



Effectiveness of donor support to women in formal political leadership – Annotated bibliography

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Question

Please provide a selection of rigorous references about the effectiveness of donor support to help women in leadership positions in formal politics be effective. What roles do donors have in supporting these efforts, and what is their effectiveness? Where possible, identify evidence on various types of interventions, their effectiveness, the challenges, and the conditions required (including the wider context) for the interventions to be effective.

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1. Overview

Domestic and external pressures to increase the number of women in formal politics have started to bear fruit over the past 20 years. Overall, this has led to a greater presence of women in elected, appointed, and recruited positions in public bodies, and to their rise to senior positions in these settings, to a lesser extent. A significant amount of rigorous research has analysed women's access to these positions, the constraints and enablers they experience once there, and their political action in office. Within this literature however, **available evidence is scarce** when the focus turns to analysing support that external aid actors have provided women leaders in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). This annotated bibliography maps a selection of references available on this issue, following a rapid review of academic, practitioner, and policy literature (this makes it subject to limitations – see the methodology section for details)¹.

The selected references show that aid donors have implemented, or supported the implementation of, several main types of interventions. They typically address one or several of **four aspects**: women leaders themselves, men leaders in formal politics, political institutions, and the links between women leaders and broader movements for women's rights. The **types of interventions** most frequently undertaken include:

- **Capacity-building** for women leaders, in women-only or mixed settings. This can address the specific skills of their leadership position (e.g. being a parliamentarian), broader political skills (e.g. leadership, negotiation), or substantive issues in their work (e.g. the object of a piece of legislation).
- **Networking** for mutual support or mentorship, primarily among women but also with men.
- **Establishing and developing sustained women-focused institutions**, such as women's caucuses and gender equality committees in parliaments.
- **Working with the formal political bodies** where women are leaders, to make these bodies gender-responsive. A variety of interventions are referenced under this, such as:
 - changing the procedures and cultures of the bodies women belong to;
 - gender mainstreaming processes, e.g. internal gender audits;
 - providing adequate support staff;
 - providing the right facilities;
 - mobilising men allies;
 - sanctioning abuse and violence in politics, including when it targets women.
- **Working with political parties**, which are defined across the literature as a major factor determining women's effectiveness, even once women are elected.

Evidence on the effectiveness of interventions and its factors appears to be patchy, mixed, and biased towards reporting positive results. It also seems skewed towards national-level politics, and towards countries with lesser levels of violence and States with stronger capacities. Results appear to depend on the quality of programming, but also on **factors such as the formal and informal political context and political economy in which women operate**. Among frequent recommendations on effectively helping women leaders, aid actors are urged to: combine

¹ For a narrative presentation of the evidence found through this rapid literature review, see the associated narrative review: (Combaz, 2018).

several types of interventions; make support structures and practices an integral part of domestic institutions over the long term; help make political bodies gender-responsive; and connect women leaders to broader movements for women's rights and gender equality.

The rest of this report is structured as follows. Section 2 describes the state of knowledge. Section 4 presents references that are reviews of the evidence base and of available data. Section 5 presents references that discuss the various interventions and approaches donors have adopted. Section 6 focuses on references (including reviews) that discuss support to women leaders in adverse contexts, such as war, high levels of violence, post-war periods, and States with weak capacities. Section 2 summarises the methodology used for this rapid review.

In sections 4 to 6, the core references are presented first. These were selected for their high relevance, the strength of their methodology, and the geographical and thematic breadth of their coverage (see section 2 for details). In the summaries of the key findings from each core reference, any bolding of text was done by the author of the present report. Core references are then followed by a few suggestions of further reading, drawn from the pool of highly relevant references with broad thematic and geographic coverage.

In addition, it is worth noting that **a number of successful interventions to support women leaders in formal politics did not involve foreign aid**, and instead resulted from domestic dynamics and mobilisations. References analysing the successes and limitations of such domestic developments are presented in section 7. This section also lists additional references with narrower geographic or thematic scopes, and some that have less systematic or strong methodologies but whose results are highly relevant to the issue.

2. Methodology

This report is based on rigorous evidence selected through a rapid, non-systematic review of academic, practitioner, and policy literature. Its findings and recommendations should therefore be understood in the context of these limitations.

Its given scope was to look at literature about donor support to women in leadership positions at any level of formal politics (national or local), in low- and middle-income countries, drawing on references published in the past 10 years (2008-2018). The searches and selection of references involved several steps, which are summarised below (in practice, some of the steps were run several times, based on information encountered during searches).

First, the researcher used advanced search syntax and keyword combinations in the database of academic journal articles Web of Science to identify relevant references, based on the scope above.

Second, the researcher used advanced search syntax and keyword combinations in Google to identify relevant references, based on the scope above.

Third, the researcher systematically browsed and searched multiple websites that appeared relevant from Google searches or reference lists in selected sources.

Fourth, whenever the researcher identified reviews of the literature (whether systematic or not) in pre-selected references, she looked at the relevant references identified there for possible inclusion.

Fifth, from the pool of references gathered in the first three steps, the researcher examined the pre-selected references and further refined the selection based on relevance and minimum standards of rigour (either clear methodology, or an established source).

Sixth, from the selection of relevant references, the researcher made a final selection of core references. These were chosen based on:

- their high relevance to the report topic,
- the breadth of their coverage. References about multiple countries, and ideally about multiple world regions, were prioritised. So were references about multiple types of interventions, to give a general sense of actions taken and to allow for comparisons.
- the strength of their methodology. These references draw on stronger methods to assess evidence. This typically involved reviews of literature, or meta-reviews of evaluations or practices.

3. State of knowledge

As indicated in the overview, **there is scant research and knowledge** on the effectiveness of donor support to women in formal politics in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). This contrasts with large bodies of literature, covering both LMICs and high-income countries (HICs), on: the political exclusion of women; what has worked in helping women gain access to elected, appointed, or recruited positions in formal political; and the link between the presence of these women and developments on gender equality in formal politics. It also contrasts with the medium-sized body of literature on support (by aid donors and others) to women in leadership positions in the private sector, in a range of contexts and entities.

Instead, there is a medium-sized body of literature on the experiences and actions of women in office in formal politics, and the factors shaping these (with most of the literature discussing barriers, not enablers – a reflection of the state of play). Within this, and focusing on LMICs, there is a small to medium-sized body of rigorous knowledge on the enabling factors and conditions that women in leadership or broader movements have generated and implemented. Beside it is the small body of rigorous knowledge of aid to support such enablers.

The rapid review conducted for this report suggests that the scarcity of knowledge of donor support may have three causes. First, there seems to be limited academic research into this, as academic research has prioritised analysing domestic dynamics in this area. Second, where programmes are implemented directly by bilateral donors or the major specialised organisations (IDEA, Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU], National Democratic Institute [NDI]), there seem to be few publically available evaluations. Instead, these actors tend to produce publications on good practices, without clarifying what the methodology behind them was. Third, there appear to be a limited though growing number of aid projects providing support to women in office and working on making their environment enabling. Such support is typically part of larger programmes for gender equality and women's empowerment, for democracy, or on governance. One practical consequence is that the evaluations of such programmes often devote limited space to discussing the support component. In addition, a number of donor documents merely describe goals, inputs, and activities, or at most outputs, with little to no information available about results or impact – a fact noted in several evidence reviews selected in this report.

A majority of the available relevant references are based on rigorous methods, whereas a sizeable minority fail to indicate their methodology or adopt weaker methodologies. **The evidence base, taken as a whole, is diverse** in several ways. It is based on diverse data – quantitative, qualitative, and mixed –, and diverse methods, from desk-based reviews to field-based comparative case studies and evaluations. It involves a fairly balanced mix of academic, practitioner, and policy literature (with academic literature somewhat less represented, due to the focus on donors). The cases covered in the literature are very diverse geographically, in that all world regions are examined, as are many different individual countries. In addition, the findings from the more rigorous references are **conclusive**, not just indicative, although they cannot always demonstrate more than correlations due to the difficulty of causally attributing major change to specific aid programmes. Findings on the interventions used, their effectiveness, and the conditions for their success, are also broadly **consistent** across references.

On the other hand, the relevant literature has **several weaknesses**. There are **no systematic comparisons to identify and rank which types of interventions, and which individual interventions, are most effective relative to one another**. There is some – uneven – evidence about effectiveness regarding each type of intervention and most identified interventions, and regarding sets of interventions. Beyond these separate pieces of knowledge though, no evidence is available on the relative effectiveness of interventions and of types of interventions. Reasons for this gap probably include the limited programming in this area, the small evidence base, the complexity of undertaking such potential research, and, importantly, the specificity of any findings to their context of intervention.

Another limitation is distinct from the previous one but related to it: there are **few general findings about the factors and conditions outside interventions that affect effectiveness**. On the factors and conditions *within* interventions that affect effectiveness, the body of knowledge does offer findings which are, if not generalisable, at least frequently mentioned in references and based on multiple contexts. With variables outside interventions, such findings are scant. A major reason for this is probably that, as multiple authors emphasise, any such findings are specific to the political, economic, social, and cultural context of intervention. Additional likely reasons include the limited programming and research in this area, the small evidence base currently available, and the complexity of undertaking such potential research.

Because a handful of aid actors are specialised in support to political leaders, there is **limited diversity in evaluations and similar assessments**: UN Women, UNDP, USAID were consistently represented in search results, as were IDEA, IPU, and NDI. Similarly, a few specialised academics and policy researchers have written several of the key references on the issue, although there remains significant diversity among academic and policy authors.

In practitioner literature, the **time frames** considered for the effects of interventions are typically in the short- or medium-term, with little known about longer-term impact. This is most likely because current programming on support to women in formal politics itself tends to be short-term, as noted in several references. This problem does not appear in academic publications, nor in most policy publications.

In terms of geography, most of the core evidence is about politics at national level, with **scant evidence on the effectiveness of support to women leaders at various sub-national levels**. Importantly, there is scarce evidence from the more adverse contexts of intervention, such as States with very weak capacities or countries with high levels of violence. Thematically, most of the evidence is about interventions that focus on women leaders, such as trainings and

networking, while interventions to change the political environment are less examined, probably because such interventions are less used.

In addition, there generally lacks a systematic engagement how distinct and intersecting structures of inequalities (such as class, caste, age, ethnicity, culture, disability, and sexualities) shape women leaders' experiences and how they would affect the effectiveness of donor support. Most of the literature pays some attention to how different women leaders have different experiences due to other socio-economic characteristics (e.g. literacy, wealth, disability). Yet, discussions usually address just a few more inequalities, without considering multiple, intersecting inequalities. Further, most references do not conflate women with gender, but many fail to carry over such approaches when writing about, e.g., class (rather than poverty or low education) or disability. Disadvantages, when addressed at all, are often made to stand in for relational power structures. A few references do better in this regard, for example addressing how to make formal politics not only gender-responsive, but also e.g. disability-responsive.

4. Reviews of evidence base and data

Core references

O'Neil, T., & Plank, G. (2015). Support to women and girls' leadership. A rapid review of the evidence (Literature review). Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Retrieved from <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9623.pdf>

Type of literature: policy	Publisher type: policy advice institute
Type of reference: rapid literature review	Peer review: yes; no details provided
Geographic scope: low- and middle-income countries	Time frame covered: not indicated
Empirical material: secondary (qualitative and quantitative material)	Approach to material: rapid review of literature on support to women and girls' leadership
Methodology & sample size: Review of literature "on programmes or interventions that aim to build the leadership capabilities of women and/or girls", asking "(i) what the evidence is on the factors that enable women and girls' leadership capabilities; and (ii) what the evidence is on whether/how women and girls are able to use leadership positions to achieve better and/or more equitable outcomes" (p. 1). Search of academic databases; snowballing and expert recommendations; search of grey literature. 54 relevant references, out of 99 identified.	

State of research and knowledge

"The body of evidence is relatively small, particularly on support to girls' leadership, and is largely grey literature written or commissioned by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as advocates or programme implementers. The studies cover a relatively even spread of geographical regions, with only the Middle East and North African countries underrepresented (with only three studies)" (p. 1).

"A minority of studies apply analytical rigour, exploring what leadership means and establishing (and testing) assumptions about how it might be developed and/or the relationship between women's leadership and other things (e.g. women's power, their influence, changes in policy, services or social norms, etc.). These more analytically sophisticated pieces are mostly

academic, although there are some notable exceptions in the grey literature (e.g. CARE, 2009, 2012; Oxfam, 2013a, 2014; Repila, 2011). **Qualitative methods are most common** in project evaluations, with quantitative methods relatively scarce and only one identified use of experimental design (Bandiera et al., 2012)” (p. 1).

Main knowledge gaps relevant to donor support

Several major gaps are relevant to the present report (p. 2-3):

- **“Barely any studies discuss the role of external funders** or analyse how their relationship with implementing partners, women leaders and women’s networks might affect the efficacy of women or girls’ leadership programmes”.
- “The majority of studies look at interventions to develop grassroots women’s leadership or to help women get into formal political positions”. There **“are few in-depth studies of whether women are effective leaders once in office, or of the success of interventions to support women politicians**, and none on the development of women’s leadership in business or the non-profit sectors”. Available evidence “is cursory and tends to focus on individual traits and barriers and to neglect broader political, social and institutional enabling factors”.
- “There are **no long-term longitudinal studies, so it is not possible to determine sustainability of outcomes**. It is possible that indirect effects, for example on social norms or policy, accrue later on”.
- “Comparative data on women’s leadership is scarce”.
- Some evidence exists on the relationship between collective and individual leadership capacities, but data and analysis on the causal relationships between individual leadership capabilities, collective action and women’s social change and influence are scarce”.
- The selected studies “do not consider the role of men and boys in developing women’s leadership, or of progressive changes in gender norms and relations more generally”.

More research is needed on “the factors that explain when and how women leaders of all types are able to advance their interests and change others’ ideas and behaviour” (cover page; also see pp. 22-23).

Lessons from programming for successful donor support

“The evidence on programme design and ways of working and funding leadership interventions is scant” (p. 21). Still, some findings are available, based on evidence about programming for women’s leadership (such findings are partly based on programming for women leaders in formal politics). Specifically, some of the important factors for success include (p. 21):

- **“Long-term support to a core group of activists** rather than *ad hoc* interventions to large numbers of women (Oxfam, 2013b);
- **Locally relevant and led leadership programmes**: for example girls and women are able to propose their own understanding of leadership, what problems they face and what inputs they need (Wijnen and Wildschut, 2015);
- **Politically smart programme design and implementation**: programmes not only use political analysis but also are designed in ways that enable women leaders, and the organisations supporting them, to work politically (Hodes et al., 2011; Oxfam, 2013b);

- **Flexible programming**, which enables programme participants to focus on ‘locally determined objectives’ (p.57) and on ‘what works and why’, rather than on problems or deficits (p. 68) (Larson and Tian, 2005), and where funders have a ‘goal oriented’ rather than ‘project oriented’ focus (p.30), and appropriate monitoring and evaluation (Hodes et al., 2011)”.

Lessons from broader evidence for programme content

The evidence on what enables women and girl’s leadership offers several messages relevant to support women in formal leadership. First, “[f]ormal institutional change is important to counter gendered social norms. Institutional change that evens the playing field, such as through affirmative action or quotas in parties, electoral lists or seats, contributes to women’s descriptive representation and to their access to decision-making and leadership positions”. However, “there is variation in how quotas intersect with wider political economy conditions (e.g. regime type, party and electoral systems and informal political rules) and wider socio-normative and development patterns”. These differences “affect whether and how quotas contribute to women’s access to leadership roles and their ability to advance gender equality agendas. More research is needed in this area” (p. 22).

Second, “informal institutions and spaces are also critical for women to be effective leaders”. Informal spaces and norms are highly important “both to the development of women’s political skills and to their effective exercise of these once in leadership positions. [...] Once in leadership positions, women’s ability to influence decision-making processes depends heavily on whether they are able to gain access to, and negotiate within and around, the informal processes and spaces where alliances are built and backroom deals made” (p. 22).

Third, women’s “individual and collective leadership is important to counter adverse gender and social norms”. These norms are the main constraint to women and girl’s leadership, but can be progressively changed by women’s leadership. However, there is “no automatic link between the emergence of individual women/girl leaders and women/girls’ collective leadership and action. Programmes need to explicitly build connections and solidarity between women, and their ability to act together to change harmful social norms” (p. 22).

Fourth, men and boys “are critical partners in changing gender norms”. Their role in supporting women and girl’s leadership is necessary, “and should be factored into international support” (p. 22).

Fifth, “[a]utonomous women’s movements are the vanguard of gender justice”. Women’s coalitions have bolstered “the ability of women politicians and feminist bureaucrats (‘femocrats’) to work effectively within government to advance gender equity”. Women’s organisations and movements need to be supported (p. 22).

Sixth, donor programming and theories of change “need to reflect the combination of factors that support women and girls’ leadership. Support for the development of particular leadership skills can be important, but women and girl’s leadership arises from a range of factors and over time”. Supporting leadership capabilities therefore needs to be ongoing, as women “enter leadership positions and as they continue to develop once in them – and not as discrete or *ad hoc* interventions (e.g. focused around elections). Leadership development also needs to be placed in broader social, political and institutional context”, among others “because effective women leadership benefits from enabling institutional frameworks as well as individual skills” (p. 22).

Major factors and conditions affecting women leaders' effectiveness

Distinct from “women having leadership capabilities or occupying leadership positions”, a central **“measure of successful or effective women’s leadership” is their achievement of individual or group objectives**, as this is central to leadership (p. 2).

The factors that affect individual women’s formal political leadership include: “family background and home environment, ‘political entrepreneurship’, paid and voluntary work, gendered social norms, quotas, electoral and party systems, decentralisation, community leadership, and poverty and disadvantage” (p. 2).

The factors that affect the links between women’s individual and collective leadership include: “networks and sharing of expertise, linkages between movements and formal leadership, movements standing in for political parties, and the socialisation impact of women in leadership” (p. 2).

Enabling conditions for women’s leadership are: “the development of capabilities, both individual and collective; supportive political institutions, including quotas and women’s access to and appointment into political careers; and increased levels of socioeconomic development within society as a whole” (p. 2).

- Key “constraints on women’s leadership, whether in political, civic or business spheres, arise from discriminatory social and gender norms more generally. However, when gender relations and roles change over time, the opportunity structure for women’s leadership appears also to change, in ways that allow more women to gain access to leadership capabilities and positions” (p. 2).
- Key factors for women’s effective leadership include: “having professional expertise and credibility (which also mirrors educational achievement); the existence of an autonomous women’s movement (and its relationship with/support to women in government/the bureaucracy); the lobbying capabilities of women civic leaders; and collaborative approaches with government and ‘working politically’” (p. 2).

Buvinic, M., Furst-Nichols, R., & Koolwal, G. (2014). Mapping gender data gaps. data2X. Retrieved from https://www.data2x.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Data2X_MappingGenderDataGaps_FullReport.pdf

Type of literature: policy	Publisher type: policy advice institute
Type of reference: report	Peer review: no information provided
Geographic scope: low- and middle-income countries	Time frame covered: situation as of 2014
Empirical material: primary (focus on quantitative data)	Approach to material: systematic mapping
Methodology & sample size: no details provided on how data were looked for. Mapping of gender data and gaps “across five domains of women’s empowerment: (1) health, (2) education, (3) economic opportunities, (4) political participation, and (5) human security”. “Need, population coverage and policy relevance were the three criteria used to select which data gaps to map” (p. 1).	

Then, classification of each gap according to the following criteria: “(1) coverage and regular country production; (2) cross-country comparability reflected in international data standards; (3) complexity (information that cuts across domains allowing users to understand patterns and determinants of specific variables); and (4) granularity (large and detailed data sources that can be disaggregated by demographic and other characteristics)” (p. 2).

Data gaps

There are **significant data gaps on women’s political participation**.

“The share of women heads of state, government ministers, and parliamentarians is tracked systematically by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and International IDEA. [...] There is also information available on electoral quotas for women and parliamentary committees on gender from the same sources” (p. 33).

“There is little comparable, regularly produced information on women’s political participation on anything beyond the above-mentioned numbers. Information on political representation and participation disaggregated by sex may not be inherently difficult to collect from government and political party records, but there is no systematic reporting and no common standards. Traditional survey data on women’s political participation is limited (except for a few LSMS surveys that include data on household members’ registration in government programs as well as basic voting behavior)” (p. 33).

“Comparable data on women’s representation at the subnational level is scarce, and for many countries it does not exist at all. Countries which have adopted women’s political quotas at the subnational level – most notably India through village panchayats, or committees – are more likely to report these figures regularly, but there is no standardized source of data across countries or regions” (p. 33).

“Women’s leadership across political parties is also not difficult to gather in theory, but is not available regionally or globally” (p. 33).

“Similarly, there is no international source of data showing the share of **women in international decision-making bodies, or representation and leadership in grass-roots political organizations**” (p. 33).

“Women’s representation and leadership in other local groups and private sector institutions is also missing. This can include **labor unions, organizing committees at the community level, professional associations**, as well as representation on corporate boards and in management positions. We also include here women’s representation in the **police force and judiciary** [...]. There are no comprehensive international data sources that track these numbers” (p. 34).

“This data on women’s representation at subnational and professional levels can be a first building block toward **needed research on women’s leadership**. Two policy relevant questions are, first, do women in leadership positions effectively exercise voice (especially for those who assume leadership through quotas and reservations) and, second, what is the impact of women’s leadership on policy outcomes, that is, do women leaders make a difference in local government bodies, in policing, in the judiciary? **Data sources to study the factors shaping women’s leadership need comprehensive information on the different domains of women’s empowerment, and on women’s effective exercise of agency and choice.** It also requires information on contextual factors influencing women’s agency, including: rights and their

applications, social norms, and the role of women’s networks and coalitions (World Bank, 2012)” (p. 35).

“There is also scant data on **women’s participation in peace and security efforts**, particularly in leadership roles, while this information is basic to adequately monitor the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 at national levels” (p. 3; also see p. 37).

Relevant current initiatives to improve data

“UN Women is working to develop standards for measuring women’s representation at the subnational level. The Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) and IDEA collect some data on women candidates and voter turnout” (p. 4).

“As part of the Resolution to Act (Res2Act) initiative, the Institute for Inclusive Security has developed a National Action Plan (NAP) Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit that prompts data collection on the implementation of NAPs promoting inclusion of women in peace and security processes. The data generated from the Toolkit will help policymakers track implementation, as well as assist individuals in holding governments accountable” (p. 5; also see p. 37).

“Various parts of the UN system track different components of women’s participation. UN Women periodically reports on the number of women negotiators and signatories in peace negotiations. The Department of Political Affairs tracks the number of women named to the positions of lead envoy and mediator to UN-brokered talks. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations tracks the number of male and female uniformed and civilian personnel serving in missions and at headquarters. The African Union (AU), European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and other multilateral organizations also gather sex-disaggregated data on personnel” (p. 5).

Ways forward

“Tracking women’s political representation at sub-national levels and their leadership roles in grassroots organizations and in key professions is [a] priority, especially when information on representation is paired with other data to study the dynamics and outcomes of women’s leadership” (p. 3).

“More consistent and thorough reporting on women’s leadership in peace and security processes is needed. Res2Act’s framework for monitoring and evaluating National Action Plans on Women, Peace, and Security could be used for data on women’s participation in peace and security processes” (p. 7).

Wales, J. (2016). *Women and power. What can the numbers tell us about women’s voice, leadership and decision-making? (Report)*. Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Retrieved from <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10276.pdf>

Type of literature: policy	Publisher type: policy advice institute
Type of reference: report	Peer review: no information provided
Geographic scope: world	Time frame covered: not indicated

Empirical material: secondary (quantitative and qualitative)	Approach to material: multi-case comparative study (on conceptual and methods) about global indicators on women's voice and leadership
Methodology & sample size: Construction of a database of indicators, following 1. an examination of "selected literature on measuring gender equality and women's voice, leadership and decision-making"; 2. cross-referencing with global databases, to map data currently collected, their coverage, and clear gaps (p. 5). Then, critical examination of existing indicators, on methodological and conceptual issues and gaps	

Key findings

- **"Indicators that measure women's influence over decisions *in practice* are rare.** They mainly measure women's representation in senior positions and women's self-reported decision-making power". Instead, "[m]ost indicators of women's leadership and decision-making measure factors that we assume enable or result from women's empowerment, such as access to resources and legal rights" (p. 1).
- **Indicators tend to rely on national-level data.** This can allow international comparisons and trend analyses. However, "subnational data is less common and can provide more insight into differences between groups of women" (p. 1).

Recommendations

- "A priority for development agencies is to **expand the number of variables systematically collected**, starting with women in senior national positions and in local government" (p. 1).
- A priority for programme managers and for researchers "is to develop clusters of indicators to measure substantive voice and leadership, and make greater use of mixed-methods approaches" (p. 1).
- "To better measure women's leadership and decision-making, indicators need to be comparable", "to measure diverse facets of voice and leadership", and to be disaggregated where possible (p. 1).

M'Cormack-Hale, F. A. O. (2015). *Going Beyond Numbers. African and Asian Studies*, 14(1-2), 85-107. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15692108-12341331>

Type of literature: academic	Publisher type: academic
Type of reference: journal article	Peer review: yes
Geographic scope: Sierra Leone	Time frame covered: 2007-2012
Empirical material: primary (qualitative)	Approach to material: single-case study assessing the accomplishments of Sierra Leone female parliamentarians serving from 2007-2012
Methodology & sample size: 1. Use of an African feminist framework to do a critical reading of current literature on women's political participation, especially showing the limitations of research on women's effectiveness and accomplishments. 2. Study of the experience of women parliamentarians in Sierra Leone. Data collected in Sierra Leone in 2010 through semi-structured interviews with 14 of 17 women parliamentarians from all the major political parties, as well as with women's groups' leaders, and councillors. Transcripts coded for study themes, including descriptive, substantive, and symbolic representation.	

Findings

The majority of **women parliamentarians interviewed did see women as their constituent group**. However, they noted that their legislative accomplishments for women's rights had been limited by the **constraints of their context**, where politics operates more along informal than formal lines (p. 96). Work on pro-women legislation, and a greater focus on women's issues, were hindered by a host of constraints, including: "financial constraints; poor education, training, and preparation; cultural constraints including patriarchy; loyalty to party over gender, and finally, the patrimonial basis of society" (p. 96).

Despite these considerable constraints, some women parliamentarians **accomplished** more than narrow attention to national-level, formal accomplishments in official politics would reveal. This was because **some constraints on their action could also constitute resources**.

For example, some parliamentarians reported experience with bias. However, others received support due to **positive (if stereotypical) perceptions about women** in general, by being respected e.g. as mothers and caregivers (p. 101). Appeals to them often referred to motherhood or other characteristics often ascribed to women, and had expectations of results on that basis (p. 97-98). Women also play strong roles in informal leadership positions, "including as Mammy Queen's and Chiefs" (p. 101). Yet, international interventions often target leadership positions within the formal public sphere only. Emphasising women's accomplishments in the formal arena marginalises the other roles women play which are valued by society, including women leaders' constituents (p. 101).

Similarly, a recurrent concern of women parliamentarians was the nature of most requests they received, which was about **constituents' personal matters** (e.g. assistance with scholarships for education, school, and hospital fees) rather than formal parliamentary work, **and the pervasive patronage system of politics**. "They also received requests for public goods such as schools and hospitals" (p. 97). A number of parliamentarians recognised such issues as being outside of their purview, and instead being the responsibility of local councils. Still, many parliamentarians "tried to meet some of these demands, often at their own expense" (p. 98). Moreover, "they also worked to implement programs and provide services in their constituencies" (p. 99). Constituency work and development were areas of women's political participation where women were already perceived as important and legitimate. This mattered especially "as a number of parliamentarians cited a prior record of accomplishment and service in their communities as one of the ways they overcame resistance to their election" (p. 101).

Implications for aid

Broadening the parameters of what constitutes successful interventions could show that women "accomplish much more than current research indicates" (p. 102). This requires developing a feminism rooted in the cultural context of societies that resonates with on-the-ground realities. For example, women "are often perceived as being more concerned for the welfare of the community". Expectations for parliamentarians "tend to focus more on their ability to address communal as well as individual socio-economic development concerns" (p. 102). This could be an opening to reduce "the perception that politics is zero-sum, where women's gains will result in men's loss" (Day 2010, cited p. 102).

Interventions to reduce culturally based resistance to women can build on the value of women's "traditional" roles. Currently, many interventions to raise women's political profile are still dominated by the public-private dichotomy. Yet, there might be promise in validating and

recognising “women’s accomplishments and standings in indigenous political institutions, as well as in capacities that are otherwise relegated to the domestic arena, such as mothers and caregivers” (Oyewùmi 2003, cited p. 101).

In addition, the “**wider understanding of what constitutes effectiveness for female parliamentarians**” calls for broadening the initiatives “to promote women’s election to political positions”, such as:

- **reinstating a budget line for constituency service;**
- **promoting greater cooperation between MPs and councillors** “who are now responsible for economic development in their communities” (p. 102).

Further reading

Practitioner and policy literature (internal or external editing)

Domingo, P., Holmes, R., O’Neil, T., Jones, N., Bird, K., Larson, A., ... Valters, C. (2015). **Women’s voice and leadership. Assessing the evidence** (Report). Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Retrieved from <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9627.pdf>

5. Discussion of interventions and approaches

Core references

References on formal politics in general

O’Neil, T., & Domingo, P. (2016). Women and power. Overcoming barriers to leadership and influence (Report). Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Retrieved from <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10443.pdf>

Type of literature: policy	Publisher type: policy advice institute
Type of reference: synthesis report (policy paper summarising two-year research)	Peer review: no information provided
Geographic scope: low- and middle-income countries	Time frame covered: not indicated
Empirical material: primary and secondary (qualitative and quantitative)	Approach to material: synthesis of findings from two-year research project about women’s voice and leadership in decision-making
Methodology & sample size: Research project entailed: 1. A “global review of the evidence on women’s voice and leadership, with thematic chapters on women’s political participation, social activism and economic empowerment” (p. 3); 2. Two rapid reviews of academic and grey literature, respectively on women and girls’ leadership programmes, and on their use of digital information and communication technologies; 3. A multi-case comparative study, with five empirical studies on Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Gaza, Kenya and Malawi.	

Only the actions of the women and men concerned can achieve women's rights and more equitable gender relations. However, international aid organisations can help (p. 12). ODI's report presents four approaches towards this – below are the components most relevant to supporting women leaders.

First, donors must aim to **facilitate “connections among different organisations (peer–peer, grassroots–elite)”**, and to help women organise around common interests and problems without determining their agenda. They “need to support and work with organic, locally anchored organisations able to work with their members” and wider society to change gender relations (p. 12).

Second, **donors need to focus on groups, not individual women**. Women do need political skills to be influential. However, “project-based support that tries to quickly plug skills gaps of individual women is unlikely to be the most effective use of resources”. Instead, donors need to invest in collective leadership by supporting organisations where “women can hone their political and leadership skills”, including e.g. political parties. In addition, they need to work not only with women, but also with families and communities, to change gendered beliefs and expectations about “roles and capabilities that are the main barrier to women's empowerment and to gender equality” (p. 12).

Third, **donors need to target all sectors, not just gender**. “Women's political power is strongly associated with their economic power. Discrete gender programmes cannot increase women's substantive power; sector programmes are also needed to build the [needed] capabilities and resources”. Donors need to invest in women's role in post-conflict and regime transitions. To that end, they should provide logistic support to women's organisations and networks, and advocate for women's inclusion in high-level peace negotiations and processes of political reform. Donors also need to invest in national knowledge production, by funding local think tanks and academic departments interested in women's rights and wellbeing (p. 12).

Fourth, **donors need to “put [their] own house in order”**, to be credible in their advocacy and assistance. Development agencies need to internally promote women's leadership. They need to stop trying “to overcome barriers to gender inequality and women's power through discrete programmes and teams”. Instead, they need to ensure that their “rules and systems incentivise collaboration, learning and problem-driven approaches within organisations and across programmes” (p. 12).

Lastly, policy-makers and practitioners should **never assume “that women leaders will act in the interests of women more generally”**. “[I]ncreasing women's leadership, on the one hand, and increasing gender equality and women's wellbeing, on the other, [are] two related but distinct objectives”. Women's public presence and positions are preconditions for their influence, but will not automatically lead to gender equality. To “achieve gender-sensitive policy and better outcomes for poor and marginalised women, it matters which women (and men) have political power”. In this regard, a more productive focus than women leaders is to look at “the women and men who have an interest in gender equality, the power to advance it, and how they do this in practice (Childs and Krook, 2008; 2009)” (p. 32).

UN Women. (2018). Corporate Evaluation of UN Women’s Contribution to Women’s Political Participation and Leadership (Synthesis Report). UN Women. Retrieved from <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2018/corporate-evaluation-womens-political-participation-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1503>

Type of literature: practitioner	Publisher type: multilateral organisation
Type of reference: internal evaluation (UN Women Independent Evaluation Service)	Peer review: no information provided
Geographic scope: world	Time frame covered: 2011-2017 (period of activities and effects considered)
Empirical material: primary & secondary (qualitative and quantitative)	Approach to material: systematic evaluation of UN Women’s contribution to women’s political participation (WPP) and leadership
<p>Methodology & sample size: 1. Portfolio analysis, on a sample of 43 countries (about 50% of the global portfolio). The analysis also included: data collection from two online surveys administered to 246 internal respondents and 119 external respondents, and 37 scoping interviews with 48 individuals; and a review of approximately 575 documents.</p> <p>2. Based on the portfolio analysis, development of a narrative to provide a full picture of UN Women’s past and ongoing work in WPP.</p> <p>3. An evaluability assessment.</p> <p>4. The in-depth analysis of a sample of 24 countries (about half of the larger sample), with: 359 interviews; six in-country field visits (Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Malawi, Mexico, Pakistan and Zimbabwe); one remote study on the region of Europe and Central Asia; and six WPP theme sampled (five sub-thematic, and one cross-cutting)</p>	

Parliamentary support

“UN Women has contributed to strengthening women’s capacity and influence in parliaments”. Parliamentary support is UN Women’s most common type of WPP programming. However, “effectiveness was uneven among the different activities undertaken” (p. 45).

Support for “**women’s MP networks (parliamentary committees, parliamentary caucuses and regional networks)**” was more successful. UN Women has helped establish women’s parliamentary caucuses. It has also contributed high value in “linking parliamentarians across countries for South-South exchange or in engaging with regional networks” of parliamentarians (p. 45).

Parliamentary support has also been effective in **building women MPs’ capacity and influence**. Capacity-building has particularly been effective “when delivered through a collective structure (commonly a women’s parliamentary caucus), which reinforces the capacity of individual MPs, while at the same time, providing a ‘strength in numbers’ influence boost”. Through caucuses, UN Women has contributed to “the promotion of women’s rights, including synergies with other thematic areas such as Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) (e.g., in Malawi, Senegal, Serbia, South Sudan and Zimbabwe)”. Capacity development for women MPs “often contributes to gender equality legislation”. Partnerships are critical to bolster MPs’ substantive impact. For example, work with MPs on issues other than WPP “is best served through close coordination with partners — either internal (other UN Women teams) or external (other UN agencies or non-UN institutions) – that have specialized policy expertise in these areas” (p. 45).

However, UN Women could focus more “on **supporting constituency relations**, especially at district level. This could help bridge the gap between women MPs and women activists. It also could improve dialogue with marginalized groups and with media and civil society to support post-legislative scrutiny of gender equality legislation, including those related specifically to WPP”. Still, there were “some positive examples of facilitating dialogue between women MPs and other actors/constituencies (e.g., Timor Leste, Uruguay and Zimbabwe)” (p. 46).

Similarly, the evaluation did not find any examples of UN Women’s **support for post-legislative scrutiny of gender equality legislation**. This is an area deserving more focus to ensure that laws passed make a difference for constituencies (p. 46).

UN Women also needs to do more work to **shift parliamentary procedures and norms towards a more enabling environment**. So far, it has only engaged in support to gender-sensitive reforms of parliamentary culture/norms in limited cases (e.g. Moldova and Turkey). Gender audits and benchmarking/monitoring for improvement are promising, and could be coordinated with existing work by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UNDP. This could aim to raise awareness of international good practices, and to work with parliaments on targets and monitoring mechanisms in this area (p. 46).

Finally, UN Women has also incorporated **change to social norms** in some of its parliamentary support, but impact has not been systematically tracked. “This has consisted of media campaigns to raise awareness about the role and efforts of women MPs and women’s parliamentary caucuses and engagement with male parliamentarians and citizens at the global [...], regional [...] and national levels (e.g., Ecuador, Uruguay and Colombia)” (p. 46).

Local government

UN Women has established a global methodology for tracking SDG indicator 5.5.1b on women’s representation in local governments. This can be leveraged to bolster its coordination and operational work at the country level, and synergies with local governance (p. 52). At this stage, it is unclear how innovative work at the global normative level “will be reflected and complemented by operational work” (p. 53).

Approaches were diverse, including some institutional capacity-building at sub-national levels (e.g. Pakistan), and some support to elected officials (e.g. Palestine and Malawi). In this area, UN Women could create synergies with other thematic areas, with WPP as an add-on to ongoing activities in Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE) or Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (PSHA). There are similar opportunities to link women’s participation in local governance to environmental decision-making (e.g. disaster risk management, climate change legislation, local water committees) (p. 53).

Sustainability often proved challenging. In particular, “few of the trainings of women to run for local office went hand-in-hand with addressing other barriers (lack of education/illiteracy or lack of access to financial resources) or social norms for helping women to access and thrive in local politics. Added to this was the problem of retention. Many women who were trained [...] as local councillors opted not to run again or were not re-elected (also with links to ingrained social norms). Positive examples included specific targeting of marginalized groups that addressed the cultural context and provided a space for marginalized women to organize. Other positive examples went beyond trainings at the individual level to institutionalizing women’s caucuses at the level of provincial governments (e.g., in Pakistan) and municipal women’s councils (e.g., in

some municipalities in Turkey). Another positive example was the creation of clubs for local women in politics and mentoring schemes (Moldova and Albania)” (p. 54).

Violence against women in politics

UN Women has been at the forefront of raising awareness of the issue at the global level, and is well positioned to build on early operations, results, and lessons to accelerate progress (p. 49; see pp. 49-52 for example of early activities).

Transformational leadership

UN Women has encountered difficulties. There is limited evidence “on how to nurture leadership skills or political apprenticeship, which is part of a wider gap in literature on developing women’s individual and collective political engagement skills”. Furthermore, compared with advocacy, “leadership development tends to be cost-intensive”. Many interventions to date “have been carried out through one-off trainings, with little evidence of replication or sustainability, although a number of good results were found” (p. 54). Still, there were some examples where institutional capacity-building of political leadership skills facilitated legislative change to support gender equality and women’s empowerment (p. 54).

With resource scarcity and competing demands, strategic approaches are important, such as collaborating with other organisations, building on existing programmes or materials, and focusing on scale and sustainability. Efforts need to focus on collective structures (e.g., women’s parliamentary caucus) to support institutions as well as individuals. For example, in Kenya and South Sudan, “partnerships with local universities and government enhanced the possibility of a sustainable model for future leadership training” (p. 55).

Barnes, J., Bishop, J.-A., & Vaca, S. (2016). Fund for Gender Equality. Meta analysis 2011–2015. ImpactReady for UN Women - Fund for Gender Equality. Retrieved from <http://www.unwomen.org/digital-library/publications/2016/8/fund-for-gender-equality-evaluations-2011-2015-meta-analysis>

Type of literature: practitioner	Publisher type: multilateral organisation
Type of reference: external evaluation	Peer review: no information provided
Geographic scope: 23 countries, across five world regions	Time frame covered: 2009-2015 (period of activities and effects covered)
Empirical material: secondary (qualitative and quantitative material); 17 of the evaluations focused on Women’s Political Participation (WPP), five on Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE)	Approach to material: meta-analysis of evaluations, about what works for who in WPE and WEE, and in the processes and approach of UN Women’s multi-donor Fund for Gender Equality (FGE)
Methodology & sample size: Systematic review. 1. Identification of the 22 FGE evaluations produced between 2011-2015 that were rated as satisfactory or above according to the standards of the UN Women Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System (p. 1-2). 2. Systematic extraction and tagging of findings, conclusions, recommendations, lessons, and good practices from this sample, resulting in 658 quotes and statements. 3. Qualitative synthesis, with structured and cluster analysis.	

The meta-analysis found that **supporting elected women representatives to be effective leaders** has indeed advanced women's political empowerment (WPE). "A number of FGE projects provided important support to elected women representatives by facilitating their access to strategic practical knowledge and peer networks as well as their contact with their constituencies. Such interventions enabled elected leaders to improve their capacity to understand and represent women's needs and priorities" (p. 42).

This is not always easy. "In Pakistan the programme identified the greatest challenge as enabling women parliamentarians to have confidence in initiating legislation and brining [*sic*] resolutions to parliament". However, there were some successes. One was the good performance of "elected women representatives associated with the GROOTS programme in Kenya". "In Guatemala, women leaders were supported to actively participate in and influence political meetings and activities" (p. 42).

In addition, **further approaches** have worked for women's political empowerment overall, and appear relevant to support for women leaders. The presentation of selected approaches below aims to make the connections with support to women already in position of leadership more apparent (p. 4-5 unless otherwise indicated; see pp. 34-43 for details).

- On training and capacity-building:
 - "Applying a cascading and peer-based approach to knowledge and skills training and development"
 - "Building women's self-confidence and individual awareness"
- On relations between women leaders and their constituencies:
 - "Connecting decision-makers and elected women representatives with their constituencies through the creation of interaction spaces"
 - Using "media – press, radio, TV and social media"
 - "Use and creation of spaces for dialogue between rights holders and duty bearers"
 - "Adopting a rights-based approach by holding duty bearers accountable for international commitments"
 - "Garnering community-level support for women's political participation"
 - "Facilitating access of marginalized women to electoral processes"
- On connections between various forms of empowerment: "Leveraging women's economic empowerment to promote women's political participation". WEE is a prerequisite for marginalised women to participate in public and political life. WEE can be effectively leveraged to support WPP (p. 36).
- On men allies: "Building male champions for women's leadership"
- On making formal politics women-friendly and gender-responsive:
 - "Fostering inclusive legislative and policy-making processes"
 - "Supporting inclusive political processes during transition"
 - "Setting up structural bodies to institutionalize and sustain gender-responsive budgeting and policy-making"
 - Making local governance structures gender-responsive
 - "Changing legislative frameworks and use of strategic litigation"

- “Increasing visibility of women activists in various community activities”
- On programming:
 - “Developing comprehensive project strategies that understand clearly and address women’s barriers to political participation”. This includes understanding which issues must be addressed first and with what strategies (p. 35).
 - “Timing interventions to capitalize on political opportunities”

“In the Asia Pacific (AP) and Africa regions, bottom-up community driven approaches were seen as most effective for enhancing women’s participation in politics and decision-making processes. In both regions, there was also a strong focus on garnering community and family support for women’s political participation. FGE projects in the AP region also employed innovative strategies (including through the use of ICT and social media) to connect women elected leaders with women’s organisations and movements in order to increase their capacity to represent and voice the needs and priorities of women in their communities” (p. 34).

“In the Arab State region, FGE evaluations focused on supporting the participation of women leaders and elected representatives in normative processes in order to secure women’s rights, foster coalitions, and leveraging international instruments to seize momentum to affect normative processes” (p. 34).

“In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, the focus of FGE interventions was primarily on increasing and reinforcing a strong body of women leaders through capacity building, and leveraging this to influence legislative and policies to advance decent work and social protection” (p. 34).

Krook, M. L., Ashman, D., Moughari, L., & Pournik, M. (2014). Women’s leadership as a route to greater empowerment. Desktop study. Management Systems International, for United States Agency for International Development. Retrieved from <https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/GetDoc.axd?ctID=ODVhZjk4NWQtM2YyMi00YjRmLTkxNjktZTcxMjM2NDBmY2Uy&rID=MTk1ODI3&pID=NTYw&attchmnt=True&uSesDM=False&rlx=MjQzMzcy&rCFU=>

Note: “Five case studies, conducted in Cambodia, Georgia, Jordan, Kenya and Mexico, provide a deeper look at the objectives and achievements of select USAID-funded programs with a significant focus on women's leadership and political empowerment.” (quote and studies at: <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment/addressing-gender-programming/strengthening-womens>)

Type of literature: practitioner	Publisher type: bilateral aid agency (USA)
Type of reference: report	Peer review: no information provided
Geographic scope: 55 low- or middle-income countries, in five world regions (over half of the programmes in Africa and Asia)	Time frame covered: 2008-2013 (period of implementation of the programmes)
Empirical material: secondary (quantitative and qualitative); documentation provided by USAID, “including award agreements and program descriptions, quarterly and final reports and appendices, PMPs and USAID internal reports” (p. 9)	Approach to material: multi-case comparative study, “to map and assess selected USAID programs dedicated to enhancing women’s leadership and political empowerment” (p. 1)
<p>Methodology & sample size: 1. Initial sample of about 74 programmes that started in 2008 or later, identified by the Elections and Political Transitions team of the Center of Excellence on Democracy, Rights and Governance; goal was to select 50 of these.</p> <p>2. Selection of 56 programmes (amounting to 98 projects) by research team, based on long-enough operation to have advancement, on sufficient documentation, and on addressing women’s leadership and political empowerment.</p> <p>3. Mixed-method desktop study of the selected programmes</p>	

Description of interventions used

Support to women leaders is provided both after elections and during transitions. **Following elections, common activities** include (p. 1-2):

- building capacity for newly elected women;
- establishing and strengthening women’s networks, and women’s caucuses;
- holding policy dialogues on women and gender issues;
- pressuring elites to adopt gender quotas.

During transitions, activities of major focus are the development of constitutions, and women’s leadership in peace processes (p. 1).

“In most cases, women’s political empowerment is a **secondary objective of broader transition and democratic strengthening** programs”. All activities of the women’s political empowerment programmes had “relatively short time frames, usually one to three years”. Women-focused programmes were relatively small – “five of the ten were under \$150,000 each”. (p. 1)

Results, challenges, and useful approaches

Frequent **results** related to women in leadership positions included: the development of action plans by political parties to incorporate women; the initiation and strengthening of women's networks; electoral or legal reforms promoting gender equality; and media coverage increasing awareness of women's political empowerment (p. 2).

Across all programmes reviewed (not just those for women leaders), the highest-performing programmes "were in countries with higher percentages of women in parliament and higher income levels. Programs that focused on elections exclusively were less likely to perform well. The highest-performing programs were managed with fewer key indicators than others; three to five indicators associated with key activities are more manageable than six or more" (p. 2).

In many countries, **challenges** included: "political conflict, which generates insecurity and uncertainty; uncooperative governments; lack of women's resources, stemming from illiteracy, lack of education, paid employment and political experience; cultures that are not responsive to or supportive of women's role in public life; and shortages of human and financial capital from local actors and donor agencies to ensure the success and long-term impact of program activities" (p. 2).

Several **strategies** help maximise resources and transform the status quo, including (p. 2):

- "new guidelines, policy statements and training to strengthen institutional gender capacity";
- "reaching out to male allies in parties and parliaments";
- creating partnerships to enhance the local relevance and sustainability of interventions. This would involve local organisations as implementers, "and local parties and female leaders as trainers and advocates".
- leveraging limited resources to reach more women, by training trainers and using other network strategies.

Recommendations

After elections, empowering women as policymakers requires providing "**briefings, orientation and training programs for newly elected female MPs**, who may not have the same access as men to existing mentoring and sponsorship networks". It also requires mobilising "interest and resources for establishing and strengthening **parliamentary women's caucuses**". Further, USAID should provide "technical assistance to campaigns for gender quotas and/or to **strengthen existing legislation**" (p. 3).

During transitions, USAID should "[e]nhance women's inclusion and gender perspective in political processes, constitution and institution development". This entails expanding training opportunities and resources to facilitate women's participation in peace processes. In addition, it requires advocating "for international commitments to ensure women are included in peace negotiations and transitional governments, and their implementation". This also means raising greater awareness among governments on "the need for and benefits of including women" in negotiations, peacebuilding, and constitution-drafting (p. 3).

In programme management, programmes should, whenever possible, cover the entire electoral cycle, from pre- to post-election, to maximise impact. Women-focused **activities need to be planned for longer periods**, to have time to achieve sizeable and sustainable changes. USAID should avoid "one-off" activities, and instead respond to the needs of women leaders for

capacity-building before, during and after their election. Broader programmes should integrate clear goals for women’s political empowerment. They should also **disaggregate women both as a group and as a sub-group**, “especially when objectives of increased inclusiveness are intended to include youth, disabled and other marginalized groups” (p. 4).

UNDP Independent Evaluation Office [UNDP IEO]. (2015). Evaluation of UNDP’s Contribution to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment. UNDP. Retrieved from <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/8794>

Type of literature: practitioner	Publisher type: multilateral organisation
Type of reference: internal evaluation	Peer review: no information provided
Geographic scope: world	Time frame covered: 2008-2013 (activities and effects covered)
Empirical material: primary & secondary (qualitative and quantitative material)	Approach to material: multi-case study, about UNDP’s gender mainstreaming and its contribution to gender equality and women’s empowerment
Methodology & sample size: Combination of methods, with: 1. Compilation and analysis of databases of quantitative and qualitative data on gender from multiple UNDP sources; 2. Review and meta-analyses of multiple UNDP evaluations, key internal and public documents, and two external commissioned reports; 3. Field visits to 13 country office and 3 regional centres, across all world regions; 4. Gender staff survey, which received 250 responses	

Results on support to women in political office

“By supporting women in political caucuses, [...] UNDP helped open doors for women in the political realm. However, deeper shifts in attitudes and norms are needed to institutionalize women’s participation in the political process and achieve equitable power distribution at a transformative level” (p. 61). “The issue is not just the number of women (or men for that matter) who are elected, but rather the quality of their leadership—and their ability to make sure that both female and male politicians help advance gender-equitable agendas and policies. This was clearly demonstrated in both the Haiti and Tunisia case country studies conducted for this evaluation [*no further details provided here*]” (p. 62).

Neutrality and enabling roles as factors of success

“One of UNDP’s success factors has been its ability to promote gender equality through the neutrality of its mandate and its role as convener, knowledge broker, advisor and enabler supporting civil society, civic oversight actors and political parties as well as governments. It has done this in situations where the stakes are high and many actors have vested interests” (p. 62).

For example, in Tunisia, “where the newly elected National Constituent Assembly began drafting a new constitution in 2012, UNDP successfully used the momentum for change” to safeguard “women’s rights and inclusive political participation through support to political parties and political dialogue. During the drafting of the constitution, UNDP provided training for women delegates and young female candidates from a wide range of political parties. Hands-on technical advice was also provided through feedback on the various drafts of the constitution, which reflected the perspective of Tunisia’s international human rights commitments, including

women's rights". Although many actors and factors were involved, "UNDP played a positive role in providing expertise and supporting increased participation of women in the political arena and through political parties. UNDP used its mandate to bridge gaps and help align opinion, while some international non-governmental organizations supported their ideological allies, which was seen as divisive" (p. 62).

Constraints and factors of failure

"Not all results were positive. Some well-intended programmes had negative consequences because of failure to analyse gender roles and power relations, precluding full and equal participation by women. In other cases, despite UNDP's contribution to creating an enabling environment, cultural norms and historical legacies of discrimination precluded good outcomes" (p. 62). For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, despite UNDP contributing to important laws being passed to protect women's rights and promote greater participation by women at national level, structures of inequality remain untouched. This is due to cultural resistance, inadequate education, and inequitable gender norms, which all limit women's advancement, access and participation (p. 63).

Reference focused on parliaments

Palmieri, S. (2011). *Gender-Sensitive Parliaments. A Global Review of Good Practice (Reports and Documents No. 65). Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Retrieved from <https://www.ipu.org/file/2085/download?token=TXdOh154>*

Type of literature: policy	Publisher type: international parliamentary organisation
Type of reference: report	Peer review: no information provided
Geographic scope: world	Time frame covered: not indicated
Empirical material: primary (qualitative and quantitative material)	Approach to material: multi-case comparative study, on the gender sensitivity of parliaments in their operational and institutional culture
<p>Methodology & sample size: Primary research carried out between 2009 and 2010:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. surveys based on three sets of questionnaires. They were directed respectively to: parliamentary authorities (95 responses in 77 countries); parliamentary party groups in parliament (71 responses from groups in 42 countries); and parliamentarians (123 responses from 50 countries). 2. face-to-face interviews with parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in all world regions; 3. 14 field-based case studies on countries from all world regions, and a subsequent report on each world region. The countries "were selected on the basis of recent innovations and emerging good practices in their respective parliaments" (p. 114). The countries were, by region: Burkina Faso, Rwanda, South Africa; Jordan, Tunisia; Australia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Viet Nam; Belgium, Spain, Sweden; Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru. 	

The report does not focus on donor interventions, but explicitly states that its findings offer many entry points for external aid. Parliamentarians and their supporters can "[u]se **everyday opportunities to mainstream gender equality**" throughout work processes and outputs. Members must assume "responsibility for mainstreaming gender in their everyday activities: legislating, overseeing and representing" (p. 107). Further, there must be **systematic change for gender equality and the inclusivity of parliaments**. In addition to a broader, fundamental push for democracy, it requires combining: more women, with stronger presence in leadership; stronger gender-sensitive infrastructure and culture, including shared responsibilities for gender

mainstreaming; more democratic, transparent, and accountable political parties; and stronger gender equality policy and legislation, with gender awareness trainings for all members and parliamentary staff (p. 107-111).

Based on the research conducted, **successful strategies and practices** to make parliaments gender-sensitive are:

- **Promoting women to key positions in parliament.** Access to leadership positions “most commonly results from rule changes and temporary special measures. Women have also created their own paths to leadership by learning the rules and taking advantage of changing political circumstances. And of course the more women enter parliament, the easier their access to leadership positions becomes”. To avoid appointing women only to positions dealing with issues such as social affairs, “more transparent methods of matching leadership positions with members’ abilities, diverse working experience, and preferences” are needed, as well as, potentially, affirmative action (p. 1).
- **“Pursuing gender equality through legislation and debate”.** Parliaments need to adopt procedures to “ensure that the legislation they pass does not discriminate against men or women, but rather actively promotes gender equality”. Examples include gender checklists and gender mainstreaming. Parliamentarians promoting gender equality also need familiarity with parliamentary mechanisms. “This can be achieved through induction or orientation training that incorporates a gender perspective, for both new and incumbent parliamentarians. Gender-specific measures, such as gender advisors, (multiple) gender focal points on each committee and gender budgeting, should also be institutionalised” (p. 2).
- **“Dedicated gender mainstreaming infrastructure”.** Mechanisms (comprising women and men) can include: gender equality committees; women’s parliamentary caucuses; multi-portfolio committees; speakers’ network on gender equality; research think tanks; and internal participatory gender audits (p. 2-3).
- **Drawing on the “contribution of men parliamentarians to gender equality”.** Examples include: men co-sponsoring or sponsoring legislation for non-discrimination against women; men being appointed to chair or to participate in gender equality bodies; and men being included in public outreach activities for gender equality. Parliamentary rules could also require the presence of men and women on all parliamentary committees – including those relating to gender equality (p. 3).
- **Gender policies and procedures of the parliament.** A gender policy in this context is “a road map for outlining a parliament’s commitment to gender equality, with a clear and detailed set of objectives and processes for achieving it. Under this overarching policy should be a suite of related policies to prevent harassment, distribute resources and allowances equitably – including access to research services, computers and office space – and define expected behaviour in a code of conduct” (p. 3).
- **Making political parties gender-sensitive.** The main avenue for parliamentarians wishing to pursue a gender equality legislative agenda in a party “is through a women’s “wing” or “organisation”. While beneficial in some respects, such an approach can also leave women ostracized. Some parties work towards gender equality by holding seminars and lectures with gender experts on important topics, and by creating strong links with stakeholders in academia and NGOs. They should also push for amendments to their internal statutes and rules to ensure women’s participation both as members and leaders”. Parties “could adopt overarching gender equality plans with clear

mainstreaming strategies, and establish dedicated party committees to oversee their implementation”. Even parties with strategies for gender mainstreaming “often need to strengthen their monitoring and evaluation efforts” (p. 3-4).

- **Making parliamentary culture and infrastructure gender-sensitive.** In particular, parliaments could support balancing work and family by “better rearranging sitting hours, with no sessions late at night or during school holidays, and by entitling all members to parental leave – not just when children are born but whenever necessary to attend to their needs. Parliaments can also make particular arrangements for women returning to work after maternity leave: allowing proxy votes (so that breastfeeding women need not attend the plenary to vote; providing special rooms for breastfeeding mothers and perhaps most importantly, establishing childcare centres in parliament” (p. 4).
- **Making parliamentary departments more gender-sensitive to support staff members.** Parliamentarians “can have an impact on the workplace culture”. For example, some women members fought against parliamentarians sexually harassing staff members. There must be continual examination of the workplace culture and infrastructure for staff (p. 4).

Reference on marginalised women in formal politics

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, with multiple authors [IDEA]. (2013). Journeys from Exclusion to Inclusion. Marginalized women’s successes in overcoming political exclusion. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Retrieved from <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/journeys-from-exclusion-to-inclusion.pdf>

Type of literature: practitioner	Publisher type: policy advice institute
Type of reference: report	Peer review: no information provided
Geographic scope: 10 low- and middle-income countries in several world regions	Time frame covered: not indicated
Empirical material: not always clear; secondary, with possibly some primary (qualitative & quantitative material)	Approach to material: 10 single case studies, with two chapter drawing out multi-case comparative findings, about marginalised women’s inclusion in customary and democratic decision-making structures
Methodology & sample size: Methodology not always indicated in the case studies; usually narrative analysis of the case, drawing on secondary literature	

The conclusion of the report identifies the lessons from the ten case studies and “their implications for those engaged in democracy cooperation and reform”. While the focus of the report is on supporting women’s access to influence, most lessons appear relevant to support to women in office. Such lessons include the following (p. 359-372).

“The roles played by external humanitarian and political assistance/cooperation players can either provide critical support to inclusion reform campaigns or can compromise their progress” (p. 362).

- To be constructive, **external support “must be built on local initiatives [...].** Marginalized women fully comprehend the need to work actively towards an expanded space for women within both customary and conventional democratic institutions. What they are often asking for is support in undertaking their advocacy in more methodical ways, drawing on lessons provided by activists in other polities [...].” (p. 362-363).
- **International support “should be deeply rooted in an understanding of existing institutional and community structures and their underpinning values and norms”.** “Specifically, external agencies can work with local partners in assisting to identify and sometimes provide the technical expertise and understanding of general political strategies and tactics that community based activists may have had relatively little access to” (p. 363).
- Programmes need to “**adopt a holistic approach to reform**”. “Empowering women ultimately involves changing gender systems and their normative underpinnings, involving men as key gender system influencers, together with young people and children as future agents of change” (p. 363).
- Holistic programming also “requires **recognizing that more than one group is likely to experience marginalization** within a community or polity, and *within* marginalized groups there are hierarchies and excluded sub-groups. These layers of marginalization between and within groups are likely to be interlinked. It is therefore important that political reform programmes address all elements of marginalization” (p. 363).
- Processes “must adhere to development ethics to ensure transparent and accountable outcomes consistent with the human rights principles pursued” (p. 369).
 - With **needs assessments**, “initiatives based on local responses to locally identified needs invariably produce more effective and sustainable results than responses relying on a one-size-fits-all approach using external players and large-scale resourcing” (p.370).
 - With **implementation**, “organizations should focus on developing female staff as a long-term commitment, rather than relying on recruitment strategies headhunting experienced staff from other organizations. [...] Organizations wishing to work on gender issues and women’s empowerment within target communities should work with local organizations already undertaking such work and negotiate partnerships, rather than duplicating existing programmes” (p. 370). The interventions themselves must reflect diversity and gender empowerment based on “transparency, accountability, honesty, integrity, the inclusion of diverse participants”, among others (p. 371).
- Change strategies, such as choosing whether to adopt non-confrontational or more adversarial stances, “are often **determined by cultural and security contexts**”. “Strategies designed to facilitate changes in knowledge, attitudes, practices and ultimately behaviours towards women must be consistent with a country’s cultural context and socio-political and security environments” (p. 365).
 - Work “must be cognizant of the fact that in each socio-political culture (and, indeed, subculture), the array of strategies adopted to facilitate change is best identified and adopted by women from within those cultural contexts. This is

supported by an additional recurring lesson evident in each of the case studies, that externally-imposed as opposed to home-grown solutions most often don't work" (p. 365).

- Activists for change must undertake "ongoing context and risk analyses in politically and militarily insecure environments, together with crisis management preparation to deal with potential threats when undertaking change work" (p. 365).

Further lessons include (p. 359-372).

- "Multi-dimensional interventions are crucial in overcoming political exclusion". "Participation alone is not enough to ensure equality unless it is based on citizen's control".
- "Developing leadership skills among marginalized group members has been central to inclusion campaign successes"
- "Exploring intersecting characteristics can facilitate unity and conflict resolution when divisions occur based on a single characteristic": "promoting characteristics such as gender and shared experiences based on this characteristic can bind people together in de-prioritizing differences arising from other characteristics" (p. 369).
- "Political, judicial and religious leadership plays an important role in overcoming marginalized women's exclusion". Conversely, change "should be negotiated with customary governance systems".
- "The media can be critical allies to inclusion reform campaigns"
- "Different types of research can be used as reform tools"
- "The advancement of human rights and democracy in customary governance must be aligned with the customary values underpinning traditional norms"
- "Timing inclusion campaigns with other events of national, provincial and local significance is likely to increase the pace and extent of change"
- It is helpful to "[d]evelop clear strategic links with existing government instrumentalities and institutions to consolidate reforms"

References focused on political parties

Ballington, J., Davis, R., Reith, M., Mitchell, L., Njoki, C., Kozma, A., & Powley, E. (2012). Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties. A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation (Guidebook). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), & National Democratic Institute (NDI). Retrieved from <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/gender%20and%20governance/EmpoweringWomenFor%20StrongerPoliticalParties.pdf>

Type of literature: practitioner & policy	Publisher type: multilateral organisation & policy advice institute
Type of reference: report	Peer review: no information provided
Geographic scope: world, 20 countries from all world regions	Time frame covered: not indicated
Empirical material: primary & secondary (qualitative and quantitative material)	Approach to material: 20 single-case study, following by comparative study based on these
<p>Methodology & sample size: 1. 20 case studies. They combined “desk research and a total of 64 in-depth interviews with current and former political party leaders, women party members and members of civil society, over a period of 18 months during 2009 and 2010. The participants were drawn from all regions and featured political parties of different ideological leanings and from different contexts, including post-conflict, developing and developed country settings. There are also a few examples drawn from civil society initiatives targeting political party reform” (p. 9-10). Beyond the goal of having diverse cases, no information on how the cases were selected for study.</p> <p>2. Comparative analysis of the results of the 20 case studies</p>	

Strategies for better women's participation in internal party organisation

- “Addressing gender equality in the party's legal framework. This can include adopting a statement on gender equality in the party's founding documents;
- Adopting measures, including internal quotas, that ensure women's participation on governing boards;
- Setting targets for participation in party conventions. This can include holding separate forums for women delegates at the conventions;
- Establishing women's wings and sections within parties, which should be formally integrated into the party structure, with defined roles and responsibilities and appropriate funding if needed;
- Ensuring that gender is mainstreamed into all of the party's policies” (p. 4).

Strategies for better women's participation in governance after elections

- “Conducting an assessment of the level of gender equality within the party, with the aim of identifying, and ultimately eliminating, any practices or rules that may directly or indirectly undermine women;
- Promoting gender-sensitive reforms to political institutions, such as changing the sitting times of parliament and the parliamentary calendar to accommodate parliamentarians with families;
- Ensuring gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in party policies, including by supporting gender-specific policy reform, such as combating gender-based violence or targeting parental leave or reproductive rights issues, and by promoting gender equality

in areas like access to justice, health, nationality, labour, land rights, social security and inheritance;

- Supporting cross-party networks of women and women’s parliamentary caucuses, as these can help channel women’s interests and concerns and can help to mainstream gender in policy development and government oversight;
- Ensuring women elected to a political institution are provided with leadership roles within the parliamentary group (e.g. group chairperson) and parliamentary committees (e.g. chairperson or group focal point);
- Forming strategic partnerships with civil society organizations” (p. 6).

Further reading

References on formal politics in general

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Krook, M. L., & Norris, P. (2014). **Beyond Quotas: Strategies to Promote Gender Equality in Elected Office**. *Political Studies*, 62(1), 2–20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12116>

Non-peer reviewed academic reference

Dekker, M. (2013). **Promoting gender equality and female empowerment: A systematic review of the evidence on property rights, labour markets, political participation and violence against women** (ASC Working Paper No. 111 / 2013). African Studies Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands. Retrieved from <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/21859/ASC-075287668-3276-01.pdf>

Practitioner and policy literature (internal or external editing)

Cownie, D., Hashem, M., Habasch, R., & Balestrini, M. (2016). **Thematic Evaluation on Women’s Political Participation [Supported by UN Women’s Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS)]**. Revised Final Evaluation Report. Lattanzio, for UN Women. Retrieved from <http://gate.unwomen.org/EvaluationDocument/Download?evaluationDocumentID=8967>

de Nooijer, P., & Mastwijk, K. (2015). **Premises and promises. A study of the premises underlying the Dutch policy for women’s rights and gender equality** (IOB Study No. 403). Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. Retrieved from <http://archieff.iob-evaluatie.nl/sites/iob-evaluatie.nl/files/Premises%20and%20Promises%20%e2%80%93%20A%20study%20of%20the%20premises%20underlying%20the%20Dutch%20policy%20for%20women%27s%20rights%20and%20gender%20equality.pdf>

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Domingo, P., Bhirabake, A.-M., Denney, L., Hassim, S., Lukman, S., O'Neil, T., ... Foresti, M. (2012). **Joint evaluation: UN Women/UNDP support to women's political participation in sub-Saharan Africa. Evaluation synthesis report Commissioned by UN Women/UNDP.** Overseas Development Institute (ODI), for UNDP & UN Women. Retrieved from <https://gate.unwomen.org/EvaluationDocument/Download?evaluationDocumentID=3603>

GADN, GAPS, & UK SRHR Network. (2015). **Turning Promises into Progress: Gender equality and rights for women and girls - lessons learnt and actions needed.** Gender and Development Network, Gender Action for Peace and Security, UK SRHR Network. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/536c4ee8e4b0b60bc6ca7c74/t/550ab0f6e4b048091fe0b18d/1426764022144/Turning+Promises+into+Progress+FINAL.pdf>

Hughes, M. M., Ashman, D., & Pournik, M. (2016). **Women in power project. Summary report.** Management Systems International, for United States Agency for International Development. Retrieved from https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/USAID-WiP-summary-report_FINAL.pdf

Jones, B. (2016). **Thematic Evaluation on Women's Leadership and Political Participation. 2011-2015** (Evaluation report). UN Women. Retrieved from <https://gate.unwomen.org/EvaluationDocument/Download?evaluationDocumentID=9006>

Leanganook Yarn. (2017). **Mid-Term Evaluation of the Pacific Women Parliamentary Partnerships Project. 2013-2018.** Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia. Retrieved from <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/pacific-women-parliamentary-partnerships-project-2013-18-mid-term-evaluation.pdf>

Martin, O. (2013). **The African Union's Mechanisms to Foster Gender Mainstreaming and Ensure Women's Political Participation and Representation.** International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Retrieved from <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/african-union-mechanisms-to-foster-gender-mainstreaming-and-ensure-womens-political-participation.pdf>

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs [NDI]. (2010). **Democracy and the Challenge of Change. A Guide to Increasing Women's Political Participation.** National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). Retrieved from https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Democracy_and_the_Challenge_of_Change.pdf

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Tadros, M. (2011). **Women Engaging Politically: Beyond Magic Bullets and Motorways** (Policy Paper). Pathways of Women's Empowerment, IDS. Retrieved from <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/5835/Women%20and%20Politics%20Policy%20Paper%20final.pdf?sequence=1>

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<https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/women-political-representation-arab-region-english.pdf>

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UN Women. (2015). **Regional thematic evaluation on women's political participation in Latin America and the Caribbean. 2011-2014**. Final Report (Executive summary). UN Women - Americas and Caribbean Regional Office (ACRO). Retrieved from <http://gate.unwomen.org/EvaluationDocument/Download?evaluationDocumentID=4828>

United Nations [UN], & International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance [IDEA]. (2013). **Democracy and Gender Equality: The Role of the UN** (Discussion paper). UN, & IDEA. Retrieved from <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/democracy-and-gender-equality-the-role-of-the-united-nations.pdf>

References on trainings

Practitioner and policy literature (internal or external editing)

Lokot, M. (2014). **Women's leadership: evidence review**. Office of Development Effectiveness, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia. Retrieved from <https://dfat.gov.au/aid/how-we-measure-performance/ode/Documents/evidence-review-womens-leadership.pdf>

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs [NDI]. (2013). **Increasing Women's Political Participation through Effective Training Programs. A Guide to Best Practices and Lessons Learned**. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). Retrieved from <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Training-Manual-Increasing-WPP-Through-Effective-Training-Programs.pdf>

References on women's networks

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References focused on parliaments

Practitioner and policy literature (internal or external editing)

Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU]. (2015). **Women in Parliament: 20 years in review**. Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Retrieved from <https://ipu.org/file/524/download?token=COINI7Qr>

United Nations Development Programme [UNDP]. (2015). **Where Are the Women? A Study of Women, Politics, Parliaments and Equality in the CARICOM**. UNDP. Retrieved from https://iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/jm_where_are_the_women_caricom.pdf

References on women's parliamentary bodies (e.g. caucuses, committees)

Practitioner and policy literature (internal or external editing)

Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU]. (2013). **Guidelines for Women's Caucuses**. Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Retrieved from <https://ipu.org/file/1062/download?token=wAj51Yy->

Palmieri, S. (2013). **A comparative study of structures for women MPs in the OSCE**. OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Retrieved from <https://www.osce.org/odihr/105940?download=true>

References focused on local government

Academic references (all peer-reviewed)

Nazneen, S., & Tasneem, S. (2010). **A Silver Lining: Women in Reserved Seats in Local Government in Bangladesh**. *IDS Bulletin*, 41(5), 35–42. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2010.00164.x>

Practitioner and policy literature (internal or external editing)

Pepera, S. (dir.) (2015). **Women and Local Executive Office**. National Democratic Institute, & Kate Spade Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Women%20and%20Local%20Executive%20Office.pdf>

References on marginalised women in formal politics

Academic references (all peer-reviewed)

Worthen, H. (2015). Indigenous Women's Political Participation: Gendered Labor and Collective Rights Paradigms in Mexico. *Gender & Society*, 29(6), 914–936. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243215602103>

Practitioner and policy literature (internal or external editing)

Hedström, J., & Smith, J. (2013). **Overcoming Political Exclusion. Strategies for marginalized groups to successfully engage in political decision-making**. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Retrieved from <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/overcoming-political-exclusion.pdf>

References focused on international organisations and processes

Practitioner and policy literature (internal or external editing)

UN Women, & Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice. (2013). **The Full View. Advancing the goal of gender balance in multilateral and intergovernmental processes** (1st ed.). UN Women, & Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice. Retrieved from https://www.mrfcj.org/pdf/2013-06-07_The-Full-View.pdf

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6. Interventions in adverse contexts

Adverse contexts include settings of armed conflict or their aftermath, other settings with high levels of violence, and States with weak institutions or capacities.

Core references

Seckinelgin, H., & Klot, J. F. (2014). *From Global Policy to Local Knowledge: What is the Link between Women’s Formal Political Participation and Gender Equality in Conflict-affected Contexts?* *Global Policy*, 5(1), 36–46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12083>

Type of literature: academic	Publisher type: academic
Type of reference: journal article	Peer review: yes
Geographic scope: countries affected by violent conflict or State fragility	Time frame covered: not indicated
Empirical material: secondary (qualitative & quantitative material)	Approach to material: systematic review of literature on women’s formal political participation in fragile and conflict-affected states
<p>Methodology & sample size: 1. Database-driven search strategy developed to match the specialised nature of the literature. Formal political participation was defined as relating to state structures, ‘traditional’ governance mechanisms, and peace processes. Results yielded 95 articles and 15 books, with 50 articles relating to Africa, 27 with a multi-region or global focus, 23 on Asia, 16 on the Middle East, 8 on the former Yugoslavia, and 7 on Latin America.</p> <p>2. Analysis of reference to answer the question: Does women’s formal political participation increase gender equality in fragile and conflict-affected contexts? Three sub-questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the link between formal political participation and gender equality? 2. What kind of political participation is likely to increase gender equality? 3. How does women’s participation in formal politics produce generalized equality outcomes in a society? 	

Major knowledge gaps

The systematic review identifies “**significant gaps** in both the ‘knowledge’ produced in research and the evidence derived from this knowledge to answer the questions posed” (p. 43). Research “continues to produce knowledge about the mechanisms that help to elect women rather than knowledge on the gender outcomes of these processes within the larger society” (p. 36). “A very large gap seems to exist between the widely accepted gender equality linked with the formal participation of women in politics and the body of ‘knowledge’ that can be discerned from the literature” (p. 42-43). “[P]art of the reason for this gap is the linking of the political agenda for women’s participation with the much broader question of gender equality. Women’s right to participation and representation is itself a legitimate claim, without having the additional burden of ‘proving’ that it will lead to gender-equality outcomes” (p. 43).

Among others, research is “missing an analytical clinch that specifies (i) the conditions that are both necessary and sufficient for women’s participation in politics to be effective and to result in gender equality outcomes for the general population, and (ii) the contextual (local) factors and conditions that are significant in shaping women’s participation, their impact and gender equality” (p. 39).

Moreover, **the factors “most crucial for increasing women’s substantive representation are least likely to be present in emerging democracies and developing-country contexts, and virtually nonexistent in fragile and conflict-affected states”** (p. 43). “Nothing in the knowledge base justifies generalizing findings from one context of research to another. Although most of the conclusions implicitly – and in some cases explicitly – articulate generalized statements, at most their claims are limited to the form of “it works somewhere””. This gives the impression that “all of the factors identified in developing, developed and transitional democracies are in some way applicable to fragile and conflict states” (p. 43). There is thus a major research gap on fragile and conflict-affected states (p. 43).

Findings on the effectiveness of women in formal politics

“A small but growing number of studies look at how effective elected women are within a given political system and their ability to influence legislative agendas or influence policy formulations that are important for gender equality. They take a more critical assessment of the link between technical inclusion and gender-equality outcomes. A distinction is made between the factors that influence the norms and values that govern political systems, and those that may increase women’s political participation. Egypt is one country in which conditions of increasing the formal political participation of women after the 1950s did not lead to their effectiveness within the political system (Howard-Merriam, 1990; Blaydes and El Tarouty, 2009). In relation to Uganda, Goetz argues that the patronage system of political parties undermines women’s ability to represent women’s interests over those of their party and elites (Goetz, 2002)” (p. 39).

Policy implications

- **“Do not assume that once women are elected gender-equality outcomes are a foregone conclusion.** Knowledge is needed to identify mechanisms and local pathways that are effective in producing desired gender outcomes.
- Policy makers should consider the link between available knowledge and their policy aims. **Knowledge is needed on the conditions in postconflict situations under which women participate in political systems** and on how quotas are interacting with these existing relations.
- Policy makers need to **consider factors that (dis)enable and/or motivate women to participate in formal and informal political processes** and to assess the circumstances under which international peace building strategies and the implementation of gender policies help or hinder women’s peace building efforts” (p. 36).

Research needed

“Research needs to focus on three areas. Firstly, understanding the conditions (in conflict/postconflict situations) under which women participate in political systems, and how these vary across different geographic, political, economic and cultural contexts. Secondly, why, in a given context, are women participating? What are the characteristics of women participating? What happens once women are elected? Under what conditions do female politicians make a difference, and why? And thirdly, how does women’s participation in formal politics produce generalized equality outcomes in a society? The central issue is to explore and identify mechanisms that are effective in producing the desired outcomes” (p. 44).

O’Connell, H. (2011). *What are the opportunities to promote gender equity and equality in conflict-affected and fragile states? Insights from a review of evidence. Gender & Development, 19(3), 455–466. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2011.636571>*

Type of literature: academic	Publisher type: academic
Type of reference: journal article	Peer review: yes
Geographic scope: fragile and conflict-affected States (FCAS)	Time frame covered: not indicated
Empirical material: secondary (qualitative & quantitative material)	Approach to material: review of evidence, about how gender equality could be strengthened in FCAS
Methodology & sample size: review of evidence commissioned by DfID. No specific indications about methodology within the article (<i>see the original study by O’Connell for details on this, referenced in this report</i>).	

Overarching findings

State-building in FCAS “has been widely regarded as an opportunity for securing greater gender equity and equality. While there has been some success in relation to women’s participation in elections and formal politics and engagement in small-scale economic enterprise, **inequitable gender power relations within the household and wider society have not been considered or understood, and thus opportunities have been lost**” (p. 455).

Support to participation in peace-making

In some contexts, aid actors have successfully supported women’s movements. For example, with the 2006 Juba Peace Talks on the conflict in northern Uganda, “UNIFEM’s funding and advocacy support was critical in ensuring women could participate [...] and have their voices heard in the negotiations (International Alert 2010)” (p. 457).

However, overall, “the hopes invested by women’s organisations and feminist activists in Resolution 1325 remain unfulfilled”. For example, there were many cases where women “were unsuccessful in their efforts to participate in the peace settlement negotiations”, e.g. in Burundi, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Kosovo (p. 457). The wealth of academic literature on gender power relations during conflict and in its aftermath has not been informing international policy making. “Greater investment is needed in building the capacity of women’s peace coalitions to better engage in and influence peace processes” (p. 457-458).

Support to constitution-making and institution-building

“Evidence of successful support to women’s ministries or institutions in conflict-affected and fragile states, in the form of institutional capacity building, donor influence and sectoral gender audits, **was slender and very context-specific**” (p. 458).

With support from external actors, women’s movements could, in some situations, “use the leverage of international conventions and agreements to make the case for enshrining gender equality within new constitutions. [...] however, [...] **overall support to peacemaking and political settlement processes lacked integration of gender issues**” (p. 458).

Support to elected women

There “was **insufficient support** directed towards building the capacity and political expertise of newly elected women parliamentarians and local councillors, especially those from the most disadvantaged communities, and inadequate attention paid to strengthening democratic processes between elections” (p. 459-460). “The challenges of performing effectively politically are daunting for all but the most privileged women. Negative cultural attitudes, male- and elite-dominated political parties and structures, violence and insecurity are pervasive. Illiteracy and political inexperience can be big obstacles too” (p. 459).

Domingo, P., Holmes, R., Rocha Menocal, A., & Jones, N. (2013). Assessment of the evidence of links between gender equality, peacebuilding and statebuilding (Literature review). Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Retrieved from <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8767.pdf>

Type of literature: policy	Publisher type: policy advice institute
Type of reference: report – literature review	Peer review: yes (unclear if internal or external)
Geographic scope: fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCAS)	Time frame covered: not indicated
Empirical material: secondary (qualitative and quantitative material)	Approach to material: literature review, about gender-sensitive approaches to peacebuilding and statebuilding in FCAS
Methodology & sample size: 1. “A meta review of the literature on gender and peacebuilding and statebuilding (i.e. a review of existing reviews)”; 2. “A detailed (but not systematic) review of published and grey literature”; 3. “Consultation with selected experts to capture the most current and relevant work” (p. 1)	

State of knowledge and gaps

“There are **important gaps** in the knowledge base regarding gender-sensitive approaches to peacebuilding and statebuilding”. Among others, **more research is needed on how “donors can support women more effectively** to influence the policy agenda and promote women’s interests” (p. 26).

In addition, little is known about how cleavages other than gender, such as those based on class, ethnicity, religion and ideology, intersect to shape agendas, including those espoused by women in politics (p. 26). There is “**limited research on identifying differences among women’s experiences and interests** in peacebuilding and statebuilding [...], and how these feature in country-specific socio-political histories of fragility and conflict” (p. vii).

“There is a **dearth of evidence on the particular political economy dynamics** of regime types, electoral systems (and how quota systems are embedded within these) and the types of political loyalties that are generated and secured – and how these issues shape the prospects for women’s participation in peacebuilding and statebuilding”. The specificities in each context are important to understand opportunities and constraints for women and gender advocates. However, “both the analytical and the empirical work remain underdeveloped”. Moreover, more knowledge is needed about how patronage politics affect women’s opportunities and constraints in formal politics (p. 26).

Findings on relevance and effectiveness of aid actors

International actors can contribute to “enabling conditions for gender-responsive peacebuilding and statebuilding through strategic support to reform-oriented coalitions, and **facilitating dialogue** among reformers and ‘resistors’ at international, national and subnational levels” (p. vii).

“It is important to identify and work with a range of key stakeholders (gender equality advocates *and* decision makers) to achieve substantive political, institutional and attitudinal change. This includes **support to capabilities** for politically strategic and technically informed engagement at key moments in peacebuilding and statebuilding” (p. vii).

“The international community has weak **coordination strategies across sectors and thematic areas** to promote gender equality in peacebuilding and statebuilding outcomes. Overcoming this requires working in a less siloed and overly technical way” (p. vii).

“Gender-responsive approaches *in all sectors and at all levels* are **deeply political** (at both the micro and the macro level of social, political and economic engagement). Deep understanding of context and how the political economy of fragility and conflict intersects with gender inequality is critical to identify opportunities and risks for strategic engagement on gender issues”. Similarly, “[u]nderstanding the wider social norms as well as concrete interest structures that shape the conduct of ‘resistors’ to gender-responsive approaches is vital in order to achieve change in power relations (gendered and other), and to foresee the force of backlash reactions” (p. vii).

Constraints

Numerous constraints hinder women’s substantive participation in post-conflict governance, including: “customary rules, negative cultural attitudes, male- and elite-dominated political parties and structures, lack of financial resources for women, violence and insecurity, the effect of backlash reactions, illiteracy and political inexperience and lack of support for capacity building”, as well as “[l]egacies of conflict and violence, combined with persistent gender-based structures of exclusion and discrimination” (p. iv).

“Institutional hybridity and a weak state presence across the national territory” are often prevalent in FCAS. Gender-responsive approaches “should **not just focus on formal state institutions**, but donors and international funders are not always equipped to engage with non-state actors and informal institutions” (p. v). The most effective entry points for addressing gender-based inequalities and norms can be working “with non-state actors and informal institutions, including community-level norms, [...] as well as renegotiating women’s public and private roles” (p. vi).

Donors lack understanding about gender across sectors. “The issues are left to the ‘gender experts’, with the result that **gender-responsive approaches often remain peripheral** to mainstream donor engagement in peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts” (p. v).

“Gender-responsive approaches are often dissociated from considerations of how they intersect with wider social, political and economic dynamics in transitional settings. For instance, increasing the number of women in parliament represents only a modest gain where authoritarian structures prevail. Effective support to gender-responsive peace and statebuilding requires a deep understanding of wider context-specific political economy conditions” (p. vi).

Recommendations for donors

It is “essential to **promote coalition building among women politicians**, linking them with women’s civil society movements, and to support high-level dialogue on the inclusion of women in the executive (Castillejo, 2011; 2013). **Coalitions with key male political brokers** who are supportive of gender equality goals **and networking and dialogue with ‘resistors’** in the political sphere are both important in patriarchal settings to contribute to mind changing and socialisation processes regarding women’s access to politics and decision making” (p. 25).

“It is not enough to build strong and politically effective gender equality institutions, or support women’s presence in parliament. This should be combined with **more forceful engagement** on gender equality with the most powerful ministries (usually the president’s office and ministries of finance and planning). This requires moving away from the ‘siloes’ forms of engagement that characterise donors’ support to gender equality agendas. Finally, donors also have a key role in supporting women’s CSOs to build a strong gender equality agenda, and forging links between state and civil society institutions on gender equality (Castillejo, 2011)” (p. 25).

“There is also a need for **further and more strategic donor engagement with political parties** to promote a gender equality agenda and to explore how parties can support their women members to become more effective vehicles for women’s participation and representation, while finding ways to encourage party leaders to include women in decision-making positions and to make party structures and culture more democratic (Castillejo, 2011)” (p. 26).

Further reading

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8. Further information

Key websites

- Harvard – Kennedy School – Women and Public Policy Program – Political empowerment: <https://wapp.hks.harvard.edu/politics>
- iKNOW Politics – Library: <http://www.iknowpolitics.org/en/learn/library>
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) – Gender & Democracy: <https://www.idea.int/our-work/what-we-do/gender-democracy>
- International Parliamentary Union (IPU) – Publications – Gender equality: <https://ipu.org/resources/publications?theme=88&country=All>
- National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) – News and publications – Gender, women and democracy: <https://www.ndi.org/publications?topic=1026>
- OECD – Gender equality and development: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/aidinsupportofgenderequalityandwomensempowerment.htm>
- UN Women - Women's leadership and political participation: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation>

- UNDP – Research and publications – Gender equality:
<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/library.html?start=0&sort=date&view=cards&tag=topics:gender-equality>
- Wilson Center – Women in Public Service Project – Resources:
<http://www.50x50movement.org/resources-page>
- Women Deliver – Strengthen Women’s Political Participation and Decision-Making Power: <https://womendeliver.org/investment/strengthen-womens-political-participation-decision-making-power/>

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About this report

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