

RECOGNIZE TO TRANSFORM

Toolbox to promote gender equality in local spaces
– examples from Latin America



Executive summary

Recognize to Transform is an invitation to look at local democracy through the experiences and voices of women. This toolbox offers ideas, experiences and practical tools to recognize gender inequalities, strengthen women's political and community participation, and expand their influence in local decision-making. By turning recognition into collective action, it seeks to contribute to more inclusive, equal and democratic territories.



UNIVERSIDAD
NACIONAL
DE COLOMBIA



FLACSO
GUATEMALA

Author



Ana Silvia Monzón M.

Co-authored with Paula Flores and Marcela García.

Table of Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction	4
Methodological process	5
Political, legal, social, and cultural actions to advance gender equality (2018–2025)	6
1. Women’s Networks: Organizing to Activate	7
2. Laws: tools to influence	12
3. Institutions: mechanisms to guarantee women’s rights	17
4. Plan to move forward	21
5. Violet Gaze: Social Audit from Women	25
6. Creating to transform: communicational actions and actions from the arts	28
7. Synthesis learned lessons and questions to promote reflection	34
Bibliography	38

Introduction

The Recognize to Transform Toolbox is a methodological and pedagogic resource directed mainly to municipal workgroups, public institution community leaders, women organizations, social organizations, learning facilitators, and people interested in promoting gender equality in local spaces. Its goal is to offer guidelines, examples, and practical tools to recognize inequalities faced by women, strengthen their political and community participation, and promote collective actions aimed at the democratic transformation of territories

This toolbox is part of the research project “Invisible Spaces, Unheard Voices: Redefining Gender Roles to Enhance Women’s Political Impact in Guatemala and Colombia” financed by the Swedish Center for Local Democracy (ICLD) and developed by the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) academic headquarters Guatemala and the National University of Colombia (IEPRI). Within this framework the publication seeks to translate the research results and regional experiences into material for reflection, training, planning, and local advocacy.

The structure of the document is designed to facilitate its use in workshops, training processes, planning meetings, or spaces for collective analysis. First, the methodological process that guided the selection of experiences is presented. Then, six axes of work are organized -women’s networks, laws, institutions, public policies, social auditing, and communicational and artistic actions- that show different routes to advance gender equality from the local level. Each axis combines a brief explanation of its importance with concrete examples from Latin America so that they can be read, compared, adapted or used as a starting point for new actions.

The starting point is to recognize and name, from the women’s own voices, the situations, experiences, personal and collective stories, as well as the family and community dynamics that mark their daily lives. This recognition allows building trust, identifying shared problems, strengthening organizational processes, formulating political agendas, and defining strategic actions to achieve common objectives based on the principle of equality, a fundamental value of democracy and the axis of SDG 5 on gender equality.

Methodological process

The Recognize to Transform Toolbox is the result of documentary research guided by the objective of identifying political, legal, social, and cultural actions carried out by women's organizations in Latin America. The criteria for considering the inclusion of these actions were: 1) type of action and thematic profile. 2) geographical scope. 3) temporal scope.

1. The type of actions is divided into six key axes:
 - a) women's networks;
 - b) formulation of legislative proposals;
 - c) institution-building for gender equality;
 - d) development of public policies with a gender and intersectional perspective;
 - e) social audit processes, and
 - f) communication and artistic initiatives.
2. Geographical scope: Priority was given to local, municipal, national, and regional experiences from various Latin American countries, with emphasis on Colombia and Guatemala.
3. Temporal scope: the period 2018-2025 was considered, which covers two years prior to the COVID 19 pandemic, its impact on social, political, economic and organizational dynamics, as well as its impact at regional and global levels, as well as the post-pandemic.

In total, we present the profile of 38 actions distributed in the six key axes. These initiatives show the importance of networks as an organizational form to strengthen women in their demand for recognition and guarantee of rights, as well as challenging imposed gender norms. These initiatives have been promoted by organizations, associations, collectives and local institutions in 11 countries.

Political, legal, social, and cultural actions to advance gender equality (2018–2025)

We present a panoramic view of actions that have allowed the accumulation of experiences and that constitute methodological and political tools to identify successes, challenges and lessons learned. These actions have been promoted by women's movements that have built with their organizational processes political agendas and worked in a sustained way to influence social, academic, political, and institutional spaces to achieve the recognition of their demands and the guarantee of their human rights. Likewise, by local, national, and regional institutions committed to guaranteeing women's rights.



1. Women's Networks: Organizing to Activate

Pedagogical guide of the axis.

.....

What is it? This axis presents women's networks as forms of organization, mutual support and territorial advocacy.

What is it for? It allows us to understand how the articulation between women leaders, local authorities and organizations strengthens political and community participation.

How to use it? In workshops or meetings, invite them to identify existing networks, allied actors, available capacities, and barriers to participation.

What to observe in the examples: forms of organization, territorial scope, advocacy agendas and mechanisms for strengthening leadership.

Municipal women's networks aim to link women community leaders with local governments to influence budgets and development plans. These networks bring together mayors, deputy mayors and councilors to strengthen their leadership, management and governance, promoting gender equality in municipal governments. These networks promote an agenda of gender equality, exchange of experiences, training and political articulation to improve women's participation in local decision-making. An example is the Ibero-American Network of Municipalities for Gender Equality (RIMIG for its initials in Spanish) that focuses on improving municipal management with a gender approach through the Ibero-American Union of Municipalists (UIM for its initials in Spanish). Both Guatemala and Colombia belong to this Network, although there are important differences in the participation of women at the local level in both countries. While Guatemala barely has 3% of women mayors elected (Assier, 2023), in Colombia this percentage is 16.01% (Electoral, 2023). This difference does not take into account the disadvantages that women from indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples and rural areas still face when participating in the political sphere.

One contribution of this type of action is to highlight the importance of inter-territorial articulation that strengthens advocacy and allows for the sharing of methodologies to confront cultural resistance to women's participation at the local level. Below is information on some organizations, networks, or articulations that women have promoted in Latin America with emphasis on the local/municipal space:

Bolivia

Name of the experience: The Association of Councilors and Mayors of Bolivia (ACOBOL for its initials in Spanish) is a national entity representing Councilors and Mayors of the country, an integral part of the Municipal Associative System (SAM for its initials in Spanish). It was created in 1999.

Year or period: founded in 1999

Purpose: The promotion and political positioning of women at the municipal level.

Territorial scope: National.

Main actions:

- Defending women's political rights.
- Incorporation of the gender approach in development planning at the municipal level to reduce inequality gaps.
- Strengthening capacities in the management of the public management of the affiliated authorities. It is a reference for all women councilors and mayors who were and/or are authorities in the local spaces of the country.
- It provides access to publications focused on municipal management with a gender perspective.

Link: Home - ACOBOL - Association of Councilors and Mayors of Bolivia ACOBOL

Name of the experience: The Network of Women Mayors of Municipalities of Good Living is an initiative led by women municipal leaders, created in 2024. It works in partnership with ACOBOL and the PAHO/WHO Movement for Healthy Municipalities, Cities and Communities (MCCS for its initials in Spanish) in the Americas.

Year or period: founded in 2024

Purposes: Promoting health, sustainability and localization of the SDGs (Agenda 2030).

Territorial scope: 23 municipalities in Bolivia.

Main actions:

- Implementation of innovative projects such as rainwater harvesting, solid waste management (raising guinea pigs for green waste) and reforestation.
- The municipal management of "Buen Vivir", focused on health, equity and well-being of their communities.

Colombia

Name of the experience: The National Women's Network is an articulation of independent women, feminists, leaders, and women's social organizations. It was created in 1991.

Year or period: founded in 1991

Purposes: influencing legislation, strengthening regional groups, and guaranteeing women's human rights

Territorial scope: 16 regions of Colombia: Barranquilla, Bogotá, Bolívar, Cauca, Chocó, Manizales, Magdalena Medio, Medellín, Pasto, Puerto Colombia, Risaralda, San Andrés and Providencia, Santander, Tolima, Valle.

Main Actions:

Participation in processes for the guarantee, promotion and defense of women's rights in Colombia in four areas of work:

- The right to a life free of violence.
- Women's right to political participation.
- Sexual and reproductive rights.
- Women's participation in peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

Link: National Women's Network

Costa Rica

Name of the experience: The Costa Rican Network of Municipal Women (RECOMM for its initials in Spanish) was created in 2008. 117 women started and currently 1,800 women participate.

Purposes: Strengthen and promote leadership, as well as the integral skills of its members in the exercise of our RIGHTS to actively participate in politics.

Year or period: founded in 2008

Territorial scope: National with representation in the 7 provinces of Costa Rica.

Actions: Training of its members, advocacy, guidance and legal advice on issues of political violence, and visibility of women's political participation in powerful and intelligent alliances. Promote political leadership, parity, and prevention of political violence against women.

Link: RECOMM

El Salvador

Name of the experience: National Association of Salvadoran Councillors and Mayors (ANDRYSAS for its initials in Spanish). Created in 2000.

It is a pluralistic association of women municipal officials and former officials that promote the participation of women through the strengthening of their capacities to promote inclusive processes towards parity democracy and economic, political, social and digital empowerment within the territories.

Year or period: founded in 2000

Purpose: Strengthen the national network of women and the equality agenda in local politics.

Territorial scope: National

Actions:

- Promote women's participation through capacity-building.
- Promoting democratic parity and economic, political, social and digital empowerment within the territories.
- Social Audit through an Observatory of Political Violence in El Salvador.

Link: <https://andrysas.org.sv/quienes-somos/>

Guatemala

Name of the experience: The Trifinio Women's Network-(HOSAGUA, for its initials in Spanish), Trifinio Region (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador), created in 2017.

Year or period: founded in 2017

Purposes:

- Consolidation of a trinational platform to revendicate rights and influence territorial development.
- Carry out strategic planning, training and advocacy processes.

Territorial scope: Trinational/Regional/cross-border articulation.

Actions: Women's network, international cooperation, political participation and women's rights.

Link to the Strategic Plan of the Trifinio Women's Network – HOSAGUA, 2020–2024, Trifinio Women's Network, with the support of UN Women and territorial actors.

Trifinio Women's Network Strategic Plan - HOSAGUA - 2020 -2024 30062020

Nicaragua

Name of the experience: Articulation of the Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women

Year or period: Background since 1981, formal creation in 1992 in the Dominican Republic.

Objectives: Consolidate a broad movement of Afro-descendant, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latin American, and diaspora women that incorporates ethnic, racial, and gender perspectives.

Territorial reach: 30 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the diaspora in Europe and the United States.

Actions:

- To make the current discrimination and violation of human rights experienced by Afro-descendant women, in the socioeconomic, political and cultural spheres visible.
- Influencing governmental and intergovernmental bodies.
- To promote the articulation of young Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean, and diaspora women members of the Network, in order to strengthen their potential, promoting training, reflection and debates.

URL link: mujeresafro.org

Peru

Name of the experience: The National Network of Women Authorities (RENAMA for its initials in Spanish)

Year or period: founded in 2008

Objectives:

- Fight for gender equality, political advocacy and overcoming political violence against women.
- Strengthen the political and technical leadership of women in public office by promoting gender equality in public management.
- Support women authorities in office, so that they have a greater impact on territorial and local decision-making.

Territorial scope: National, it operates through boards of directors at the national level with provincial representation,

Actions:

- It addresses political participation, municipal and budgetary management, and technical assistance in investment projects and political harassment.
- It holds national meetings of mayors and authorities to articulate proposals for local development.
- Political advocacy is achieved by actively speaking out in defense of gender parity and alternation in Peruvian political candidacies.

2. Laws: tools to influence

Pedagogical guide of the axis.

.....

What is it? This axis addresses laws as tools to recognize rights, establish state obligations and open routes of enforceability.

What is it for? It helps to analyze how standards can expand women's participation and prevent political and digital violence.

How to use it? Suggest reviewing what laws exist in the territory, what gaps persist, and which actors can promote reforms or demand compliance.

What to observe in the examples: type of regulation, problem addressed, implementation mechanisms, responsible institutions and possibilities of citizen surveillance.

In recent decades, women's organizations have devoted a great deal of effort, resources, and time to the formulation of legislative initiatives to achieve their approval in Congresses or legislative Parliaments. As a result, the principle of equality has been recognized in most political constitutions. The legislative agenda includes, among other proposals, laws against violence against women, for political rights, labor rights, the right to land, water, and education. In general, laws do not incorporate a gender and intersectional perspective, so gaps persist between women due to their ethnic and racial affiliation, social class, and place of residence.

Regarding political participation it is important to mention that the political parity laws approved in Argentina (2019), Mexico (2019), Bolivia, and Ecuador, have contributed to increasing the candidacies of women and their election as authorities. These cases show the effect that the application of laws has on reducing gender gaps.

In Colombia the main and most recent law to guarantee women's political participation is Ley 2453 of 2025 [Law 2453 of 2025], which establishes measures to prevent and punish violence against women in politics, guaranteeing their equal participation. Historically, Ley 581 of 2000 (Ley de Cuotas) [Law 581 of 2000 Quota Law] imposed a minimum of 30% of women in decision-making positions, and Ley 1475 of 2011 [Law 1475 of 2011] mandated the inclusion of women in electoral lists.

In contrast, Guatemala is one of the few countries in Latin America that does not have any affirmative action measures to encourage women's political participation. Therefore, disadvantages persist in women's participation and representation in the Congress of the Republic, and other State agencies, as well as in municipalities and the Sistema de Consejos de Desarrollo (Development Council System) where women, despite multiple efforts, have not yet been recognized as full citizens.

A lesson learned in the decades of struggle for democracy and women's participation is that legislative norms are not enough; Institutional support, budget, political will, and citizen vigilance are required for women to be recognized as political subjects and to exercise their positions without violence.

In recent years legal reforms have been proposed that address two interrelated issues: gender-based political violence and digital violence, both of which limit women's right to participate in politics. It should be noted that the Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM for its initials in Spanish) of the Organization of American States (OAS for its initials in Spanish), created in 1928, has proposed framework laws on political and digital violence with the aim of getting States to adopt this legislation. The profile of both proposals is presented below:

Latin America and the Caribbean

Name of the experience or law: Ley Modelo Interamericana para Prevenir, Sancionar y Erradicar la Violencia contra las Mujeres en la Vida Política.

Country or territory: Latin America and the Caribbean

Year or period: 2016

Purpose: Provide guidelines to the states in order to prevent, sanction, and eradicate violence against women in political life, harmonizing political rights with the Convención de Belém do Pará

Key aspects:

- **Definition:** Defines political violence as gender-based actions or omissions, including digital violence, to limit women's political rights.
- **Scope:** Includes female candidates, officials, community leaders, and women in political parties.
- **Actions:** Urges the establishment of measures for protection, reparation to victims, and administrative or criminal sanctions.
- **Responsibility:** It obliges political parties to adopt prevention and care protocols.

Link: <https://belemdopara.org/ley-modelo-interamericana-para-prevenir-sancionar-y-erradicar-la-violencia-digital-contra-las-mujeres-basada-en-genero/>

Name of the experience or law: Ley Modelo Interamericana contra la Violencia Digital.

Country or territory: Latin America and the Caribbean

Type of actor or instrument: Regional Judicial Standard promoted by CIM/OEA and MESECVI

Year or period: 2025/2026

Purpose: Prevent, sanction and eradicate gender cyberviolence such as harassment, threats, unwanted diffusion of images, identity theft and other kinds of violence in digital settings.

Key aspects:

- Integral definition: Encompasses acts such as harassment, identity theft, threats, deepfakes, and unwanted diffusion of personal content:
- Digital platform's responsibility: Defines rules so that digital platforms eliminate violent content in a timely manner and cooperate with authorities.
- Gender and intersectional approach: Protects women, children and teenagers in digital settings.
- Digital education: Promotes digital alphabetization to prevent cultural patterns of subordination and violence.
- Integral Reparation: Establishes mechanisms to protect and repair physical, psychological, and economical harm.

Link: <https://www.oas.org/es/mesecvi/docs/Ley%20Modelo%20Interamericana%20Violencia%20Digital%20contra%20Mujeres.pdf>

Bolivia

Name of the experience: Ley N.º 1096 de Organizaciones Políticas de Bolivia [Law No. 1096 on Political Organizations of Bolivia], approved in 2018 by the Legislative Assembly and the Plurinational Electoral Body.

Country/territory: Bolivia

Territorial reach: National

Year or period: 2018

Key aspects of the law:

- Reform of the political system and demands on political parties to incorporate equal democracy, alternation and statutory adaptation of political organizations.

Link: <https://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/americas/BO/bolivia-ley-1096-2018-de-organizaciones-politicas>

Colombia

Name of the experience: Ley 2424 de 2024 sobre participación paritaria y efectiva de las mujeres en las ramas y órganos del poder público [Law 2424 of 2024] on the equal and effective participation of women in the branches and organs of public power, approved by the Congress of the Republic.

Territorial reach: National

Year or period: 2024

Purpose: Prevent,

Key aspects:

- Parity / political representation
- Legal reform and subsequent regulation. Increase minimum participation of women and strengthen parity in public power. National. Law. Official sources (Función Pública)

Link: Law 2424 of 2024 - Regulatory Manager - Civil Service

Costa Rica

Name of the experience: Ley N. º 10235 para prevenir, atender, sancionar y erradicar la violencia contra las mujeres en la política [Law No. 10235 to Prevent, Address, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women in Politics], approved by the Legislative Assembly / TSE.

Country/territory: Costa Rica

Kind of instrument: National law approved by the Asamblea Legislativa (Legislative Assembly) with implementation linked to the Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones (Supreme Election Tribunal)

Year or period: 2022

Territorial scope: National

Key aspects of the law:

- Criminalizes violence against women in politics.
- Includes guidelines for implementation and institutional circulars.
- Establishes obligations for parties, municipalities and institutions in the face of political violence.

Link: Ley10235-violencia-contra-mujeres-en-politica.pdf

Ecuador

Name of the experience: Reforma al Código de la Democracia que incorpora sanción por violencia política de género [Reform of the Code of Democracy that incorporates sanctions for gender-based political violence], 2020.

Country: Ecuador

Kind of instrument: Electoral reform.

Year or period: 2020

Purpose: Recognize and punish political gender violence in the electoral regime.

Key aspects:

- Electoral reform to recognize and sanction gender-based political violence within the electoral regime
- The State shall promote the inclusion and political participation of persons belonging to indigenous peoples and nationalities, the Afro-Ecuadorian people, and the Montubio people

Link: https://www.asambleanacional.gob.ec/es/system/files/2020-02-03-sro134_20190103.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Panama

Name of the experience: Ley 184 de 2020 sobre violencia política contra la mujer [Law 184 of 2020 on political violence against women].

Country: Panama

Kind of instrument: National law

Territorial scope: National

Year or period: 2020

Purpose: Prevent, eradicate and punish political violence against women.

Key aspects:

- Typifies gender-based political violence.
- Promotes an interinstitutional Protocol to prevent, eradicate and punish political violence against women.

Link: Official sources (s3-legispan.asamblea.gob.pa)

3. Institutions: mechanisms to guarantee women's rights

Pedagogical guide of the axis.

.....

What is it? This axis presents institutions, mechanisms and public services created to guarantee women's rights.

What is it for? It allows us to recognize that equality requires permanent structures, budget, trained personnel, and inter-institutional coordination.

How to use it? Use it in training processes to identify which institutions exist, what services they offer, how they are accessed, and how close they are to women in the territory.

What to observe in the examples: institutional mandate, coverage, services, resources, articulation with civil society, and capacity for accountability.

The Fourth World Conference on Women (1995, Beijing, China) was a political milestone that brought together women from 189 countries, official delegations and representatives of women's and feminist organizations. This space was decisive because based on the Beijing Platform for Action that established 12 critical areas (such as violence, poverty, political participation, health, education, work, and communication), it promoted the creation and strengthening of institutional mechanisms in States to guarantee women's rights. The women agreed on the demand that governments establish permanent structures – ministries, institutes, secretariats – with a budget and political capacity to mainstream gender equality.

Institutional mechanisms are fundamental to guaranteeing women's rights because they turn social demands into **sustainable norms, policies and practices** within the State and organizations. Without them, progress depends solely on the political will of the moment or on social pressure, which makes them fragile and reversible.

6 relevant keys are identified as to why we should demand and strengthen the institutional framework to guarantee women's rights:

- **Stability and continuity:** Institutions create legal and administrative frameworks that transcend governments and conjunctures, ensuring that rights do not depend on immediate political changes.
- **Access and protection:** Women must have formal channels to denounce rights violations, access justice and demand compliance.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Institutional mechanisms oblige States and organizations to report on progress, budgets, and results, which strengthens citizen vigilance.
- **Cultural transformation:** by incorporating the axes of gender equality and the recognition of the cultures of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants in laws, public policies, and programs, institutions help change discriminatory practices and legitimize new forms of coexistence.
- **Guarantee of resources:** Without institutionality gender and intersectionality policies often lack funding. The mechanisms ensure specific budgets and trained personnel.
- **Articulation with civil society:** They function as bridges between feminist demands and governmental structures, allowing historical struggles to be translated into concrete changes.

Institutional mechanisms have been created to coordinate laws and policies in favor of women, both at the national and at the municipal level or in specific areas such as monitoring protocols against violence or care systems, among other examples:

Bolivia

Name of the institution: Plurinational Service for Women and Depatriarchalizing “Ana María Romero”, Government of the Plurinational State, as of 2019

Country: Bolivia

Kind of instrument: Public entity of the Government

Territorial scope: National.

Purpose: Implement depatriarchalizing, equality and guarantee of women's rights policies

Actions and services:

- Institutional Programs and Training.
- Implement policies of depatriarchalizing and equality.

Link: Decreto Supremo <https://sepmud.gob.bo/>

Colombia

District Care System: the Manzanas del Cuidado (Care Blocks in Bogotá) in specific urban areas that concentrate free services for women caregivers and their families, seeking to alleviate their unpaid workload.

Territorial scope: Bogotá, Colombia

Kind of instrument: Local public system of care services.

Year or period: Functioning during the recent period.

Purpose: Concentrate free services for caretaker women and their families, lessening the burden of unpaid work and recognizing the right of care.

Actions and services:

- Training and employability: Courses with SENA, training to finish high school and orientation in entrepreneurship.
- Wellness and care: Respite activities such as yoga, community laundry, psychosocial and legal counseling.
- Dependent care: Spaces where children, the elderly, or people with disabilities are cared for while their caregivers study or rest.

Link: District System of Care - Women's Time and Services

Guatemala

Name of the institution: Municipal Directorates for Women, coordination relations with the Presidential Secretariat for Women-SEPTEM (for its initials in Spanish) and the Municipalities, 2020

Territorial scope: National

Kind of instrument: Institutional municipal mechanism articulated with a ruling national entity.

Year or period: 2020

Purpose: Coordinate the implementation of the National Public Policy for the Promotion and comprehensive development of women, gender equality and prevention of violence.

Actions and services:

- Coordinate implementation of the Política Nacional para la Promoción y Desarrollo integral de las mujeres [National policy for the Promotion and Comprehensive Development of Women].
- Strengthening and coordinating with local gender programs.
- Promote participation, economic development and violence prevention.

Link: <https://seprem.gob.gt>

Mexico

Name of the institution: Las Utopias: Units of Transformation and Organization for Inclusion and Social Harmony. They were created in 2019 from the Mayor's Office of Iztapalapa, Mexico City.

Country/territory: Mexico City, Mexico. Iztapalapa Mayor's office.

Kind of instrument: Local public program of social, cultural, sporting, education and caretaking infrastructure.

Purpose: Face social and regional inequality through comprehensive public spaces that bring free services, culture, sporting, education, recreation and caretaking closer to the community

Territorial scope: 12 mayors' offices in Iztapalapa, with a projection of reaching 100 in Mexico City.

Actions and services:

- Urban transformation strategy to address the historical and structural socio-territorial inequality in the demarcation of Iztapalapa in Mexico City.
- They are centers with free sports, culture, education, recreation and care services, designed to combat inequality
- They transform public space to generate a system of parks and social, cultural and sports infrastructure for the integral development of communities.

Link: Iztapalapa Utopias Archives - Mexico City

Peru

Name of the institution: Observatorio Nacional de la Violencia contra las Mujeres y los integrantes del grupo familiar (National Observatory on Violence against Women and family members)

Year or period: founded in 2022

Territorial scope: National

Purpose: Monitor, produce and spread information about violence against women and family members to strengthen decision making, prevention and institutional response.

Actions and services:

- Digital platform to compile, organize and spread information about violence against women.
- Produce information for monitoring, prevention, public policy creation and institutional monitoring.

Link: <https://www.gob.pe/institucion/mimp/tema/observatorio-nacional-de-la-violencia-contra-las-mujeres-y-los-integrantes-del-grupo-familiar>

4. Plan to move forward

Pedagogical guide of the axis.

.....

What is it? This axis addresses planning and public policies as instruments to convert demands for equality into objectives, programs, budgets and concrete actions.

What is it for? It helps connect women's needs with national, municipal, and community public decisions.

How to use it? Invite them to review existing plans, identify priorities, formulate proposals, and locate opportunities for advocacy in local budgets and programs.

What to observe in the examples: gender and intersectionality approach, citizen participation, goals, assigned resources and monitoring mechanisms.

National policies establish legal and strategic frameworks that ensure equality is a state objective, linking ministries, budgets and development plans. These policies must be articulated at the local and municipal level to ensure that equality is a comprehensive and sustainable process, capable of transforming both state structures and local realities. Municipal policies bring equality closer to the daily life of communities, adapting strategies to specific realities (rurality, indigenous peoples, urban neighborhoods), through public policies, and programs and projects in education, health, employment, security, and culture that incorporate the gender and intersectionality perspective that have a comprehensive approach. These actions require citizen participation where women can have a direct influence, and strengthen participatory democracy, so that their voices are heard in the formulation of proposals, priorities, and budgets. The contributions of women in the formulation of public policies, whether national or local include, among others, the visibility of specific needs. With their contributions issues that were previously invisible emerge such as care, gender violence, reproductive health, and access to productive resources. The participation of women also contributes to transforming planning methodologies by making processes participatory, more horizontal, and sensitive to cultural and social diversity. When women influence local planning, it has been shown that budgets can be redirected towards equity, education, and health programs. This redirection generates direct impacts on daily life. In short, when women participate, public policies cease to be abstract and become tools for social transformation, connected to daily life and gender justice.

Some examples of public policies that promote gender equality are:

Chile

Name of the policy: Política Nacional de Igualdad de Género [National Gender Equality Policy], 2021–2030 . Ministry of Women and Gender Equity

Year or period: 2021-2030

Key aspects:

- Gender equality.
- Cross-sectoral programs and public communication.
- Reducing gender gaps in political participation, economy and education.

Link: <https://minmujeryeg.gob.cl>

Colombia

Name of the policy: Política Pública Nacional de Equidad de Género para las Mujeres [National Public Policy on Gender Equity for Women], 2020–2030 Government of Colombia / Presidential Advisory Office for Women’s Equality.

Year or period: 2021-2030

Key aspects:

- Women’s rights.
- Cross-sectoral strategy and public campaigns.
- Promote economic autonomy, political participation and violence prevention.

Link: <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co>

Guatemala

Name of the policy: Política Municipal de Desarrollo Integral de las mujeres durante su ciclo de vida [Municipal Policy for the Integral Development of Women during their Life Cycle], 2019–2027. Municipality of Guatemala, Municipal Directorate for Women.

Country/territory: Guatemala municipality, Guatemala

Institution in charge: Municipality of Guatemala, Women’s Municipal Direction

Year or period: 2019-2017

Purpose: Promote the comprehensive development of women during the life cycle and strengthen municipal capabilities for equality.

Key aspects:

- Citizenship and equal participation.
- Enhancing women's economic autonomy.
- Inclusive, safe, sustainable metropolis, neighborhoods and public spaces for all with resilient capacities.
- Strengthening municipal capacities in gender for equality among its inhabitants.

Link: Municipal Policy and Plan for the Integral Development of Women during their Life Cycle, Municipality of Guatemala 2019-2027 | UN Women – Latin America and the Caribbean

Peru

Name of the policy: Política Nacional de Igualdad de Género [National Gender Equality Policy], 2022–2027. Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations.

Country/Territory: Peru

Institution in charge: Ministry of Woman and Vulnerable Population.

Year or period: 2022-2027

Territorial scope: National

Purpose: Reduce structural discrimination and gender gaps through interinstitutional actions directed towards equality.

Key aspects:

- Promoting gender equality as an objective for public policy.
- Articulate inter-agency programs and public campaigns.
- Reduce structural discrimination and gender gaps.

Link: <https://www.gob.pe/mimp>

Uruguay

Name of the policy: Sistema Nacional Integrado de Cuidados [National Integrated Care System]

Country/territory: Uruguay

Year or period: 2019-2025

Territorial scope: national

Purpose: Recognize, distribute and reduce care work through public services, campaigns and social coresponsibility.

Key aspects:

- Care Economy.
- Public campaigns and social services.
- Recognizing, redistributing and reducing care work.

Link: <https://www.gub.uy/sistema-cuidados>



5. Violet Gaze: Social Audit from Women

Pedagogical guide of the axis.

.....

What is it? This axis presents social auditing as a practice of citizen surveillance, monitoring and accountability from the perspective of women.

What is it for? Allows reviewing whether public commitments, budgets, and services respond to the real needs of women and their communities.

How to use it? Organize commitment mapping exercises, budget reviews, service observations and collective building of questions for the authorities.

What to look for in the examples: indicators, sources of information, community engagement, reporting mechanisms, and use of data for advocacy.

Social auditing from women, in local spaces, is crucial to strengthen democracy, ensure that public resources respond to the real needs of the community, and make the historically invisible demands of women visible. It is an advocacy tool that opens spaces for dialogue where the diversity of local voices is represented. Furthermore, it proposes that women actively participate in oversight, evaluation of progress, detection of gaps, and contribute to decision-making. Likewise, social auditing from women demands compliance with the commitments assumed by both the central government and local authorities, generating more inclusive and transparent processes. The key areas for social auditing focus on controlling public spending, so that women can ensure that municipal and community budgets are allocated to priority needs such as health, education, security, and equality programs. This prevents diversions and encourages reporting when there are irregularities. Additionally, it is important to follow up on regular transparency and accountability by national and local authorities. Citizen participation, especially of women, strengthens the fight against corruption and promotes more accountable institutions.

To exercise social auditing, women need to develop technical and political capacities that allow them to lead in their communities, question power structures and propose alternatives. In Latin America, women's movements have developed diverse experiences over the last three decades, which include citizen observatories on various issues such as food security, health, parity and political violence, as well as participatory evaluations of local budgets.

Social auditing, from the perspective of gender and intersectionality, strengthens accountability and legitimizes the voice of women in traditionally masculine spaces (CEPAL/ONUMUJERES, 2024). Some experiences that account for social audit processes are, among others:

Latin America and the Caribbean

Name of the experience: Gender Equality Observatory – ECLAC

Country/territory: Latin America and the Caribbean

Institution in charge: ECLAC

Year or period: continuous regional surveillance

Purpose: Produce, systematize and spread information to monitor advances and breeches in regional gender equality

Key aspects:

- Data and reporting platform on gender equality.
- Social indicators with a gender perspective.
- Regional monitoring of equality policies

Link to Monitoring Platform: <https://oig.cepal.org>

Bolivia

Name of the experience: Observatorio de Paridad Democrática, Órgano Electoral Plurinacional [Democratic Parity Observatory 2018–2025. Plurinational Electoral Body]

Country/territory: Bolivia

Institution in charge: Órgano Electoral Plurinacional (Plurinational Electoral Body)

Purpose: Monitor women's political participation and democratic parity.

Key aspects:

- Political parity.
- Digital monitoring platform.
- Produces information on women's political participation.

Link to Observatory / reports: <https://observatorioparidad.oep.org.bo>
https://www.facebook.com/ObservatoriodeParidadDemocratica/?locale=es_LA

Colombia

Name of the experience: Observatorio de Asuntos de Género (Observatory of Gender Affairs)

Institution in charge: Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer (Presidential Advisory Office for Women's Equality)

Year or period: 2018-2025

Territorial scope: National

Purpose: Monitor statistical information and analysis on gender equality and public policy directed at women.

Key aspects:

- Monitoring gender equality indicators.
- Create statistical reports and specialized analysis.
- Monitor public policies related to gender.

Link to Observatory: <https://www.observatoriogenero.gov.co>

Ecuador

Name of the experience: Observatorio Nacional de Participación Política de las Mujeres (National Observatory of Women's Political Participation).

Country/territory: Ecuador

Institution in charge: Haciendo Ecuador Foundation with support from the Consejo Nacional Electoral (National Electoral Council)

Period: Created in 2020

Territorial scope: National

Purpose: Generate data on political participation and political gender violence to identify breeches and fortify parity.

Key aspects of social auditing:

- Digital monitoring platform.
- Generate data on participation and gender-based political violence .
- Analyze gender-based political violence.
- improve parity in candidacies and make visible women's participation in Ecuador's elections.

Link: Institutional resolution <https://www.cne.gob.ec>

6. Creating to transform: communicational actions and actions from the arts.

Pedagogical guide of the axis.

What is it? This axis brings together communicational, artistic and cultural actions that dispute meanings, make inequalities visible and mobilize communities.

What is it for? Helping to understand how art, communication and public narratives can transform social imaginaries and strengthen political advocacy.

How to use it? It is an invitation to analyze messages, audiences, languages, channels and emotions that mobilize experiences, and to design their own communicational or artistic pieces.

What to observe in the examples: form of expression, central message, target audience, reach, capacity for reply, and link to claims to rights.

Communicational and artistic actions are fundamental to transform social gender norms because they act in the symbolic and cultural terrain where inequalities are reproduced. At the same time, they are advocacy tools that encourage women's participation in politics and the community. In general, they contribute to making hidden realities visible since art and communication show the experiences of women who are usually left out of official discourses. At the same time, they question stereotypes, and through creative narratives they dismantle patriarchal imaginaries and open space for new ways of relating. Through images, languages and representations they generate empathy, emotions and awareness. Indeed, a visual campaign, a community play or a mural can raise awareness more than a technical report. They also strengthen local voices so that women and communities feel free to express their demands in accessible and their own languages. Some of the main forms of artistic and communicational expression are:

- Communication campaigns to disseminate messages about rights, equality and participation, creating social pressure on institutions.
- Community art expressed in murals, embroidery, weaving, poetry, photography, theater, performances, and music transform public spaces into scenarios of memory and resistance.
- Digital narratives: Social networks and alternative media amplify the voices of young, indigenous, Afro-descendant, and rural women, connecting local struggles with global agendas.

- Visual pedagogy: Feminist infographics, factsheets, and timelines make it easier for communities to understand complex political processes.

In summary, communication and art are bridges between everyday experience and political action. They allow women not only to participate, but to transform the way they are represented by others and to project how they see themselves and what their agendas are.

Bolivia

Name of the experience: Graphic interventions Mujeres Creando

Agent in charge: Colectivo Mujeres Creando [Women Creating Collective]

Date or period: 2015

Territorial scope: National.

Form of expression: Feminist arts organization

Topics:

- Violence and women's rights.
- Feminist political graffiti in public space.
- Denunciation of institutional violence and state patriarchy.

Link to the website: <https://mujerescreando.org>

Chile (Valparaíso/Santiago)

Name of the experience: Un violador en tu camino Colectivo (A rapist in your path)

Agent in charge: Colectivo LasTesis (LasTesis Collective).

Date or period: 2019

Scope: global, translated into several languages.

Form of expression: performance.

Topics:

- Violence/rights
- Choral street performance replicated globally and viralized on social networks.
- Reporting of sexual and institutional violence.
- Feminist politicization of public space.

Link: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/06/chilean-anti-rape-anthem-becomes-international-feminist-phenomenon>

Colombia

Name of the experience: El Arte de Cuidarte (The Art of Taking Care of Yourself).

Agent in charge: District Care System/Local Government (Bogotá).

Date or period: 2021

Territorial scope: Municipal

Form of expression: Cultural-artistic strategy (art, play, literature) in community spaces

Topics:

- Promotion of the right to care and support for caregivers
- Comprehensive training strengthening expressive, linguistic, cognitive, motor and social capacities of children.

Link to report: <https://bogota.gov.co/mi-ciudad/integracion-social/el-arte-de-cuidarte-la-nueva-estrategia-para-el-cuidado-de-la-ninez>

Ecuador

Name of the experience: Kombi Violeta.

Agent in charge: campaign carried out by the Violet Coalition, to counteract violence against women in politics. Esquel Foundation and Women's Association for Gender Equity and Autonomy (MEGA for its initials in Spanish)

Date or period: 2024

Territorial scope: National

Form of expression: Theatre of the oppressed Itinerant caravan and territorial communication

Topics:

- Political violence and rights.
- Promotion of women's political participation.

Link to report: <https://megamujeres.org/kombi-violeta-recorre-ecuador-contra-la-violencia-politica-hacia-las-mujeres/>

Link to base document: Diagramacion-Wamis-empoderadas.pdf

Guatemala

Name of the experience: Ajchowen Women: Healing Through Theatre

Agent in charge: Ajchowen Women: Healing Through Theatre. Indigenous and artistic social organization

Date: created in 2011

Territorial scope: National /Community.

Form of expression: Testimonial community theatre and stage memory.

Topics:

- Memory/rights.
- Visibility of sexual violence in armed conflict.
- Strengthening the leadership of indigenous women.

Link to report: <https://prensacomunitaria.org/2024/10/mujeres-ajchowen-y-el-objetivo-de-sanar-la-memoria-y-dignificar-el-arte/>

Name of the experience: Women with the Ability to Dream in Colors

Agent in charge: Collective of women with disabilities, indigenous, ladinas, mestizo, from Panajachel and its surroundings.

Date or period: 2018

Reach: Local and national

Form of expression:

theater of the oppressed to stage situations of violence or discrimination, allowing the audience to interact and seek solutions.

Topics:

- Sexuality, the recognition of rights and political advocacy
- Empowerment and denunciation of violence.
- Making visible stories of resistance, breaking down social barriers and the fight against exclusion.

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/Mujeresconcapacidad>

CAPABLE OF TRANSFORMING – Women with the Ability to Dream in Colors

Feature: Dreaming in Colors: A Story of Disability and Resistance | Alharaca - Alharaca

Name of the experience: Las Sindecoro (The indecent ones)

Agent in charge: Feminist choral group from Guatemala, composed of women committed to social transformation, the eradication of inequalities, and the defense of rights

Date or period: 2017

Territorial scope: National

Form of expression: Chorus. The group uses vocal artistic expression as a tool of resistance, addressing issues of justice, gender equity and the rights of indigenous peoples.

Topics:

- Interpretations loaded with social, feminist and protest themes.
- Accompaniment to the struggle for emancipation and the rights of women and indigenous peoples through music.
- Support for causes in defense of democracy and freedom of expression,

Links to reports: The Sindecoro, feminist voices for resistance and transgression | Rue <https://www.plazapublica.com.gt/opinion/ocho-anos-de-sindecoro>

Link to their FB page: SinDecoro, feminist voices | Facebook

Mexico

Name of the experience: Sangre de mi sangre (Blood of My Blood)

Agent in charge: Colectiva Hilos, artistic feminist organization

Date or period: 2020-2025

Territorial scope: National & Replicable

Form of expression: Collective embroidery as a practice of resistance, memory, denouncement and feminist art activism.

Topics:

- Violence / memory.
- To make visible and protest against femicides, human trafficking and disappearances.

Link to PDF document: <https://colectivahilos.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Lineamientos-Colectiva-Hilos.pdf>

Name of the experience: Luchadoras

Agent in charge: Feminist organization

Date or period: 2020

Scope: Digital space

Form of expression: Feminist Internet: Digital Self-Defense and Political Action

Topics:

- Creation of meeting spaces that vindicate and dignify the knowledge, strength and power of women.
- Production of guides, manuals and digital campaigns for the prevention of digital violence and promoting safe political participation.
- Appropriation of ICTs (information and communication technologies),
- Building an Internet free of violence.

Link to PDF document: <https://luchadoras.mx>



7. Synthesis learned lessons and questions to promote reflection.

The examples presented in this toolkit show that gender equality is built through diverse, complementary and sustained actions over time. Networks organize and strengthen leadership; laws recognize rights and establish obligations; institutions convert claims into services, programs and budgets; public policies allow for the planning of changes; social audit monitors the fulfillment of commitments; and communicational and artistic actions transform imaginaries, mobilize emotions and open new forms of participation. Overall, the experiences show that no strategy works in isolation. A network needs legal frameworks and allied institutions; a law requires a budget, protocols and citizen vigilance; public policy needs social participation so as not to remain a formal document; and an artistic or communication campaign can amplify demands, but it requires political articulation to produce lasting changes.

Lessons learned

- Collective organization is the starting point. Women's networks make it possible to identify common problems, build agendas, and sustain advocacy processes beyond individual leadership.
- Laws are necessary, but not sufficient. Laws expand rights, but they require institutions, budget, training, reporting mechanisms and citizen monitoring to be effective.
- Institutions must be close to the territories. National mechanisms are important, but their impact depends on their ability to dialogue with municipalities, communities and local organizations.
- Planning turns claims into actions. Public policies help translate needs into verifiable objectives, goals, responsibilities, and resources.
- Social auditing strengthens democracy. When women monitor budgets, services, and indicators, transparency and accountability increase cohesion and identification.
- Art and communication transform the senses. Cultural actions make it possible to name violence, dispute stereotypes and mobilize social support for equality agendas.

Questions for collective discussion

1. Which problems of gender inequality are most visible in our territory and which remain hidden or naturalized?
2. What networks, organizations, institutions or leaderships currently exist to promote change?
3. What laws, public policies or municipal plans can be used as advocacy tools?
4. Where are the greatest gaps observed between what the laws say and what happens in women's daily lives?
5. What information, data or testimonies do we need to strengthen social audit actions?
6. What artistic, communicational or community languages could help to mobilize more people?
7. What alliances would be necessary to turn a demand into a concrete proposal?

Questions for the workshop

These questions can be used in small groups, plenary sessions or social mapping exercises to connect the experiences of the toolbox with the reality of each territory.

OPENING: RECOGNIZING THE TERRITORY

1. What inequalities do women experience in our community, municipality or institution?
2. Which of these inequalities are easily named and which tend to remain hidden?
3. What personal or collective experiences help better understand these inequalities?

CONTINUED »

Questions for the workshop » CONTINUED

ANALYSIS OF EXPERIENCES: IDENTIFYING LESSONS LEARNED

1. Which experience of the toolbox is most similar to our territorial reality?
2. What strategy does that experience use: organization, law, institution, public policy, social audit, communication or art?
3. What problem does it seek to solve, and which actors participate in its solution?
4. What elements of that experience could be adapted to our context?

COMPARISON: CONNECTING STRATEGIES

1. What changes when a demand or claim is worked on from a network, a law or a public policy?
2. What does an institution contribute that a communication campaign could not provide and vice versa?
3. What combination of strategies would be most useful for our territory?
4. What risks arise if a strategy is implemented without women's participation?

LOCAL ADAPTATION: MOVING FROM REFLECTION TO ACTION

1. What problem would we prioritize working on in the next six months?
2. What allied actors already exist and what alliances need to be built?
3. What are the minimum resources needed to initiate a specific action?
4. What first step can be taken by the group, organization, community or institution?

CLOSING: EVALUATE LEARNING

1. What idea of the workshop changes our understanding of gender equality?
2. What lessons can we learn to strengthen women's participation?
3. What individual or collective commitment can we assume after the workshop?

Recommendations for adapting the experiences

- Start from the local diagnosis: identify needs, actors, available resources, and barriers to participation.
- Combine strategies: articulate organization, legal incidence, institutionality, planning, monitoring and communication.
- Ensure diverse participation: include indigenous women, Afro-descendants, youth, rural women, women with disabilities, caregivers and community leaders.
- Define achievable objectives: prioritize concrete actions that can be measured, evaluated and sustained over time.
- Caring for the safety and well-being of participants: anticipating political, digital, emotional or community risks.
- Document the process: record agreements, learnings, difficulties, testimonies and results to strengthen collective memory

The purpose of these exercises around guiding questions is to allow the group to identify which elements are transferable to the local context, which alliances must be built and what are the first steps that would lead to converting an inspiring experience into a concrete action of incidence, or formation community transformation

Bibliography

Assier, A. (25 de 04 de 2023). Un país sin alcaldesas. Guatemala, Guatemala, Guatemala.

CEPAL/ONUMUJERES. (2024). Las mujeres en los gobiernos locales de América Latina y el Carib, 2023. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL/ONUMUJERES.

Electoral, M. d. (2023). Balance electoral y legislativo en torno a la participación política de las mujeres en Colombia. Bogotá: MOE.

UNDP. (2023). Breaking Down Gender Biases. Shifting social norms towards gender equalit. New York: UNDP.

Zabaleta, M. (31 de julio de 2020). El bordado devino herramienta de lucha, activismo y ritual en toda latinoamérica. Obtenido de <https://martazabaleta.blogspot.com/2020/07/el-bordado-devino-herramienta-de-lucha.html>

NOTES

