WOMEN FOCUS
CANADA INC.

WFC Capacity-Building Evaluation Report

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Background

Women Focus Canda ("WFC") was founded in 2018.

WFC's mission is to: *"[…] end poverty in Canada by empowering women with resources, advocacy, and community support to achieve economic stability, personal and professional growth. [WFC] is committed to dismantling barriers, fostering equal opportunities, and amplifying women's voices to create lasting, and positive change nationwide."*[1]

WFC's vision is of "[*a] Canada where all women, regardless of their background or circumstances, have access to the resources, opportunities, and support they need to thrive.*"[2]

From its inception, WFC was reliant on *ad hoc* funding and the generosity of volunteers in order to engage in projects. As a project-based and project-funded organisation, it pivoted flexibly to meet each project's requirements but was unable to grow its own administrative capacity, as it was constrained by the scope and limits of each project.[3] As a result, WFC's impact was limited to whichever projects were being funded and the organisation was unable to fulfil its mission from a position of strength and stability.

WAGE Funding to Advance Organizational Capacity

In 2024, Women and Gender Equality Canada ("WAGE") funded WFC to build and enhance its operational management effectiveness and efficiency.[4]

Specifically, the project that was funded intended to:

> *"[…] significantly advance its organizational capacity to support gender equality and poverty reduction. By allocating resources to hire experienced consultants, [WFC] will build a competent team capable of expanding service delivery and pursuing sustainable funding.*
>
> *[…] Plans to enhance its operational efficiency, increased program offerings, and foster knowledge sharing amongst partners.*

[1] Women Focus Canada's website (accessed February 27, 2026) [online: https://womenfocuscanada.org/who-we-are/]
[2] Women Focus Canada's website (accessed February 27, 2026) [online: https://womenfocuscanada.org/who-we-are/]
[3] Interview of February 27, 2026
[4] Per Work Plan provided by WFC to the author, available at *Annex A – Project Description, Activities and Expected Results*, pg. 9 of 19.

[…] Expected to broaden community impact by addressing local issues collaboratively.

Key activities include assessment of governance, leadership development, recruitment, training, policy development to be measured by specific performance measurement methods

[…] Develop a funding strategy and expand its partnership network, integrate technology to improve operational efficiency and measure impact through internal evaluation."[5]

Methodology for This Evaluation

This Evaluation Report is consistent with Work Plan Key Activities D1 & D2.

1. The Evaluator attended a meeting during which several consultants presented updates regarding the work they had been doing for WFC, on April 15, 2025.

2. The Evaluator met several times with WFC Administration to identify and guide the collation of documentary evidence that ultimately informed this report.

3. Upon the Evaluator's request, WFC administration prepared 2 chronologies for the Evaluator to review:

    a. A chronology laying out the order of events that took place, including hyperlinks to supporting evidence ("Event Chronology"); and

    b. A chronology of social media, outlining engagement with the community ("Engagement Chronology") and how WFC's increased capacity has translated into public outputs.

    These chronologies provide a cohesive timeline answering the 'who' 'what' 'when' and 'why', 'where' of each activity / line item and are cited throughout this report.

4. The Evaluator reviewed the documentary evidence collated by WFC.

5. The Evaluator conducted three interviews:

[5] Work Plan provided by WFC to the author, available at *Annex A – Project Description, Activities and Expected Results*, pg. 9 of 19.

a. Two group interviews with the Executive Director, Dr. Oluremi Adewale ("Remi") and Project Coordinator, Glenda Mattinson ("Glenda") together, twice. The first interview took place on February 27th, 2026, and the second on March 20th, 2026.

b. A final group interview, with both the ED and Project Coordinator as well as the Business Development Officers, Osinachi Okey-Okore ("Osinachi") took place on March 26th, 2026.

Building Capacity

WFC was awarded the funding in June 2024[6] and began receiving funds in September 2024. Commencing shortly after receipt of funds, WFC hired one full-time staff member; one part-time staff member; and several consultants in order to build administrative capacity ranging from website-management and cyber-security, to governance, and more.

Staff

Within less than a month of receiving the funds, WFC expanded from a single part-time member of staff, Executive Director ("ED"), Oluremi Adewale, more than doubling its capacity by hiring Project Coordinator, Glenda Mattinson.

Soon after, in October 2024, WFC hired a staff member for the part-time role of Business Development Officer ("BDO"). Unfortunately, the person undertaking this role left WFC only three months later in January 2025, in order to undertake a full-time role elsewhere. WFC was able to rapidly fill this position by the current BDO, Osinachi, who was onboarded in February 2025.

These three staff members now form the core team at WFC and have been able to engage in several activities, partnerships, community partnerships, programs, and events between September 2024 and March 2026.

With the assistance of consultants, WFC has been able to implement project management software enabling staff to operate with improved efficiency.

Consultants

WFC invested in consultants who assisted the organisation in the following realms: communication[7], information technology ("IT"), cyber-security[8], human resources[9] and

[6] E-mail from Remi of March 26, 2026.
[7] Event Chronology , line 11
[8] Event Chronology, lines 5, 11
[9] Event Chronology, line 6

governance policies[10]. WFC also retained consultants to advise them with respect to, and assist them with developing strategies for, various types of fund-raising. It was crucial to WFC that they would be able to sustainably advance their mission and vision by the end of the grant-period. As such, with respect to fund-raising, WFC hired consultants to assist them with understanding how to: effectively pursue grant applications[11], prepare funding proposals[12], and develop fund-raising templates.[13] WFC also received assistance updating their *Canada Helps* page from a consultant. [14]

Consistent with Key Activities A, B, and C within the Work Plan, i.e. the review of existing policies, development of new policies based on consultant recommendations, and the implementation of recommendations and new policies,[15] the consultants reviewed the existing policies and procedures, made recommendations, and developed assets for WFC's use. Further, some of these consultants also provided informal or formal training to various members of the WFC ecosystem, including board members, staff, consultants, students, and volunteers. Whilst much of the training was for staff and volunteers, some consultants were invited to receive training where it was felt the training would enhance their ability to provide tailored support to WFC.[16]

Whilst WFC's initial aim, per Key Activity B, was to audit existing, and develop, digital fund-raising infrastructure, support from the fund-raising consultants enabled WFC to not only increase its fund-raising capacity in digital formats, but also traditional ones. For example, whilst fund-raising consultants were able to assist with the *Canada Helps* website, support in the form of fund -raising templates can be used not only for digital fund-raising activities but also traditional fund-raising applications. Further, fund-raising consultants also improved WFC's traditional donor-relationship management, for example, by developing a 'Thank You Call Manual'.[17] This, in turn, fulfilled parts of Key Activities C1 and C2, which involved the review of WFC's pre-existing communication tools, and developing an outreach and communication plan, respectively,

Student Placements

With the addition of new staff, WFC was able to increase capacity by engaging in student placement programs with four educational institutions, namely Centennial College, Sheridan College, International Business University, and Canadian Care College. In addition to cultivating relationships with these educational institutions,

[10] Event Chronology, lines 12, 16
[11] Event Chronology, line 26
[12] Event Chronology, line 13
[13] Event Chronology, line 4
[14] Event Chronology, line 25
[15] Work Plan provided by WFC to the author, available at *Annex A – Project Description, Activities and Expected Results*, pg. 9 of 19.
[16] Interview of March 26th, 2026.
[17] Event Chronology, lines 4, 79

WFC also pursued other avenues to increase its capacity via student bodies: some of the student placements were facilitated by the platform Riipen, which matches students with organisations offering student placement programs. Through student placement programs initiated either through relationships cultivated with institutions or through recruitment via the Riipen platform, WFC was able to increase its available workforce temporarily, whilst also building relationships with student-members of its workforce.

A good example of how WFC was able to leverage the relationships it developed with students is the case of Centennial College student "J". J worked on multiple projects, including making in excess of 100 calls to organisations[18], in order to support WFC's relationship-building efforts during their placement. Following the end of J's student placement, J requested to stay on as a WFC volunteer, demonstrating WFC's successful relationship-development as well as talent acquisition and retention.

Volunteer Recruitment & Support Services

WFC also increased capacity via volunteer recruitment and retention. They aim to provide volunteers with a supportive experience, increasing the likelihood of retaining their volunteer-force. For example, they host WhatsApp groups for different volunteer groups through which they provide information to their volunteers and communicate with them.

As a result of improvements to WFC's digital infrastructure, a volunteer registration sign-up was added to the website. During the grant period, WFC also began leveraging events in order to recruit volunteers. As of March 2026, WFC created marketing materials for volunteer-recruitment that were used for the *HerStory* event in October 2025; and WFC intends to replicate their volunteer-recruitment efforts at this event at future events.

As a result of the funding to increase WFC's capacity, WFC staff are able to manage the volunteers. Both staff hires, the Project Coordinator and the BDO, are often responsible for volunteer-management and WFC allocates such responsibilities on a case-by-case basis. The Project Coordinator explained that when both the Project Coordinator and the BDO are working on the same event, that the BDO typically manages volunteers who are presenting or 'front-facing' whilst the Project Coordinator tends to oversee volunteers who assist in various other capacities, for example running the registration desk.

Though WFC had historically engaged volunteers for projects and events, the WFC ED describes the impact of the capacity-building funding as having "*leveraged volunteers*

[18] Interview of March 26, 2026.

and increased our number of volunteers – because we have capacity, we have been able to strengthen [our volunteer engagement]".[19]

Assets Developed

The capacity building funding resulted in assets being developed both in-house and with the assistance of consultants. For example, the Project Coordinator produced a Volunteer Interview and Onboarding Manual, following the receipt of in-house training from the WFC ED.

Similarly, several assets were developed with the assistance of consultants, ranging from forms, surveys, procedures, strategies and recommendations, checklist tools, and scholarship proposal templates, to name a few. All of these assets were translated into French making them consistent with both of Canada's official languages.

External translation support was hired to assist WFC with the website and the translation consultant advised that WFC could also use online available translation software for in-house materials, exemplifying the use of consultants to keep WFC's operations cost-effective.

More traditional marketing assets were also developed. For example, WFC produces a newsletter on an *ad hoc* basis and a newsletter sign-up form had been added to the website as an asset which aims to improve WFC's community outreach. [20] Similarly, WFC have instituted a customer relationship management ("CRM") platform to assist with maintaining their community, partners, community partners, donors, and volunteer relationships, consistent with Key Activity C.

Challenges

Volunteer Technology-Adoption

Though WFC was able to increase its capacity via its volunteer base, the volunteers who had experience working with Google Docs struggled to adopt the Outlook Platform and programming. The Program Coordinator made efforts to explain why WFC was using outlook but fundamentally the volunteers found this to be a less user-friendly experience.

WFC also faced challenges with respect to timelines: the Project Coordinator explained that "there is overhead in getting WFC outlook accounts for all volunteers, and sometimes our timelines for an event are too short to accomplish this. So sometimes

[19] Per Remi, interview of March 26, 2026.
[20] Event Chronology, line 190

we put things like team updates in Google documents so even our new newest volunteers receive them promptly."[21]

With respect to user-adoption, going forward, WFC could improve user-adoption by asking users who struggle to adopt technology to champion the new technology and even develop workshops or training for other users. This would incentivise users to learn the required platforms and programs and increase knowledge translation within the organisation.

With respect to timelines, it would be helpful for WFC to establish a policy or a set of internal guidelines with respect to when they will use Google Docs and when they will use the Microsoft / Outlook suite.

Developing Key Performance Indicators

Work Plan Key Activity D3 required WFC to develop measurable Key Performance Indicators ("KPIs") to track progress and success per deliverable.

In November 2025, the Project Coordinator inquired with respect to KPI's with WFC's Communication & IT consultant. The consultant advised that the organisation was in too preliminary in stage to use traditional KPIs but that WFC could begin to use KPI's as the organisation matured.

Whilst this was a challenge, WFC did have some success with developing and implementing KPIs at this stage. The Event Chronology and Engagement Chronology documents created for this Evaluation track each deliverable, program, and event, and provide associated notes as well as hyperlinks to relevant documents, but do not *explicitly* define their definition of success. However, each Chronology highlights which parts of WFC's mission that each project, program, or event fulfill, thereby serving as a form of tracking success against the metric of WFC's Mission Statement.

The Evaluator suggested that the Project Coordinator research KPIs used in non-profits, which the Project Coordinator did towards the end of the grant period. The Project Coordinator reported that many of the recommended KPIs were items that WFC already monitors and that the organisation would like to adopt these formally in upcoming programs, projects, and events. The Project Coordinator advised that select KPIs have been integrated in the WFC's internal project template to ensure that these KPIs will be tracked and used in the future.

Further, the WFC website master is investigating whether they can use selected KPIs to track the success of the International Women's Day event, that took place on March 7th, 2026. If this is possible, WFC will have successfully implemented KPIs for this one event and can continue this practice on a project-by-project basis.

[21] WhatsApp exchange between Project Coordinators and the Evaluator on March 30th, 2026.

Ripple Effect: From Capacity to Community Impact

> *"[WFC] will build a competent team capable of expanding service delivery and pursuing sustainable funding. [...] Plans to enhance its operational efficiency, increased program offerings, and foster knowledge sharing amongst partners. [...] Expected to broaden community impact by addressing local issues collaboratively."*[22]

As WFC increased its capacity within the organisation, its programming and outreach efforts flourished.[23] Though a review of outcomes is outside of the scope of this Evaluation Report, it is worth noting the community impact WFC has been able to effect during the grant period, especially in light of the goals set out in the Work Plan, highlighted above, such as: "expanding service delivery and pursuing sustainable funding", increasing program offerings, fostering knowledge sharing amongst partners, and broadening community impact.

To these ends, during the grant period, WFC was able to:

a) Host programs such as the *Youth Civic Engagement Program* (YCEP), a cyber-bullying program, the *Click with Confidence* program, the *LaunchHer Pad*, and conduct a trade-skills survey;

b) Create, and obtain funding for, scholarships for nursing and HVAC students;

c) Host events such as the *HerStory Expo* and an event celebrating International Women's Day 2026; and

d) Build both partnerships and community partnerships.

   WFC defines *partnerships* as relationships in which the partners provide or exchange resources to or with WFC; they define *community partnerships* as people and organisations who have become part of WFC's overall network, and with whom they may share information, event details, or who will help advertise WFC initiatives.

   a. WFC established partnerships with organisations such as: the CIBC Foundation, City of Brampton, Sheridan College, Centennial College, Telus, TD Insurance, The Redwood, and Canadian All Care College.

[22] Work Plan provided by WFC to the author, available at *Annex A – Project Description, Activities and Expected Results*, pg. 9 of 19.
[23] For a detailed account, please see the Engagement Chronology.

b. WFC also established several community partners, such as: Women's Habitat of Etobicoke, Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub, HiMark, Sacred Motherhood and the Toronto Foundation.

Whilst the WAGE capacity building funding was not responsible for this programming, the fact that WFC had the capacity to engage in such programs, collaborations, and partnerships is likely, at least in part, a result at the funding they received to increase WFC's capacity.

Next Steps

WFC has expressed its desire to obtain further funding to have its consultants return to create and deliver comprehensive training to staff, potentially other consultants and volunteers.

Conclusion

Over the course of the grant-period, WFC was able to substantially meet the requirements set out in their Work Plan. In some regards, such as fund-raising supports, they were able to exceed what they set out to achieve in the Work Plan; in others, such as the development of KPIs, they were less successful, but nonetheless, have set the foundation for being able to move forward within the spirt of the Work Plan.

Final Comments

All the staff at WFC interviewed expressed their gratitude to WAGE for supporting them in being able to pursue their mission more effectively. They intend on continuing to leverage the capacity they have built thus far as they move forward.