sheet outlining its achievements to provide to community organizations.
11. It is recommended that CAWI hold an Annual General Meeting. Representatives from the community organizations could be invited to attend an Annual General Meeting to find out more about CAWI and how they could continue to partner with CAWI.

12. CAWI needs to ensure that women take their learning from the Civic Participation Training back to their communities. Therefore, it is recommended that CAWI solicit regular feedback by surveying community organizations on this issue.
13. CAWI could also assist women in applying the training within their communities. It is recommended that CAWI work with women and community organizations to identify specific, concrete ways that will facilitate women bringing their training back to their community and their community organization.
14. CAWI needs to work on increasing its visibility within Ottawa. Therefore, it is recommended that CAWI increase its exposure in the media by periodically sending out press releases and making representatives available to the media for commenting on municipal issues as they arise.
15. In order to increase its visibility and publicize the Civic Participation Training workshops, it is recommended that CAWI provide short information sessions to women throughout Ottawa, giving them information to increase their knowledge of how the City works and how they can express their views to the City decision-makers.
16. City staff and Councillors emphasized the importance of ongoing contact. They also indicated their willingness to meet and work with members of CAWI to discuss current issues, deputations, and City reports. Therefore, to ensure that women's voices are heard at the municipal level, it is recommended that women from CAWI maintain contact with City Councillors, City staff, and advisory committees.

General

17. It recommended that the CAWI Steering Committee review the evaluation recommendations, determine which ones to implement, and develop action plans to put them in place.

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A

Focus Group Protocol

1. What is your name and which training did you participate in?
2. What did you learn from training?
3. Do you think that the content of the training was appropriate?
 - a. How can we improve the contents?
4. What barriers or challenges got in the way of your learning?
5. Which parts of training were useful (workshops, meeting in Action teams, presenting deputations, presenting to the media)?
 - a. Any suggestions for other ways of doing training?
6. Since completing the training, what type of action have you taken for the city?
 - a. Are you taking your views to the city decision makers?
7. What challenges did you face when taking your views to City councillors and city staff?
8. How can the Action Teams be modified to increase participation and involvement?
9. What impact has CAWI had on your personal life?
10. Do you have any other suggestions for improving the Civic Participation Training?

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol for City of Ottawa Staff

1. What is your experience with the City for All Women Initiative?
2. What are your impressions of the City for All Women Initiative?
3. How effective is the City for All Women Initiative in raising awareness of women's concerns at the municipal level?
4. How has the City for All Women Initiative informed the decisions made at Ottawa City Council?
5. How can the City for All Women Initiative be more effective in making women's voices heard at the municipal level?
6. What challenges do women face in having their voices heard at City Council?

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol for City of Ottawa Councillors

1. What is your experience with the City for All Women Initiative?
2. What are your impressions of the City for All Women Initiative?
3. How effective is the City for All Women Initiative in raising awareness of women's concerns at the municipal level?
4. How has the City for All Women Initiative informed the decisions you have made at City Hall?
5. How can the City for All Women Initiative be more effective in making women's voices heard at the municipal level?
6. What challenges do women face in having their voices heard at City Hall?

APPENDIX D

Interview Protocol for Mentors

1. As a mentor, you play a major role in organizing the Civic Participation Training as well as organizing the Action Teams. What barriers or challenges do you face?
 - a. How can CAWI help you address these challenges?
2. Do you receive adequate support from CAWI in your role as a mentor?
 - a. Do you receive adequate support from your community organization in your role as a mentor?
 - b. What type of support would be useful?
3. Do you think that the content of the Civic Participation training was appropriate?
 - a. How can we improve the contents?
4. What challenges did you and your Action Team face when taking your views to City Councillors and City staff?
5. How can the Action Teams be modified to increase participation and involvement?
6. Do you have any other suggestions for improving the Civic Participation Training?

APPENDIX E

Interview Protocol for Community Organizations

1. To what extent are women from your community organization involved in City politics?
2. How many women from your organization have been involved with the City for All Women Initiative?
 - a. What has been their involvement with the CAWI?
3. In what ways are these women bringing their learning from CAWI back to your community organization?
 - a. What challenges might prevent these women from taking their learning from CAWI back to your community organization?
4. How are you benefitting from CAWI's Civic Participation Training?
5. How can CAWI better serve your community?
6. In what ways has the City been effective in enabling women from CAWI to influence decision-making and planning?
7. Do you have any other suggestions for improving the Civic Participation Training?

APPENDIX F**Interview Protocol for Steering Committee Members**

1. What is the overall achievement of the CAWI Civic Participation Training?
 - a. What are the benefits to the participants?
 - b. What are the benefits to the community organizations?
 - c. What are the benefits to the City of Ottawa?
2. Are the program participants the people that the Civic Participation Training was intended for?
3. Overall, how can we improve the training?
 - a. How can we improve the Civic Participation Training so we can better address the interests and needs of specific groups of women (women with physical disabilities, visible minorities, Francophones, new Canadians, Aboriginal)?
 - b. What suggestions do you have for new ways of doing the training?
4. How can we increase participation in the Action Teams?
 - a. How can the Steering Committee contribute to increased participation in the Action Teams?
5. *(For academics on Committee) To what extent has the relationship between CAWI and academics been strengthened through the Civic Participation Training?*
 - a. *How can this relationship be further strengthened?*
6. Do you have any other suggestions for improving the Civic Participation Training?

APPENDIX G

Interview Protocol for CAWI Participants (Case Study)

1. Which training(s) did you complete?
2. If you look at where you started before participating in CAWI and where you are now after the training, what has happened along the road? (*follow up question: What personal changes have happened in your life because of the Civic Participation Training?*)
 - a) Have you tried new activities (job, school) that you would not have done otherwise?
 - b) What opportunities have come along since the training?
 - c) Has there been a change in the way you think of yourself?
 - d) What challenges did you face along the road?
 - e) How did you overcome these challenges?
3. Any suggestions for improvement?
4. Is there anything else that you want to tell us about CAWI?