



ILJ Colombia consisted of two stages:

- Two virtual sessions bringing together distinguished national and international parliamentarians, as well as subject-matter experts, aimed at strengthening key knowledge on leadership, legislative processes, and political participation.
- An in-person meeting, which constituted the final stage of the program, allowed participants to put individual and collective leadership into practice, strengthen collaborative work, and enable the presentation of proposals addressing the challenges identified by the young women, thereby consolidating the participants' learning.

YOUTH LEGISLATIVE IMPACT PROGRAM COLOMBIA

Between October and November 2025, more than 30 young women leaders from all regions of Colombia participated in the Youth Legislative Impact (ILJ, by its Spanish acronym) – Colombia program, titled *From Potential to Impact*, an initiative developed by ParlAmericas in partnership with the Congress of the Republic of Colombia.

ILJ is a ParlAmericas training program designed to strengthen the leadership and political action capacity of young women in Latin America by developing skills, knowledge, and tools that enable them to actively participate in public life and contribute to democratic renewal.

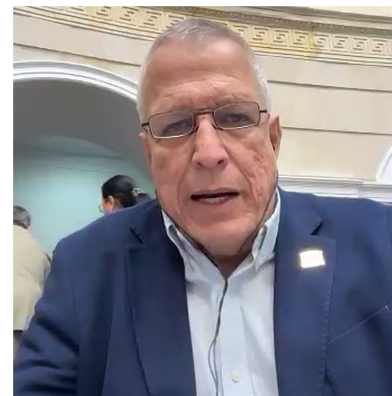
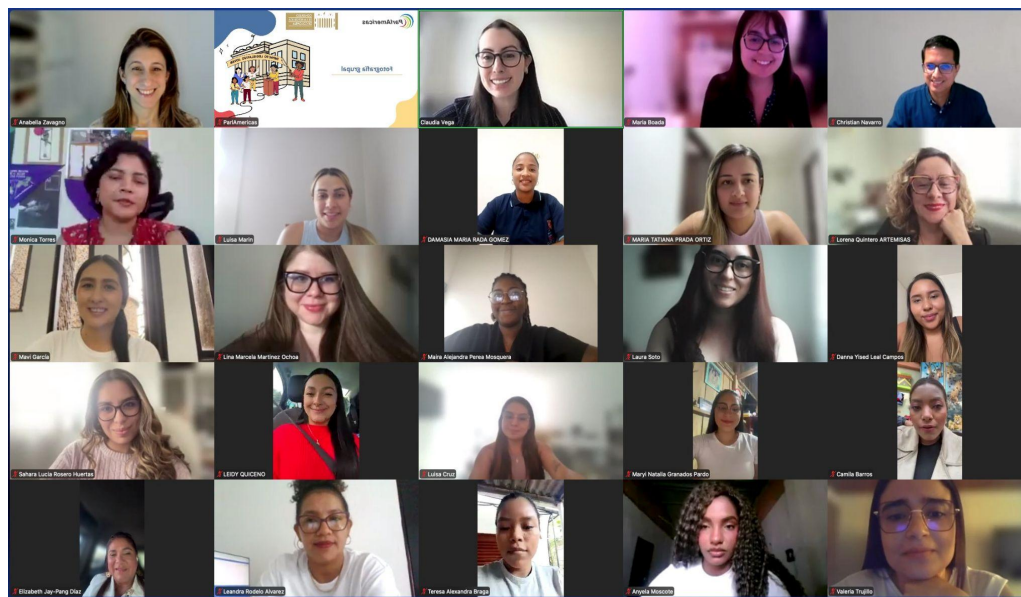
The Colombia edition marked the fourth implementation of the program in Latin America, following previous editions in [Panama](#) (2021), [Honduras](#) (2022), and Brazil (September 2025), consolidating ILJ as a regional reference initiative for strengthening the political leadership of young women.

FIRST VIRTUAL SESSION - OCTOBER 9

From Potential to Leadership

This first virtual session served as an introductory space for the program, dedicated to facilitating the presentation and integration of the participating young women leaders and fostering an initial exchange around their motivations, aspirations, and challenges. Through a plural dialogue, the session promoted reflection on youth participation and its contribution to building a more inclusive, open, and representative democracy in Colombia.

Likewise, through a multi-stakeholder panel, participants heard stories of youth and parliamentary leadership, intended to inspire and encourage them to strengthen their leadership skills.

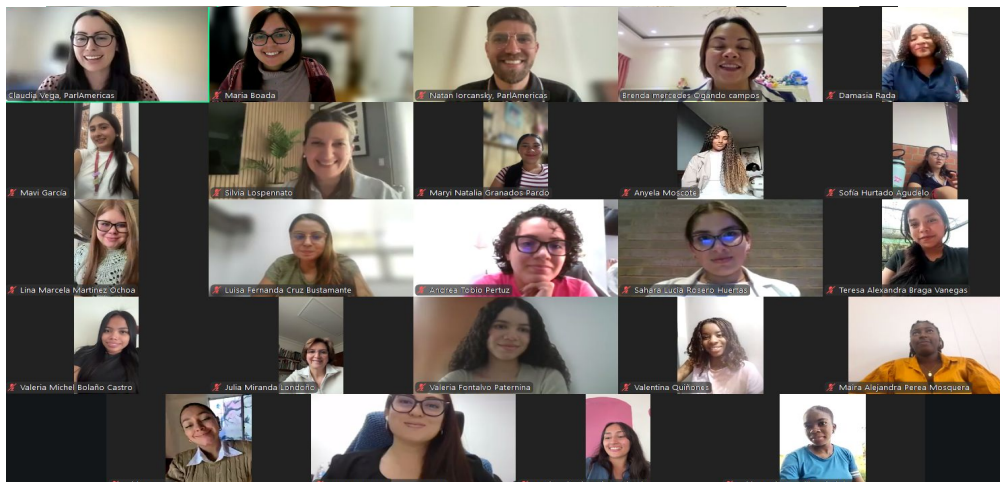
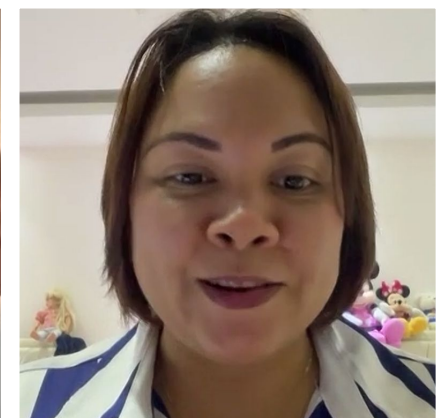
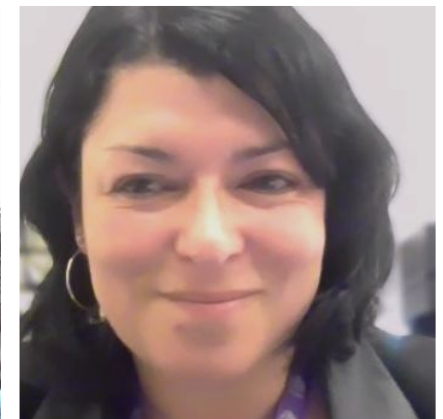


SECOND VIRTUAL SESSION - OCTOBER 23

From Leadership to Impact

During this session, practical recommendations were shared to strengthen the leadership and political advocacy capacity of young women in Colombia. Key messages highlighted the importance of building and sustaining support networks, acting in coherence with personal values, and exercising leadership grounded in transparency, integrity, and courage. The session also underscored the need to define a clear purpose and to identify the right moments to promote dialogue and effective political action.

Through an international panel, women parliamentarians from across the region shared their trajectories and lessons learned in political advocacy through parliamentary work with participants. The panel also addressed the opportunities for citizen participation offered by parliaments, and the role of parliamentary staff in strengthening the link between citizens and legislative work.



WELCOME ACTIVITY - NOVEMBER 18

Meeting of Young Women Leaders with Parliamentarians from the Region

ILJ participants—young women leaders from all regions of Colombia—gathered in the city of Bogotá ahead of the start of the program's in-person meeting. This welcome session focused on creating an environment of trust and dialogue through activities designed to strengthen bonds among participants, promote network-building, and facilitate the identification of shared themes and interests that were subsequently addressed throughout the meeting.

In addition, this activity enabled direct exchanges between program participants and national and international parliamentarians.



IN-PERSON MEETING - NOVEMBER 19 AND 20

ILJ-Colombia “From Potential to Impact”

As the final stage of the program, the ILJ-Colombia in-person meeting was held at the Congress of the Republic. During the sessions, discussions addressed the demographic composition of Colombia and the strategic role of young people in the current landscape, in which nearly 47% of the population is under the age of 30 years (according to data presented by UNFPA). Similarly, participants reflected on the barriers faced by young women in politics and the importance of programs such as ILJ, as well as the need to increase women’s participation in order to reduce these barriers.

This meeting also represented a valuable opportunity to bring citizens closer to Congress by initiating the co-creation process for the *10th Plan for an Open and Transparent Congress 2025-2026*. Building on the Congress's ongoing efforts to strengthen transparency, legislative innovation, and citizen engagement, ILJ-Colombia participants held the first youth roundtable, creating a space for dialogue, consensus-building, and active participation, alongside Congress staff and civil society representatives.



[ACTIVITY WEBPOST](#)



AGENDAS (in Spanish):

- [SESIÓN VIRTUAL 1](#)
- [SECOND VIRTUAL SESSION](#)
- [IN-PERSON MEETING](#)



[PODCAST EPISODE](#)



[VIDEO RECORDING](#)



IN-PERSON MEETING - NOVEMBER 19 AND 20

ILJ–Colombia “From Potential to Impact”

Through various working groups, dialogues, and panels, the young leaders acquired key tools, including the development of compelling messages and the strategic communication of those messages to advance impactful initiatives. Participants had the opportunity to apply these knowledge and tools in the preparation of their final projects: a video reflecting a challenge faced by their communities, their vision for change, and proposals for collaboration with Congress.

Likewise, through expert presentations, participants learned about programs, projects, and initiatives dedicated to strengthening the participation of young women in politics as agents of change in Colombia.

As a practical exercise in parliamentary work, the young women leaders attended a public hearing of the First Committee of the Chamber of Representatives, during which [Statutory Bill No. 301 of 2025 \(Chamber\)](#) on parity in public organizations was examined.

The application of the knowledge acquired in the program resulted in the development and presentation of videos addressing challenges and proposals for change in areas such as the environment, health, education, and employment. These videos focused on specific issues, drew on real data to diagnose the problems, and put forward proposals for legislative action to mitigate them.



AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Host parliamentarian

- Senator **Germán Blanco** (Colombia), President of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network (OPN)

Colombian parliamentarians

- Honourable Representative **Juan Sebastián Gómez**, First Vice-President of the Chamber of Representatives
- Senator **Ana María Castañeda Gómez**, Second Vice-President of the Senate of the Republic
- Honourable Representative **Elizabeth Jay-Pang**, member of the ParlAmericas Council
- Honourable Representative **Catherine Juvinao**, First Vice-President for South America of the OPN
- Honourable Representative **Yenica Acosta**
- Honourable Representative **Julia Miranda Londoño**

International parliamentarians

- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Antares Vázquez Alatorre** (Mexico), President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality (PNGE)
- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Brenda Ogando** (Dominican Republic), First Vice-President for the Caribbean of the PNGE
- Member of the Legislative Assembly **Carolina Delgado** (Costa Rica), member of the ParlAmericas Council
- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Silvia Lospennato** (Argentina)
- Member of Congress **Sonia Gutiérrez** (Guatemala)

Experts and parliamentary staff

- **Diego González**, Secretary General of the Senate of the Republic and General Coordinator of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament
- **Luis Mora**, Representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- **Diana Espinosa**, Acting Deputy Representative of UN Women Colombia
- **Vanessa Suárez**, Program Assistant at the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) Colombia
- **Claudia Fuenzalida Cereceda**, member of the Parliamentary Staff Network for Gender Equality and Head of the Planning and Management Control Unit and Gender Focal Point of the Senate of the Republic of Chile
- **Vanessa Cala**, Advisor on Good Governance and Legislative Transparency at the General Secretariat of the Chamber of Representatives
- **Daniela López**, Communications Specialist in Public Affairs and Political Strategy
- **Lorena Quintero**, Project Director at Fundación Artemisas
- **Mónica Torres**, ILJ Honduras participant



Senator Germán Blanco (Colombia), President of the OPN

"The spirit behind this program is to recognize where the energy and imagination needed to open pathways in public life lie — within youth — to transform institutions and project different futures."



Member of the Chamber of Deputies Antares Vázquez Alatorre (Mexico), President of the PNGE

"Politics is the art of dialogue, of building consensus, of reconciling issues that are often opposing. Leadership requires knowing how to engage in conversation with others so they can become allies."



Honourable Representative Catherine Juvinao (Colombia), First Vice-President for South America of the OPN

"As more women enter politics, we open the door for others. And we normalize, in the collective imagination, that women have power, that women have come to lead, and that women have come to transform."



Member of the Chamber of Deputies Brenda Ogando (Dominican Republic), First Vice-President for the Caribbean of the PNGE

"It is truly inspiring to see so many young women gathered at this meeting, from different territories and with diverse life trajectories and early experiences of political engagement."

Acknowledgements

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We extend our sincere appreciation to the panelists who generously shared their time, knowledge, and experiences, as well as to the organizations and individuals who promoted and supported the implementation of the event. Their contributions were essential in consolidating this program as a regional reference for advancing women's political participation and fostering inclusive political leadership.

We extend our special thanks to all program participants.

