



## Peer-learning/City Twinning

Register here: <https://www.humanrightsgolocal.org/alga-registration/>

Room link: <https://webinars.humanrightsgolocal.org/b/hum-gdk-thl-7d9>

### Context and Rationale

No need to recall the several international, regional, and national commitments, legal instruments and institutional arrangements related to women's rights (CEDAW, the Global Agendas 2030 (SDG 5), Climate Agenda, New Urban Agenda, Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, Pact for the Future, African Union Agenda 2063 and its Protocol on Women's Rights (2003), national Constitutions, laws and regulations...). Let us recall this last commitment from the International Community in the Pact for the Future adopted in October 2024:

#### 1. Sustainable Development and financing for Development

**ACTION 8. WE WILL ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS AS A CRUCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO PROGRESS ACROSS ALL THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND TARGETS.**

“We recognize that the achievement of full human potential and sustainable development is not possible if women and girls are denied full human rights and opportunities. Sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development can only be realized when all women, adolescent girls and girls have their full human rights respected, protected and fulfilled. We decide to: (a) Take bold, ambitious, accelerated, just and transformative actions to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls; (b) Urgently remove all legal, social and economic barriers to achieve gender equality and ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making **in political, economic and public life.**“

We are only five years away from the implementation date of the SDGs, but the results achieved to date have not yet met the ambitions and expectations, not to say they are not on a good track, as women and girls continue to face different forms of inequality, discrimination, violence and vulnerability, everywhere and in all sectors, in particular at the subnational level. Access to power and decision-making is one of those areas where there is still a long way to go.

Indeed, throughout the world, the number of women who have accessed elective or executive positions does not reach parity, especially in Africa. Only a few countries (Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, etc.) have succeeded in adopting strategies, public policies, measures and tools that have allowed women to benefit

from a facilitating, supportive, enabling, and encouraging environment, sometimes by imposing and adopting some affirmative actions (the use of quotas for example).

However, women have demonstrated everywhere that when they have access to opportunities and resources, when they access to power and decision-making, they are “**Game Changers**”, bearers of commitment, creation, creativity and ensuring that the values and principles of effective Governance are respected and implemented. They are also citizen-oriented and solution-oriented.

It is in this context and based on their commitment and partnership that the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) based in Rabat (Morocco) and the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels under the auspices of UNESCO, based in the City of Graz (Austria) have decided to organize and implement an ambitious Peer-Learning/City Twinning Program during 2025, in the form of a series of Webinars on Women's Rights.

In a globalized world, peer-to-peer exchange and collaboration, like city twinning initiatives, between local authorities from different municipalities and regions play a vital role in addressing human rights issues at the local level.

Recognizing the importance of peer-to-peer exchange, the UNESCO Centre in Graz and UCLG Africa Academy ALGA will organise 3 webinars for peer-to-peer learning in the spirit of a city twinning cooperation among African female human rights multipliers of local authorities and women representatives of local authorities of the City of Graz, Austria.

The webinars focus on the following highly relevant topics for local politics:

- 1. Participation of women in local politics;**
- 2. Prevention of gender-based violence;**
- 3. Inclusion through sports.**

### **The Modalities & Exchange:**

Each of these webinars will last for about 2 hours. The peer exchange is moderated by the Centre. ALGA organises the participation of 10 to 15 African female representatives of local authorities (REFELA and others) and the Centre organises the participation of women's representatives of local authorities from Graz (including the Mayor and Deputy-Mayor).

These peer-to-peer exchanges represent an important chance to enhance understanding, cooperation, and joint action to address human rights issues at the local level. By leveraging the expertise, experiences, and diverse perspectives of female local authorities from Graz and African cities, this initiative aims to contribute to advancing human rights and sustainable development in both regions.

The peer-to-peer exchange will bring together women's representatives of local authorities from African cities and the city of Graz to discuss key human rights issues. The webinars will focus on:

**1. Political Participation:** Exploring best practices and challenges related to promoting inclusive political participation at the local level, with a particular emphasis on engaging marginalized communities. (Online-event on 19 March 25, 15-20 participants)

More information and statistics on the representation of women:  
[Women in Local Government | Global overview](#)

**2. Gender-Based Violence:** Addressing the issue of gender-based violence in both African cities and Graz, with a focus on sharing strategies and interventions to support survivors and prevent future incidents. (Online-event on 18 June 2025, 15-20 participants)

**3. Social Inclusion through sports:** Discussing sports offers as means to empower girls and women and ensure inclusion. (Online-event on 29 October 25, 15-20 participants)

### **Main Objective**

This Program aimed at fostering partnerships with African cities to address human rights challenges at the local level. These webinars serve as platforms for female multipliers as representatives of local authorities to engage in dialogue, as well as foster knowledge exchange, and collaborative problem-solving.

### **Target groups:**

Elected women, Mayors, gender experts, activists at the local level.

### **How to participate?**

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**AGENDA OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> WEBINAR / EXCHANGE:  
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

<b>When? /What?</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Facilitators</b>
<p><b>Graz Local Time: 12:00-12:15</b></p> <p><b>Opening</b> Welcoming Remarks Opening speech on promoting women's rights at the local level</p>	<p><b>Hon. Ms Rohey Malick Lowe</b> President of REFELA, Lord Mayor of Banjul, The Gambia, represented by <b>Hon. Dr Fatna EL-K'Hiel</b>, Deputy-President of REFELA, President of REFELA-Morocco National Chapter, Mayor of Arbaoua, Morocco.</p> <p><b>Hon. Ms Elke Kahr</b>, Mayor, City of Graz, Austria.</p>	<p><b>Dr. Isabella Meier</b>, UNESCO C2 Centre Graz, Austria.</p>
<p><b>12:15-12:45</b> Advisory Boards / Councils as an example of good practice for the political participation of women at local level Information on the functioning of these councils (structure, mandate, how to establish it), What works?</p>	<p><b>Ms Anna Majcan</b>, Women's Council Graz Austria.</p> <p><b>Dr Elke Lujansky-Lammer</b>, Human Rights Council Graz, Austria.</p>	<p><b>Dr Isabella Meier</b></p>
<p><b>12:45-13:00pm</b> REFELA of UCLG Africa as an example of good practice for the empowerment of women at local level.</p>	<p><b>Cll Ms Doreen Kalimba</b> Member of RALGA Board, Chair of Local Economic Development Commission, Chairperson of Kayonza District Council, Rwanda "Promoting Women's Rights at the Local Level in Rwanda and Kayonza District.</p>	<p><b>Dr Najat Zarrouk</b> UCLG Africa, Morocco.</p>
<p><b>13:00pm-13:15pm</b> The experience of the Prefectoral Council of Skhirate-Temara, Morocco.</p>	<p><b>Hon. Ms Aatimad Zahidi</b> President of the Prefectoral Council of Skhirate-Temara, Morocco.</p>	<p><b>Dr Najat Zarrouk</b></p>

<p><b>13:15pm-13:50pm</b> Discussion / exchange:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the most important cultural, structural, and political barriers women face in political spaces?</li> <li>2. What are successful approaches / strategies to overcome these barriers?</li> <li>3. What are necessities and conditions to foster political participation of women in African cities and in Graz?</li> </ol>	<p>All participants</p>	<p><b>Dr Isabella and Dr Najat</b></p>
<p><b>13:50pm-14:00pm</b> Closing + outlook to the next seminar.</p>	<p><b>Dr Isabella &amp; Dr Najat</b></p>	