

Women's Political Leadership Programme 2017-2019

Final Evaluation report

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Edith Emily Mudogo, Tanzania, former participant in Women Political Leadership programme. Photo: ICLD



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List of abbreviations used in the report

POL - The Political Leadership Programme

GMLD – Gender mainstreaming Local Development

BHCLI – Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative

ITP – International training programme

ICLD – International Centre for Local Democracy

SALAR – Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions

Sida - The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

Summary

The purpose and objective of this evaluation has been:

- to provide ICLD with input and reflections on the structure and content of their international training programme “Political leadership programme” 2017-2019.
- to through semi structured interviews with participants, mentors and other relevant actors provide ICLD with reflections and suggestions on improvements for future arrangements of the programme.
- to through a comparative analysis between the Political Leadership Programme and two other similar programmes, one internal international training programme (ITP) at ICLD and one external leadership programme, provide ICLD with reflections and improvements for future arrangements of the programme.
- to provide ICLD with a way to assess to what extent the programme is relevant to its stakeholders and to ICLDs own goals and objectives.

The conclusion of the evaluators is that the POL4 and 5 is achieving its objectives and is relevant to ICLD’s goals and to the priorities and policies of its stakeholders. We also conclude that the programme has a substantial impact on the participants and the mentors in their roles as political leaders. We do however see that the layout of the programme could be improved for greater impact and to strengthen the sustainability to make sure the benefits last over time.

Interactive teaching

Based on the interviews with both participants and mentors the evaluators suggest ICLD implement more interactive teaching-sessions such as group activities, discussions, games, or quizzes. A more interactive learning dynamic could be a way to make the participant more engaged in the learning experience and make for a more interesting and memorable way of learning. The evaluators would suggest that ICLD look at the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative (BHCLI) case-based learning sessions and how they use real-life cases as educational material to develop the participants leadership capabilities.

Strategic issue – personal and political

Because of the difficulty pinpointing institutional or organisational change based on participation in the POL we suggest the programme not only include a personal strategic issue

but also a political one. The political strategical issue would focus on change the participant wants to achieve in her local political engagement and would make it easier to make practical real-life change in her local context.

Discussion and dialog

Because of the unique opportunity of having many abled female politicians from all over the world gather we would suggest ICLD make more room for peer learning and opportunities for dialog and sharing experiences. During the interviews with the participants, they put a lot of emphasis on networking and the importance of meeting other female politicians from around the world. More interaction and focus on dialog with other participants were therefore highly requested during the interviews.

Study visits

The greatest impact on the participants seems to have been seeing how things works in each country and later having the opportunity to have a discussion on that experience. This is equally true when talking to the mentors who also seemed most affected by what they experienced during the study visits abroad. The evaluators would therefore suggest that the workshops include more study visits and trips around the city in which the workshop takes place.

Preparation

The evaluators suggest that ICLD provide the mentors with an introductory guide or hold an introductory meeting to make sure the mentors are fully informed and prepared for their role in the programme, especially on how their roles differ from the ICLD staff. We also suggest that the ICLD make sure that the participants have a comprehensive understanding of the limitations and purpose of the mentorship and the mentor's role and assignment throughout the programme.

Data and information

Information was talked about during the interview in association with element such as empowerment, equality, and discourse. Information can be a tool for power in politics in many ways. Withholding or obscuring information can hinder political sustainability in a country and be a sign of corruption. The evaluators therefore suggest that the programme implement more learning sessions about information- and data gathering. Here, ICLD can look at BHCLI and the way they implement data and information in their programme.

Male participation

The evaluators suggest that ICLD further assess the possible advantages and disadvantages of having male participants attending the programme. We would especially suggest ICLD to reflect upon whether the benefits of the male participants presence outweigh the restrictive effect their presence had on the female participants.

Continuous evaluations

Because of the amount of time passed since the interviewed participants attended the programme, they had difficulties giving detailed or specific examples of the programmes content. The evaluators would therefore suggest that ICLD let the participants give continuous feedback after attending the different workshops. One way that the ICLD has already improved the evaluation process is by implementing a “baseline” in later arrangements of the programme.

Disposition

The second chapter of the report include an introduction to the evaluation, its purpose, goals, and the overall process. The chapter also presents an overview of the purpose, goals, content, and target group of the Political Leadership Programme. The third chapter contains a description of the methods used in collecting the empirical data which makes up the results in the evaluation such as selection of participants, fall-out and structure of the interviews. The fourth and fifth chapter present the results and findings based on the empirical data collected. The fourth chapter presents the results from the semi-structured interviews with participants and mentors. The fifth chapter contains an introduction of both the internal ICLD international training programme and the external Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, each followed by a comparative analysis between the programme and the Political Leadership programme. The sixth, and final, chapter includes a short analysis by the evaluators on the relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and contribution of the programme followed by suggested improvements for future arrangements of the programme.

Introduction

This report is an evaluation of the ICLD international training programme “Political Leadership Programme 2016-2019”. The initiative to evaluate the programme arose from a discussion between ICLD project leader Therese Bergström and associate professor Agneta Blom. The questions to be answered in the evaluation and what material to include in the work, has been discussed with Agneta Blom, but finally defined and settled by ICLD.

Blom is engaged in the programme as a lecturer on democracy. Previously Blom has also been involved in the evaluated programme as a mentor. During the period 2014-2020 she held the position as Chair of the City Council in Örebro municipality. Because of that Blom has a pre-understanding of the programme, its objectives, and how it has been conducted in practice. To be sure the material for the evaluation was collected without a bias because of this pre-understanding, all interviews and preliminary analysis of the results have been carried out by research assistant Ylva Kemmer.

The objective and purpose of this evaluation is to provide ICLD with input and reflections on how well the objectives and goals of the programme has been met. It is also to provide ICLD with suggestions on improvements for future arrangements of the programme. The material used in this evaluation are documents provided by ICLD, SALAR and the Bloomberg Harvard Academy and semi structured interviews with participants, mentors and other actors involved in POL4 and POL5. The interviews focus primarily on the participants experience of the programme and their perceived usefulness of the knowledge, methods and tools included in the programme in their everyday work activities. One of the goals with the evaluation is to learn how the programme has contributed to specific action or change, not only for the participant themselves, but also in their local government.¹

The purpose of the evaluation

Evaluating the ICLD’s ITP’s offers a way to systematically assess how well the goals and objectives of the programmes are met. An evaluation will therefore provide ICLD with information on their programme’s effectiveness and impact but also suggestions on what improvements could be made in upcoming arrangements of the programme.² The evaluation will also provide ICLD with a way to assess to what extent the programme is relevant to its stakeholders and to ICLDs own goals and objectives.

¹ ToR Evaluation of PoL 4 and 5

² ToR Evaluation of PoL 4 and 5

Evaluation Process

The evaluation is based on documents provided by the ICLD and SALAR containing information about the programme structure, content, participants, and mentors. ICLD provided the evaluators with a list of participants of which 12 were initially selected and contacted about participating through agreeing on virtual semi-structured interview. SALAR provided the evaluators with information about the selection of the mentors and a list of 9 mentors of which four were interviewed. The evaluators also interviewed representatives at Harvard for information on their leadership programme and representatives at ICLD and SALAR for additional information on the POL. These representatives also provided the evaluators with information by sharing documents with information on their area.

Overviewing the Political Leadership programme

The Political Leadership programme 4 and 5 is an 18-month long international training programme (ITP) with participants from countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe. The ICLD is commissioned by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) to offer international training programmes as a method to support institutional capacity development on the local level in low- and middle-income countries.³

The programme structure and content

In the initial stages of the programme the participants will each choose a strategic issue which will be a continuous project the whole duration of the programme. The strategic issue should focus on improving a skill in the participant such as leadership abilities or communication skills. The programme is divided into six phases with three physical meet ups in different participating countries, one of which is a two-week visit to Sweden.

³ Local Political Leaders – capacitating women in politics 2016

Figure 1. The six phases of the programme⁴

Phase one	The inception phase include dialog between the participants and ICLD staff about the expected outcome of the programme. The participants will also be asked to identify a strategic issue of importance.
Phase two	This phase consists of the visit to Sweden and includes study visits to Swedish municipalities where the mentors will help to provide theoretical and practical examples of the Swedish model of governance and of Swedish gender policies.
Phase three and five	These are the phases in between the workshops and includes interaction between participants and resource persons from ICLD in working on the participants chosen strategic issue and handing in written reports.
Phase four and six	These phases include workshops in different participating countries, the first one will be used to reflect upon progress made and follow up on lessons learned. The final workshop will include presentations and workshops reflecting on the outcome of the programme.

The programme purpose and goal

The goal of all ICLD's training programmes is combatting poverty through the strengthening of local democracy. ICLD takes a multidimensional view of poverty, implying that poverty not only means lack of material resources, but also lack of power, voice and respect for human rights, lack of opportunities and choice, and/or lack of human security. To this end all parts of the training in the programme is based on supporting and implementing local democracy through the strengthening of ICLD's core values: equity, participation, transparency, and accountability. All ICLD training programmes are expected to increase the participants organisational capacities related to these core themes. Since local government officials and politicians are increasingly identifies as key players in development and democratization the Political Leadership Programme aims to achieve its objectives by

⁴ ICLD application form: The international training programme "Local political leaders" 2016

strengthening and empowering the participant herself. The programme aims to provide the following changes in the participants:

- Empower the participant with improved leadership skills.
- Help the participant to fully utilize the power and influence of her position.
- Strengthen the participants role as a role model to encourage political participation among marginalized groups.
- Give the participants access to a network of women in similar positions.

Programme target group

The programme is aimed at politicians, all women, whom at the time of the programme hold an elected seat in local government in countries where ICLD offers ITP's. The applicants should hold key positions in local governments such as local government officials, politicians at regional or local level, or representativeness from civil society organisations, and be actively involved in strategic decision making. The applicants will also need to have sufficient skills in the English language since the programme is organised and conducted in English.

The mentors

The mentors are Swedish politicians, all women, chosen in collaboration with SALAR (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions). All mentors have/should have participated in SALAR's leadership or networking training programmes where they get the chance to reflect upon their leadership abilities. When SALAR choose mentors, they also take into consideration the mentors party affiliation and their assignments geographical location to assure that there is diversity amongst the mentors.⁵

Method and material

Contact with participants – participation and fall-out

The ICLD staff provided the evaluators with names and contact information to the participants that they selected. Factors that they took into consideration for the selection was to have a variation on what part of the world the participants came from and their skills and understanding of the English language. ICLD specifically wanted the empirical material of the

⁵ Programme overview ITP: Political leadership programme "POL 7 – 9, 2021 – 2023"

[Förtroendevalda är mentor i internationellt ledarprogram - SKR](#)

Interview with Lena Lindgren (SALAR)

evaluation to be based on interviews with two participants from Asia, five from Africa and five from Eastern Europe and Turkey.

The initial contact with the participant was through an introductory email including information about the objectives of the evaluation. The email was sent to 12 participants, and it clarified how the interviews would be structured and carried out and it included suggestions on preferable dates on which the interviews could take place. It also clarified that even though ICLD provided the evaluators with names of participants their participation would be presented anonymously in the report.

The first week after the participants were initially contacted only four participants replied, all of which expressed that they wanted to participate. Because of time limitations for the evaluations, the evaluators decided to contact another three participants. About two weeks after the initial email eight participants had answered. All of them wanted to participate, but many had not replied with a specific time when the interview was supposed to take place. At this time, the evaluators started contacting those participants who were active on certain social media such as Facebook. Within about three weeks after the initial contact, eight participants had been interviewed. Some of the participants who initially had agreed on participating stopped answering emails while planning a date for the interviews and some did not attend the scheduled Zoom-meetings. One participant cancelled the interview because of high spread of Covid-19 in her municipality at the time of the evaluation. Two participants were contacted on WhatsApp, one did not respond and the other one explained that she unfortunately had had a death in her family and could not attend. Four weeks after the initial email was sent to the participants the evaluation was still missing three interviews with participants from Africa. The evaluators asked ICLD for additional names of participants from Africa and received four names and their email addresses. None of these four answered the initial email and did not appear to be active on either Facebook or WhatsApp. The evaluators have during the whole process continuously send additional emails and messages reminding the participants of the booked dates for interviews but with little success. The Evaluation therefore was not able to include interviews from 12 participants which ICLD requested in their terms of reference and was missing interviews from three African participants in the preliminary report. The evaluators recognize that the fall-out leads to the evaluation lacking proper representation, especially when most of the participants attending the POL4 and 5 were from Africa.

The evaluators tried to contact more African participants before the final hand in of the report and contacted another 18 participants via email, three of which had outdated email addresses and five were also contacted on WhatsApp and two on Messenger. Out of these 18, five responded and three expressed that they wanted to participate. However, one of these three participants rescheduled a couple of times and finally replied that she did not have the time. The second one turned out to have been the secretary of the actual participant of the

programme and she explained that the participant that the evaluators were looking for was deceased since a few months back. The last participant was interviewed on WhatsApp which makes the total of three participants from Africa.

In total the evaluators contacted 26 African participants via email and another two on messenger. Seven of these were also contacted on WhatsApp.

Figure 2. Participant geographical affiliation

Eastern Europe and Turkey	Afrika	Asia
Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
Participant 5	Participant 4	Participant 9
Participant 6	Participant 10	
Participant 7		
Participant 8		

The interviews – purpose and objectives

The questions asked during the interviews are based on the Terms of Reference presented by the ICLD:

- What did the participants learn from participating in the programme?
- To what extent did the interviewed participant feel that the programme met their expectation?
- In what way has the knowledge been useful to them as well as their organization and/or citizen in their mission as political leaders?
- What are the success factors and barriers experienced by the participants to achieve local democracy?
- How did the Swedish mentors contribute to the achievement of the programme goals?

All these aspects were accounted for in the questions asked during the interviews as well as questions on how these can be improved.

The interviews – structure and content

The interviews with the participants were all done on Zoom, they were all in English and were all recorded. The interviews were semi-structured and based on an interview guide with different themes related to the programme such as: background, application process, expectations before enrolling, experience of the programme, and overall thoughts on how to improve local democracy. The chosen method was qualitative semi-structured interview which made it possible for the interviewer to ask follow-up questions when an interesting or relevant issue came up and made for a more in-depth conversation.

Contact with the mentors – participation and fall-out

To get a greater understanding of the mentor's role in the programme the evaluators also set out to interview four of the mentors from POL4 and POL5. The objective with the interviews was to learn more about how the Swedish mentors contributes to the achievements of the programme goals and what the mentor's thought could be improved.⁶ The mentors interviewed were chosen in collaboration with SALAR who provided the evaluators with a list of nine mentors of which the evaluators choose four. The evaluators initial choice of mentors was based on their assignment's geographical location in Sweden and their party affiliation to make sure that there was variation in the selection. Of the four initial mentors contacted three replied and wanted to participate. The evaluators chose to contact one additional mentor from the SALAR list, who agreed to participate. The participation of the last mentor contacted meant that there were two mentors with the same party affiliation.

The interview – structure and content

The interviews with the mentors were all semi-structured interviews on Zoom and they were all recorded. Like with the participants the interviews were based on themes which meant that the mentors could speak freely about their experiences of the programme. The interviews with the mentors were all conducted in Swedish. All quotes by mentors presented in the next chapter are translated by the evaluators.

⁶ ToR Evaluation of PoL 4 and 5

Results - interviews

Disposition

The two following chapters will present the results of the evaluation. The first chapter will present the results from the interviews with the selected participants and mentors from the POL4 and the POL5. The following chapter will present the results from the comparisons between the POL and one internal ITP at ICLD and one external training programme. Each chapter is categories into main themes and sub themes which each represent a topic which was especially emphasised during the interviews by the participants, mentors or/and by the evaluators.

How the participants come to join the programme

The participants in the evaluation were all active politicians while attending the POL, most held seats in their local city councils during the time of the programme. Many of the participants were specifically involved in women's issues or other social issues. Some of the participants expressed their activism for human rights and some also talked about being actively involved in environmental- and sustainability issues and projects. All the interviewed participants therefore met the qualification necessary to partake in the POL. It is however difficult to determine to what extent the participants chosen to partake in the programme had the capacity to implement organizational or institutional change in their region or to what extent the participant actively could influence political decision-making. What we focus on instead is to examine how the participants forwarded their knowledge and experience to other people in their organization and what initiatives they helped develop after attending the programme.

Expectations of the programme

Self-confidence and public speaking

Almost all the participants in the evaluation expressed problems relating to shyness and having problems expressing themselves, especially in a public setting, which is a big part of most political positions. One of the participants spoke about how women in her country are scared or ashamed to speak up and how she also struggled with this. "I needed to develop myself and to say proudly that 'Yes, I am a leader, I am equal, and my opinions are to be counted for'." (Participant 8). The need for empowerment and courage when speaking to colleagues as well as speaking in different public settings were both common reasons given by the participants on why they applied to the programme.

In my political work I became insecure [...] I felt alone, and I tried to google some information about how I can find a programme that is especially about women empowerment and the ICLD came up. (Participant 5)

They express the need to find ways to assert themselves in their political positions. “I needed a kind of support to teach me how become a voice that is listened to” (Participant 8). They also expressed a need to be taken seriously as equals to their male counterparts.

Back then, I really needed to learn how to assert myself as a female politician and that’s what I was lacking, because sometimes when you have a conversation with your male colleagues you don’t even understand what they are talking about because they develop some sort of a special language amongst themselves and since you don’t understand you cannot react. You become more isolated from politics, in order to prevent that I really wanted to attend a programme. (Participant 6)

Networking

Many participants expressed feeling lonely as women in a very male-dominated field and in need of a community to support them. Some of the participants were the only member of their local city council who was female. Many expressed a need for a network of women political leaders from whom they could get support and advice, who understand their struggle and support them on their political journey. One participant answered this when asked why she applied to the programme: “At home you have your family and friends, but no one is in the same position and understands you and the problems you face.” (Participant 7). Other participants explain:

I wanted to [...] have friends in other countries, women like me, to build this network of women in politics. (Participant 1)

The insecurity that I felt was about standing alone in politics and the lack of women in politics which makes you feel a lot of pressure which can be very crushing. You have no one to share your problems with so I wanted to surround myself with women, but I didn’t know how to do that. (Participant 5)

Many of the participants also expressed a need to learn how to get more women involved in politics in their countries. In many of the participating countries few women are involved in politics and some of the participants explained how these women are not always supportive of each other. One participant talked about the need for women to take more action:

We are always waiting for someone else to fix the things that we need to fix. We always say ‘we need this’ and ‘we want this’, but people don’t take action and don’t engage in politics. It is hard to convince people to do engage, especially women. (Participant 7)

She later continues:

[...] it is not just about getting women to vote. It is about them getting involved in politics. Because nowadays even if you don’t want to be involved in politics, the politics is engaged with you. (Participant 7)

A few of the participants were new in their political assignments and explained the importance of building a network of women in similar positions to exchange experiences and advice. This support, they explained, is not something that exist in a natural way in their countries where it is not self-evident that people should work together and share knowledge for the benefit of the community. In their countries, they explained, people who are involved in politics are driven by ambition, money or advancing their businesses rather than helping the community or working towards democratization.

The effect and experience of the programme

Self-confidence and speaking up

Many of the participants spoke about how the programme was empowering in the respect that it helped them with their self-confidence and public speaking. One participant on what she learned from the POL: “What I have learned is definitely to value myself and I needed that.” (Participant 5). Many of the participants explained how the programme helped them to enhance their self-esteem and how they now are more confident when they speak.

We gained a lot of self-confidence because I don’t think that we had it at the beginning [...] but being among such strong personalities and women as political leaders and being recognized by others as a political leader of course gives you self-confidence. (Participant 8)

After the training I have improved very much because [...] if I am having an opinion or something to raise either in a meeting or in a discussion, I am just free to express

myself. But before the training, even though I know I can defend, or I can argue I was just too scared to stand up and express myself. (Participant 2)

[...] I was told by my managers and other experienced politicians that one of the first steps to fight against something is to speak about it not to be afraid to raise the topic [...] and that was what I did. I was not afraid to speak during sessions, I wrote posts on facebook-pages, I did interviews with mass media (Participant 1).

The participants explain how the programme empowers them by encouraging them and by practical advice. One participant explains how she got to see her problem with public speaking differently through the help of the ICLD trainers:

The programme also gave me concrete solutions like; prepare yourself. 'If you want to speak but you don't want to be nervous then read, prepare yourself!' It was obvious but you still need someone to tell you that. (Participant 5).

She explains how the programme gave her a lot of practical advice on public speaking which she still remembers and uses today. Another participant explains how the programme has been useful to her in both her private life and in her political assignment. She learned how to better communicate with people and how to better ask questions, this has led to her taking on more speaking roles in her municipality.

One participant specifically pointed out how the training in the programme had improved her leadership skills and how the knowledge she gained "[...] removed my hesitations." (Participant 3). She continued:

This training enhanced my capabilities and cultivated a lot of leadership skills in me [...]. [...] it gave me skills on how to hold meetings, how to bring people in the meetings and how to put forward the agenda and what the rights and duties of the people in the local government are. (Participant 3).

She explains how the training experienced and the knowledge gained during the programme made her a stronger and less hesitant politician. The importance of access to information and knowledge is something emphasised by the participants, as it can be used as a tool for power in politics. Gaining information about certain things e.g., human rights or gender equality, during the programme was therefore given as examples of tools of empowerment for the participants. It was a way for them to overcome their hesitation while discussing a political argument or speaking up on certain issues.

Networking and interaction

All the participants put emphasis on the importance of networking and getting to know and talk to women in similar situations, both mentors and other participants. It is referred to as a great way to evolve, by learning through hearing about other people's experiences and knowledge.

Networking is very important for all people, because if we don't network, we cannot learn anything. [...] where we are lacking, we can go forward and whatever difficulties we are having we can communicate with each other and we can meet those obstacles. (Participant 3)

When I came back, I introduced some of the things that I had learned, and I have also strengthened my network. I am still communicating with some of the political leaders that I have met through ICLD. We communicate, find out how each of us are doing. They also call me when they have some challenges, seeking my opinion. (Participant 4).

The networking element of the programme was stated by the participants, to be inspiring and they realised the value of having people around you who are supportive and understands the struggle of being a woman in politics.

This programme influenced me, and I understood that to know girls who shares your values and who understands what it is like to be a woman in politics is very important, to combine your efforts. (Participant 1)

I must say I learned a lot from this programme, especially while interacting with other colleagues who were politicians, finding out the way they are doing things and how they were dealing with their challenges. (Participant 4).

Networking is also a tool for the participants to feel less alone and to have people around them who support them and encourage them in their political assignment. "Even though we are from different parts of the world we face the same problems and that makes you feel stronger." (Participant 7). She later explains why networking is an important part of the programme: "We get courage in this programme, courage from the other women and from the mentors and from everyone there who is encouraging you to continue. We learn how to be role models for others." (Participant 7).

Networking was also emphasized as a great source of knowledge by many of the participants. One participant expresses it like this:

It was very important to me to see the Swedish way of doing things. But also, to hear the experiences of my fellow friends coming from Africa for example. It is very important to learn about other people's experiences, it helps you grow and become more knowledgeable. (Participant 6)

One of the participants (Participant 10) explained how politicians on her municipality lack exposure to the outside world and how meeting people from other countries is a way to grow as a politician, through being confronted by new perspective and new mindsets: "We lack exposure [...] we need to interact to change people's mindset". (Participant 10). She expressed that this was one of the strengths of the programme. This way of thinking was common in discussions with participants.

The mentors and their influence on the participants

Many of the participants spoke highly of their interactions with their Swedish mentors. Some of the participants described them as their favourite part of the programme. One participant explained: "In the workshops we were taught theory and with the mentors we were taught real life" (Participant 1). She talked about how the interactions with the mentors was a way to better understand the theoretical knowledge they had gained through the lectures and learn how to apply them to in real-life situations. One of the participants gave an example where she explained how, during her visit to Sweden she noticed that a lot of fathers were outside with their young children. When she mentioned this to her mentor, they started a discussion about the history of Swedish family policy.

During the interviews, the participants would often emphasize the impact the Swedish politicians had on them, especially the way they communicated and worked together. One of the participants talked about the Swedish politicians they met in Sweden during their study visit. One participant described how she was surprised and influenced by how "[...] opposite political parties were able to interact as family." (Participant 10). She talked about the importance of working together, even with the opposition, when making sustainable change in the community. Another participant, when talking about Swedish politicians:

"They have a way of working together, putting their differences aside and working for the community. [...] this is something that we still struggle with in our community, women don't support women" (Participant 4).

This something also the mentors noticed that the participants took note of and were affected by. One of the participants talked about how she did not apply to the programme because she was lacking formal knowledge but that she wanted to gain informal knowledge e.g., knowledge about how to handle different social situations. “[...] just watching the mentors working was influencing and empowering”. (Participant 5).

The Swedish visit

All the participants spoke highly of the workshops in Sweden and the visit to the Swedish municipalities. Many of them gave examples of what they saw and how they were inspired by how things are done in Sweden. They described visiting recycling plants, nursing home for elderly people and schools. One participant explained how, during the study visit in a Swedish municipality, she was shown the municipality website which had a formal channel for communicating with the residents, where they could ask questions and have discussions on things relating to the municipality. This was an idea that she brought back home and introduced in her municipality. Another participant (participant 7) got to visit the Swedish municipality right before an election and described how it inspired her and helped her to prepare for campaigns back home.

Many of the participants also described how interesting it is to see how the municipality spends money and how they prioritise, specifically how local politicians in Sweden do not get as many privileges as the politicians in their counties e.g., cars, personal drivers, and bodyguards. Many spoke about this in relations to corruption and how the Swedish way of prioritising is putting the community first. One participant said the following about her experience meeting Swedish leading politicians and how they differ from the politicians in her country:

It was very inspiring because I saw scientists who became governors. I was impressed that most women in politics in Sweden come to politics from education, from social work, from ecology and it is not businessmen- and women [...] it is like two different planets of politics (Participant 1)

The participants spoke about the way Swedish politicians prioritise and how their mindset differ from their own local context. The monetary and personal incentives of becoming a politician did not apply in the same extent in the Swedish context. She described the programme “[...] like fresh air” (Participant 1) because of her experience of meeting leading female politicians who are involved in politics to better their community, not for their own ambition.

Initiatives

Bellow we present some examples of initiatives that the participants have done which they themselves expressed were inspired by their attendance in the programme. When presenting any potential impact that the programme had on the participant and potential causation of any individual change or political initiative, we have tried to have a critical approach. This means e.g., follow up questions during interviews on how any change is linked to what they experienced or learned during the programme.

Many of the participants gave examples of how they forwarded the knowledge and experiences they gained during the programme to other people through workshops, seminars, and lectures. “I have held many trainings or workshops as a resource person and whatever I have learned there I’ve passed those communication skills to the people.” (Participant 3).

One of the participants (participant 7) attended her study visit in a Swedish municipality right before an election which she describes as highly informative, and it gave her a lot of ideas which she shared with party members back home by doing presentations in her party’s youth association about preparing for an election campaign. She also presented documents and information she received from ICLD to her colleagues, one of which was about the sustainable development goals. Other participants also started groups in their communities. “We have founded a women’s self-help group [...] We tell them about health issues and issues of education, climate issues.” (Participant 3).

Many of the participants talked about how they were surprised and inspired by the recycling in Sweden. “You don’t throw away things in Sweden, you reuse everything.” (Participant 10).

Another participant talked about the trips she and her mentor did during the visit to the municipality. Since the participant was especially interested in environmental and sustainability issues the mentor brought her to a recycling site.

What was most interesting to me was to see how they do their recycling. We went to a recycling site where they were separating all their refuse that they were collecting. It was something that was very intriguing for me and I also introduced it in our municipality. We have different containers with different colours, so we are separating the waste which make it very much easy to be taken for recycling. [...] it managed to create some jobs for certain local people who were unemployed, and I must say that even our residential areas have most improved because they are no longer so dirty (Participant 4)

Many of the participants spoke about the importance of creating ways for women to help each other and to get women more involved into politics. Many of them explained how they were

influenced by the programme to start different initiative such as workshops or local groups for women to engage more in their communities.

This is something that I work with all the time, making sure that we support young women. Because we have the challenge that in political leadership position, they are all dominated by males. We are trying to draw women into politics and make them aware of what is happening. (Participant 4)

Improving local democracy and fighting corruption

During the interviews many of the participants spoke about corruption, how local democracy is hindered and what challenges they face in working towards developing democracy in their local region or municipality. This was a common topic while speaking about their visit to Sweden and their discussions with their Swedish mentors. As discussed above, the participants expressed that they were surprised and influenced by the Swedish politicians reasoning on politician privileges and how the Swedish politicians argued against such incentives in favour of benefiting the community. Many of the participants expressed that money and ambition, rather than ideas and believes, control and guide politicians in their countries. Money is both an incentive for people to get politically involved and, as Participant 9 spoke extensively about, for the public to vote for a certain candidate. She explained how a big problem in her region is that there are a lot of poor people who, she expresses, are more easily persuaded to accept bribes to vote in a certain way in elections.

Participants from eastern Europe spoke about the problem of having people becoming politicians because of personal or selfish reasons and to have the power to hand out resources, such as land and properties, to friends or/and family. This is something that the participants relate to problems with the lack of transparency in their local municipality or region. Problems with politicians and administrators not having the community's best interest in mind was a common problem brought up during the interviews. One participant talked about how she needed support in making sure that the different actors in the administration did what they were supposed to and that the tax-payer money was spend according to the budget.

This programme assisted me in trying to bring in some systems to make sure that we account for the money that we are receiving. [...] We had some meetings, especially with the municipality manager, the CFO, to make sure that they do things accordingly. (Participant 3)

Many of the participants also spoke about the importance of knowledge and information in promoting local democracy. One of the participants, when speaking of the importance of

educating women and girls on democracy: “In Africa, the way we are raised we don’t know that we have rights”. (Participant 2). Another participant also spoke highly on the effects of education on democracy especially when it comes to women and their ability to make a difference in their communities. “We want women to be politicians, but they don’t have the education. If girls are not educated there is no chance for us” (Participant 10). She explained how the culture in most African countries places the girls in the home which result in a lot of women not knowing how to read or write. Information was often talked about during the interviews as a tool of power in politics and in society in general and described as something that is not easily shared. Some of the participants even expressed hesitation in helping pass on experiences to, or educating, women with different party affiliation. One of the main reasons given on why participants applied to the programme was related to a wish for a network of women whom they could learn from and exchange experiences and advice, something that they lacked in their local context. Many expressed how women in their local context lack the knowledge, interest or means to be actively involved in politics and this leads to a lack of representation. Participant 8 explained how she was one of only two female members of the local council with 25 members. All the participants spoke about the problems occurring when there is no proper representation and how they in different ways were working to increase female participation in politics.

Interviews with the mentors

The mentors’ thoughts on preparations and introductions to the mentorship

The mentors underlined the benefits of attending a SALAR leadership programme before attending the Political Leadership Programme. They explained that the SALAR leadership programme made them reflect on their own leadership abilities and skills. Although one of the three mentors had not attended any of SALARs leadership programmes, she did not express a particular need for it to prepare for the mentorship because of her many years of experience working in politics.

The mentors experienced the objectives and goals of the programme to be clear, but they expressed that their role as mentors in the programme could have been better explained to them beforehand. They would like to have known exactly what parts of the programme they should be involved in and to what extent. They especially wanted the roles of the mentors and the ICLD staff to be clearly outlines, both for themselves and for the participants. One of the mentors expressed the following about the mentors’ expectations:

“Some of us thought that we would have a greater responsibility than we actually had. We were assigned participants, but it was ICLD staff that had the greater part of the communication with them.” (Mentor 2).

The mentors experience and thoughts on the programme

The mentors expressed a gratitude of having been a part of the programme because it provided them with different perspectives on Swedish politics and democracy. The experience made them reflect on how things work in Sweden and how much they take for granted about Swedish democracy, but it also made them more aware of things that can be improved e.g., wastefulness of resources in Sweden, such as water.

The experience also provided the mentors with a network of politicians from around the world from whom they get to learn about and understand countries differently than they would have from the media.

The mentors all talked about how their role in the programme was to provide the participant with a different perspective on how to handle different political problems and give them alternatives on how to deal with different situations. The mentors especially emphasized the perceived impact the political discourse had on the participants. How the Swedish politicians would discuss certain topics across party lines in a decent and respectful way and how the opposition and the majority can work together and have objective and constructive conversations with each other. This is something that the mentors noticed that the participant took note of in Sweden, the importance of a decent way of communicating in a democracy and of working together for the benefit of the community.

Some of the mentors expressed problems with participants asking them for help in areas which were not part of their role in the programme. Some participants asked for monetary help, support, and financing for different projects in their local municipalities. This is something that the mentors expressed as problematic since it is not something they could help the participants with.

Some of the mentors explained how their discussions with the participants often surrounded being prepared and properly informed as a politician. This is important partly because when a person is properly prepared and informed her confidence grows and she is more at ease when speaking on a topic. Participants also pointed out how information can be used as a tool for power in politics and concealing information is a common power tactic in many of the participants countries. One mentor talked about a conversation she had with one of the participants about the importance of keeping even the opposition informed on different matters to make political strategies sustainable and stable over time. This led to a discussion on the

importance of the principle of public access to official records for a functioning and thriving democracy.

Changes and improvements – participants and mentors

Introduction to the mentorship, their role, and limitations

The mentors expressed a need for an introduction held by ICLD where it is explained what is expected of the mentors and what their mission entails. “It could be made clearer how involved the mentors are supposed to be, maybe it would have been good to have an introductory meeting with all the mentors”. (Mentor 2). One of the interviewed mentors also explained that this could be an opportunity for new mentors to talk to mentors from previous implemented programmes and take part in their experiences and knowledges. Not least this could help the mentors in planning and organizing the visit to their municipality.

The mentors also expressed a need for ICLD to make sure that the participants are fully aware of the purpose and limitations with the mentor’s role in the programme. Some of the mentors explained how the participants would sometimes ask for help in areas where the mentors could not help such as help with funding projects or other monetary assistance. This was something that the mentors expressed made them uncomfortable. To make the mentors role clearer both for themselves and the participants sake was both pointed out as improvements that could be made on the SALAR’s list of reflections and improvements.⁷

Some of the mentors stated that it would be helpful for the introduction to the programme involve some sort of discussion on international meetings and the struggle with cultural differences between participants. This was also something that the evaluator noticed during the interviews with the participants where some of the participants expressed how they were aggravated or made uncomfortable by other participants. The reasons given was often connected to cultural or religious differences. “This is something that we noticed [...] that there was a tension in the group. This is something that we need to be prepared for, to understand that we look at things and understand things in different ways”. (Mentor 1). One of the mentors explained how it might be helpful to discuss this early in the programme to make sure everyone knows how to deal with that kind of interaction.

Less theory more interaction

One common criticism of the content of the programme was the long lectures with little or no interactive bits. Many would point out the unique experience of meeting so many abled

⁷ Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting: Reflektioner och förbättringsområden 7/12 2016.

women from all over the world and a frustration over not getting to interact enough with them. This is something that the interviewed mentors also mentioned. The mentors suggested that the workshops involve more group activities, group discussions and more interaction with the participants in general to fully utilize the unique opportunity of talking to politicians from all over the world. One of the interviewed mentors expressed how it would be a lost opportunity to not salvage the experience and knowledge in the group, even though the lectures are necessary and interesting they would benefit from making it a group-activity instead of a listening experience.

Some participants explained that it was difficult to concentrate and be engaged in long lectures. Many also expressed a difficulty to remember what they learned during the lectures. One participant explained:

There was more theory during the workshops, so we were given holistic information just like at school and of course there were less emotions and when there is less emotions you remember things worse. When you communicate with people it is always emotional and it impresses you more and that is why I remember the people with whom I communicated and what they said. (Participant 1)

One of the participants suggested more interactive element during the workshops.

The lectures should be more interactive and more games that will push people to work in groups. More interaction between participants during the classes because we were mostly just listening to people speaking, not speaking with them. (Participant 5).

This, she explains, would also be a good way for the participants to practice debating and political discussion with people about certain issues.

Some of the mentors expressed a wish to be more involved with the participants and to get more time for discussions and interactive sessions. They expressed a wish to keep in touch with the participants even in between the workshops, this would make it easier to “pick up where we left off” (Mentor 2) and to form a more natural bond with the participant that you mentor.

Follow-ups

All the participants in the evaluation expressed a desire to keep the programme going in one way or another. “It should be a continues process, they should not leave the programme after giving us training. There should be some link with them.” (Participant 3). Some participants suggested that ICLD organize a follow-up in terms of practical projects that they participants

can work on while back in their countries and report to ICLD about your progress. “What you have learned should not be consumed only by you, but you also have to share it with other women in your country and report back to ICLD what you have done.” (Participant 7).

The mentors all expressed a desire to keep in touch with the participants after the programme had ended. Not all the participants are active on social media which makes it difficult to communicate with them and follow up on their progress. Some suggestions were for ICLD to create a formal channel, virtual meetings or in person follow ups with the participants and the mentors some time after the programme finished. This would also be a way for the participants to raise problems or obstacles that they met in their political assignment which could be discussed in a group setting and which could perhaps help them to overcome that.

Forwarding the knowledge

During the interviews with the participants some had difficulties expressing exactly how they transferred and shared their experience with others in a concrete way. Since the programme’s objective is to empower and strengthen the participant as a political leader it is sometimes not clear to the participants how to transfer the knowledge and experience that they received through the programme.

Participation

One of the mentors spoke about the experience of having a mixed group of participants, both men and women. This is something that was tried out during the POL5 visit to Zambia and South Africa where male colleagues were invited to partake in some of the sessions. ICLD described this as an opportunity to involve men in the promotion of women and a way for them to learn about how to support their female colleagues to be agents of change.⁸ The mentor spoke about how this could be both an advantage and a disadvantage. From her experience, the female participants would take a step back when male participants were present and not engage as much in discussions or exercises. This is also pointed out as a reflection in SALAR’s documents on reflections and improvements where it is described how the women seems very effected by their male colleagues’ presence.⁹ The mentor explains how this was a challenge for the Swedish mentors present. They had to intervene and show how women must assert themselves when men try to dominate a conversation. She also saw the advantage of having men attending the programme to make sure the women have allies in their countries to help them reach goals related to equality.

⁸ Agenda for ITP final workshop: Local Political Leaders – Capacitating Women in Politics (fifth cohort)
Agenda for ITP regional workshop: Local Political Leaders – Capacitating Women in Politics (5 cohort)

⁹ Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting: Reflektioner och förbättringsområden 7/12 2016.

Results – Comparison between programmes

This chapter includes a comparison between POL and one internal ICLD training programme; Gender Mainstreaming Local Development (GMLD) and one external; Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative (BHCLI). The comparisons include differences and similarities between the programmes and main differences in outcomes between the programmes.¹⁰ It was an expressed wish from the ICLD to the evaluators to make a comparison between these particular programmes and the POL. The evaluators have not had any objections to do so and find no reason to problematize the selection.

Overview of the Gender Mainstreaming Local were chosen by ICLD and Development

The Gender mainstreaming programme is an 18-month long training programme with participants from four countries in eastern Africa: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.¹¹

Target group

The participants are local government officials in teams of three. These teams must include a manager, a gender equality strategist/ coordinator and an economist/development strategist or similar function. A maximum of 24 participants per cohort. Each participating country will be assigned a national mentor by ICLD who will take part in arranging workshops and support the teams in their country.

The programme structure and content

The programme has four in-person workshops, one of which will take place in Sweden. The visit to Sweden will be a two week visit with a two-day municipal study visit for each team. The first workshop, or inception workshop, will be an introduction to the programme. The second, or follow up, workshop focuses on deeper knowledge and understanding of the areas of expertise included in the programme and reporting on progress. The third workshop, the Swedish phase is a two week visit to Sweden and a two-day study visit for each team to different Swedish municipalities. The fourth and final workshop focuses on the reported results from the different teams.¹²

¹⁰ ToR Evaluation of PoL 4 and 5

¹¹ Programme overview ITP: Gender Mainstreaming. Gender 1-3, 2018-2023

¹² Programme overview ITP: Gender Mainstreaming. Gender 1-3, 2018-2023

The mentors

All teams from the same country will be assigned one national mentor by ICLD. The mentors are tasked to support and visit the teams during the duration of the programme, with a maximum of three visits to each team. They are also expected to help if any of the workshops are held in their home country and to assist if the programme has any learning activities in their area of expertise.¹³

The programme purpose and goals

The purpose and goal of the programme is to empower and promote social, economic, and political inclusion of all.¹⁴ Every participating local government is expected to carry out a change process using the gender mainstreaming methods taught during the programme. This entails that the local government conducts a gender equality assessment of all policies that affect the way people live.¹⁵

Comparison between the Political Leadership Programme and the Gender Mainstreaming Local Development

The following comparison is of the POL and the GMLD which are both ITP's offered by ICLD. The empirical material for this comparison are the semi-structured interviews conducted with the participants and mentors from POL 4 and 5 and the Final Evaluation Report of the Gender Mainstreaming Local Democracy done by Monica Johansson, Eccola!, and Elin Ekström, Questa.

Gender Mainstreaming Local Democracy: Final Evaluation Report 2020-05-18

The evaluators followed the overall process and took part in several workshops. To get the participants' perspective on the programme the evaluators also conducted semi-structured interviews in 2019.¹⁶

The main differences between the POL and GMLD

The main difference between the programmes is the target of change, the POL focuses on participants' individual development while GMLD focuses on a change process in the participants' local municipality or region. In the POL the participants work on a strategic issue

¹³ Programme overview ITP: Gender Mainstreaming. Gender 1-3, 2018-2023

¹⁴ Final Evaluation report: Gender Mainstreaming Local Democracy (p.14)

¹⁵ <https://icld.se/app/uploads/files/gender-itp-2019.pdf>

¹⁶ Final Evaluation report: Gender Mainstreaming Local Democracy (p.11)

which is something personal related to leadership- or communication abilities that the participants feel they need to work on. In the GMLD participants from local governments apply and work in teams of three. The GMLD has a more regional focus where they target government officials in four African countries whereas the POL has a wider geographical range with participants from Europe, Africa and Asia.¹⁷ The target group also differs between the programme with the GMLD accepting both male and female applicants while the POL only accepts women applicants. The mentor's role also differs in the programmes, in POL the mentors are Swedish leading female politicians while in the GMLD the mentors are based in the same country as the team they are mentoring.¹⁸

What are the main differences in the outcome of the two programmes?¹⁹

- Since the POL focuses on change in the individual and the GMLD focuses on change in a specific area (Gender Mainstreaming) it might be easier for participants in the GMLD to give concrete examples of political or institutional change inspired by the programme. Generating political change might also be an easier task for the GMLD where a team of three from the same municipality can work together to reach specific goals outlined by the programme.

The similarity in the participants experiences and thoughts in POL and GMLD?

- Participants from both programmes highly appreciated the Swedish visit and the study visit to the Swedish municipality.²⁰
- The participants from both programmes expressed a usefulness of not only interacting and exchanging experiences with Swedish partners but with participants from other countries.²¹
- Both the participants from the GMLD and the POL appreciated group discussions and to actively participate in different learning scenarios.²² To focus more on interactive exercises is something the participants of the POL and the interviewed mentors especially emphasised as something that could be improved for future arrangements of the

¹⁷ <https://icld.se/app/uploads/files/gender-itp-2019.pdf>

Interview with Therese Bergström at ICLD

¹⁸ Interview with Therese Bergström at ICLD

¹⁹ ToR Evaluation of PoL 4 and 5

²⁰ Final Evaluation report: Gender Mainstreaming Local Democracy (p.13)

²¹ Final Evaluation report: Gender Mainstreaming Local Democracy (p.13)

²² Final Evaluation report: Gender Mainstreaming Local Democracy (p.13)

programme. The GMLD evaluation includes suggestions from the evaluators on removing some of the lectures to make room for more dialog, exchanges of experiences.²³

- Participants from both programmes also requested more time in between sessions to get to interact more with the mentor, ICLD staff and other participants.²⁴
- Participants from both programmes suggested ICLD create a more formal way for the participants to keep in touch after the programme.²⁵

Overview of the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative

The Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative is a yearly leadership and management programme developed and taught by faculty from Harvard Kennedy School and Harvard Business School.²⁶

Target Group

The programme targets mayors and senior members from 40 cities, each participating city must have a population higher than 100.000 people. Every year one mayor from each city is selected which in turn select two senior officials from their team to participate.²⁷

The programme structure and content

The first three days of the programme contains in-person executive education classes. Following this the participants will be part of a series of virtual learning sessions spread out over a year. The mayors will reconvene every six weeks for a two hour long virtual class.²⁸ The programme also offers the participants coaching and support from other mayors, participants, Harvard faculty and graduate students and the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative team.²⁹

The programme includes an in person and virtual sessions which focuses on the participants personal leadership abilities and organizational practices in their city.³⁰ The mayors and the senior officials firstly undergo intense in person leadership training in the very start of the

²³ Final Evaluation report: Gender Mainstreaming Local Democracy (p.14)

²⁴ Final Evaluation report: Gender Mainstreaming Local Democracy (p.21)

²⁵ Final Evaluation report: Gender Mainstreaming Local Democracy (p.21)

²⁶ [Program Description — Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative](#) 31/3-2021

²⁷ Interview with Courtney Hall – Project manager at the BHCLI

²⁸ Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative – Program Overview

²⁹ [Mayors Program Curriculum 2019.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#) 8/4-2021

³⁰ [Program Description — Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative](#) 31/3-2021

programme.³¹ These include key concepts with classes on e.g., leading with and beyond formal authority, building high performing teams and organizations, motivation change and mobilizing others and collaboration across departments and sectors.³² Beyond this standardized parts the programme also include a customised elements. The participants can choose one of the following key practices to advance critical priorities in their cities: innovation, collaboration, use of data and evidence, and citizen engagement.³³

The programme purpose and goals

The objective of the programme is to foster the participants professional growth and to advance key practices and capabilities in city halls throughout the world.³⁴

Comparison between the Political Leadership Programme and the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative

Similarities between the POL and the BHCLI

- The BHCLI is similar to the POL in the sense that it also focusses on growth in the individuals attending the programme, improving their leadership and communication skills. Participants in both programmes state that the programme has helped them with increasing their leadership capabilities, communication abilities and increasing transparency.³⁵
- The BHCLI, as well as POL, includes both include lectures and field visits during the in-person meeting/workshops.³⁶

Differences between the POL and the BHCLI

- The BHCLI have case-based teaching method where the participants get to study different cases and practise different problem-solving strategies and tactics. This entails that the participants receive a case to study up on which they later get to discuss. These are real-

³¹ Interview with Courtney Hall – Project manager at the BHCLI

³² [Program Description — Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative](#) 31/3-2021

³³ Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative – Program Overview
Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative – program description

³⁴ [Program Description — Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative](#) 31/3-2021

³⁵ Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative – program description

³⁶ Senior Leaders program 2019

world cases such as the 2010 Chilean Mining Rescue or the New Orleans Neighborhood's battle to recover from hurricane Katrina.³⁷ This type of exercise draws upon the participants real-world insights and let other participants take part on their expertise and experience. Every exercise also includes an additional reflection, this could be about e.g., Teamwork, where the participants will be asked to reflect on their relationships with people in their administration.³⁸

- The BHCLI is specifically aimed at mayors and persons, male and female, from their teams while the POL has a wider target group in a professional sense but only includes women.
- In the BHCLI there is only one in-person meeting in the beginning of the programme with no other meeting or chances for networking opportunities apart from the virtual meetings. In POL 4 and 5 there are three in-person workshops in different participating countries.
- The BHCLI include a team from each participating city and has teambuilding as a key concept for the participants to actively work on. Mayors attending the programme has expressed that the programme has helped them to learn how to build high-performing teams.³⁹ This differs from the POL where the participants are lone applicants from their region.
- One of the key practices in the BHCLI is "Data and evidence". This part of the learning experience focuses on teaching the participants about how to use data to better their decision-making process. Learning about gathering relevant data is also helpful in increasing transparency and to manage performance.⁴⁰

³⁷ Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative – Senior Leaders program 2019

³⁸ Interview with Courtney Hall – Project manager at the BHCLI
Senior Leaders program 2019

³⁹ Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative – Program Overview
Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative – Program description

⁴⁰ [Program Description — Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative](#)

Analysis

ICLD standards of evaluation

Relevance: how relevant is our programme to the needs, priorities, and policies of the different stakeholders?

Sweden's government agency for development cooperation, Sida, is one stakeholder who finances the ICLD's operations, which includes their ITP's.⁴¹ Sida works to develop and create better living situations for people living in poverty by allocating resources and knowledge to developing areas. To achieve this, much of the work is done in collaboration with different partners such as ICLD.⁴² Our conclusion is that the POL programme is of high relevance for the priorities and policies of Sida and is of high relevance and fill important needs for the participants. The evaluators see a certain value in that the ITP-programme includes a broader range of engaged women holding key positions in local governments such as local government officials, politicians at regional or local level, or representatives from civil society organisations from where they are actively involved in strategic decision making. We believe the aim of empowering women in local democracy improves using this broader definition and not only engaging women in certain top positions, as for example mayors. Furthermore, we find it important that continued evaluations are made throughout the programme to make sure it stays relevant for its stakeholders and to make sure the programme leads to sustainable development in local politics.

Effectiveness: Are we achieving our objectives?

Our conclusion from the discussions with participants is that the programme is achieving its objectives, but that the layout may be improved so that the goals may be set higher. The programme is especially achieving its objectives regarding empowering the participant and strengthening her role as a politician and as a role model.

⁴¹ <https://www.sida.se/en> 2021-05-05

ICLD: Presentation of the International Center for Local Democracy: application and information about the POL 2016.

⁴² <https://www.sida.se/en> 2021-05-05

<https://www.sida.se/en/about-sida> 2021-05-05

Impact: What is our impact on people's lives? (e.g., in relation to the ultimate changes in people's lives or environment as a result of our initiatives)?

Our conclusion is that the programme has a substantial impact on the participants and the mentors in their roles as political leaders as well as on their surroundings. We believe that by improving the programme set out, it will be easier to pinpoint how the programme may have an impact on the participants as persons and political leaders on the one hand, and on their local society, where they are engaged for change, on the other hand.

Sustainability – will the benefit last?

We are convinced that the programme has an impact that will last not least because the women engaged feel that they get empowered by participating. Improvement in the layout of the programme may strengthen this even more, and it will also be easier to follow up how to reach sustainability.

Contribution/attribution: What contribution have we made to outcomes and impacts (in relation to other factors/actors)?

Based on the interviews with participants and mentors we can state that the programme has led to the following impact:

- Empowering the participants through strengthening her communication and leadership skills but also through advice and experience gained in interaction with other participants, mentors and ICLD staff.
- Giving the participants and mentors access to a network of women in similar positions which they would not have accessed without attending the programme.
- Giving the mentor and participants new perspective on democracy, its problems and how to promote democracy in a local setting. They learned about new ways to solve different political problems or how to handle different political situations.
- It inspired participants to create initiatives in their local government or municipality to in different ways promote democracy through e.g., increasing political participation, involving local women in politics, environmental and recycling projects or increasing transparency in their administration.

The evaluators suggested improvements to the programme

Interactive teaching

To have more interactive workshops. Both the participants and the mentors expressed the benefit of having more teamwork exercises and group activities, discussions, and games. This way of learning was preferred by the interviewees because it makes for a more interesting, interactive, and memorable way of learning. The evaluators of the internal programme GMLD also suggested that “Long lectures without interaction should be avoided”⁴³ and suggest having a more interactive dynamic and using tools such as games and quizzes to facilitate learning processes.

One way to make the learning experience more interesting during the workshops is for ICLD to look at how the BHCLI implement case-based teaching. This would be a way for ICLD to use practical real-life cases to work on leadership capabilities in the participants. Making this exercise a discussion amongst the participants would also let them interact and share experience and knowledge with each other which is something pointed out as important by both mentors and participants. This gets the participant more engaged in the learning experience rather than being a passive listener. If the cases used in the learning sessions are relatable local examples this could also be a way for ICLD to inspire the participant to actively change policy or create initiatives in their communities after the programme.

Strategical issue – personal and political

When comparing the POL with GMLD and BHCLI, we can see that the POL focusses solely on personal change while the other two programmes focus on political change. The result of interviewing participants tells us that the personal change is an important part of the programme – e.g., to empower participants by giving them training in self-confidence and public speaking, but any possible actual political or institutional change is more difficult to pinpoint. One way to promote political or institutional change within the limits of the programme could be having the participants working on both a personal strategic issue, *and* a political strategical issue focusing on change the participant wants to achieve in her local political engagement. If so, it may be easier to work for sustainable change and at the same time to see that what happens in the programme also have impact in real politics. Based on what political strategical issue the participants have chosen, study visits in Sweden may be organized to improve and strengthen ideas of change e.g., waste management or improvement in secure surroundings for women and children. Choosing a political strategic issue early in

⁴³ Final Evaluation report: Gender Mainstreaming Local Democracy (p.28)

the programme is also a way for SALAR and ICLD to connect participant to the most suitable mentor.

Discussion and dialog

Involve the participants more in the teaching moments and to make sure that the participants learn from each other. This type of peer learning was highly requested during the interviews and is something that the BHCLI is trying to develop further, especially making sure the participants can connect with each other in between and after the workshops. The evaluators for the GMLD also suggested more interaction in their final evaluation where they suggested that some of the lectures be taken out of the programme in favour of more time for dialog, exchange of experience and learning between the participants.⁴⁴

Study visits

To have more study visits during the workshops in each country. The greatest impact on the participants seems to have been seeing how things works in each country and later having the opportunity to have a discussion on that experience. This is equally true when it comes to the mentors who also seemed most affected by what they experienced during the study visits abroad.

Preparation

During the interview both the participants and mentors requested that the programme better inform and prepare the mentors and the participants on what the mentors role entails. The POL4 and POL5 did not have a systematic or structured introduction for mentors. The mentors requested a clearer role description to better understand to what extent they should be involved with the participants and how their roles differ from the ICLD staff. One way to do this would be to have a start-up meeting with the mentors where they get the chance to learn from each other and talk about their experience of participating in the programme. This could also be a continues process the duration of the programme where the mentors get to meet and discuss potential obstacles they face or questions that arises along the way. The ICLD could also create an introductory guide to the programme where their role and assignment is clearly defined. The mentors also suggested that the participants also get a briefing on the mentors' role to make sure they understand the limitations and purpose of the mentorship. The evaluation of the GMLD suggest involving the mentors more in the planning and implementing process, this could also be a way for the mentors to better understand the programme and their role in it. It might however be a difficult task considering that the

⁴⁴ Final Evaluation report: Gender Mainstreaming Local Democracy (p.14)

mentors are leading politicians and might not be able to spare the amount of time this would require.

Data and information

Information gained through interaction, networking or theoretical learning was talked about during the interview in association with element such as empowerment, equality, and discourse. Information can be a tool for power in politics in many ways. Withholding or obscuring information can hinder political sustainability in a country and be a sign of corruption. The lack of information in a political discussion or debate can also make politicians feel insecure in their argument and therefor hinder them in their political assignment. Teaching the participant about data gathering and ways of accessing information could therefor help the POL in its main goals of empowering the participants and promoting local democracy in the participating countries. Here, ICLD can look at BHCLI and the way they implement data and information in their programme. “Data and evidence” are one of their four key practices which makes up the customized part of the programme where the participants can choose an area in which their city needs to grow.

If the POL would include, as suggested above, a political strategic issue for each participant this could be connected to a potential data- and information-gathering session during a workshop and could thereby strengthen both the participants knowledge on that particular issue and their understanding of data-collecting.

Male participation

ICLD have tried involving male participants in different sessions during the workshops at multiple times. This is described to involve men in the promotion of women and a way for them to support their female colleagues to be agents of change.⁴⁵ This could also be a way for the participants male colleagues to be more open and less sceptical regarding the programme.

The male participants were not at all discussed during the interviews with the participants but brought up several times by the mentors. Because of the perceived impact their presence had on the female participants the evaluators would suggest ICLD to assess whether this had the desired effect or not. To especially consider whether the benefits of the male participants presence outweigh the restrictive effect this had on the female participants.

⁴⁵ Agenda for ITP final workshop: Local Political Leaders – Capacitating Women in Politics (fifth cohort)
Agenda for ITP regional workshop: Local Political Leaders – Capacitating Women in Politics (5 cohort)

Suggested improvements for future evaluations

Continuous evaluations

The interview questions about the content of the programme were difficult for the participants to answer because of the amount of time that had passed since they attended the programme. They had difficulties giving the evaluators concrete examples. One suggestion, if the ICLD wants feedback on the content of the workshops, is to let the participants give feedback directly when the workshops end or let an evaluator attend the workshop and meet and speak to the participants. This would be a great way to get continuous feedback directly from the participants. The evaluators also noticed that it was especially difficult to get a hold of participants for this evaluation because of outdated contact information, to have a continued contact with the participants after the programme would be one way to solve this problem.

Another aspect of the importance of continues evaluation of ICLD's ITP's is to assess how the programme is relevant to its stakeholders. Sida, a stakeholder and financier of ICLD, is an agency focused on result-based management to ensure their collaborations contributes to their overall goals of development. This approach is a vital approach for Sida and is based on continuously asking questions on what we are achieving? What do we want to achieve? And what can we do differently?⁴⁶ To have continues evaluations of the programme would therefore be a way to make sure the programme stays relevant to its stakeholders.

One way that the ICLD has already improved in relations to continues evaluations is the introduction of the Baseline, a questionnaire filled in by the participants both before-, in the middle of- and after the attending the programme. The Baseline include questions on the background and political engagement of the participants. The Baseline focuses primarily on the participants perception of different democratic values and how these have changed after attending the programme and not as much on the participants experience of the content and structure of the programme. The Baseline also requires the participant to state examples of how these values are addressed in her local content and how these relate to her own activities during her time in office.⁴⁷

If the layout of the programme is revised following the suggestions in this evaluation, one idea could also be to do follow-up research during implementation of the new layout, to systematic and continuously document and learn about the programmes effect and impact on the participants and their political acts.

⁴⁶ <https://www.sida.se/en/for-partners/partnership-with-sida/results-based-management> 2021-05-05

⁴⁷ ICLD: Baseline WPL 7 - 2021

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