



W100

Women Bridging Brussels



Women100 (W100) is a community of diverse women from all corners of Brussels who wish to connect and amplify the voices and actions of women in Brussels. We love our city and believe that its exceptional diversity is its strength in the 21st Century. We aspire to build bridges and break down barriers between women across Brussels. We aim to create a space that brings together women who are change makers from different fields from all Communes to imagine a powerful common vision and solutions for how we can co-create a Brussels that celebrates all communities, ages, origins, nationalities, languages, and abilities.

On 30 March 2019, more than 100 women reflecting Brussels' socio-demographic-cultural diversity met to discuss "how to live better together." Our discussions at the Bourse that day addressed several questions:

- What inequality do you experience today in your life in Brussels?
- What are your proposals to build solutions for these inequalities?
- Which existing or new initiatives could help connect women and communities with each other in Brussels?
- What actions can you take – can individuals take – to address these inequalities?
- What actions can we take collectively to address these inequalities?
- If you were Minister-President of the Brussels Region, what would you prioritize?

After the meeting, participants were asked their views of the meeting. Questions included: What was your overall impression of the W100 event – on a scale from not-so-

great to very good? Did the W100 meeting help you in any way? If so, how? As a result of W100, have you planned or taken any concrete actions? If so, what?

Forty percent (40%) of participants responded to the survey, much higher than typical post-event survey response rates. Of these:

- 71% described the meeting as “very good,” and 29% as “good.” No one gave the meeting a lower rating.
- 80% praised the organization of the meeting.
- 57% valued the diversity of meeting participants.
- 80% found the meeting helpful/useful.
- 26% have taken concrete action as a result of the W100 meeting, while an additional 43% indicated that they want / plan / hope / expect to take concrete action to follow-up the meeting.

On the online survey, respondents offered the following remarks.

« W100, c'est l'audace de rassembler 100 femmes d'horizons, de réalités et de background complètement différents pour construire un projet commun. Défi relevé haut la main ! Yes W100 can ! »

« Great to meet so many diverse women from different sectors and realise the similarities Nice to have an initiative for Brussels and not just the international sector. »

« Boeiende denk- en ontmoetingsplek voor vrouwen die vooruit willen, samen met anderen, zonder iemand achter te laten. Zelfs mannen niet. »

« Une possibilité d'échange avec les femmes qui vivent dans un autre contexte social complètement différent. Autour d'une même table: mères au foyer, avocates, chercheuse d'emploi , ambassadrices. De quoi revoir nos préjugés. »

« An inspiring day and an honour to be among so many committed and bright women of all ages and backgrounds with a common love of Brussels. »

« W100: bel exemple des voix de la diversité des femmes à Bruxelles. Celles que l'on n'entend que de temps en temps, ou très rarement ou jamais, mais qui ont tellement d'expériences à partager, d'idées pour améliorer la vie de tous les jours et le futur de la ville et de ses habitantes! »

« W100 is basically project hope, Brussels style. I felt so much power, so much love, so much hope in a room that welcomed women of all different backgrounds together, fighting for the same thing: making Brussels a better place to live for women and for all. »

« Sans aucun doute, je pense qu'il faille repartir sur une saison 2 avec la possibilité d'échanger sur nos projets respectifs, voire créer des alliances etc... »

« W100 was special in that I crossed paths with a lot of inspiring women I wouldn't have had the pleasure of meeting otherwise. »

« Nouer des liens avec une diversité de femmes incroyable et sortir avec des idées concrètes de changement plein la tête en seulement une seule journée - c'est possible ! »

« W100 was one of the most inspiring and memorable days I've had in Brussels. Women of all ages and walks of life in the room were there to listen and to share their challenges, sometimes very personal stories and ideas for ways forward. I come away with improved understanding and renewed hope for the city we call home. »

« C'était une journée riche en rencontres, en échanges et en débats. Enrichissante de tous les points de vue: (re)donner le goût de s'impliquer dans un projet citoyen, aller à la rencontre des "autres", se parler et se confronter pour trouver une entente et un chemin accepté et acceptable par chacune. »

« One of the most emotionally and intellectually satisfying days of my life. »

« Partons sur un W200 ! »

« W100 was een unieke kans om de enorme diversiteit van deze stad in de verf te zetten; de gesprekken verliepen sereen en we hebben kunnen vaststellen dat we meer met elkaar delen dan wat we denken. »

« L'événement W100 était une grande première à Bruxelles! Jamais autant de diversité n'a été rassemblée dans la même salle! C'est un projet à soutenir pour qu'il y en ait encore! Je pense que cela peut vraiment aider à faire bouger les choses à Bruxelles et dans le bon sens.

« W100 is not about excluding men, but about the links between different milieus in the city which can perhaps be made more easily by women because of some fundamental commonality of their experience. »

« Le genre de journée qu'on voudrait raconter à ses proches mais impossible de trouver les mots pour exprimer la chaleur ressentie. »

« W100 is een realistischer and authentiekere weerspiegeling van Brussel dan haar parlement, haar straatbeeld in eender welk kwartier, or haar reputatie buiten Brussel. Hier gonst het potentieel van één van de meest onderschatte steden van Europa, en leeft er een wezenlijke drang om oplossingen te vinden en in eigen handen te nemen. »

« Une journée plein d'énergie venant des femmes qui changent Bruxelles. pour une ville plus égale, plus ouverte, plus creative. »

« Une rencontre de femmes uniques dans toutes leurs diversités. »

« Belle initiative, première étape d'un processus de mise en place d'un réseau de femmes engagées, actives et ancrées dans diverses réalités. Grande richesse en perspective... »

« J'espère que W100 deviendra une référence en réalisant de beaux projets et un beau modèle de rencontre. »

« Ik was aangenaam verrast van de verschillende competentie van de aanwezige vrouw. »

« W100= 100 bruxelloises de toutes les couleurs, l même enthousiasme partagé, 100 idées et projets exprimés. »

« Unieke ontmoetingen in een uniek kader »

« Un expérience enrichissante et positive pour un meilleur "faire ensemble".

Suggestions for improvement varied widely. Some clear suggestions for next time included: choose a setting with better acoustics; send invitations further in advance; provide more concrete information about existing and prospective activities and initiatives; and end the meeting with concrete actions the participants can take.

W100 organizers are very happy with these results, and are looking ahead to strategize next steps to build on the success of the March 30 meeting.

This document highlights the main threads and common issues raised during these discussions.

To learn more, see www.w100.be or contact us directly at W100bxl@gmail.com.

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Thank you • Merci • Bedankt

TYPES OF INEQUALITY

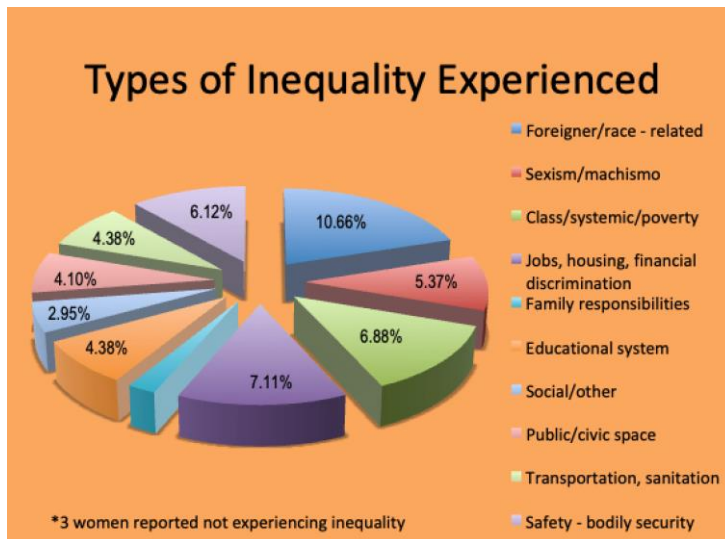
The women of Brussels who participated on March 30 experience a wide range of inequalities.

The mostly type of inequality most commonly cited was discrimination based on race or being of foreign origin. Eleven percent (11%) reported this concern.

Over 7% of women experience discrimination in getting fair treatment for housing, jobs and access to financial services.

Nearly 7% of women experience systemic class discrimination.

Just over 6% of women have concerns about physical safety and bodily security. Other types of discrimination include general sexism / machismo, in the educational system, in public transportation and sanitation, in public / civic space, in social relations and in family relations.



SOLUTIONS

On March 30, more than 90 solutions were suggested by participants.

Thirty-one percent (31%) of these focused on community work and social actions in local neighborhoods.

Nearly 20% focused on reforms to education and child care, and another 20% focused on eliminating discrimination in work and finances.

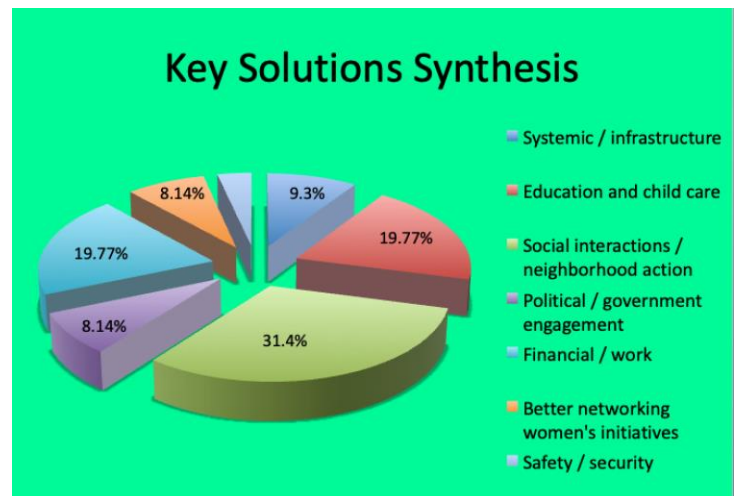
Other major topics for solutions focused on political / government engagement (8%), systemic / infrastructure issues (9%), and better networking and coordination among women’s initiatives.

Some solutions were complex; other solutions were quite straightforward. Complex solutions include:

- Women’s houses and platforms, online and offline with satellite sites, offering multiple services and activities and focusing on multiple themes
- Bilingual and multilingual schools, and cultural media, such as Belgian TV in several languages
- Mapping out and better connecting women-run and women-supporting associations, initiatives and organizations
- Development of a manifesto or pledge to support and defend each other.

Other solutions involved practical actions that can be taken by individuals or collectively. Examples include:

- Twinning/meet-ups: communes, schools, neighborhoods
- Organize school exchanges
- Visit a new commune on car free day – exploratory walks
- Make a Brussels recipe story book
- Community radio – give/elevate the voice of communities
- Identify spaces where women do/don’t feel comfortable
- Trainings for women, eg, self-defense, how to get a job, empowerment
- Assistance - gate openers, in commune offices to welcome and support newcomers
- Create an ASBL or private initiative



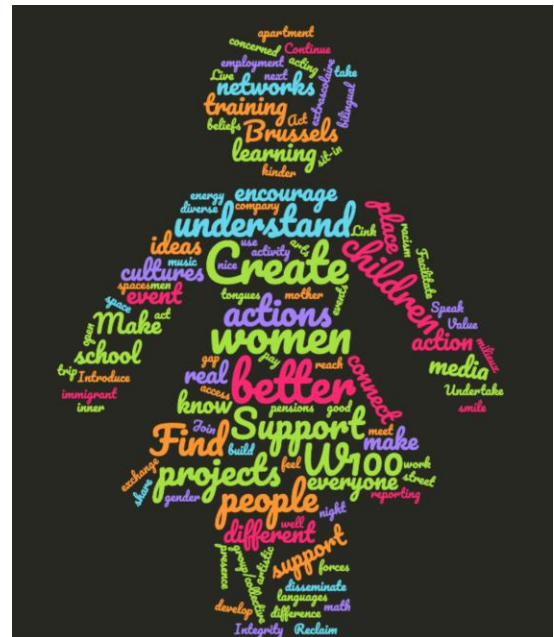
COLLECTIVE ACTION: W100

Participants were enthusiastic for future collective effort, and there was a strong interest in continuing to build W100 as an initiative.

They indicated wanting to see W100 develop a systematic mission and strategy. They urged that W100 be continued, convened regularly with local meetings.

The women urged creation of an online platform for sharing individual profiles for individuals and for women's initiatives and organizations.

There was a strong desire to see better connection of existing networks and taking direct action to address women's concerns in Brussels. Better dissemination of the work of W100, including through creation of a trademark, label or badge was commonly cited. The women are interested in seeing more sharing of good practices and resources among women. They suggested that politicians be provided with feminist language and data. Other collective actions include creation of a language-bridging platform for women to discuss personal issues; hold thematic sessions; and intercultural trainings.



ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT MINISTER-PRESIDENT OF THE BRUSSELS REGION

The women were asked what would they prioritize if they were the Minister President of the Brussels Region. Major themes that emerged were:

- Women in political decision-making posts, the convening of a “women's parliament;” install a post for women’s rights in each Commune
- Make Brussels more welcoming to "strangers" and newcomers; campaigns against racism and discrimination
- Better fund and reform the educational system with programs on inclusion, tolerance, gender stereotyping, multi-lingualism
- Address poverty and increase women's incomes and socio economic independence

The Women 100 organizers have been honored to initiate and facilitate this process and are looking forward to a future building on all the inputs from March 30.

