



ILJ-Dominican Republic consisted of two stages:

- A virtual phase composed of two sessions aimed at strengthening participants' leadership skills, encouraging their participation in public life, and fostering reflection on their role in political and social change processes. This phase brought together national and international parliamentarians, as well as experts from various fields.
- An in-person meeting in Santo Domingo, serving as the culminating stage of the program. This space enabled participants to put into practice the learning developed during the previous sessions through leadership exercises, collaborative work, and the development of proposals related to food security.

YOUTH LEGISLATIVE IMPACT PROGRAM DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

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The Youth Legislative Impact (ILJ, by its Spanish acronym) Program is a regional ParI Americas initiative designed to strengthen the leadership and political action capacity of young women in Latin America, recognizing their participation as a fundamental element in fostering democratic resilience and strengthening democracy. The program has previously been implemented in [Panama](#) (2021), [Honduras](#) (2022), [Brazil](#) (2025), and [Colombia](#) (2025).

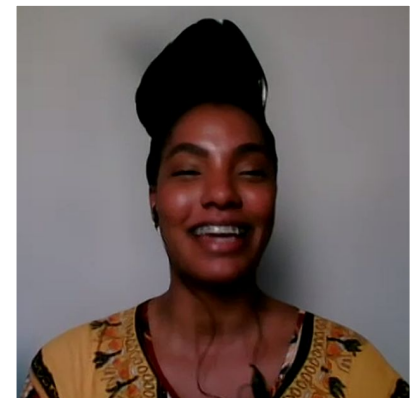
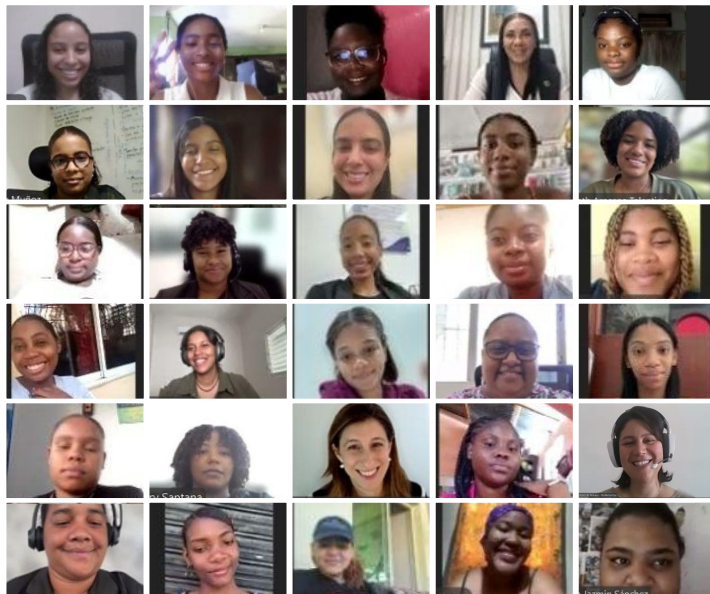
Between February and April 2026, the edition of ILJ–Dominican Republic was held in partnership with the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic. The program brought together nearly 40 young women leaders between the ages of 18 and 25 from different regions of the country and provided a space for exchange, collaboration, and learning aimed at strengthening their active engagement in public life and social transformation processes.

FIRST VIRTUAL SESSION – FEBRUARY 19

Strengthening Leadership

As the opening session of the program, this first virtual meeting provided participants with an opportunity to get to know one another, interact, and share their motivations for generating positive change within their communities. Through participatory activities, the young women reflected on their roles as leaders and on political life as a legitimate and strategic space for advancing social transformation.

Subsequently, through an international panel featuring parliamentary representatives, civil society representatives, and a participant from a previous ILJ edition, the young women heard leadership experiences and trajectories intended to inspire them and strengthen their own paths of engagement.

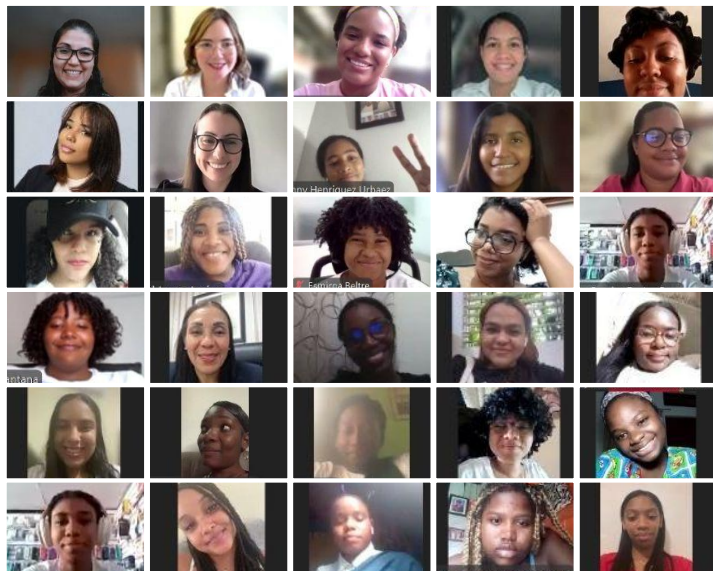


SECOND VIRTUAL SESSION – MARCH 5

Generating Political and Social Impact

During the program's second session, the young women leaders participated in an international panel focused on how to advance political and social transformation through parliament, diplomacy, and civil society. Drawing on these discussions, the session facilitated the sharing of experiences, strategies, decisions, and lessons learned to strengthen the impact of young women within their communities and in public life. Building on the first session, which addressed women's access to decision-making spaces, this meeting further explored how participants can make their voices heard and drive change from within those spaces.

Group dialogues were also held, during which participants reflected on the transformations they wish to promote in their communities. As a result, each group identified between one and three priority areas for change, as well as initial steps to move toward their realization.



WELCOME ACTIVITY – APRIL 7

Meeting of Young Women Leaders with Parliamentarians from the Region

As the start of the in-person meeting in Santo Domingo, participating young women leaders gathered in a casual setting to foster dialogue, exchange, and build a foundation for trusting relationships. Through ice-breaker games, the activities encouraged a connection among participants and laid the groundwork for the development of leadership networks that would accompany the following stages of the program.

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



IN-PERSON MEETING – APRIL 8 AND 9

ILJ–Dominican Republic

As the final stage of the program, the ILJ–Dominican Republic in-person meeting was held at the Chamber of Deputies, bringing together the young women leaders to deepen their learning developed during the virtual sessions. Over the course of two days, participants engaged with parliamentarians, experts, and representatives of international organizations and civil society in spaces designed to strengthen their leadership, expand their political and social action tools, and reflect on the role of young women in transforming their communities and public life.

The sessions addressed topics such as the participation of young women in decision-making spaces; women's leadership in the digital age; food security through the experiences and contributions of rural women; and the tools available to effectively engage with Congress. A key focus of the dialogue on rural women and food security was connecting challenges identified in communities with potential responses through public policy, legislative action, and citizen participation. Through a panel and working groups, participants exchanged perspectives with experts and women leaders on priority issues, opportunities for action, and the importance of incorporating the voices of young women in developing solutions.

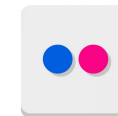


[ACTIVITY WEBPOST](#)



AGENDAS (in Spanish):

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



[PHOTO GALLERY](#)



IN-PERSON MEETING – APRIL 8 AND 9

ILJ–Dominican Republic

The meeting also provided participants with tools to extend their leadership beyond the program. Sessions on effective communication, citizen participation, and engagement with Congress strengthened the young women's capacities to formulate messages, present proposals, and identify institutional mechanisms through which they can contribute to public and legislative debates within their communities.

As part of the program's practical component, participants worked in groups to develop their final projects: videos focused on food security-related challenges faced by their communities, their vision for change, and proposals for collaboration with Congress to advance responses through legislative action.



AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Host parliamentarians

- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Shoraya Suárez Ariza**, Vice-President for the Caribbean of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change and Sustainability (PNCCS)
- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Brenda Ogando Campos**, Vice-President for the Caribbean of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality (PNGE)

Parliamentarians from Dominican Republic

- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Alfredo Pacheco Osoria**, President of the Chamber of Deputies
- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Dharuely D'Aza Caraballo**, Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies
- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Olfanny Méndez Matos**
- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Melina Sánchez**, President of the Youth Committee of the Chamber of Deputies
- Senator **Aracelis Villanueva Figueroa**, President of the Family and Gender Equality Committee of the Senate of the Dominican Republic
- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Liz Mieses**

International parliamentarians

- Member of the Legislative Assembly **Carolina Delgado** (Costa Rica), Member of the ParlAmericas Council
- Honourable Representative **Catherine Juvinao**, First Vice-President for South America of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network (OPN)
- Senator **Iván Flores García** (Chile), President of ParlAmericas
- Member of the National Assembly **Katherine Pacheco Machuca** (Ecuador), Member of the ParlAmericas Council
- Member of the Legislative Assembly **Luz Mary Alpízar** (Costa Rica), Vice-President for Central America of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network (OPN)
- Member of Parliament **Sandra Cobena** (Canada)

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Diplomatic representatives

- Her Excellency **Jacqueline DeLima Baril**, Ambassador of Canada to the Dominican Republic

Experts and parliamentary staff

- **Guadalupe Valdez**, Executive Director of the Centro de Investigación y Promoción Social (CIPROS)
- **Ana Gabriela Rojas Cuautla**, founder of Colectivo Cultural Camaxtli, Mexico
- **María Paula Gómez Soto**, Knowledge Management Specialist with the *Mesoamérica sin Hambre* program of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- **Roberta Santoro**, Gender Specialist at the FAO Office in the Dominican Republic
- **Lutty Suero**, Program and Project Coordinator at the National Confederation of Rural Women (CONAMUCA)
- **Miguelina Cabrera Febrillet**, Member of the Coordinating Team for Work with Girls, Adolescents, and Young Women of the *Junta de Mujeres Mamá Tingó Haina Organization*
- **Ely Encarnación**, Deputy Director General of Migration, Dominican Republic
- **Rosemary Cedeño Nieves**, Director of Committee Coordination of the Senate of the Dominican Republic
- **Sara Brochet**, Gender Specialist with the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) of the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States
- **Mildred Samboy**, Development Coordination Officer – Partnerships and Development Finance, United Nations Office in the Dominican Republic, and OCR Gender and Youth Focal Point
- **Juan Carlos Chavarría Herrera**, Manager of the Citizen Participation Department of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica and Regional Coordinator for Central America of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament
- **Natalia Gherardi**, Executive Director of the Latin American Team for Justice and Gender (ELA)
- **Anyela Moscote**, ILJ Colombia participant



Member of the Chamber of Deputies Shoraya Suárez Ariza (Dominican Republic), Vice-President for the Caribbean of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change and Sustainability (PNCCS)

"Women are strong and resilient, but it is also true that we face greater barriers to accessing positions of power and decision-making. That is why creating the conditions to strengthen women's leadership is not a privilege: it is a democratic necessity."



Member of the Chamber of Deputies Brenda Ogando Campos (Dominican Republic), Vice-President for the Caribbean of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality (PNGE)

"The accumulated experience of those who have paved the way, combined with the vision and creativity of new generations, allows us to envision political representation that is more equitable and more closely connected to citizens. It is this combination that truly renews our institutions."



Member of the Legislative Assembly Carolina Delgado (Costa Rica), member of the ParlAmericas Council

"If we, as women, cannot have a say in determining the direction of our own development, it is impossible for the world to change."



Honourable Representative Catherine Juvinao, First Vice-President for South America of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network (OPN)

"Transformations do not happen overnight; they are built with patience, tools, and networks of collaboration. Take advantage of this space to strengthen your causes, connect your projects, and build your own path toward advocacy and impact."



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.

