



FROM WORDS TO ACTION:

Best Practices for Women's Participation
in Latin American Political Parties



FROM WORDS TO ACTION:

Best Practices for Women's Participation in Latin American Political Parties

Co-authors

Beatriz Llanos

Kristen Sample

Researchers

Jutta Marx and Jutta Borner (Argentina)

Gloria Ardaya (Bolivia)

Luis Felipe Miguel (Brazil)

María Emma Wills and Diana Cardoso (Colombia)

Marcela Jager (Costa Rica)

Marcela Ríos, Maggi Cook and Daniela Hormazábal (Chile)

María Fernanda Cañete (Ecuador)

Yolanda Guirola (El Salvador)

Claudia López (Guatemala)

María Antonia Martínez (Honduras)

Daniela Cerva (Mexico)

Eva Samqui Chan (Nicaragua)

Mariela Arce (Panama)

Milena Pereira and Maridí Gonzales (Paraguay)

Beatriz Llanos (Peru)

Magaly Pineda (Dominican Republic)

Niki Johnson (Uruguay)

Magdalena Valdivieso (Venezuela)

From Words to Action: Best Practices for Women's Participation in Latin American Political Parties

© International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2008

International IDEA's publications do not reflect a specific regional or political interest. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of International IDEA, its board of directors or council members.

Any request to use or translate all or part of this publication should be addressed to:

International IDEA
SE-103 34 Stockholm
Sweden

Graphic Design: Ruperto Pérez-Albela Stuart
Artwork: En el cielo, Domingo Yépez Silva-Santisteban

The original edition of this publication was produced in Spanish. *Del dicho al hecho: manual de buenas practicas para la participacion de mujeres en los partidos políticos latinoamericanos*, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm, 2008 (ISBN 978-91-85724-40-6) © International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

This English version of the publication was undertaken by UNDP and was made possible through the generous support of the United Nation's Development Programme's Gender Team, in the Bureau for Development Policy. The translation to English was conducted by Martín Gianelli López and then edited for publication by Abigail Somma.

Contents

Foreword	5
Acknowledgements	6
1. Introduction	7
2. Research Methodology	9
3. Using the Handbook of Best Practices	10
4. Women and Politics in Numbers	10
5. Quotas and More: “Knots” in Women’s Political Participation	15
6. Obstacles At Home: The Role of Political Parties in Women’s Underrepresentation	18
7. From Rhetoric to Best Practices	20
7.1. Statutes and Declarations of Principles	20
7.2. Internal Organization	22
7.3. Recruiting	27
7.4. Elections and Leadership Advancement	28
7.5. Training	34
7.6. Electoral System Reform	39
7.7. Financing	41
7.8. Government Plans	43
7.9. Inter-Party Agreements	46
7.10. Relationship with Civil Society	53
7.11. Media	55
8. Learning from Best Practices	58
Bibliography	59

Foreword

Although it is often said that there can be no democracy without political parties, it is equally true that there can be no parties without the democratic participation of women. This not only means being open to women's specific demands and interests, but also providing them with equal opportunities to reach leadership and representative positions.

International IDEA's work in the field of political parties and gender creates the framework for this publication. Even though there is still a long road before attaining gender equality in politics, we need to acknowledge that in recent years some parties have advanced in key areas. Through an extensive series of interviews carried out in eighteen Latin American countries, the research on which this publication is based identifies 95 "best practices" implemented by these organizations. We hope that the dissemination of these practices will compel leaders and activists to consider equality as the rule and not the exception in all party levels.

Since its founding in 1995, one of International IDEA's central themes has been to strengthen political parties in order to contribute to the consolidation of representative democracy. Even in cases where these organizations lack the population's trust, they still carry out indispensable functions such as channeling the demands of citizens, developing policies and programs, selecting candidates for the Executive and Legislative powers, as well as monitoring the sitting government. These are functions that in present-day democracies no other organization can perform.

International IDEA also focuses on democracy and gender in order to identify obstacles preventing women's adequate political participation, collect information on this topic and design tools to overcome the obstacles identified. The persistent underrepresentation of women, in elected and nominated electoral positions and party positions, reveals a number of unresolved "knots" and challenges that must be confronted before attaining gender equality in political parties.



Vidar Helgesen

Secretary General
International IDEA

Acknowledgements

This handbook is the result of efforts started in January 2007, involving a number of people without whom it would have been impossible to complete. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to them.

Foremost, to those researchers responsible for the national evaluations and for documenting the best practices found in the eighteen Latin American countries: Jutta Marx and Jutta Borner (Argentina), Gloria Ardaya (Bolivia), Luis Felipe Miguel (Brazil), María Emma Wills and Diana Cardoso (Colombia), Marcela Jager (Costa Rica), Marcela Ríos, Maggi Cook and Daniela Hormazábal (Chile), María Fernanda Cañete (Ecuador), Yolanda Guirola (El Salvador), Claudia López (Guatemala), María Antonia Martínez (Honduras), Daniela Cerva (Mexico), Eva Samqui Chan (Nicaragua), Mariela Arce (Panama), Milena Pereira and Maridí Gonzales (Paraguay), Beatriz Llanos (Peru), Magaly Pineda (Dominican Republic), Niki Johnson (Uruguay) and Magdalena Valdivieso (Venezuela).

We would also like to thank those organizations that shared data for the evaluations, especially those representatives and leaders from diverse political parties that provided researchers with information about their organizations' struggles to attain egalitarian participation for women.

We would also like to thank those institutions that made this process possible through their sponsorship: the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the Andean Community (CAN) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The original edition of this publication was in Spanish. This English version publication was made possible through the generous support of the United Nation's Development Programme's Gender Team, in the Bureau for Development Policy.

The project's main team was led by Beatriz Llanos and Kristen Sample, with the assistance of Alicia del Águila, Zoila Cruz and Eileen Boyle; María Inés Calle was the editorial coordinator and Rosario Rey de Castro was copy editor. Prereleases received the valuable comments and contributions of Violeta Bermúdez, Marcela Jager and Marcela Ríos. The translation to English was conducted by Martín Gianelli López and editing of this translation was completed by Abigail Somma.

1. Introduction

Even though women represent more than half of the voting population in many countries and have been widely incorporated into the economic sphere over the last decade, reality tells us that there is still an important gap between these advances and women's access to elected or political party positions. While considerable improvements have taken place in women's participation in political decision-making bodies, the numbers continue to show substantial levels of underrepresentation. In the eighteen Latin American countries examined in this study, there is an average of two women representatives for every ten men. In thirteen of these countries there is not even one female mayor for every ten male mayors, and those countries with an Upper Chamber have less than two women Senators for every ten men.

In order to resolve this asymmetry, and in response to the demands of socially and politically organized women –as well as the international consensus supporting them– several countries have chosen to include quota mechanisms in electoral regulations. These quotas have been functioning with greater or lesser effectiveness depending on the context and regulatory framework in which they are applied.

However, by focusing on analyzing the implementation and results of quota mechanisms one might neglect to consider the institution that normally initiates and develops the career of those wanting to attain elected government positions: political parties. We should not forget that these are the organizations that, usually through internal selection processes, determine who makes up the electoral lists by which citizens vote in their representatives.

We often hear that political parties are going through a crisis. Regular citizens perceive parties as detached from their daily worries, believe that many party leaders lack credibility and trustworthiness, and feel that most parties have been unable to adapt to attitude and paradigm shifts that have taken place in recent years. This background creates the context in which there is – at times– scant awareness of the importance of representing and promoting women's interests.

In spite of this, political parties are still the main channel for political participation, as well as the privileged vehicle for the resolution of social conflicts and for representing women's demands and interests. Moreover, it is parties that decide which candidates the electorate votes for, whether at the presidential, parliamentary, local, and even international levels, as in the case of regional parliaments.

It is therefore imperative that we delve into a topic that has gone almost unexplored until now: the existence of mechanisms to promote gender equality driven from within these organizations. Have parties included policies to promote equity in their statutes, organizational structure and government proposals? Do they have differentiated strategies to attract women activists? Have they made inroads in promoting and including women among their senior ranks and public positions? Do they promote women's leadership, for example, through training and by directing resources to that end?

In order to respond to these questions, in 2007, International IDEA began a research project called “Best Practices for the Participation of Women in Latin American Political Parties.” The objective was to identify in eighteen regional countries (where representative and multi-party democracy is currently established), positive examples of promoting more and better participation of women within party structures, including examples of eradicating barriers or obstacles that hinder women’s equal political participation.

As a result of this research, 95 best practices were identified, which in most cases, are being systematized and publicized here for the first time. While some of them are the result of parties’ own commitment to clear and coherent policies in favor of gender equality in party politics, others are the consequence of the women activists themselves –sometimes working against the current– to open their organizations to more inclusive behaviors, turning them into more hospitable spaces, perhaps even conducive to their own participation.

This demonstrates that change within organizations can and should be bidirectional. If parties really want to turn their organizations into democratic and inclusive institutions, it is urgent to have both men and women leaders who promote more and improved participation from women. However, if that opening up process takes too long or fails altogether, it is equally imperative that women organize themselves and pressure for those transformations from the grassroots.

This handbook is aimed at women leaders and activists from political parties, as well as the international and national organizations working with them. The findings provide a comparative look at women’s political participation in the countries studied as well as at the obstacles women confront during their political careers. It offers an essential framework for understanding and appreciating every one of the 95 best practices identified, which are important examples of the promotion of women’s effective political participation.

However, for the purpose of this publication we have selected 41 of them, which presented comparatively, are illustrative of the diversity of experiences undertaken in the countries studied. For those wanting to familiarize themselves with the entire set of cases, the national evaluations and each one of the files containing best practices, this publication is accompanied by a CD with the information in digital format.

We hope that these tools can kick-start a debate on the incorporation of best practices in political parties, to transform rhetoric on equality into real opportunities for women. We also hope that this publication fosters the exchange and implementation of real and positive experiences that have an impact beyond just discourse.

2. Research Methodology

In 2007, national researchers in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela began the task of evaluating, foremost, the “state of affairs” with respect to women’s political participation to understand national contexts. Secondly, they approached main parties (political parties with representation in Congress or with valid registration before the courts or electoral tribunals) in order to determine whether or not these best practices exist. To do this, multiple interviews were conducted with leaders, activists or elected representatives from each one of the organizations studied.

Information on each best practice had to be registered in a “Best Practice Registry File”, specifically designed to systematize each experience appropriately and uniformly. This information also had to be added to one or more of the eleven “institutional spaces” previously defined by the project, which correspond to several fields of party activity. These are:

- Statutes and Declarations of Principles
- Internal Organization
- Recruiting
- Elections and Leadership Advancement
- Training
- Electoral System Reform
- Financing
- Government Plans
- Inter-Party Agreements
- Relationship with Civil Society
- Media

Furthermore, to ensure that each one of these experiences could be considered a best practice, we used the criteria agreed unanimously in 1999 by the United Nations Committee “Women and Equality.” Therefore, in order to be considered a best practice, experiences had to comply with at least one of the following prerequisites:

- sustainable,
- leads to a visible change in gender equality,
- has an impact on the political context,
- represents an innovative approach and is replicable.

As a result of this process, each consultant selected a group of relevant practices from various political organizations and created eighteen national evaluations, which provide important information on the existence of quota laws and their impact on women’s participation in Congress (Lower Chamber), and at the regional and local levels. They also include information on the percentage of women activists (to

the extent that they are quantifiable) and the presence of women in party leadership positions. Finally, the evaluations address the extent to which gender issues have been incorporated into party statutes, as well as in government plans and proposals.

3. Using the Best Practices Handbook

As mentioned, the objective of this handbook is to provide women politicians, their organizations and the general public with information from eighteen countries about practical experiences in promoting effective participation of women in politics.

It is, therefore, a tool for inspiration and support designed to increase initiatives on these matters in the region. In order to get the most out of this handbook, we recommend the following:

- Review the handbook's contents and identify areas of party activity in which to carry out effective initiatives for the participation of women.
- After reviewing the analysis of the identified areas in the handbook, find the best practice files on the CD which accompanies this publication. You will find all 95 best practices on the CD, organized by eleven "institutional spaces", as defined in the handbook.
- For more in-depth study of the context in which each practice took place, we recommend that you also review the country evaluation where the identified practice is being implemented. Country evaluations can also be found on the CD.
- Apply the analyzed information to your country's context and party experience, and also develop a best practice to promote the effective participation of women in your political organization.
- Once your initiative is approved and implemented, share it with International IDEA so that it can be used as a reference for other political organizations.

If you wish to obtain more information on a given experience, we recommend that you contact the relevant political party or coalition directly. You will find a summary table attached to this handbook which includes all the best practices used in the study.

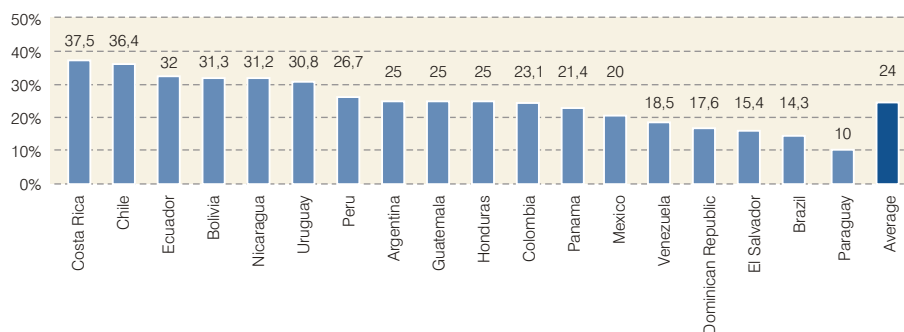
4. Women and Politics in Numbers

Currently, all of the region's countries have ratified international tools such as the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women¹ (1979), committing themselves to the incorporation of gender equality policies in order to become representative and inclusive democracies. In line with this Convention, a first look at the political situation of women reveals that women's presence in diverse public decision-making spaces has increased significantly with respect to past decades.

During the 90s, the presence of women in ministerial cabinets barely reached 9% (Buvinic and Roza 2004) and, specifically in 1997, the average number of women in the Lower Chambers of Latin American countries was just 10.8%. One decade later:

- two women, Michelle Bachelet in Chile and Cristina Fernández in Argentina, have been popularly elected to the Presidencies of their respective countries;
- Women represent 24% of all ministerial cabinet positions and occupy portfolios previously reserved for men;

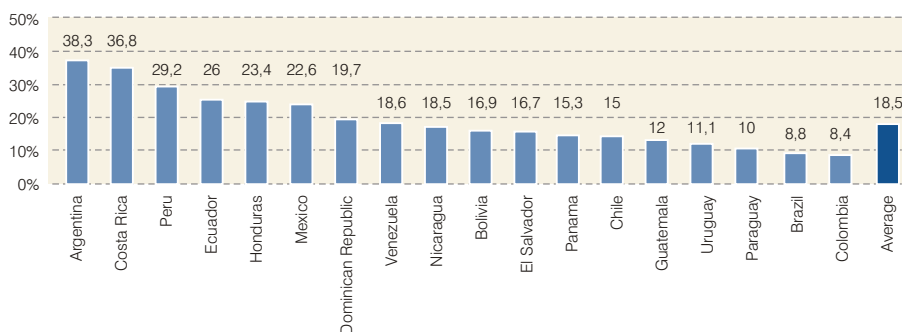
Graph 1
Women in Ministerial Cabinets, November 2007



Source: International IDEA 2007.

- out of 75 women Ministers in the region as of November 2007, 21.3% headed portfolios linked to the productive sector and the environment, 12% headed economy and infrastructure, another 12% were in the equality and social development sectors and 6.7% led defense and internal affairs portfolios;
- women comprise 18.5% of all representatives in the region's Lower Chambers or unicameral Congresses, a process that has been accelerated by the approval of affirmative action measures, such as quotas, in eleven countries.

Graph 2
Women in Latin American Unicameral Congresses or Lower Chambers



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union figures 2007.

Affirmative or positive actions: What exactly are quotas?

In general terms, quotas are a strategy aimed at ending the barriers that women have traditionally faced when trying to participate in and access decision-making spheres (Duarte 2001). Starting from the realization of a significant imbalance between the political representation of men and women, they attempt to reduce these imbalances by leveling the playing field. Quotas guarantee women's presence in the political sphere by reserving positions for them, thus establishing minimum levels of participation.

There are three types: constitutional, legislative and party quotas. In the first two, the quotas are mandatory, and in the case of party quotas, they are voluntary. Quotas also have several levels of application; among them is the reservation of a percentage of positions in electoral lists for women and the reservation of legislative seats or benches with respect to the total number of people elected (International IDEA and FLACSO Chile 2005).

In Latin America, eleven countries –constitutionally in Argentina's case and legally elsewhere– have established the obligation of including a percentage of women, varying between 20% and 50% depending on the country, in the lists presented by each party during electoral processes.

This type of quota has guaranteed a more balanced electoral offer. Before the adoption of these quotas, women were practically absent from the electoral lists presented by parties. Even though a significant increase in the electoral results of women has occurred in several countries adopting this system, they do not guarantee a given percentage of women elected.

Quotas in Latin American Countries

Country	Year of Approval	Percentage
Argentina	1991	30% (LC and UC)
Bolivia	1997	30% (LC) 25% (UC)
Brazil	1997	30% (LC)
Costa Rica	1996	40%
Ecuador	1997	50% (2006 elections)
Honduras	2000	30%
Mexico	1996	No more than 70% per gender (LC and UC)
Panama	1997	30%
Paraguay	1996	A woman candidate every five places (LC and UC)
Peru	1997	No less than 30%
Dominican Republic	1997	33%

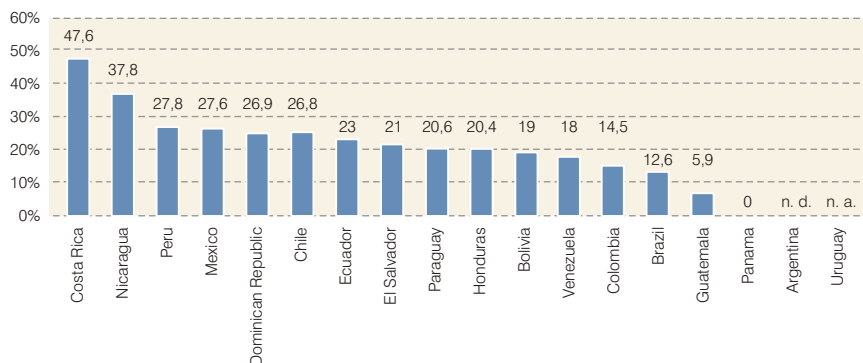
Sources: Based on information in <www.ipu.org> and <www.idea.int>.

* Venezuela constitutes a peculiar experience. In 1977, after reform of the Law of Suffrage and Political Participation, it was mandated that political parties and male and female electors include 30% women candidates in their lists, which was applied during the 1998 elections. However, the National Electoral Council later declared that the regulation was unenforceable because it ran against the principle of equality outlined in Venezuela's Constitution. This decision was later ratified by the country's Supreme Court of Justice.

LC = Lower Chamber; UC = Upper Chamber

- ten countries in the region have a percentage of women municipal councilors exceeding 20%. Costa Rica with 47.6% and Nicaragua with 37.8% show the best results.

Graph 3
Women Councilors/Regents

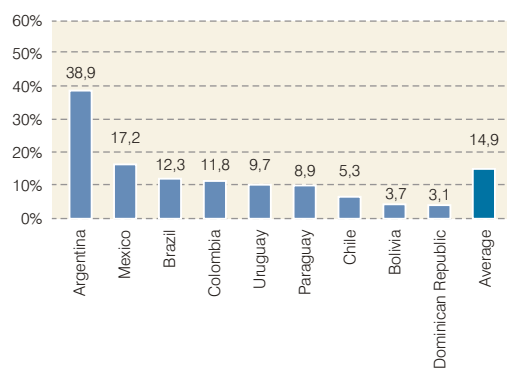


Source: International IDEA 2007.
n. d. = no data.
n. a. = not applicable.

Despite the importance of these advances, the fact is that women are still far from obtaining equal participation in decision-making spaces, even though in most of these countries they make up more than 50% of the voting population, as reflected in the following data:

- women account for barely 14.9% of the region’s Senators. Out of nine countries with a bicameral system, five –Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic– have a representation rate below 10%;

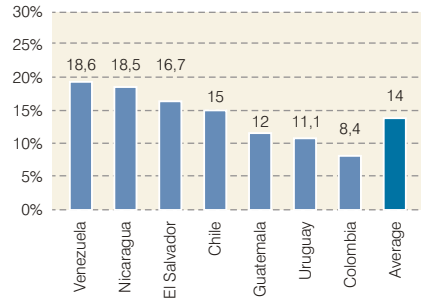
Graph 4
Women in Upper Chambers as of 2007



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union figures 2007.

- in the seven countries that have not adopted quotas –Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Venezuela– female representation in Lower Chambers or unicameral Congresses is, on average, only 14%. Colombia, Uruguay and Guatemala register the lowest rates of women participation with 8.4%, 11.1% and 12%, respectively.

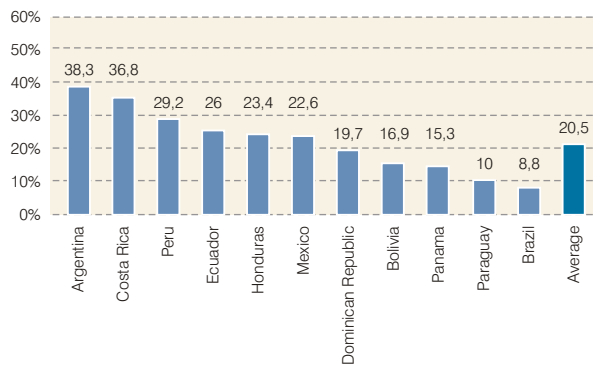
Graph 5
Women in Lower Chambers or unicameral Congresses – Countries without Quota



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union figures 2007.

- although the eleven countries that have adopted quotas have attained an average female representation rate of 20.5%, some of these, such as Brazil and Paraguay, barely reach 8.8% and 10%, respectively. While Panama and Bolivia reach 15.3% and 16.9%, respectively.

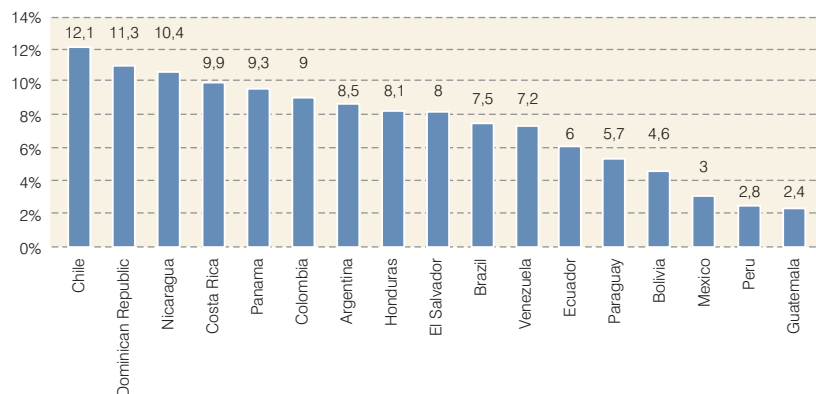
Graph 6
Women in Lower Chambers or unicameral Congresses – Countries with Quota



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union figures 2007.

- the presence of women in mayoralties is dramatically low. Four countries have a 0% to 5% rate of women mayors, ten are in the 5% to 10% range, while only Chile (12.1%), the Dominican Republic (11.3%) and Nicaragua (10.4%) exceed a 10% rate, all of them showing very low levels.

Graph 7
Women in Local Positions: Mayors



Source: International IDEA 2007.

5. Quotas and More: “Knots” in Women’s Political Participation

The adoption of quotas –between 1991 and 2000– in eleven countries has produced a significant increase in the number of women in public life, especially in Lower Chambers. Argentina, a pioneer in the adoption of this type of mechanism, has gone from a representation rate of 6% to 38.3%; Ecuador has gone from 4% to 26%; Peru from 11% to 29.2%; Honduras from 9.4% to 23.4% and Costa Rica from 14% to 36.8%.

Table 1
Presence of Women in Lower Chambers or Unicameral Congresses Before and After the Quota

Year	Women Participation Before Law (LC), %	Current Women Representation (LC), %
Argentina	6%	38,3%
Bolivia	11%	16,9%
Brazil	7%	8,8%
Costa Rica	14%	36,8%
Ecuador	4%	26%
Honduras	9.4%	23,4%
Mexico	17%	22,6%
Panama	8%	15,3%
Paraguay	3%	10%
Peru	11%	29,2%
Dominican Republic	12%	19,7%

Source: Based on information in <www.ipu.org> and <www.idea.int>.

However, Brazil and Bolivia are examples of countries that, despite having adopted this measure, show only a slight increase in the representation of women (see box). Examples such as these enable us to identify at least five factors limiting quota efficiency:

- The electoral system where the quota is applied, which can be proportional or first-past-the-post; moreover we need to consider the type of list,² size of the electoral district³ and party importance.⁴

- the way the law was written, which needs to be as precise as possible;
- the existence or lack of a mandate for the placement of women in lists, an issue that is particularly important in the case of closed or blocked lists because it guarantees that women will be placed in “eligible” positions;
- the type of sanctions imposed, which, in order to be truly effective, should consider barring the registration of lists in cases of quota non-compliance.
- a socio-political culture that does not necessarily promote more and better participation of women.

The Case of Brazil	The Case of Bolivia
<p>Brazil has a first-past-the-post system in single-member and double-member districts for electing Senators, and a proportional representation system in large districts for electing Representatives.</p> <p>In parallel, the law regulating quotas establishes that, for all those positions elected under the proportional representation system, party lists must reserve a minimum of 30% and a maximum of 70% of seats for candidates of each sex.</p> <p>Those lists are open, without a placement mandate and parties are allowed to present candidates totaling up to 150% of the overall number of seats. Furthermore, the law does not establish penalties if parties disregard stipulated quotas.</p> <p>In this sense, the 150%-percentage rule has been regarded by experts (Htun 2003 and Marx and others 2007) as an “escape clause” for parties, which may even draw up lists without any female candidates.</p> <p>In order to shed light on the situation, the authors utilize the example of a district with ten representatives. If we apply the aforementioned norms, each party would be able to present up to fifteen candidates and should, in principle, reserve four candidacies for women. But, were the party to present a list of eleven male candidates without including a single woman, it could not be sanctioned in any way.</p>	<p>Bolivia has a mixed proportional representation system and a 30% gender quota that is implemented differently depending on whether it involves the Senate or the Chamber of Representatives.</p> <p>In the latter, two simultaneous-voting procedures have been established: one uses a first-past-the-post system and the other uses proportional representation. Under this system, 68 out of 130 legislators are elected by a simple majority in single-member districts, while the rest (62) are elected in nine districts through party lists, using the proportional representation system.</p> <p>The quota applies only to the 62 seats elected under the proportional representation system in multi-member districts; it is mandatory to include a woman out of every three candidates.</p> <p>This differentiation has resulted in a substantial growth of female representation within multi-member districts, while it remains at very low levels in single-member districts.</p> <p>Given that Bolivian legislation also establishes the possibility of nominating incumbent and substitute candidates for every post in an election, the mandatory 30% quota has been applied to both posts. The result: parties place more women in substitute positions.</p> <p>In addition, we have to consider the use of “political harassment” (Machicao, originally in Baldez and Bráñez 2004: 152) to put pressure on elected incumbent women to resign and hand over their posts to male substitutes.</p>

* In first-past-the-post systems, the party obtaining the most votes gets all the contested positions, while in proportional representation systems the number of elected positions is assigned “in proportion” to the percentage of votes obtained by each party.

Both cases highlight the need to analyze a country's context before introducing modifications to transform mere declarations into effective steps.

Moreover, without denying the great importance that quotas have had on increasing women's political participation, it is imperative that we acknowledge that they can only influence a specific stage in women's political lives: their nomination as candidates. However, a politician's journey, as we know very well, is much longer and influenced by several structural factors which may stand in the way of women's systematic and egalitarian participation in political decision-making spaces. These issues cannot be resolved with quotas alone.

The main obstacles usually confronting women are (International IDEA 2005b and 2008):

- The prevalence of a masculine model of exercising power in political life, political parties and government institutions.
- Difficulty reconciling family life with public political life, as the weight of caring for the home and raising children still falls mostly on women in many Latin American countries.
- The existence of an “unfriendly” organizational logic in political parties, which translates into lack of financial support for women candidates, despite the well-known difficulties they have in obtaining funds. For example, more women than men are unemployed or have part-time and poorly-paid jobs. They also have, on one hand, limited access to power circles and political networks yet on the other hand, more is expected of them in terms of qualification and requirements.
- Scarce contact and cooperation with other public or private institutions such as women's organizations.
- Lack of training and leadership programs for women aimed at improving political performance.
- Invisibility of their proposals and candidacies in the media.
- Remnants of a popular political culture that is not very progressive with respect to the participation of women outside the home.

Some Facts about the Socio-Cultural Context of Women Participating in Latin America's Political Sphere

- *Relationship with the media.* During Peru's 2006 elections, media coverage of women candidates for Congress was barely 22.3% (International IDEA and Asociación Civil Transparencia 2007a).
- *Family life vs. public life.* While only 17% of the Argentine male legislators (elected for the 2003-2005 period) were single, divorced, widowed or separated, 40% of women legislators belonged to one of those categories (Marx and others 2007).
- *Perceptions of public opinion.* According to data from Latinobarómetro 2004, in countries like Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Colombia, Paraguay, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras, 40% of citizens or more declare that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with the phrase: “it is better for women to concentrate on the home and for men on the workplace”.

We need to analyze these problems and take a series of appropriate measures to change this situation. It generates few incentives for the participation of women and results in a system below parity levels, meaning the equal participation of men and women in a truly democratic and inclusive society. Paradoxically, several of the aforementioned obstacles are directly related to the quintessential political environment of representative democracies like ours: political parties.

6. Obstacles At Home: The Role of Political Parties in Women's Underrepresentation

Despite frequent talk of crises affecting political parties, in modern democracies they still carry out the task of aggregating and representing their populations' interests with lesser or greater success. In addition to structuring a particular vision for the country and building a series of policies meant to achieve their objectives, they are also responsible for giving voters, through electoral lists, a range of candidates nominated to represent the population.

The way these lists are composed is a decision made by parties, and depending on their level of commitment to gender equality within their organization, they will nominate a certain number of women. Sadly, the reality of the situation and corresponding numbers indicate that political parties in Latin America are still structures with paternalistic and sexist tendencies.⁵

Even when legislation creates a mandate to comply with a quota, some parties manage to avoid it. In countries that have not adopted a quota, numbers reveal parties' unwillingness to put women on lists.

Some Facts about the Party Context of Women Participating in Latin America's Political Sphere

- *Participation in leadership positions.* In countries like Uruguay, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Panama and Chile, the percentage of women in leadership positions does not exceed 20%.
- *Candidate lists.* In Chile, a country that has not legally adopted quotas, only 9.7% of party candidates between 1989 and 2005 were women (International IDEA and FLACSO Chile 2005). In Colombia, also a country that has not adopted quotas for elected positions, out of 168 candidates competing for the Senate in 2006, barely 18% were women (International IDEA 2007).

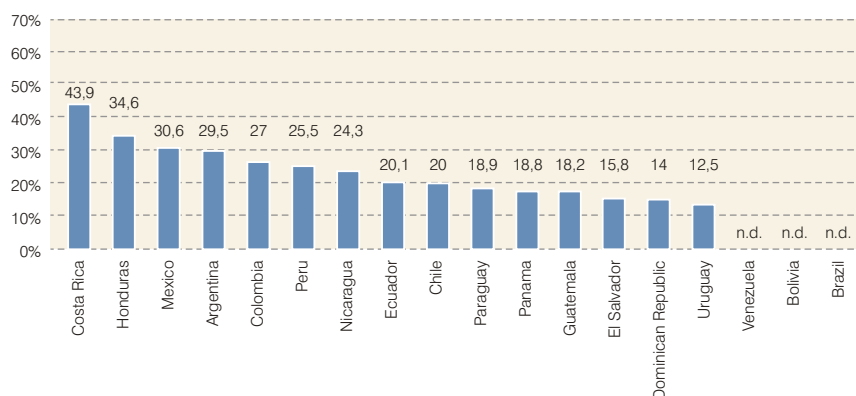
- *Quota compliance.* During Bolivia's 1999 municipal elections, a scandal occurred around "transvestite candidates". In order to feign compliance with the quota, parties altered the names of male candidates so that they looked like the names of women. In the same vein, in order to reach the objective of increasing the number of elected women in Costa Rica, the quota law had to be modified to establish clearly that women had to appear in eligible positions and not merely as "filling" at the end of lists.
- *Campaign financing.* In Peru's 2006 general elections, Parliamentary male candidates spent 4.6 times more on average in advertisement than women candidates (IDEA and Asociación Civil Transparencia 2007a).

This is aggravated by the lack of enthusiasm parties show in preparing and promoting women leaders within their organizations, evidenced by the absence of training spaces and financial support for the development of women's political careers.

Conversely, even though parties may refer to female membership in their discourse, very few actually bother to count them. Among those that have done so, two political organizations in Mexico and one in the Dominican Republic are noteworthy. In Mexico, the Democratic Revolution Party's (PRD) has 53.2% women activists registered, while the National Action Party (PAN) has 46.7% between active and joint members (International IDEA 2007). In the Dominican Republic, the Christian-Social Reformist Party (PRSC) has a 44.32% rate of registered women.

Party estimates normally place female participation levels between 40% and 50% of the total, while women's participation in the main leadership bodies (in countries where information is available) does not exceed 30%, with the exception of Costa Rica (43.9%), Honduras (34.6%) and Mexico (30.6%).

Graph 8
Women in Leadership Bodies in Latin American Political Parties



* Data based on information verified by national investigators working for the "Best Practices for the Participation of Women in Latin American Political Parties" project, carried out by International IDEA in 2007 (International IDEA 2007a). In Mexico's case, we've taken the year 2004 as the reference date to quantify the number of women in National Action Party, Institutional Revolutionary Party and Democratic Revolution Party (PAN, PRI and PRD) leadership positions.

These numbers reveal a disparity between the number of women members and their representation in parties' decision-making levels. In this context, we need to ask ourselves: What are women members doing? Is their political participation limited to support tasks, mobilization or logistics? In this case, we face a serious problem if we consider that these are the organizations where someone aspiring to have a political career begins the learning process and also where leaders must be found to represent the party's platform to citizens.

It is therefore very important that women have equal opportunities to participate, compete and be elected in all of these processes. However, this requires a series of transformations in party structures and logistics that can only be achieved through the progressive adoption of what we have termed "best practices."

Recommendations for Political Parties included in the *Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women*, to Guarantee Women's Equal Access and Full Participation in Power Structures and Decision-Making Processes

- Consider the possibility of examining party structure and proceedings with the intention of eliminating all barriers directly or indirectly discriminating against the participation of women.
- Consider the possibility of establishing initiatives allowing women to fully participate in all internal decision-making structures and nominating processes, either by designation or election.
- Consider the possibility of incorporating gender issues in political platforms through measures designed to ensure that women are allowed to participate in the party's leadership on an equal footing with men.

7. From Rhetoric to Best Practices

In the following pages, we present a selection of the 95 practices that we documented during our research. They are classified according to eleven "institutional spaces" built around the main areas of party activity, several of which pose particular difficulty for women's equal participation. The experiences presented here help reverse the problems often found in various political organizations, hence their description as "best practices."

7.1. Statutes and Declarations of Principles

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), as mentioned before, has been ratified by every Latin American country. Similarly, after four UN-organized Conferences on women's issues, most regional countries have approved laws promoting gender equality (International IDEA and the Organization of American States 2004). An

atmosphere favoring the inclusion of women has also influenced political parties, whose discourse –as well as statutes and declarations of principles– now include references to equality between men and women. Now the challenge is to turn general and rhetorical discourse into concrete actions.

We can find an example of this movement from discourse to action in Argentina's Socialist Party. Its Charter, Article 3, paragraph d, defines effective equality between party men and women as one of their organization's principles. This was then complemented in 2005 by an Ordinary Congress that established practices the party needed to realize the principle of equality.

Best Practice: Declaration of the First Ordinary Congress – 2nd Era of the Socialist Party: “On the Road to Parity between Men and Women”	
Political Party: Socialist Party (PS, in Spanish) Country: Argentina	
Description:	Declaration of the First Ordinary Congress – 2nd Era of the Socialist Party, held in Buenos Aires on June 24-25, 2005; states that article 3 of its Charter, guaranteeing the principle of effective equality between men and women within the party, should lead to the following best practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every leadership, decision-making and representative body within the party should have equal representation of men and women. • Candidate lists for elected positions at all levels must have identical participation. • In the case of single-member positions, genders must alternate over time. • We shall promote any measure enabling men's and women's equal participation in leadership and decision-making positions at the national, provincial and municipal level, as well as within workers' and professionals' unions, the Judiciary and collegiate bodies. • We shall promote the introduction of legislative bills entailing proactive measures toward the effective compliance with these principles.

Another important aspect of statutes is to provide visibility to the numerous female activists in political parties when referencing them. This is a first step toward reversing the predominantly male concepts found in political language. Examples can be found in Venezuela's Movement for Social Democracy - Podemos and Clase Media Revolucionaria parties, which acknowledge women through the use of inclusive or gender-sensitive language:

Article 21. The fundamental priority of our male and female activists shall be to fight against poverty, which has taken hold of that great sector of our population that lives in deprivation. Inspired in the principles of freedom, social justice and equal opportunity, they shall contribute to overcoming this evil affecting our country and Latin America.

Podemos Party Statute

Principle 4: The Civic Example. A path for the education and development of our people, our leadership and ourselves (men and women).

Declaration of Principles of the Clase Media Revolucionaria

The Charter of the Socialist Party is also written in inclusive language employing the Spanish articles los/las when referring to a group of men and women.

7.2. Internal Organization

One of the main obstacles to women's participation in politics is the existence of a masculine model of exercising power. Under this logic, and for many years, the reproductive and care-giving role assigned to women in their private lives carried over to the public sphere. Therefore, political parties had feminine sections within their internal structures to focus solely on these areas.

As time went by, due to progressive leaders and the efforts of women committed to advancing egalitarian policies, interesting changes happened with these feminine sections. They evolved into what are now known as Secretariats for Women, sometimes considered a vehicle for promoting gender equality and equal opportunity in political organizations. This happened with the Pañamenista Party (PP), Citizens' Action (PAC) and Christian-Social Unity (PUSC) parties, the last two from Costa Rica, which succeeded in redirecting the public funding received by their parties toward promoting parity in the composition of their governing bodies.

Best Practice:

Creation, From a Gender Perspective, of the Secretariat for Women (SENAMUP, in Spanish)

Political Party: Panameñista Party (PP)
Country: Panama

Description: The SENAMUP was introduced in the Statute as part of a party reform process initiated at the end of 2004. Several women activists saw it as the appropriate moment to introduce strategies that would create a strong Secretariat, thereby guaranteeing equal opportunities for women in the party's various spheres.

The process is national and the Secretary General of the Secretariat for Women is part of the party's National Political Commission. The Secretary General's election happens through an electoral process that is democratic and secret, carried out simultaneously with the election of party delegates and all other party positions at the district, circuit, provincial, regional and country level.

The Secretariat has an annual, obligatory training plan designed to educate, train and strengthen the political involvement of women and their leadership. It has succeeded in obtaining 30% of subsidies received by the party, exceeding the 10% figure that the quota law established for women's education. Moreover, any party decision involving women's issues has to be submitted to the Secretariat.

The objective of this Secretariat and its training activities is to create gender awareness in women, enabling them to demand their rights and achieve the transformations needed to establish real equality of opportunity, both inside and outside political parties.

Best Practice:
National Commission for Women

Political Party: Citizens' Action Party (PAC, in Spanish)
Country: Costa Rica

Description: A group in the party designed to promote women's participation at all levels of the national political landscape, particularly internally and in decision-making bodies, as well as in lists for elected positions. It focuses on the importance of dealing with gender issues within its organization and in political action.

The group works with a coordinating committee named by the Political Commission, an entity with which it coordinates its activities, and is ratified by the National Assembly. Its responsibilities include:

- Promoting training for women, enabling them to fully exercise their citizenship rights, as well as personal empowerment.
- Promoting training for party men and women designed to highlight the different impact that social, economic, political and cultural issues have on men and women.
- Promoting the reflection, discussion, definition and political strategy of the issues connected to social processes which limit women's rights.
- Promoting the affiliation of women and their peer involvement in all party bodies, activities and positions.
- Proposing mechanisms and actions to overcome those obstacles hindering the incorporation of women into party life.

Best Practice:
National Secretariat for the Promotion and Organization of Women's Political Participation

Political Party: Christian Social Unity Party (PUSC, in Spanish)
Country: Costa Rica

Description: This section of the political party has raised the gender issue inside the organization and developed activities to increase awareness among members. This National Secretariat has the following duties, among others:

- Promoting the active incorporation of women in all internal political processes and activities within the party.
- Promoting the participation of women in the internal election processes within the party's different branches.
- Promoting the designation of women in the party's candidate lists to elected positions.
- Establishing the organizational strategies and procedures for the participation of Social-Christian women in political activities, in accordance with the general guidelines established by the National Political Council for the entire party.
- Guaranteeing that any National Government –established after the electoral process won by the party– names the highest possible number of women to the position of minister, vice-minister, senior officer, executive president, manager, deputy manager, and board member of decentralized institutions. To that effect, it shall recommend and nominate those women judged the most adequate for the fulfillment of said positions.

Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiating, with the National Executive Committee, the percentage of state financing to be directed to the promotion, education and organization of Christian-Social women's political participation. In the event that the established percentage does not satisfy the Secretariat, the Secretariat may appeal to the National Political Council to make a final determination on the correct amount, which shall not be lower than the one previously assigned by the National Executive Committee.
--------------	--

It is important to emphasize the innovative participatory processes some leaders developed for their female activists when defining the objectives and strategies of their Secretariats. These processes not only served to mobilize women but, moreover, to strengthen their capacities and vision in the pursuit of equal opportunities within their organizations. This is something that took place during the experiences of Ecuador's Democratic Left and Paraguay's Colorado Party.

Best Practice: Creation and Implementation of a Strategic Plan for the Group of Women from Pichincha Province	
Political Party: Democratic Left (ID, in Spanish) Country: Ecuador	
Description:	<p>The Democratic Left's (ID) Group of Women from Pichincha carried out a participatory SWOT analysis of the status of women in the political field. They then created a Strategic Plan for their group that has been implemented since the end of 2004. It formulates a mission and vision, general and specific objectives, and the policies and strategies to be promoted.</p> <p>The document was discussed among party women in Pichincha province, and delivered to the President, Vice-presidents, provincial president and ID's cantonal presidents.</p> <p>The next step was to name commission members to correspond to each one of the Plan's expected components: the political-organizational commission, training commission, productive commission, legal commission, information commission, communications and public relations commission, economical and financial commission and social inspection commission. Member selection was carried out according to capability and personal interest in participating. Finally, each commission outlined their work plan and has executed it in coordination with the president of the Group of Women from Pichincha.</p> <p>The process of developing activities, planned and coordinated with each group, strengthened the ID women in Pichincha province, both individually and as a group. They now have more interest in participating in party life, decision-making and contesting for elections. Candidates are better able to articulate speeches and make proposals within their group.</p>

Best Practice: Strategic Plan of the Central Commission of Colorado Women	
Political Party: Colorado Party (PC, in Spanish) Country: Paraguay	
Description:	<p>The Strategic Plan was established after a meeting held in the month of February 2005 between the Central Commission of Colorado Women (CCMC), local representatives from each department and the Executive Board.</p> <p>The purpose of the meeting was to: a) initiate a process of political development for women deputies leading departmental and local organizations, b) strengthen their capacity to contribute to internal party development and c) respond to calls for increased female leadership. The meeting also made clear that there was a need to create a structure for this development process, and therefore, the CCMC's Strategic Plan was created.</p> <p>As part of the Plan's general objectives, it called for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to the development and institutional strengthening of the central, departmental and sectional commissions of Colorado women. • Supporting party negotiations with the purpose of transforming them into a hub of political, social, economic and cultural development, through the process of consensus. • Developing political action and a transformation of thinking (within the party's political sphere), which emphasizes Colorado women. • Promoting the effective participation of women in the party's national, political sphere. • Using training as an effective means of fulfilling roles in the different areas of national politics and as a way of improving the position of women. • Promoting participation by increasing equal opportunities for women and men in local, departmental and national development. <p>The Plan was approved and commenced the same year it was created (it lasts three years). It has several courses of action in political, social, and economic areas as well as trainings on strengthening citizenship. Foreseeing a multiplier effect, it formed an interdisciplinary team of trainers, who are responsible for forming the base of grassroots monitors in each department, with a purpose of better implementation.</p>

Finally, it is also important to point out the creation, in other parties, of new organic units that transcend the roles of the traditional Feminine Secretariats. In the case of the Argentine party Affirmation for an Equal Republic (ARI) this happens through the promotion of debate and issues that form part of the gender agenda, while in the case of the Citizens' Action Party (PAC), it is by guaranteeing, through controls, party compliance with commitments to include gender on equal footing.

Best Practice:
Creation of Gender Policy Group (GPG) by ARI Members
Committed to Gender Equality

Political Party: Affirmation for an Equal Republic Party (ARI, in Spanish)
Country: Argentina

Description: During 2001, a group of young ARI members from Buenos Aires province, comprised mainly of women, began working on activities related to gender issues. Foremost, the group carried out seminars to publicize and debate issues related to women and political leadership. These seminars included women participants from several social and political fields. In view of the positive results achieved by these seminars, a group of around thirty women began to call for the creation of a GPG. Towards 2003, the GPG was formally created, and one of its internal rules established the need for bimonthly meetings and two large, annual seminars in different districts of the province and city of Buenos Aires.

The GPG is composed of people that, because of their activity, profession or political affiliation, wish to participate in trainings, discussions or activities related to a gender perspective. The GPG's activities consist of:

- Seminars/talks/public debates on gender policy.
- Trainings on issues involving family violence.
- Formation of working teams on sexual health.
- Cooperation with political management bodies.

Best Practice:
Prosecutor's Office on Gender Equality

Political Party: Citizens' Action Party (PAC, in Spanish)
Country: Costa Rica

Description: With national jurisdiction, and as part of the Internal Electoral Tribunal, the objective of the Prosecutor's Office on Gender Equality is to guarantee the observance of PAC's principles and obligations with respect to gender equality. Its duty is to inform the Political Commission on the implementation of these obligations and to formulate recommendations for their improvement.

It is staffed by a person with a prominent track record in the party who is fully knowledgeable on gender equality issues. He or she is named or ratified by the National Assembly and is guided by its statutes and regulations. Moreover, the person performing the role of prosecutor is a member of the party's Commission on Women.

Even though this position has not yet had to intervene and make recommendations regarding party compliance with the statute on gender issues, its existence has a positive influence on the Commission for Women and other bodies within the party, given that it is constantly monitoring their compliance.

The aforementioned best practices are interesting attempts to include equity criteria and a gender perspective in the functioning of political parties, as well as in the actions that impact their inner workings and socio-political views. They should serve as examples to other groups interested in democratizing their governing processes and perspectives.

7.3. Recruiting

If, as we have seen, women represent more than 50% of the electorate in most Latin American countries, and public opinion in several countries in the region indicates that increasingly people view female leaders as just as capable their as male counterparts, then one way to connect with citizens would be, without a doubt, to encourage and integrate more women activists, promoting their participation and growth within organizational structures.

Furthermore, women are the leaders of numerous social or communal movements in several Latin American countries, and therefore have a personal following that might be interested in joining political parties. Although there are only a few examples, some parties have decided to venture outside their traditional base, developing strategies that recruit women, with the intention of identifying potential leaders and thus holding “a good hand of cards.” The purpose is to help parties compete in future electoral processes while also increasing the number of women leaders in party structures.

In the experiences presented below, it is important to highlight the intention to reach women by offering training opportunities that, on the one hand, address the specific problems they face and, on the other hand, focus on the party's ideological stance. In the case of the National Coordinating Committee for Women of the National Unity of Hope party, the increase of knowledgeable women activists and greater access to leadership positions allowed them to negotiate changes in party policy that resulted in more equitable conditions.

Best Practice:

Motorcade for Gender Awareness in Minas Gerais – “Woman: Take a Stand”

Political Party: Party of the Republic (PR)

Country: Brazil

Description: From September 2007 to September 2008, the PR financed and organized motorcades in the interior of Minas Gerais state. The objective was to reach the party's 400 municipal boards located in the state (the second most populous in Brazil). Each month, members of the party's Feminine Movement chose a city to visit.

Training courses were held to explain party doctrine, goals achieved thus far and, primarily to, encourage new women to join the party. Another purpose was to identify local women leaders qualified to become candidates in the next municipal elections (2008). Even though these sessions were open to anyone, they were basically geared toward women not already affiliated with the party.

Best Practice:
Strategy for the Affiliation, Training and Promotion of Women to Internal Roles and Elected Positions

Political Party: National Unity of Hope (UNE, in Spanish)
 Country: Guatemala

Description: In the year 2000, realizing that women made up only 3% of total party members, the National Coordinating Committee on Women created a strategy to attract more women members. It was based on three pillars: affiliation, training and participation quotas in the executive committees where the party is active, as well as in elected positions (after the next elections in 2011).

With respect to affiliation, women's groups were organized in the country's municipalities and women were trained on their rights and offered legal counseling on issues like family violence. The premise being that once the party was seen as supporting them, their inclination to join would increase. Once affiliated with UNE, women would continue to receive training in the area of political participation.

In parallel, an attempt was made to have more women participate in the Departmental and Municipal Executive Committees, permeating the organization at all levels. In 2006, the National Coordinating Committee on Women estimated that 20% to 30% of all leaders were women. This critical mass allowed for negotiations with party leader Álvaro Colom, and resulted in a quota of at least twelve winning seats for women during the 2007 elections. This measure was approved by the National Executive Committee and by the National Assembly, and the result: during the 2007 electoral campaign, seventeen women obtained winning positions.

Finally, a proposal was submitted to the National Executive Committee that included a reform of party statutes. It was approved on May 2007 during the National Assembly, and specified a minimum quota of 40% women for internal (National Committee as well as Departmental and Municipal Committees) and elected positions.

Taking into account public dissatisfaction with political parties, it is imperative that parties improve their outreach particularly to under represented groups like women.

7.4. Elections and Leadership Advancement

Numbers show that there's still a large gap between the number of women activists in political parties and those able to obtain leadership positions within their organizations. Over time, many countries changed their legal frameworks in an attempt to balance the presence of women in candidate lists for elected positions. Now many parties have prioritized a strategy of voluntarily adopting regulated quotas to increase the number of women within their decision-making structures.

Even in countries lacking a legal quota, like Chile, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Uruguay, new political parties have voluntarily included them in their statutes. Table 2 shows the different practices gathered during this research. The impact and level of compliance are available in further detail on the CD which accompanies this publication.

Table 2
Practices Related to the Implementation of Quotas within Political Parties

Country	Party	Quota Percentage	Applicable to
Argentina	Alianza para una República de Iguales (ARI)	No more than 70% for either gender.	Composition of party bodies and candidate lists.
	Partido Socialista (PS)	No less than 30% of either gender.	Composition of party bodies and candidate lists.
Bolivia	Unidad Nacional (UN)	Man/Woman or Woman/Man Pairs	Candidate lists for the national executive board and Constitutional Assembly.
Chile (no legal quota)	Partido Socialista (PS)	No more than 60% of either gender.	Candidate lists to the party's collegiate bodies.
	Partido por la Democracia (PPD)	No more than 60% of either gender.	Collegiate bodies of the party and candidate lists to Elected positions.
	Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC)	No more than 80% of either gender.	Decision-making bodies in the party.
Costa Rica	Partido Acción Ciudadana (PAC)	Gender parity.	Party bodies and candidate lists to elected positions.
	Partido Unidad Social Cristiana (PUSC)	No more than 60% of either gender.	Party bodies and candidate lists to elected positions.
	Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN)	40%, with compensation formula to avoid inequality.	Lists for representative or leadership positions in the party.
Guatemala (no legal quota)	Partido Los Verdes	50%	Party leadership positions.
	Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG)	No more than 70% of either gender.	Party and elected positions.
Mexico	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)	Gender parity.	Party leadership, elected and public administration positions, candidate lists for positions elected under proportional representation.
	Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD)	No more than 70% of either gender.	Lists for leadership and representative positions.
Nicaragua (no legal quota)	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN)	30%	Candidate lists for national elected positions and party's National Congress.*
Paraguay	Partido País Solidario (PPS)	50% in the list's first third.	Candidate lists for party bodies and elected positions.
Dominican Republic	Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD)	33%	Party bodies and lists for elected positions.
	Partido Reformista Social Cristiano (PRSC)	15%	National Political Commission membership.
Uruguay (no legal quota)	Partido Socialista (PS)	Minimum percentage must equal percentage of women activists.	Leadership bodies and electoral lists.
Venezuela (no legal quota)	Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS)	25%	Leadership positions and lists for deliberating bodies.
	Acción Democrática (AD)	30%	Leadership bodies.
	Movimiento V República (MVR)	Gender parity	Electoral circuit lists.

Source: IDEA Internacional 2007.

*When it defines the party's internal strategies and elections. In this case the quota has not been included in the party's statutes, but adopted by the National Congress and ratified every time elections are held.

With respect to quota percentage, the aforementioned organizations –except for Uruguay's Socialist Party, which, as we shall see, does not have a percentage but rather a “mirror” criterion – have established formulas guaranteeing that the minority gender will never comprise less than 20% of the total, although some have even introduced equal representation, 50%-50%. Furthermore, there are two implementation models that have been introduced, sometimes alternating the gender sequence and other times, jointly. First, positions are reserved for women (meaning the number of positions assigned to women relative to the total) both for party leadership and elected positions; and secondly, a minimum number of women are guaranteed for candidate lists, which increases the number of women candidates but does not guarantee their election.

However, it has been determined that the success of quotas depends on multiple factors. Although their adoption is a step in the right direction, in the case of mandated quotas, the mere introduction of a percentage to guarantee the presence of more women in key places is not enough. Undoubtedly, quotas that reserve positions and impact the party's structural composition will be more effective⁶ than those that only guarantee placement in lists.⁷ In the same way –and in compliance with the electoral rules of any given election–, those quotas that allow the appointment⁸ of women to “eligible” positions or directly mandate parity⁹ (50% men and 50% women), such as with closed or blocked lists, are going to have the best results. Obviously, quotas that establish precise and implementable sanctions for non-compliance will be more effective, thus preventing the adoption of quotas solely as a mere “rhetorical” tool for parties.

Following that line of thought, the quota regulations mentioned below – considering their context and implementation rules– are those which by design may imply greater efficiency, assuming committed party leadership. The Citizens' Action Party (PAC) and Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) have introduced a criterion of parity (50%) in the composition of lists and/or positions.

Best Practice: Equal Participation in Leadership Positions and Candidate Lists	
Political Party: Citizens' Action Party (PAC, in Spanish) Country: Costa Rica	
Description:	<p>According to the Citizens' Action Party, equal opportunities for men and women in all spheres of human development involve a concrete commitment to guaranteeing equal participation in all internal bodies and decision-making structures, as well as in election lists.</p> <p>Therefore, Article 11 of its statute establishes that, in order to fulfill the goal of gender equality, an even number of candidates of each sex must be nominated for all lists or positions in each body and committee. It also requires compliance with the laws and interpretations passed on these issues by the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal.</p> <p>In the case of rosters or lists presented by the party for elected positions, equity must not only be established in percentage terms, but also by the alternative placement of both genders in the sequencing of the list.</p>

Best Practice:
Parity in Leadership Positions and Candidate Lists for Positions in PR Elections

Political Party: Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI, in Spanish)
 Country: Mexico

Description: During the party's 2005 National Assembly, parity was established for leadership positions inside the party, as well as for elected positions (multi-member and single-member). Specifically, the mandate said that under no circumstance will the proportion of members of either gender exceed 50%. This quota also applies to positions in the federal, state and municipal administrations, and to candidate lists for elected positions under the proportional representation system.

These regulations, established in Section 4 of the PRI's statute entitled "Of Women," indicate the following:

"Article 37 – Leadership positions in National, State, Federal District, municipal and regional committees shall not include a proportion of members of the same sex greater than 50%."

"Article 38 – National and regional candidate lists for elected positions in federal elections, presented by the Party under the principle of proportional representation, shall under no circumstance include a proportion of members of the same sex greater than 50%. The same formula applies to candidate lists for elected positions under the principle of proportional representation in the case of state elections, under the terms of the applicable regulatory law.

The principle referred to in the previous article shall be observed in every segment of ten candidates, guaranteeing the alternative placement of each gender. During federal and state elections governed by a first-past-the post system, the Party will avoid, under the principle of equity, nominating a proportion greater than 50% of proprietary candidates of the same sex unless party membership is previously consulted. With respect to substitute candidates, the Party shall guarantee gender parity."

Unlike the previous examples, the following are particularly important because Nicaragua, Uruguay and Chile do not have legally mandated quota mechanisms. Therefore, the adoption of quotas by the Sandinista National Liberation Front and the Party for Democracy, respectively, has been voluntary.

Best Practice:
Political Party Quota with Placement Mandate

Political Party: Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN, in Spanish)
 Country: Nicaragua

Description: Since 1996, the FSLN has established a 30% quota for women and a 15% quota for youth in candidate lists for elected positions in the National and Central American parliaments, and elections to the National Congress when they define party strategies and internal elections.

With respect to list order, it indicates that male candidates may be nominated for the first two positions, while the third one must be a woman; and so on, successively.

The quota policy for women and youth is ratified by the National Congress every four years. This has occurred every time there are national elections since its original approval.

Best Practice: Mirror Quota for Leadership Positions and Candidate Lists	
Political Party: Socialist Party (PS, in Spanish) Country: Uruguay	
Description:	<p>Article 65 of the PS's statute establishes a quota for women in executive bodies in order to promote their political participation. Therefore, in order to elect members of the Central Committee, National Executive Committee, Regional Committees, Departmental Committees and their respective Executive Secretariats, "monitoring" bodies, and socialist candidates to electoral lists at different party levels, the percentage of women to be elected through quota voting – at a minimum - should equal the percentage of women members of the Socialist Party in the corresponding jurisdiction.</p> <p>Therefore, no percentage is established, but rather a "mirror" criterion, by which female participation in party leadership bodies, as well as in lists, must be in direct relation to the number of activists.</p>

Best Practice: Quota for Political Party Bodies and Candidates to Elected Positions	
Political Party: Party for Democracy (PPD, in Spanish) Country: Chile	
Description:	<p>The PPD's equal opportunity principle specifies that neither men nor women shall occupy more than 60% of elected positions at collegiate party bodies or in candidacies to elected positions (article 7). It also states that in the case of national vice-presidencies, this translates into the election of two male vice-presidents and two female vice-presidents, so as to establish total parity for these positions.</p> <p>The PPD was the first Chilean party to incorporate affirmative action into its statutes.</p>

We must stress that even though quotas represent an important "accelerator" for women's representation, they cannot be construed as the sole solution to resolve underrepresentation. It is imperative that political organizations introduce additional processes to include properly qualified and motivated women in positions of leadership within their organizations. Additionally, they must spread both the importance of opening space for women among their members, leadership and various internal structures, as well as create an agreeable environment for their participation.

We have been able to identify two movements with these goals: an awareness campaign undertaken by the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) and an initiative by the Group of Women of Pichincha, part of Ecuador's Democratic Left (ID) party, which outlines the profile of a candidate and creates a transparent and meritocratic selection process designed to motivate and inspire confidence in participants.

Best Practice:

Intra-Party Campaign to Increase Awareness about the Need for Women Candidates

Political Party: Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB)
Country: Brazil

Description: Between August and September 2007, as the deadline for the inscription of new candidates for the 2008 municipal elections approached, the PMDB was intent on urging the National Executive Board to establish an internal policy to promote women candidates and therefore, they launched a campaign called "Woman: Take a Stand." The objective was to inform state party directors about the need for women candidates, taking into account national quotas, established at 30%.

In order to achieve their goal, a motivational video was created about the need for female participation and distributed to the PMDB's state executive boards. They also received an informational brochure outlining the importance of complying with the number of women candidates established by law.

Additionally, it was decided that specific strategies or instruments would be developed by each state group, in accordance with local characteristics and the profile of the targeted female population. The video and brochures were distributed to sixteen federal states.

Best Practice:

Profile Design and Candidate Pre-Selection for Elected Positions

Political Party: Democratic Left (ID, in Spanish)
Country: Ecuador

Description: Between June and July 2006, the party's Group of Women responded to the multiple demands of ID women in Pichincha province who were to be considered as candidates for the October election later that year. This response was a collectively proposed profile that, according to women activists, party candidates should fit in order to be nominated for elected positions in the Lower Chamber, provincial councils and municipal councils.

In general terms, they asked that applicants: 1) have an academic background corresponding to the position they intend to occupy, 2) have a connection to the community through some organizational affiliation, 3) have prepared plans or proposals for their tenure, 4) and have a gender sensibility and have made contributions, inside or outside the party, from that perspective.

They also elected an Inspection Committee, comprised of six incumbent and three substitute members, to oversee the process. The Committee prepared a set of guidelines regulating its own operation, and established rules to evaluate potential candidates according to the profile that was agreed upon collectively.

Three classification criteria were established: *attitude* (tolerance, willingness to reach agreements, sociability, self-control, capacity to work under stress, among others), *aptitude* (academic training, experience in representative functions –not necessarily political– through election or nomination) and *political-ideological commitment* (extent of party affiliation, links with the Group of Women from Pichincha, ideological strength, consistency between discourse and

Description: practice, confidence and acceptance from other members). With respect to evaluation, a 1 to 100 scale was used, with 100 being the best score.

Once these inputs were ready, the Committee invited all of ID Pichincha's women activists to present their folders and then evaluated their criteria for qualification. Twenty-eight folders were received (approximately eleven candidates would be submitted due to an alliance with another political party), which were evaluated in a process during which a secretary would read a resume out loud, without naming the candidate, while each member of the Committee wrote down the corresponding score.

The folders and their respective grades were then sent to the ID's national leadership and Pichincha authorities for further evaluation.

As we have pointed out, quotas do not constitute the definitive solution to equal participation between men and women; however, they have become an important instrument in enabling women to enter traditionally male spaces. This situation poses new challenges, such as broadening the traditional patterns of “doing business” in politics so that the masculine approach is not seen as the only valid model.

7.5. Training

When internal and external electoral processes are nearing and they are accompanied by quota laws that establish the minimum percentages for women in lists, party leaders often lament that there are few or no women with “candidate potential” in terms of leadership, qualifications, visibility and experience.

The situation is worse in countries with no affirmative action in popular elections, as party leaders, under no obligation to incorporate women, decidedly favor male candidates in their lists. We have already mentioned the example of Chile, a country that had only one woman for every ten candidates in elections held between 1989 and 2005. Similar situations have occurred in Colombia: during the 2006 elections, women comprised only 18% of Senate lists; that is, less than two women for every ten men (International IDEA 2007).

This is hard to understand when we consider that the proportion of women party members ranges between 40% and 50% of total members. Perhaps it is because parties have neglected to prepare and groom their activists, who have had few opportunities for training or to gain experience in management, either public or party-related. This is true even more so for women, and in certain circumstances, adds to the multiple forms of gender discrimination that exist in Latin American societies.

On the other hand, even though Latin American countries –with the exception of Venezuela– use public funds (directly or indirectly) for campaign financing or maintenance costs, there are very few laws that allow the use of these funds for research, development or training activities. Argentina,

Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama and Peru are countries with laws that do allow using funds for these purposes. (International IDEA and Autonomous University of Mexico 2006). However, only Costa Rica and Panama have established the legal obligation to assign part of those funds specifically for women's development.

The other countries do not specify where parties should direct these funds. However, organizations like Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the National Action Party (PAN), the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB) and Argentina's Affirmation for an Equal Republic (ARI) have made the choice to direct funds to women voluntarily. As a way of reducing the inequities men and women face in their private and public lives, these groups equip their women activists with an improved capacity to compete.

In the ARI's case, it is interesting to note that both men and women receive the same training contents (including gender). In the PAN's case, it is recognized that "more and better qualified women" has resulted in their increasing presence in elected positions.

Best Practice: Political Training for Women

Political Party: Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI, in Spanish)
Country: Mexico

Description:

The National Organization of PRI Women (OMNPRI), composed of 32 state branches, a president, 19 Secretariats and the necessary Regional Coordinating Councils, is geared toward implementing actions that promote gender equality, acknowledging that important economic, social, political and cultural inequalities still remain.

In order to fulfill these objectives, the OMNPRI, along with the Secretariat for Political Training and Education, provides specialized training and education to women from a gender perspective. Its two main training topics include:

- Political education and training.
- Establishment, execution and monitoring of social/productive projects.

In the latter case, training is designed to teach women how to fill out project applications –particularly productive ones– at different State Secretariats and government institutions, as there have been several opportunities for women-focused projects that have been lost due to lack of information, outreach or capacity to fill out applications. Currently, the OMNPRI is in charge of training all the states' party presidents and the political training secretaries so that they, in turn, are able to train other women.

As part of its activities, OMNPRI has collaborated with public and private institutions on trainings for party activists and members of social organizations in several states and municipalities around the country. They have also organized meetings, seminars and conferences on the economic, political, social and legal situation of women, as well as arranged scholarships for women students at the primary, higher and postgraduate levels.

Best Practice:

Training for the Promotion and Political Preparation of Women: Campaign Promoters

Political Party: National Action Party (PAN, in Spanish)
Country: Mexico

Description: According to the PAN's Secretariat for the Political Promotion of Women, the main cause of political discrimination against women is lack of training and information. The difficulty in reconciling family responsibilities with professional and political development is another important obstacle to members' political participation. In this sense, women's resumes and political track records are still smaller than those of their male counterparts, a limiting factor when running for elected positions.

For that reason, the intention is to level men's and women's capabilities through seminars, workshops, forums and courses directed at women candidates, as well as members and sympathizers at the federal, state and municipal levels. In the design of these courses, specifically for women, the Secretariat is supported by the party's Training Secretariat, as well as by external trainers and specialists.

Trainings (forums, courses and workshops) revolve around several topics, depending on current needs, contexts and the organization receiving it. Themes include motivation, attitude, team work and women-specific topics.

During the 2007 elections, a course was organized specifically for women interested in campaigning or becoming campaign coordinators in an effort to increase female participation. Another novel idea beginning that year was promoting and preparing women for mayoral races, which had not been done very much up to that point.

Best Practice:

Political Training Program for Women

Political Party: Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB, in Portuguese)
Country: Brazil

Description: The PSDB's Political Training Program for Women is gradually being implemented in all Brazilian states by the state secretariats for PSDB Women, with financing provided by the Teotonio Vilela Institute, a political studies and training organization with links to the party.

The program offers an educational handbook and courses for women party members or others interested in gender issues. The material was prepared and coordinated by Doctor Lucia Avelar, chief of Brasilia University's Political Science Department, and consists of four modules. Module I, *Women and Politics*, attempts to awaken women's interest in politics. Module II, *Women and the State*, emphasizes the importance of women's involvement in power circles. Module III, *Women and Citizenship*, deals with women's specific rights within society. Finally, Module IV, *Women and the PSDB*, invites women to participate actively within the party, becoming part of the group's history.

Through a training program that extends political development workshops to other trainers, more than twenty trainers in thirteen states have already been trained, while more than 3,000 PSDB women attended these courses in 2005.

Although the program's objective also includes identifying local leaders, the most concrete results have been in empowering women activists. As a consequence, the party has published abundant advertising material (informational brochures, newspapers, pamphlets, etc.), organized regular pioneer-training meetings annually (2003), and created a Network of PSDB-Supporters.

Best Practice: Inclusion of Equity Issues in Contents of Party Development Program	
Political Party: Affirmation for an Equal Republic Party (ARI, in Spanish) Country: Argentina	
Description:	<p>Article 50 of ARI's Charter establishes that the contents of the political development program shall include the following areas of study and research: public policy and finance, municipal policy, ecology and the environment, education, health and gender equity, and other areas of interest.</p> <p>Starting four years ago, training materials for both member and non-member men and women have been provided by the Hannah Arendt Cultural and Political Development Institute, a body that is linked to ARI, but defines itself as "independent and detached from the political party struggle." The institute and its activities are open to all people who want to experience an unconventional approach to these issues possibly inspiring a different political praxis (www.institutoarendt.com.ar/Historia del Instituto). Training activities are also carried out on party premises.</p> <p>Since 2004, the institute has offered a general course, conferences, seminars, panels and workshops. The curriculum is high quality yet easy to understand. The general course is the backbone of the institute's training activities and its main theme reflects the central area of debate for each year. Out of twenty classes offered in each of these courses, two or three are geared specifically to gender issues, while the rest frequently include gender views. The main subjects during 2007 were The Frontier of Bodies and Gender and Income Distribution.</p> <p>Transcripts for all these classes are available on the institute's Internet page (www.institutoarendt.com.ar, Salón de Lectura), thus democratizing educational opportunities. Additionally, the institute develops annual activities, such as courses on gender and public policy and seminars on feminist philosophy.</p>

In some cases, lack of public financing has not been an obstacle for party women preparing their activists for leadership positions. The Secretariat for Women of Guatemala's Unionist Party, with the support of its women delegates, is carrying out a series of training courses on issues ranging from party ideology to public management.

Best Practice: Training of Party Members Endorsed By the Secretariat for Women	
Political Party: Unionist Party Country: Guatemala	
Description:	<p>One of the priorities of the Secretariat for Women is to empower women through knowledge, with the premise that greater knowledge equals greater participation. Therefore, activities are oriented toward increasing women's self-esteem and teaching them not to depend on men for any of their tasks.</p> <p>The group's most important practice is organizing workshops aimed specifically at Unionist women. These workshops are carried out in every national department, offering ideological elements to support the party base while exposing women to the party's principles.</p>

Description: "Why are we Unionists?" and "Why do we have to participate?" are the subjects of the first two workshops. These are followed by workshops on citizenship and political issues.

The subsequent workshops deal with a range of subjects, given that many women also participate in other types of organizations. Among the subjects covered, the following stand out: tips on municipal development and norms, decentralization, peace and multicultural/intercultural agreement, the creation of participatory budgets, and Electoral and Political Party Law.

The organization of the trainings is entrusted to women party delegates in each department. They convene their municipal delegates and through them, reach out to members and participants throughout the department.

Trainings deal with issues connected to gender solidarity and attempt to create an atmosphere of cooperation and team work. The reason for this focus is an awareness that rivalries can exist within political parties due to the fact that few internal positions are available for women and the fierce struggle for candidacies during electoral campaigns. In this type of setting, linked to feminist principles of community-building among women, the intention is to build support for common objectives, assure the project's continuity and perpetuate a unified stance with women when they reach public positions.

Although lack of economic resources constitutes an important obstacle for women's training and development, it can also be viewed as a challenge for women, who in the face of this situation, should present viable alternatives and look for financing beyond the party sphere or state subsidies. For example, in 1997, deputies from El Salvador's Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the Nationalist Republican Alliance, used their management experience as parliamentarians, to create a bipartisan space for the development of women party leaders, both preparing them for public office and empowering them to participate in their organizations.

In the same vein, the Salvadoran Association of Parliamentarians and Former Parliamentarians (APARLEXSAL) was founded in 2000, offering seminars, training and leadership courses with financing and technical support from cooperation agencies. The APARLEXSAL is highly recognized, not only by international cooperation agencies but also by political parties and the Legislative Assembly, which has provided the physical location for its operation.

Additionally, Central America and the Dominican Republic have promoted municipal women's associations. These associations include women serving in local positions, as well as women technical experts and former mayors, councilors and regents. The idea of including all women offers the advantage of sharing experiences and knowledge acquired during their respective mandates as well as promoting the involvement of all women, without party or political distinctions.

Lastly, although one should not neglect women's access to training and development on gender issues, it is also important to extend this access to men, as social transformation and the eradication of unequal gender roles is everyone's responsibility. Moreover, we need to be conscious of the fact that

having women in the public sphere is not enough to achieve change and equality. What we need are qualified women with the necessary “tools” to exert power equitably and conscientiously, independent of their political parties.

7.6. Electoral System Reforms

As pointed out earlier, only eleven national legislations –out of eighteen Latin American countries– have introduced affirmative action mechanisms, and then only mandating minimum quotas for the nomination of women candidates, varying from 20% to 50%. In several countries, the approval of the quota came to be through pressure and strategizing by party women, or by alliances among these women, women’s movements and civil society activists. In these cases, despite their differences, the women were united around a common agenda - to create changes in electoral laws for more political inclusion.

One example is Ecuador’s Popular Democracy party, where leaders and activists lobbied to commit their party to support the quota in Parliament. Another example is Honduras, where a union of women parliamentarians from all parties combined with civil society activists to revive a quota initiative presented by the Parliamentary Commission on Women’s Issues.

These experiences can serve as examples for countries like Colombia, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Venezuela, which have yet to adopt similar initiatives. They can also help to promote reform processes in countries where quota effectiveness is being compromised either by a country’s electoral system regulations or by lenient sanctions for non-compliance.

Best Practice: Lobby In Favor of Passing a Quota Law	
Political Party: Popular Democracy (DP, in Spanish) Country: Ecuador	
Description:	<p>In 2000, Ecuador’s National Congress considered reforming their Electoral Law by introducing an electoral quota for women known as the Quota Law. This effort was met by resistance from most political parties and their representatives, including some Christian-Democrat legislators.</p> <p>With this background, a group of women, including DP leaders and Christian-Democrat representative Elizabeth Ochoa, set forth a strategy to demand a quota for women in their political organization and parliamentary block. The actions directed at internal party spheres suggested lobbying members at the provincial and national levels.</p> <p>Provincial leaders dialogued with their corresponding boards and the delegates to the DP’s National Committee, explaining the meaning and relevance of the quota, with the hope that these medium level institutions would adopt supporting resolutions. The wives of several leaders and representatives also played an important role in this process. Even though they weren’t in</p>

Description: leadership positions, these women lobbied intensely and were able to make an impact. They repeated the strategy with national leaders in Quito, maintaining personal talks with DP representatives and with the leader of their parliamentary block.

Once leaders and representatives were aware of the issue, and individual and provincial support was secured, the group of DP women leaders asked the party to pass a resolution supporting the Quota Law and to instruct its legislative block to defend it. In effect, the DP's National Board committed to observing the Quota Law, while Christian-Democrat legislators were mandated to defend it to their National Committee. To formalize this commitment, the Christian-Democrat legislators signed a document prepared by party members.

This strategy merged with a series of actions organized by women from civil society (meetings, sit-ins, mobilizations, media presence, among others) and resulted in the Quota Law's approval.

Best Practice:

Joint Strategy to Guarantee Quota Approval in Honduras's Parliament

Political Party: Women representatives from all parties with Congressional representation and women from civil society
 Country: Honduras

Description: In 2001, while political parties prepared for the electoral campaign, the National Congress's Permanent Commission on Women's Affairs introduced the bill for the Equal Opportunities for Women Law (LIOM, in Spanish). The law was designed to reduce the gap between men and women by adopting affirmative action measures in various realms.

It established a political participation quota of 50%, which most representatives opposed. The third and last day of debates on the article in question coincided with the closing ceremony of a meeting of Latin American women legislators in the capital city. It was attended by nearly all women representatives, who were hosting the event.

The opposing representatives took advantage of the women's absence and approved the elimination of the above article, in the presence of only one woman legislator who then informed her counterparts of the matter. The Commission president submitted a strategy to her fellow women to ensure that in the next plenary session, which had to approve the minutes of what was discussed the previous week, the issue would be reopened through a motion.

The strategy was brought to civil society women's organizations, which lobbied on behalf of the women's movement while women representatives and politicians negotiated with decision-makers in Congress. It was the first time women representatives from every political party were united in the same goal, with some of them even going against their own party line.

In the end the session took place only after women politicians –and civil society– allowed the entrance of male representatives to Parliament to negotiate a 30% quota which would increase progressively until reaching parity. The decision was made in the early hours of April 11, 2000, after heated interventions from representatives. The Congress President's speech was noteworthy, asking parties to abandon the practice of placing women in unelectable positions, using them as "stuffing" in electoral lists.

Even if the importance of these types of strategies is clear, it is also imperative to generate space for women politicians to become "electoral engineers"¹⁰ and acquire the knowledge and capabilities needed to analyze and influence the reform process. While this process is mostly technical, it also has a powerful political impact, because what ultimately is at stake is a real, and not just formal, opening of political systems to greater and better participation of women. This evolution has not yet been identified in the countries analyzed during the course of this research.

7.7. Financing

When talking about the issue of training we said that directing public funds to promote equal participation of women was more the exception (only Costa Rica and Panama consider it) than the rule in Latin American jurisprudence. Additionally, despite being one of the main problems confronting women who attempt to develop their political careers, the subject has been largely forgotten by party leadership. The reason, as far as we know, is because no measures have been implemented—save for those practices mentioned below—to improve the situation.

In Costa Rica's case, law No. 7142—Law for the Promotion of Social Equality—has been in force since 1990, mandating parties to assign a percentage of State-distributed funds for the political development and participation of women (International IDEA 2007). The Citizen's Action Party (PAC) and the National Liberation Party (PLN) stand out among parties complying with the legal mandate. Their experiences are summarized below.

Best Practice: Financing for Gender Education	
Political Party: Citizen's Action Party (PAC, in Spanish) Country: Costa Rica	
Description:	<p>Of the total sum received by the party in the way of contributions and/or state allotments, it assigns no less than 20% of those total contributions and/or allotments to training and organizational efforts, and no less than 15% of those total contributions and/or allotments to training women and youth.</p> <p>These sums shall fund the work of men and women candidates to every elected position and internal party position, as well as those already elected. Additionally, they are also directed toward awareness raising activities, for example, on issues like party democracy.</p>

Best Practice: Financing Aimed at Training Women	
Political Party: National Liberation Party (PLN, in Spanish) Country: Costa Rica	
Description:	Article 171 of the statute indicates that at least 10% of the party's budget shall be assigned to the political development of PLN women. It is the responsibility of the Political Education Secretariat, in coordination with the president of the PLN Women's Movement, to guarantee compliance with this regulation.
	Through its work with women's groups at several party levels, the PLN Women's Movement facilitates training programs for women candidates to different positions and for those already elected.
	Training subjects vary and range from doctrinal matters (the most frequent) to more specific activities related to gender issues.

In Panama's case, an adjustment to the Electoral Code made in 2002 mandates parties to assign 25% of public and electoral financing to training activities; and out of this sum, a minimum of 10% must be used to train women (International IDEA 2007). This regulation has only been followed by the Panameñista Party, which assigns 30% of state subsidies to the development and participation of women through the National Secretariat for Panameñista Women – SENAMUP. This experience was referenced in the “Internal Organization” section.

Once again, as in the case of training, lack of adequate regulation should not lead women to think that obtaining funds to participate in politics through private financing is intrinsically dangerous or dishonest, nor that it must compromise their ideology or platform. For example during the 2007 elections for municipal delegations and councils the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front's (FMLN) women candidates designed an interesting plan to obtain the necessary funds and to raise the visibility of their candidacy and proposals, in a transparent manner and with clear objectives and actions.

Best Practice: Financing Strategy for the Promotion of Women Candidates	
Political Party: Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN, in Spanish) Country: El Salvador	
Description:	In 1997, as a new election approached, FMLN women were in a disadvantaged position with respect to male candidates. They did not have money to fund their campaigns for the Chamber of Representatives and municipal councils. Acknowledging economic limitations, and in view of the fact that the party would only publish posters promoting the first candidates for each circumscription, they planned to request funds from businesspeople. These funds were meant to contribute to democratic competition and highlight the participation of women, without creating a later obligation to donor companies.

Description:	<p>To that end, they established an Electoral Committee that received approval from party leadership to act with complete autonomy. The Committee had three objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a platform for women with the intention of spreading the candidates' positions among the electorate. • Emphasize the importance of highlighting women during the electoral campaign. • Lobby the party to guarantee that women's issues would be endorsed during the electoral campaign. <p>Two groups were created to work on obtaining funds: the first was responsible for contacting companies and the second was in charge of contacting supporters and friends residing outside the country. Although contributions obtained inside the country exceeded those from outside, they were insufficient to cover advertising expenses. For this, other types of activities were organized for supporters and party members, such as dinners and targeted fundraising.</p> <p>The money they obtained (200,000 <i>colones</i>, or 22,875 US dollars) was invested in the publication of <i>Poder Femenino</i> (Feminine Power) magazine, which covered the lives and capabilities of women candidates to deputy positions, mayoralties and councillorships. It was also used for printing posters and t-shirts with the names of all women candidates and in the publication of the Programmatic Platform to be distributed throughout the country.</p> <p>The Committee developed such an effective negotiating capacity that they secured preferential prices from women heads of advertising firms, enabling them to advertise on radio and TV.</p>
--------------	--

In the end, the crux of the matter lies in the fact that if the intention really is to apply the principle of equality within parties, a percentage of available funds must be equitably assigned to the education and development of male and female activists, especially when those funds come from the State.

7.8. Government Plans

Although no Latin American country mandates the public development and presentation of government plans, this is one of the few tools citizens can use to learn about each party's position on specific topics, as well as how they prioritize issues, and what actions they would take to address them once in power. It is possible that voters use this information to decide how to vote based on the extent that they see solutions to their problems or recognize their ideological affinities.

Beyond the electoral terrain where the plans are usually announced, these documents have also become an important accountability tool to compare party behavior during campaigning and once in power. They help to discern which promised policies have been carried out and which haven't.

Therefore, being able to influence their content implies influence in the electoral debate, and in the long term, in the public agenda. However, in many cases, gender issues are completely absent from these platforms; either specifically, or in a wider sense, in terms of more and better rights for women in

various spheres. The incorporation of these issues is a battle that activists have to fight within their organizations. They will be more or less successful depending on the party's and leadership's commitments to the agenda and on women's capacity to negotiate their own inclusion. During our research, we found a party –the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG)– that had incorporated these criteria in their government plan, a document presented during the 2007 electoral campaign.

Best Practice: Women's Rights as a Priority Issue in the Government Plan	
Political Party: National Revolutionary Unity of Guatemala (URNG, in Spanish) Country: Guatemala	
Description:	<p>Conceived and developed by party women and the Broad Movement of the Left, a government plan was presented by URNG in the last electoral campaign that breaks women's issues down into priorities, central themes and specific policies.</p> <p>The main central themes identified by the Broad Movement of the Left's (MAIZ, part of the URNG) government plan for the 2008-2012 period were:</p> <p>Priorities (8) – Fight against the patriarchal system and any form of discrimination that excludes people based on ethnicity, age or gender and does not permit social development in an equitable manner. (URNG-MAIZ2007)</p> <p>Central Themes (3) – Central theme based on rights and women's full participation in national life. (URNG-MAIZ2007)</p> <p>Government policies after election – <i>National policy for the promotion and development of women calls for:</i> - Institutionalization and implementation of a national policy for the promotion and development of Guatemalan women, in order to guarantee: 1) an end to discrimination, 2) access of women to State institutions, 3) control of gender violence, 4) the benefit of universal and free public services and 5) gender parity in political and electoral participation.</p> <p>-Strengthening those institutions created for the benefit of women, especially the Presidential Secretariat for Women; the Office for the Defense of Indigenous Women and the Coordinating Committee for the Prevention of Intra-Family and Anti-Woman Violence (CONAPREVI).</p> <p>-Guaranteeing, within this framework, the implementation of international instruments that support women, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women; and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women.</p> <p><i>Prevention, punishment and eradication of violence against women, youth and children:</i> The State as a whole must assume the responsibility of preventing, punishing and eradicating violence against women, youth and children, giving urgency status to addressing the growing phenomenon of 'femicide.' There is a need to address existing legal shortfalls and loopholes, discriminatory patterns and attitudes against women and the deficiencies of criminal investigations, particularly in cases of sexual violence. Promotion is needed for educational programs and campaigns aimed at transforming social perceptions and norms legitimizing</p>

Description:	<p>violence against women. Also needed is the immediate adoption of social, educational and legal measures to protect and support women victims of violence and the prosecution and sentencing of aggressors attacking women, youth and children. (URNG-MAIZ 2007)</p> <p>This plan considers that women are fundamental actors in economic development and priority recipients of public education and health services. It also recognizes the importance of a gender approach to Educational Reform and the need to consider of women when making decisions at the local level.</p>
--------------	---

Even when political organizations fail to listen to women's demands, there are promising experiences such as Nicaragua's. This case demonstrates that male and female leaders and candidates can open up to certain issues and proposals during elections, particularly if they result from a commitment among various actors—in this case, women members from different parties sharing a common agenda.

Best Practice: Incidence of Women in Party Nominations for Local Elections	
Political Party: Women activists of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN, in Spanish), the Liberal-Constitutionalist Party (PLC) and the Conservative Party (PC), in alliance with women from civil society Country: Nicaragua	
Description:	<p>Taking place within the framework of the 2004 municipal elections in the city of Matagalpa, the Association of Professional Women for Integral Development (AMPDI, in Spanish) initiated a leadership and empowerment process for party women. The group generated policy proposals on the women's agenda, outlining their demands and needs in terms of their human rights.</p> <p>A wide ranging group of women convened mayoral candidates from every political party and urged them to accept their political agenda. The proposal was received by the FSLN candidate, who promised to create an Office for Women should he win the election. Once he was elected, this proposal was carried out with mayoralty funds and the position was occupied by a woman elected from a list of three candidates proposed by the group. A municipal ordinance also stipulated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulating and implementing a policy of gender equality as a central theme of the municipal government's actions. • Incorporating gender analysis when reviewing the municipal strategic plan. • Establishing mechanisms to monitor the municipal budget, in order to analyze whether the interests and needs of women as well as the initiatives generated by the Gender Equality Commission, are being incorporated.

There is another way to better tailor party platforms to the needs and interests of women, and that is to open the development process to all citizens, civil society organizations and anyone interested in these issues. Doing so helps to narrow the gap between the sometimes distant perspective of politicians and the real problems of people. This is what the Christian-Popular Party (PPC) did to determine and improve the items included in their 2006 Government Plan's Women and Equal Opportunity Chapter.

Best Practice: Strategic Alliance for the Participatory Creation of the Party's Government Plan	
Political Party: Christian-Popular Party (PPC, in Spanish) Country: Peru	
Description:	<p>This initiative was planned and executed in the context of Peru's pre-electoral campaign, preceding the Presidential and Congressional elections of April 2006. In these elections, the PPC participated as a member of the National Unity Alliance, comprised also of the National Solidarity and National Renewal parties, which ultimately presented the candidacy of Lourdes Flores Nano.</p> <p>In August 2005, a process began to improve the <i>Women and Equal Opportunities</i> chapter of the party's Government Plan. Its main objectives were, foremost, to publicize its platform, and secondly, to gather comments and suggestions through outreach.</p> <p>For this to happen, an alliance was established with the International Republican Institute (IRI), which also providing financing.</p> <p>Two mechanisms were established to contact citizens. One was to seek advice from civil society by meeting with women-focused NGOs, journalists and international aid agencies. The other was to hold ten public hearings in the cities of Trujillo, Arequipa and several provinces of Lima; organized in schools, community centers and party premises.</p> <p>These contributions improved the <i>Women and Equal Opportunities</i> chapter of the party's Government Plan and generated twenty proposals for topics like State, Health, Education, Employment, Poverty, Violence against Women, and Citizenship and Participation. The chapter was later approved by the party's Political Commission and then by the party Congress held in December 2005.</p>

Finally, coming with specific offers in government plans also opens the possibility for party women (with the involvement of women from civil society, independent women and even those from other political organizations) to set up a common platform from which to demand the execution of campaign promises. This contributes to consensual politics instead of detrimental confrontations.

7.9. Inter-Party Agreements

After analyzing several regional experiences, we can conclude that inter-party agreements are one of the most widespread and effective practices women can use to promote the discussion, consensus and approval of measures favoring their rights. Women have realized that isolated efforts can often be easily diluted and that there are issues –beyond a party's or group's ideology or interests– that unite them and require the development of common platforms. There are at least three types of linkages to this end: agreements among women parliamentarians, between women activists and women parliamentarians, and between women activists and civil society.

The first type of agreement, located and systematized in our research, has been found in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Uruguay. The Bolivian Union of Women Parliamentarians – UMPABOL was the pioneer.

Best Practice: Union of Women Parliamentarians of Bolivia (UMPABOL, in Spanish)	
Political Party: Women parliamentarians and former parliamentarians from every political party Country: Bolivia	
Description:	<p>The UMPABOL is an institution within the Bolivian Congress, created to promote gender equality. It includes all active women parliamentarians (incumbent and substitutes), as well as former parliamentarians. It was formalized through Resolution 212/9798 of the Rt. Honorable Chamber of Deputies, on March 24, 1998.</p> <p>Its objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratizing the political system. • Making laws and conventions compatible with international treaties signed by the Bolivian State that call for the eradication of violence and discrimination against women. • Reviewing the body of law in order to eliminate discrimination and violence against women. • Publicizing the laws promoting and guaranteeing women's rights among the public. • Creating currents of opinions that favor the establishment of political participation quotas guaranteeing the presence of women, on an equal footing, in elected and decision-making positions. • Promoting the participation of women in higher-level and decision-making positions within parties. <p>UMPABOL has a director that is elected during a Plenary Assembly for a two-year period. The number of members is reached through consensus between party blocks, respecting the views of all organizations and taking into account their weight in Parliament. For her own part, the director also elects a spokeswoman by consensus. The Plenary Assembly is composed of incumbent and substitute parliamentarians, founding members and formerly appointed parliamentarians.</p> <p>Working in coordination and joining efforts with the Women's Association for Equity and Equality (AMUPEI, in Spanish), Women's Coordinating Committee, Women's Platform and the Political Forum, UMPABOL has managed to pass the following laws, among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law against Family or Domestic Violence. • Law for Shortening Legal Procedure and Family Assistance. • Law for the Protection of Victims of Crimes against Sexual Freedom. • Law for the Prevention and Punishment of Human Trafficking, especially Women and Children. • Quota Law (Electoral Code and Party Law). • Decree for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women.

Conceived as spaces for dialogue and the exchange of views, these groups do not necessarily form part of their Parliament's formal and organic structures, as happens in Bolivia.

Table 3
Cooperation experiences among parliamentary women (by country*)

Experience	Country
Bolivian Union of Parliamentary Women (UMPABOL, in Spanish)	Bolivia
Women's Block at the Brazilian National Congress	Brazil
Bicameral Commission for the Defense of Women's Rights	Colombia
Roundtable of Peruvian Parliamentary Women - MMPP	Peru
Bicameral Feminine Bench	Uruguay

Source: IDEA Internacional 2007.

* The Forum of Parliamentary Women of Ecuador was active between 2003 and 2007, an experience that has not been included in this research. Its existence was interrupted by the dissolution of Congress which was carried out by the Constitutional Assembly in November 2007.

Although all of these groups share the same objectives to a greater or lesser degree, one that has had significant results despite limited membership –four Senators and twelve Deputies– is Uruguay’s Bicameral Feminine Block. It has a horizontal structure lacking hierarchies and regulations. Achievements include the creation of the Chamber of Representatives’ Commission on Gender Equality, the approval of a series of laws by the Uruguayan Parliament and above all, the visibility of women and their legislative efforts in the public domain.

Best Practice:
Bicameral Feminine Block (BBF, in Spanish)

Political Party: Parliamentarians from all parties
Country: Uruguay

Description: This group was created in 2000 as space for horizontal and inter-party coordination, originally between incumbent and substitute deputies who are elected by the four parties with parliamentary representation. It was restructured in 2005 and became the Bicameral Feminine Block (BBF), composed of women Senators and Deputies.

Its objective is to present bills defending the rights of women and to maintain consistent coordination with diverse state bodies and social organizations. The group lacks any kind of authority or internal hierarchy. It functions through a notion of “unity” and not through a unanimous consensus on topics, as it strives to respect the differences and limits of each one of its members.

During the 2000-2005 legislative period, it organized a number of initiatives including: interviews with representatives from several Executive and international bodies, seminars and conferences carried out in conjunction with academic institutions and women’s social organizations, press conferences, formal tributes and the presentation and promotion of legislative bills.

Every year on March 8, the BBF undertakes a public “rendering of accounts” of its legislative performance, its representation of Uruguayan women, the demands from women’s organizations and its oversight of other State powers in the previous year. During the event, it mentions some of its main activities, among them:

- Promoting the creation of an Equity and Gender Commission (CEGE) at the Chamber of Deputies.
- Promoting the approval of the following laws (between March 2006 and March 2007):
 - Creation of a Registry of Alimony Debtors
 - Prosecution for the crimes of kidnapping, rape, sexual assault, corruption of minors and rape of a minor

Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Regulations for household workers — Equal rights and opportunities for men and women — Creation of the Governing Council for Public Policies on Gender Equality. <p>This initiative has significantly increased the political prominence of women parliamentarians and has had an important impact on the legislative agenda. It also represents a new way of doing politics that has made women legislators more visible to the public eye, thanks in part to the press, which took advantage of the group's novelty. Finally, "gender solidarity", one of the BBF's guiding principles, makes women feel supported during their parliamentary work, even if they maintain different political opinions.</p>
--------------	---

Among the most recently established organizations, we need to highlight Colombia's Bicameral Temporary Commission for the Defense of Women's Rights. Despite possessing affirmative action mechanisms (a 30% quota) to incorporate women in decision-making positions within public administration, Columbia has not yet approved this sort of measure for elected positions. It is also a country where women's participation rates are very low: 8.4% in the Lower Chamber and 11.8% in the Senate. Because of these low participation rates, this type of organization is particularly relevant, as it can become the catalyst, through consensus, to induce important changes for women rights in Colombia.

Best Practice: Temporary Bicameral Commission for the Defense of Women's Rights	
Political Party: Parliamentarians from all political parties Country: Colombia	
Description:	<p>The creation on 20 July 2006 of an ad hoc block of Congressional women, called "Temporary Bicameral Commission for the Defense of Women's Rights in Colombia" was made possible because of a legal classification established in Article 66 of Law 5 from 1992 - National Congress Regulations. It states that Presidents, the Chamber's Boards of Directors and its Permanent Commissions have the ability to create Temporary Commissions to advance specific legislative and administrative tasks.</p> <p>The block of women Members of Congress is composed of all women Members of Congress in the Republic of Colombia and does not belong to any specific political affiliation.</p> <p>Its creation occurred in a context where few women were present in Parliament, and was preceded by several events that indirectly led to a favorable outcome. Firstly, the <i>More Women, More Politics</i> campaign, sponsored by UNIFEM, Fescol, GTZ and the Presidential Council on Women, accompanied the 2006 electoral process. The initiative was part of a longer process organized by the National Women's Network, Network Junction and other organizations –SISMA Mujer among them, an NGO promoting women's rights.</p> <p>In parallel, in 2006 the international NGO Women's Link carried out an intense lobbying effort with media, the judiciary and academia to decriminalize abortion. This put the issue of women's rights in the press, radio and television. Additionally, several candidates were present during the celebrations organized after decriminalization, and once elected, were already</p>

Description: sensitized to the interests of Colombian women and the defense of their rights. Undoubtedly, that a woman was named President of the Senate and promoted the idea from her position also played a role.

Among the results of the activities carried out by the block of Congressional women was: 1) the approval of Bill 171 of 2006, which establishes norms for the prevention, eradication and punishment of any form of violence against women, 2) reforms to the Penal codes, the Penal Procedure, and the Law 294 of 2006, 3) the enactment of other regulations, and 4) establishing the International Women and Power Forum.

With respect to agreements among women party activists, we were able to gather experiences from Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

Table 4
Cooperation experiences among women activists, by country

Experience	Country
Confederation of Ecuadorian Women for Change – Network of Ecuadorian Women of Political Parties and Movement s	Ecuador
National Forum	El Salvador
Full Citizenship Commission of the Forum of Political Parties	Guatemala
Honduran Forum of Women Politicians	Honduras
National Forum of Party Women	Panama
National multi-party platform and multi-party roundtable on gender policy.	Peru
Regional platform and multi-party roundtable on gender policy - Cuzco	
National Forum of Women Politicians	Dominican Republic
Uruguayan Network of Women Politicians	Uruguay

Source: IDEA Internacional 2007.

Panama’s National Forum of Party Women stands out because of its duration and the recognition it has earned from other political actors and public institutions. It has an elevated level of institutionalization and coordination with the Women Secretariats within parties. This has helped the group to decentralize and to increase approval of its country’s Quota Law, as well as approval for the regulations that obligate parties to assign part of their state funding to women’s training activities.

Best Practice: National Forum of Party Women (FONAMUPP, in Spanish)	
Political Party: Women activists from all political parties Country: Panama	
Description:	<p>FONAMUPP is a national group where Panamanian women politicians convene to achieve joint goals. Actions are carried out with the direct participation of women from all political parties and coordinated with party authorities, while the Secretariats for Women act as strategic allies. Other key participants are involved such as Panama's Electoral Tribunal, local authorities and international organizations. It also belongs to the National Alliance of Organized Women, an organization with which it has undertaken activities such as signing the Women and Development Electoral Pacts during the 1999 and 2004 elections.</p> <p>It has a Board of Directors comprised of members from current political parties who serve a term of one year. It is organized in chapters throughout the country's provinces, and there are currently four functioning provincial chapters. Decisions are reached by consensus: representation and compromise are the FONAMUPP's guiding principles.</p> <p>Its priorities include training party women so as to reduce disparities in the political field, and improving compliance with the Quota Law in electoral processes and internally within parties. Its greatest achievement has been to transform the aspirations of women into legal regulations, essentially with respect to the Electoral Code.</p> <p>During 1997, FONAMUPP lobbied parties and Panamanian women legislators to support a quota (30% of candidates to positions within parties or elected positions) and regulations requiring parties to comply with female participation in internal leadership positions and candidacies to elected positions. It also received approval for a state subsidy for political parties, according to which 10% of the 25% reserved for training activities had to be assigned to women's political development.</p> <p>FONAMUPP has been part of the National Council on Women since its founding in 1995, and actively participates in the Legislative Assembly's Commission on Women. It has speaking rights in the National Commission of Electoral Reforms, which was convened by the Electoral Tribunal (1996, 1999, 2000 and 2005) and in 1993 FONAMUPP participated in the creation of the Second Equal Opportunity plan for Women 2002-2006.</p>

Also interesting is the experience of the Dominican Republic's Forum for Women Politicians. Despite the absence of permanent funding for its activities, it has managed to remain an inter-party organization which seeks consensus and dialogue, and promotes the effective political involvement of Dominican women with a goal of creating women political leaders.

Best Practice: National Forum of Women Politicians	
Political Party: Representatives from all political parties Country: Dominican Republic	
Description:	<p>The National Forum of Women Politicians Inc. is a non-profit women's organization, structured according to the Dominican Republic's current legislation, and comprised of women from those political parties recognized by the Central Electoral Committee.</p> <p>Its objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defending gender equity within political parties and promoting the equal participation of women at all levels. • Insisting that the principle of equality is linked to the principle of gender equity and equal opportunity for all within a framework of respect for personal dignity. <p>It has elected three national directors, for a period of two years each, since its founding. The presidency has rotated between the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD), the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) and the Christian-Social Party.</p> <p>Currently, the Forum has fifteen chapters throughout the country and nine in the National District. The Electoral Assembly in each chapter is comprised of twenty women from each party (120 in total).</p> <p>Some of its past activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting public documents demanding that women be granted greater political participation and that the internal structures of parties permit greater equity. • During the past Congressional and municipal elections (May 2006) the Forum went to the Central Electoral Committee, along with representatives from the State Secretariat for Women, to demand that political parties comply with the 33% women quota for candidacy lists established by electoral law 275-97. • During the constitutional reform process of 2007, the Forum presented a reform proposal advocating the constitutional recognition of alternate electoral parity in presidential, congressional and municipal elections, as well as within the public administration. • The constitutional reform proposal demanded the incorporation of human rights for women established by international treaties and that the Constitution adopt gender-inclusive language and establish the basis for real participation for women. <p>The forum has also carried out training and political education programs for women, through agreements with the State Secretariat for Women and with civil society organizations such as Citizen Participation and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. There have been dozens of trainings held for women politicians.</p>

Lastly, we need to mention Honduras's Forum of Women. Although it only existed between 1991 and 1997, it was the only experience we found that involved an institutional dialogue between elected authorities, party women and women from social movements. Its goal was to promote debate and bring together diverse perspectives to resolve problems. As a result of mutual learning, the group was able to create the synergies needed for the approval and implementation of a series of reforms to several laws discriminating laws against women.

Best Practice: Honduran Forum of Women Politicians	
Political Party: Women Deputies of the National Congress, women from political parties and civil society Country: Honduras	
Description:	<p>The Permanent Commission on Women's Affairs was created in 1991 and composed of deputies from the National Party and the Liberal Party.</p> <p>At the end of the armed conflict that impacted the lives of most of the Central American population, political parties were well positioned to understand their populations' unmet needs. The Commission's seven women deputies created an internal group for analyzing women's situation and their problems. They looked for legal or other solutions, and then invited the other five women deputies (also Liberal and Nationalist) that weren't part of the Commission to agree upon the legal proposals they would introduce to the National Congress plenary.</p> <p>This analysis and proposal development held within the framework of an inter-party roundtable brought the Commission closer to civil society women and led to the creation of a discussion corner for women from every part of the country. It improved the relationship between party women and women in social movements, established a mutual understanding among them and developed the individual and collective growth of the women politicians involved.</p> <p>The organizational effort was dubbed the Women's Forum and became the first open forum to exclusively tackle women's issues. It called for reforms to several laws which explicitly discriminated against women, such as the Agrarian Reform law, and suggested public policies to improve the health of women within the framework of the PAHO-sponsored <i>Woman, Health and Legislation</i> project.</p> <p>In order to eradicate sexism from primary schools, it carried out an extensive review of textbooks used in basic school subjects. It also pointed out the need to reform the Electoral Law and Political Organizations Law so that they guarantee that the representation of women in decision-making spaces corresponds to the percentage of women in the country's total population (51.3%).</p>

7.10. Relationship with Civil Society

In the last few years, the idea that political parties have become disconnected from their societies' needs has significantly penetrated public discourse. Party affiliation continues to fall and many surveys indicate that even though citizens recognize the importance of parties to the functioning of democracy, very few Latin Americans trust them.

Because of this disenchantment, many people have opted to become involved with civil society organizations, a way to influence state policy but, above all, to build and propose national projects that reflect social demands.

However, in order for democracy to function, both spheres –political and social– must be seen as complementary and relationships of trust must be built between them.

On the political party side, there is an urgent need to improve proposals and platforms, adapting them to constant social change. With respect to civil society organizations, they would be more effective if they adopted a less confrontational attitude, made more positive suggestions and abandoned the temptation of de facto replacement of political organizations.¹¹

The relationship between women party activists and women from civil society is not immune to these problems. In some cases, tensions have risen between issues deemed critical to the women's agenda – such as sexual and reproductive rights– and ideological beliefs or party policies. However, positive results were reported from countries where efforts converged and actions were agreed upon by consensus, such as the aforementioned cases in Ecuador and Honduras for the approval of quotas.

We believe that this road must not only be explored but pursued, because achieving many of the goals on the women's gender agenda requires the greatest possible number of committed players, as well as players able to generate change from within the political sphere. In that vein, we need to highlight the alliance signed in 2006 between the Sandinista Renewal Movement and Nicaragua's Autonomous Women's Movement. Because of this merger, the movement strengthened its vision, proposals and technical capacity, while the Alliance improved its platform's political influence.

Best Practice:

Political Alliance between the Sandinista Renewal Movement Party and the Women's Autonomous Movement

Political Party: Sandinista Renewal Movement Alliance (Alianza MRS, in Spanish)

Country: Nicaragua

Description: Faced with the upcoming 2006 national elections (President, Vice-presidents and Deputies), the Women's Autonomous Movement (MAM) –an organized group of women and feminists– suggested the establishment of a political agreement with the Alianza MRS, which was accepted and signed by its leadership and included their demands in the party's Government Plan.

To justify the agreement, the MAM affirmed that “having a political program that upheld their needs and aspirations in an objective way was an essential precondition to achieving true democracy for everyone.” According to the MRS, the agreement was part of its policy to “generate alliances with social movements and those individuals and political parties committed to [...] the establishment of a new order” (Political Agreement 2006).

The agreement —made up of five programmatic points, one of them being “gender democracy”*— established that:

- The MAM would provide consultancy on gender issues to the campaign team and Alliance candidates.
- A MAM representative would participate in campaign strategies and would contribute to monitoring the management of funds.
- The MAM would provide consultancy to the Alliance block and any commission it may preside.

* This concept refers to gender democracy, understood as a system seeking equality between men and women, acknowledging their differences but striving for women's inclusion as political actors.

Description:

- Should it win the election, the Alliance would consult the MAM on cabinet formation.
- The MAM would endorse the Government Plan and support the Alliance's women candidates.

The MAM is a member of the Alianza MRS' Board of Directors, taking part in decision-making processes at the highest level. Moreover, it has its own training program for the Alliance's women activists and sympathizers on gender and development (from a feminist perspective), electoral reform, statutes and current events.

Lastly, we must not forget that cooperation between party women and women from civil society could become a strategic asset when negotiating increased rights for women. This relationship helps consolidate support from social representatives, brings day-to-day reality to the political table and decision-making, and improves negotiating capacity by broadening the party's representation beyond the political sphere.

7.11. Media

In an era where mass media has radically and irreversibly transformed communication between politicians and citizens, the success or failure of a public figure depends in large part on his or her capacity to gain access to this “window.”

Mass media has attained such an importance that few people doubt the power it has to determine the issues societies discuss or the concerns that shape public opinion. In fact, a study undertaken in 2003 by Latinobarómetro reveals that 51% of Latin Americans feel that the most trustworthy source of political information is television, 16% chose radio and 8% selected newspapers, as opposed to 12% mentioning friends or relatives. Overall, it means that eight people in ten (79%) consider mass media the most trustworthy source of information.

Setting the agenda also implies determining who the main players are. Although regional studies in this area are scarce, we will mention two studies carried out during political campaigns that indicate women receive less media attention than men. In Uruguay's case, the Johnson study (2005) – undertaken in the penultimate week of the 2004 campaign – reveals that despite comprising 17.7% of the total number of candidates, women candidates only received 10.6% of TV, radio or press coverage. On top of that, 81.3% of their appearances were silent, meaning they only included references or images without statements.

In Peru's case, the study undertaken by International IDEA (2007b) during the 2006 electoral campaign determined that, even though women represented 39% of the candidates to Congress, their coverage in the media represented 18.59% of total press, 22.22% in television and 26.19% in radio.

In order to combat this disadvantage, women need to turn their participation and proposals into news events that attract the media; otherwise, the chances of getting their messages across are very slim. The initiative adopted by women from the Progressive Encounter – Broad Front New Majority

during the 2004 campaign in Uruguay – mentioned below– points in that direction: giving visibility to both candidacies and their proposals.

Best Practice: Public Presentation of Women Candidates	
Political Party: Progressive Encounter – Broad Front – New Majority (EP-FA-NM) Country: Uruguay	
Description:	<p>During the 2004 electoral campaign, using the slogan from the time of democratic recovery in the region –“If Women Aren't Present, Democracy Doesn't Work”–, the Thematic Unity of the Broad Front's Rights of the Citizen organized a press conference at their headquarters to present the main women candidates in the left-wing's coalition lists.</p> <p>The objective was to put the spotlight on women candidates and communicate their agenda as left-wing women politicians, to the press and the electorate. The main topics in the agenda were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize the National Institute of Family and Women. • Apply the National Plan of Opportunities and Rights, the National Plan for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Treatment. • Recognition of sexual and reproductive rights. • Compliance with obligations agreed by the country at international forums and conferences related to women's rights. <p>Although the presentation did not result in massive press coverage nor in the presence of a major Broad Front leader (which would have implied a recognition from party leadership of the value of women's work), the press conference provided visibility to the thirty women candidates for the election, while increasing awareness of their programmatic proposals.</p> <p>It also helped to position women as autonomous political actors, with an agenda of their own that is relevant to the electorate and to the campaign debate. This strategic positioning can serve to counteract the stereotypical way women candidates are presented by the electoral commissions of parties or agencies that work on publicity.</p>

It is also essential that women acquire communication tools to manage different media formats with proficiency. On many occasions, inexperienced communicators –despite having interesting proposals– can induce apathy among citizens, as well as in journalists, who are eager to find political characters with media savvy that translates into high ratings. Now more than ever, in addition to principles, knowledge and experience, male and female politicians need to “communicate.” Through personal effort and training, this can be achieved.

On the other hand, even though it is important to have strategies that allow women to “expose” themselves as political actors outside their own parties, they should not forget internal communication with party activists. This can be used to publicize and debate ideas, which are the breeding ground for common perspectives that will strengthen women's hands in politics. *SOMOS*

with a Gender View was a newspaper created by women leaders from Ecuador's Popular Democracy party which followed that principle.

Best Practice: Development and Distribution of the newspaper <i>SOMOS con visión de género</i>	
Political Party: Popular Democracy (DP, in Spanish) Country: Ecuador	
Description:	<p>With the intention of publicizing women's thinking in general, in particular their opinions with respect to diverse political issues, in 2005 a group of women party leaders decided to publish a newspaper, edited every 45 days and with a circulation of 2,000. The newspaper included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An editorial section to express the ideological position of Christian-Democrat women. • A space to introduce party women who occupy a position, particularly if it is an elected position. • Stories of historical women active in the political field. • An informative section on the rights of people. • A cultural segment. <p>In order to balance the aridity of political issues, the newspaper utilized an attractive format, letter type, colors and layout. An inclusive name was also sought: <i>SOMOS con visión de género</i> (<i>WE'RE with a Gender View</i>). Although the DP supported the initiative, financing had to be secured from outside the party.</p> <p>Once funding was secured, responsibilities were distributed. A paid director was named, who presented each issue's contents before the Editorial Board. The newspaper acquired a significant rate of distribution within the party by mailing issues to provincial boards. It was also sent to non-members and, above all, distributed among party men.</p> <p>After the seventh issue, the DP started a process of reunification; the team thus thought it prudent to suspend the newspaper.</p>

We must point out that the social transformations needed to reduce gender inequality could be significantly accelerated if the media contributed to the visibility of women by using equity criteria.

8. Learning from Best Practices

Although it is true that the political participation of women is a dynamic and active process, some aspects need to be considered so that it can be further enriched, not only for women politicians, but for society as a whole.

In that sense, recalling the experiences mentioned previously, we need to stress that:

- Promoting the effective political participation of women requires the firm action of political parties, as they are the quintessential decision-making bodies in a democracy.
- Despite the continued presence of a series of obstacles limiting the political participation of women in the region, some political parties have undertaken innovative and effective initiatives that can be considered “best practices,” which if copied by other political organizations could accelerate the goal of equality in politics.
- The sustainability of best practices needs to be a commitment of the whole party and not only its women members; therefore it would be preferable that the approval and implementation of measures be made known to all members, who could then publicize them. In this way, the existing party leadership would be held accountable for progress within its political organization.
- The implementation of best practices within parties’ different “institutional spaces” is a complementary strategy to the adoption of quota systems. We need to keep improving them and correct those aspects limiting their efficiency in order to arrive at a political party system where gender issues are a central item in party platforms.
- Finally, in order to achieve the objectives of best practices and quotas, we should not neglect the important task of transforming the cultural stereotypes still affecting women. Promoting their participation in public spaces implies, with equal intensity, promoting male participation in private spaces.

Bibliography

Ed. Beltrán, Elena and Virginia Maquieira

2001 *Feminismos. Debates teóricos contemporáneos*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

CEPAL

2007 “El aporte de las mujeres a la igualdad en América Latina y el Caribe”. Tenth Regional Conference on Latin American and Caribbean Women. Santiago de Chile: ECLAC

Corporación Latinobarómetro

2004 *2004 Latinobarómetro Report*. Santiago de Chile.

2003 *2003 Latinobarómetro Report*. Santiago de Chile.

Del Águila, Alicia

2004 *Mujeres en los partidos políticos del Perú. Situación y mecanismos para su promoción*. Lima: Asociación Civil Transparencia.

Del Águila, Alicia y Beatriz Llanos

2007 Cuota, sistema electoral y prácticas partidarias. Claves de los avances y barreras a la participación política de la mujer en la Región Andina (unpublished).

Duarte, Isis

2001 Exhibition to convene Participación Ciudadana’s technical team. Santo Domingo, 23 May 2001. In <http://www.pciudadana.com/actividades/2003/cuota_isis.htm>.

Buvinic, Mayra and Vivian Roza

2004 *Women, Politics and Democratic Prospects in Latin America*. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank.

Htun, Mala N.

2003 *Dimensiones de la inclusión y exclusión política en Brasil: género y raza*. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank, Series of technical report from the Department for Sustainable Development.

Htun, Mala N.

2000 *El liderazgo de las mujeres en América Latina: retos y tendencias*. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Dialogue.

IDEA Internacional

2008 30 años de democracia. *¿En la cresta de la ola? Participación política de la mujer en América Latina*. Beatriz Llanos y Kristen Sample, editors. Lima: International IDEA.

2007 “Buenas prácticas para la participación de mujeres en la política latinoamericana” project. National documentation: Arce, Mariela (Panama); Ardaya, Gloria (Bolivia); Llanos, Beatriz (Peru), Cañete, María Fernanda (Ecuador); Cerva, Daniela (Mexico); Samqui, Eva (Nicaragua); Guirola, Yolanda (El Salvador); Jager, Marcela (Costa Rica); Johnson, Niki (Uruguay); López, Claudia (Guatemala); Martínez, María Antonia (Honduras); Marx, Jutta and Jutta Borner (Argentina); Miguel, Luis Felipe (Brazil); Pereira, Milena and Maridí Gonzales (Paraguay); Pineda, Magaly (Dominican Republic);

- Ríos Tobar, Marcela; Maggi Cook and Daniela Hormazábal (Chile); Valdivieso, Magdalena (Venezuela); Wills, María Emma and Diana Cardoso (Colombia).
- 2005a "La representación política de las mujeres en la región andina". In ed. Kristen Sample and Daniel Zovatto. *Democracia en la región andina: los telones de fondo*. Lima: International IDEA (Sample, Kristen).
- 2005b "Obstacles to women's participation in Parliament". In ed. Julie Ballington and Azza Karam. *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*. A Revised Edition. Stockholm: International IDEA (Shvedova, Nadezhda).
- 2005c "La participación política de la sociedad civil en la región andina". In ed. Kristen Sample and Daniel Zovatto. *Democracia en la región andina: los telones de fondo*. Lima: International IDEA (Verdesoto, Luis and Ardaya, Gloria).
- 2004 La aplicación de las cuotas: experiencias latinoamericanas. Workshop Report. Stockholm: International IDEA.
- 1988 "Using Quotas to Increase Women's Political Representation". In *Women in Parliament. Beyond Numbers*. Stockholm: International IDEA (Dahlerup, Drude).
- n.d. *Global Database of Quotas for Women*. In <www.quotaproject.org>.

International IDEA and Asociación Civil Transparencia

- 2007a *La igualdad esquivada. Una mirada a las Elecciones Generales 2006*. Lima: International IDEA and Asociación Civil Transparencia. Ed. Jennie Dador and Beatriz Llanos. Lima: International IDEA and Asociación Civil Transparencia.
- 2007b *La política por dentro. Cambios y continuidades en las organizaciones políticas de los países andinos*. Ed. Rafael Roncagliolo and Carlos Meléndez. Lima: International IDEA and Asociación Civil Transparencia.

International IDEA and FLACSO Chile

- 2005 *Cuotas de género, democracia y representación*. Ed. Marcela Ríos Tobar and Andrés Villar. Santiago de Chile: International IDEA - FLACSO Chile.

International IDEA and Organization of American States

- 2004 "Financiamiento político y perspectiva de género". In ed. Daniel Zovatto and Steven Griner. *De las normas a las buenas prácticas. El desafío del financiamiento político en América Latina*. San José: International IDEA and Organization of American States (García Quesada, Ana Isabel).

International IDEA and Autonomous University of México

- 2006 *Regulación jurídica de los partidos políticos en América Latina*. Daniel Zovatto, coordinator. Mexico City: International IDEA and Autonomous University of México.

Inter-Parliamentary Union

Various *Women in National Parliaments*. In <<http://ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>>.

Inter-Parliamentary Union

- 2001 *La representación política de las mujeres en América Latina*. En <www.quotaproject.org/sources/southamerica.cfm>.

Johnson, Niki

2005 *La política de la ausencia: las elecciones uruguayas 2004-2005, las mujeres y la equidad de género*. Montevideo: Comisión Nacional de Seguimiento Mujeres por democracia, equidad y ciudadanía.

Ed. León, Magdalena

2005 *Nadando contra la corriente. Mujeres y cuotas políticas en los países andinos*. Quito: UNIFEM, UNFPA, FLACSO Ecuador.

Machicao Barbery, Ximena

2004 *El acoso político: un tema urgente que enfrentar*. La Paz: CIDEM.

Martín Salgado, Lourdes

2002 *Marketing político. Arte y ciencia de la persuasión en democracia*. Barcelona: Paidós Ibérica.

Marx, Jutta; Jutta Borner and María Caminotti

2007 *Las legisladoras. Cupos de género y política en Argentina y Brasil*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI. Editora Iberoamericana, Instituto Torcuatto di Tella and United Nations Development Program.

Ed. Mella Márquez, Manuel

1997 *Curso de partidos políticos*. Madrid: Akal Universitaria.

Norris, Pippa

2004 *Electoral Engineering. Voting Rules and Political Behavior*. Cambridge University Press.

Payne, J. Mark; Daniel Zovatto and Mercedes Mateo Díaz

2006 *La política importa. Democracia y desarrollo en América Latina*. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank and Instituto para la Democracia y la Asistencia Electoral.

Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) and Movimiento Amplio de Izquierda (MAIZ)

2007 *Programa de Gobierno 2008-2012*.

Notes

- ¹ We need to mention the Action Platform emerging from the Fourth Global Conference on Women organized by the UN in Beijing in 1995, a document that, although non-binding, implies a political commitment to the international community on the part of countries and is a necessary reference for action on those commitments.
- ² Electoral lists are classified as open, closed and blocked or closed and unblocked.
- ³ Understood as the total number of seats up for election in each electoral district.
- ⁴ It refers to the number of seats obtained by each party in an electoral district.
- ⁵ On this, Wills and Cardoso (International IDEA 2007) have established the concept of political organizations' "friendliness or indolence" towards the inclusion of women. In Colombia's case, the results of this investigation can be consulted in their national file, included in the CD accompanying this publication.
- ⁶ In the case of legal quotas, several authors and studies indicate that quotas work better if they are applied in proportional representation systems, with a high incidence per district, closed lists, placement mandate and clear rules.
- ⁷ See a quota classification in International IDEA and FLACSO Chile 2005.
- ⁸ Those where the party defines its female and male candidates' placement order, where the elector votes without being able to alter the established sequence.
- ⁹ We need to mention that the term parity is used to express the equal participation of men and women, implying that no gender is underrepresented by less than 40% or overrepresented by more than 60%. Cf. the text of Organic Law 3/2007 of March 22 on the Effective Equality of Men and Women in Spain.
- ¹⁰ Term created by Pippa Norris. See Norris 2004.
- ¹¹ See International IDEA 2005c.