

Consolidated Report of Research Findings



Barriers to Women Candidates and Women Administrators in Local Governments in Five Countries:

Benin | Ghana | Zambia | Cambodia | Sri Lanka

Partnerships for Municipal Innovation - Women in Local Leadership (PMI-WILL)



FEDERATION
OF CANADIAN
MUNICIPALITIES

FÉDÉRATION
CANADIENNE DES
MUNICIPALITÉS



Coordinated by: Partnership for Municipal Innovation – Women in Local Leadership (PMI-WILL)

Published by : Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Edited by: Elsie Odonkor- Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Specialist

With special thanks to:

Mary Heather White - Project Director

Nora Benamra - Project Manager

Natalie Benoit - Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist

Nadege Djonou - Project Officer

FCM International

24 Clarence Street

Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5P3

Tel: 613-241-5221 / Fax: 613-241-7117

www.fcm.ca



Five Countries

Benin / Ghana / Zambia / Cambodia / Sri Lanka

Acknowledgement

This report is the outcome of research studies conducted in the 5 partner countries implementing the **Partnership for Municipal Innovation - Women in Local Leadership** (PMI-WILL). The PMI-WILL project is implemented by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) in partnership with member municipalities, provincial and territorial associations (PTAs), as well as in collaboration with Local Government Associations (LGAs) and key stakeholders in each of the five implementation countries.

The PMI-WILL project intends to enhance the enjoyment of the rights of women and girls in five countries: Benin, Cambodia, Ghana, Sri Lanka and Zambia. This six-year project (2021-2027) will support women local elected officials and administrators at the municipal level, municipal councilors and local governments in the partner countries. To assess the barriers to women's participation in local governance as elected officials and decision-makers, research was commissioned by the LGAs.

Our special thanks go to our donor, Global Affairs Canada (GAC). We would like to express our appreciation to the LGAs as well as all the consultants commissioned by the LGAs whose contributions and analysis made this study possible. For the country specific research reports, please check with our 5 partners below:

[Benin- Association Nationale des Communes du Bénin \(ANCB\)](#)

[Cambodia- National League of the Local Councils of the Kingdom of Cambodia \(NLC\)](#)

[Ghana-National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana \(NALAG\)](#)

[Sri Lanka - Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities \(FSLGA\)](#)

[Zambia- Local Government Association of Zambia \(LGAZ\)](#)

Special mention also goes to the consultant Sandra Ceciari who worked to consolidate the reports into one document and Dr. James Mensah, who provided guidance to enrich the report. Finally, our gratitude goes to all the staff of FCM who supported and guided to finalize this report.

Executive summary

Gender equality is crucial for a peaceful and sustainable world, as recognized by the United Nations through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The SDGs call for women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership in all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life. However, currently, women are underrepresented in local and regional governments worldwide. The Partnership for Municipal Innovation - Women in Local Leadership (PMI-WILL) project aims to address this issue and enhance the rights of women and girls, particularly those from marginalized groups. Research studies were commissioned in its 5 countries of operation: Benin, Cambodia, Ghana, Sri Lanka and Zambia. The report is the synthesis of the 10 reports on research studies conducted and highlights the challenges and recommendations in barriers to women's participation in local government as elected officers and administrators along four thematic areas: socio-cultural and religious, policy and legal framework, institutional provisions, and individual barriers.

To identify barriers to women's participation in local government as elected officers and administrators, research studies in partner countries were commissioned. Nine (9) consultants were recruited in the 5 countries to lead the research. Secondary and primary data in the 5 countries were used for the purpose of the research. Consultants employed different methods with most conducting purely qualitative research and a few using the mixed method approach of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. A total of 568 administrators were interviewed made up 423 females and 145 males. The research to identify barriers to women's participation in elections had a sample of 677 made up of 553 females and 124 males. The sample for the study on women's participation engaged successful candidates, unsuccessful candidates, women aspirants, (these included youth, women with disability, women from minority ethnic groups and marginalized communities). Others interviewed included opinion leaders, academicians, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) who work in the field of local governance. Once the reports were finalized a validation and an action planning meeting was conducted, first to validate research findings and secondly to develop action plans that would be implemented in the second phase of the project.

The document discusses the various types of barriers that hinder women's participation in local governance. These barriers can be categorized into four types: policy and legal barriers, socio-cultural and religious barriers, institutional barriers, and individual barriers. Policy and legal barriers include the lack of attention paid to capacity-building and financial resourcing, as well as the inadequacy of inclusive implementation approaches to enable gender mainstreaming in policies and programs. Socio-cultural and religious barriers include unequal gender relationships, prejudices, and discrimination against women candidates. Institutional barriers include policies and arrangements by political parties and electoral commissions, which disadvantage women. Individual barriers include finances, education, lack of self-confidence, gender stereotypes, and lack of mentors. These categories of barriers are always present and vary in importance in different countries.

Key findings from the study

Policy and legal barriers: Although all countries have legal instruments and national constitutions that emphasize the principle of gender equality, the implementation of these legal frameworks is weak. There is a lack of gender-sensitive policies and legal frameworks, as well as a lack of political will to support women. Quotas are identified as a mechanism to support women's participation in politics, but not all countries have implemented them. It is important to note that Sri Lanka's Local Authorities (Amendment) Act, No. 1, was revised in 2017 by Act No. 16 to include a 25% women's quota in local elections. When it comes to women in local administration whereas the reports from Benin, Ghana, and Sri Lanka underlines again the absence of legal instruments for women, the report from Cambodia makes mention of a national recruitment policy of 25% -50% of women public servants. The absence of legal frameworks and policies and their weak implementation, lack of supportive environment in the workplace, absence of capacity building programs, and lack of gender disaggregated data are identified as the main obstacles for women administrators.

Socio-cultural and religious barriers: Patriarchal norms are prevalent in all 5 countries studied, leading to discrimination, negative gender stereotypes, and hindering education for girls in Benin and Cambodia. In spite of institutional efforts to end violence against women in Benin, it remains prevalent. The culture of emphasizing woman as a household manager and the man as a provider, leaves only a small chance for women to get involved in social, economic and political development in Cambodia. Male hegemony restricts the independence of women to take important decisions such as contesting for elections. In Ghana, the society tends to judge women more on how well they perform as mothers and wives, rather than their achievements in their career. The discrimination against women, in a male-dominated culture, gender stereotypes, verbal and sexual abuse of women in politics, sexual harassment and gendered defamation before, during and after local government-level elections is a disincentive for many women to join. Parental sex preference of males over females in Sri Lanka reinforces the stereotypes that a boy will grow to be a man and a girl will grow up to serve the man, and she cannot reach further than womanhood. Other negative norms such as virginity test, female genital mutilation amongst Muslim communities all go to prevent further progress on gender equality and remain a persistent barrier towards eliminating violence against women. The myth that women are unable to hold leadership positions, was identified as a gender stereotype that affects the performance of female administrators in local government. The upbringing of the girl child in Zambia has been identified to be highly contributing to the lower self-esteem of a woman in adulthood taking away confidence levels. There exists a deep-rooted concept of unequal gender relations in which men are superior to women. Zambia has a dual legal system, (statute and customary laws) which has resulted in a number of gender inequalities in the execution of the laws.

Institutional barriers: The research underlined the role of the electoral system and the voting method, in particular the discriminatory positioning of women on the electoral lists (last position or alternatives) in Benin, Cambodia and Sri Lanka, the different forms of corruption during elections and, the structure of political parties in all countries of study discriminates against women as they do not support women financially and women lack mentors to guide them enter political life. The power and influence wielded by men and political leaders often leads to intimidations and violence against women candidates, sexual harassment and political patronage in particular in Benin, Ghana, and Zambia. When it comes to the position of women in local administration, the report underlines the issues of sexual violence and harassment that women face and the consequences that this has on their career in Benin, Ghana and Zambia. Women do not hold managerial positions.

Individual barriers: These include financial constraints, social pressures, psychological barriers, family responsibilities, and violence. Financial barriers were identified as a significant setback in all countries studied, as women do not have enough financial autonomy to pursue a political career. Family responsibilities and social pressure to excel in family life were also evident in all five countries, with single mothers often considered irresponsible and not trusted with leadership positions. Additionally, women face psychological barriers, and the issue of violence was reported at varying degrees in all countries. Poverty, lack of education, and access to information also further constrain women's participation in politics and local administration. Despite these obstacles, many women are motivated to engage in politics and work towards a change in their society and women's situation in general, but economic obstacles often impede their efforts.

Key recommendations

Policy: All the countries for the study recommended advocacy to review legislation and policies to encourage the participation of women in local government as leaders and decision makers. Benin and Ghana recommend a law of affirmative action passed for local government elections. Cambodia and Zambia's advocacy is targeted at having electoral reforms that promotes gender equality and obliges political parties to support women candidates. Sri Lanka already has a 25% quota system for women in local government elections and thus advocates for gender mainstreaming in political parties as well as the selection criteria in political parties. In local government administration, the advocacy efforts should be with the Local Government Ministries to promote gender equality in recruitment and promotion and to protect women. In Benin, there is a push to modify the Constitution and laws to promote parity between men and women in recruitments and offer positive discrimination in favor of women and the disabled. Similarly, Cambodia is advocating for legislation to reduce gender inequality and enhance gender equality strategies, including quota systems for recruitments and leadership positions in local administration. Ghana is advocating for an extension of maternity leave and promoting women into senior positions in local government, while Sri Lanka is advocating for the design and implementation of gender policies in all local governments. Finally, Zambia is advocating for strong policies against sexual harassment and violence, particularly for women and marginalized groups, in local government.

Institution: The recommendations for local government elections and administration in all countries of study include eradicating electoral corruption and reducing the role of money in politics, working with political parties for gender strategies and policies on sexual harassment and corruption, ensuring women's good positioning in electoral lists, and raising awareness against electoral corruption and fraud. Other recommendations include supporting women's engagement in local elections, implementing policies on gender equality, and combating discrimination and violence against women in politics. Additionally, creating special funds to support women political campaigns. In local government authorities, establishing childcare services and advocating for gender quotas within local administrations are also recommended. Finally, the research highlights the need for promoting flexible work environments and extended teleworking for women in local administration and ensuring access to disabled people in local government buildings.

Socio-cultural: To address socio-cultural barriers within local government elections and local government administrations in the countries of study, various actions to promote gender equality and combat gender stereotypes were recommended. Some of the recommended actions include raising awareness through campaigns, involving traditional leaders and the media, designing and implementing gender awareness programs, and promoting policies and services to support women in local administrations.

Benin recommends awareness-raising to reduce cultural barriers and stereotypes against gender equality, promote a feminist society, and encourage women's participation in political and economic life. Cambodia suggests increasing civic and political education, media campaigns, academic research, and discussions on women in politics, and providing support for women to better balance private and political life. Ghana proposes leadership and mentorship programs for women with disabilities, involving traditional leaders in raising awareness, and combating discrimination against women. Sri Lanka recommends incorporating gender equality into government media policy and promoting training for community leaders. Zambia suggests collaborating with stakeholders, providing information programs for women, and promoting gender equality awareness. Some recommendations specifically for local government administrations include promoting gender transformative approaches, designing gender awareness programs, planning capacity building programs, assessing discriminatory social norms, and promoting policies and services to enable women to balance professional and family life.

Individual: Some recommendations to address individual challenges faced by women in local government elections include supporting women mentoring and coaching programs, reinforcing women's financial capacities, providing training on laws and financial support, creating capacity building programs for women, promoting training to enhance leadership qualities, advocating for funding and campaign support for women candidates, and providing mentorship programs to prepare women for political work. Other suggestions include creating economic opportunities for women and leading an in-depth study on sexual violence against women. In local government administrations the following recommendations were proposed: Benin, highlights raising awareness on gender issues, organizing training sessions for teachers, and supporting women in leadership through mentoring and coaching. Cambodia recommends providing training on laws and financial support for women elected at the local level, increasing support mechanisms for women politicians, and advocating for increased benefits for pregnancy and maternal leave. Ghana suggests creating economic opportunities and capacity building programs for women to support them in taking leadership roles. Sri Lanka recommends organizing training programs in local governments, including digital literacy, and allocating funds for effective distribution of equipment. Zambia suggests providing training and capacity building programs, advocating for eliminating gender pay gap, and creating mentorship programs for women.

Conclusion

The PMI-WILL's project research conducted in its five partner countries found that gender equality in local government is still far from being achieved. This is due to discrimination, negative socio-cultural norms and political institutions acting as gate keepers to women's participation in politics. Progress on gender equality in local government is set against the backdrop of global gender equality more broadly. The UN Women report (2022) also shows that it may take close to 300 years to achieve full gender equality worldwide due to global challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic, violent conflicts, climate change, and backlash against women's rights. The PMI-WILL project aims to increase women's participation in local governance in the five partner countries to achieve gender equality and the UN Agenda 2030. The project proposes key recommendations to address the barriers that women face in local governance and improve their daily conditions of life. Key amongst the recommendations is addressing negative social norms by engaging men as allies and promoting women role models. The participation of women in decision-making at the local level is crucial to ensure increased responsiveness to women's needs and poverty reduction. Local governments, national associations, and stakeholders are encouraged to contribute to this reflection and establish a clear way of action to achieve women's full and effective participation in political and public life.

Contents

4	Acknowledgement
5	Executive summary
11	Chapter 1 Introduction
11	1.1 Background of study
12	1.2 Methodology
13	1.3 Context
19	1.4 Overview of types of barriers to women's participation in local governance
20	Chapter 2 Barriers to women's participation in local governments elections and administration
21	2.1 Barriers to women's participation in local government
27	2.2 Key findings on barriers to women's participation in local government as elected officers\ and administrators
27	Benin
30	Cambodia
33	Ghana
37	Sri lanka
41	Zambia
44	Chapter 3 Key recommendations for women's participation in local governance
44	3.1 Key recommendations for women's participation in elections at the local level
48	3.2 Key recommendations for women in local administrations
52	Chapter 4 Conclusions
52	Bibliography

Chapter 1

Introduction

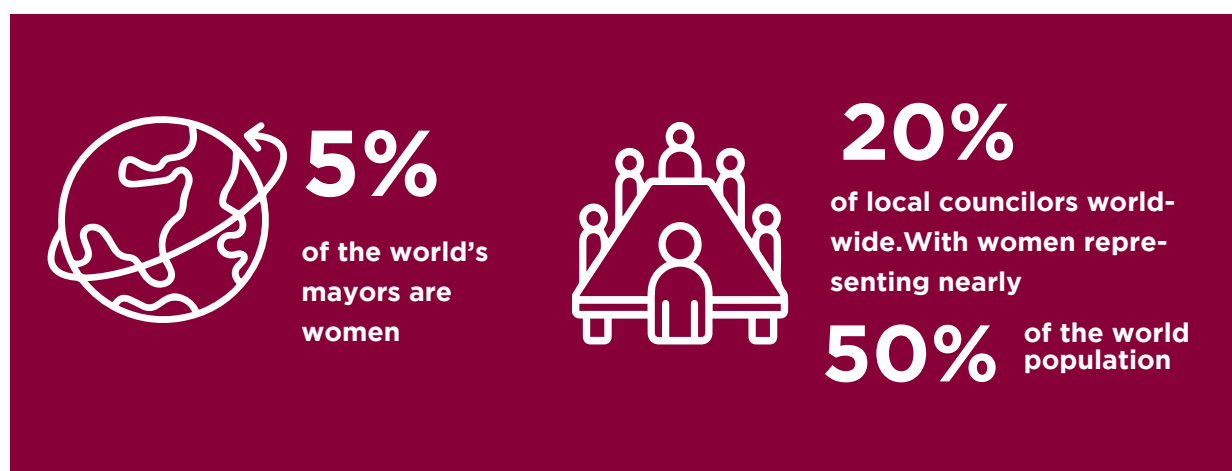
1.1 Background of the study

Gender equality is today recognized by the United Nations not only as a fundamental right but as a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. The UN Agenda 2030 - Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), signed by the 193 member states in September 2015 calls for achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls (Goal 5), and integrating a gender perspective in all the other goals. Women's right to equal political participation at all levels of government were already emphasized in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action¹. The importance of women's equal political participation at all levels of governments is clear in the wording of SDG target 5.5 - "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public

life - and the choice of indicators for monitoring progress in achieving this target". Two indicators on women's representation in decision-making in political life are included: the SDG indicator 5.5 on women's representation in Parliaments and SDG indicator 5.5.1b, a new indicator on women's representation in local government.

Local and regional governments have been working to achieve gender equality, particularly to increase the participation of locally elected women and promote the participation of women in local decision-making. Even though women's decision-making and administrative powers in local and regional governments vary across countries, all local and regional governments have the potential to advance gender equality through their local policies. Today, fewer than 5% of the world's

Diagram 1- Participation of women in local decision-making



mayors are women and they make up an average of 20% of local councilors worldwide². Women represent nearly 50% of the world population³,

this gap means that many women's voices are missing from the decision-making process. Including women and other marginalized groups

1. The Beijing declaration and Platform for Action were launched by the IV World Women Conference organised by the UN in Beijing in 1995

2. Source UCLG : www.uclg.org

3. Gender ratio in the world : <https://statisticstimes.com/demographics/world-sex-ratio.php#:~:text=The%20population%20of%20females%20in,101.68%20males%20per%20100%20females.>

could bring a different and constructive approach to policies, planning and programs at the local level.

In this context, the Partnership for Municipal Innovation - Women in Local Leadership (PMI-WILL) project intends to enhance the enjoyment of rights of women and girls, particularly those from marginalized groups, in five countries: Benin, Cambodia, Ghana, Sri Lanka and Zambia. PMI-WILL conducted research in each of the 5 countries and produced a report on Barriers to Women's Participation as Elected Officials in Local Government

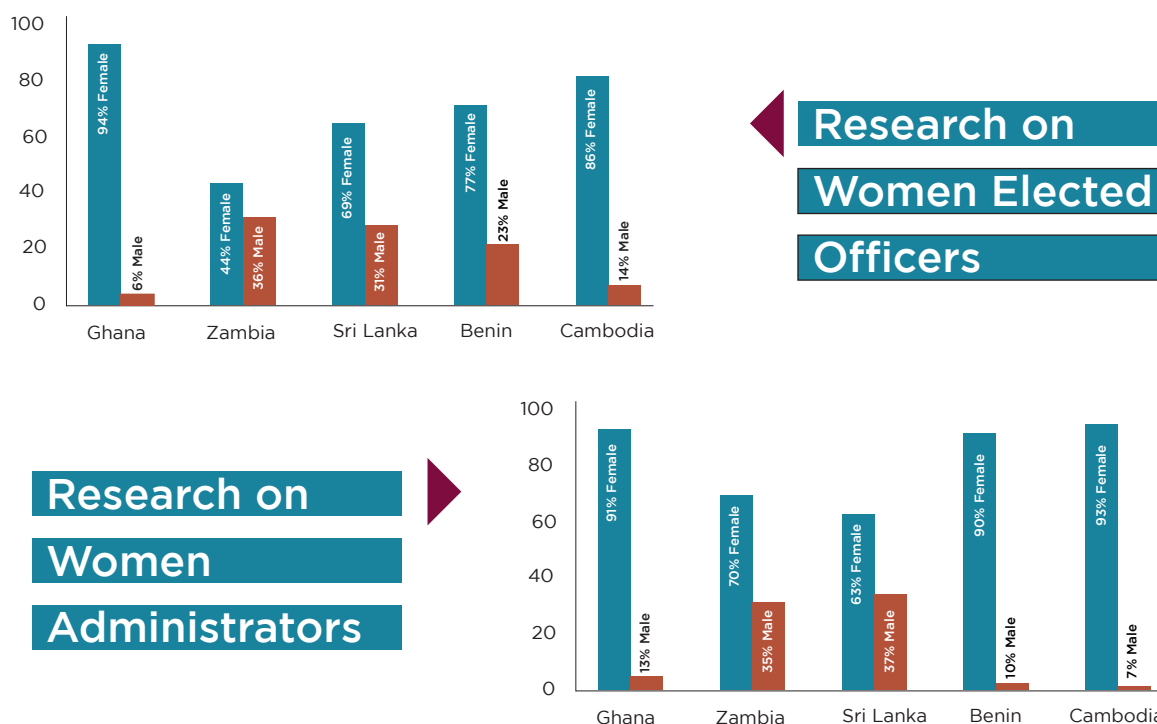
and a report on the Barriers to Women Administrators in Local Government for each country. This consolidated report synthesizes 10 reports and will draw attention to specific challenges and recommendations of the five countries on women in local government.⁴ The document will highlight the major findings according to the four thematic areas for the research: socio-cultural and religious, policy and legal framework, institutional provisions, and individual barriers and make recommendations for the next steps of the program implementation.

1.2 Methodology

To identify barriers to women's participation in local government as elected officers and administrators, research studies in partner countries were commissioned. Nine (9) consultants were recruited in the 5 countries to lead the research. Consultants employed different methods with most conducting purely qualitative research and

a few using the mixed method approach of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Once the reports were finalized a validation and an action planning meeting was conducted, first to validate research findings and secondly to develop action plans that would be implemented in the second phase of the project.

Diagram 2: Statistics of Respondents for Research Barrier Studies



4. See country specific links for the individual reports

1.3 Country Profiles

The context of the five countries which have been studied is summarized in the following country descriptions



Image source: Slide Travel

Benin



Elected officers

Councillors 4.3%
Mayors 4%



Human Development Index rating

HDI value - 0.54. Ranking - 158/189,
2019



Region/Location

West Africa - bordered by Togo
(west), Nigeria (east), Burkina-Faso
(north-west) and Niger (north-east)



Gender Inequality Index rating

GII value - 0.61. Ranking - 148/162,
2019



Capital/Seat of Government

Porto Novo/Cotonou - most
populous city and economic capital
of the country



Population

Approx. 13 million - 51% Women
and 49% Men

Benin is a country with low level of education as one of the main reasons for women's vulnerability. There are around 50 ethnic minorities in Benin; the largest is Fon/Dahomey which is 39% of the population. The reports recognize that defining the situation of marginalized women was very difficult and the reflection has not been finalized. During the validation meeting of the reports, a deeper analysis of the situation of women from ethnic minorities and women with disabilities was recommended.



Cambodia



Elected officers

Councilors 20.8%
Mayors 2%



% of women headed households

18%



Region/Location

Southeast Asia - bordered by Thailand (northwest), Laos (north), Vietnam (east) and the Gulf of Thailand (southwest)



% living below poverty line

13.5%



Capital/Largest city

Phnom Penh



Human Development Index rating

HDI value - 0.59. Ranking - 144/189, 2019



Population

16 million - 51% Women and 49% Men



Gender Inequality Index rating

GII value - 0.47. Ranking - 117/162, 2019

In Cambodia, ethnic Khmer make up 90-94% of the entire population with the rest comprising of four distinct groups: Cham, indigenous highland communities, ethnic Chinese, and ethnic Vietnamese. Cham is a term used to designate three separated Muslim groups⁵. The people who are considered as the disadvantaged and/or marginalized groups, according to the reports, are those who have little or no access to the most significant social and economic services for their life including education, health, social assistance, employment, and decision making. They are placed under five categories, being widow, orphans, people with disability, poor families, and indigenous people. Women's access to education in Cambodia is limited when compared to men—particularly at the secondary school level. For instance, a 2018 UNESCO report indicated, "only 37% of Cambodian women reach upper secondary school."⁶

5. Source : www.minorityrights.org.

6. <https://www.childrenofthemekong.org/why-girls-are-not-in-school/>

Ghana



Elected officers

Councillors 9.1%
Mayors 15%



% of women headed households

18%



Region/Location

West Africa - bordered by Ivory Coast (west), Burkina Faso (north) and Togo (east)



% living below poverty line

11.3%



Human Development Index rating

HDI value - 0.611. Ranking - 138/189, 2019



Capital/Largest city

Accra



Human Development Category

Medium



Population

Approx. 31m = 52% Women and 48% Men



Gender Inequality Index rating

GII value - 0.54. 2019



Ghana has more than seventy ethnic groups, Akan the major ethnic group make up 47.5% of the population. Some marginalized groups in Ghana include persons with disability, or people with mental health problems or people living with HIV/AIDS. According to the report, the ingrained patriarchal society structure coupled with gender stereotypical behaviors towards women from marginalized society prevent efforts to attain gender parity or equality at the local level. There are not enough structures or a comprehensive program or strategy to orient young women who are interested in politics. The existing structures to push women into the political space are inactive due to lack of funding from governments and other stakeholders. Political participation of women in general at all levels is underrepresented but those from marginalized groups are worse.

Sri Lanka



Elected officers

Councilors 22%
Mayors 2%



Ageing populations stats

Projected - 22% by 2030 = 1 in 5
persons, mostly elderly women, 2017



Region/Location

South Asia - shares a maritime
border with India and the Maldives



Human Development Index rating

HDI value - 0.782. Ranking - 72/189,
2019



Capital/Largest city

Jayewardenepura Kotte/Colombo



Human Development Category

High



Population

Approx. 22m = 52% Women and
48% Men



Gender Inequality Index rating

GII value - 0.40. Ranking - 90/162,
2019



In Sri Lanka, the two main characteristics that mark a person's ethnic heritage are language and religion, which intersect to create four major ethnic groups-the Sinhalese, the Tamils, the Muslims, and the Burghers. The Sinhalese make up 74.9% of the population⁷. A report from Amnesty International⁸ has recently recorded discrimination against the country's Muslim community. The report from the country refers to marginalized people as including people from minority ethnic and religious groups, persons with disability or people from the plantation communities⁹.

7. Russell R. Ross and Andrea Matles Savada, editors. Sri Lanka: A Country Study. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1988. <http://countrystudies.us/sri-lanka/38.html>

8. Report from 19 March 2021

9. The 2020 Human Development Report

Image source: Colombo Telegraph

Zambia



Elected officers

Councillors 9%
Mayors 13%



Region/Location

Southeast Africa - bordered by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (north), Tanzania (north-east), Malawi (east), Mozambique (southeast), Zimbabwe and Botswana (south), Namibia (southwest) and Angola (west).



Population

18m = 50.3% Women and 49.7% Men



% of women headed households

56.7% of households in poverty are female-headed



% living below poverty line

54.4% - more than half of population, LCMS 2015



Human Development Index rating

HDI value - 0.58. Ranking - 146/189, 2019



Human Development Category

Medium



Gender Inequality Index rating

GII value - 0.53. Ranking - 137/189, 2019



In Zambia there are more than 70 ethnic groups; some of them are small groups; the main group is Bemba. According to Minority Rights Groups International Bemba speakers have “key positions in central government but there is no dominant ethno-linguistic group. English is the language of the government, and the lack of English can entail social exclusion.”¹⁰ The research report from Zambia refers to some form of marginalization of minority groups during the electoral process.¹¹



10. www.minorityrights.org

11. Research on barriers to women's participation in local government elections, Zambia



Image source: Open Democracy

1. 4 Overview of types of barriers to women's participation in local governance

Several factors account for low participation of women in local governments; they can be formal, backed by legal statutes, policies and procedures or informal, as per the customs and norms of a group of people. These factors have been categorized into 4 types of barriers:

1 Policy and legal barriers

According to the World Bank (2017) key barriers to women's participation in politics include the structure of the current legal framework, a political culture embedded with patriarchal values and norms that are unsupportive to female candidates and a lack of personal wealth or access to fund campaigns. Women are less likely than men to have the education, contacts and resources needed to become effective leaders.

There is inadequate attention paid to capacity-building, financial resourcing and inclusive implementation approaches to enable gender mainstreaming in policies and programs (at any level of decision). One of the most well-known policies is the quota system used to promote women in politics (which can be voluntary or mandatory) and applied at various points of entry into the political system, e.g., political party membership recruitment, candidate identification, selection and endorsement, or numbers of seats filled by women (either elected or appointees)¹². There is also a lack of appreciation of the importance of gender issues by people working in the public sector

which is translated into a reluctance or inability to participate and implement gender mainstreaming strategies or programs.

2 Socio-cultural and religious barriers

Unequal gender relationships in which men are superior to women still exist in most societies. Women are subject to prejudices that marginalize and stereotype them into traditional roles that do not allow them to reach certain goals; men are reluctant to give power to women. According to the group of experts reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action 15 years on¹³, "The persistence of male-dominated social structures and socialization processes seriously impede women's meaningful participation in political and decision-making process. Women continue to be assigned traditional domestic roles confined to the household, and models of leadership and participation continue to privilege masculine traits while feminine qualities are deemed unsuitable for political leadership. Tradition, culture, and religion are used to keep women disempowered. When women do face such notions, they can face

12. Voluntary quotas are used by parties to affect change internally or in elections, without any legislative or regulatory measures. Quotas can also be required statutorily or under electoral legislation. They can be introduced at all levels of the political system: at the federal, national, regional, or local level.

13. Briefing Paper « Structural barriers, cultural constraints and other challenges – Women Empowerment in institutional mechanism for Power and decision making – The Beijing Platform for action 15 years on;

violence, a key mechanism of control exercised at the family and community level....” Patriarchal norms also lead most voters including women to discriminate against women candidates. As patriarchy promotes the supremacy of men over women. In general women, candidates are often insulted and ridiculed with this trend on the rise in our digital society.

3 Institutional barriers

A number of institutional policies, procedures, or situations systematically disadvantage certain groups of people. It is important to know what policies and arrangements have been put in place by political parties and electoral commissions for individuals who would like to contest local government elections. How do these policies and arrangements impact women? Local government elections are impacted by institutional rules from political parties, electoral bodies that disadvantages women. The adoption processes, filing fees of political parties, rules governing the counting of elections are but a few. At local government administrations’, there is the need to review human resource policies, recruitment postings, promotions, and remunerations and how the working environment (infrastructure, logistics) impact women. Institutions with rigid schedules pose a challenge to young families, especially the women as they find it difficult to manage family responsibilities and work. Having meetings and training on dates and times could exclude some staff from participating as well as communicating in languages not comprehensible by all could count as some barriers to women’s effectiveness in local government as administrators.

4 Individual barriers

There are a number of individual barriers to women participation in leadership positions. Among these are finances, educational status, religion, and disability. But other barriers can include: the lack of other female supportive leaders, lack of self-confidence, gender stereotypes, affordability

and accessibility of childcare, and lack of mentors. Some of these individual barriers are also barriers for women administrators. In some countries women perceive politics as a “dirty or rough thing”, hence their low interest in it. These barriers are based on the assumption that politics is a ‘male’ world, a world in which success requires attributes such as competitiveness, aggressiveness and self-assertiveness – which are typically assigned to men. This scares women and provoke their fears of losing members of their families.

The importance of these categories of barriers can vary from country to country, but they are always present, as we will observe in the analysis of the situation of women in Benin, Cambodia, Ghana, Sri Lanka and Zambia.

Chapter 2

Barriers to women's participation in local governments elections and administration



Image source: Zurijeta Dreamstime

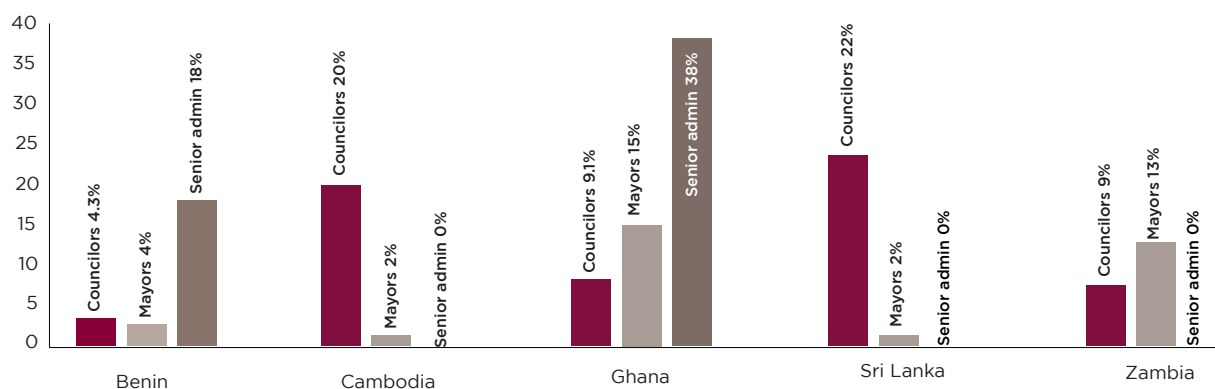
2.1 Country-specific literature review on barriers to women's participation in local government.

In this section we synthesize the literature gathered in the five countries and analyze and compare the existing barriers according to the four thematic areas identified above.

Generally, women's participation in local government across all five countries of study is weak, as can be seen in table 7 below. In Benin only 4.35% of women are elected at the local government and out of 5,477 employees in local government administration, there are only 25% women. Cambodia has seen a steady rise of women's

representation at the municipal, commune, and Sangkat levels increasing to 20.08% women municipal councilors after the 2017 elections. Ghana experienced one of its lowest performances in local governments' election in 2019 with only 9.1% of women elected. The 2016 elections in Zambia only went up to 9% female representation at the local government level. The overall number and percentage of women elected as women Mayors in the last election was 15 out of 116 representing 13%. The statistics, however, continue to pose a serious concern.

Diagram 3: Women's participation in local governance



Policy and legal barriers

International initiatives and agreements in favor of women have been at the start of more inclusive policies as revealed by the reports from the five countries. However, the role of the national governments in transforming the international legal frameworks into national legislation and enforcing its implementation is critical to achieve the desired change. The reports show different realities in the examined countries, with regard to the existence of gender-responsive policies and legal frameworks and their level of implementation.

It is worthy of note that all five countries have legal instruments and national constitutions that emphasize the principle of equality between men and women. Nothing in the countries' constitutions inhibits women or marginalized groups from contesting for local government elections or being in leadership positions within local government administrations. However, there is a weak implementation of these legal frameworks, as

sector-specific policies that govern local governments in general are gender neutral with the exception of Sri Lanka¹⁴. The absence of gender sensitivity among the implementers of the legislation is underlined, in all 5 countries together with the absence of a National Action Plan to promote and empower women administrators. In this context, the findings of the report from Sri Lanka are of interest because, while mentioning the existence of a legal framework for women elected in local governance, the report stresses the lack of political will to concretely support women.

Among the policies to support women's participation in politics, the most well-known and widely used mechanism is quotas. Quotas lay down requirements that each sex be represented by at least a given minimum proportion on a list of candidates, in an assembly or as part of a government. A growing number of countries currently use this mechanism, either legislatively, electorally, or internally in the case of political parties. It is

**Sri Lanka's Local Authorities
(Amendment) Act, No. 1, was revised
in 2017 by Act No. 16 to include
25% women's
Quota in local elections.**

important to note that Sri Lanka's Local Authorities (Amendment) Act, No. 1, was revised in 2017 by Act No. 16 to include a 25% women's quota in local elections. This provision, which was enacted in response to a constitutional demand for affirmative action, allowed a critical mass of women to gain access to local governments. More than 2,500 women were elected, accounting for 30% of all elected candidates surpassing the established quota. The examples of Rwanda and Sen-

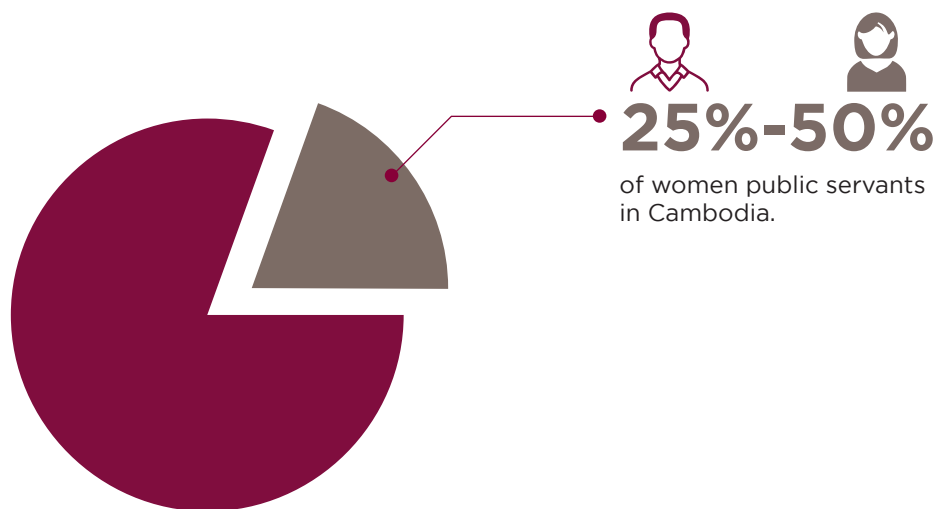
egal were mentioned in the report from Benin¹⁵. The lack of quotas was identified as a barrier for a balanced participation of women in local politics in 3 out of the 5 countries: Benin, Cambodia and Ghana.

When it comes to women in local administration whereas the reports from Benin, Ghana, and Sri Lanka underlines again the absence of legal instruments for women, the report from Cambodia

14. Refer to country specific reports for details

15. In Rwanda the Constitution of 2003 reserves to women 30% of the seats at all level of decision making. In Senegal a Parity Law instituting total parity between women and men in all elected institutions was passed following an amendment to the Constitution in 2010.

Diagram 4: National recruitment policy



makes mention of a national recruitment policy of 25% -50% of women public servants. However, the report stresses the weak implementation of the policy. All reports emphasized the lack of supportive environment in the workplace for women to achieve work and life balance, the lack of continuity of governmental policies and the absence of capacity building programs, as main obstacles for women administrators. The report further says that Local governments do not have a gen-

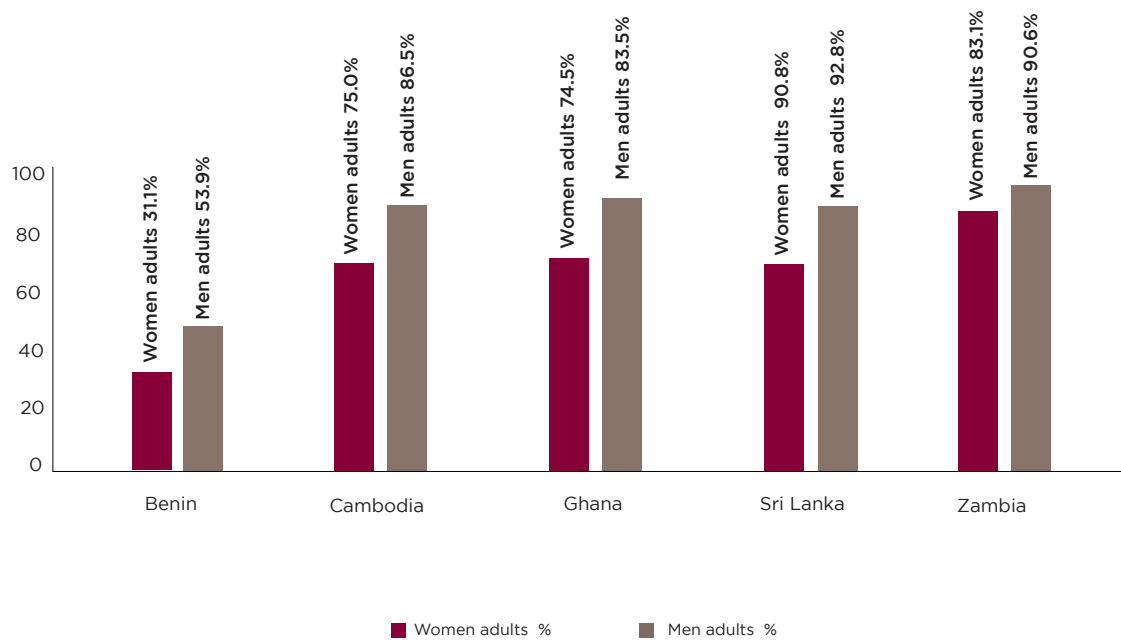
der strategy to respond to the unique needs of women administrators and also bemoans the lack of gender disaggregated data to evaluate gender equality in local administrations. Thus, despite the constitutional commitment by the governments in the five countries, the lack of legal frameworks and policies and their implementation has led to lower participation of women in local government.

Socio-cultural and religious barriers

The socio-cultural context is a fundamental factor influencing the equality of women and men in general. The reports confirm that these countries are not an exception. The participation of women in local political life and as senior administrators can be highly influenced by patriarchal culture and mentality. All 5 countries of the research have strong patriarchal norms. The role of men and the dominance of men are seen to be superior to that of women. This situation has led to women having to deal with cultural norms that

increase their role as homemakers, promote discrimination and sexist culture, enforce negative gender stereotypes and inhibit the progression of the education of girls to higher levels. Education and gender norms have a strong impact also for women administrators as they influence the opportunity for women and girls to obtain such employment. Although lower levels of education of women were recorded in all 5 countries, Benin is the most affected as seen in the diagram below.

Diagram 5: Literacy rate of women and men by country 16



16. <https://countrveconomy.com/demography/literacy-rate>

Institutional barriers

The Ministry of Local Government in the 5 countries have the overarching responsibility of developing policies and statutes for the smooth running of local governments in their countries. Besides the Ministry, there is the local government services (Ghana, Zambia and Sri Lanka) and Civil service (Cambodia and Benin) that are in charge of recruitment and promotions of local government administrative staff and the management of local government offices in the 5 countries. Although the Ministry of Local Government or the Departments in charge of decentralization plays an instrumental role in terms of policies and acts to govern the smooth running of local governments in country, the mandate for the successful running of local government elections lies in the hands of the electoral commissions, political parties and media. The role of political parties as gatekeepers to women's participation in local government elections was evident in all countries, including Ghana, where local government elections are non-partisan. The reports from Benin, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Zambia stress that political parties play a central role in selecting the candidates and setting the political agenda for election campaigns and the implementation of national laws/quotas. Male political leadership in the 5 countries lacks the commitment to implementing constitutional provisions on inclusive

governance and quotas. The media plays a major role in campaigning and promoting candidates during local government elections. However, the media has been identified as biased towards women in their reportage, as it has been used as a tool to propagate stereotypes, hindering the successes of women candidates. The process of filing and campaigning for local government elections has been identified as cumbersome and costly generally for women in the 5 countries. The reports, also mention that the electoral procedures managed by the electoral commissions and the police, during and after elections have failed to curtail election-related violence, especially violence committed by ruling party cadres. This creates a fearful environment for women voters during elections. Long distances to polling stations, poor election infrastructure especially for persons with disability, and lack of civic education further impede women's ability to vote on election day (Godfrey & RuthHenckes, 2021).

In general, the electoral processes often deter women to stand as candidates in local elections. The table below summarizes the different issues women candidates face in this context while underlining that some issues are not institutional but legal or individual – such as the issues concerning money or the required level of education).

Table 9. Barrier's women face during the electoral process.

Benin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of enforcement of law on the advancement of women in politics -Paternalistic functioning of political parties -Issue of electoral corruption and monetization of politics -Harassment and intimidation of women political candidates -Weight of family responsibilities -Educational and capacity limitation
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of political will of political parties -low ambition on women for political office -limited knowledge and skills in politics -Absence of pro-gender equality electoral system -Family responsibility
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -individual actors and party executives' preference for male candidates; -Lack of access to economic resources -Education and capacity challenge -work/family role conflict -abuse of women in politics -Lack of commitment towards policies that promote the inclusion of women in politics
Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -inadequate efforts of political parties to increase women's political participation. -women's lack of solidarity and fewer skills in fundraising -Biased media coverage -Lack of safety and respect for women in political arena
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of commitment by political party leadership to promote inclusive governance -Lack of self-confidence and low education among women aspirants -Lack of financial resources -Harassment and intimidation of women in politics

As aforementioned, the local government services/ civil service, local government training institutes and the department of decentralization are key institutions mentioned in the reports for the management of local government administration. Recruitment and promotions are handled differently in the five countries. Whereas in Ghana and Zambia, local government staff recruitment is centralized and handled by the Local Government Service, Sri Lanka and Benin, operate slightly differently with the recruitment of senior positions done at the national level and other staff positions recruited at the provincial in the case of Sri Lanka and by local councils in Benin. Cambodia's local government recruitment is done by the civil service at the national level. It was therefore not surprising that the issue of staff postings

negatively impacted the work of female administrators in Ghana and Zambia as compared to the other countries. The lack of gender-responsive policies in most countries such as flexi-hours, child-care facilities to support women manage their triple roles (reproductive, productive and community roles) is a major hindrance to women excelling in their careers. Apart from three months of paid maternity leave offered in most countries, there are no policies that support working mothers. Zambia and Benin have paternity leave days of five and three days respectively. A safe and hygienic environment came out in all the reports: most of the local government service offices have bad sanitary facilities. The table below highlights some of the key challenges identified in the five countries.

Table 10. Working environment ¹⁷ – sanitation issues for women local administration

Benin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -sexual harassment -Lack of working facilities in the office -lack of toilets in municipal buildings -lack of transports -major obstacle for people with disability (to work but also to have access to local administrations)
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of security for women having to return home from work -lack of social assistance is a great concern for women having to manage family and childcare with professional life. -lack of protection scheme for people with disabilities.
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -sexual harassment; unsolicited compliments of a sexual nature; -Inadequate working facilities -serious issue with lack of safe and hygienic environment for women (the report stresses the difficulties for women during the menstrual period).
Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -sexist working culture -the report stresses the lack of access of local governments buildings to people with disabilities
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -sexual harassment especially by co-workers; comments of physical structure, tribal background, marital status, etc. -Late salaries or insufficient salaries are a big issue for women working in local administration

Individual barriers

Several factors account for individual needs and barriers to aspire leadership position in Local Governments. These range from individual skills, to psychological, social, financial, and family burdens. Financial barrier was identified as a major setback in every country, as reported in the detailed country reports. Notably, women in the five countries of the research do not have enough financial autonomy to choose a political career. The cost of high electoral campaigns is a hindrance to most women candidates. Social pressure to excel in family life was evident in all five countries as well. The authors from Benin and Ghana note that single mothers are considered irresponsible, hence not trusted with leadership positions. The psychological barriers have an impact also on women when they want to have a professional

career in local administrations. The issue of family responsibility is particularly present in all countries. In Cambodia, the research has shown that women who work in local administrations spend 6.8 hours per day doing households work compared to 2.7 hours for men. Women also have less time to rest (6.6 hours per day) compared to men (12.1 hours). Finally, the issue of violence is reported at varying degrees in all the countries of study. The subsequent section on country-specific findings will give more details.

The findings of these reports establish that women’s participation in politics and in local administration are further constrained by poverty, lack of education, and access to information (as particularly underlined in the report from Zambia). It

17. This table does not take into account the issue of violence which is analysed in the chapter about individual obstacles.

is crucial to note that this is also what motivates these women from engaging in politics, to work for a change in their society and in women's situation in general. When this happens, the economic obstacles have a terrible impact. The report from Zambia says: "it is difficult for women to participate in political life when their major concern is survival, and they have no choice but to spend much of their time trying to fulfil the basic needs of families.

Marginalized groups

The report from Benin recognizes that defining the situation of marginalized women was the great difficulty of this research. It was probably the case in each country. Among the marginalized groups, the reports often referred to women from minority ethnic groups, who suffer double discrimination when it comes to participating in local politics and administration as seen in Ghana, Sri Lanka and Zambia. Persons with disability are faced with stigmatization, lack self-confidence, and mobility issues. Mobility issues were emphasized more in the reports on women in local administration.

2.2 Key findings on barriers to women’s participation in local government as elected officers and administrators

This section gives more details on country-specific key findings to barriers identified in the previous section under the four themes of the research.



Image source: Zurijeta Dreamstime

Benin

Referring to human rights as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the African Charter of Human and Peoples’ Rights adopted by OAU¹⁸ on 18 June 1981 and ratified by Benin on 30 January 1986, the Constitution reaffirms the Beninese people’s attachment to all international instruments that take precedence over internal law.¹⁹ Women’s participation in local governance in Benin is still weak. Although the Constitution of 1990, which was revised in 2019, emphasized the principle of equality between women and men, equality is far from being achieved in all spheres of society. If women represent only 7.4% at the National Parliament after the elections of 2019, the situation is even more difficult at the local level as the percentage of women elected at the last local elections of 2020 was only 4.35% (com-

pared with 4.4% at the elections of 2017). The situation of women in the administration is not better. According to a report on human resources in municipal administration carried out in 2020, out of 5,477 civil servants at the local level in Benin, there are 4,085 (75%) men and 1,392 (25%) women. This consolidated report summarizes on one hand the report based on the survey led by the ANCB²⁰ in 33 municipalities covering the 12 departments of the country, involving more than 100 people²¹, and on the other hand, the report on the presence of women in local administration, led also by the ANCB and based on a survey carried out in 14 municipalities.

Percentage of women elected in 2020 elections



4.35%

Civil servants at the local level in 2020

5,477



4,085
(75%)
Men



1,392
(25%)
Women

Policy and legal barriers

The legal status of women in Benin is influenced by the customary norms²² which do not promote the emancipation of women. Even though the

18. OAU: Organisation of African Union

19. CEDAW Report: 7 November 2002.

20. Association Nationale des Communes du Benin

21. Out of 114 people interviewed, there were 88 women and 26 men. We will add that this report also refers to the Kakai report presented at the National Parliament of Benin and the work done by the Swiss cooperation.

22. Namely contained in the « Coutumier du Dahomey » of 1931 and the civil right of 1804.

revised Constitution of 2019 recognizes equality between women and men, the legal status of women has not really evolved, and discrimination still exists. Notable laws regulating local government in Benin are the Law n° 98-006 of March 9, 2000, on the electoral, communal, and municipal system in the Republic of Benin and Law n° 97-028 of January 15, 1999, on the organization of the Administration in the Republic of Benin.

These laws are gender-neutral as they do not have specific targets for men and women. The survey identifies as important obstacles the lack of implementation of the principle of equality between women and men as indicated in the Constitution and the absence of legal instruments supporting women. This has resulted in the low participation of women in Benin as elected officers and administrators.

Socio-cultural and religious barriers

In almost all of Benin's ethnic groups, patriarchy is the most widespread form of social organization. It is based on the stereotyped concept of women's and men's roles in society which enshrines male dominance over females. This has negatively impacted women's roles as leaders and decision makers. Although women work very hard, they are not recognized. The main role ascribed to women is linked to reproduction and maternity. The continuation of cultural practices that are degrading for women appears in forms such as the need for women to obtain authorization from men (father and or spouse) for important decisions and can be linked to the banalization of gender-based violence. Although Benin has established a legal and institutional framework to end violence against women throughout the country, gender-based violence is high with 76% of violence against women aged between 15 and 49 years of age is physical, 44% sexual, 86% verbal or psychological and 7.3% concern genital mutilation²³. This male hegemony which is rooted in mentalities, perceptions and behaviors are reinforced through both endogenous and exogenous religions that reinforces the subordination of

women through its practices. Thus, the report on women in local politics underlines: The situation of widows and women divorced is much worse. Women who want to contest for elections must seek approval from their husbands or male figures before they can contest. Should they get approval from their homes or families, these women are judged by society and stereotyped. With regards to local administration, this socio-cultural burden has the same impact, with a crucial challenge for women which is sexual harassment and violence that they have to face at work.

Institutional barriers

The research underlined the role of the electoral system and the voting method, in particular the discriminatory positioning of women on the electoral lists (last position or alternatives), and the different forms of corruption during elections. Also, the structure of political parties in the country discriminates against women as they do not support women financially and women lack mentors to guide them enter political life. The power and influence wielded by men and political leaders often leads to intimidations and violence against women candidates, sexual harassment and political patronage. When it comes to the position of women in local administration, the report underlines the issues of sexual violence and harassment that women face and the consequences that this has on their career²⁴. Women do not hold managerial positions. Conciliation of professional and personal life, as already said, is very difficult for women, particularly for those who must travel a long distance between their office and home.

Individual barriers

Women face many obstacles in Benin as politicians and as workers in local administrations. With regards to elected women the report underlines the low level of education, the social pressure on women at the local level to prioritize their roles as mother and spouse, the dependence of the woman on her spouse, the lack of family support and

23. African Development Bank Group, 2021. Country Gender Profile, Assessment of the Impacts of Covid-19 on Women and Girls.

24. The report underlines the importance of laws voted in 2021 to struggle against this serious issue.

the psychological issues such as the fear of public speaking and the lack of self-confidence were some barriers identified. Additionally, the timing of meetings makes it difficult for women to conciliate with family life. The fear of personal attacks (verbal but also physical), conflicts, violence and insecurity were also mentioned. The financial barriers were also stressed, generally, women do not have enough financial autonomy to choose a political career, they do not have money to engage in an electoral campaign, and impossible for women to borrow money for a campaign. All these elements but financial barriers are true not only for women in politics but also in local administration. Regarding local administration, the report underlines that the lack of facilities and toilets in the municipal building is a serious problem for women working in local administration in Benin.

Marginalized groups

In the report on women elected it appears that women of ethnic minority are one of the marginalized groups and the major obstacle for them to enter political life is linked to lack of popularity at the local level. Women with disability appear as another marginalized group for which the following obstacles were identified, stigmatization of society, lack of self-confidence, fear of public meetings and speaking, mobility difficulties, etc. The report on women in local administration underlines the issue of women with disabilities due to the obstacles in transportation, in terms of access to the buildings but also to the obstacles that women with disabilities have with getting access to education.



Image source: REUTERS/ Samrang Pring

Cambodia

The Kingdom of Cambodia acceded to and ratified the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on 15 October 1992 and recognized this Convention without reservation as stated in Article 31.1 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia that “The Kingdom of Cambodia shall recognize and respect human rights as stipulated in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenants and Conventions related to human rights, women’s and children’s rights”²⁵. The Constitution of Cambodia of 1993, amended in 2018, gives equal rights, freedom and political equity to both men and women. Yet, the report of the secretariat general of the National Assembly of early 2020 underlines the efforts to be made to help women to take leadership positions. Cambodia continues to maintain a pronounced inequality of representation between men and women in public affairs and political life, including political parties, candidates and elected representatives. There is a low number of elected women at the national level (20% of women at the National Parliament after the elections of 2018) and at the communal level (22% of women

Percentage of women at national parliament - 20% in 2018

Percentage of women commune councilors - 22% in 2022

commune councilors after the elections of 2022) even though women’s representation at the National Assembly has increased from 6 to 21 % during the last decades. In this consolidated report, we will try to identify the obstacles for women based on the report concerning women in local politics (after a survey of 105 people of which 90 were women and 15 men), and on the issue of women in local administration (after a survey conducted on 214 made up of 199 women and 15 men) in 5 provinces of the country).

Policy and legal barriers

The Ministry of Women Affairs and Ministry of Interior took leading roles in Cambodia to formulate a draft National policy on gender equality providing a long-term policy framework for and further enhancing the principle of gender equality in the national policies. The Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDG) has also set women’s seats at the commune councils to 25% by 2022 and 30% by 2030. However, the obstacles for women to enter in local politics have hampered the achievement of this target. The 2022 local government elections saw an increase of 2,562 women elected raising the percentage of elected women from 20% in 2017 to 22% in 2022. Some obstacles identified during the study linked to policy are: the lack of specific written policies, particularly election laws to promote women’s participation in politics; the existence of discrimination, lack of encouragement and political wills of the political parties; and the lack of gender quota. The report on women in local administration underlines that, through different commitments and supports, the number of wom-

25. CEDAW Report: 11 February 2004

en in management positions at the provincial level has increased from 16% in 2017 to 22% in 2019, and at the district level from 23% in 2017 to 27% in 2019. On local government policies and laws, Cambodia has The Law on The Administration and Management of Commune/Sangkat and the Law on Administrative Management of Capital, Provinces, Municipalities, Districts and Khans. Although the law on the administrative and management of commune/Sangkat is gender neutral the law of administrative management of capital, provinces, municipalities, districts and Khans is gender-responsive. The law states that “The council shall ensure representation of women in all committees including the appointment of the chairperson or deputy chairperson of the committees.” The Ministry of Civil Services, particularly, has produced guidelines on the recruitment of civil servants with a committed quota between 20-50% for women. However, the main barrier in implementing the commitments as envisaged is the disinterest of women working in local government offices as compared to working in the economic and public sectors.

Socio-cultural and religious barriers

Cambodia remains a hierarchical society with strong ideas about power and status, with attitudes toward gender roles emphasizing the woman as a household manager and the man as a provider. Therefore, women have a small chance to get involved in social, economic and political development. The dominant cultural values relating to women’s responsibility for family and household are a significant barrier to women’s participation in different development activities, including political leadership. Although in recent times discriminatory attitudes toward women in commune councils have decreased significantly, with strong support and promotion of women from male commune councilors and village chiefs²⁶, and with some women playing vital roles in formal economic development including holding government official positions, the social expectations of women to prioritize family over other

responsibilities remain strong. In this framework, the report underlines the lack of educational programs targeted at talented and knowledgeable women to arouse their interest in politics is the first main socio-cultural barrier for women to run for local elections. The lack of safety and respect for women in the political sphere is the second socio-cultural barrier. The third main challenge is cultural norms and stereotypes about women in society. Finally, violence, harassment, insecurity in politics, religious beliefs about women in society, and the discriminatory or sexist working culture in government offices also pose great challenges to women’s participation in politics. With regards to women in administration, the report notes that formal education and gender norms do have a strong influence on opportunities for women and girls to get such employment. For example, because of the long distances from home to schools, only a few girls attend secondary school. Invisible norms continue to keep women to household and childcare duties even if the family’s economic status demands women to engage in income generating work. The traditional belief that undervalues women’s capacities and potential is very strong. Furthermore, the lack of adequate and affordable childcare services prohibits women from performing additional activities outside of their primary occupation – the family. In conclusion, despite the increased numbers of women in local administrations, important barriers remain as their power in decision-making is still limited.

Institutional barriers

The survey on women elected underlines the lack of tools for gender equality and women’s political participation; the absence of continuity to promote women’s representation at the local level; the lack of education and literacy among women about political participation; the lack of solidarity among women; the lack of reliable information on gender issue in politics; and biased media coverage of women in politics as the main obstacles affecting women’s participation in local government elections.

26. COMFREL Political Gender Watch 2019 available at: <https://comfrel.org/political-gender-watch-2019-comfrel-official> accessed 14 April 2022

Regarding local administration, the report stresses that although there is a quota at the national level, there is a weak implementation as there is no affirmative action at the recruitment stage in Local Governments to ensure that females are recruited. Local Governments do not have gender responsive policies which include flexi-hours, childcare facilities, etc. The institutional framework does not provide sufficient benefits and assistance for women to be effective and efficient in local governance. It is important to stress the lack of supportive environments in the workplace for women to achieve work and life balance. With all these constraints women are left with not much choice of having to choose the welfare of their homes over their professional careers. Limiting the chances of having enough women in mid-level or senior positions in local government.

Individual barriers

The report on women elected stresses that when women are interested in politics and do have political ambitions, they: need to find support, an adviser or mentor. Generally, women do not find this support and resort to taking counsels from friends or within their political parties. The lack of financial means to support their political ambition was also identified. The survey also identified the concern of women during election campaign in dealing with the press and their biased media coverage; family responsibility, the loss of privacy and professional goals are also the personal barriers for women to run for office.

With regards to women in local administration, the research is consistent with literature showing that the most critical barriers for female officials in local administration are the time burden for the household, taking care of children and food preparation. The research also refers to the different access between women and men to training and capacity development services.

Furthermore, women recognize the lack of several access to resources, equipment and facilities to perform the work, lack of appreciation from the male officials and superiors, and lack of feedback mechanisms. The research found that 72% of interviewed female officials realized that not all LG's staff are free to express their opinion in the official meetings and that they have no chance to participate in LG's councils and board of governor's meetings. They also demonstrated the fear of losing positions or being noted and criticized by their superiors and their allies if the feedback is straightforward to the management. The female officials could only express their concerns and demands at an individual level secretly with trustable colleagues.

Marginalized groups

Marginalized groups identified in the reports are widows, Indigenous People and persons with disability. Although the reports do not refer to ethnic belonging in Cambodia, as a marginalization factor. However, projects addressing the issue of women marginalized groups do exist, supported for example by CARE²⁷ as the Project EMW - Ethnic Minority Women, focusing on women who experience social isolation, discrimination and economic exclusion as a result of their ethnicity. Due to their marginalization status most of them are unable to access education that will propel them to professional carriers as civil servants. On the political front, they lack the capacity, confidence, finance to contest.

27. www.care-cambodia.org



Image source: Jonathan Torgovnik Getty Images of Empowerment

Ghana

In 1992, Ghana adopted a new Constitution, which is the supreme law of Ghana. Chapter 5 of the Constitution deals with the fundamental human rights and freedoms in conformity with the international human rights framework including the CEDAW. In addition to the rights accorded to all persons, articles 22 and 27 deal specifically with women's rights. Article 17 of the Constitution specifically deals with equality and freedom from discrimination and states that all persons are equal before the Law. Article 17(2) states that "a person shall not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, color, ethnic origin, religion, creed, social or economic status²⁸." Therefore, the Constitution guarantees the right of women to political participation and leadership decision in Ghana. Various reforms have been undertaken to deal with some of the inhibiting factors that have contributed to the non-active participation of women. The report recalls that in response to this provision, inhumane and cruel practices such as widowhood rites have been outlawed through the Parliamentary amendment of Ghana's Criminal Code. Ghanaian women have been struggling

for this by organizing solidarity women groups²⁹. Furthermore, the Constitution and the Local Governance Act 936, 2016 stipulate that 70 per cent of the members that form the general assembly of each MMDA³⁰ must be elected and 30 per cent appointed by the President. Political parties are

The appointment of 30% of membership of the Assembly and the Chief Executives is performed in consultation with traditional authorities and party leaders and is based on the nominees' experience and expertise.

neither allowed to support nor sponsor candidates for assembly membership during local government elections. The appointment of the 30% membership of the Assembly and the Chief Executives is performed in consultation with traditional authorities and party leaders and is based on the nominees' experience and expertise. This should ensure the representation of key interest groups. Unfortunately, with 909 candidates and 216 winners in the 2019 District Assembly Elections recorded the second-lowest number of women contestants in the history of the District Assembly elections coming after the 547 women contestants and 196 winners in 1998. In this consolidated report, we will summarize the obstacles that women face in Ghana to be elected at the local level (thanks to the findings of research among 48 respondents, 93% women and 7% men, across all of Ghana) and to be local administrators (thanks to a mixed approach survey where data were collected from Metropolitan, Municipal and District areas).

Policy and legal barriers

The legal framework guiding local government elections in Ghana is the District Assembly Elections Act, 1994 Act 473. The Act although does not discriminate against any citizen (minority

28. CEDAW Report of 18 April 2005

29. The report mentions Women Organisations such as the Federation of International Women Lawyers (FIDA), the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), and the 31st December Women's Movement (31st DWM) which have advocated for the enactment and enforcement of laws against the inherent human rights of women and girls. BANTU for Development, an African regional non-governmental organisation, in collaboration with civil society organizations and individual activists under the Women's Manifesto Coalition has produced a Women's Manifesto, which is an important action document on women's empowerment in Ghana into all spheres of public life.

30. Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assembly

ethnic group, women, persons with disability) 18 years above who wants to contest for local government elections, is gender neutral. The Act disallows political party sponsorship or support at the local government elections. The institutional body to regulate elections is the Electoral Commission of Ghana. The respondents of the research were unaware of policies that constitute a barrier to women's participation in local-level elections but on the other hand, they were also unaware of policies that seek to promote the active participation of women in local-level elections. However, although Act 473 speaks against the involvement of political parties, the respondents mentioned that the individual actors in political parties make it difficult for women to be a candidate; some party executives prefer male candidates over female candidates, and the situation is even more difficult when an opposition candidate is a man. When it comes to local administration the report stresses that several national policies touch on gender equality and women empowerment, but it appears to be no attention paid to women managers in the local government system.

Socio-cultural and religious barriers

The report on elected women stresses several barriers including work-family conflict: combining family roles, childcare, household chores and campaign duties which is very stressful for women. The difficult situation of women married to men with political ambition was also recalled. This was ascribed to the heinous task on them to balance family and their participation in political life. This has deterred many women from venturing into politics as Ghanaian society tends to judge women more on how well they perform as mothers and wives, rather than their achievements in their career. The discrimination against women, in a male-dominated culture, gender stereotypes, verbal and sexual abuse of women in politics, sexual harassment and gendered defamation before, during and after local government-level elections is a disincentive for many women to join. Family background has been associated with the eligibility of a candidate.

The electorate looks at the candidate's family to assess if she belongs to the political class. Coming from a wealthy respected and recognized family background is a plus in local elections. It is also believed that if one has key contacts and associates, it could improve the person's performance in the elections. In patriarchal societies, such as Ghana, men are preferred as leaders as compared to women due to their social positions in society. This, therefore, put women automatically at a disadvantage and discourages most women from vying for positions. In terms of ethnicity and religion, whereas religion may influence the ability of women to contest for local-level elections, the report says that findings from the middle and southern zones of Ghana seem to portray the opposite and that none of the respondents indicated that religion had affected them negatively. However, it seems also that in the Northern Zone, religion had some influence on the election of women as Assembly Women³¹. Muslims, in highly dominated Muslim communities, are preferred over non - Muslims. In fact, during the validation workshop ethnic group or tribe came out strongly as a barrier to the participation of women in elections. When a female contest in a district that she does not originate from or belongs to their tribe, but has settled there due to marriage or work, it is used against her. The report concerning women in local administration underlines barriers such as gender stereotyping and prejudices. The myth that women are unable to hold leadership positions, was identified as a gender stereotype that affects the performance of female administrators in local government. Cultural norms that label women as inferior and men as superior also affect social interactions in the workplace.

Institutional barriers

The report on women in local politics stresses the barriers such as; the recruitment process which can support or impede the efforts of women willing to be candidates for local elections, political parties as gate-keepers and lack of transparency in the electoral process. Although local elections are supposed to be non-partisan, political parties

31. Local government councils are referred to as Assembly in Ghana. Elected officials are thus called Assembly men or women.

are heavily involved in local-level elections, and they provide the candidate with the needed resources to win the election. In the report about women in local administration, the following institutional barriers were identified in Ghana. Staff posting/transfer issues were identified as a significant barrier. Whereas postings are part of the LG's condition of service, they sometimes mean women have to make significant adjustments to their family and marriage life. Internal rules indicate that there should not be partisan politics in the local government service, but the survey reveals that there are political groupings in the workplace, and this influences the career of the staff. Inadequate work logistics (computers, the internet, paper, and vehicles, among others) significantly affect women's performance.

A safe and hygienic environment is lacking in most of the local government service offices as they have bad sanitary facilities. Respondents maintain that the sanitary conditions at the workplace are so bad that they had to close early, especially during their menstrual periods. For some, the situation has the potential for the spread of diseases and infections. This is particularly difficult for women who live far away and have a long way between home and the office.

Individual barriers

There are a number of individual barriers to women in local elections, we will recall the major ones among which include: lack of financial capability. Most women do not have the financial resources to stand as candidates for local-level elections. Marital status poses a challenge for women contesting in elections. In Ghanaian culture, a woman's identity is embedded in her marital status. Unmarried women are perceived negatively and stigmatized. As a result, being single affected most women who wanted to be candidates in local elections.

Education status is a big issue since women usually have low educational qualifications. Men often use that against women and argue that

women cannot do the work. The report on women in local administrations stresses the following individual barriers: work-family challenges is a big issue for women who play multiple roles in society. The multiple roles of women as mothers, wives, and paid employees create a major problem for most women and is one of the major barriers that hinder women from excelling in their duties as administrators. According to some of the participants, apart from the time spent at work for official roles, they equally spend a lot of time at home performing domestic duties such as cleaning, cooking, and childcare responsibilities. This becomes more challenging for women with younger children. Some of the participants lamented that the time of reporting to work, which is 8:00 am does not favor women with younger children, especially, babies. Psychological issues arising from the stress of combining various roles take a toll on women. The multiple roles of working women, particularly, those with children have a significant effect on their well-being and career progression. The lack of psychological preparedness for a higher position is another issue which works against the interest of women.

The findings from the field indicate that indeed, the lifelong belief that power and leadership are in the hands of men can lead to women not imagining themselves in decision-making positions. Therefore, fearing that, they cannot perform in these higher positions. Another psychological challenge that women in the local government service encounter is intimidation. According to respondents, the men intimidate the women and look down on them. This intimidation discourages them, thinking that they are not fit for such higher position jobs. Women also lack sponsorship for required programs. The participants stated that they are unable to stand for positions due to financial challenges. There are inadequate opportunities for workshops and training programs as well. Participants believe there should be regular workshops and training programs to empower women. Sexual harassment is also a challenge which confronts women. It was reported by a sig-

nificant number of the respondents who noted that it usually takes the forms of unsolicited verbal compliments of a sexual nature, light touches to actual groping, and demand for sex. The perception of women administrators as sex objects, in the local government, affects the mental health of women and contributes to absenteeism, lack of interest in the job, and stress. The duration of maternity leave is another major challenge. The current three months allocated for maternity leave is considered inadequate because breastfeeding is recommended at least for six months and because babies of three months are too fragile to leave in the care of another.

Marginalized groups

Disability is seen as a barrier to women running for elections as well as effectively delivering in their roles as administrators. The negative reaction persons with disabilities receive from community members becomes a major barrier to their active engagement in politics. Some respondents in the Northern Zone stated that women are already in a disadvantaged position. This is due to societies in Northern Ghana being highly patriarchal. This coupled with a disability was too challenging for women to handle. Most local government administrative blocks are also not accessible to persons with disability. There is also the factor of age which was also identified as a barrier. Although age did not come up as a barrier to women running for local elections in the Middle and Southern Zone of Ghana, it was a major issue in the Northern Zone. The respondents mentioned that older people are usually preferred during elections because they are regarded as wise and good leaders. It was revealed in the interviews that a physically challenged woman who stood as a candidate for local-level elections was not only discriminated against based on her gender and disability but also experienced discrimination in her financial status. It can be concluded that the social identities that intersect with the social position of women make them vulnerable and powerless in competing for positions in local elections

in Ghana. Tribalism or ethnicity was identified as a marginalization factor in districts that are populated by indigenous people. Although Act 473 stipulates that any citizen can contest for elections in any district of choice, so far as you have resided in the community for 12 months, female candidates from different ethnic origins are marginalized when they contest for elections in districts they do not originally hail from.



Image source: Paul Jeffrey

Sri Lanka

Currently, Sri Lanka is a signatory of numerous international and domestic legal frameworks and has initiated numerous non-binding charters and action plans to increase women representatives and women political participation in politics. Sri Lanka uses quota systems to advance women’s participation – reserved seats, holding seats for women candidates; legislative quotas, mandating a percentage for women candidates and voluntary party quotas where political parties voluntarily commit to nominating a certain number or percentage of women candidates³². The Constitution of Sri Lanka guarantees equality and non-discrimination of sex, and women have the equal right to be elected to political office as men. Women have right to vote and participate in elections since 1931 in Sri Lanka. Despite this, the participation of women has been comparatively low in local governance until the introduction of the 25% quota in 2016³³. At the local government elections held in 2018, political parties yielded 17,128 female members at the election: 535 were elected and the rest of the female members were nominated through additional lists. As for local

administration, the Public Service Commission (PSC) has been established with the mission to ‘Establish and Promote an Efficient, Disciplined and Contented Public Service to Serve the Public with Fairness, Transparency and Consistency.’³⁴ Furthermore, the Sri Lanka Institute of Local Governance (SLILG) was established in 1999 with the objective to enhance the institutional and management capabilities of Provincial Councils and Local Government agencies for the efficient and effective provision of services to the people. This consolidated report will summarize the barriers that women face in Sri Lanka to enter political life and local administration.

Policy and legal barriers

Several laws and policies exist in the country pertaining to gender equality in political participation at the Local government. To ensure that the 25 per cent women’s quota for local elections was achieved, the Local Authorities Elections was amended in 2016. The Local Authorities Elections (Amendment) ACT, No. 16 of 2017³⁵, outlines that every contesting political party and independent group must submit two nomination papers for each local authority in which it is contesting. One nomination paper consists of a list of names of candidates to be elected through the first-past-the-post system, at least 10% of whom must be

50%
**Candidates running
for Local Government
Election must be
women in Sri Lanka**

32. Women’s political representation in Sri Lanka : electoral system analysis and recommendations;

33. The government introduced a 25% quota for women to enter the local government authorities in 2016.

34. Public Service Commission, official website, available at: https://www.psc.gov.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=106&Itemid=232&lang=en accessed 8 August 2022

35. [PL 005262 \(Gov\) Local Act, No. 16 of 2017.pmd \(sri.lankalaw.lk\)](#) Published as a Supplement to Part II of the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka of August 31, 2017.

women. Per section 28 Of the Local Government Election Ordinance, the additional (second) nomination paper is for candidates running for the proportional representation seats, 50% of whom must be women. In addition, the youth are allowed to contest elections by submitting a copy of their birth certificate in addition to an affidavit which is requested for all candidates. However, implementation and monitoring are lacking due to the absence of gender sensitivity among the implementers, and political parties have not made adequate efforts to increase women's political participation. With regard to the administrators, there are four (4) major legal instruments that govern the LGAs in Sri Lanka today. These are Provincial Council Act No.42 of 1987, Pradesheeya Sabha Act No 15 of 1987, Municipal Ordinance No.16 of 1947, and Urban Council Ordinance No. 61 of 1939. None of the legislations has provisions related to gender-responsive service or inclusive service except the Pradeshiya Sabha Act. At present, Sri Lanka does not have any National Action Plan (NAP) for Local Government. A National Policy on Local Government was adopted by the GoSL in 2011 for a period of four years. However, no reference/provision was included with regard to the gender-inclusive service delivery or capacity development of women administrators in this National Policy. The Sri Lanka Administrative Service, the recruitment and promotion agency for the Local Government Service, do not have gender-responsive policies for the recruitment and promotion of women into seniority or special grade positions.³⁶ Women are hardly represented in the selection committees, thus although women make up most staff within the local government, men outnumber women in managerial or leadership positions.

Socio-cultural and religious barriers

Despite being a progressive society, harmful social cultural norms rooted in patriarchy are a major challenge to women's participation in local

government. Parental sex preference of males over females, reinforces the stereotypes that a boy will grow to be a man and a girl will grow up to serve the man, and she cannot reach further than womanhood. Other negative norms such as virginity test, female genital mutilation amongst Muslim communities all go to prevent further progress on gender equality³⁷ and remain a persistent barrier towards eliminating violence against women³⁸. The Women's Wellbeing Survey³⁹ found that in Sri Lanka, 1 in 5 all partnered women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence.

The study also found that 49.3% of the women who experienced sexual violence by a partner did not seek formal help due to reasons like shame, embarrassment and fear of being blamed or not believed and/or thinking that violence was normal or not serious enough to seek help. In this context, violence by partners in any form can have a significant impact on women's health and well-being and is also interconnected with the socio-economic recovery from crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic⁴⁰. The respondents to the study mentioned the existence of a sexist working culture and the lack of safety and respect for women in the political system. Women are confronted with violence during elections. Violence against women is perpetrated in the form of cyberbullying which is especially carried out on social media platforms against female candidates. Bribery and corruption are also mentioned as barriers in the local councils for women. Some of the key informants mentioned that corruption is rampant in the institutions although laws and procedures are in place for auditing and supervision of the functioning of the work. The report on women in local administrations reveals that women are hesitant to undertake higher responsibilities because of the gender-discriminatory role of women inherited traditionally in Sri Lanka. The gender-discriminatory social norms in Sri Lanka confine women within the domestic sphere. Another issue is that

36. https://www.pubad.gov.lk/web/images/latest_document/service_minutes/2012/1431934569-1882-2--e-.pdf, The Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. MINUTE OF THE SRI LANKA ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE

37. Harmful Traditional Practices in Three Countries of South Asia: culture, human rights and violence against women. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Gender and Development Discussion Paper Series No. 21 https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/SDD_pub_2530.pdf

38. Women's Wellbeing Survey - 2019 Findings from Sri Lanka's first dedicated National Survey on Violence against Women and Girls Final Report

39. The survey covered all the 25 districts in Sri Lanka and interviewed more than 2200 women aged 15 and above.

40. www.srilanka.unpfa.org

of mobility and security. Mobility i.e., distance, cost, and form of transport is a serious constraint that prevents the majority of women officers from taking part in training programs. It was also revealed that some male officers were reluctant to hire or have females of their reproductive age in their departments due to concerns about them going on maternity leave of 85 working days and other leave options available for lactating mothers.

Institutional barriers

The undemocratic nature of political institutions is one major challenge for women in politics. Although there are laws to promote women in politics, institutionalizing them has been a challenge. The Sri Lankan political parties to a large extent functions as networks of powerful men. Thus, few women get the opportunity to advance through party structures, unless they happen to be related to a male member of a party's leadership. Therefore, women nominated by political parties as candidates are often the wives or daughters of established (male) politicians. Although, the quota law has forced parties to recruit more women, it has reduced their political influence, as women elected through proportional representation lists are treated by male leaders as second-class politicians⁴¹. The report on women elected stresses that political parties do not support women in their election campaign. Biased media coverage was an issue underlined by more than 50% of respondents. Strong competition and violence within and between the parties in electoral periods also works against women aspiring to become political leaders; there are few support services or accountability mechanisms for women targeted with political violence or sexual harassment.

Regarding women in local administration, the report noted that the systems in place for the officials to function are obsolete and inefficient. For instance, a few places still use old typewriters

instead of using computers. Another issue according to the report is the lack of communication skills. There are two national languages in Sri Lanka, namely Sinhala and Tamil. The recruitment policy for public service administration as well as the constitution recognizes Sinhala and Tamil as the official and national languages of Sri Lanka respectively and an administrator needs to be proficient in one language and English to work as a public servant. However, due to the post-war resettlement, Sinhala-speaking, and Tamil-speaking communities live in almost all districts, provinces and the LGA territories. Therefore, being bilingual (Sinhala and Tamil) has been crucial to delivering services. However, those who have studied in their own mother tongue, which is one of the national languages, find difficulties in working in the other national language. Although the English language is taught from an early stage in schools and universities, the ability to use English as a link language is limited. This is a constraint on the ability of women administrators to communicate and perform efficiently. This also is seen as a barrier to enhancing their knowledge and further learning.

Individual barriers

Regarding individual barriers, finances represent another significant issue for women's political participation in Sri Lanka. Due to the patronage-based politics of most Sri Lankan political parties, contesting an election has also become a very costly enterprise. Candidates must campaign across a wide geographical area and use their own resources to mobilize and consolidate their electoral base. As women tend to have less access to independent wealth as well as political donor networks, they are often discouraged from running for political office⁴². Further than that, there are other important obstacles for women in politics: the highly competitive nature of elections; the lack of solidarity among women; the lack of political knowledge; and the lack of funding - a major issue as political parties are not

41. <https://epd.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/gap-sri-lanka-final.pdf>. EU support for women's political participation and leadership under the EU's Gender Action Plan A case study on Sri Lanka
42. <https://epd.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/gap-sri-lanka-final.pdf>. EU support for women's political participation and leadership under the EU's Gender Action Plan A case study on Sri Lanka

providing adequate funding and majority of the female candidates do not have the necessary experience in mobilizing funds.

When it comes to women in local administration the author of the report stresses the gender role of women inherited traditionally in Sri Lanka. The women in Sri Lanka generally uphold the values of their reproductive role. Women who are primarily seen as the reproducers are expected to give priority to it even at the cost of their personal and professional development. Women are responsible for multiple tasks of childbearing, child-rearing, caring for the elderly and other domestic tasks with limited or no support by the spouse and/or the extended family. This problem is further compounded due to a lack of childcare facilities and support services. Lack of skills among women has also been mentioned, underlining the need for capacity development programs.

Marginalized groups

The report on women elected stated that “women of vulnerable families did not face problems in contesting at elections as some of them have succeeded in winning elections. The respondents were of the view that vulnerability is not considered as an issue in politics while interest in social work and leadership qualities contribute to their success”. The report on women administrators

underlines that women in plantation communities are the very marginalized group of women in Sri Lanka. The members of the plantation communities are considered as secondary citizens, they are not able to enjoy the state services. The members of the plantation community have been the least empowered people in the country and their social and political empowerment remains very low. These vulnerabilities further worsen when they overlap with the gender identity as ‘women’. Thus, the women in the plantation community are the most marginalized in the country and women administrators in this area need to be capacitated and strengthened more, to address the vulnerabilities of women and to ensure inclusive service delivery. It is also stressed the lack of access for women with disabilities. The LGAs which are located in old buildings, mostly were built before 2009, do not have access for persons with disabilities. The lack of access for persons with disabilities in LGAs prevents women administrators with disabilities from performing their work to the highest standards and causes them physical and mental difficulties to cope with the situation. This lack of access also prevents women with disabilities to access the services delivered by the LGAs.



Image source: Getty Images AFP G Guercia

Zambia

In promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, Zambia has strengthened the policy and legal framework. The National Gender Policy was revised in 2014 to ensure the attainment of gender equality in the development process. The Constitution (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016 confirms the equal worth of women and men and their rights to freely participate in, determine and build a sustainable political, legal, economic, and social order. The enactment of the Gender Equity and Equality Act, no. 22 of 2015, strengthens the legal framework for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls and empowers women to participate fully in public and private affairs in the country⁴³. To address the challenge highlighted above, Zambia has embarked on a decentralization process whose main aim is, to place the local government authority at the center of all development processes and to improve community participation and inclusivity. The statistics, however, continue to pose a serious concern. The overall number and percentage of women elected as women Mayors in the last election are 15 out of 116 representing 13 per cent. The number and percentage of women elected to municipal office stand at 140 out of 1,858, representing 8 per cent. In addition,

the amended Constitution Act of 2016 included a clause that anyone aspiring to stand as a candidate for political office needs to have a minimum qualification of a Grade 12 School Certificate or its equivalent. This is a great obstacle for women as most of them do not meet this requirement. Before the amended constitution, 2006 and 2011 general elections, Zambia had more female representation in elections as compared to the female representation in the 2021 elections. The amended constitution disadvantaged several women who had expressed interest and had been trained in some instances to stand as candidates but did not possess the required educational qualifications. This consolidated report will summarize the barriers identified by the research concerning women elected at the local level and women in the administration.

Policy and legal barriers

The policies in the country although does not explicitly discriminate against women, laws governing elections are gender neutral. The revised election law and election procedures, when carefully reviewed, act as barriers for women's participation in local government elections. The report on women in local politics stresses that the lack of gender responsive or gender specific policy to encourage women to participate in local government elections is a challenge. The legal requirement for candidates to have a minimum level of education Grade 12 seem to support men indirectly, as some women do not have that qualification. Also, election laws requiring candidates to post large monetary deposits work against most women. With regards to women in local administration, the report established concerns among council workers on labor matters, especially in terms of recruitment, promotions, and transfers. The survey underlines that recruitment remains centralized under the confines of the Local Government Service Commission (LGSC); which also decides where to post new entrants to local government and also transfer people across the nation.

43. Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing declaration and platform for action (1995) and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General assembly (2000) in the context of the 25th anniversary of IVth world Conference on women and the adoption of the Beijing declaration and platform for action - Republic of Zambia.

Socio-cultural and religious barriers

The research found that cultural barriers were prominently cited as inhibitors for women running for local government elections. This was attributed to societal expectations of a woman's role as prescribed by traditional assumptions, norms, and values. The upbringing of the girl child was also highly contributing to lower self-esteem of a woman in adulthood taking away confidence levels. There exists a deep-rooted concept of unequal gender relations in which men are superior to women. This biased view regarding gender equality originates from not only traditional cultural and social norms but also from the dual structure of statutory law and customary law⁴⁴.

Zambia has a dual legal system,(statute and customary laws) which has resulted in a number of gender inequalities in the execution of the laws.

Zambia has a dual legal system, (statute and customary laws) which has resulted in a number of gender inequalities in the execution of the laws. Depending on the sort of legal system being utilized, rights which are supposed to be protected under statutory law, are not necessarily observed and women endure unfair treatment in terms of child marriage, and unequal distribution of power. Key highlights from the research associated with socio-cultural barriers are the lack of adequate moral, financial, and social support from both men and fellow women. Societal expectations of a woman's role as prescribed by the traditional assumptions, norms, and values; preference for a

boy to access education than a girl; patriarchal society, traditionally assigning more power and resources to men than women. Patriarchal norms also lead women voters to discriminate against women candidates in elections. The report on women in local administration identified the barriers as women victims of verbal harassment, especially by co-workers. Also, non-progressive cultural beliefs and traditional practices have a negative impact on women administrators, as they contribute towards stereotyping of female workers by male co-workers and the public.

Institutional barriers

According to the European Democracy Hub (2021), the male political leadership lacks commitment to implementing Zambia's progressive constitutional provisions on inclusive governance. Within political parties, older men mostly from the dominant ethnic regions, dominate decision making structures. Although some of the main political parties are developing gender equality plans, women's exclusion has continued because the plans are yet to be adopted and implemented by the respective political parties. For example, Zambian parties have failed to implement mandatory quotas for women for the two main political parties, the Patriotic Front (PF) and the United Party for National Development (UPND), which have announced a goal of ensuring 40 per cent female representation in key internal structures but have failed to realize this goal in practice (Katongo, 2017). The report on women's participation in local government elections highlights: The lack of support from their political parties creates elements of discrimination. Violence and sexual harassment by men within the political party system exists. A number of women have been victims of sexual demands from the opposite sex at various stages of the adoption process within the political parties (both ruling and opposition). The abuse of social media and internet to intimi-

44. Country Gender Profile: Zambia Final Report. JICA 2016. https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/thematic_issues/gender/background/c8h0vm0000anji6-att/zambia_2016.pdf

date women through cyberbullying also account for low participation in local government elections. The report on women in local administrations noted that segregation and discrimination were the most prominent challenges for women administrators in Zambia. Some respondents narrated that they were discriminated against based on their tribe, culture, marital status and social economic status. Sexual harassment was captured across all project districts under this study. Respondents could not reveal further information but stated they had been victims of sexual harassment, through suggestive behaviors from their male counterparts and supervisors, inappropriate sexual advances, gestures, and words. The Respondents mentioned that the inadequate/lack of reporting and grievance structures in the councils, worsens the situation of women. They are vulnerable to cases such as sexual and verbal harassment as they do not have adequate protection in their place of work. Late salaries were said to be a challenge by some respondents. 4.7% of the respondents reported that late salaries affected them. This was a common concern for both male and female workers. It was reported that the late salaries caused the women administrators to have low self-confidence especially if they did not have the financial resources to manage their daily needs. Related to this is insufficient salaries. Low salaries make it difficult for women (and men) to progress in their careers, help their families and advance their social economic status etc. It was also mentioned that women were the lowest-paid workers compared to their male counterparts.

Individual barriers

Women contesting for local government elections face a myriad of challenges. Firstly, from her home, she needs to seek the consent of her husband and family before making her intentions known to the public. This can be quite challenging as the Zambian society is a patriarchal society that upholds male leadership and frowns on female leadership. Thus, due to this strong

allegiance to patriarchal norms, most women are not interested in nor motivated to go into politics. The few who make an attempt are faced with verbal and sexual abuse. Additionally, the lack of financial resources is one of the major reasons why fewer women than men stand for elections in local government. Psychological factors such as lack of self-esteem, and fear of rejection, in a male-dominated environment negatively affected women who wanted to contest local government elections. The report on local administrations in Zambia reported also highlighted; the lack of self-confidence, intimidation from male colleagues, and ability to manage the family, work and social commitments as individual barriers affecting women administrators. The separation of some women administrators from their families due to transfers negatively affect their performance at work as well as their finances as they had to run two homes. Frequent transfers under local government were condemned by more than 50% of the respondents as they have an emotional and family impact.

Marginalized groups

According to Minority Rights Groups International⁴⁵, in Zambia there are more than 70 ethnic groups. Some of them are small groups and the main group is Bemba. Bemba speakers have key positions in central government but there is no dominant ethno-linguistic group. English is the language of the government, and the lack of English can entail social exclusion". The report only refers to the advantages of some dominant groups during the electoral process. (See institutional part of this report). The research on administrators noted that, persons with disability particularly women, were identified to be marginalized within local governments as they are mostly excluded during training programs organized for the local government staff.

45. www.minorityrights.org

Chapter 3

Key recommendations for women's participation in local governance



Image Source: Ernest Mwale Reuters

The research reports from the five countries make recommendations aimed at supporting the participation of women in local government. Below in 3.1 we present the recommendations for women's participation in elections and in 3.2 recommendations for women administrators. In each section we group the recommendations from each country by type of barrier: policy, institutional, social norms and individual.

3.1 Key recommendations for women's participation in elections at the local level

Local level elections

Policy

Benin

Advocacy to design gender responsive legislative measures in local government elections.

Obtaining the modification of the electoral law in order to foresee positive discrimination for women and disabled.

Application of the principle of equality between women and men already included in the Constitution and other international or regional legal instruments.

Cambodia

Advocating for the formulation of election laws promoting gender equality in politics such as:

- promoting gender equality in election procedure and regulation
- gender policy to promote women's political participation, including running for local election;
- advocating for policies and regulations to fight discrimination and violence against women in political parties;
- promoting women's equal participation within political parties and in the policy-making process;

Enabling the inclusion of more women in the local, central selection committees, and parliamentary committees.

Ghana	<p>Advocating for the development of gender friendly policies that encourage more women to run for local government election.</p> <p>Advocate to pass the affirmative action bill to integrate women into all spheres of public life.</p>	
Sri Lanka	<p>Advocating for gender policies and gender mainstream in political parties.</p> <p>Supporting the use of selection criteria in political nominations.</p>	
Zambia	<p>Advocating the revision of the Electoral Act before 2026 and oblige the electoral parties to field women candidates.</p>	
Institutional	Benin	<p>Eradicate electoral corruption and reduce the role of money in political life.</p> <p>Working with political parties for the launch of a gender strategy and policies on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) sexual harassment, corruption, informal patronage, etc. ii) ensuring women good positioning in the electoral lists iii) programs of mentoring and coaching for women leadership. <p>Raising awareness against electoral corruption and fraud.</p> <p>Advocating to reinforce the financial capacity of women and for legislative measures to support financially or materially women candidates. Women need to have enough financial capacity to decide to be involved in politics and they need money for the electoral campaign.</p>
	Cambodia	<p>Ensuring application of gender equality provisions in the Constitution (Art.31);</p> <p>Enabling secure political environment for women within political parties;</p> <p>Supporting initiatives for women's engagement in local elections;</p> <p>Implementation of policies on gender equality already existing at national level (gender mainstreaming and national policy on gender equality (2020-2030);</p> <p>Encouraging female political candidates</p> <p>Working for implementation of SDG 5 on Gender Equality;</p> <p>Combating discrimination and violence against women in politics.</p> <p>Providing supports such as funding, resources, and human resources to women leaders;</p> <p>Strengthening the respect for women's political rights;</p>
Ghana	<p>Advocating for the creation of a special fund to support women political campaigns.</p> <p>Advocating the Gender Desks and political parties for programs of support to women participation in local politics.</p> <p>Creating a mentorship platform/network supporting women in local elections;</p>	

Sri Lanka

Advocating for funds to support women electoral campaigns and other development activities;

Promoting gender inclusion in school curricula.

Combating corruption and auditing and supervising the implementation of the existing provisions at local level;

Zambia

Advocating for the Electoral Commission reduce women nominations fees.

Carrying out a mapping of NGOs providing support to women participation in politics and promoting collaboration with them.

Developing a gender equality code of conduct within political parties imposing them a specified number of women candidates in all local government elections;

Socio-cultural

Benin

Awareness raising to reduce cultural obstacles and stereotypes against gender equality.

Raising awareness on role of women in decision-making;

Promoting a feminist society;

Working for a more positive image of women;

Combatting women stereotypes

Encouraging women participation in political life

Supporting girls' education

Supporting women participation in economic life

Cambodia

Increasing civic and political education to change society's perception of politics, including women's role.

Utilize both the social and mass media to campaign on women's rights and women's role in leadership;

Combatting the traditional stereotypes of women;

Increasing academic research, debate, and discussions on women in politics;

Providing support for women better conciliate private and political life

Raise public awareness on the role of women in political life;

Ghana

Advocating to create programs on leadership and mentorship for the inclusion of women with disabilities in politics.

Involving traditional leaders like chiefs and queen mothers in programs of raising awareness to combat discriminations against women.

Sri Lanka	<p>Incorporating gender equality into the government media policy in order to portray a positive image of women.</p> <p>Promoting manuals and guidelines for training of community leaders, with the support of NGOs;</p>
Zambia	<p>Collaborating with key stakeholders at local levels on women matters and supporting networks of women and gender equality awareness.</p> <p>Providing information programs for women, including in education at school and within the family (ex. same rights for a girl and a boy).</p>
Individual	
Benin	<p>Supporting women mentoring and coaching programs;</p> <p>Programs supporting women leadership including in political parties</p> <p>Reinforcing women financial capacities including activities generating personal income</p> <p>Mentoring for women during their mandate</p>
Cambodia	<p>Providing training on laws and financial support for women elected at local level;</p> <p>Increase support mechanism for women politicians such as capacity development schemes and political funding for women.</p>
Ghana	<p>Supporting programs of education for women.</p> <p>Creating Capacity Building programs for women to support them in taking leadership at local level;</p> <p>Creating economic opportunities for women to empower them financially</p>
Sri Lanka	<p>Promoting training for women to equip them with new knowledge and enhance leadership qualities.</p> <p>Leading an in-depth study on sexual violence against women to be conducted by civil society groups.</p> <p>Supporting women for self-employment with the support of NGOs and donors for their implementation.</p>
Zambia	<p>Advocating to provide funding and campaign support for women candidates.</p> <p>Encouraging women to be candidates at local governments elections;</p> <p>Launching programs of capacity building at the local level to support women's capacities.</p> <p>Providing mentorship programs preparing women for political work and enhancing their political skills.</p>

3.2 Key recommendations for women in local administrations

Women administrators

Policy

Benin

Advocating for modifying the Constitution and law to promote parity between women and men in recruitments and positive discrimination in favor of women and disabled.

Advocating for a law protecting women from violence.

Ensure a legislation reducing inequalities between women and men;

Cambodia

Enhancing the implementation of existing gender equality strategies with focus on quota systems recruitments in LGs.

Advocating in favor of quotas for women in leadership positions in local administration.

Ghana

Advocating for a strong policy against sexual harassment including a system that protect the identity of women victims of violence in local government policies.

Advocate for an Extension of the Maternity Leave.

Sri Lanka

Designing and implementing a strategy at national level aimed at promoting women into senior positions in local government service.

Zambia

Advocating for designing and implementing gender policies in all local governments.

Advocating for the implementation of strong policies against sexual harassment and violence within local governments (of which women and marginalized groups are victims in particular).

Institutional

Benin

Creating an association of women in local administration.

Creating gender and inclusion points in all municipalities in order to implement policies and actions for women and disabled.

Organizing awareness raising actions on gender issues for municipalities' employees.

Organizing awareness raising initiatives for local elected and ministers' civil servants on gender issues at local level.

Taking measures in favor of friendly working environment for women (ex. adapting working timing, foreseeing more children care centers, building toilets in local governments buildings).

Integrating gender budgeting in municipal budgets.

Providing legal and psychological support for women victims of violence and for disabled in all municipalities.

Cambodia

Establishing childcare services in all local authorities.

Working with the Provincial departments' women offices to improve childcare initiatives and support to allow women to conciliate professional life and household duties.

Deliberate gender budgeting in all local budgets.

Establishing committees with members of all divisions of the administration in all municipalities in order to take charge of women and marginalized groups issues.

Providing women administrators with necessary working material and equipment - including material with gender responsive approach.

Ghana

Strengthening the Gender Unit Desk in all local governments;

Implementing the Human Resources Operations Manual, in particular the clause for the posting of women administrators which will have to take into account their personal needs;

Providing nursery facilities within each local government.

Develop a robust Sexual Harassment Policy (including a whistle-blower system).

Advocate for reforms in organizational policies and programs to relieve women of the challenges they go through in juggling work with family.

Sri Lanka

Establishing a Unit responsible for Human Resources in any local government.

Ensuring access to all disabled in local governments buildings and also statistics on women administrators with disabilities.

Putting in place a gender disaggregated system having also an ethnic and religious breakdown in order to better address women needs according to their ethnic, religious background or health situation (ex. disabled women).

Zambia

Promoting policies facilitating flexible work environment and extended teleworking for women in local administration.

Foreseeing Gender Committees at District Level to promote Gender Mainstreaming policies;

Advocating for gender quotas within local administrations including for leadership positions.

Advocating for provisions allowing local governments to recruit locally and end centralized recruitment process for local governments.

Socio-cultural

Benin

Raising awareness actions on gender issues towards religious authorities.

Raising awareness initiatives on gender issues in any working environment.

Organizing training sessions on gender issues for teachers.

Organizing campaigns of raising awareness on gender and inclusion in schools.

Involving the media in large campaigns on gender issues.

Cambodia

Foreseeing raising awareness tools for gender transformative approach addressed to female officials' families and local governments' colleagues and leaders.

Collaborating with media to organize large campaigns on gender equality and social and cultural norms.

Organizing campaigns on women leadership especially in the framework of capacity building programs.

Ghana

Designing and implementing extensive gender awareness programs aiming at eliminating gender stereotypes affecting women in local administrations.

Sri Lanka

Planning capacity building programs for local governments in plantations areas in order to address the vulnerabilities and needs of women in this area.

Assessing the gender discrimination norms which prevent women administrators from performing their work effectively and foreseeing measures to transform such discriminatory social norms;

Zambia

Promoting policies and services enabling women in local administrations to conciliate professional and family life (ex. structures for children, taking nursery hours, etc.)

Individual

Benin

Working and advocating to reinforce women education and training.

Organizing capacity building sessions with local authorities.

Launching a program of grants for women working in local governments.

Inviting women administrators to be involved in professional and women organizations.

Launching a program of coaching for women and in particular for women working in local administrations.

Cambodia

Reinforcing education and training programs for women in local authorities.

Creating capacity building programs for women in local administrations – communication, leadership, public speaking, local governance, etc.

Advocating for increasing the benefits package for pregnancy and maternal leave.

Ghana

Providing a counselling and psychological support Unit for women in all local governments.

Providing adequate working tools and equipment for women in local governments.

Institute leadership and on-the-job training program for women.

Providing mentorship program and networking platforms for female administrators.

Sri Lanka

Organizing training programs in local governments including digital literacy and allocating funds to ensure effective distribution of equipment in local administrations.

Setting capacity building programs for women in local administrations.

Zambia

Providing training and capacity building programs for women and marginalized people within local administrations.

Advocating for eliminating the gender gap in salaries of local administrations and struggling against low salaries.

Chapter 4

Conclusions

The studies from the partner countries in the context of the PMI-WILL Project that we have summarized in this consolidated report, confirm that gender equality is far from being achieved in these countries.

UN Women has just published⁴⁶ the “Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): the Gender Snapshot 2022”. The report says that at the current rate of progress it may take close to 300 years to achieve full gender equality in the world and stresses that “Global challenges, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath, violent conflicts, climate change, and the backlash against women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights are further exacerbating gender disparities”. In this global background, women from Benin, Cambodia, Ghana, Sri Lanka, and Zambia are furthermore victims of discrimination linked to the state of development of their countries which undermines their possibilities to fully participate in local governance and political life. The women, like in many developing countries, suffer fundamental delays in terms of access to education, health, and basic service which, are serious attempts at human dignity and can be considered, therefore, as real obstacles to the respect of human rights.

The achievement of SDG on Gender Equality 5 is crucial for the realization of the UN Agenda 2030, the reports from the five PMI-WILL partner countries raise some critical issues which cannot be ignored in the global political agenda. Gender equality is a central issue on the international agenda and the key stakeholders for development are supposed to play an active role to respond to this challenge, of promoting and working for women’s rights to achieve gender equality. The impact of Covid 19 has further exposed gender

gaps as its impact on women has been extreme poverty, unemployment, health, unpaid care, violence against women and girls, access to education, etc. and the pressure is high to tackle their needs, today more than ever. Local governments, as the tier of government closest to the people, are the best placed to improve women’s daily conditions of life. Women, including those from marginalized groups, must fully participate in local governance to see their needs and requests taken into account.

The participation of women in decision-making at the local level is the condition sine qua non to achieve gender equality at the local level. It is only by increasing the number of women on local councils as administrators and elected officers, that it will be possible to ensure increased responsiveness to women’s needs, and greater investment in social programs leading to poverty reduction. This is the driving principle of the PMI-WILL project, confirmed by the findings in the five partner countries which show the huge gap still exists. The studies have identified the barriers that women face to participate in local governance, as far as it concerns the legal and policy framework, the institutional, sociocultural and individual barriers. On this basis, the reports have formulated some proposals for action that are summarized in this consolidated report within two tables (one regarding women elected and one for women administrators), which draw the key recommendations for the five partner countries.

We believe these key recommendations, to be further discussed by the project stakeholders, can inspire the road map in each of the project partner countries. The national associations of local governments and the local stakeholders can certainly

46. On 7 September 2022

bring a major contribution to this reflection.

The long experience and positive practices of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities will be a crucial added value for the success of the program together with, the great support that the network of UCLG with its regional sections will be able to offer. This consolidated report will be a useful tool to establish the future steps of the PMI-WILL and will indicate a clear way of action to achieve women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic

and public life, in the five partner countries. The Partnerships for Municipal Innovation – Women in Local Leadership (PMI-WILL) project aims to enhance the enjoyment of rights for women and girls in Benin, Cambodia, Ghana, Sri Lanka and Zambia by (a) increasing the participation of women, in particular those from marginalized groups, as leaders and decision-makers in local governance, thus contributing to building a better and more sustainable world and to the realization of SDG 5.5 within the UN Agenda 2030.

Bibliography

- African Development Bank Group. (2021). Country Gender Profile, Assessment of the Impacts of Covid-19 .
- Amnesty International. (2021). Sri Lanka: From burning houses to burning bodies: Anti-Muslim violence, discrimination and harassment in Sri Lanka. London: Amnesty International Ltd.
- Association Nationale des Communes du Benin (ANCB). (2022). Obstacles to Women's Candidacy in Local Elections in Benin.
- Benin Coutumier du Dahomey. (n.d.). Retrieved from Resource Equity:
<https://resourceequity.org/record/1815-benin-coutumier-du-dahomey/>
- Care Cambodia. (2022). Ethnic minority women. Retrieved from care-cambodia.org:
<https://www.care-cambodia.org/marginalized-ethnic-minorities>
- Children of the Mekong. (n.d.). Why are girls not in school.
Retrieved from childrenofthemekong.org:
<https://www.childrenofthemekong.org/why-girls-are-not-in-school/>
- Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL). (2020). Retrieved from comfrel.org: <https://comfrel.org/english/press-release-on-political-gender-watch-report-assembly-and-female-members-of-parliament-and-empowerment-of-female-commune-sangkat-councilors-in-their-performance-at-the-local-level/>
- Democracy Reporting International. (2021, October 13). Improving women's political participation in Sri Lanka - Briefing Paper 116 - October 2021. Retrieved from Democracy Reporting International:
chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=<https://www.democracy-reporting.org/uploads/publication/15243/document/dri-sri-lanka-improving-women-s-pol-61666f4eae558.pdf&clen=546888&chunk=true>
- Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka. (2020, October). Publication - Women's Wellbeing Survey 2019. Retrieved from srilanka.unfpa.org:
<https://srilanka.unfpa.org/en/publications/womens-wellbeing-survey-2019#:~:text=Known%20as%20the%20Women's%20Wellbeing,intimate%20partner%20in%20their%20lifetime.>
- European Democracy Hub. (2021). EU support for women's political participation and leadership and leadership under the EU's Gender Action Plan: A case study on Sri Lanka.
- International Center for Ethnic Studies. (2022). Retrieved from Publications; Minorities in Cambodia: <https://minorityrights.org/publications/minorities-in-cambodia-june-1995/>
- International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES). (2022). Women's Political Representation in Sri Lanka: Electoral Systems Analysis and Recommendations. IFES.
- Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA). (2016, March). Country Gender Profile: Zambia Final Report.

- Local Authorities Elections (Amendment) ACT, No. 16 of 2017. (2017, August 31st). Sri Lanka.
- Local Government Association of Zambia. (2022). Barriers to Women Running for Local Government Elections in Zambia.
- Minority Rights Group International. (2022). World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous People: Zambia. Retrieved from <https://minorityrights.org/country/zambia/>
- Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights. (2008). The Declaration of Human Rights in the Cambodia Constitution. Office of United Nations High Commission for Human Rights Cambodia County Office.
- Public Service Commission (Sri Lanka). (2022, August 8). Overview. Retrieved from https://www.psc.gov.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=106&Itemid=232&lang=en
- Shaheed, F. (2009). Structural Barriers, Cultural Constraints, Meso Traps & Other Challenges Women's Empowerment in Institutional Mechanisms and Power & Decision-Making The Beijing Platform for Action 15 Years On: UN ESCAP. UK: Asset Publishing Service.
- The Gazette of the Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka Extraordinary. (2013, December 23). Sri Lanka. The Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. (2017, August 31st). Local Authorities Elections (Amendment) ACT, no. 16 of 2017. Sri Lanka.
- UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). (2005, April 18). Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Combined Third, Fourth and Fifth Periodic Reports of States Parties, Ghana. UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). (n.d.). Gender and Development Discussion Paper Series No. 21: Harmful Traditional Practices in Three Countries of Asia: culture, human rights and violence against women . Bangkok, Thailand.
- UN World Population Prospects 2019. (2021, August). Gender Ratio in the World. Retrieved from [statisticstimes.com: https://statisticstimes.com/demographics/world-sex-ratio.php#:~:text=The%20population%20of%20females%20in,101.68%20males%20per%20100%20females](https://statisticstimes.com/demographics/world-sex-ratio.php#:~:text=The%20population%20of%20females%20in,101.68%20males%20per%20100%20females)
- United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). (2022). Retrieved from <https://www.uclg.org/en/issues/gender-equality>
- United Nations. (2004). The Implementation of the International Convention of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Cambodia. CEDAW.
- United Nations Development Program. (2020). Human Development Report 2020: The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene.
- United Nations. (November 2002). Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- United Nations Population Fund. (2017). Ageing Population of Sri Lanka: Emerging Issues, Needs and Policy Implications (Thematic Report based on Census of Population and Housing 2012). Colombo: United Nations Population Fund. Retrieved from [Ageing Population of Sri Lanka: Emerging Issues, Needs and Policy Implications: https://srilanka.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA%20Ageing%20Monograph%20Report_0.pdf](https://srilanka.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA%20Ageing%20Monograph%20Report_0.pdf)
- US Library of Congress. (1988). Sri Lanka: A Country Study. Retrieved from <https://countrystudies.us/sri-lanka/38.html>

FCM International
24 Clarence Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5P3
Tel: 613-241-5221 / Fax: 613-241-7117
www.fcm.ca