

EXCHANGE

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WOMEN SHAPING LED IN THE CARIBBEAN

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In the Caribbean, LED is driven by the start-up and growth of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). While small businesses make up more than 50% of Caribbean enterprises and more than 50% of the region's GDP, almost 70% of Caribbean MSMEs are informal—unlike registered businesses, informal businesses are less likely to seek training, access financing through traditional lenders, and be mentored through business support groups.

To better understand barriers faced by Caribbean entrepreneurs, CARILED commissioned seven country studies to examine influencers like policies, elected officials, and proximity to services. The studies demonstrate that while women are increasingly accessing finance, more work must be done to inspire confidence to apply for formal financing such as loans. Like other countries, women in Dominica were more likely to become entrepreneurs to support family members, but less likely to become formal businesses and take financial risks to grow their companies. As such, women are less likely to seek training, financing and mentorships—all necessary for financial success.

Gender and MSME Country Studies are available on www.cariled.org. Findings have been used to revise approaches to creating local economic profiles, performing ease of doing business assessments and informing the governance of local committees in 34 partner communities. The growing voice of Caribbean women in LED discourse has launched several projects targeting local female entrepreneurs. In efforts like the Kingston and St. Andrew Parish Enterprise Assistance Program in Jamaica, 80% of the program's awardees are women, with this approach to local business support also replicated in the neighbouring Parish of Clarendon.



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ПРОМИС



SUSTAINABLE
AND INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITIES IN
LATIN AMERICA



PLEDDG: STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

"Give your best 'elevator pitch': You have one minute to convince the mayor (or a colleague) that he should pay more attention to inequalities between women and men in your city." This was the task given to the Association of Ukrainian Cities' (AUC) Committee on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men at a meeting in Kyiv in November 2016.

As part of the meeting, Pam McConnell, Deputy Mayor of Toronto and FCM Board Member, addressed resistance to gender equality in her 34-year career in local politics; the committee discussed strategies to handle unsympathetic journalists and how to involve more men in discussions of gender equality; and Beth Woroniuk, PLEDDG gender equality consultant, provided tips and coaching. By the time the elevator pitch exercise came around, participants were eager to practice their best arguments.

The committee approved the *Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for the AUC for 2017-2018* and an Action Plan to move to the AUC board for discussion and

approval. Key action areas include increasing the quota for women's participation on the AUC board from 5% to 10%, supporting member cities' efforts to sign the *European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life*, strengthening the capacity of local officials on gender equality issues, and improving data collection.

FCM's PLEDDG project supports AUC work to strengthen women's participation. Building on over four years of work with AUC through an earlier initiative, PLEDDG continues to support the Committee on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, providing administrative and technical support and facilitating access to Canadian experts such as Deputy Mayor McConnell.

PLEDDG incorporates gender analysis and gender equality results across its work areas. Support to business development centres includes a focus on women entrepreneurs and efforts are ongoing to ensure that local strategic plans include a gender perspective and outcomes to strengthen equality between women and men.

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PMI-LED TALKS GENDER EQUALITY

Partners from the Partnerships for Municipal Innovation in Local Economic Development (PMI-LED) met in Ottawa in November 2016 for the program's first steering committee meeting. The rich discussions included questions around gender equality and women's representation.

Zulema Cerrudo, president of ACOBOL, an association that represents female elected officials in Bolivia, described the parity law in that country that obliges half of all municipal councillors to be women. This law took years to achieve and although it has brought many advantages, it has also brought serious challenges, including higher incidences of intimidation and verbal and physical abuse against women candidates, councillors and mayors.

President Cerrudo spoke of the *National Law against Harassment of and Political Violence against Women*, a first of its kind in Latin America. Countries from Latin America, Asia and Africa asked Bolivia to share their journey and their process. ACOBOL is happy to share how their association is improving gender equality in municipal governance by supporting women in their mandates to gain the skills they need to ensure more gender-sensitive municipal processes and by supporting and protecting women who are victims of political abuse.



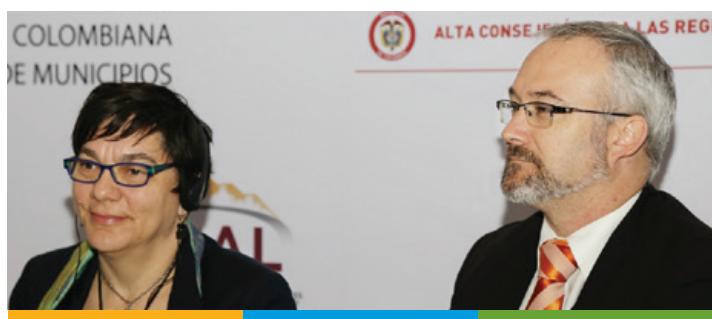
Councillor Bev Esslinger, FCM board representative for PMI-LED's programming in Asia and a councillor from the City of Edmonton, described that city's work to involve women and youth, barriers to participation, and how best to engage women and youth in municipal activities. Edmonton's Women's Council supports City Council directly and has worked to change policies to eliminate barriers for women, such as parental leave and child care policies as well as the length of council meetings.

WOMEN MAYORS OF COLOMBIA AND CANADA EXCHANGE EXPERIENCES

The First Vice President of FCM and Deputy Mayor of Winnipeg, Jenny Gerbasi, travelled to Bogota in December 2016 to share her experience as a female elected official in Canada, as well as to present FCM's programs to promote women in local government, to a group of women mayors of Colombia.

The event was part of FCM's Sustainable and Inclusive Communities in Latin America (CISAL) program, working in partnership with the Federation of Colombian Municipalities to support its Network of Women Mayors. This network aims to strengthen the role and capacity of women in local government in Colombia in the areas of advocacy, knowledge exchange and promotion of an effective dialogue between municipalities and the national government.

"I am sure that when Canadian and Colombian municipalities come together, we both learn, grow and build our communities," said Gerbasi in the opening of the event where more than 60 female



mayors gathered to plan how to strengthen the participation of women in local government and bring more sustainable and inclusive development to their communities. Joan Westland Eby, Mayor of Bolton Est, Quebec, shared her experience, challenges and strengths. "It is important for government to reflect its population and for everyone to have a voice. Given that women tend to be 50% of the population, it would be logical that we had that kind of representation at a local, provincial and national level," said the mayor.

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NEW PROGRAM: RELIEVING PRESSURE IN JORDAN

FCM, with funding from Global Affairs Canada, has launched a new \$20.7-million five-year initiative to assist municipalities in Jordan struggling to manage the influx of displaced Syrians by mobilizing Canadian municipal leaders and practitioners to provide peer-to-peer technical assistance to communities in central and southern Jordan.

"Jordan's municipalities have shown great compassion in supporting men, women and children fleeing a horrific situation. But as the crisis drags on, they are struggling to manage growing demands for water, sanitation, health services, education and employment," said FCM President Clark Somerville.

Working closely with Jordan's Ministry of Municipal Affairs and other partners, the program aims to strengthen leadership, administrative capacity, citizen engagement and improve solid waste management services.

"With the experience, tools and knowledge from FCM, we will help alleviate this burden. Canada's municipalities were among the first to open their hearts and homes to Syrian refugees, and I look forward to this continued partnership," said Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie.

The project focuses on both citizens, especially women and youth, to increase understanding of how they can more actively engage in planning and decision making at the local level as well as male and female municipal elected officials and staff.

RESOURCES

WEBINAR RECORDING: SUPPORTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This [webinar](#) offered perspectives from three regions of the world in creating inclusive communities by making sure women have a voice in the development of LED initiatives.

CASE STUDY: PROMOTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This case study highlights good practices emerging among FCM and its partner local government associations in improving women's political leadership and decision-making in local government. Access it now in [English](#), [French](#) or [Spanish](#).

TOOLKIT - PROMOTING EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This booklet proposes practical strategies to mainstream gender equality and environmental sustainability in municipal development projects, with an emphasis on LED. Interested? Access it in [English](#), [French](#) or [Spanish](#).

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