

Blair Burnett  
Tiffany Cox  
Jonathan Moyer  
Tory Waters

# Best Practices Report: WomenNC & Cities for CEDAW Campaign

28th April 2016



UNC  
COLLEGE OF  
ARTS & SCIENCES

**PUBLIC POLICY**

This report was compiled by a UNC-Chapel Hill Public Policy capstone team in the spring of 2016 under the guidance of Cassie Holt, the WomenNC Advocacy Chair, and Dr. Jennifer Hazen, lecturer within the UNC Public Policy Department.

## INTRODUCTION

The Cities for CEDAW movement seeks “to make the global local” through the passage of ordinances and resolutions that localize the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) treaty within various cities across the United States. Within the Cities for CEDAW model, 35 U.S. cities are currently working for the ultimate local passage of a CEDAW resolution or ordinance to assert a strong anti-discrimination stance on the issue of gender disparities. The North Carolina coalition has not yet passed any localized CEDAW ordinance or statute and is still in the preliminary stages of exploring its viability within the state.

Founded in 2009, WomenNC, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, has spearheaded much of the advocacy work for the North Carolina Cities for CEDAW campaign. Current projects of the coalition include: annual research presentations at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women conference in New York City, speaking engagements to educate community members about the importance of a localized CEDAW resolution or ordinance, film screenings, and social media efforts, and the Commission on the Status of Women fellowship. Many of these initiatives have been scaled in a way to meet the needs of the growing coalition.

The intention of this best practices report is to create an organizational roadmap for future WomenNC advocacy work to localize CEDAW within the NC Cities for CEDAW coalition.<sup>1</sup> Our initial Status of Women report drew attention to the large gender inequalities and inequities present in the areas of economics, health, sexual violence, and political representation.<sup>2</sup> To successfully address these challenges, this best practices report offers organizational recommendations for WomenNC to improve and expand the efforts of the North Carolina Cities for CEDAW coalition.

In light of the current political climate in North Carolina, WomenNC must reevaluate their emulation of successful Cities for CEDAW campaigns with regards to local anti-discrimination legislation. WomenNC will need to strengthen its current operations in order to effectively localize the principles of CEDAW. This organizational reform includes improving the

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the methodology used to inform this report, please see Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> Burnett et al. *Status of Women in North Carolina*. 29 April 2016.

internal communication structure and re-aligning the goals of the fellowship program, prior to expanding community outreach initiatives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Streamline Coalition Communication*

WomenNC currently acts as the only defined 501(c)3 nonprofit of the North Carolina Cities for CEDAW coalition, spearheading many of the larger advocacy efforts. Despite the size of the coalition with ten partner organizations, each organization involved with the North Carolina Cities for CEDAW coalition has expertise that works to support WomenNC and the Cities for CEDAW campaign in a particular way. However, coalition members have attested to differing levels of investment in the Cities for CEDAW campaign, which results in WomenNC undertaking larger levels of advocacy work than the other coalition members do.<sup>3,4</sup>

Before WomenNC works to incorporate new partners within the NC Cities for CEDAW campaign, the coalition would benefit from streamlining communication channels to clarify campaign responsibilities. **Thoroughly defining each coalition member's role within the larger North Carolina Cities for CEDAW framework would provide for better organizational balance and responsibility within the coalition.** With this renewed sense of responsibility, the coalition could tackle key principles of successful Cities for CEDAW campaigns in a more evenly distributed way. Capitalizing on specific coalition members strengths and professional expertise has the strong potential to further campaign efforts.<sup>5</sup> A first step towards the realization of this best practice would be to devote upcoming coalition meetings to a thorough analysis of campaign progress and a re-assignment of advocacy responsibilities of the coalition partners.<sup>6</sup> In San Francisco, the Cities for CEDAW campaign's recommended implementation guidelines include the need for a thorough localized gender analysis, an oversight body responsible for action plan implementation, and an adequate and sustainable funding source.<sup>7,8</sup> These detailed steps would only be possible with streamlined coalition communication for WomenNC and the broader North Carolina campaign.

<sup>3</sup> Beth Dehghan, interview by Blair Burnett, 2 April 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Younghee Overly, interview by Blair Burnett, 6 April 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Sue Barnett, interview by Tiffany Cox, 23 March 2016.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> "Implementing CEDAW As A Local Ordinance," San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, accessed March 2016, <http://citiesforcedaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Fact-Sheet-on-Implementing-CEDAW-as-a-Local-Ordinance.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Menon Anu, Ann Lehman, Laura Marshall, Emily Murase, and Linda Zane. *Human Rights in Action: San Francisco's Local Implementation of The United Nations' Women's Treaty (CEDAW)*. 2010.

A renewed plan of action for the campaign, specifically in response to the current political climate regarding anti-discrimination legislation, has the potential to give new momentum to the advocacy coalition. **Cities for CEDAW literature detailing best practices from successful campaigns that have passed local CEDAW legislation assert the need for newer coalitions to publish an action plan with information about CEDAW and its benefits for women in the state.**<sup>9</sup> With the development of this plan, WomenNC and the larger coalition could distribute the plan to coalition partners, elected officials, and media, as well as potential funders and donors.<sup>10</sup>

**In addition, the campaign should revitalize its public relations strategy to engage with new audiences.** A strong public relations (PR) strategy has been viewed as vital to many successful Cities for CEDAW campaigns outside of North Carolina and may prove essential to extending WomenNC's audience within the state.<sup>11</sup> Formation of a PR team devoted to maintaining social media efforts in order to market coalition work within the Cities for CEDAW campaign would alert the public of the work behind WomenNC and the broader coalition.<sup>12</sup> Specific ideas to develop an updated PR strategy include making the WomenNC website more accessible to new followers and highlighting the Cities for CEDAW campaign on the website.<sup>13</sup> In addition, this PR strategy could generate a thorough social media action plan to gain more followers on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.<sup>14</sup> For this updated PR strategy to become a reality for WomenNC and the larger coalition, the organization must find new sources of volunteers for PR opportunities,<sup>15</sup> such as journalism students at local universities.

---

<sup>9</sup> June Zietlin, Marilyn Fowler, Ellen Buchman, Tyler Lewis, and Tara Yarlagadda, editors. *Cities for CEDAW: A Campaign to Make the Global Local*. 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Barnett, 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Zeitlin et al., edit., "Cities..."

<sup>12</sup> Dehghan, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Barnett, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Dehghan, 2016.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

### ***Re-Align the Goals of the Fellowship***

WomenNC manages two programs: the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) fellowship and the Cities for CEDAW campaign. As of now, the two programs have minimal overlap; fellows only work on the campaign by reaching out to relevant organizations to join the coalition or helping to organize the monthly coalition meetings.

Currently, the fellows are focused on researching the status of women in North Carolina and effective local practices promoting women's rights, and the fellows then present that research to international non-governmental organizations at the United Nations CSW conference.<sup>16</sup> There is an opportunity to reform the fellowship program to make its goals align more closely with the goals of the Cities for CEDAW campaign. The fellowship committee will soon have a new set of members, and the leadership of WomenNC has expressed interest in re-aligning the objectives of the fellowship program. Thus, changing the fellowship before the next set of fellows begin is a promising opportunity.<sup>17</sup> If the fellows contribute to the Cities for CEDAW campaign, WomenNC benefits from a greater number of advocates researching challenges facing women in North Carolina and increasing community awareness surrounding the importance of the local implementation of CEDAW.

In order to enhance the impact of the fellows' research on the Cities for CEDAW campaign, **WomenNC fellows could conduct gender analyses on issues pertinent to women in the state of North Carolina** based upon their research interests, and WomenNC advocates could use information from those gender analyses as talking points when in discussion with local government officials or coalition members.<sup>18</sup> In order to fulfill their community service requirement, **fellows could organize educational workshops relevant to their research area**, and these workshops would be used to raise awareness about the Cities for CEDAW campaign in the general community and attract potential coalition members. Further discussion of these workshops is found in the following recommendation section.

**WomenNC fellows are an invaluable resource for promoting the Cities for CEDAW campaign on their respective campuses.** Fellows can introduce the campaign to relevant

---

<sup>16</sup> Isabella Higgins, interview by Tory Waters, 23 March 2016.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Dehghan, 2016.

student organizations focused on women's rights or the achievement of equality in general and encourage them to attend the educational workshops to learn more about the challenges facing women in the state of North Carolina. These organizations are a source of college-aged volunteers who could contribute to grassroots organizing for the Cities for CEDAW campaign. Additionally, fellows could assist WomenNC staff in the social media component of the Public Relations toolkit. Through re-aligning the objectives of the fellowship to more closely resemble those of the campaign overall, WomenNC gains up-to-date research and promotion of the Cities for CEDAW campaign among college-aged individuals.

## *Enhance Community Presence*

WomenNC's efforts are currently stalled in regards to maintaining close working relationships with local policymakers as well as a lack of general awareness of localizing CEDAW within North Carolina.<sup>19</sup> The advocacy successes of the Cities for CEDAW campaigns in Louisville and Los Angeles County have seen support from local policymakers and/or politicians because of grassroots advocacy.<sup>20, 21</sup> For instance, Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti's executive directive developed a gender equity coalition comprising of a liaison from every county department tasked with conducting specific research on women's issues.<sup>22, 23</sup> The North Carolina coalition hopes to eventually achieve a balance in which the government partnerships and the grassroots community action of the Cities for CEDAW campaign can thrive together.<sup>24</sup>

The establishment of new connections within the Triangle area (i.e. Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, and surrounding cities), could enable WomenNC to identify and recruit relevant stakeholders in the community who will facilitate access to government officials. These connections would also provide WomenNC with a network of individuals who could serve as champions of the Cities for CEDAW movement.<sup>25</sup> Beyond access to government officials, an enhanced community presence attracts volunteers and sources of funding for the campaign.<sup>26</sup> In tandem with a renewed communications strategy, individuals from non-profit organizations and the private sector could provide the perspectives and experiences necessary for growing the coalition.<sup>27</sup>

**The development of community engagement programs** will allow WomenNC to address the articles of CEDAW and build community support through offering courses and trainings on women's rights issues within North Carolina. WomenNC could utilize local findings from the Status of Women report to draw support from community stakeholders in directing attention to issues of gender inequities within North Carolina in areas of economics, health,

---

<sup>19</sup> Overly, 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Barnett, 2016.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> "Mayor Garcetti to Issue Executive Directive on Gender Equity in City Operations." City of Los Angeles.

<<http://www.lamayor.org/mayor-garcetti-issue-executive-directive-gender-equity-city-operations>> Accessed on 12 April 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Los Angeles County Code § 175735. 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Overly, 2016.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Barnett, 2016.



violence against women, or political representation.<sup>28</sup> These programs have the potential to address the most pertinent issues facing women in North Carolina by educating groups in the non-profit, private, and government sectors.<sup>29</sup>

**Extending engagement efforts within the private sector** can also help to gain crucial funding for the implementation of WomenNC’s advocacy and fellowship work. Fostering connections with businesses in the Triangle area will engage working professionals by offering them the opportunity to support women’s rights within the state.<sup>30</sup> Not only can these connections build a network of support throughout the private sector, but they have the potential to attract crucial funding for expanding WomenNC’s capacity to run community engagement programs.<sup>31</sup>

**Organize a conference with other coalition members to engage non-profit and business professionals working in the field of women’s rights.**<sup>32</sup> Academic, nonprofit, and business professionals in the Triangle area may offer key insights and connections that can improve the coalition’s outreach by identifying and directing efforts to improve the status of women throughout the state.<sup>33</sup> Creating a platform for non-profit and private sector professionals to engage with each other will provide the coalition with an opportunity to foster relationships with potential new members to the campaign. For other Cities for CEDAW campaigns, this type of platform has also opened the door for new leads on potential government partners in CEDAW advocacy.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Blair Burnett et al., “Status of Women in North Carolina,” 2016.

<sup>29</sup> Barnett, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth Scott Osborne, interview by Jonathan Moyer, 23 March 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Barnett, 2016.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

## CONCLUSION

This best practices report seeks to inform WomenNC on the initial organizational steps the coalition could take to gain support so that legislative action may be effectively taken when the political climate is more amenable. With a strong organizational effort from WomenNC and the larger coalition, future advocacy efforts within the broader community and local government will be more streamlined and feasible. The three overarching recommendations outlined within this best practices report should proceed sequentially, so that the implementation of the proposals, which are backed by the Cities for CEDAW literature and semi-structured interviews, can create the strongest foundation for WomenNC as a leader in policy advocacy regarding issues of gender discrimination. By streamlining coalition communication, re-aligning the goals of the fellowship, and extending community outreach initiatives, WomenNC has the opportunity to expand upon its current progress to achieve positive impact in women's rights within North Carolina.

## Appendix A: Methodology

Based upon client feedback, our public policy capstone was tasked with researching best practices for the organization to move forward with their advocacy efforts. Our team began this process with thorough analysis of Cities for CEDAW campaign literature detailing best practice findings from other Cities for CEDAW campaigns. To understand the place of WomenNC and the North Carolina Cities for CEDAW coalition, our team determined that semi-structured interviews with individuals from different levels of the WomenNC organization and larger coalition were the best tool to assess the organizational structure and function. Due to time constraints and schedule limitations of individuals within WomenNC, the North Carolina Cities for CEDAW coalition, and other national coalition organizers, our team was only able to interview five individuals who are listed below. These individuals were selected based upon client recommendation, specifically, WomenNC's policy and advocacy lead, Cassie Holt.

### *Interviewees:*

- Elizabeth Scott Osborne, Chair of Cities for CEDAW Campaign in Sarasota, FL, 21 March 2016
- Isabella Higgins, Former WomenNC Fellow, 21 March 2016
- Mary Sue Barnett, Chair of Cities for CEDAW Campaign in Louisville, KY, 23 March 2016
- Beth Dehghan, Founder of WomenNC, 2 April 2016
- Younghee Overly, Founder of North Carolina chapter of UN Women, 6 April 2016

### *Interview Questions*

- **Questions Posed to Cities for CEDAW Campaign Coordinators**

- What is the status of your current Cities for CEDAW campaign?
  - How has the implementation of CEDAW been successful?
  - Biggest hurdles to passage of CEDAW and how you overcame them?
- Who were your most vital allies? How did they help you?
  - What was the status of your relationship with various government officials? How did you build these relationships?
- How was this campaign run? Lobbying versus grassroots efforts? What tactics did you use? What was easiest? Most effective?
  - How have you incorporated data into your persuasion to adopt CEDAW principles?
  - How did the coalition operate?
- What do you think other Cities for CEDAW campaigns can learn from your successes?
  - Do you foresee widespread implementation of CEDAW in American cities? Why or why not?
  - What do you predict are the biggest obstacles to implementation across the country?
  - What advice would you give for coalition building?
- What was the most serious women's issue CEDAW addressed in your area?
  - Which issue was addressed most effectively?
- Louisville specific: Given the political climate, how did you frame CEDAW to gain broad support?

- **Questions Posed to Other NC Coalition Members**

- How did you become involved with the WomenNC coalition?
- What is your role in lobbying for CEDAW?
  - What relationships do you have with the city council / county officials?
  - What is the composition of your organization?
  - Relevance of CEDAW to you? Does that shape your role?

- What do you hope to imitate and accomplish as seen from other Cities for CEDAW campaigns?
  - What do you anticipate being the greatest obstacle in implementation?
- **Questions Posed to Other WomenNC Members**
  - Where is WomenNC currently in the overall goal and process of ratifying CEDAW as a local county ordinance?
  - What has been the reception when pitching this? What are your thoughts behind the reaction?
  - Describe the coalition that has been created surrounding WomenNC. What are its strengths and weaknesses?
  - Where do you hope to see WomenNC within the next 5 years? What are big goals you hope to accomplish within that time frame?
  - What are important processes you currently abide by within your organization and why are they imperative to the way your organization functions?
  - What work are you looking to emulate from other Cities for CEDAW campaigns?

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Burnett, Blair, Tiffany Cox, Jonathan Moyer, and Victoria Waters. "Status of Women in North Carolina." (2016).

"The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women-CEDAW... Because Women's Rights Are Human Rights." (2015): n. pag. Web.  
<[http://citiesforcedaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CEDAW-USFact-Sheet-\\_10-22-15.pdf](http://citiesforcedaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CEDAW-USFact-Sheet-_10-22-15.pdf)>.

"Implementing CEDAW As A Local Ordinance," San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, accessed March 2016, <http://citiesforcedaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Fact-Sheet-on-Implementing-CEDAW-as-a-Local-Ordinance.pdf>

Los Angeles County Code § 175735. 2015.

"Mayor Garcetti to Issue Executive Directive on Gender Equity in City Operations." City of Los Angeles. <<http://www.lamayor.org/mayor-garcetti-issue-executive-directive-gender-equity-city-operations>> Accessed on 12 April 2016.

Menon, Anu, Ann Lehman, Laura Marshall, Emily Murase, and Linda Zane. *Human Rights in Action: San Francisco's Local Implementation of The United Nations' Women's Treaty (CEDAW)*. 2010.

Zeitlin, June, Marilyn Fowler, Ellen Buchman, Tyler Lewis, and Tara Yarlagadda, editors. "Cities for CEDAW: A Campaign to Make the Global Local." (2015): 1-10. Web.  
<[http://citiesforcedaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/CEDAW-toolkit\\_December-2015.pdf](http://citiesforcedaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/CEDAW-toolkit_December-2015.pdf)>.