

Workshop 5. At the Campfire: Associations and Networks Supporting Gender Equality

THE FORTNIGHT
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Municipal Exchanges
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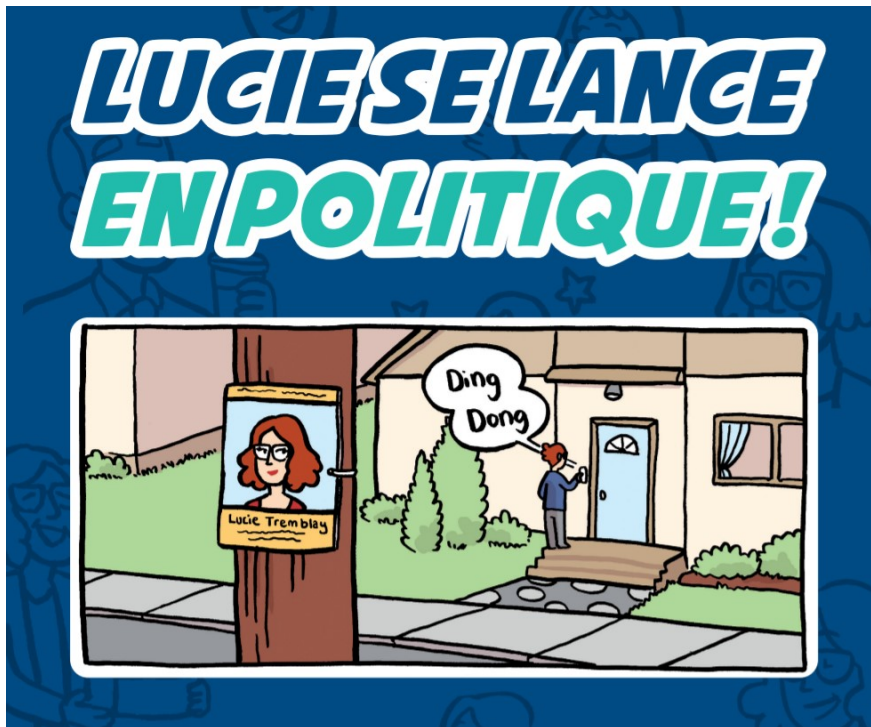
Objectives

Share concrete experiences of municipal associations in the implementation of gender equality policies and strategies to promote the involvement of women in municipal politics.

Canadian Experiences

In Quebec there are two associations of municipalities: the Union of Municipalities of Quebec (UMQ) and the Quebec Federation of Municipalities (FQM). Each has a working group to promote female leadership: the UMQ Women and Governance Commission and the FQM Women and Politics Committee. They each implement various actions to increase the participation of women in politics:

1. The two associations have developed a **gender equality policy** to increase the representation of women internally, on boards of directors, committees, and commissions. The policy is a model for municipalities to follow.
2. A year before the municipal elections, they organize an **awareness campaign** to encourage women to run. In the absence of political parties at the municipal level and a parity law (as is the case in Tunisia), the only way to have more women elected is to have more women running.
3. UMQ and FQM carried out a **survey** to identify the main obstacles preventing women from entering politics. Three of these obstacles are: the difficulty of balancing work and family, self-doubt about their abilities, and the discrimination or harassment experienced by women in politics.
4. Based on this survey, FQM developed its **action plan**, which includes activities under four themes: 1) encouraging women to run; 2) offer training to elected officials (e.g., leadership, communication on social media); 3) networking for elected women 4) raising awareness of the role of elected officials.
5. The **associations** allow elected women to collectively address issues that affect all of society. Together, they can advocate to the government and access grants to take action.



Associations and Networks

- Both associations are leading initiatives to **challenge the stereotype** that “Politics is a man’s business.” The UMQ produced a comic strip based on the anecdotes and experiences of elected women. The FQM has published the *Guide to Valuing the Role of an Elected Official*, to show the different styles of leadership that exist.
- One of the strategies to encourage women to run for politics is to use **positive role models** in campaigns, highlighting successful women, and raising awareness of the impact they can have as an elected official.

The **Women, Politics and Democracy Group (GFPD)** works in partnership with the associations. The mission of the GFPD is to sensitize the population to the importance of citizen and democratic action, to promote the full participation of women in political life, and to support the exercise of citizenship. The GFPD implemented the Parity Challenge project to support regional county municipalities (RMC) in the development of an equality policy with an action plan. The process is based on the Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) methodology. The GFPD also offers numerous training courses for women who wish to develop their leadership and become involved in politics. The Group is also advocating for the establishment of a parity law.

Additional Resources



[Workshop recording](#)

[Video of the project Parity Challenge, GFPD](#)
(French)

[Equality policy, UMQ](#) (French)

[Parity and equality policy, FQM](#) (French)

[Cartoon of Lucie Goes into Politics, UMQ](#)
(French)

[Guide to Valuing the Role of an Elected Official, FQM](#) (French)

[Promotional video of Magog, QC](#)

[Deployons nos Elles, Vicky-May Hamm](#)



Tunisian Experiences

In Tunisia, the situation of women is contrasted. There are several advances for women in politics, but many obstacles persist. Decentralization and the parity law have enabled women to enter municipal politics, but they are not always accepted into leadership positions. They face different forms of violence and harassment: domestic violence, harassment at work or in public places (according to a survey by the Ministry of Women, at least 47% of women have been victims of domestic violence in their life). In rural areas women are poorer and discriminated against. In 2018, a law was adopted to combat violence against women.

The **Network of Tunisian Municipal Elected Women** was created in March 2020, with the support of the Inclusive Municipal Leadership Program (IMLP), GIZ, and the National Federation of Tunisian Communes (FNCT), to support and train elected women. Several activities were carried out in the first year:

- ⇒ Organizing consultations with elected women to identify capacity development needs.
- ⇒ Holding workshops on leadership and the role of an elected official.
- ⇒ Actions to combat violence against women in general and elected officials in particular: training on rights and recourse in collaboration with local associations; development of a guide on how to deal with situations of political violence.
- ⇒ Setting up (in collaboration with the Ministry of Women) an observatory to monitor cases of violence, receiving calls and notifications of cases of violence, and following up with victims.
- ⇒ Collaborations with experts to propose laws that promote and protect women in leadership positions.

In general, the network plays an important role in motivating women to participate in politics, accompanying them during the process, giving them moral support, and ensuring that they are successful.