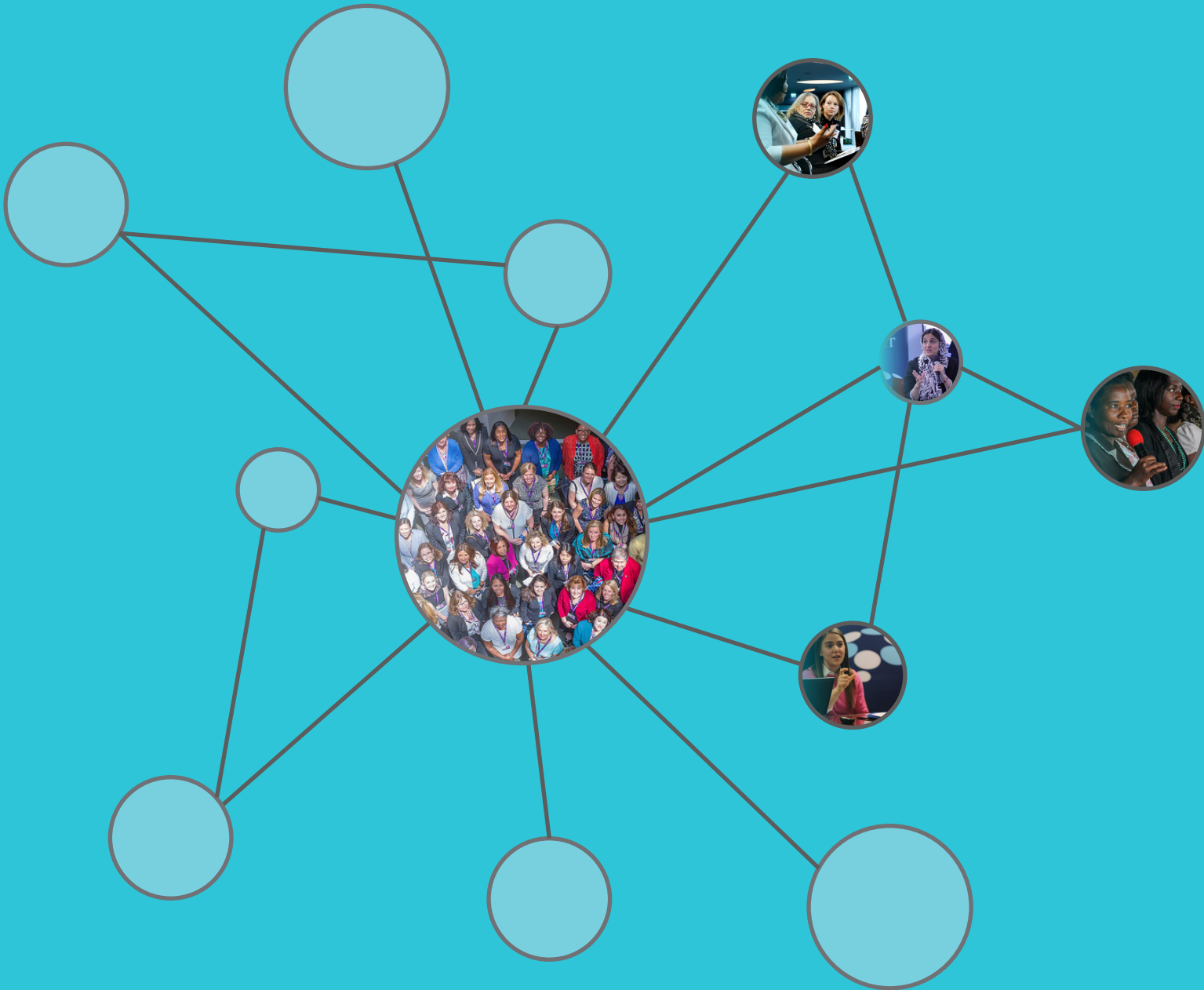


# Women's Political Networks

Defining Leadership, Breaking Barriers, and Fostering Change

*Lucina Di Meco*



**RESEARCHING WOMEN'S POLITICAL NETWORKS**

**A RESOURCE GUIDE**



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## About the Women in Public Service Project

The Women in Public Service Project will accelerate global progress towards women's equal participation in policy and political leadership to create more dynamic and inclusive institutions that leverage the full potential of the world's population to change the way global solutions are forged.

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## Executive Summary

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This paper seeks to understand the impact women's political networks have globally in supporting women overcome the universal cultural and structural barriers they face in engaging in a political career. With best practices from national, regional and international networks, this paper explores the role and modus operandi networks have adopted in supporting women running for national office in congressional or parliamentary elections, enhancing their effectiveness and shaping their leadership once in office. Through desk research of existing literature, interviews with women engaged in national politics and experts in this field, this paper also seeks to raise questions on the role of technology, the media and the correlation between women's participation in networks and their substantive representation.

## About the Author

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Lucina Di Meo is a Senior Gender Expert with more than 15 years of experience in the design, management and implementation of international development programs addressing gender inequality. Lucina has worked for the United Nations, as well as a wide range of international nonprofits and foundations, defending and promoting women's and girls' rights and empowerment in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

# Women's Political Networks: Defining Leadership, Breaking Barriers, and Fostering Change

*Background & Research Paper*

**Annex I: Researching Women's Political Networks: A Resource Guide**

*Annex II: Designing Women's Political Networks: A Ten-Step Toolkit*

## Researching Women's Political Networks: A Resource Guide

### Background

This resource guide has been designed to complement the paper: *Women's Political Networks: Defining Leadership, Breaking Barriers And Fostering Change*, which explores the role and *modus operandi* of women's networks in supporting female political aspirants get elected, gain higher leadership positions and in shaping their policy making once in office. The resource guide includes two main sections: **Women in Politics: Key Bibliography**, and **Women's Political Empowerment: Mapping of National and International Actors**.

Following a similar approach to the research paper, the bibliography focuses on a few key areas of investigation, namely: contemporary thinking on women's descriptive and substantive representation; analysis of the universal cultural and structural barriers women face in all stages of the political carrier (and their solutions); the main lessons learned from experiences and programs fostering women's political participation through civil society, political parties and national legislatures. Drawing on some of the resources referenced in the research, it includes a substantial amount of additional sources.

The mapping of actors provides a list of the most authoritative and reliable international, regional and national organizations working to promote women's political participation and leadership all over the world, arranged by geographic outreach. The mapping includes, among many others, some of the networks and institutions that are referred to in the paper for their best practices in enhancing women's political engagement.

## Women in Politics: Key Bibliography

This bibliography provides an overview of key resources available from feminist and non-feminist<sup>1</sup> literature on women and political participation: articles from some of the key scholars on this topic,<sup>2</sup> as well as policy papers, toolkits and manuals of best practices. Following a similar approach to the paper, it is arranged by issue-specific sections:

1. Women in Politics: Considerations On Descriptive and Substantive Representation
2. Women's Confidence and Ambition Gap: On Competition and Political Participation
3. Societal Expectations and Media Coverage of Women in Politics
4. Family Penalty: The Impact of Domestic Responsibilities on Women in Politics
5. Gender-Based Violence in Politics
6. Women and Financing of Political Campaigns
7. Women and Political Leadership
8. Fostering Women's Political Participation in Civil Society, Political Parties and National Legislatures: Best Practices and Manuals

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1 Methodological note: what is feminist research?

There is a large amount of literature on gender and conflict. Some of this research self identifies as “feminist research”. In absence of a unanimously accepted definition, it is safe to say that feminist research tends to have a very strong social change agenda and use methods “which can best answer particular research questions, but always using them in ways which are consistent with broad feminist goals and ideology” (Jayaratne and Stewart, 1991). Most of the existing research, however, does not identify as feminist, but follows a “gender approach”, consisting, of a set of agreed principles, namely: consideration of the hierarchical power relations between men and women that tend to disadvantage women throughout the research process; integration of diversity, including the differing ways that race, ethnicity, class, caste, sexuality, age, and (dis)ability, affect gender relations, with special attention to the voices of the marginalized, into all levels of the research process; analysis of the relationships between and among all research parties (including the researcher/s); common use of qualitative methods considered ‘non-traditional’ in the physical and social sciences and in research for development in particular; adaptation of quantitative methods to take into consideration ‘hard-to-measure’ aspects such as women’s empowerment, and sensitive items such as gender-based violence.

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2 They are: Jennifer Lawless, American University; Joni Lovenduski, Birkbeck College, University of London; Karen Beckwith, Case Western Reserve University; Karen Celis, Vrije Universiteit Brussel; Mala Htun, University of New Mexico; Melanie Hughes, University of Pittsburg; Mona Lena Krook, Rutgers University; Nikki Johnson, Universidad de la Republica, Uruguay; Pamela Paxton, University of Texas; Pippa Norris, Harvard; Sarah Childs, Bristol University.

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## Women's Political Empowerment: Mapping of National and International Actors

Since Beijing, a great number of networks, organizations and institutions have been created, aimed at fostering women's political participation and leadership nationally, regionally and globally. While it does not claim to be exhaustive, this mapping provides an overview of some<sup>1</sup> of the most authoritative and reliable institutions, organizations and networks working to promote women's political participation and leadership all over the world, arranged by geographic outreach.

<sup>1</sup> An important caveat needs to be made: this list does not include women's caucuses and parliamentary bodies, neither women's political party wings. While these bodies are extremely important, their effectiveness varies over time and political context. For more on this issue: <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/caucus-e.pdf>.

### International Actors and Global Knowledge Platforms

[Agora](#) is a global knowledge platform on parliamentary development. It has been designed as a tool and a meeting space used by parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and the community of practice in order to facilitate information exchange.

[Apolitical](#) is a website and online forum which highlights and shares new ideas, effective solutions and stories of the impactful work of public servant everywhere.

[BRIDGE](#), Institute of Development Studies (IDS), supports the needs of policy makers, practitioners, advocates and researchers in bridging the gaps between gender theory, policy and practice to make gender equality happen. BRIDGE targets both gender and non-gender specialists in an effort to ensure gender is central to all development thinking and practice, and to inspire transformation in attitudes, policies and legislation.

[Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action](#) (CREA) is a women's human rights organization that empowers women to articulate, demand and access their human rights by enhancing women's leadership and building networks at the local, regional and international levels. Based in New Delhi, India, it is one of the few international women's rights organizations based in the global South, led by Southern feminists, which works at

the grassroots, national, regional, and international levels.

[Global Database of Quotas for Women](#) is a joint project of International IDEA and Stockholm University. This website provides information on the various types of quotas existing today, detailing the percentages and targets in countries where they are applicable.

[The Global Fund for Women](#) is a US-based non-profit funding women's human rights initiatives. It focuses on improving sexual and reproductive health and rights, freedom from violence and economic and political equality all over the world through advocacy campaigns, grantmaking and collaborations.

[The International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics \(iKNOW Politics\)](#) provides a web-based forum for exchanging information and debate on member fora on the status of women in politics around the globe. The project is a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme, UN Women, the National Democratic Institute and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

[Institute for Inclusive Security \(ISS\)](#) is a DC-based NGO advocating for full inclusion of all stakeholders (particularly women) in peace and

security processes, consulting with governments, conducting field research, and providing leadership development for women leaders in conflict zones around the world. Inclusive Security includes the Women Waging Peace Network, a network of more than 2,000 women peacemakers from conflict areas around the world, launched in 1999 to connect these women with each other and with policy shapers.

[Inter-Parliamentary Union \(IPU\)](#) is the world organization of parliaments, it has a membership of 170 Member Parliaments. Since 1985, at the initiative of women parliamentarians from different countries, it has established a Forum of women parliamentarians to enhance solidarity among women and advance the gender equality agenda.

[International Civil Society Action Network \(ICAN\)](#) is a registered non-profit, US based organization whose mission is to support civil society activism in promoting women's rights, peace and human security in countries affected by conflict, transition and closed political space. It offers a network of activists and women leaders working in the space of women, peace and security.

[International Foundation for Electoral Systems \(IFES\)](#) supports citizens' rights to participate in free and fair elections. IFES works to fortify women in political and electoral processes as candidates and elected leaders, technical experts in elections, engaged civil society leaders and informed voters. IFES implements innovative women's empowerment activities to increase women's political participation and leadership.

[International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance](#) (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization committed to promoting sustainable democracy worldwide. Among their fields of research, IDEA produces comparative knowledge on democracy as it relates to gender, diversity, and conflict and security.

[International Women's Tribune Centre \(IWTC\)](#) is an international non-governmental organization that provides communication, information, edu-

cation, and organizing support services to women's organizations and community groups working to improve the lives of women in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Western Asia.

[Institute for Women's Policy Research \(IWPR\)](#) researches and identifies successful strategies to encourage women's participation in civic and political life. IWPR has conducted research with female activists working in a range of contexts—including interfaith organizations, unions, and secular social justice movements—about their experiences in taking on public leadership roles and the sources of motivation that inspired their involvement in this work.

[National Democratic Institute \(NDI\)](#) believes that equitable participation of women in politics and government is essential to building and sustaining democracy. The Institute trains, educates, and motivates women candidates and elected leaders, as well as female citizens, in the political process.

[Socialist International Women](#) is the international organization of the women's organizations of the socialist, social democratic and labor parties affiliated to the Socialist International. It aims to end discrimination against women, build relations within its member organizations and create programs to foster women's political participation.

[The Global Women's Leadership Initiative \(GWLI\)](#) at the Wilson Center. The Women in Public Service Project (WPSP) seeks to build a new generation of global female leaders. Founded through a partnership between the US Department of State and five leading women's colleges, the WPSP aims to train women to enter the public sector by cultivating the 'strategic leadership skills, energy, and commitment required to tackle today's global challenges

[The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women \(INSTRAW\)](#) aims at strengthening women's role in politics and decision-making.

[The United States Institute of Peace \(USIP\)](#) is a DC-based non-partisan, independent, federal institution that provides analysis of and is involved in conflicts around the world. The Institute was established by an act of Congress in 1984.

[The Women in Parliaments Global Forum](#) (WIP) is the global network of female Parliamentarians at national level, including the European Parliament, of whom there currently are around 9000.

[The Women's Democracy Network](#) (WDN) is an initiative of the [International Republican Institute](#) to increase women's political participation, leadership and representation in elected office. WDN accomplishes this goal by linking these women with their peers in other countries who share similar struggles, providing mentorship from experienced women who have are leaders in their fields, and through skills-building trainings designed to target their identified needs.

[UN Women](#) provides training for women political candidates to help build their capacities, and offer civic education and sensitization campaigns on gender equality. UN Women backs gender equality advocates in calling on political parties, governments and others to do their part in empowering women.

[U.S. State Department's Office of international Women's Issues](#) provides information and fact sheets on women's situation in several countries.

[Vital Voices Global Partnership](#) is the preeminent non-governmental organization (NGO) that identifies, trains and empowers emerging women leaders and social entrepreneurs around the globe and gives them training and visibility to support them in their leadership trajectory.

[WEDO](#) works on a range of cross-cutting issues—from climate change and natural resource management, to global governance and finance and UN reform—toward three interlinked goals: women's leadership, sustainable development and global governance.

[Wikigender](#) is a global online collaborative platform linking policymakers and experts from both developed and developing countries to find solutions to advance gender equality. It provides a centralized space for knowledge exchange on key emerging issues, with a strong focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular on SDG 5. Both English and French speakers worldwide can discuss current issues, relevant research and emerging trends on gender equality. Wikigender places the spotlight on gender data and statistics as a complement to the [Gender, Institutions and Development Database](#) (GID-DB) and the [Social Institutions and Gender Index](#) (SIGI), both developed by the OECD Development Centre.

[Womankind Worldwide](#) partners with local organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America that challenge discrimination and violence. The organization aims to enable women to understand their legal rights and ultimately improve their lives.

[Women for Women International](#) provides women survivors of war, civil strife and other conflicts with the tools and resources to move from crisis and poverty to stability and self-sufficiency, thereby promoting viable civil societies.

[Women Thrive Alliance](#), an initiative of Women Thrive Worldwide, is a leading voice for global women's rights. We work to empower grassroots women so their perspectives and solutions shape local, national, and global policies to help women and their families break free from poverty, violence, and inequality.

[Women Waging Peace Network \(WWPN\)](#) believes sustainable peace is possible only when those who shape policy include women and other affected groups in the prevention and transformation of violent conflict. Through networking, research and recommendations, WWPN aims to increase involvement of women in preventing, resolving and rebuilding after conflicts.

[Women's Campaign International](#) (WCI) is a

nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to increasing the participation of women in political and democratic processes worldwide. WCI's mission is to increase the number of female elected officials throughout the world, ensure their effectiveness once elected and build the capacity of local organizations working on women's issues.

[Women's Centre for Democracy and Human Rights](#) is a nongovernmental organization aimed at developing democratic society based on human rights, gender equity and social justice. The organization achieves its goals through education, advocacy and research.

[Women's Learning Partnership \(WLP\)](#) is made up of WLP International in the USA and 20 WLP national and regional partners. WLP is commit-

ted to the creation of tolerant, egalitarian, and democratic communities developed through partnerships based on cooperation, trust, and respect.

[International Women's Democracy Center \(IWDC\)](#) provides the necessary training for women to increase their participation in local, state, and national politics, policy and decision-making, working in partnership with established NGOs and recognized community leaders around the world.

[Worldwide Governance Indicators \(WGI\)](#) compiled by World Bank researchers, shows that many developing-country governments are making important gains in control of corruption, and some of them are matching the performance of affluent countries in overall governance measures.

## United States Organizations, Networks and Institutions

### *National Organizations and Institutions*

[Elect Women Magazine](#) is a U.S.-based online media site that provides campaign tips, stories, and resources to women running for political office or thinking about it. Candidates and elected officials provide the blog posts, and women candidates can blog in to ask questions, offer advice, and share information.

[EMERGE](#) provides a seven-month program for Democratic women who want to run for elected office. Emerge gives Democratic women who want to run for public office a unique opportunity. We are the only in-depth, seven-month, 70-hour, training programs providing aspiring female leaders with cutting-edge tools and training to run for elected office and elevate themselves in our political system.

[Emily's List](#) supports pro-choice Democratic women candidates by raising campaign contri-

butions, organizing campaigns and mobilizing Democratic women voters. Recognizing that early campaign money is crucial for establishing the viability of a political campaign, EMILY is an acronym, which stands for 'Early Money Is Like Yeast' – because it makes the 'dough' rise.

[IGNITE](#) trains young women from high schools, colleges, and universities across the United States. IGNITE teaches young women how to think critically about policy and understand where the levers of power to make change actually reside. Via our high school curriculum, college chapters, annual conferences, and elected women network, IGNITE teaches young women to become civically engaged and ultimately step into public service.

[National Foundation for Women Legislators](#) seeks to provide strategic resources to women leaders for leadership development and effective gover-

nance through conferences, effective seminars, educational programs, professional relationships, and networking at both the state and federal levels in nonpartisan ways.

[National Organization for Women Political Action Committees](#) supports feminist candidates, male and female, for federal office. The NOW Equality PAC (NEP) supports feminist candidates for state and local office in the US.

[National Women's Political Caucus](#) (NWPC) is a non-partisan national grassroots membership organization dedicated to increasing the number of pro-choice women in elected and appointed office in the US.

[Public Leadership Education Network \(PLEN\)](#) introduces college women to role models, career paths, and skills trainings before they enter the workforce. PLEN's mission is to increase the number of women in top leadership positions influencing all aspects of the public policy process.

[Running Start](#) introduces young women to role models, talks to young women about the importance of politics in their lives, and gives them the encouragement and skills to pursue a career in political leadership. Running Start's Young Women's Political Leadership Program introduces secondary school (high school) girls to the importance of women in political leadership and trains them in public speaking, networking, on-camera media training, and platform development.

[She Should Run](#) is an online nomination tool and resource center that asks women to consider a run for office. An individual can submit a form with the information of a woman who he or she believes should run for office someday, and the program will guarantee that she gets positive encouragement, connections, and the necessary resources to take the next step

### *University Sponsored Organizations*

[Athena Center for Leadership Studies](#) – Bar-

The [Susan B. Anthony List](#) (SBA List) is a non-profit organization that seeks to reduce and ultimately end abortion in the U.S. by supporting pro-life politicians, primarily women, through its SBA List Candidate Fund political action committee.

[Women Under Forty Political Action Committee](#) (WUFPAC) is a nonpartisan political action committee that supports women forty years of age and under running for state and federal public office. It aims to represent voices of young women in shaping public policy and to build seniority of women in Congress by getting them elected at a younger age.

[Women's Campaign Fund](#) (WCF) is a nonpartisan organization, is dedicated to dramatically increasing the number of women in elected office who support reproductive health choices for all. WCF provides financial support to its endorsed candidates and produces original research related to women in politics.

[Women Living Under Muslim Law](#) is an international solidarity network that provides information, support and a collective space for women whose lives are shaped, conditioned or governed by laws and customs said to derive from Islam.

[Women Waging Peace](#) (WWP) connects women addressing conflict around the world in the belief that they have a role to play "in preventing violent conflict, stopping war, reconstructing ravaged societies, and sustaining peace in fragile areas around the world." Women Waging Peace advocates for the full participation of women in formal and informal peace processes. The initiative is run by the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and Hunt Alternatives.

nard. The Athena Center aims to be a globally

renowned center for advancing women in leadership. The Center encourages women leaders to be visionary, bold, and globally aware.

[Center for American Women and Politics](#) – Rutgers University. CAWP uses research and data, education and outreach programs to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women's participation in politics and government and to enhance women's influence and leadership in public life. The Rutgers Center for American Women and Politics, for example, runs a number of programs for women who are interested in running for office. The Ready to Run program is divided into two parts, one tailored to women who plan to run in the near future, and one for those who are thinking about running sometime in the future. Additional sessions are targeted towards African-American, Hispanic and Asian-American women, to address potential group-specific challenges in the campaign process.

[Center for Integrative Leadership](#) – University of Minnesota. The Center for Integrative Leadership (CIL) is a forum for the study of leaders and leadership across sectorial and geographic boundaries. CIL engages in collaborative teaching, community outreach, and research initiatives with other University centers, and external community partners.

[Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy](#) – University of Massachusetts, Boston. Part of the John W. McCormack Graduate Institute of Public Affairs, the Center seeks to expand involvement of women in politics and policies affecting them through quality graduate education, collaborative research and events, and focusing on intersection of race and gender.

[Center for Women's Global Leadership](#) – Rutgers University fosters women's leadership in the area of women's human rights and social justice through women's global leadership institutes, strategic planning activities, international mobilization campaigns, UN monitoring, global

education endeavors, publications, and a resource center.

[Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security](#) (GIWPS) examines and highlights the roles and experiences of women in peace and security worldwide through cutting edge research, timely global convenings, and strategic partnerships.

[NYU Women's Leadership Forum](#) – New York University fosters leadership development, facilitate professional growth, and sponsor opportunities for outreach among women in leadership roles. Through networking, access to electronic resources, and participation in an array of events such as conferences, guest presentations, and opportunities for professional development, women can exchange information and interact with others who have common interests and goals.

[Wellesley Centers for Women](#) – Wellesley College is the largest social science organization in the US dedicated to gender research. The Center conducts research and creates programs with women's perspectives and experiences at the core and ensures this work reaches a wide audience and influences public policies and programs.

[Women and Politics Institute](#) – American University. Based at American University's School of Public Affairs, the Women and Politics Institute offers courses, training, research and other opportunities to learn about women in the political arena.

[Women and Public Policy Program](#) – Kennedy School, Harvard University. WAPPP's primary activities focus on developing the relationship between women and public policy through facilitating scholarship, encouraging and enhancing teaching, publishing materials, and influencing the policy process by strengthening women's leadership and the advocacy power of grassroots women.

[Women's Campaign School](#) – Yale University aims to provide training for women who want to



run for office or who want to move up the ladder to higher elective office. For five days, participants are put through an intense political immersion program designed to teach campaign skills, strategic assessment, and improvisation.

[Women's Initiative in Leadership](#) – Harvard University (WIL) was created to address the interest and importance of female students at Harvard in developing leadership skills. The program strives to explore and understand leadership through seminars, discussions, and interactive workshops over the course of a semester.

[Women's Leadership Academy](#) – University at Albany, State University of New York. The purpose of the Women's Leadership Academy (WLA) is to strengthen participants' self-efficacy, leadership capacity and capabilities to increase female presence in public policy and politics. WLA hosts a week-long summer program for undergraduates and a six-month fellowship for graduate students to foster leadership skills.

[Women's Leadership Conference](#) – George Washington University. Each spring, the Women's Leadership Conference and the Elizabeth Somers Leadership Center bring together an intergenerational audience of professional women, many of whom are alumnae and students, to discuss the

personal and professional challenges facing women in the 21st century.

[Women's Leadership Initiative](#) – Yale University aims to create a campus culture that encourages and empowers aspiring female leaders at Yale. Since its inception, WLI has grown to support both small and large forums of discussion, from WLI Salon Nights to mentorship families, and Job Shadowing Days to an annual Women in Leadership Conference.

[Women's Leadership Institute](#) – Auburn University. The Women's Leadership Institute (WLI) was established to help women associated with Auburn University take a proactive step in closing the gender gap of women in politics, corporate boardrooms, and the administrations of business and educational institutions. WLI also hosts public programs to train and inspire a new generation of women leaders.

[Women's Leadership Program](#) – George Washington University. The Women's Leadership Program is a year-long, selective, living and learning program for freshmen women of any school at GWU. WLP students have the benefit of small classes, close contact with faculty and women in leadership roles, and strong community ties within the Program.

## Regional and National Organizations and Networks

### *Regional And National Organizations And Networks, Europe*

[The European Parliamentary Forum on Population & Development \(EPF\)](#) is a network of members of parliaments from across Europe who are committed to protecting the sexual and reproductive health of the world's most vulnerable people, both at home and overseas.

[The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights \(ODIHR\)](#) is one of the

world's principal regional human rights bodies. Based in Warsaw, Poland, ODIHR is active throughout Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and North America. The Office promotes democratic elections, respect for human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination, and the rule of law. ODIHR implements programs on increasing the participation of women in the political and public arena, capacity building of women's networks,

combating violence against women and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 emphasizing the involvement of women in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

[The Centre for Advancement of Women in Politics](#) aims to foster an appreciation for women's contributions to politics, government, and public decision-making in the UK and Ireland. The website includes research on women's political participation and representation, public attitudes to women in politics, and women in parliament.

[Women for Election](#) is an Irish not-for-profit, non-partisan organization whose vision is of an Ireland with balanced participation of women and men in political life. Our mission is to inspire and equip women to succeed in politics.

[Engender](#) is Scotland's feminist organization. Engender has a vision for a Scotland in which women and men have equal opportunities in life, equal access to resources and power, and are equally safe and secure from harm.

[National Women's Council of Ireland](#) (NWCI) is the national representative organization for women and women's groups in Ireland. Its purpose is to achieve women's equality in a society where women and men can participate effectively as citizens in all aspects of social, cultural, economic and political life.

[The European Institute for Gender Equality \(EIGE\)](#) is an autonomous body of the European Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all EU policies and the resulting national policies, and the fight against discrimination based on sex, as well as to raise EU citizens' awareness of gender equality. Among other things, EIGE issues reports and studies on

women's leadership within the European Union.

[The European Women's Lobby](#) (EWL) is the largest umbrella organization of women's associations in the European Union (EU), working to promote women's rights and equality between women and men. It has a network of 2500 women's groups across Europe and provides a number of lobbying tools on its website, available in a range of languages, to help ordinary citizens to put pressure on elites in their own countries to take gender balance seriously in their nominations

[The International Gender Policy Network](#) (IGPN) is a non-profit, non-governmental network organization aimed at promoting gender equitable and gender sensitive public policy at all levels of global society. IGPN advocates for the inclusion of women's human rights into the national, regional and global policy agenda and for full implementation of social, economic and culture rights of women. IPGN is situated all over Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

[The CEE Network for Gender Issues](#) includes women from progressive political parties, civil society movements and parliament from twenty-one countries in Easter Europe and the former Soviet Union. This network has been extremely successful in establishing strong feminist streams within left wing parties, lobbying for gender quota rules and ensuring high representation of women within parties and parliaments.

[The Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa \(AWEPA\)](#) forges cooperation with African Parliaments to strengthen parliamentary democracy in Africa, and to attain the Millennium Development goals by supporting human rights, development, and democracy in Africa.

## Regional And National Organizations, Africa and MENA Region

[African Women's Development Fund](#) is a grant-making foundation that supports local, national and regional women's organizations working towards the empowerment of African women and realization of their rights.

[Akina Mama wa Afrika](#) is an international, pan-African, non-governmental development organization for African women. It creates a space for African women to organize, and build links with African women active in the areas of their own development.

[Arab Women's Leadership Institute](#) (AWLI) supports the efforts of Arab women to increase their participation in public life and the political process throughout the Middle East and North Africa region. AWLI offers training, networking and mentorship opportunities to advance women in leadership positions.

[Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc](#) (ADFM) is an independent association established in 1985 to defend and promote the human rights of women, and to foster equitable policies and social practices. As one of the largest non-governmental organizations in Morocco focused on the rights of women, ADFM has been successful in forming networks with civil society and governmental institutions regionally and internationally. The organization guarantees and reinforces the rights of women through advocacy, awareness raising, literacy campaigns, direct assistance, and education, among other activities.

[Association des Femmes Chefs de Famille](#) (AFCF) is a non-governmental organization in Mauritania whose primary mission is to promote human rights and to defend the rights of women and children. AFCF strives to bring support to women in precarious situations (particularly female heads of households), create a network of associations working to improve living conditions for women and children, and contribute to fostering gender equality

and building active solidarity among women of different social classes.

[BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights](#) (BAOBAB) is a non-profit organization working for women's human rights and legal rights under religious laws, statutory laws, and customary laws, with a particular focus on Muslim women. BAOBAB works with legal professionals and paralegals, policymakers, women's and human rights groups, other non-governmental organizations, and members of the general public. Its programs promote human rights education, particularly women's human rights. BAOBAB sponsors women's rights training and education projects, and programs that enhance understanding of women's rights to influence social and government policies.

[Be-Free Center/Bahrain Women's Association](#) (BFC/BWA) is a woman's rights and child empowerment organization in Bahrain. The organization strives to increase awareness of women's legal rights, as well as other issues that affect women, such as globalization, information technology, the environment, health care, culture, and the family. The Be-Free Center focuses on eliminating child abuse and neglect and empowering children to be powerful and productive citizens. Through activities including training workshops and seminars, radio and television programs, advocacy campaigns, and networking, BWA promotes active citizen participation among women. Officially established in 2001, the vision of BWA is "to empower leaders for the human development era."

[Campaign for Good Governance \(CGG\)](#) is a registered national non-governmental organization (NGO) advocating for good governance, freedom, democracy, and gender equity in Sierra Leone.

[Club de Madrid](#) works directly with women leaders and women's groups in the Greater Horn of Africa and the Andean Region to promote

interaction and dialogue with national, regional and international decision-making structures and mechanisms to engage in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

[Collectif 95 Maghreb Egalite](#) is a network anchored in the women's movement of the countries of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. The founders of this network, coordinators of women's organizations, intellectuals and researchers, believe that the struggle for equality between women and men is a determining factor in the achievement of full citizenship.

[The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians \(CWP\)](#) was founded by women delegates at the 1989 plenary conference so women at future conferences could discuss ways to increase female representation in Parliament and work towards the mainstreaming of gender considerations in all CPA activities and programs. In 2004, the group was formally recognized in the CPA Constitution and its elected Chairperson added to the CPA Executive Committee.

[Femmes Africa Solidarite](#) (FAS) is an international non-governmental organization that works to promote and strengthen the role of African women in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts.

[The African Women's Development and Communication Network \(FEMNET\)](#) is a membership-based pan-African Network set up in 1988 to advance African women's development, equality and other human rights. Over the years FEMNET has played a central role in sharing information, experiences, ideas and strategies among African women's NGOs in order to strengthen women's capacity to participate effectively in the development processes on the continent.

[Forum for Women in Development \(FWID\)](#) is a network of Egyptian non-governmental organizations working for the emancipation of women and elimination of all aspects of discrimination

against women. Launched in 1997 by 15 civil society organizations, FWID advocates for the reform of policies and legislation that discriminate against women. It is made up of groups of activists, both male and female, from different social and professional backgrounds, who work together to build a democratic, just, and egalitarian society.

[Foundation for the Support of Women's Work \(FSWW\)](#) is a non-governmental organization in Turkey seeking to ensure women's equal participation in social, economic, and political decision-making by drawing on the expertise and potential of local women. Established in 1986, it supports low-income women's groups to improve the quality of their lives, their communities, and their leadership. KEDV/FSWW works in Istanbul, the Marmara earthquake region, and south-eastern Turkey. The organization also provides consultancy, training, and monitoring support to those local governments, non-governmental organizations, and other organizations that want to integrate FSWW programs into their activities.

[Kayan Feminist Organization](#), a feminist organization established by Palestinian-Israeli women, is a capacity-building non-governmental organization devoted to women's development.

[KIND](#) stands for the Kudirat Initiative for Democracy, a not-for-profit organization based in Lagos, Nigeria. We work primarily in Nigeria in the areas of leadership development for young women and on collaborative projects aimed at removing barriers to women's public participation and ending violence against women.

[Mano River Women's Peace Network](#) is an organization with a mission to advocate for and promote at all decision-making levels the involvement of women and youth in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict in the Mano River sub-region, throughout Africa, and the world.

[Moremi Initiative for Women's Leadership in Africa](#) strives to engage, inspire and equip young

women and girls to become the next generation of leading politicians, activists, social entrepreneurs and change agents. Moremi Initiative is a non-profit organization based in Nigeria and the United States and operating throughout Africa.

[Mowatinat](#) means 'Female Citizens.' This Arabic-language site of Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan provides news, information and resources on women's political and public participation in the MENA and beyond.

[Nigeria Women Trust Fund](#) (WF) was created in 2011 to increase the representation of women in Nigerian governance at all levels and address the growing concerns about the gender imbalance in elective and appointive positions. It supports female political aspirants and candidates irrespective of political affiliation, providing them with the financial resources and trainings.

[Program on Governance in the Arab Region](#) (POGAR) is dedicated to the promotion and development of good governance practices and related reforms in the Arab states in tandem with the [Arab Human Development Reports](#). POGAR was developed at the request of Arab governments, and therefore specifically addresses national needs and concerns.

[Rwanda Women's Network](#) (RWN) is a national non-governmental organization dedicated to promotion and improvement of the socio-economic welfare of women in Rwanda since coming to being in 1997. Over time, the organization has dedicated its efforts to strategies that empower women and has extensive experience in fostering women's participation and grassroots responses to community challenges. To date, RWN works with various local and international partners, and plays a capacity building and facilitating role to a network of over 52 grassroots associations across the country.

[Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan](#) (SIGI/J) is a non-governmental organization established in 1998. Its founders include lawyers, jurists, and

human rights activists working to support and promote women's rights through education, skills training, and modern technology. Its programs include human rights education, initiatives for combating violence against women and girls, and a knowledge partnership program that provides ICT training. SIGI/J also sponsors cultural and educational events that highlight the experiences of women leaders.

[Tha'era network of women](#), set up in 2013 by the women's organizations of social democratic parties in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia, has built the capacity of over 150 women political activist to become trainers for female political activists at the grassroots level.

[The Center of Arab Women for Training and Research](#) (CAWTAR) provides the Arab region with a center for research and studies related to gender and women's status, and advocacy for improvement of women's status. CAWTAR is committed to the empowerment of women based on human rights and gender principles.

[Voice of Libyan Women](#) is a Libyan women's advancement and empowerment NGO based in Tripoli, with branch offices in Zawia & Misrata, focusing on the political participation and economic investment of Libyan women, as well as the elimination of all forms of gender based violence.

[Women's Learning Partnership](#) (WLP) is dedicated to women's leadership and empowerment. At its essence, WLP is a builder of networks, working with 20 autonomous and independent partner organizations in the Global South, particularly in Muslim-majority societies, to empower women to transform their families, communities, and societies.

[Women's Affairs Technical Committee](#) (WATC) is a coalition of seven women's organizations, three women's center and individual women activists. WATC seeks to eliminate discrimination against women, develop the role of women in society and

to empower women to assume decision-making positions in Palestine.

[Women's Self-Promotion Movement \(WSPM\)](#) is a grassroots organization created in 2001 in Zimbabwe. WSPM implements women's eco-

## *Regional and National Organizations, Asia*

[All Women's Action Society \(AWAM\)](#) is an independent feminist organization committed to improving the lives of women in Malaysia. Its vision is to create a just, democratic, and equitable society where women are treated with respect, and are free from all forms of violence and discrimination. To reach this goal, AWAM informs, connects, and mobilizes those interested in securing women's rights, bringing about equality between men and women, and supporting women in crisis. AWAM's activities include advocacy, training and education, and direct services to victims of violence, including counseling and legal aid.

[Asian University for Women](#) seeks to graduate women who will be skilled and innovative professionals, service oriented leaders, and promoters of intercultural understanding and sustainable human and economic development in Asia and across the globe.

[Aurat Foundation](#) is committed to working for women's rights and empowering citizens to participate in good governance for the purpose of creating a just, democratic, and humane society in Pakistan. The organization works in partnership with over 1,200 non-governmental and community-based organizations on activities related to advocacy, activism, and knowledge- and information-building for women's rights and gender equality in Pakistan.

[DidiBahini](#) is a non-profit non-governmental organization established with the goal of facilitating gender mainstreaming into the development process in Nepal.

conomic empowerment programs and women's capacity-building programs that seek to improve the lives of disadvantaged women through education, economic development and leadership. The organization primarily works with refugee women and girls in the southern Africa region.

[Human Rights Center/Citizens against Corruption \(CAC\)](#) in Kyrgyzstan focuses on the rights of women and refugees, provides legal consultation, conducts and disseminates research, convenes civic forums, participates in public hearings, and trains human rights defenders. CAC advocates against corruption in the government through monitoring elections and supporting election reform, supporting women in Parliament, and advocating against the use of torture and the death penalty.

[International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific \(IWRAP Asia Pacific\)](#) is a non-profit international women's organization based in the South. It promotes the domestic implementation of international human rights standards by building the capacity of women and human rights advocates to claim and realize women's human rights.

[Korean Institute for Women and Politics](#) is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that aims for a greater inclusion of women in politics by taking into account the obstacles facing women's political participation.

[N-Peace](#) is a multi-country network of peace advocates in Asia seeking to advance Women, Peace & Security (WPS) issues. It supports women's leadership for conflict prevention, resolution and peace building, and promotes the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, and related resolutions, at regional, national and community levels.

[Online Women in Politics](#) was born out of the

vision of Asian women leaders to explore creative ways in organizing a network of Asia Pacific women involved in politics, governance, decision-making, and transformative leadership.

### [Shymkent Women's Resource Center \(SWRC\)](#)

is a non-profit organization in Kazakhstan whose programs combat trafficking and violence against women and promote the rights of women and women's leadership. SWRC organizes campaigns to combat trafficking, creates self-help support groups for women, provides psychological and legal counseling, and manages a

[Sisters in Islam \(SIS\)](#) is an organization of Muslim women in Malaysia which seeks to articulate women's rights in Islam by emphasizing the need to interpret the Qur'an and the hadith in their proper historical and cultural contexts. SIS works in the areas of research, advocacy, legal reform and services, public education and publications.

[The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development \(AFPPD\)](#) is a regional non-governmental organization based in Bangkok, Thailand. It engages with parliamentarians from Asia and the Pacific to champion policies on population and development. AFPPD educates,

motivates, involves, and mobilizes parliamentarians on the linkages between increasing population and development issues such as reproductive health, family planning, food security, water resources, sustainable development, environment, ageing, urbanization, migration, HIV/AIDS, and gender equality.

### [The Center for Asia Pacific Women in Politics \(CAPWIP\)](#)

is a non-partisan, non-profit and non-governmental regional organization (NGO) dedicated to promoting equal participation of women in politics and decision-making.

### [The Center for Asia-Pacific Women in Politics \(CAPWIP\)](#)

is a regional organization dedicated to promoting equal participation of women in politics and decision-making. CAPWIP supports its network through technical assistance in organizational and program planning, training, research and information sharing.

[Wedu](#) is a leadership development organization that aims to unlock the leadership potential of women in Asia, enabling them to become leaders of their own communities, through leadership trainings. Wedu is based in Bangkok, Thailand.

## *Regional and National Organizations, Oceania*

[Women Into Politics \(WIP\)](#) ensures that Australian governments honor their commitment to CEDAW to eliminate discrimination against women in the public and political sphere and to give women equal opportunity for political participation.

[Women's Electoral Lobby \(WEL\)](#) is dedicated to creating a society where women's participation and potential are unrestricted, acknowledged and respected and where women and men share equally in society's responsibilities and rewards.

## *Regional and National Organizations, Latin America*

[Association of El Salvadoran Women Parliamentarians and Ex-Parliamentarians \(ASPARLEX-SAL\)](#) offers training, networking opportunities and resources to female political aspirants in El Salvador.

[The Inter-American Parliamentary Group \(IAPG\)](#) is a regional alliance of parliamentarians working across party lines to advance and promote laws and policies within the framework of a broad human development agenda, which includes health, and sexual and reproductive health and rights,

and women's empowerment. The IAPG is an independent parliamentary network and the only dedicated to advance the commitments made at ICPD, Beijing and the MDGs. The IAPG has supported parliamentarians in moving forward policies and promoting laws to advance and protect sexual and reproductive health, violence against women, HIV and AIDS and sex education for young people.

[Latin American Parliament](#) (Parlatino) is a regional, permanent organization composed by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. It has a permanent commission on gender and youth.

[ParlAmericas](#) is an independent network composed of national legislatures of 35 states from North, Central, and South America, and the Caribbean. The Group of Women Parliamentarians is the only permanent working group of ParlAmericas. It includes representatives from each of the sub-regions of the Americas: North, Central, South, and the Caribbean.

[Red PROLID](#) is a platform from the Inter-American Development Bank that connects women who hold or aspire to have leadership positions

in the public sector in Latin America. It aims at strengthening the work of women and men parliamentarians by providing a space to share and exchange experiences and knowledge from a gender equality perspective.

The [Bolivian Association of Councilwomen \(ACOBOL\)](#) is part of the local government system for institutional and political representation, especially for indigenous communities as there is a corresponding mandate in the Autonomous Municipal and Indigenous Government (GAM) in order to build municipal equity. ACOBOL works with indigenous women mayors and councilors in the 337 Autonomous Municipal and Indigenous Governments in Bolivia to support them as women in their political role and defend their political rights.

[The Inter-American Commission of Women \(CIM\)](#) is a specialized organization of the Organization of American States and is a forum for generating hemispheric policy to advance women's rights and gender equality. It is an intergovernmental agency that works to ensure recognition of the civil and political rights of women.







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