



# DRG 2024 Annual Learning Forum

February 15-28, 2024

## *Findings Track*

Session 4: Advancing  
Gender-Inclusive  
Democracy: Assessing  
Barriers and Opportunities

Thursday, February 22  
2024 at 9:00 - 10:00 am  
Eastern



# AGENDA





## Findings Track

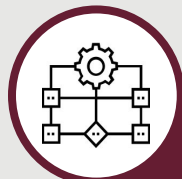
**Session 1:** What do we know about how to support democratic openings?, 2/15 at 8:00 - 9:30 am Eastern

**Session 2:** Interrogating Information Integrity: Insights on What Works, 2/20 at 9:30 - 11:00 am Eastern

**Session 3:** What we've learned about countering corruption: political will, transnational corruption, and behavioral change, 2/21, 9:00 - 10:30 am Eastern

**Session 4:** Advancing Gender-Inclusive Democracy: Assessing Barriers and Opportunities for Advancing Women's Leadership and Participation in Politics and Public Life, 2/22, 9:00 - 10:00 am Eastern

**Session 5:** Reinforcing Our Resilience: Insights on Supporting DRG Practitioner Mental Health, 2/27 9:00-10:00 am Eastern



## Process Track

**Salon 1:** Just Learn What? Informing Future USAID DRG Learning Priorities, 2/15, 11:00am-12:00pm

**Salon 2:** Did we succeed? All you ever wanted to know but were afraid to ask about developing robust outcome indicators, 2/27 9:00 - 10:00 pm Eastern and 2/28, 9:00 -10:00 am Eastern

**Salon 3:** Leveraging Rigorous Outcome Performance Evaluations (ROPEs) - Tips, Tricks and Applications, 2/29 at 10:00 - 11:00 am Eastern

# Past and Current Learning Priorities and Questions

## DRGLINKS

About Resources Topics Events Training Q

### DRG Learning Agenda

A dynamic collection of research questions that serve the DRG Center's and USAID Missions' analytical efforts



Background

2016-2017 DRG Learning Agenda



### DRG LEARNING AGENDA OVERVIEW

The DRG Learning Agenda is a set of priority and strategic research questions that guide DRG programming, monitor academic research, program evaluations, and multi-method tests of effectiveness. The DRG Center created the DRG Learning Agenda through a process of consultation with the DRG Center's and USAID Missions' analytical efforts.

#### DRG Center Research by Theme

##### PARTICIPATION & INCLUSION

- Restrictive environment
- Youth participation
- Women's participation
- Social movements
- Electoral systems

##### TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

- External vs. internal
- Decentralization
- Civil service
- E-governance
- Gender-based

##### HUMAN RIGHTS

- Information
- Human rights
- National human rights institutions
- Cross-border

##### DRG INTEGRATION

- Participatory and Acco
- National
- Cross-border
- Scale of

##### DEMOCRATIC CHANGE

- Theories of change
- Paths away from authoritarianism
- Transitions from conflict

### DRG LEARNING THEME: Human Rights

The DRG Learning Agenda is a set of priority and strategic research questions that guide DRG programming, monitor academic research, program evaluations, and multi-method tests of effectiveness. The DRG Center created the DRG Learning Agenda through a process of consultation with the DRG Center's and USAID Missions' analytical efforts.

#### DRG Center Learning Agenda Focus

##### Information Campaigns

In what ways are human rights awareness campaigns successful and what are their unintended negative consequences?

Key Documents: "Misinformation: Design and Implications for Human Rights Defenders", "Misinformation: Design and Implications for Human Rights Defenders"

##### Human Rights Defenders

What types of support to human rights defenders and human rights organizations most improve their capacity to monitor and report on human rights violations and ensure the livelihood of societies or future?

Key Documents: "Struggle from Below", "Misinformation: Supporting Civil Society"

### What factors and dynamics foster – and build resilience to – the proliferation of disinformation, misinformation, and/or malinformation?

The Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance's (DRG) 2021-2023 learning agenda seeks to answer key learning questions, including this question on misinformation. More information on the DRG Learning Agenda can be found here. In this case, a team of researchers, including Robert A. Blair, Jessica Gosselin, Brandon Nyhan, Laura Pater, Pablo Appel, and Charlene J. Stanfield, conducted an extensive literature review and synthesized evidence from 176 interventions in 155 unique studies conducted in both the Global North and the Global South.

#### Information Ecosystem

This evidence review focuses on the factors that contribute to the spread of misinformation and how to build resilience against it. While there is extensive research on misinformation in the Global North, the literature on the Global South is still in its early stages. The review identified interventions targeting consumers and producers of misinformation and to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of these interventions. The interventions were categorized into four main groups: informational, educational, socio-psychological, and institutional.

#### Key Findings

**FALSE** Debunking and inoculation work. These information interventions are the strongest evidence base – more than 110 studies – and are the most effective at reducing false beliefs immediately after exposure. Evidence on media literacy, the leading educational intervention of these studies focus on the Global North and South.

**TRUE** Evidence on media literacy, the leading educational intervention of these studies focus on the Global North and South.

**TRUE** Social norms interventions appear most effective among socio-psychological interventions.

**TRUE** Institutional interventions have the greatest potential for evidence from either the Global North or South.

### What are the most effective interventions focused on public backsliding and/or support greater democratization?

The Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance's (DRG) 2021-2023 learning agenda seeks to answer key learning questions, including this question on democratic backsliding. More information on the DRG Learning Agenda can be found here. In this case, a team of researchers, including Paul Frison, Jennifer McCoy, Rachel Beatty Reid, Kenneth Roberts, and Maria Carter, conducted an extensive literature review on democratic backsliding and support greater democratization. The review identified interventions targeting consumers and producers of misinformation and to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of these interventions. The interventions were categorized into four main groups: informational, educational, socio-psychological, and institutional.

#### Opening Up Democratic Spaces

The erosion of democratic governance in many countries in recent decades has sparked debate among scholars and policymakers. This literature review examines the nature and norms and institutions from autocratic forces. Unlike abrupt forms of democratic breakdown, contemporary backsliding is characterized by gradual erosion, with elected officials playing a central role in subverting democracy from within. Backsliding is observable in both high and low-income countries and is often linked to political polarization and the rise of populist leaders.

Countries varied in democratic resilience and the success of autocratic incumbents in suppressing opposition parties, media, and civil society organizations. Backsliding typically unfolded incrementally through interactions between incumbents and opponents, with very few cases starting with military coups.

Opportunities for democratic opening are present throughout different forms and degrees of backsliding. Democratic recovery is often facilitated by opposition coalitions, and popular protests. Early identification of Autocratizing strategies can empower oppositional checks and balances, preserving independent media, and mobilizing citizens through democratic means.



# Past and Current DRG Learning Agenda Insights

## Key Findings

While context matters in designing a toolkit to autocrats, sites of successful resilience with strategies are detailed below:



**Electorate:** Depolarization, responsible media consumption, democracy, civil society, and freedom of expression.



**Civil Society:** Pushing back against further polarization through accountability through legal democratic actions, and freedom of expression.



**Political Parties:** Seeking to build "enclaves," building pro-democratic electoral coalitions with previously excluded voters.



## Key Findings



**Debunking and inoculation work.** These information interventions have the strongest evidence base — more than **effective** at, e.g., reducing false beliefs of these studies **focus on the Global North**.



Evidence on **media literacy**, the leading the Global North and South.



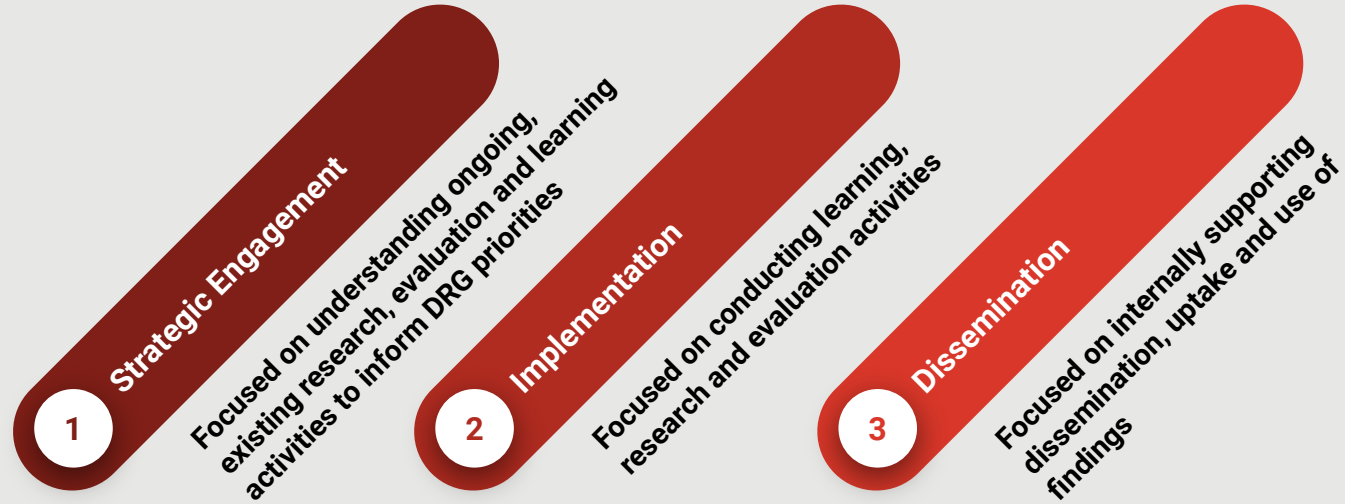
**Social norms interventions** appear to be sociopsychological interventions.



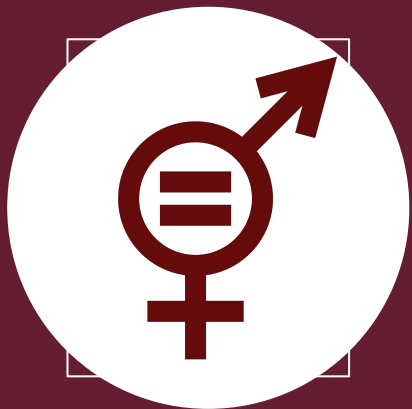
Institutional interventions have the greatest **evidence** from either the Global North or South.

Intervention	Impact	Feasibility	Scalability	Durability
Inoculation	High	Medium	Low	Low
Debunking	High	Medium	Low	High
Credibility labels/tags	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
Contextual labels/tags	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Media literacy	Low	Medium	High	Low
Accuracy prompts	Medium	High	High	Low
Frictions/reflection	Medium	High	High	Medium
Social norms	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium
Platform alterations	High	Low	High	Medium
Politician messaging	High	Low	Medium	High
Journalist training	High	Medium	Low	Medium

# 2024-26 DRG Learning Agenda



Track	Findings	Process
Type	What / How Works?	Improve Evidence Use
Definition	Understand the what, and how, of effective DRG programming	Improve DRG learning and evidence support

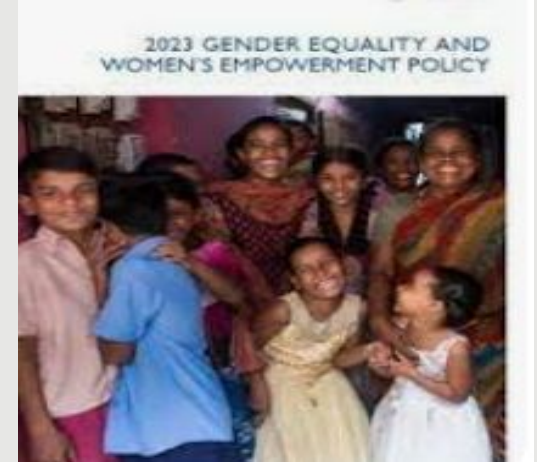


## Session 4: Advancing Gender-Inclusive Democracy

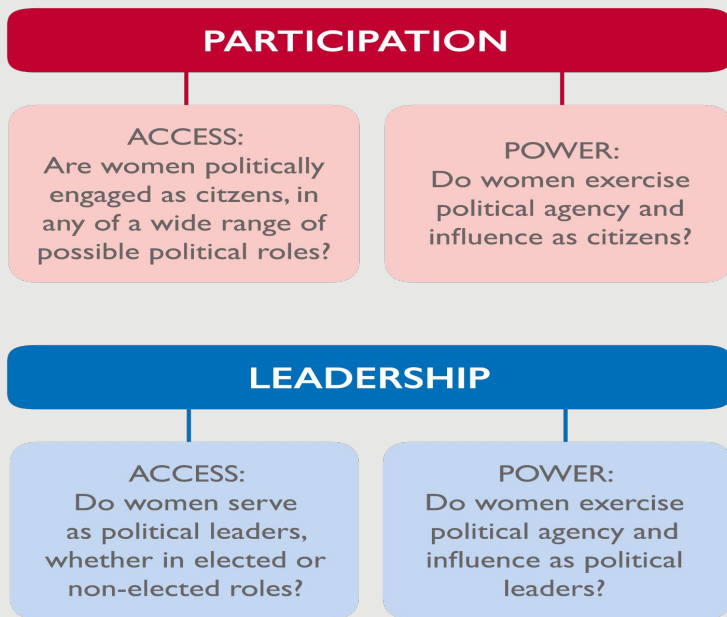
### Speakers:

- Levi Adelman: Senior Social and Behavior Change Advisor, DRG Bureau, USAID.
- Caroline Hubbard: Senior Gender Advisor, DRG Bureau, USAID.
- Shannon Schissler: USAID/Honduras Democracy and Governance Office Director
- Claire McGilley: USAID/Honduras WPPL POC

# USAID Advances Gender Inclusive Democracy



# BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY



USAID’s “Ecosystem” approach:

- **Socio-Cultural Factors**—Norms and practices, personal attitudes and behaviors.
- **Institutional Factors**—Formal and informal rules and systems of politics.
- **Individual Factors**—Women’s political ambition, women’s resources and support.





# METHODOLOGY

Assessment components include:

- **Part I—Data Collection**
  - Desk review.
  - Key informant interviews.
  - Focus group discussions.
  - Politician survey.
- **Part II—Data Analysis & Dissemination**
  - Trend analysis and recommendations development.
  - Final report, presentation, two-pager.

# METHODOLOGY

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## INTERVIEWED

Including politicians,  
candidates, political party  
leaders, journalists, and  
civil Society leaders

26

## LOCATIONS

within the six countries

92

## FOCUS GROUPS

Conducted with  
stakeholders such as  
voters, elected officials,  
and local leaders

# BARRIERS & OPPORTUNITIES



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS

## Barriers

- Patriarchal norms and attitudes are pervasive across societies, limiting women's ability to exercise agency in private and public life.
- Role of religion consistently mentioned as reinforcing limitations on women's movement, access to resources, and autonomy from family structures.
- Pernicious impact of violence against women in politics (VAWP) – including physical, psychological (including extending to family), and online being most common.



*“It is more difficult for women to enter and be in politics. Expectations [from] others [of] her are higher, and her expectations of herself are high, too .... while men do not have [the same] high expectations of themselves.”*

— Woman Government official, Kyrgyzstan

# SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS

## Opportunities

- Potential for male religious, social, and political leaders to champion gender equity—rooted in cultural values.
- Creative approaches to messaging campaigns against misogyny and VAWP; i.e., the arts and psycho-social support to candidates.



*“It is more difficult for women to enter and be in politics. Expectations [from] others [of] her are higher, and her expectations of herself are high, too... while men do not have [the same] high expectations of themselves.”*

*-Women government official, Kyrgyzstan*



# INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

## Barriers

- Where they exist, affirmative action and VAWP legislation are incomplete and unevenly implemented.
- Institutions responsible for oversight have limited to no monitoring and enforcement authority or resourcing.
- Political parties' opaque practices disadvantage women's leadership and influence beyond voter mobilization.
- Party candidate nomination and financing practices privilege male candidates, hindering women's ability to mount competitive campaigns.
- VAWP is pervasive in political parties.

# INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

## Opportunities

- Male allies in political parties and governing institutions leverage their privilege for institutional reforms.
- Legal reform that enacts or empowers monitoring and enforcement capacity.



*“It was one of the  
difficult decisions in  
my life to stay in  
politics.”*

-Woman political  
leader, from Quito,  
Ecuador

# INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

## Barriers

- Lack of access to resources including childcare, family support, and finances hinders women's autonomy.
- Perceived and real skill gaps in navigating political party power structures, campaigning, and media readiness.
- Compounded marginalization of women along economic, ethnic, and religious lines.



# INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

## Opportunities

- Rising levels of education—formal and informal—enhancing women's socio-economic and political prospects.
- Upcoming generation of men and women more open to progressive ideas about gender roles.



*“There are women who fight... Women who started from nothing, who had only a primary school education, but who became members of parliament, beating doctors and academics.”*

*-Women in civil society, Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire*

# FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS



# SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS

- Support **public information campaigns**, rooted in cultural values, that name and take on patriarchal behavior.
- Promote a school **curriculum that challenges harmful gender stereotypes** and typical gender roles.
- Implement **awareness campaigns to address the influence and impact of misogyny and political violence** on gender equality and women's political rights.
- **Engage men** (in parties, in elected office, and in families) as allies and demonstrate why gender equality can benefit everyone.
- **Enlist diverse groups in the media space** to understand and cover WPPL and VAWP.
- Develop and implement **programs to tackle mal-information, misinformation, and disinformation** propagated through social media to counter cyber bullying and defamatory coverage of women candidates and politicians.

# INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

- **Promote legal reform** to affirm and advance affirmative action and measures to counter violence against women in politics.
- **Close legal loopholes, and mandate and resource** monitoring and enforcement measures to incentivize women's access and power in elected and appointed positions.
- **Provide long-term support for women's organizations** and movements to support sustainable programs and campaigns.
- **Support parties to develop more robust internal structures** and outreach efforts for civil society and voters, particularly women.
- Support political parties to **meaningfully promote participation of women** members through trainings and to sensitize male party leaders to the importance of and their role in promoting women's participation.
- Support parties to build recruitment and leadership development **pipelines for young women and men.**

# INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

- Provide **sustained training for women in their local territories** on topics including: campaign skills, resilience, strategic communications, conflict mitigation, negotiation, etc.
- **Create multi-party spaces/networks for women political leaders** to discuss common challenges and potential solutions.
- Provide programs that support **women's access to and control over financial resources**.
- Create **mentorship spaces to build a pipeline for young women** or women who are newer to politics.
- Support **childcare structures** in parties and institutions to facilitate women's ability to have families and participate in politics.

# WPPL Focus Country: USAID/Honduras

*Shannon Schissler, Democracy and Governance Office Director &  
Claire McGilley, WPPL POC*











# WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

Honduras

PHOTO: USAID

The women's political participation and leadership (WPPL) assessment in Honduras, one of an eight-country pilot under USAID's Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) Learning, Evaluation, and Research (LER) II activity, uses the latest iteration of USAID's **WPPL Assessment Framework**. The Honduras WPPL assessment investigates the barriers to and opportunities for expanding women's participation and leadership in Honduras along socio-cultural, institutional, and individual dimensions. There are promising WPPL indicators in Honduras: women make up a majority of voters and hold elected positions at all levels of government, including the presidency, thanks in part to the gender quota. However, political parties are a major space of exclusion for women, and violence against women in politics, and gender-based violence in general, is pervasive and a key barrier to women's full and equal participation.

The assessment findings and recommendations are derived from a desk review of relevant literature and documents, a survey of 21 politicians, and 40 key informant interviews and seven focus group discussions with politicians, civil society, and media in Tegucigalpa, Tocoa, and La Ceiba. **The Honduras WPPL Assessment Report** can be used by the relevant stakeholders to identify priority areas in which their investments in programs and initiatives to support WPPL are likely to have the greatest and most meaningful impact.

## FINDINGS

### BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

- Political parties prefer men candidates, and most parties lack gender-sensitive bylaws and internal policies.
- Policies in Congress do not recognize the different needs of women and men elected officials; the lack of a proxy vote disadvantages women, who are more likely to be absent due to domestic responsibilities. Additionally, women in Congress do not receive equal financing to run their offices.
- Violence against women in politics (VAVIP) is common and legal protection for women is weak. Government institutions also lack sexual harassment policies or internal mechanisms to report violence.
- Cultural norms and expectations often prevent women from being perceived as capable and legitimate political actors. Women are viewed as caregivers and limited to domestic work, discouraging them from political participation and stigmatizing women who do pursue political activity.
- Women often lack the knowledge, skills, or confidence to enter politics due to harmful gender stereotypes and fewer opportunities to gain experience outside the home. There is also a lack of adequate training for women to gain the necessary skills for campaigning or drafting legislation once they are elected.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

- Honduras has signed several international and regional conventions to protect the rights of women, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Additionally, the constitution guarantees equality to all citizens and prohibits discrimination based on sex. Although loopholes to these legal structures prevent them from achieving their potential, they provide a framework for supporting and promoting WPPL.
- The government has shown a willingness to dedicate resources to gender equality, such as through the establishment of the Women's Prosecutor and Family Councils through the Ministry of Health, reforms to existing laws such as the Penal Code, and the Family Code, and the creation of the National Institute for Women.
- There is broad women's participation in civil society—especially within organizations that advocate for women's rights and the protection of reproductive rights—which could translate to increased participation in formal politics.

In the 2021 elections, 62.8 percent of women who were registered to vote voted. Barriers to voting are especially prevalent for women who are also part of other marginalized groups such as women with disabilities, women from rural areas, LGBTQI+, and Indigenous women.

## SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

- International donors and relevant national stakeholders should focus on working with and engaging men political and religious leaders to educate them on the benefits of more diverse participation as well as the influence and impact of misogyny and political violence on gender equality and women's political rights.
- International donors and civil society organizations (CSOs) should train journalists and other media professionals on how to cover women in politics in a gender-transformative way.

## INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

- The government of Honduras and the National Electoral Council (CNE) should conduct a formal review and revision of national electoral laws to better support women's access to and leadership in political life, including applying the gender quota law to both primary and general elections, amending electoral law to require any vacated elected seat to be filled with either someone of the same gender or someone from the underrepresented gender, instituting reform to specify that candidates for mayoral seats must alternate gender every election, and developing sanctions on political parties for not appointing women. Electoral institutions should also mainstream gender considerations into their internal operations and external programming.
- Congress, the CNE, and political parties should take steps to develop policies and protocols that are sensitive to the needs and experiences of Honduran women, including sexual harassment policies and mechanisms for their enforcement and rigorous measures to monitor compliance with laws on gender equality.
- CSOs should strengthen their coordination and advocacy efforts around passing laws to address VAVIP, such as the draft Law Against Political Violence. International donors should continue to invest funding in supporting local CSOs, particularly those not based in the capital or that represent women from marginalized groups.
- Stakeholders should work to combat gender-based violence as a whole to reduce instances of VAVIP, for example by eliminating impunity for perpetrators and providing support for survivors.

## INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

- The Secretary of Education should create gender-sensitive civic education programs in government schools to build girls' leadership skills and demonstrate to young boys that girls' and women's participation in public life is normal and important.
- National political parties should support youth committees to create advocacy campaigns aimed at motivating women—in particular young women and girls—to participate in politics and raise their awareness of the benefits of women's political participation and gender equality.
- The CNE should prioritize its partnerships with CSOs to develop sustained and localized leadership and capacity-building programs for civil society and women in both rural and urban contexts through its National Institute for Political and Electoral Training.
- Electoral institutions, CSOs, and international donors should provide candidate training to women running for office and for recently elected women leaders. This training should focus on skills necessary to seek office and to be an effective public official once elected.





# USAID/Honduras

## Programmatic Highlights

- Dialogue among key democratic actors, civil society, and marginalized and underrepresented populations, including women, to advocate for transparency, inclusion, democratic reforms, and improved political participation of women and LGBTQI+, among other topics.
- Collaboration with with electoral management bodies and municipal offices to improve policy frameworks that strengthen and protect women's participation and also prevent gender based violence.
- Empower women through public speaking skills and knowledge of women's rights and legal framework, to advocate for their participation and respect based on these provisions.
- Support women entrepreneurs and economic participation.

You have questions, we have answers!

Thank you so much for  
your participation!

