



UCLG CONGRESS
WORLD SUMMIT OF LOCAL
AND REGIONAL LEADERS

Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment

#CitiesAreListening
Town Hall Track

Policy Papers



HUAIROU COMMISSION
Women, Homes & Community

#CitiesAreListening

The 2019 Congress and World Summit will mark the way towards the follow up of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the first review of the New Urban Agenda in 2020.

It will consolidate the policies that UCLG has been promoting within its strategic plan, with a strong focus on localizing the SDGs, aiming at leaving no one, and no place behind, with a key focus on local governments as representatives of communities and for communities, and keeping the four UCLG Policy Councils issues as key pillars.

Special attention will be paid to creating a space of structural dialogue with other constituencies and stakeholders and in particular civil society. For the first time, the outcome will not only be a declaration, but a corpus of integrated policy recommendations resulting from a consultation with other stakeholders and offering both bottom-up continental and region-specific priorities.

The Summit will provide a space to ensure connection between the agenda of the global municipal and regional movement and that of the sister constituencies. A special Track has been set up to this end: The Town Hall - with discussions at the highest levels led by the organized international constituencies.

The Town Hall is the space for dialogue and interaction between different internationally organized civil society and the political leadership of the local and regional governments constituency to jointly define the local global policies. Local and regional leader cannot achieve these goals on their own, and thus they need to build upon, strengthen and enhance partnerships moving forward. The goal is not only to invite partners and stakeholders to join, but to collaborate in the world that we are building. The Town Hall is structured around 5 sessions with different themes: Accessible Cities; Addressing Informalities; Gender Equality; Right to the City, and Sustainable Urban Development.

Preparations towards the Congress were articulated around an open process of co-creation led by the constituencies themselves and facilitated by the World Secretariat. Each group elaborated policy recommendations for local governments to implement transformative action on the above-mentioned themes. At the Congress' Town Hall sessions – designed by the constituencies themselves –, each document will be presented by the constituency's representatives, discussed with UCLG members and debated with all other constituencies. After deliberations a pooling of recommendations will be defined as a result of the session, which will be presented to the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments.

1. Acknowledgements and Background

The perspective of our Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Paper makes the case that policy mandates are fundamental to producing and nurturing just and prosperous cities and communities. It draws on the knowledge, experience, contributions and leadership of the women's movement - both grassroots and professionals - who, for the past decades have been working tirelessly to ensure that women are not forgotten and left behind. They have advocated successfully for the inclusion of gender inclusion in global normative frameworks, including the Habitat Agendas, New Urban Agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender equality and women's empowerment are enablers of efficient and accountable local governance, not an additional burden. Local governments can adopt principles and strategies to accelerate social, political and economic participation, and inclusive decision-making and equitable development.

To make this case and illustrate the practical and strategic ways forward, we will focus on how organized groups of grassroots women¹ in cities and towns are working with their local authorities for women's empowerment and gender equality. We interviewed nine grassroots women leaders and collected information from an additional 33 leaders from cities around the world to inform this paper. This allowed us to identify diverse strategies, tools, and approaches being used to improve quality of life, to assert the 'right to the city', to empower women as public leaders, to hold government accountable, and to advance gender responsive and equitable local governance.

Gender equality is enshrined in many constitutions as a fundamental right, with 143 countries guaranteeing equality between men and women in their Constitutions by 2014², and is reflected in international human rights frameworks (see Annex 1). At the city level, local governments have adopted their own plans and strategies to achieve gender equality. Unfortunately, while gender equality is often a right on paper at both local and national levels, it is rarely achieved in practice. Rather, we are a long way from achieving gender equality and women's empowerment anywhere in the world. In fact, the inaugural report by Equal Measures on the 2030 Agenda revealed and not one country is on track to achieve the gender goals and targets laid out in the SDGs by 2030³. While many of these frameworks have been developed for the national level, including the SDGs, it is in cities around the world that much of the work to localize and implement these goals and frameworks takes place.

Some cities have worked to integrate gender mainstreaming as a tool for promoting gender equality and to overcome some of these gender gaps, though this approach has also been criticized for its limited impacts in advancing gender equality and in positively impacting the lives of grassroots women. One city that is recognised as having successfully integrated gender mainstreaming Vienna, Austria where the approach was

¹ For this paper, we understand 'grassroots' to mean organized networks and groups of community women working to improve the living conditions and quality of life in their urban, peri urban and rural poor communities in the Global South and North. Examples include: women-led: informal settlement/resident associations; informal sector producer/service/trader groups/co-operatives; small farmer associations, savings and credit groups, parent associations, neighborhood health, safety, water, committees etc.

² United Nations (n.d.) "Gender Equality", Webpage: <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/gender-equality/>

³ <https://www.equalmeasures2030.org/products/global-report-2018/>

integrated across all urban planning. This means that they consider differentiated needs of women and men at different phases of the lifecycle in all phases of the planning process, from conception to resource allocation and implementation, to maximize the potential for the built environment to be gender inclusive⁴. Some other cities, such as Edmonton, Canada, are going further, applying a GBA+ (gender-based analysis plus, to consider gender but also other factors) to all city policies and programmes to ensure that they work for all city residents⁵. Increasingly, new language is emerging to go beyond gender mainstreaming to gender transformation. This means that in addition to gender mainstreaming in urban planning, for example, there must be parallel efforts to challenge and transform the underlying root causes of gender inequality, including patriarchal systems that maintain this inequality. Essentially, gender transformation requires a redistribution of power between the genders and a redefinition of gender norms and relations that results in both individual and collective empowerment of women⁶. To support such a shift on a broader scale, new mechanisms are required to facilitate and sustain the participation of people who can drive this change. Finally, local governments must ensure that they build their own capacities to effectively deliver on gender transformative strategies. In Penang, Malaysia, for example, the mayor introduced gender equality and women's empowerment training and awareness raising for all levels of staff working with the local government.

2. Assessment and Challenges

Cities are sites of opportunities for gender equality and women's empowerment. Studies show that women and girls who live in cities are more likely to access education, marry later⁷ and participate in the formal economy. However, there are persistent barriers and challenges for women in cities. Importantly, there are challenges around improving the quality of life, living and working conditions, and opportunity structure for women and girls in their cities and town. These issues are directly connected to the priorities of local authorities: economic growth, the provision of quality services and infrastructure, and inclusive development.

Women are disproportionately affected by poverty, which is pressing and persistent barrier to women's empowerment and gender equality. Other challenges include high levels of **violence against women and girls** in both private and public spaces (globally, 35% of women have experienced such violence).⁸ These numbers do not include experiences of

⁴ City of Vienna (2016) *Gender Mainstreaming in Urban Planning and Urban Development*. URL: <https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/studien/pdf/b008358.pdf>

⁵ City of Edmonton (2017) Gender Based Analysis Plus. URL: https://webdocs.edmonton.ca/siredocs/published_meetings/120/677815.pdf

⁶ Moser, Caroline (2016) « Gender transformation in a new global urban agenda: challenges for Habitat III and beyond », in *Environment and Urbanisation*, v.29 (1), April 2017. URL: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0956247816662573>

⁷ Plan International and Women in Cities International (2012) *Adolescent Girls' Views on Safety in Cities: Findings from the Because I am a Girl: Urban Programme study in Cairo, Delhi, Hanoi, Kampala and Lima*. URL: <https://femmesetvilles.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Adolescent-Girls-Views-Safety-in-Cities-full-report-English.pdf>

⁸ UN WOMEN (n.d.) "Facts and figures: Ending violence against women", Webpage: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>

sexual harassment, which is upwards of 90% in some cities.⁹ In addition, **discriminatory laws** (ex. inheritance laws that prevent women from owning land), **harmful gendered norms** (ex. women spend three times longer on unpaid care work than men¹⁰), **the gender pay gap** (on average, 20% worldwide ¹¹), **unequal political representation and participation** (ex. only 15% of elected mayors in Europe are women¹²), **urban planning gender gaps** (ex. lack of affordable and effective transportation to suit women's mobility needs ¹³), **lack of access to adequate and affordable basic services and infrastructure** (80% of household water collection is done by women ¹⁴), the **disproportionate impact of climate change on women**, and the **lack of time personal and leisure time** for women are all examples of diverse manifestations of gender inequality in cities and countries today. These exclusions and oppressions are often worse for certain groups of women when their gender interacts with other identity markers, including age, ethnic and cultural identity, women living in poverty, sexual identity legal status, and other factors.

In cities around the world, grassroots women are working proactively to addressing the issues that are most pressing in their communities. These cover a range of different challenges, from land titles to safe public spaces to women in government. Many groups have been acting as the leaders in their cities, connecting local authorities to global normative agendas and working with their local authorities to localize and implement strategies to achieve the global goals. Grassroots women have benefited from being networked at the global level, which supports their capacities, develops their knowledge about global process and normative frameworks, and creates an environment ripe for concerted action. To illustrate, on February 19th, 2013, the Huairou Commission and its partners organized a Global Day of Action for Safer Cities and collectively mobilized women's organizations in 58 cities to sign agreements with local authorities and institutions in support of the incorporation of safety concerns of women in

Ten challenges to gender equality and women's empowerment ¹⁵	
1	Poverty
2	Violence against women and girls
3	Lack of access to economic opportunities
4	Lack of access to productive assets (land, housing titles, credit)
5	Lack of access to basic services
6	Patriarchal control in the family, public affairs, social space
7	Lack of opportunities for women to participate in policy-making
8	Lack of women in politics
9	Lack of political will and financing to ensure agreed upon legal and policy commitments are implemented
10	Lack of laws and legislation that guarantee gender equality and women's empowerment

⁹ UN WOMEN (n.d.) "Facts and figures: Ending violence against women", Webpage: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>

¹⁵ The ranking is based on survey results from a targeted sample of 33 grassroots women who were asked to rank the biggest challenges facing women in their municipalities, by order of importance.

urban planning processes¹⁶. Below are some additional examples of grassroots-women-led initiatives that not only positively contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment, but which have had positive impact at the institutional or systems level, which is necessary for gender transformative impacts.

Grassroots Women's Networks Lead and Partner to Assist Local Governments in Advancing Equitable & Sustainable Development		
STRATEGY	ORGANISATION, COUNTRY	POSITIVE SYSTEMIC IMPACT
1. Supporting women to stand for and sustain positions in local government¹⁷	Mother's Centres (MC) Czech Republic <i>National network</i>	With MC support and mentorship, nearly 350 women ran in the last local elections. A number were elected, including to the vice-mayor position. The trust and communication women built as local MC activists and campaigners has enabled them to build a peer platform with other elected women enhancing their capacity to govern effectively and for women's rights, thus having a greater positive impact on gender equality. .
2. Gender roundtables: incentivizing women's leadership in devolved, local budgeting & governance¹⁸	CONAMOVIDI/ GROOTS Peru, Peru <i>National network</i>	The Equality Law (<i>ley de igualdad</i>) mandates consultative space for community women to sit on gender roundtables, alongside city representatives and other key stakeholders to review local development plans, programs, and budgets. Grassroots women leaders in the national Community Kitchen's Movement have shaped decision-making processes via the roundtables by insisting the distinct needs of rural and urban populations guide plans and investments. Bringing in the grassroots

¹¹ International Labour Organisation (n.d.) Global Wage Report 2018-19: How big is the gender wage gap in your country? Webpage: https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/enhanced/WCMS_650829/lang--en/index.htm

¹² URBACT (2019) Gender Equal Cities. URL: <https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/urbact-genderequalcities-edition-pages-web.pdf>

¹³ CAF, IDB and UN Habitat (2019) "Gender Inequalities in Cities", Urban 20 White Paper, URL: http://www.urban20.org/item/ejes-y-documentos-clave/U20_WP_Gender_inequalities_in_cities.pdf

¹⁴ CAF, IDB and UN Habitat (2019) "Gender Inequalities in Cities", Urban 20 White Paper, URL: http://www.urban20.org/item/ejes-y-documentos-clave/U20_WP_Gender_inequalities_in_cities.pdf

¹⁵ The ranking is based on survey results from a targeted sample of 33 grassroots women who were asked to rank the biggest challenges facing women in their municipalities, by order of importance.

¹⁶ Huairou Commission (n.d.) « Reclaiming Public Spaces for Women », webpage: <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs151/1101426922527/archive/1113690629353.html>

¹⁷ Personal interview with Rut Kolínská. Czech Mother's Centres, 4 September 2019.

¹⁸ Personal interview with Relinda Sosa Perez, GROOTS Peru, 10 September 2019.

		perspective to decision-making has meant that policies are positively impacting women.
3. Making change from the inside: elected women model empowering, gender responsive decision making¹⁹	FEMUM, (various) Latin America and the Caribbean	FEMUM brings together elected women to tackle important issues facing women in the LAC region. Over time, they have built their capacities to effectively address violence against women and girls, reduce climate and disaster risk and promote gender responsive local plans. Their work to support more women to hold elected positions and to create inclusive policies for citizen participation and gender equality is well respected.
4. Community-led democratic oversight and accountability²⁰	International Women Communication Center, Kwaura State, Nigeria	In Nigeria, the Transition Monitoring Group was formed to ensure transparent, free and fair elections. A few women's groups launched this watchdog initiative, which spread to 450+ civil society organisations cooperating to hold government accountable and ensure transparent governance processes.
5. Formalizing women's farm land leases: grassroots-led processes to secure tenure rights²¹	Shibuye Community Health Workers (SCHW) Kakamega County, Kenya	In Kakamega County, grassroots women mobilized communities in three wards to proactively develop community-driven land lease guidelines to strengthen women's contractual rights to control and manage farmlands leased from local government. They successfully lobbied local chiefs and other officials to update lease guidelines by explaining the co-benefits that would be produced--enhanced food security and livelihoods, ecologically sustainable/climate smart planting and soil management practices by formally enhancing tenure security for women farmers.
6. Mainstreaming local indigenous women's knowledge in	The Cantarranas Methodology initiated by WAGUCHA ²³ , Honduras	The "Cantarranas Methodology" is a set of tools for capacity building used to forge ongoing partnerships between mayors, local councilors and citizen groups to advance effective climate and disaster risk management initiatives in highly vulnerable areas. A formal training certification

¹⁹ Personal interview with Olenka Ochoa, FEMUM, 10 September 2019.

²⁰ Personal interview with Dr. Limota Goroso-Giwa, International Women Communication Centre, Nigeria, 6 September 2019; Official Website of the Transitional Monitoring Group Nigeria, <https://tmgnigeria.wordpress.com/about/>.

²¹ Personal interview with Violet Shivutse, Home-Based Care Alliance, Kenya, 17 September 2019; IISD 'Securing Access to Farm Land through Community-led Lease Agreements: Realizing the SDGs in Western Kenya', <https://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/quest-articles/securing-access-to-farm-land-through-community-led-lease-agreements-realizing-the-sdgs-in-western-kenya/>

²³ WAGUCHA is a community-based women-led organisation of Afro-indigenous Garifuna people who recovered and reconstructed their coastal communities surrounding Trujillo Honduras after the devastating impact of Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

climate and disaster risk governance.²²		process, endorsed by the Central American DRM regional body, has recognized 98 indigenous grassroots women as expert trainers in teaching: climate resilience and disaster risk mapping and management, fostering public information campaigns for Resilient Cities and Towns and resilient sectoral planning and programming (e.g. food security/sustainable: agriculture/livelihoods; coastal and forest protection, eco-tourism, sustainable infrastructure).
7. Bottom up housing²⁴	Zambia homeless and poor people's federation Zambia	Grassroots women collectively saved money to gain loans to purchase land. These are then repaid and reinvested. The women then negotiate with government to ensure that necessary basic services, such as water access or sanitation are put into place where the women will be building their homes, resulting in an increase in women living in secure conditions and with secure tenure.
8. Upgrading informal settlements: using microcredit to upgrade housing and small infrastructure²⁵	Lumanti Kathmandu, Nepal	An urban community support fund was created by government and other partners to provide long-term loans to communities to invest in new housing projects. Communities are organised into federations, including a women's federation to work on issues that are important to them, including water, sanitation, disaster risk management, etc. to make improvement to the neighbourhood where their new housing is located.
9. Grassroots partnerships with government to provide access to services²⁶	Damayan ng Maralitang Pilipinong Api (DAMPA) Philippines <i>National network</i>	DAMPA is part of the municipal development council, meaning that they participate in policy and programme development. They simultaneously work to build the capacities of local people to access municipal services. Through this, 2000 families have benefited from the community mortgage programme and 7500 families were resettled in a way that respects international guidelines. They also access livelihood programmes adapted to both urban and rural contexts, and children get support to go to school.

²² Personal interview with Analucy Bengochea, Honduras, 10 September 2019

²⁴ Personal interview with Veronica. Katulushi, Zambia Homesless and Poor People's Federation, 13 September 2019

²⁵ Personal interview with Sobina Lama, Lumanti, Nepal, 6 September 2019

²⁶ Personal interview with Josephine (Jhocas) Castillo, DAMPA, Philippines, 30 September 2019

3. Recommendations for local and regional governments

1. Develop and commit to meaningful municipality-wide plans and initiatives that advance gender equality and women's empowerment by applying an intersectional diversity lens to policies, planning, budgeting and programmes to ensure gender-just and responsive outcomes.
2. Accelerate women's public decision-making roles through the recruitment and appointment of expert grassroots women leaders, feminist professionals and individuals with a demonstrated track record of supporting gender-just responsive outcomes to municipal planning, finance and monitoring committees and civil service positions.
3. Foster inclusive citizen participation and community engagement through the sustained use of financial and other incentives that empower women leaders of marginalized communities and groups to champion gender-just and responsive cities and settlements in partnership with local authorities.
4. Engage local grassroots and women's groups familiar with global and regional normative frameworks to co-design a collaborative approach to localizing implementation, with particular emphasis on creating strategic linkages to national policies and processes that are promoting the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment outcomes (ex. country efforts for SDGs 5 and 11).

4. Enabling Environments for Local Action

4.1 Advance gender equality and women's empowerment by applying an intersectional diversity lens to policies, planning, budgeting and programmes

- 4.1.1 Create a department or office for women, gender equality as a decision-making body internal to the municipal government charged with accelerating women's empowerment and gender responsive policies and outcomes, and thereby gender quality gains.
- 4.1.2 Empower professional and grassroots experts to evaluate existing municipal policies, programming and financing to assess where women and girls are not benefiting equally and recommend a targeted corrective action plan (with budget and oversight).
- 4.1.3 Invest in capacity and skills development of key offices, senior officials, administrators and elected and civic leaders responsible for insuring gender equality targets; and normalize the use of gender-responsive analysis and planning tools in local decision making.
- 4.1.4 Support, recognise and make use of grassroots-generated data (ex. community mapping, household surveys) to inform decision-making, policy, infrastructure development, and budgeting.
- 4.1.5 Build on existing grassroots women's knowledge to address challenges facing communities (ex. grassroots knowledge about climate change resilience can support governments to more effectively plan and respond to disasters).

4.2 Accelerate women's public decision-making roles and community monitoring of city policies and programmes

- 4.2.1 Undertake participatory audits of existing policies and mechanisms and their effectiveness
- 4.2.2 Use participatory tools, such as community score cards, partnership monitoring or women's safety audits, to track how well government is doing
- 4.2.3 Create reflective monitoring programmes to track success and challenges with achieving gender equality and women's empowerment at local levels
- 4.2.4 Introduce monitoring mechanisms to track what policies and programmes aimed at gender equality and women's empowerment achieve, what they can do, what have they not achieved

4.3 Foster inclusive citizen participation and community engagement

- 4.3.1 Consult communities before plans are finalised
- 4.3.2 Inform communities on how to participate
- 4.3.3 Ensure democratic processes are open and transparent (ex. city council meetings are open to the public)
- 4.3.4 Work with grassroots women's organisations who can mobilize and support local communities to participate
- 4.3.5 Participate in local-to-local dialogues to hear grassroots concerns, priorities, and ideas for action

4.4 Engage local grassroots and women's groups in efforts to localize implementation of international and regional normative frameworks

- 4.4.1 Formalize partnerships with grassroots groups
- 4.4.2 Receive training from community groups and local authorities on global normative goals, including the SDGs and New Urban Agenda
- 4.4.3 Support the operations of grassroots women's groups (ex. office space, financial resources, political space, support them in incorporating their group to attain formal status)
- 4.4.4 Make use of grassroots-generated data to track indicators
- 4.4.5 Make links between the community level and national level to ensure that local efforts are captured in national reporting
- 4.4.6 Acknowledge that grassroots leaders are agents of change and give them a seat at the table

5. Joint Way Forward

Step One: Recognizing that women and men experience the city differently and that there are systemic barriers to gender equality and women empowerment.

Step Two: Recognize that empowering grassroots women and promoting more effective development / poverty / wellbeing outcomes for communities also enables local authorities to deliver more effectively on the promise of the SDGs.

Step Three: Form multilevel and multistakeholder partnerships among different stakeholders including grassroots women, local government, women's organisations and others to bring about positive changes to make cities gender inclusive. This includes formalizing and institutionalizing partnerships with organised grassroots women-led organisations.

Step Four: Provide training on gender equality, women's empowerment and on gender transformative approaches for staff at all levels of local government, including elected officials.

Step Five: Generate and make use of disaggregated data (minimally by gender, age, income) - including data generated by grassroots groups - to understand the current context of gender equality and women's empowerment and to track progress.

Step Six: Set specific, measurably goals and outcomes to track progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment in the city. Try to align such progress with broader reporting on the SDGs and New Urban Agenda to demonstrate localisation of the goals.

Step Seven: Provide opportunities for internet and face-to-face meetings between grassroots women's groups and local authorities working to promote gender equality and women's empowerment to share tools, lessons, successes and strategies to make their own work, and the work of others, more powerful and impactful. A key element of empowerment for grassroots women is that they get to articulate their priorities in their own words and voices directly to decision makers.

Step Eight: Incubate and disseminate knowledge around gender equality and women's empowerment in cities and make visible the women and grassroots groups who are often leading these efforts.

ANNEX 1: Key Global Normative Frameworks that Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Cities

YEAR	NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS
1945	UN Charter "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small"
1948	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) provides that every human being is entitled to all the rights and freedoms within the Declaration 'without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status'
1979	Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
1995	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
1995	Inter-American Convention of Belém do Pará
2000	Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is unanimously adopted by the UN Security Council
2015	Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) The 2030 Agenda solidifies global commitments to gender equality in SDG 5 and SDG 11, specifically addressing sexual violence in public space.
2015	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
2015	Addis Ababa Action Agenda - Financing for Development
2016	New Urban Agenda

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