



CARIBBEAN WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Year in Review - Oct 2021 - Sept 2022

ANNUAL REPORT

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ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIWiL	Caribbean Women in Leadership
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
YWiL	Young Women in Leadership
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations

ABOUT CIWIL

CIWIL is a flagship networking organisation committed to advancing transformational leadership, and to increasing the numbers of women in leadership and decision-making in political and civic life, proportionate to the female population in Caribbean countries. CIWIL is non-partisan, and independent institution and a leading advocate to increase the participation of women in leadership and decision-making within the Caribbean.

We work with activists, female parliamentarians, development professionals, and national gender machineries to train and support women across the region as they seek elected office or assume other positions of leadership.

CIWIL's work is committed to facilitating:

- gender equality in leadership and positions of power in all spaces of society.
- purposeful gender mainstreaming;
- realising a critical mass of personally aware, educated and socially empowered Caribbean women through training, advocacy, mentoring and research;
- the realisation of equitable and sustainable development of the Caribbean region for the benefit of all of the region's citizens

We work with activists, female parliamentarians, development professionals, and national gender machineries to train and support women across the region as they seek elected office or assume other positions of leadership.

CIWIL is a membership-based organisation, headquartered in Trinidad and Tobago with a network of seven (7) National Chapters¹ throughout the Caribbean Region(as at Septmber 2022. CIWIL has a Regional Board of Directors, which approves policy direction and has oversight of the management of the organisation.

¹ Chapters were established in 2019 in St. Kitts and Nevis, then The Bahamas. In 2020, Chapters were established in Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The agreed foundation elements of the Plan are as follows:

Mission

To drive the advancement of Caribbean women in leadership, at the community, national and regional levels, through advocacy, partnership, sisterliness, mentorship, training, and development.

Vision

An organisation that enables Caribbean women to realise gender equality and equity for sustainable, transformational leadership and people-centred development.

Core Values

Integrity
Transparency
Gender Justice
Inclusiveness
Accountability
Sisterliness
and
Impartiality

Strategic Objectives: Twelve (12) Strategic Objectives were identified. The Plan will be implemented through forty-one (41) Strategic Initiatives.

Figure 1. Leadership, Management, and Functional Structure of CIWiL



The new Strategic Plan builds on the achievements of the implementation of the previous strategic plans (2015-2020 and 2010-2015)², cognisant of the evolving national, regional, and global operating environments. In addition to building on the previous plans, factors such as the experience of its stakeholders, the current uncertainty in the regional environment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the increase in Chapters from two (2) to seven (7) in 2020 required CIWiL to take a deep look at the NGO’s relevance and sustainability, especially projecting into a post-COVID paradigm.

² Both of the earlier Strategic Plans were funded by UNWomen (previously UNIFEM).

Message from the President of CIWiL's Regional Board of Directors

Many of us over the last several years have been impacted by the concurrent crises of COVID-19, climate change and the global economic crisis, which have compounded in a way that exposed pre-existing gender inequalities and exacerbated multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Upon closer examination of every issue, women and girls are invariably disproportionately affected in myriad ways, such as an increase in gender-based violence, loss of jobs, food insecurity and unequal burden of care.

These realities, continue to underscore the significance and relevance of our regional organisation in knowledge sharing, awareness raising and nurturing agents for social change. And provides the impetus for our continued relevance and evolution.

As an organisation, looking back at what we have been able to achieve within the constraints of an immediate post-pandemic period, we celebrate growth and adaptability. We pivoted our engagement strategy to leverage the virtual space to ensure we remained functional and relevant, from the onset of the pandemic.

We grew numerically, with the establishment of five (5) CIWiL National Chapters right in the throes of the pandemic, between July and December 2020—Trinidad & Tobago, Antigua & Barbuda, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Belize, and St Lucia. Now with a presence in eight countries, including the spice island of Grenada, we look ahead to formalising chapters in Barbados, Guyana and Jamaica to perform critical and important work on the ground to influence laws and policies that promote gender parity and sustainable communities.

We maintained our commitment to training, advocacy and capacity

building through virtual engagements at the national and regional level, which included training for electoral candidates and mentorship of young women leaders. We also heightened our digital media presence to become more accessible and responsive as the world adapted to a new normal.

As the curtain closes on these past two years, we look toward the horizon in anticipation of what is to come. Today, we look back and see how far we have come—as sisters individually, and collectively as CIWiL. Let us celebrate the hurdles we've overcome and embrace the lessons learnt of our resilience.

We are well poised to continue the work we have begun. Let us forge ahead boldly with courage and confidence.



Lady A. Anade Trotman-Joseph
President, CIWiL Regional Board

Message from the Regional Secretariat

CIWiL continued its work this past year to strengthen women's leadership in the region through training, advocacy, and mentorship. We promote the democratic participation and inclusion of women and girls in the leadership and decision-making process in the Caribbean, and are focused on improving and sustaining the growth of our network and support for women leaders.

Steadfast in our goal to increase the number of women in leadership and decision-making in political and civic life, we facilitated a number of engagements, which straddled both the virtual and physical (in-person) spaces, as restrictions on movement and congregation relaxed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and there was a slow return to pre-pandemic operations.

This year's activities centred around training of electoral candidates, mentoring young women leaders, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building

YWiL

Since the inaugural launch of the Young Women in Leadership (YWiL) programme in 2020, we have hosted a second cohort in Trinidad and Tobago, and a first cohort in the nation of St. Lucia, culminating in October 2021 and June 2022, respectively. The programme, developed in partnership with ParlAmericas, has been designed to strengthen and encourage young women to explore leadership and decision-making in the public and private sector through a gender transformative lens. Across both countries, we were able to engage more than eighty (80) young women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five (18-25) years, via online training, and concluded the programme with an All Women Sitting of Parliament.

Training of Electoral Candidates

Women remain underrepresented in leadership and decision-making spaces, and consequently issues that disproportionately impact women and girls, remain unaddressed and pervasive. CIWiL, as part of its commitment to supporting the increase in the numbers of women in political and leadership spaces, hosted virtual and in-person training sessions and clinics for women candidates and their teams, ahead of general and local government elections in the region.

Women in Antigua & Barbuda, St. Kitts & Nevis, and Trinidad & Tobago were beneficiaries of these sessions, which established transformational leadership as a lens through which good governance and decision-making may be viewed. Practical strategies for engaging constituents, the media and managing teams were also facilitated by former and current female politicians across the region.

Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building

Our advocacy efforts to promote transformation in the region toward greater gender sensitivity, and to foster a critical mass of personally aware, educated and socially empowered people, continued as CIWiL engaged allies and stakeholders through various webinars aimed at facilitating discussion on gender-sensitive issues at the societal and policy levels.

CIWiL has also been an implementing partner as part of the Jamaica Spotlight Initiative, which is aimed at strengthening a coordinated approach to addressing gender based violence (GBV). A range of stakeholders have been engaged to collaborate with and participate

Message from the Regional Secretariat

in various awareness and capacity initiatives and one-on-one interactions focused on sharing information and tools on good practices to take action to respond to violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Activities under this project included:

Workshop for the Private Sector on Promoting Freedom from Violence in our Workplaces and Communities

Capacity-building session for journalists on accuracy and sensitivity in reporting on family violence

Virtual Discussion on Psychosocial Support Services for GBV Victims/Survivors

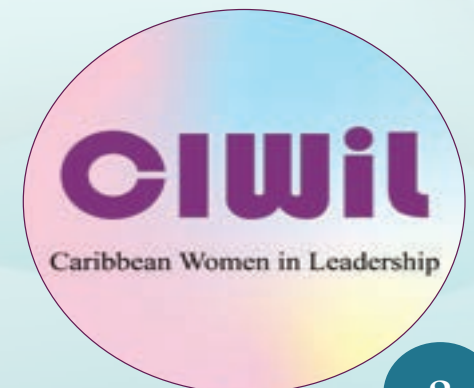
Virtual Forum on Utilizing Social Media as a Tool for Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Jamaica

As we look toward the future, we are confident that we will continue to make an impact in the lives of women across the region. We continue to navigate a time of unprecedented uncertainty, and possess a new vigour that propels us forward.

As an organisation and a movement for the attainment of gender equality across the region, we continue to thank our partners who support us in this work—our main partner - ParIAmericas, through Global Affairs Canada, along with other allies such as UN Women Caribbean, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the InterAmerican Task Force and governments across the Caribbean.

Dylis Mc Donald

Project Coordinator, CIWiL Regional Secretariat



Operations and Finances

Funding Profile - CIWiL

Funding Agreements: Over the fiscal period October 2021 to September 2022, CIWiL's operations and activities were primarily financed through funding agreements with the following agencies:

(i) Global Affairs Canada (GAC) / ParlAmericas under the project 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean'. This funding agreement began in December, 2018.

(ii) Equality Fund under the project 'Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) Caribbean'. The funding agreement began in July, 2020.

(iii) UNWomen under the project 'Jamaica Spotlight Project'. This funding agreement began in August 2021.

For the period October 2021 to September 2022, the budgeted contributions of CIWiL's respective funding agreements are presented in Diagrams 1 and 2.

Membership Fees: Prior to October 2021, a total of four (4) National Chapter bodies were formed as follows:

St. Kitts & Nevis, Bahamas, Trinidad & Tobago, and Antigua and Barbuda. However, three (3) additional National Chapter bodies were formed during the fiscal period (October 2021-September 2022) as follows: Belize, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia.

As such, by the end of September 2022, a total of seven (7) National Chapter bodies had been formed, and it is anticipated that two (2) National Chapter bodies, Grenada and Jamaica, will be formed in the next fiscal term. Over the period, membership fees were collected from the Bahamas National Chapter.

DIAGRAM 1 - CIWiL'S FUNDING PROFILE AS AT SEPTEMBER 2022

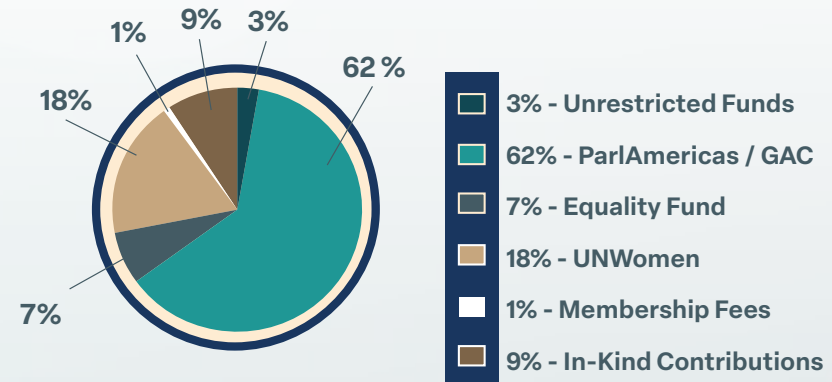
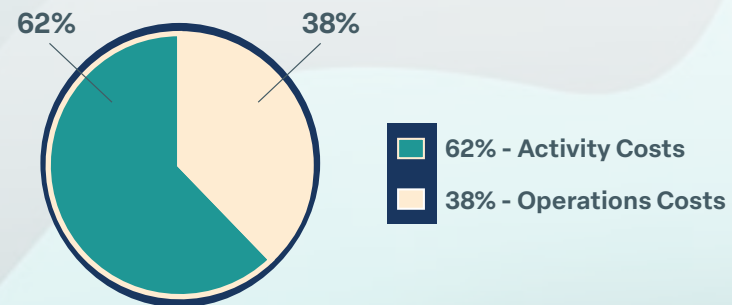


DIAGRAM 2 - PROFILE OF BUDGETED CONTRIBUTIONS FROM FUNDING AGENCIES AS AT SEPTEMBER 2022



In-Kind Contributions: These contributions, which are featured as part of the funding profile of CIWiL, are recorded when fair values can be reasonably estimated and supporting documentation is available and verified.

Unrestricted Funds: Uncommitted contributions received by CIWiL during the fiscal period.

Milestones and Achievements at a glance

CIWiL's major activities this year have focused on its work with ParlAmericas under the project "Promoting Women's Political Participation in the Caribbean" (PWPLC).

2021

Q3

- NOV 11 Dominica Formation Meeting
- NOV 23 Q3 National Chapter Webinar "Advancing the Gender Agenda"
- DEC 9 Dominica Formation Meeting
- DEC 10 Q3 Regional Webinar "Grounding Women's Rights as Human Rights"
- DEC 14 CIWiL Sisters' Celebration 2021
- DEC 16 Dominica Formation Meeting

Q2

- SEP 27 Q2 Regional Webinar- "Pathways to Good Governance"

2022

Q1
Q2

- APR 1 - Regional capture of media mentions for the period April to September 2022
- SEP 30

Q4

- JAN 14 Dominica Formation Meeting
- MAR 24 Q4 Regional Webinar "Strengthening Caribbean Women's Voices, Agency and Leadership at all Levels of Climate Action"
- MAR 29 Q4 National Chapter Webinar - Presentation on CIWiL Strategic Plan
- Dominica Formation Meeting

Q1

- APR 25-27 Commonwealth Secretariat Meeting - Workshop on Leadership for Good Governance and Social Transformation in the Caribbean (Hosted by CIWiL, the Commonwealth Secretariat, UN Women)
- MAY 18 Promoting Freedom from Violence in our Workplaces and Communities
- MAY 27 YWiL SLU Leadership Workshop
- JUN 22 Women Candidates Virtual Regional Townhall
- JUN 27 YWiL SLU Parliamentary Siting

Milestones and Achievements at a glance

CIWiL's major activities this year have focused on its work with ParlAmericas under the project "Promoting Women's Political Participation in the Caribbean" (PWPLC).

Q2

- JUL 1** Spotlight Journalism Session (Capacity-building session for journalists on accuracy and sensitivity in reporting on family violence)
- JUL 5** Bahamas Women's Parliamentary Caucus - Introductory Discussion
- JUL 17** Virtual pre-election training session on preparing to run in an election for female candidate in the St Kitts General Election
- JUL 21** Communities of Practice: Psychosocial Support Services for GBV Victims/Survivors - Improving Quality & Access.
- AUG 5** Bahamas Women's Parliamentary Caucus - Introductory Discussion
- AUG 11-12** Local Government Candidate Training - South
- AUG 17-18** Local Government Candidate Training - North
- AUG 17** National Chapter Webinar - Women's Health and Well-being a Call to Action
- AUG 25** Grenada Chapter Formation Meeting - Virtual
- SEP 1** Trainer of Trainers (This is the first and only session held thus far. Subsequent sessions will resume on a date TBC)
- SEP 21** Utilizing Social Media as a Tool for Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Jamaica
- SEP 30** Grenada Chapter Formation Meeting - Meet and Greet

2022

Pillar 1

Improve the management and sustainability of CIWiL and its Chapters

CIWiL, as a multi-partisan, and independent NGO, ensures that the membership of its board is representative of the region's diversity. This cadre of women is representative of all sectors of society and many are themselves activists, advocates and academics all with a shared passion for achieving gender equality in the Caribbean using transformational leadership approaches focused on inclusivity.

The work of the Regional Board focuses on the implementation of the organisation's strategic plan which guides the work of the Regional Secretariat in implementing various advocacy, networking, research and capacity building initiatives. These programmes are aimed at strengthening and advancing women's participation in leadership and decision-making in politics, public life, private and civil sectors.

The CIWiL Regional Board in addition to its overarching governance role, provides guidance and support to National Chapters across the Caribbean. It supports National Chapters in promoting CIWiL's strategic direction and policies and implementing programmes at the national level.

For more information on our Regional Board of Directors please visit our website: www.ciwil.org



Pillar 2

Enhance the delivery of activities to promote and support enabling conditions for leadership by women and girls

Women’s political and socio-economic status improves when women become more involved in decision making and policy development at all levels of governance.

CIWiL Sisters’ Celebration of Achievements and Resilience in 2021

Caribbean Women in Leadership (CIWiL) capped off 2021 with an intergenerational conversation between the emerging young women leaders of the CIWiL National Chapters and the doyennes in the field of gender and development - CIWiL Board members, pioneers and pre-eminent Caribbean leaders, namely, Dame Biller - patron of CIWiL, Ambassador at Large and Plenipotentiary (Barbados) and Dr. Carla Barnett - CARICOM Secretary-General. As the title of this session, “CIWiL Sisters: A Celebration of Achievements and Resilience with Cheer,” suggests, it was a convivial forum which provided an opportunity for Chapter members to share their triumphs, receive meaningful feedback, and build solidarity across generations of visionary, transformational women leaders.

CIWiL “Past & Present” - Origins, Founding Mothers and Enduring Relevance

CIWiL’s work focuses on strengthening women’s political participation and leadership in the region through advocacy, networking, research and capacity building. There is a long history behind how this came to

be and Dr. Barnett, a self-described honorary member of CIWiL, provided a brief history of CIWiL from its inception in 1998, when it became the organisation in the region to champion the 1995 Beijing DPfA, and most notably, its agenda on women’s participation in political decision-making. Nana Oye Hesse-Bayne, CIWiL Board Coordinator, paid tribute to three founding sisters whose early work made CIWiL possible - Dr. Rosina Wiltshire, Dr. Rawwida Baksh and Dr. Hazel Brown. Hesse-Bayne emphasised the value of building upon their work and fittingly, Belizean Chapter member, Katie Jones, shared her poem, “To the Woman I have Become,” about the inspiration she draws from such Caribbean feminist stalwarts.

Both Dame Miller and Dr. Barnett reflected upon the challenges of 2021, which were compounded by the pandemic and climate change, and disproportionately experienced by women - uneven health consequences, food insecurity, rise in VAWG, unequal burden of care, and job losses. Dame Miller pointed out that the consensus emerging from CIWiL’s interventions on these issues, was the imperative of gender-sensitive responses and the inclusion of women in decision-making, recommendations echoed at international platforms like COP26 and CSW65. Dame Miller thus re-affirmed the importance of CIWiL’s work.

How CIWiL National Chapters Drive Transformative Change at the Country Level

Executive Members of each of CIWiL’s 7 National Chapters have benefitted from CIWiL’s training, and have since translated those learnings into leading their local chapters - chapters which now, in turn, are able to promote and implement CIWiL’s vision, mission, objectives,

Pillar 2 cont'd

and programmes on women's transformational leadership at the national level. The presentations shared by each Chapter bore testament to this.

CIWiL "Future" - Strengthening Women's Representational & Substantive, Transformational Leadership

Dr. Barnett remarked on the "room for improvement" in the numbers of women at the highest levels of decision-making as heads of State and in regional organisations. Concurrently, she notes areas of progress and adds: "We have had many more young women entering politics across the region, so we have reason to expect that this number will increase." She asserts, however, that "...we have to know that will not just happen. It will take real support for women by women who want to participate and move up in politics."



This kind of solidarity is characteristic of transformational leadership, which Lady Anande Trotman Joseph, CIWiL's President reminded us, is "one of the main pillars of CIWiL." Dame Miller described this approach as one which links accountable leadership and good governance, and addresses the gender and power relations underpinning regional challenges. According to Lady Anande, it involves a distinctively empathetic sisterliness - whereby we support and serve as role models to one another and the next generation, collaborate as a community in action, and break the mould of patriarchy. She advises that this requires an intentional reframing and re-envisioning of our lives, communities and regional societies in ways that are equitable, fair, just and respectful. CIWiL remains committed to the development of women transformational leaders in 2022.

All Chapters participated in IWD 2021, with many conducting activities throughout March. Activities highlighted a diversity of remarkable Caribbean women leaders in politics and other sectors and focused on topics such as women's political empowerment and equipping women to pivot in a COVID-19 world. The Chapters' resolve and dynamism around issues affecting women were also patent in their advocacy for ending GBV during and beyond last year's 16 Days Global Campaign. In Antigua and Barbuda, the Chapter denounced the harassment and prejudice directed at women leaders. The Bahamas Chapter worked with partners and Parliamentary allies to push forward GBV legislation, which has since been passed. The Chapter also engaged religious leaders in sensitizing discussions on marital rape. Other Chapters collaborated with State and CSOs to implement community outreach and engagement activities ranging from candlelight vigils, awareness

Pillar 2 cont'd

marches, and 'orange the town' public demonstrations, to school visits and community workshops, all aimed at educating the public about GBV. They also employed PR strategies, with many Chapters making presentations to the media, talk show appearances, and issuing press releases.

Chapters also advocated around other pertinent issues in the region. For the St. Vincent and the Grenadines chapter, efforts turned to disaster relief in April following the eruption of La Soufrière. The Antigua and Barbuda Chapter focussed on "Changing the Narrative" and addressing barriers that often prevent women from pursuing leadership careers. One such output has been the launch of the Young Women's Career Closet which offers access to professional clothing for young women in need who are entering the workforce.

Training women electoral candidates was undertaken by some Chapters, including the St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago chapters. The latter also co-coordinated the second Young Women in Leadership Programme (YWIL). The impact of such interventions by National Chapters - often in conjunction with the Regional Secretariat - is evident in the increase in women assuming leadership positions. For example, seven (7) of the women running in the Bahamas' September 2021 elections who participated CIWiL's pre-elections training, are now Members of Parliament, and all but one of the five women contesting the next Nevis Island Administration and Federal elections are members of CIWiL.



Pillar 2 cont'd

Virtual Townhall for Women Candidates

In light of impending General Elections in Grenada, St. Kitts & Nevis and Antigua & Barbuda, CIWiL hosted a multi-partisan Virtual Town Hall to engage women candidates from each country, on women's political leadership. The event was attended by 34 women, which took place on 22nd June, 2022 from 5:00. The two-hour session focused on building skills, awareness and sensitization among participants to equip them to successfully engage in political and leadership spaces as agents of social change.

H.E. Ambassador Elizabeth Thompson and CIWiL Board President, Lady Anande Trotman-Joseph led the discussion, sharing anecdotes and stories about their experiences as politicians, providing real life examples from the campaign trail about what women candidates can expect. Participants were also reminded of the importance of addressing the needs of all constituents, while wearing a gender lens, as men also comprise that salient group. The women candidates benefited from the balanced perspectives on the romanticism of pursuing politics in service of community against the harsh contrast of the challenges faced by women candidates.

CIWiL works to strengthen and increase young women's representation and participation in leadership and decision-making.

Training for Women Electoral Candidates and Women in Leadership is part of CIWiL's core programmatic deliverables. These workshops focus on preparing women candidates to successfully manage their campaign and provides them with skills and knowledge to become agents of social change.



Pillar 2 cont'd

Quotes from beneficiaries of Local Government Candidate Training

“

I appreciated the information that was shared, it indeed provided a detailed explanation on the reform of the government, managing your campaign and how to become an effective leader.

Britney P, Tunapuna

”

“

The "Duty Bearers" and the "Rights Owners" are titles that have clarified a deep understanding of the guilt I have been carrying. I have learnt that it should not be a guilt to carry but a reality to accept.

Esther S, Tunapuna

”

“

Very inspiring and excellent workshop. It was warm and insightful and created an appreciation of feminist points of views, which included a space where respect helps and shapes a better way forward in women leadership.

Karina N, Tunapuna

”

“

I valued the diversity of the women in the room and the relevance of the topics ...the practicality of the topics used in class activities.

Tameika M, Tunapuna

”

“

The workshop was exceptional. I'm very happy to know a group like CIWIL functions in Trinidad and Tobago. Having attended, I feel more inspired and I'm looking forward to more workshops and becoming a member of CIWIL.

Josanne M, San Fernando

”

“

I learnt that I have so much more to learn. That what I aspire to be a part of, is of great magnitude and not to be taken lightly. I also learnt that I have to be truthful to myself about why I am running for office and become far more knowledgeable about the realities of being part of a campaign.

Valdeen S, San Fernando

”

“

The role play and practical engagement was very helpful. The positive criticism and feedback from participants provided a great platform for change.

Alisa B, San Fernando

”

“

The interaction with the speakers helped me overcome some fear from public speaking.

Sapphire R, San Fernando


”

Pillar 2 cont'd

ADVOCACY & ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

For the period October 1st 2021 to September 30th 2022, the CIWiL Regional Secretariat utilized the following social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and CIWiL's website.

Facebook and Instagram

 There were 185 new likes on Facebook, and 219 new followers on Instagram for the period, increasing the following of both platforms to a total of 1,260 and 990 respectively.

Instagram stories were introduced to promote higher levels of engagement. For the period, Instagram stories reached a total of 312 followers.

Instagram Lives were also hosted for International Observances, such as World Youth Skills Day, on July 15th 2022.

Twitter

There was a total of 689 followers via the Twitter page for the period.

LinkedIn

The LinkedIn platform received a total of 372 followers for the period.

YouTube

There was a total of 39 subscribers via YouTube for the period.

CIWiL's Website

The CIWiL website was used as a main platform for information sharing. Content types include articles, resources, press releases and news updates.

These platforms are significant as a large percentage of the Caribbean region actively engages on these platforms. For example, the Statista Research Department October 2022 report revealed that an average of 22.2 million social media users hail from the Caribbean region, indicating that there is active utilization of social media in the Caribbean. CIWiL aimed to reach social media users on platforms that they most frequently used, and hence CIWiL maximized posting to Facebook and Twitter. Instagram was also significant in connecting with a younger audience such as young women and girls. YouTube serves as a valuable source for posting videos on events and regional campaigns to support CIWiL's video reach to all social media users.



PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS



Rooted in our shared goals of advancing gender equality and women's leadership in the Caribbean region, ParlAmericas has had the distinct honour of forming a strong strategic alliance and partnership with CIWiL. In reflecting upon the 2021-2022 period, the programming implemented by CIWiL, including through our joint Government of Canada sponsored project on Strengthening Women's Political Leadership in the Caribbean, has continued to evidence the importance and impact of such work. CIWiL has stood as a flagship organisation and a premiere ally in efforts to support women's leadership through advocacy, mentorship, training, and development in the Caribbean region.

We have seen firsthand the extensive growth and tremendous impact CIWiL has accomplished via the establishment of its Regional Secretariat and the eight CIWiL national chapters formed across the Caribbean region to date. Despite the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic in recent years, CIWiL has proven itself as consistent and committed to the cause of promoting the principles of transformational leadership and gender equality through the numerous virtual webinars, meetings, and advocacy campaigns implemented.

Particularly noteworthy is the emphasis CIWiL continues to place on training and developing women political leaders, evidenced by the sessions for candidates and campaign teams at different levels of government hosted virtually and/or in-person in Trinidad and Tobago, Belize, The Bahamas, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Antigua and Barbuda. The CIWiL Bahamas chapter also hosted a session in November 2022 that brought together current and former parliamentarians from across the political divide in The Bahamas to work to establish a women's parliamentary caucus; ParlAmericas was pleased to partner with the chapter, and with UN Women Caribbean and CPA, on that session.

A major milestone of our partnership in the 2021-2022 period was the successful implementation of the Young Women in Leadership

(YWiL) - Saint Lucia initiative in May-June 2022. We also saw the CIWiL Trinidad and Tobago chapter implement the first chapter-led YWiL in October-November 2021. The YWiL program has planted seeds of transformational leadership, gender justice, good parliamentary practices, and gender mainstreaming in decision-making in the minds of over 150 dynamic young Caribbean women since 2020. These young women created history by participating in all-women parliamentary sittings to debate and put forward new ideas on pertinent gender issues.

ParlAmericas congratulates and celebrates CIWiL for its achievements in promoting and supporting women's leadership and gender equality in the region. We look forward to our continued partnership and programming in the years to come.

***Alisha Todd, Director
General - ParlAmericas***

The work being done by CIWiL and the Commonwealth Secretariat to ensure more inclusive dialogues and expand women's political participation, is both exceptional and essential. Exceptional, because of its scope and transformative potential and essential, because so many years after the Beijing Platform of Action, women remain the face of poverty, inequity and underdevelopment. This partnership for social justice and a better world, is one to which we all need to commit. The workshop in Barbados yielded great ideas, fresh resolve, renewed commitment, wonderful camaraderie, and great ideas. It's important that those who labour in this cause draw succour from each other and I was happy to be a beneficiary of the joint CIWiL- COMSEC initiative.

***HE Elizabeth Thompson
Ambassador, Barbados***

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

Organisations matter, and in my view **CIWIL** matters to the women in this Caribbean Region. Over the past year I have been actively engaged with CIWIL on training programmes geared towards supporting women who were candidates for elected office to various Parliaments. As a member of the Training Panel, I was excited to be given the opportunity to share my experience as a victorious female candidate in back-to-back general elections, and, as a Political Consultant of Party Politics. CIWIL's attention to this aspect of political engagement made me realize that they were on target, seeking to change the dynamics of female's political participation in the process of electoral representation. Change comes from inside also; being on the inside means you have not only space at the table and a Seat, but also a stronger voice to effect that **change**. CIWIL is on the right course ----- **Real Change**.

Rene. M. Baptiste CMG
St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
Former Member of Parliament (2001-2010)
& Current Speaker of the OECS
(Parliamentary) Assembly 2012 to date

COLLABORATIONS

- InterAmerican Task Force
- Departments of Gender: Antigua and Barbuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Institute of Gender and Development Studies, St. Augustine
- Commonwealth Local Government Forum
- UN Women: Spotlight Initiative

STORIES OF IMPACT

**CIWiL - MAKING A DIFFERENCE:
LEADERSHIP IN ACTION OR LEADERSHIP JOURNEYS**

Charlene Paul

Charlene Paul is a trailer blazer and pioneer, who is unafraid to stand in front and usher others along the path. She is a long-time advocate for the advancement and support of women and has been breaking ground and raising the bar in many areas of her professional and personal life in this pursuit.

In 2019, Charlene became Chapter Chair of the Caribbean Women in Leadership Bahamas National Chapter. And was a founding member and advocate for the Chapter's formation in that nation. The Chapter has been very vociferous on the national scene championing women's representation in Government. So, it was no surprise to see Charlene among the women candidates' contesting elections in 2021. Following the 2021 general elections, two more women were elected to government increasing representation to 18 percent—Charlene was not among them but, her contribution has positively impacted the political landscape ushering more women into the political space.

Remarking on her journey as Chair, of the inaugural CIWiL Bahamas National Chapter, Charlene says her voice and advocacy have been strengthened.

"I am emboldened in my bid to speak-up for those who cannot speak for themselves. The exposure has built my confidence and capacity, which enables me to connect with persons on any level of leadership, locally or internationally, to advocate for the changes needed in our communities and nation.

"The training sessions afforded by both the Regional Secretariat and local organizations have made me more aware of the need for transformational leadership in all spheres of society, and particularly in political leadership. CIWiL has provided a platform for me to connect with women from all sides of the political divide and across the socioeconomic landscape of The Bahamas and the Caribbean. This connection has increased my access to political leaders, advocacy groups and other organization," she said.

Jemiah Whitney Prince

Jemiah Whitney Prince is a young woman committed to service and advancing gender equality in the region. Her passion to contribute to realising gender equity began during her upper school years of secondary education. Research for her Sociology thesis brought her attention to the sparse number of women within government in the Caribbean. To better understand this phenomenon, she went on to interview female parliamentarians in Trinidad and Tobago to discuss the barriers that confront them, even within their own parties.

Fast forward to 2021, when the CIWiL Trinidad and Tobago National Chapter announced its second YWiL programme in Trinidad and Tobago. This would provide a forum where Jemiah could further explore leadership in the political space, while learning the value of applying a transformative lens to leadership and decision making, as well as the importance of allyship from men in advancing gender work. She culminated this experience by becoming a member of the CIWiL Trinidad and Tobago National Chapter.

“YWiL encouraged me to push pass my threshold, which I have applied in my professional life,” she says. “The effect of the training encouraged me to enter legal spaces I thought were not accessible to me. While waiting to be called to the bar following the successful completion of my law examinations, I opted to pursue two legal internships where I not only gained experience but found phenomenal male and female mentors”.

Now, a member of the Trinidad and Tobago National Chapter Executive Committee, having contested and won the post for Vice Chair, Jemiah has an opportunity to put her commitment to service, and passion for gender justice and gender affairs to work, alongside her fellow chapter executives and sisters. Jemiah says she wants to be part of the change she advocates and be among the women that children see represented in parliament, boardrooms, educational spheres, and trade industries.

“I am humbled and honoured by the opportunity to serve on the Executive Committee of the CIWiLTT Chapter. This role provides an opportunity for me to apply all that I’ve learned and continue to learn in this gender space, and it will equip me to make a meaningful impact wherever I’m called to function.

Leaders like Charlene, and the women that comprise the CIWiL Bahamas National Chapter are enabling others to act, inspiring a shared vision, modeling the way and challenging the status quo for the benefit of those women who will ascend after them.

“Is there not a cause” is the value powering Charlene’s pursuits whether she is forging a path for herself or facilitating capacity-building in others. She believes that every obstacle, large or small, can be overcome with the right perspective and attitude. And takes inspiration from David, an ancient King of Israel, who as a boy confronted the Goliath of his day. Unrelenting, he overcame his mighty opponent using what others perceived as limited resources. But the lesson we can all take away—never despise your gift! Embrace your worth and soar!

An avid supporter of gender equality and women in leadership, Charlene has been a founding member of several clubs and associations committed to this purpose. Among them, Avenue of Hope at which she served as a Founding Executive; Virtuous Women where she was a Founding President; and S.M.A.R.T. Women, a member of the Pilot Club and Kingdom Women in Business.

Charlene graduated from St. Anne’s High School in 1980, and College of The Bahamas in 1982, before attending the London School of Accountancy to pursue her professional accounting studies. In 1985, she committed the rare feat of acquiring her qualification from the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants’ after her first attempt at the exams. She is currently a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants of England.





A LOOK BACK

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