

*Industry Paper*

---

# **37 Ways that Women Deliver 2019 Delivered for Girls, Women, and Gender Equality**

---

Gretchen Gasteier  
Project Manager and MPH

---

***KEYWORDS:*** *Women Deliver, Gender Equality, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)*

DOI: <https://doi.org/xx.xxxxx/xxx.xxxx.xxxxxx>

## 37 Ways that Women Deliver 2019 Delivered for Girls, Women, and Gender Equality

Gretchen Gasteier

Project Manager and MPH

### Practitioner Report

---

#### Corresponding Author:

Gretchen Gasteier, Project  
Manager and MPH

#### E-mail:

ggasteier@womendeliver.org

#### How to cite this article:

Gretchen Gasteier (2023), 37  
Ways that Women Deliver 2019  
Delivered for Girls, Women, and  
Gender Equality. *International  
Journal of Business Events and  
Legacies*, 1(2), 55-63.

#### DOI:

[https://doi.org/xx.xxxxx/xx  
xx.xxxx.xxxxxx](https://doi.org/xx.xxxxx/xx<br/>xx.xxxx.xxxxxx)

**Date of Submission:** 2023-03-27

**Date of Acceptance:** 2023-06-05

**ABSTRACT:** Women Deliver is a global advocacy organization that focuses on gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights. While originally focused on maternal and newborn health, it has expanded to work on broader issues of gender equality while remaining strongly rooted in SRHR. The organization works both within and outside of the halls of power to advocate for economic and rights-based investment in gender equality and SRHR. Women Deliver has also bolstered the advocacy efforts of gender equality advocates around the globe by working with young advocates through its award-winning Young Leaders Program and convening triannual conferences that bring together decision-makers and advocates from diverse fields. Women Deliver prioritizes building a meaningful relationship with the local community that hosts its conferences, often highlighting women-led organizations and local issues and solutions.

**KEYWORDS:** *Women Deliver, Gender Equality, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)*

### The Conference and its Organisation

Over the past decade, Women Deliver (WD) has been working at the forefront of the gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) movement. While it began as a 20th-anniversary campaign for the neglected Safe Motherhood Initiative, with an exclusive focus on reproductive, maternal, and newborn health, Women Deliver has evolved into an independent organization focusing on gender equality more broadly, while remaining strongly rooted in SRHR. A strong advocate, eminent convener, and effective communicator, Women Deliver is a global advocacy organization working in new ways across sectors and issue areas to advance solutions and action on gender equality and SRHR. WD works within and outside the halls of power to make the economic and rights-based investment case to decision-makers and influencers globally.

Beyond their own advocacy work, Women Deliver has bolstered the advocacy efforts of gender equality advocates around the globe. WD has welcomed five classes of Young Leaders since 2010, working with 1,000 young advocates from 148 countries through its award-winning Young Leaders Program to strengthen their knowledge, skills, network, and resources to advocate for gender equality and SRHR. These young advocates have successfully influenced dozens of governments and organizational policies, agendas, and strategies at the global and national levels.

Women Deliver has brought together hundreds of thousands of advocates to galvanize momentum and drive change for girls and women through its triannual Conferences and virtual convenings. Since 2007, Women Deliver has convened five Conferences, growing to one of the largest and most influential convenings on gender equality in 2019 in Vancouver, Canada, with more than 8,000 in-person participants and more than 125,000 virtual participants from 169 countries.

Women Deliver Conferences convene thousands of decision-makers and advocates from diverse fields, including civil society, government, the private sector, and international agencies, alongside women's rights organizations and movements, youth-led and LGBTQIA+ organizations, and advocates representing the intersectional identities of girls, women, and underrepresented populations to identify solutions, bolster accountability, and drive change. WD2023 will adopt a greater focus on partnerships than ever before by building bridges between diverse actors and bringing country-level advocates' perspectives to bear, both in-person and virtually, every step of the way.

Women Deliver prioritizes building a meaningful relationship with the local community that hosts our conferences. We welcome locally-driven events as part of the Women Deliver experience. These events often highlight women-led organizations and focus on local issues and solutions.

## **Feminists Deliver**

A grassroots collaboration of British Columbia-based women, girls, non-binary, and Two-Spirit people and the organizations that support them hosted a four-day conference on the urgent issues facing indigenous and other communities in British Columbia. This collaboration was designed to build transnational connections between grassroots intersectional feminist movements and re-envision the global women's agenda as one of a diversity of grassroots intersectional feminist voices.

## **Longhouse Dialogues**

Four non-permanent longhouses in the style of the Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Pacific Island peoples were erected near the conference centre for a series of events and dialogues led by young, local, and indigenous peoples that explored issues pertinent to girls and women in British Columbia and globally. Organized by the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation, the goal was to build global solidarity and understanding of shared concerns.

## **The Road to WD2019**

Women Deliver used its power to gather people from across sectors and around the world, to listen to diverse voices, and to make sure we were addressing the most pressing issues of our time. A group of thought leaders and innovators from multi-lateral agencies, philanthropy, the private sector, civil society, and foundations came together to develop a concept and strategy for WD2019. We asked participants to help us develop a conference that would maximize delegates' effectiveness at rallying political support, persuading governments to fund initiatives that advance gender equality, and holding decision-makers accountable. We held this strategic planning session with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center.

Women Deliver conducted a nine-month Listening Tour, during which staff consulted with individuals and organizations from a wide range of sectors and geographies and heard perspectives from all over the world to inform and frame WD2019. 1,357 individuals filled out an online survey and 150+ contributed to group interviews. 72 organizations from a wide range of sectors and issue areas were consulted via in-person interviews (17 government institutions, 28 NGOs, 11 UN Agencies, 5 corporations, 16 foundations, 2 public-private partnerships, 2 media organisations, 1 think-tank and 3 other organisations). Stakeholders were based in 20 different countries.

### **Conference Advisory Group**

A flexible and active Advisory Group — comprised of representatives from multilateral institutions, NGOs, companies actively engaged in advancing gender equality, foundations, media, and academic/research institutions — provided strategic advice and input in the development and implementation of WD2019. Sectors represented included health, human rights, gender equality and women's rights, youth, education, nutrition, environment, and economic empowerment.

### **Youth Engagement Working Group**

The Women Deliver Youth Engagement Working Group, comprised of diverse youth-serving and youth-led organizations, collaborated and coordinated with us on efforts to develop and implement youth-forward programming at WD2019 and advance meaningful youth engagement.

### **Indigenous Advisory Circle**

Comprised of leaders from the Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, and Squamish Nations, the Indigenous Advisory Circle advised us on everything from the meaningful engagement of local indigenous communities in the entire WD2019 program to including indigenous art and culture in the Fueling Station.

### **Communications and Advocacy Group**

The Communications and Advocacy Group consisted of hundreds of partner organizations and their communications and advocacy leads. The group met regularly to identify issues and opportunities and amplify the messages and advocacy goals of WD2019. Some of the key announcements, digital moments, and media opportunities came from or were supported by the group.

## **Canada as Host Country**

After an extensive process, Women Deliver selected Canada as the host for WD2019 — in part because it is a country that has delivered for girls and women. While it can do more, Canada is committed to investing in gender equality. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stressed an ongoing commitment to a feminist international assistance policy.

Civil society in British Columbia and across Canada convened to help bring Women Deliver to the country. Vancouver embraced the concept of a conference that spilt out of the convention centre and supported the drive for gender equality in the community and around the world.

## **Indigenous Communities**

WD2019 was held on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, and Squamish Nations. During the selection process, their leadership embraced us as partners in the drive for women's leadership in all areas of public life. With the support of an Indigenous Advisory Circle, we listened and learned over many months and spent time with the Musqueam community to deepen our understanding. The Circle shared insights into the history and traditions of the community, and the WD2019 program reflected our learning.

## **The Government of Canada**

Canada truly stepped up. As a conference partner, the government provided financial support and organized many events around the world through its foreign missions to promote WD2019 participation and engagement. In addition, the Minister of International Development and Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Maryam Monsef, convened a Ministers Forum to discuss and deepen commitment to gender equality around the world. Ministers representing portfolios ranging from gender to human rights to foreign affairs to social service workshopped policy solutions to address challenges for adolescent girls, interacted with and mentored youth advocates, and detailed how they will use their power to influence change at home.

## **Canadians Mobilized for Women Deliver**

Women Deliver Mobilization Canada was established within the Canadian Partnership of Women and Children's Health (CanWACH) with representation across sectors such as banking, education, youth, health, philanthropy, INGOs, and more. More than 100 organizations joined, including Assemblée des groupes de femmes d'Interventions régionales, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the Toronto Foundation, the Women's Health Research Institute, and the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation. Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast engaged on issues where progress was deemed most necessary: gender-responsive health systems and services, gender-based violence, women's economic empowerment, and equal opportunity.

The Province of British Columbia and the City of Vancouver welcomed us and seized the opportunity to showcase their commitment to and vision for gender equality. The Honourable John Horgan, British Columbia Premier, and Vancouver Mayor Kennedy Stewart were among the champions of Women

Deliver. The Honourable Janet Austin, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, who places diversity and inclusion at the heart of her mandate, regularly champions gender parity and fighting for equality for the LGBTQIA+ community. She supported, engaged, and connected Women Deliver to partners all over the province.

A Women Deliver conference tradition, Vancouver hosted Culture Night, which encouraged delegates to meet locals for an evening of immersive culture, conversation, and entertainment. Culture Night showcases the host country and invites locals to see what Women Deliver is all about. Vancouver presented local bands, food trucks, and the art and civic life of Vancouver and British Columbia.

### **37 Ways that WD2019 Delivered**

Women Deliver has been strengthening and improving its measurement practices and the rigour with which the impact of our advocacy is measured. Our conferences are one tactic we use to advance gender equality and the health and rights of girls and women, and therefore, it is important to have data on their effectiveness.

Measuring the full impact of WD2019 is not feasible given that the conference convened more than 8,000 participants and the effect of their participation will reach across sectors and years into the future. However, Women Deliver rigorously tracked the outcomes of WD2019 using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to help determine the effectiveness of its model and approach.

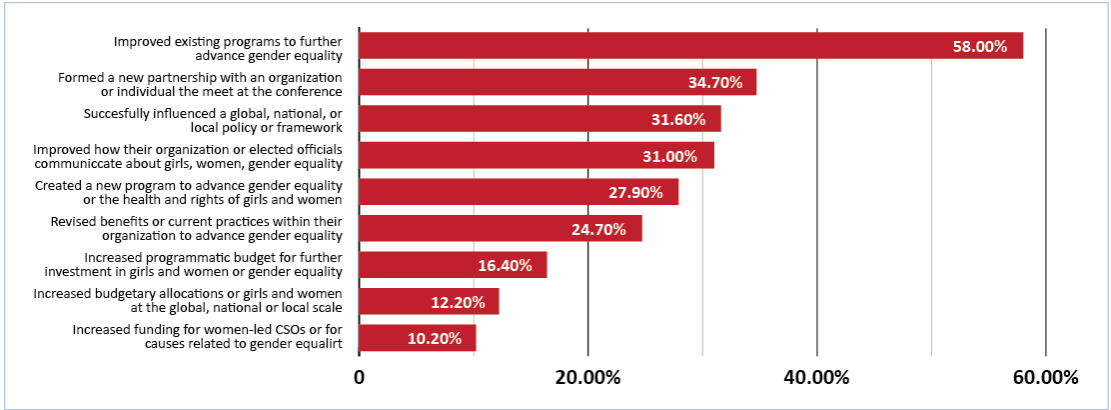
Women Deliver developed several surveys to measure the impact of WD2019. We disseminated surveys in-person using paper surveys and on the WD2019 conference app. After the conference, we disseminated a separate post-conference survey to all participants using Survey Monkey. Respondents were able to provide feedback on every session at WD2019.

Over 700 conference participants responded to surveys disseminated during the conference. This included participants at the Private Sector Pre-Conference, the Advocacy Academy, skills-building sessions, media training, and general concurrent and plenary sessions throughout the conference.

Following the conference, 3,102 respondents (or 39 per cent of conference participants) provided feedback in the post-conference survey disseminated via email.

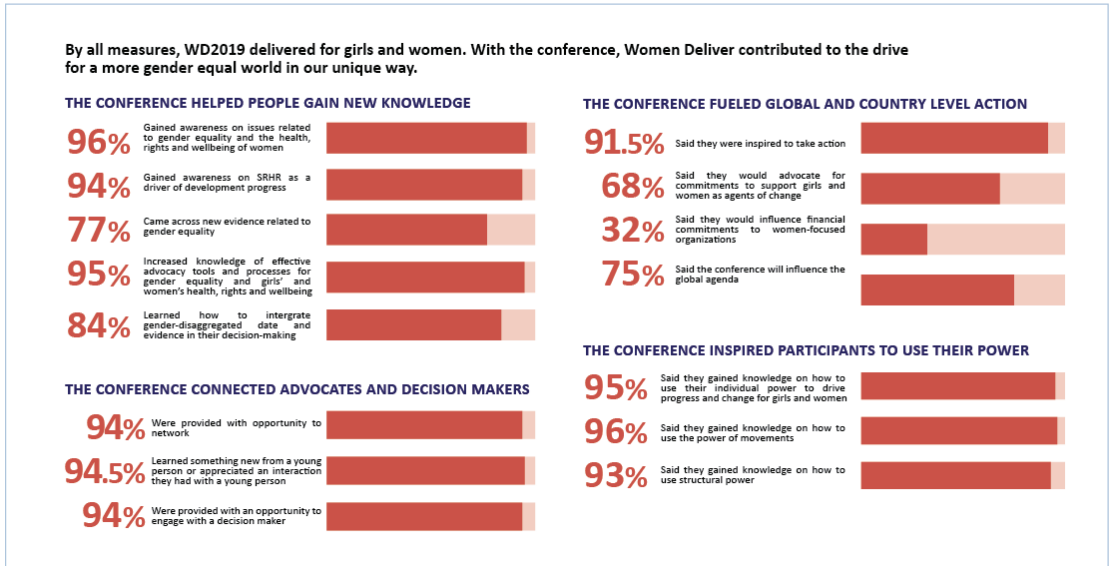
In addition to the collection of survey data, Women Deliver staff and conference consultants all developed post-conference memos and participated in a post-conference debrief to reflect on achievements and lessons learned. These memos and notes from the debrief sessions informed parts of this report and will be further analyzed to adapt the WD2022 Conference program as necessary.

Figure 1



This result is from a survey conducted in July 2020, one year post the event. Respondents were asked to select the ways attending WD2019 impacted their work over the following year.

Figures 2 to 5



These statistics are from the Post-Conference survey, which had 3,102 respondents.

The Women Deliver 2019 Conference was one step in the march towards a more gender-equal world. With more than 8,000 people – including heads of state, ministers, parliamentarians, academics, advocates, activists and journalists - from over 165 countries on-site and more than 100,000 people joining around the world through satellite events and the virtual conference, WD2019 connected advocates and decision-makers, fueled global and country-level action, and shined a global spotlight on the importance of gender equality. The new ideas, inspiration, and solutions shared at the conference will continue to inspire the world to harness power for good, demonstrate the power of gender equality, and catalyze investment in women-focused organizations and in sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The following list is a selection of ‘deliverables’ from this conference:

- Women-focused civil society organizations from crisis-affected communities advocated directly with donors and international organizations about the concrete actions needed to drive a more feminist and localized approach to humanitarian aid at the first Humanitarian Pre-Conference.
- Founders and leaders of some of the world’s most influential movements shared a stage for the first time in history. Leaders from #MeToo, Time’s Up, Ni Una Menos, climate, labour unions, citizen journalism, and others found commonalities for the way ahead.
- We welcomed participants from 49 countries to the inaugural Women Deliver Advocacy Academy to strengthen their skills and build connections.
- NGOs, grassroots, and survivor-led organizations from across the globe came together for the first time to create a unified plan to end female genital mutilation/ cutting by 2030.
- The Global Parliamentary Alliance on Health, Rights, and Development was launched, the first global platform for parliamentarians to advocate both in their home countries and abroad for better health care, expanded human rights, and SDGs.
- Canada raised the bar. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced a 10-year, CAD 1.4 billion annual commitment to gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- The second Generation Now: Our Health, Our Rights Pre-Conference co-hosted by the International AIDS Society and Women Deliver welcomed hundreds of youth changemakers and allies from around the world, and inspired multiple commitments to advocate for linked SRHR and HIV services, systems, and policies.
- Kenya pledged to lead. President Uhuru Kenyatta committed to ending female genital mutilation by 2022, ending child marriage, acting on climate change, and making primary and secondary education compulsory for all children.
- In collaboration with Women Deliver, the Overseas Development Institute launched an entire issue of its Humanitarian Exchange Magazine focused on addressing the needs of girls and women in emergencies, with nearly every article co-authored by a women-focused civil society organization.
- Merck and P&G, together with Women Deliver and campaign partners, launched the Deliver for Good Business Ally Network. These private sector champions are a new and important part of the Deliver for Good campaign, bringing the cross-sectoral approach required to drive solutions toward a more gender-equal world.



- The UN Foundation announced new and expansive commitments from ten global companies to improve the health and empowerment of more than 250,000 women workers and community members around the globe.
- At the Gender-Smart Investing Summit, nearly 200 top innovators representing trillions in assets under management gathered to address bottlenecks that slow the deployment of capital to projects and companies that champion gender equality.
- Pro Mujer announced a new joint venture with Deetken Impact to manage the Ilu Women's Empowerment Fund, a diversified portfolio of high-impact businesses in Latin America and the Caribbean that promote women in leadership and governance, gender-sensitive value chains, and workplace equity.
- The Government of Canada announced that it will invest CAD 300 million to bring granting, philanthropic, and investment worlds together into a single platform, the Equality Fund. The Fund is structured to create sustainable and predictable funding for women's rights organizations and movements in developing countries. The fund is expected to mobilize over CAD 1 billion in the next 15 years to empower girls and women around the world, working to shift how investment decisions are made for gender equality outcomes.

## Conclusion

Women Deliver convenes triennial conferences to connect, partner, and identify solutions and instigate action — together. Women Deliver conferences are designed to maximize delegates' effectiveness at rallying political support, persuading governments to fund initiatives that advance gender equality, and holding decision-makers accountable.

We know that policies and programs that address the whole girl and the whole woman, in all their intersecting identities, create a virtuous cycle that leads to more women in leadership and at decision-making tables, solving the world's most intractable problems.

The main conference outcomes tracked were related to:

- Influence
  - The salience of the power dynamics behind gender inequality and of the solutions that power progress for girls and women
  - Conference messaging uptake by decision-makers and by the media
  - Investments in gender equality by governments
- Capacity Building
  - Equipping conference participants with knowledge of and training on tools that will help them better advocate for and advance gender equality (and SRHR)
  - Equipping journalists, advocates, and influencers with the knowledge and tools to hold governments accountable for their commitments towards gender equality
- Access
  - Providing conference participants with access to new evidence, solutions, tools, and processes for gender equality (and SRHR)

- Creating the space and opportunity for conference participants to network
- Creating the space and opportunity for conference participants to engage with decision-makers
- Demonstrating effective meaningful youth engagement and creating space for others to meaningfully engage youth
- Action
  - Inspiring and equipping conference participants to use their power to take action at the individual, structural, and movement levels

Figure 6: Photo of delegates taken in the Fueling Station during WD2019.

