

Strengthen Girls' and Women's Political Participation and Decision-Making Power

Facts, Solutions, Case Studies, and Calls to Action

OVERVIEW

The full and equal political participation of women is a prerequisite for democratic governance. However, globally, girls and women continue to be marginalized from the political sphere due to restrictive laws and institutional barriers, discriminatory cultural practices, and disproportionately low access to quality education, healthcare, and resources. Yet reversing discriminatory policies and practices is possible and has been done.

This policy brief examines various proven solutions to addressing barriers in institutions, sociocultural norms, and individual capacity in order to empower all girls and women and amplify their voices in decision-making processes. The interventions presented range from raising awareness among girls and women — particularly the most marginalized — of their rights and national power structures, to fostering inclusivity in leadership roles.

SECTION 1: FRAMING THE ISSUE

Girls and women have the right to engage in civil society, vote in elections, be elected to government office, serve on boards, and make their voices heard in any process that will ultimately affect them, their families, and their communities. While girls younger than 18 rarely have the right to vote or be elected to office, the right to have their voices heard in decision-making processes is one instilled in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹

Moreover, at a time where nearly half of the world's countries are considered democracies, the inclusion and equal participation of all citizens has become increasingly critical for good governance, which in turn is necessary for sustainable peace and development.² By investing in gender-responsive political participation, the international community not only moves closer to realizing girls' and women's basic human rights, but also to fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets that depend upon it. While achieving gender equality and empowering girls and women is the goal of SDG 5 — Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls — the benefits of including girls and women are cross-cutting, paving the way to more inclusive and resilient democracies, balanced economies, and enhanced peacebuilding capacities.^{3,4} As of June 2018, an estimated 23.8% of national parliamentarians were women, an increase of more than 12% since 1995.^{5,6} Women have also increasingly taken on positions of power as corporate leaders, civil society activists, political party leaders, mayors, cabinet ministers, prime ministers, and presidents.^{7,8} Despite this progress, there is still a long road ahead to achieving gender equality in the political sphere. Although multiple international agreements, regional frameworks, and national laws recognize girls' and women's right to lead and participate in politics as a measure of democratic integrity, the widespread absence of women in political and decision-making bodies persists. Furthermore, as of October 2017, only 11 women worldwide were serving as heads of state and 12 were serving as Head of Government.⁹ As of January 2017, only 31 countries in the world had 30% or more women ministers.¹⁰ As of 2016, women held an estimated 32% of senior management positions in the central governments of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.¹¹ As of 2016, young women represented 40% of the world's parliamentarians that are younger than 30. Since young people make up less than 2% of the world's parliamentarians, young women are still amongst the most underrepresented globally.¹² Both male and female legislators face numerous pitfalls during political campaigns, but women are three times as likely to worry about gender discrimination and twice as likely to fear not being taken seriously as their male counterparts.¹³

While women face multiple barriers to their full participation, it is as girls that they often first experience the challenges, which can limit their political participation and leadership later in life.¹⁴ Prevailing social norms and cultural attitudes discourage girls' and young women's political activism, which in turn limits their willingness and agency to take political action.¹⁵ With little encouragement from their direct environment and limited female role models in the public sphere, levels of engagement in party activism among young women are lower than that of young men.¹⁶

In humanitarian, conflict, and post-conflict settings, resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security acknowledges the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, in humanitarian response, and in post-conflict reconstruction.¹⁷ The resolution also affirms the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in peace and security processes. Additionally, older adolescent girls' and young women's participation in peace processes is guaranteed under resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security. However, in nearly twenty years since resolution 1325 was adopted, little progress has

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Meeting the demand to invest in women's political participation and decision-making power is linked to the achievement of several SDGs and targets, including:

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- **5.5** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life
- **5.c** Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

- **10.2** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status
- **10.3** Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and action in this regard

SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.



been made in facilitating and supporting gender-sensitive engagement. Despite the proven results and importance of including girls' and women's voices in conflict resolution, women remain a small minority of United Nations military peacekeepers and parliamentarians in conflict-afflicted countries.¹⁸ Additionally, data from 31 peace negotiations between 1992 and 2011 showed that women accounted for only 4% of signatories to peace agreements and represented less than 9% of negotiators at peace tables in the 17 cases for which data was available.¹⁹

Multiple barriers prevent women from taking their place within the political arena, including legal, political, and cultural constraints. These barriers — which are often rooted in exclusionary traditional gender norms — bring additional challenges for women who belong to marginalized groups. Even when men and women share the same barriers, women remain at a disproportionate disadvantage because of the ways in which interconnected systems of power impact those who are most marginalized. Therefore, meaningful political participation of girls and women needs to address the overlapping dynamics of inequality and should be representative of all girls and women, including those from indigenous communities, those with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ groups, and girls and women living in fragile settings.^{20,21}

SECTION 2: SOLUTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

The systemic barriers that girls and women face to their meaningful political inclusion occur and must be addressed on three levels: the *individual*, *institutional*, and *socio-cultural*.^{22,23,24} While change may not happen simultaneously on each level, all three must be addressed in order to create an enabling environment for girls and women to reach equal and sustainable political participation. Breaking down the barriers and creating opportunities at each level calls for a collaborative effort among states, civil society, and the international community.^{25,26} Each of these stakeholders, from lawmakers to activists to religious or traditional leaders and family members, can play a different role in addressing different challenges.²⁷ Additionally, instituting mechanisms that report on gender-equality commitments and ensure accountability for increasing women's political participation are essential for tracking progress and collecting data at the local and state level. The path forward needs to ensure and support girls' and women's right to be involved in decision-making and political processes. This should be rooted in the following solutions:

- Introduce gender quotas as transitional mechanisms
- Promote girls' and women's rights, and participation in conflict prevention, mitigation of humanitarian crises, and peacebuilding processes
- Promote access to decision-making spaces and political processes for all women, especially the most marginalized
- Create training and leadership pathways that are gender sensitive
- Foster inclusivity in leadership, civic engagement, and decision-making in public and private spheres
- Ensure political environments are free from gender-based discrimination and violence
- Ensure recognition of women in decision-making capacities

Introduce Gender Quotas as Transitional Mechanisms

Evidence suggests that when women are elected to political positions, they make a difference for girls and women and strongly impact legislation.²⁸ In many cases, women are more likely to pursue inclusive policies and respond to constituent concerns;²⁹ they tend to push for positive change around health, community wellbeing, poverty reduction, and family welfare, and are more likely to strive to reach a consensus on policies.^{30,31,32}

When well-designed and properly implemented, quotas can be effective, temporary measures to increase women's access to decision-making positions while transitioning to the point where a gender balance in political leadership can be achieved and sustained.³³ Quotas can be adapted to fit a variety of political system, structures, and contexts, and while they may not work in every situation, they can be particularly crucial within electoral systems that are not conducive to equal participation.³⁴ Quotas often address an institutional barrier — whether within political parties, at a national level, or in private sector — and ideally, rather than placing the onus on individual women to succeed, they demand action from institutional actors and power-holders.³⁵ As of June 2017, 46 single or lower houses that were comprised of 30% or more women had some form of a quota system in place — either legislative candidate quotas or reserved seats.³⁶ Additionally, a 2017 report on women in parliament showed that women won more than 30% of seats in countries where quotas were used, compared to 15.4% of seats in countries where no form of gender quotas were used.³⁷

Case Study: Doubling the Proportion of Women Parliamentarians in Senegal

In 2010, after long-term efforts by civil society and the national cross-party women's network, Senegal adopted legislation calling for women to be guaranteed seats in all elective bodies at every level of government. It set mandatory stipulations for absolute gender parity by requiring political parties to alternate one man and one woman on the lists of candidates they submitted or risk having their candidates rejected outright. In preparation for the 2012 elections, the government, along with civil society and UN Women, launched an awareness campaign and a training program on the electoral process to educate and encourage female candidates. The outcome of the 2012 elections resulted in a near balance between men and women in the National Assembly — a tangible shift toward gender parity and democracy.³⁸



- **16.7** Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels
- **16.10** Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
- **16.b** Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development



Promote Girls' and Women's Rights, and Participation in Conflict Prevention, Mitigation of Humanitarian Crises, and Peacebuilding Processes

In 2000, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which calls for: 1) women's participation in peace processes; 2) the protection of girls' and women's rights; 3) gender training for peacekeeping operations; and 4) gender mainstreaming in UN activities around conflict, peace, and security.^{39,40}

Mainstreaming gender in conflict prevention and resolution can improve outcomes before, during, and after conflict. Women's participation in democratic transitions in particular can improve the likelihood of peace negotiations arriving at settlements and parties reaching sustainable agreements. Research shows that women's participation in resolution processes decreases the chances of peace agreements failing by 64% and increases the chances of peace agreements lasting for fifteen years by 35%.⁴¹

Although there is broad recognition that gender-specific peacebuilding strategies can aid in effective and holistic reconstruction, national policies and programs often neglect to invite women to negotiating tables or to provide a platform for girls and women to voice their specific needs during reconstruction periods.⁴² As of 2017, women parliamentarians in conflict and post-conflict countries have remained stagnant at 16% in the past two years, despite a general increase in women parliamentarians globally.⁴³ Additionally, while 88% of UN-supported peace talks included consultations with women in 2014, three-quarters of all peace agreements from 2000 to 2015 failed to mention women.^{44,45}

Gender equality is a key predictor of human security and peace. Government leaders need to recognize that state security goes beyond armed conflict and that it includes everyday human security, particularly those of marginalized and vulnerable groups.⁴⁶ Beyond the formal process of peace accords, transitions provide a pivotal moment for gender equality in a country. They offer a rare opportunity to transform fundamental barriers to gender equality, allowing institutions, processes, and norms to be reshaped into more inclusive systems — a transformation which, in turn, can build the democratic backbone of sustainable peace, fostering more resilient democracies and helping prevent future conflict. Yet for these transitions to be transformative, women not only must be present at formal processes, but also have the capacity to engage in the creation of new governing structures.⁴⁷

Case Study: The Peace Table Project

As the Asia-Pacific focus of the Women at the Peace Table project, Indonesia has made great efforts to attain gender balance in peace negotiations through a participatory process. Through convening actors from government and civil society, the project has yielded positive dialogue around ways to develop sounder and more gender-inclusive policies for peacebuilding. From these meetings, a report, "Women at the Indonesian Peace Table: Enhancing the Contributions of Women to Conflict Resolution," was released, outlining the positive effects of women in leadership roles. As a follow-up, training sessions were conducted to address the relationship between women, peace, and security.⁴⁸

Promote Access to Decision-Making Spaces and Political Processes for All Women, Especially the Most Marginalized

Women's rights groups and networks are powerful levers of political change. They provide girls and women platforms with which to elevate their voices and with accessible avenues for political representation and participation. Despite their importance in galvanizing political actions, these groups operate in an increasingly shrinking civil society space, where funding and political will for women's movements are scarce.⁴⁹ Stabilized access to flexible, long-term funding will allow women's groups to build on their existing work, while effectively responding and adjusting to emerging trends and needs. With access to stable resources and support, groups can build greater capacity, be innovative in their work, and galvanize greater impact.⁵⁰ Moreover, for maximum impact, women's groups need to be included as partners and stakeholders at every stage of the policy- and decision-making process. Increased investment in women's movements and groups will allow for the further creation and strengthening of safe spaces through which girls and women can cultivate and exercise their agency, leadership and decision-making skills.

Women from marginalized groups, such as indigenous women, women from minority ethnic groups, and women with disabilities, often face even greater barriers to participation via intersectional discrimination. Positions of political power must be accessible to all women and not restricted based on age, educational background, socio-economic status, geographical origin, indigenous status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other demographic characteristic. Diverse female leadership is essential in shaping systems and policies that are representative and inclusive of all.⁵¹ Parliamentary representation of women from marginalized populations can also benefit society by creating space for new insights regarding national issues. Ensuring gender balance at all levels of the decision-making process, including providing support and representation to women from marginalized populations, is necessary for policy reforms that are inclusive and cognizant of all populations, particularly those most at risk. For example, increased engagement of indigenous women is integral to gender-responsive climate action and disaster-risk reduction processes because indigenous groups have a close relationship and dependence on the environment and its resources.⁵²

However, parliamentary participation by indigenous populations remains low globally. Research conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union shows that indigenous people are proportionally underrepresented in 12 parliaments and absent from nine parliaments out of the 33 parliaments with data available.⁵³ There is a lack of data available on indigenous populations' roles in decision-making bodies — fewer than half the parliaments surveyed had data available on indigenous representation, possibly due to the low number of countries that legally recognize indigenous peoples.⁵⁴



Relevant International Agreements:

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution (1990/15)
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)
- 2003 United Nations General Assembly resolution on women's political participation (A/RES/58/142)
- 2011 United Nations General Assembly resolution on women's political participation (A/RES/66/130)
- Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030)
- Report of the High-Level Working Group on the Health and Human Rights of Women, Children and Adolescents (2017)



Create Training and Leadership Pathways That Are Gender Sensitive

Encouraging continuous participation and civic education of girls and women in schools, universities, and through civil society spaces can be important to their future political participation.⁵⁵ Some youth development experts note that another integral element of future political participation entails institutionalizing young people's civic education and participation in settings they experience on a regular basis.⁵⁶ Civic education taught in school to girls from a young age helps them understand the workings of democracy and their country's political systems. It also equips them with necessary knowledge and skills to become active citizens and engage with the political issues of their time. Trainings targeted at girls to acquire the foundational skills for political participation such as problem-solving, assertive communication, and negotiation capabilities, along with opportunities to engage in decision-making processes at the family and school level, are all critical pathways to political empowerment.⁵⁷

Youth-led civil society and volunteering organizations can also be important avenues for participation and learning. Civil society groups allow young people to learn about decision-making processes and exercise their agency in issues affecting their own community. These groups also introduce young people to networks of like-minded peers, setting the foundation for further learning and engagement with civic and political life.⁵⁸ Similarly, educational sports programming, especially for girls, can be confidence-building mechanisms that cultivate their leadership, agency, and resilience.⁵⁹

Offering gender-sensitive political leadership and skills-based training for women also provides them with the foundation they need to actively participate in politics. Many groups and organizations around the world have carried out programs focused on overcoming major political barriers for female candidates, legislators, and influencers.⁶⁰ These barriers include lack of financial resources and educational opportunities, unaccommodating governments, and geographic restrictions. By fostering opportunities in political engagement training, women may increasingly take action at local, national, and international levels to yield lasting results.

Case Study: Train, Run, Win and Lead

An umbrella network of women's organizations in Trinidad & Tobago launched a training program in 2013 to educate women on the fundamental elements of politics in their country. "Train, Run, Win and Lead" not only educates women about who is responsible for what in government, but the program works to empower them to fully participate in positions of leadership and ultimately affect change. Following the first round of trainings, half of the women who ran for office won seats in local elections – almost all of which had previously been held by men.⁶¹

Foster Inclusivity in Leadership, Civic Engagement, and Decision-Making in Public and Private Spheres

Addressing the needs of girls and women is impossible without representation of their interests in top decision-making positions. Evidence shows that an increase in the participation of women in politics affects how their needs are prioritized in policymaking. In some Scandinavian countries, for example – where women are well represented in positions of power – public budgets and policies more appropriately reflect the interests of girls and women.⁶² This same principle holds true for institutions of global governance, where there is a distinct gender imbalance.

When it comes to tackling the effects of climate change and natural disasters, girls and women are integral to progress and must be included in decision-making and mitigation leadership. Disaster Risk Reduction – the practice of systematic analysis and mitigation of the causes of disasters, including reducing exposure to hazards, lessening the vulnerability of people and property, and improving preparedness and early warning for adverse events – is truly effective when girls and women are involved.^{63,64}

Women's participation in local government is also essential to inform policy and deliver change. Women's engagement in leadership positions at the grassroots level has been shown to have positive correlations to a higher quality of education, health, and infrastructure projects, as well as a boost to women's empowerment and standards of living.⁶⁵ Yet empowerment starts in the home and in the community. Admiration, respect, and affection in father-daughter relationships are vital components of successful women.⁶⁶ For both male and female children, the father's role matters, particularly in terms of how boys interpret gender equality.⁶⁷ Studies have also indicated that community and sports programs can foster problem-solving, team-building, communication, and leadership skills in girls that can be applied throughout their lives.⁶⁸

Another way to boost women's decision-making power is to propel more women into leadership positions in the economy. In the private sector, gaps in leadership styles between men and women are common, making it harder for women to attain management positions. A 2015 study conducted by McKinsey, "Women in the Workplace," observed that women believe they are disadvantaged by workplace bias. When compared to men, women are close to three times more likely to report having missed out on opportunities, such as a promotion or a raise, specifically because of their gender.⁶⁹ Evidence shows that corporations with more women in leadership and decision-making positions show better financial performance than those with low female representation.⁷⁰ Therefore, it is critical to ensure that women are equally represented in leadership positions in a variety of businesses, workplaces, trade unions, and other social movements, and that women's rights issues are prioritized in collective bargaining processes. Quotas also serve as valuable transitional tools to increase women's representation in male-dominated work and leadership environments.⁷¹

Case Study: Women in India Influence Local Politics

By 2009, women's grassroots political representation in India had reached 50%.⁷² Prior to the 73rd Amendment Act in 1992, women were often restricted from elected positions.⁷³ The act changed that by reserving at least one-third of the seats of all Panchayat Councils and one-third of all Pradhan (head of the Panchayat) for women.⁷⁴ Since its inception, women Panchayat Raj (village committee) leaders have become increasingly involved in their communities, ensuring that issues such as quality healthcare and education, as well as the financial considerations necessary to realize access to these services, are discussed at meetings.⁷⁵ As a result of their participation, there was a 62% increase of potable water projects in these communities initiated by a woman leader,⁷⁶ as compared to communities with male leaders.⁷⁷

Ensure Political Environments Are Free from Gender-Based Discrimination and Violence

Governments need to demonstrate gender equality in their leadership and decision-making bodies by not only increasing female representation in ministerial and elected positions, but by also by fostering gender-equitable work cultures in state institutions.

Adopting gender-responsive policies and practices in governing institutions can ensure that female leaders are able to function and perform their services in an open and inclusive work environment. These policies and practices could include gender-equitable parental leave, childcare services, and fixed hours for voting debate and negotiations in decision-making bodies such as national and regional parliaments.^{78,79}



Violence against girls and women in politics and in decision-making positions is also a global issue, and has serious repercussions for inclusive democratic societies. Violence cuts across all political sectors, including civil society, political parties, electoral processes, and affects politically active girls and women, regardless of their roles. According to FRIDA the Young Feminist Fund, more than 50% of their members regularly feel unsafe or threatened because of the work they do in advancing gender equality.⁸⁰ In the digital context, gender-based abuse and harassment plays an important role in erecting further barriers for girls' and women's empowerment. In a time when digital spaces animate multiple facets of daily life, digital violence — or cyber-bullying — can discourage girls and women from utilizing these platforms for civic and political engagement.

While acts of gender-based political violence are usually directed at individual women, they also carry an impact beyond their intended specific target — to frighten other women who are already politically active, to deter women who might consider engaging in politics, and to communicate to society that women should not participate in public life in any capacity.^{81,82} Those who are in positions of influence or leading human rights advocacy are frequently targeted, with a view to silencing their voices and the voices of others.

The increased political participation of girls and women necessitates a safe and open physical, social, and digital environment, where all can participate and lead without fear of violence or harassment. Building an enabling environment for women's free and equal participation can be done by integrating protection from gender-based violence within the legal framework around electoral cycles. Improving girls' and women's access to justice and legal aid can also ensure accountability of assailants and discourage gender-based violence in politics.⁸³ Strengthening national anti-violence and digital harassment policies can protect privacy and flow of personal data, ensuring safer digital spaces for all. Additionally, engaging boys and men in promoting and supporting girls and women as leaders and decision-makers is also essential for building open political spaces.⁸⁴

Case Study: Working to End "Sextortion" in Tanzania

While corruption is an issue that affects citizens regardless of their gender, women are often differently targeted and disproportionately impacted by it. In Tanzania, civil society groups became very concerned over the widespread practice of "sextortion," wherein women in political parties, rather than being asked for money in return for political nominations, are asked for sexual favors — a distinct form of violence against them.⁸⁵ In 2014, they launched a "Coalition Against Sextortion," with an accompanying campaign to raise awareness about the pervasive presence of this sexual extortion of women and the harassment women faced in public life. They also undertook training for women candidates and politicians ahead of the national elections, training them to recognize and avoid sextortion if they encountered it. As a result of these efforts, the Ethics Secretariat in the country issued guidelines in the spring of 2015 cracking down on sextortion, sending a clear message to public officials that the practice of sexual extortion would no longer be tolerated.⁸⁶

Ensure Recognition of Women in Decision-Making Capacities

Advancing the right of women to serve in positions of leadership and actively participate in decision-making processes can be achieved in part through their enhanced visibility. By publicly recognizing their contributions, the capacities of girls and women are more broadly accepted, thus dispelling negative gender stereotypes.⁸⁷ Representation matters and is of paramount importance to inspire the next generation of female leaders. Toward this end, women parliamentarians should share their experiences publicly to normalize the idea of having women in positions of power and mentor young women and girls to help them access decision-making spaces and positions of power.

The media plays a crucial role in highlighting the positive contributions of women in politics and avoid perpetuating negative gender-based stereotypes. Female politicians can also gain visibility through support from civil society and other female leaders.^{88,89} Working with others, including boys and men, contributes to shifting societal perceptions around political gender roles or capabilities.

Case Study: Albanian President Tells Women Leaders to Make their Voices Heard

In 2009, Albanian President Bamir Topi called on women to not only participate in politics and public life, but to actively strive to be seen and heard in those positions.⁹⁰ With 10 of 140 parliamentary seats and 1 of 65 mayoral positions occupied by women, Albania had one of the lowest percentages of elected women in Europe.⁹¹ In an effort to shift these statistics, the government has invested in ways to increase women's effective and visible participation in politics as a means of maintaining a stable, democratic government and economic growth.⁹²

SECTION 3: THE BENEFITS OF INVESTMENT

Investing in women's right to political participation is a necessary step to achieving global gender equality and democratic governance.^{93,94} The positive impact of increasing women's participation in politics has been documented in a study reporting that an increased number of women in parliament leads to greater investments in education.⁹⁵ Another study showed that companies with strong female leadership, meaning three or more women on the board or female board representation higher than the country average, boast a return on equity that is 10.1% annually, compared to 7.4% annually for companies without.⁹⁶

Furthermore, research suggests that gender balance in the political sphere promotes gender balance in the workforce. This represents tremendous economic potential, as evidence shows that gender equality in the workforce could lead to doubling women's contributions in global GDP growth by 2025.⁹⁷ Girls' and women's political participation stretches beyond elected office: women's involvement and empowerment in all aspects of public life, from activism in civil society to leadership in political parties and on corporate boards, brings gains for sustainable, peaceful democracy, and for more representative, resilient systems.⁹⁸ Evidence also shows that countries with higher engagement of women in public life experience lower levels of inequality.⁹⁹

SECTION 4: CALLS TO ACTION

Women's equal participation in politics is a crucial step toward achieving gender equality, the SDGs, and progress for all. It is not only empowering for the women engaged, but benefits their communities, countries, and the world as a whole. Closing the gender gap by upholding women's right to political participation requires cross-cutting approaches to national and local issues and specific actions from key institutions.



In order to power progress for all, many different constituents must work together – governments, civil society, academia, media, local communities, the United Nations, and the private sector – to take the following actions for girls and women:

- Eliminate structural and legal obstacles that hinder all girls' and women's participation in politics and decision-making, and hold those obstructing them accountable. (Most relevant for: governments and the private sector)
- Offer training programs for young people, women, and men on political systems, girls' and women's right to participation, and roles in decision-making, as well as unconscious bias training and inclusion. (Most relevant for: civil society and governments)
- Introduce temporary quota systems and inclusive, gender-sensitive leadership pathways to help bring all girls and women into political spheres. (Most relevant for: governments, the private sector, and NGOs)
- Secure equal visibility of female politicians and decision-makers and promote a more inclusive representation of leadership. (Most relevant for: the media)
- Promote a safe and enabling political environment in which all girls and women may participate in public life at all levels without fear of physical or digital violence and harassment. (Most relevant for: governments, civil society, media, the United Nations, and the private sector)
- Promote women in leadership and decision-making roles at all levels, including at peace negotiation tables and in humanitarian emergencies. (Most relevant for: governments, civil society, the United Nations, and the private sector)
- Promote community and sport programs that foster leadership skills for girls and women and promote gender equality. (Most relevant for: civil society and governments)
- Support women's leadership in the workplace through greater inclusion in executive positions and on corporate boards. (Most relevant for: governments and the private sector)
- Fund grassroots organizations that build the capacity of girls and women to participate both individually and collectively in social, economic, political, and public life. (Most relevant for: governments and the private sector)
- Implement policies and accountability mechanisms that track and report on government performance with respect to gender-equality commitments. (Most relevant for: governments and the private sector)
- Incorporate men in training focused on supporting and promoting girls and women as leaders and decision-makers. (Most relevant for: governments, civil society, and the United Nations)

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These briefs are intended to be used by policymakers, decision-makers, advocates, and activists to advance issues effecting girls and women in global development. These materials are designed to be open-sourced and available for your use.

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ENDNOTES

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