



LEADING FOR CHANGE

CANADIAN WOMEN'S FOUNDATION
LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE PILOT PROGRAM

HIGHLIGHTS REPORT
FEBRUARY 2017



ABOUT THE CANADIAN WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

The Canadian Women's Foundation is Canada's public foundation for women and girls. The Foundation empowers women and girls to move out of violence, out of poverty, and into confidence and leadership.

Since 1991, the Foundation has raised more than \$70 million and invested in over 1,400 community-based programs across Canada. It is one of the largest women's foundations in the world.

The Foundation takes a positive approach to address root causes of the most critical issues facing women and girls. Our staff studies and shares the best ways to create long-term change. We also bring community organizations together for training, knowledge-sharing, and networking.

The Foundation carefully selects and funds programs with the strongest outcomes and regularly evaluates its work. It has a special focus on building a community that invests in the strength of women and the dreams of girls.

For more information, visit
www.canadianwomen.org

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Canadian Women's Foundation
133 Richmond Street West, Suite 504
Toronto ON Canada M5H 2L3

Phone: 416-365-1444
Toll Free: 1-866-293-4483
TTY: 416-365-1732

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Evaluation Team:

Eileen Alma, Associate Director, International Centre for Women's Leadership, Coady International Institute
Pamela Johnson, Program Teaching Staff, International Centre for Women's Leadership, Coady International Institute
Suzanne Gibson, Suzanne Gibson & Associates

ABOUT THE COADY INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

Established by St. Francis Xavier University in 1959, the Coady International Institute is a world-renowned centre of excellence in community-based development and leadership education. The Coady International Institute works with innovative people and organizations to create effective, practical, and sustainable solutions to reduce global poverty and injustice.

In recognition of its firm commitment to and strategic focus on advancing women's social, political and economic empowerment, the Coady Institute launched the International Centre for Women's Leadership in 2011. The Centre is a unique focal point for quality education, partnership-building, and action-oriented research on women's leadership and empowerment both in Canada and around the world.

The Coady Institute's partnership with Canadian Women's Foundation builds on its long and distinguished history.

For more information, visit
<http://coady.stfx.ca/themes/women/cwfli/>

“The Leadership Institute's grant activities provided me with the knowledge and capacity to confidently **lead organizational change** and to teach others how to **achieve effective change.**”

Graduate of the Canadian Women's Foundation Leadership Institute



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“There is no greater force for change, for peace,
for justice and democracy, for inclusive economic
growth than a world of **empowered women.**”

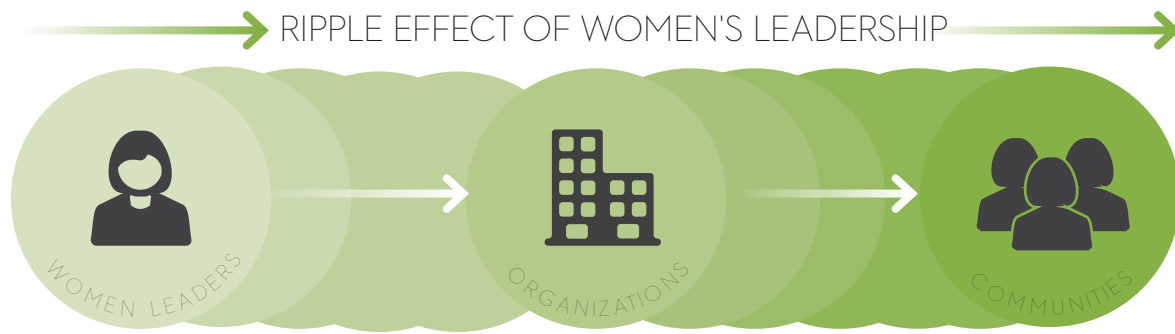
Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka,
UN Under-Secretary-General and
Executive Director of UN Women

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Women's Foundation is a leading voice on the issue of women's economic development in Canada. Through our Economic Development Fund, the Foundation supports community programs that focus on micro-enterprise, self-employment, skilled trades and job training, to help women and their families transition out of poverty, and into confidence and leadership.

In 2012, the Foundation partnered with St. Francis Xavier University's Coady International Institute to launch the **Canadian Women's Foundation Leadership Institute** as a three-year pilot program.

The vision was a women's leadership institute that would have a profound multiplier effect that rippled out from women leaders themselves, into their organizations, and to the women and broader communities their organizations serve.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report summarizes the evaluation data gathered throughout the Leadership Institute pilot program from 2012 to 2015, highlighting the Institute's approach, successes, and lessons learned. It also touches on the plans for the next phase of this unique, innovative, and much-needed women's leadership development program.

THE NEED: CULTIVATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF WOMEN LEADERS

Meet Maya. She wants to change the world.

That's why she became a social worker, and why she works at a non-profit organization that helps newcomer women to find jobs and plan their careers. Maya thrives on helping women to overcome barriers and achieve economic independence—particularly since poverty rates are so high in the community she serves.

She is full of ideas. She wants to help her organization reach more women, secure more funding, partner with other organizations, and launch a new job-placement program. But she's not sure how to begin translating her ideas into reality.

With some training and mentorship, she has definite leadership potential. But Maya's organization—unlike a large corporation—doesn't have the resources to support professional development. If anything, her small team constantly struggles to do more with less.

In fact, government and other funding for women's services has decreased, leaving Canada's non-profit sector, and women's organizations in particular, more vulnerable than ever. This lack of funding

imperils the sector's ability to develop the next generation of leaders, which is crucial to protecting and advancing women's economic development.

While there is growing awareness of the need to support women's leadership, women in Canada continue to be under-represented in both professional and political arenas.

- Women hold 33% of senior management roles.¹
- Women hold 12% of corporate board seats.²
- Women hold 26% of the seats in Canada's House of Commons.

The Canadian Women's Foundation believes strongly in the power of grassroots organizations to spark social change, but they can only continue to do this work when women like Maya ascend into leadership roles. **The Canadian Women's Foundation Leadership Institute supports these emerging women leaders in Canada's non-profit sector, and promotes a broader, more inclusive approach to leadership.**

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP

In both the non-profit and for-profit world, modern leaders understand that supporting diverse leadership is win-win: it improves business performance while building gender and racial equality, and a stronger society for all. According to a *Global Leadership Forecast*³ from Development Dimensions International, high-performing businesses tend to have more women in leadership roles: 37% of leaders in higher-performing companies are women, compared to 19% of leaders in lower-ranked companies. In *Why Diversity Matters*⁴, a report from McKinsey & Company, companies that rank highest for gender diversity are shown to be 15% more likely to have above-average financial returns; those that rank highest for racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to be higher performers.

1. Statistics Canada, Table 282-0009 Labour Force Survey Estimates. <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&retrLang=eng&id=2820009&paSer=&pattern=&stByVal=2&pl=1&p2=38&tabMode=dataTable&csid=>, 2015.

2. Canadian Securities Administrators. http://www.osc.gov.on.ca/documents/en/Securities-Category5/sn_20160928_58-308_staff-review-women-on-boards.pdf, September 2016.

3. Development Dimensions International. *Global Leadership Forecast*. http://www.ddiworld.com/DDI/media/trend-research/global-leadership-forecast-2014-2015_tr_ddi.pdf?ext=.pdf, 2014/15.

4. McKinsey and Company. *Why Diversity Matters*. <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters>, 2015.

THE PROGRAM: A TAILORED AND INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP

The Canadian Women's Foundation Leadership Institute offers an intensive one-year program that is tailored to meet the needs of women working in the non-profit sector.

The leadership development training focuses on three key pillars:

- Personal leadership skills development
- Organizational development
- Community development



The key elements of the program include:

- A **residential in-class learning phase** at the Coady Institute at the beginning of the program (which lasted nine days during the pilot phase)
- Individual leadership **self-assessments**
- Participants develop an **organizational leadership action plan** within each woman's organization and implement it throughout the year
- About three days per month of **applied learning** and action, including online distance learning modules and webinars, with peer-to-peer sharing and learning
- **Individual and group** assignments
- Working with **mentors and coaches**
- A **final in-class residential component** at the end of the program helps participants integrate all the learning elements, facilitate broader discussions and hone their leadership action plans.

WHAT MAKES THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE UNIQUE?

The Leadership Institute's approach is rooted in both the Foundation's and Coady's overall missions and visions. No other players in Canada have demonstrated this substantial and targeted investment in women's leadership in the non-profit sector. Several factors make this program unique:

- **Focus on the non-profit women and girls' sector**, which ultimately impacts families, neighbourhoods, and communities.
- **Inclusive model of women's leadership:** See "What is Inclusive Leadership?" below.
- **Comprehensive program design** covers individual, organizational, and community leadership for a multiplier effect.
- **Innovative curriculum and learning model** combines best practices and cutting-edge adult education principles in all learning styles.
- **Mentorship and coaching:** Established women leaders are matched to participants to provide leadership role-modelling, as well as specific technical assistance where needed.
- **Organizational capacity-building:** Each woman receives a \$1,500 organizational capacity-building grant to help implement her leadership action plan and enhance her organization's capacity. Each employer matches the grant, doubling its value to \$3,000.
- **Alumni network:** The creation of an ever-growing alumni network for graduates to support and learn from each other, and to collaborate on sector-wide projects. This is a network of leaders poised to mobilize regional and nation-wide responses to emerging issues and opportunities.

WHAT IS INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP?

One of the barriers to diversity in leadership is the notion that leaders need to fit a traditional "command-and-control" stereotype. The Leadership Institute advocates for an inclusive model of leadership. An inclusive leader is one who:

- Emphasizes "power with" rather than "power over"
- Collaborates with and listens deeply to others
- Is committed to participatory leadership and respects non-traditional, non-hierarchical ways of leading
- Embraces diversity and reaches out to include the most marginalized voices
- Shares knowledge and empowers those around them to reach their full potential
- Uses their voice and influence to create positive social change

WHO GRADUATED FROM THE INSTITUTE?

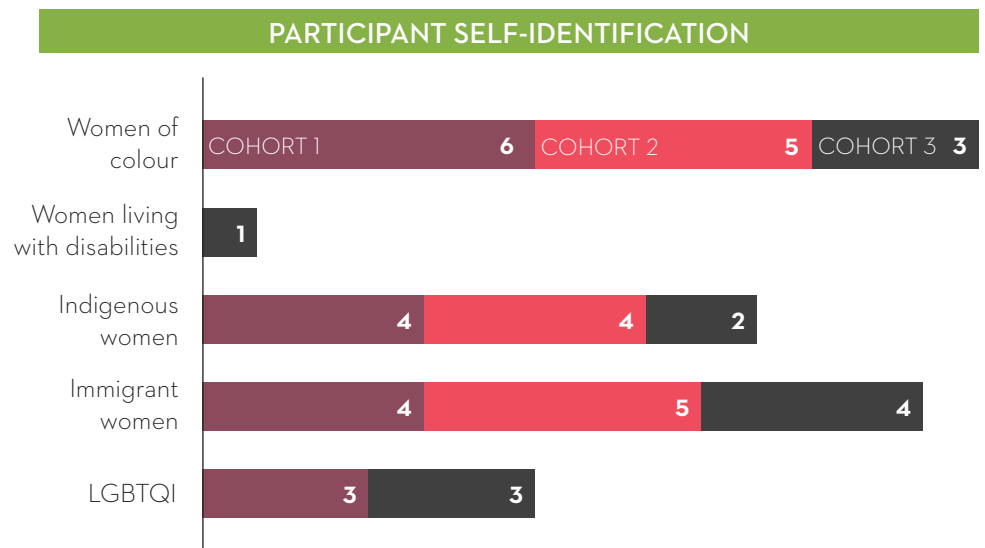
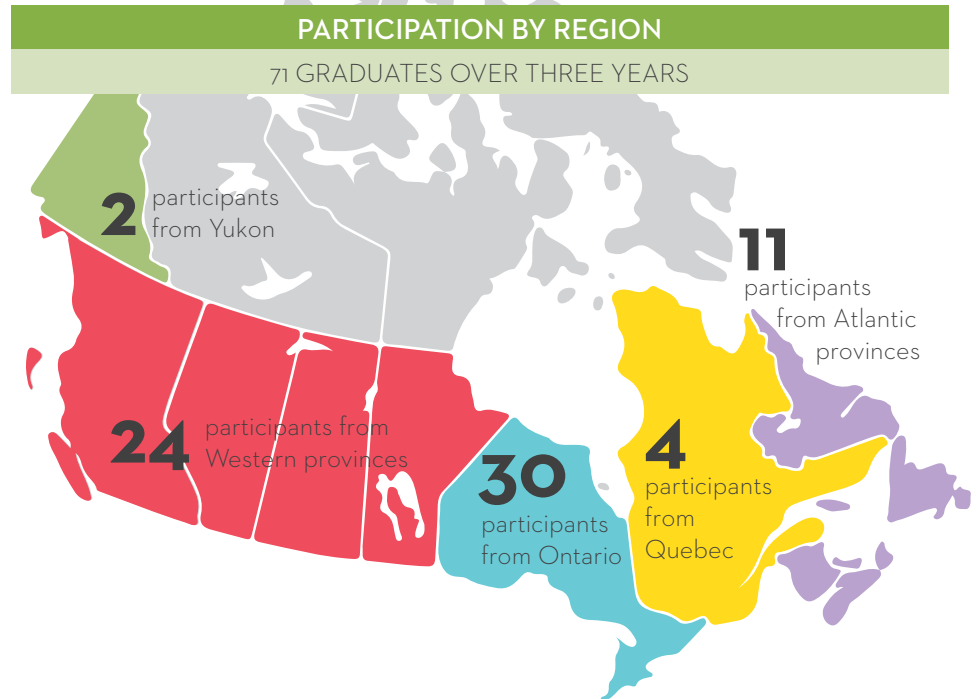
Over the three years of the Leadership Institute's pilot program, 71 dynamic and diverse women from across Canada's non-profit sector graduated.

All of the participants came to the program from organizations that support social and economic change for women in their communities. The participants were chosen because of their willingness and potential to take on leadership roles.

During the pilot program, the Leadership Institute succeeded in reaching women from many backgrounds, age groups, cultures, experiences, organizations, and regions of the country. About 20% of the graduates came from rural areas, where access to professional development opportunities is even more limited than in urban areas. The charts to the right show the diversity of the pilot program participants.

These alumni gained valuable leadership skills, while building their organizations' capacities, resilience and strength.

In addition, more than 50 mentors and coaches participated in the program, and now form part of the Leadership Institute's network of leaders and champions for change.

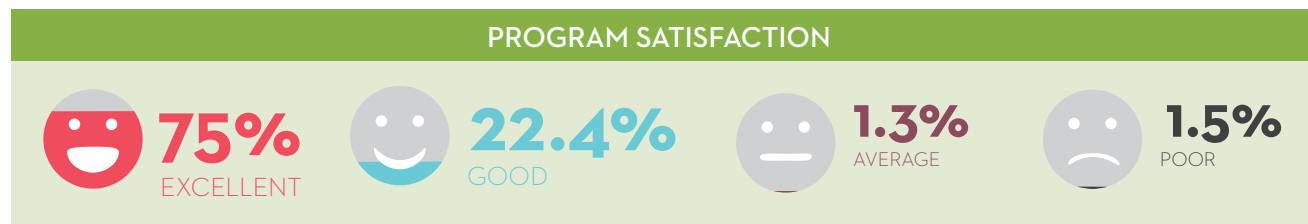


INSTITUTE IMPACT: A SNAPSHOT OF SUCCESS

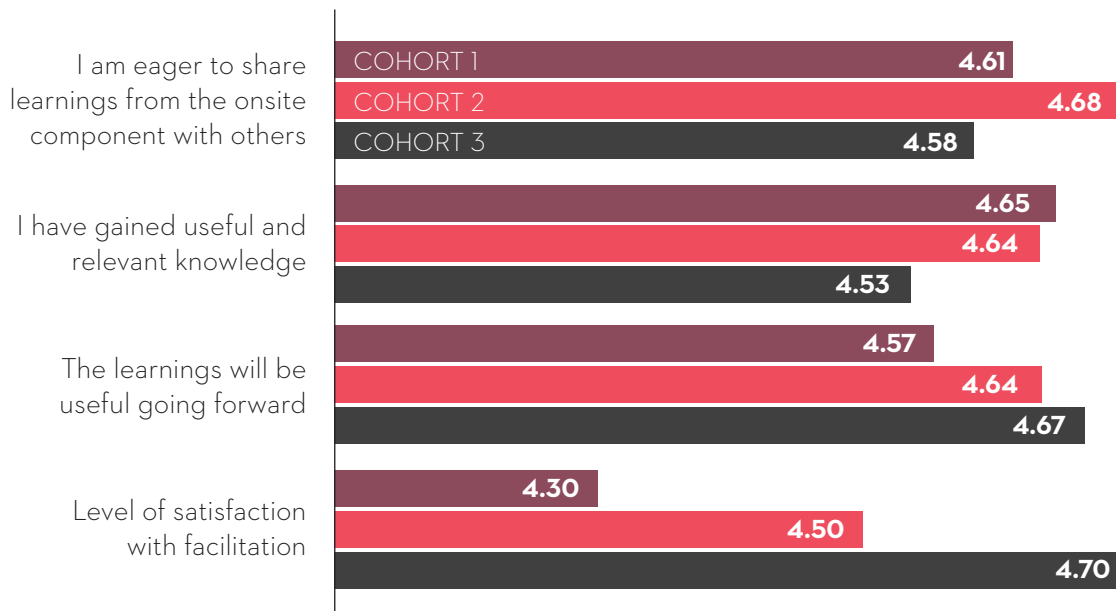
Transformative. Life-changing. That’s how graduates described their experience in the Leadership Institute. Both informal and formal evaluation data underline the impact of the Leadership Institute on women’s lives, their organizations, and communities.

Feedback on the program was overwhelmingly positive; incredibly, **97.4% of the graduates rated their experience as either good or excellent**, with 75% rating it as excellent.

Equally important, participants also found the content to be useful and relevant to their work. The following charts show the high level of program satisfaction, as well as how participants ranked their learnings in the program.



OUTCOMES ACROSS COHORTS (RATING OUT OF 5)



IMPACT ON THREE LEVELS

Keeping in mind that the Leadership Institute focuses on three key areas of leadership—individual, organizational, and community—participants reported significant gains in each one:



Individual Leadership

Some of the personal leadership gains included:

- Improved knowledge and management skills
- Increased confidence, as well as negotiation and conflict-resolution skills
- Opportunities to apply leadership skills and step into new leadership roles



Organizational Leadership

At the organizational level, participants noted their ability to act as catalysts for change, and to launch new initiatives using their capacity-building grants. They reported:

- Increased ability to make or meet strategic goals
- Ability to implement succession planning for staff
- Creation of fund and resource development strategies, resources, and tools
- Recognition of opportunities for collaborations or partnerships



Community Leadership

While it's still early for measuring the impact at this level, there are initial signs of success, including:

- One graduate initiated a partnership strategy that has enhanced coordination of employment support services in Burlington, Ontario.
- Another graduate helped to launch change-management training for member organizations across Ontario.
- One graduate has taken steps to provide family mediation services across a large region of the Yukon (see Graduate Profiles: Katherine Alexander, on Page 8).

GRADUATE PROFILES

While evaluation data capture the impact of the Leadership Institute on its participants, the following graduate profiles help to complete the picture. They vividly illustrate how women across Canada have used their Leadership Institute training to effect positive change within their organizations and beyond.

Katherine Alexander, Executive Director of the Elizabeth Fry Society,

Whitehorse, Yukon. Katherine used her capacity-building grant to source additional funding so she could complete a Family Mediation Certificate through the Justice Institute. She is taking steps to steer her organization toward offering much-needed legal services in criminal and family mediation, with the goal of increasing access to justice, lowering incarceration rates, and de-escalating domestic conflict among the primarily Indigenous population the organization serves.



Indu Krishnamurthy, Assistant Director of ACEM (Montreal Community Loan Fund),

Montreal, Quebec. While participating in the Leadership Institute, Indu was named coordinator for a government project that provides micro-credit to immigrants with professional qualifications. She says the leadership skills learned at the Institute helped support her professional growth. Four years later, the micro-credit project has provided more than 315 loans for 260 people, with 30% of clients having acquired their Canadian accreditation, and nearly 50% now working in their field or a related one.



Debbie Scallion, Respectful Relationships Coordinator

for the Quesnel Women's Resource Centre, Quesnel, BC. Debbie developed an anti-oppression, rights-based program for children in grade school. Starting with the basic principles of respect and communities of care, her goal was to roll this program out throughout the school board region. She received support from both the teachers' union and parents.



Kendra Strong-Garcia, Senior Director of Programs, YWCA Regina, Saskatchewan.

Kendra focused her project on the creation of anti-oppression training aimed to end violence and racism against First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. She ran the pilot in her organization and will share it with other YWCAs across the country.



WHY THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE WORKS:

In their evaluations, graduates noted the following elements as critical to the program's success:

- ✓ The **three-pronged leadership approach**: individual, organizational, and community.
- ✓ The leadership action plan, which resulted in **tailored, flexible and active learning**.
- ✓ The tremendous value of **connecting** with other participants who had similar needs, programming interests and **aspirations** for the sector. This opportunity for peer learning was seen to be central to the program's success.
- ✓ Depth of shared knowledge pertaining to **women-centered leadership** and to the sector, with a special focus on **gender analysis**.
- ✓ **Distance learning**, which allowed participants to apply their organizational leadership training on the job.
- ✓ **Expertise** of the facilitation and program team (both Coady and the Canadian Women's Foundation).
- ✓ The Foundation's support on several levels, including **grant-giving** and connections.
- ✓ The graduates' sense that they secured the confidence, resources and experiences to carry out their work as **change agents**, and to step up into leadership roles.



“Your program not only boosted our program, and our relations with the community, but also the morale of our staff participant. She went from having very little understanding of community economic development, to developing a full-blown initiative that engaged more than 50 community members!

Thank you so much for such an incredible program!”

Executive Director of a
Leadership Institute graduate

WHAT'S NEXT? THE FUTURE OF THE CANADIAN WOMEN'S FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

In its three-year pilot phase, the Canadian Women's Foundation Leadership Institute delivered a one-of-a-kind program with transformative outcomes. It is tried and true.

The Institute is set to embark on its next phase and continue to realize its vision of exponential impact. Based on evaluation feedback, the program will be even more finely tuned to enhance women's learning, and maximize organizational and community impact. The next group of students will begin their leadership journeys in October, 2018, with two other groups to follow in subsequent years.

When we invest in strong women leaders, those women will mobilize and lead change for women and girls. With the collective commitment of its partners and supporters, the Canadian Women's Foundation Leadership Institute will continue to build on its success and impact.

This will result in a growing network of resilient, dynamic, and action-oriented women leaders from coast to coast to coast. Their leadership will help transform the socio-economic status of women, families and communities for the benefit of all Canadians.



We are ready to
**make change
happen** for
ourselves and
for women in
Canada.”

Graduate of the Canadian
Women's Foundation
Leadership Institute



For more information about the Canadian Women's Foundation Leadership Institute Pilot Program, visit canadianwomen.org