

Network for Gender Inclusive Democracy

Women's political empowerment and democratic resilience are intrinsically tied: countries will not achieve responsive, accountable governance or progress toward broader sustainable development goals without the meaningful participation, leadership, and agency of women.

Women's participation is especially critical as they represent more than half of the population.

Research demonstrates that countries that provide a safe and enabling environment for women, in all their diversity, to participate equitably in politics and public life produce more inclusive and effective policy outcomes, are more peaceful, have higher economic growth, and are more stable democracies.^{1,2}

Nevertheless, research has also found that the impact of investments in women's leadership have been limited by insufficient collaboration and coordination among committed stakeholders, coupled with interventions that are often too short, too narrowly focused on skill building, too small in scale, and too under-resourced.

The Network for Gender Inclusive Democracy (Network) was formed to help bridge these gaps.

Network Purpose

Formally launched at the second Summit for Democracy in March 2023, the Network is working to catalyze diplomatic and programmatic action to advance women's civic and political participation and leadership. Network partners are working multilaterally and at the country level to build the pipeline of civic-minded and/or politically interested women and girls, while simultaneously aligning their diplomatic engagement and development resources to create a favorable environment to facilitate their representation, leadership, and agency.

The overarching mission of the Network is to better align members' efforts to amplify and advocate for gender-inclusive democracy, including women's leadership in politics and public life.

The Network has three primary goals:

1. **Coordination:** Foster sustained and real-time dialogue among stakeholders, both at the headquarters and country level, in order to align strategic approaches, diplomatic outreach, and programming.
2. **Knowledge Management:** Improve dissemination of strategies, tools, data, and learning across stakeholders in order to promote a shared understanding of the state of efforts and best practices to promote gender-inclusive democracy and advance women's leadership in politics and public life.

3. **Advocacy:** Serve as a platform to champion women's political and civic leadership at the national, regional, and international levels for policy prioritization and resource allocations commensurate with the importance of this goal.

Women LEAD Community of Practice

In 2024, the Network agreed to lead the Community of Practice (CoP) for [Women LEAD](#), an initiative that seeks to advance democracy and gender equality and equity by supporting women's participation and leadership in politics and public life, both on and offline.

As the CoP for Women LEAD, the Network will convene initiative partners to address critical challenges that impede women's and girls' participation and leadership in politics and public life and to strengthen actors and actions that support women and girls, in all of their diversity, to achieve their ambition for inclusive, resilient, and accountable democracy.

This goal will be achieved through three objectives:

1. **Learn:** Collect and analyze data on and elevate emerging trends and threats to women's and girls' engagement and promising responses/opportunities to overcome barriers and strengthen participation, with attention to:
 - Regional perspectives,
 - Varying degrees of democratic openness/closing space contexts; and
 - The impact of digital, new, and emerging technologies on the safety and security of women leaders.
2. **Share:** Enable sharing and application of knowledge and best practices and resources, including improved mechanisms for sharing learning and data, among CoP stakeholders.
3. **Expand Reach with Calls To Action:** Engage in coordinated advocacy and joint messaging about an action-oriented agenda in support of the CoP goals across national, regional, and global platforms and with diverse stakeholders.

Network/CoP Partners

Since its launch in 2022, the Network has continued to add new members, most recently with the addition of partners of the Women LEAD initiative. Network members include:

Intergovernmental institutions

- Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
- Inter-Parliamentary Union
- OECD Development Co-operation Directorate
- Open Government Partnership
- The World Bank's Women, Business and the Law (WBL) project
- UNICEF
- United Nations Population Fund

- UN Women

National governments

- Australia
- Canada
- Finland
- Germany
- Iceland
- Japan
- Kenya
- Norway
- The Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Republic of Korea
- Romania
- Spain
- Sweden
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom
- United States
 - United States Agency for International Development
 - United States Department of State

Foundations

- Colmena Fund
- Daniel Sachs Foundation
- Mozilla Foundation
- Omidyar Network
- Open Society Foundations
- Skoll Foundation
- The Trawalla Foundation
- Wallace Global Fund

Civil society partners

- Apolitical Foundation
- Fundación Multitudes
- Humane Intelligence
- International Foundation for Electoral Systems
- International Republican Institute's Women's Democracy Network
- IREX
- National Democratic Institute
- Pollicy

- #ShePersisted
- Save the Children
- Westminster Foundation for Democracy
- Women Political Leaders
- Vital Voices

Researchers and academic institutions

- The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security
- Mine the Gap
- Mona Lena Krook of Rutgers University
- The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

For questions about the Network, please contact genderdemocracynetwork@usaid.gov.

1 Waylen, Georgina. 2014. "Strengthening women's agency is crucial to underpinning representative institutions with strong foundations of participation." *Politics & Gender*. 10(4): 495-523.

2 Summer Forester, Kaitlin Kelly-Thompson, Amber Lusvardi, S Laurel Weldon, New Dimensions of Global Feminist Influence: Tracking Feminist Mobilization Worldwide, 1975–2015, *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 66, Issue 1, March 2022, sqab093, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqab093>