



SPOTLIGHT ON PUBLICATIONS: WOMEN IN POLITICS IN LATIN AMERICA



This Spotlight presents key publications that analyse women's opportunities to participate in politics in Latin America. It begins with a selection of publications that provide an overview of women's participation in politics in the region, before focusing on three key strategies that are being employed to improve gender equity in politics – gender quota laws, gender mainstreaming in parliaments, and practices for improving women's representation and participation in political parties. Finally, the Spotlight features key publications on the role of the media in electoral campaigns and women's political participation.

OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN THE REGION

► [Presence Without Empowerment? Women in Politics in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

This paper, prepared for the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum in December 2010, reviews common trends in Latin America and the Caribbean relating to women's participation in politics. It provides a comparative analysis of women's presence in national legislatures in different countries of the region, and also analyses the impacts of the presence of women in politics on women's rights, public policy and public opinion. This paper could be useful for different actors in Africa and South Asia since it provides a concise and accessible overview.

Full citation: Htun, M., Piscopo, J. 2012. *Presence Without Empowerment? Women in Politics in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Social Science Research Council, Brooklyn.

► [30 Years of Democracy: Riding the Wave? Women's Political Participation in Latin America](#)

This International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) publication analyses the extent to which Latin America has succeeded in granting women access to positions of power by comparing the degree to which 18 countries in the region have included women in decision making processes. It also assesses the barriers faced by women in accessing positions of power, such as political party politics, media coverage and campaign financing. Finally, the publication makes recommendations on how to ensure the qualitative representation of women in political spheres.

Full citation: Llanos, B., Sample, K. 2008. *30 Years of Democracy: Riding the Wave? Women's Political Participation in Latin America*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Stockholm.



► [Women in the Americas, Paths to Political Power: A Report Card on Women in Political Leadership](#)

This report recounts discussions that took place during the 'Women in the Americas, Paths to Political Power' dialogues, which brought together women political leaders from all over the Latin American continent. These dialogues aimed to analyse the enabling factors and strategies that explain progress towards gender equity in politics across the region. The report also assesses on-going challenges and provides recommendations that could be of use to government officials, international institutions and public policy professionals in other regions, in particular those interested in promoting political participation of women from vulnerable groups, such as Afro-descendants, indigenous and poor women, that remain largely excluded from the spheres of power.

Full citation: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). 2008. *Women in the Americas, Paths to Political Power: A Report Card on Women in Political Leadership*. IDB, Inter-American Dialogue, League of Women Voters of the United States, Washington, DC.

GENDER QUOTA LAWS IN LATIN AMERICA

► [Engineering Quotas in Latin America](#)

This paper questions whether quota laws introduced in Latin American countries have met initial expectations in terms of enhancing democratic representation and political responsiveness. It provides an analysis of the impacts of quota laws on the quantitative and qualitative representation of women in political spheres, drawing on examples from eleven countries across the region: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Peru. The author also explores the impacts of quota laws on gender-sensitive laws and policies. This paper presents an interesting critique of gender quotas that will be of interest to policymakers and practitioners working on issues of empowerment, democracy and women's rights.

Full citation: Piscopo, J. 2006. *Engineering Quotas in Latin America*. Working Paper Series #23. Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies, UC San Diego, San Diego.

► [Gender Quotas and Women's Political Participation in Latin America](#)

This paper, compiled from the results of the [Americas Barometer 2010](#), analyses the impact of gender quotas on women's participation in politics in the 24 countries included in the survey. It also contains an interesting case study on Uruguay that compares men and women's participation in politics before and after the adoption of a gender quota in 2009. The author concludes that although quotas increase the number of women elected to the national legislature, they do not produce significantly smaller gender gaps in men and women's participation in Latin America. This paper will be of relevance to policymakers and practitioners interested in understanding the practical limitations of gender quotas.

Full citation: Schwindt-Bayer, L. 2011. *Gender Quotas and Women's Political Participation in Latin America*. Vanderbilt University, Nashville.

GENDER-SENSITIVE PARLIAMENTS

► [Gender Mainstreaming in Latin American Parliaments: A Work in Progress](#)

This study analyses the promotion and safeguarding of women's rights and interests within Latin American parliaments. It includes a review of good practices for mainstreaming gender equality into formal and informal regulations, such as



maternity and paternity leave, parliamentary infrastructures, working hours, official working languages and specific rules regarding sexual harassment. It also analyses gender mainstreaming measures aimed at promoting women's issues and interests within parliamentary work. The study highlights the importance of women's participation in parliamentary committees and assemblies and also shows how the presence of women in parliaments can help to expand the political agenda. This report will be useful to parliamentarians and practitioners as it provides concrete examples of strategies for improving working conditions for women parliamentarians.

Full citation: Marx, J., Borner, J. 2011. *Gender Mainstreaming in Latin American Parliaments: A Work in Progress*. IDEA, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Lima.

► [Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practices](#)

This report by the Inter-Parliamentary Union reviews the progress of parliaments around the world in relation to gender sensitivity, in particular how parliaments have evolved to become more inclusive and how gender perspectives have been integrated into their operational and institutional activities. It reviews best practices from countries around the world, including experiences from Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Peru. This report provides useful guidelines to parliamentarians, practitioners and any other actor seeking information about successful strategies for improving gender sensitivity in parliament.

Full citation: Palmieri, S. 2011. *Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practices*. Inter-Parliamentary Union, Geneva.

FOSTERING GENDER EQUALITY IN POLITICAL PARTIES

► [Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties: A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation](#)

This publication offers an interesting review of best practices from the global South concerning the inclusion of women in political parties. It analyses these practices according to the different stages of electoral cycles, thereby providing useful guidelines to political parties and women's rights activists who wish to understand the practical implications of promoting women's participation in political parties. This publication also provides 20 case studies from across Africa, Asia and Latin America, including experiences from El Salvador, Mexico and Peru.

Full citation: Ballington, J. 2012. *Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties: A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation*. United Nations Development Programme, National Democratic Institute, New York.

► [From Words to Action: Best Practices for Women's Participation in Political Parties](#)

Political parties play a key role in the promotion of women's participation in politics since, in many cases, they have a key responsibility for deciding who should be nominated as a candidate and therefore elected to positions of power. This publication explores different mechanisms implemented by political parties to promote women's progress in moving up the political ladder. It describes how some political parties in Latin America have included mechanisms in their statutes and internal organisation and includes a review of the strategies they have used to attract women activists and promote women's leadership. Drawing on 41 best practice case studies, this publication provides an interesting comparative analysis that will be of use to women leaders, activists and party leaders that wish to promote women's participation among their ranks.

Full citation: Llanos, B., Sample, K. 2008. *From Words to Action: Best Practices for Women's Participation in Political Parties*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm.



► [Gender and Political Parties: Far from Parity](#)

This publication offers a balanced analysis of women's participation in political parties and demonstrates that there is still a lot to be done in Latin America regarding the inclusion of women in decision making processes. Although some countries have introduced quota laws, Latin America remains far from achieving gender parity in terms of the number of women nominated as political candidates. Furthermore, countries in the region also lack adequate legal frameworks requiring political parties to provide funding for training women.

Full citation: Roza, V. Llanos, B., Garzón de la Roza, G. 2011. *Gender and Political Parties: Far from Parity*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Inter-American Development Bank, Stockholm.

GENDER EQUALITY IN MEDIA COVERAGE

► [Election Coverage from a Gender Perspective: A Media Monitoring Manual](#)

The media plays a fundamental role in women's election campaigns and their participation in decision making processes. This is because the media provides the main public space for political competition and debate, and is also the main source of information for voters. This publication describes how media watch groups can help to correct disparities in the coverage of men and women's campaigns. It also presents the main conclusions from a meeting that brought together six Latin American organisations to share their knowledge and experiences of media monitoring with a gender perspective with the aim of developing a methodology that could be replicated in other parts of the world. This media monitoring manual will therefore be useful for civil society organisations, women activists, journalists or practitioners promoting equal media coverage for men and women candidates.

Full citation: Llanos, B., Nina, J. 2011. *Election Coverage from a Gender Perspective: A Media Monitoring Manual*. UN Women, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm.

► [Unseeing Eyes: Media Coverage and Gender in Latin American Elections](#)

The challenges faced by women in politics limits their progress towards power during the electoral phase. Many of these challenges have to do with the way their campaigns are covered by the media. This publication compares how the media covers men and women's campaigns in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Peru and Uruguay, and asks whether women have the same opportunities as men to make themselves and their agenda known to the electorate. It also addresses whether the media gives women the same level of legitimacy as male candidates. The recommendations made in this publication will be useful for journalists, activists and practitioners promoting fairer media coverage of women in electoral campaigns.

Full citation: Llanos, B. 2011. *Unseeing Eyes: Media Coverage and Gender in Latin American Elections*. UN Women, New York.

CONTACT [FUNDAR](#)

To learn more about these and other publications related to women in politics in Latin America, contact the author, Marine Perron, Fundar Researcher, at marine@fundar.org.mx.

FIND OUT MORE FROM [ELLA](#)

To learn more about efforts to promote gender equality in Latin America, read the [ELLA Guide](#), which has a full list of the knowledge materials on this theme. To learn more about other ELLA development issues, browse other [ELLA Themes](#).



ELLA is supported by:

