



Promoting Inclusion and Equality through Parliamentary Youth Programming: Resource Compilation for Member Parliaments

Introduction

According to Kofi Annan, the 7th Secretary-General of the United Nations, "Gender equality is critical to the development and peace of every nation."

Youth parliaments and programming offer a wide range of benefits to both their participants and parliaments themselves, including:

- promoting learning and interest in the legislative process,
- strengthening connections between the public and parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, and
- incorporating new perspectives into debates on legislative issues.



This latter point is especially important considering that only 2% of parliamentarians globally are under the age of 30. Further, as women and other groups remain underrepresented in formal decision-making processes across the Americas and Caribbean region, parliamentary youth programs create an important opportunity to amplify the voices of diverse youth and to contribute to long-term efforts to promote inclusion in parliament.

Numerous parliaments have undertaken youth programs that centre young women's political participation and gender equality principles, or that incorporate related learning in existing programs, recognizing that such education and training can strengthen democracy. Societies will benefit from all future leaders being empowered to recognize gender inequalities and develop skills allowing them to promote and take decisions in favour of equality for all.

This document was prepared to support parliaments in incorporating gender equality and inclusion themes and approaches into new and existing youth programming. It presents resources and information from such programs that can be drawn upon in the planning and implementation processes.

For further information or full access to any of the ParlAmericas materials referenced below, please contact info@parlamericas.org.

Examples of parliamentary youth programming

The Young Women in Leadership program



The Young Women in Leadership (YWIL) initiative is a program that ParlAmericas and Caribbean Women in Leadership (CIWiL) have implemented with the national parliament, inspired by the [Daughters of the Vote](#) program by Canadian organization Equal Voice, and other partners in four Caribbean countries: [Trinidad and Tobago](#), [Antigua and Barbuda](#), [Saint Lucia](#), and [Jamaica](#). The goal of the program is to support young women's interest in politics and public leadership by providing training and education, as well as exposure to the parliamentary sphere.

YWIL is similar to a national youth parliament, as it culminates in the young women's participation in a [simulated parliamentary sitting](#), but the motion of focus is a gender equality theme and participants also receive training on gender equality and processes for inclusive decision-making.

The Youth Legislative Impact program

The Youth Legislative Impact program is an initiative that ParlAmericas has implemented in [Panama](#) and [Honduras](#), together with the national parliament of each country and the National Forum of Women of Political Parties of Panama (FONAMUPP) and the Forum of Women Politicians of Honduras, respectively. The goal of the program is to promote youth political participation, especially the empowerment of young women, and inclusive decision-making and civic engagement.

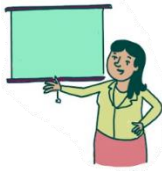
The specifics of the Youth Legislative Impact program vary per country, but it centres around a series of training sessions on parliamentary process and inclusive leadership, culminating in participants' collaboration on a document or product that is presented to the legislature for use (e.g., a draft bill or a set of recommendations for committee work).



Mainstreaming gender equality and inclusion in youth programming

Across the region, some of the ways in which parliaments have incorporated gender equality and inclusion into new and existing youth programming are the following:

- Creating mentorship programs for young women leaders



Example: [The President's 10](#) is a program run by the President of the Senate of Antigua and Barbuda and parliamentary staff that was launched in 2017 with support by other women parliamentarians in that chamber. The initiative supports an annual cohort of 10 young women to encourage their pursuit of political careers or other leadership positions.

- ☑ Centring the debate of a National Youth Parliament on themes related to gender equality
- ☑ Incorporating within the training for program delegates a module on the importance of gender-sensitive and inclusive decision-making and methods for doing so
- ☑ Implementing programming specifically focused on young women’s political participation, including in partnership with other organizations, such as those described above



Materials to support the inclusion of gender equality in youth parliamentary programming

Through our partnerships on the YWiL and ILJ initiatives, ParlAmericas has developed a number of materials that can be shared with parliaments for their own use and adaptation, including:



- ☑ **Session guides, presentations, and exercises** on how to apply a gender lens in parliamentary decision-making
- ☑ **Handouts** on [gender sensitivity in legislation](#), [intersectionality](#), and how to undertake [legislative analysis](#)
- ☑ **Presentations** to guide participants through reviewing parliamentary motions from a gender lens and preparing parliamentary contributions from this approach
- ☑ **Agendas for workshops** on inclusive leadership and methodologies for panels on the same theme
- ☑ **Parliamentary motions** on women’s economic empowerment and on changes to **budgetary allocations** as a result of gender-responsive analysis
- ☑ Materials to conduct a [Power Walk exercise](#) to understand intersectionality
- ☑ **Resource lists** that provide youth with links to materials on topics related to parliament and gender equality

Other related resources



[Engaging Youth in Parliaments to Advance Gender Equality](#)

This toolkit presents a summary of youth priorities in the gender equality agenda, strategies to support young leaders, and highlights the importance of enabling youth participation based on experiences by ParlAmericas, FONAMUPP, and CIWiL implementing collaborative work to promote youth leadership for gender equality in parliaments.

[Keynote Interview: Supporting Women’s Political Leadership through Intergenerational Partnerships](#)

In this ParlAmericas podcast recorded as part of the 12th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality, Ashlee Burnett, a youth leader and gender equality activist, and the Honourable Jean Augustine, a Grenadian-Canadian former parliamentarian and minister, discuss the importance of young women’s leadership, strategies for strengthening women’s political participation and creating more

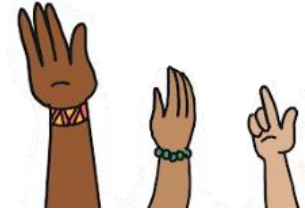
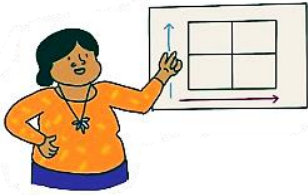
gender sensitive and youth friendly parliaments, and responses to the differentiated impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and other regional issues.

[Designing Inclusive Futures in Partnership with Youth](#)

This activity report from the 12th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality (PNGE), hosted virtually by the Congress of Colombia and the Parliament of Grenada, presents key strategies

discussed at the meeting to advance gender equality goals through collaborations between parliaments and youth. In the report you can also access the [declaration](#) on

parliament-youth partnerships that was adopted during the Gathering.



[Youth Advocacy in Parliaments for Climate Action with a Gender Perspective](#)

This activity report summarizes a session that was held as part of the NGO Forum in the framework of the 66th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women with the objective of exploring the strategies and methods that can be used by young activists to promote feminist climate action in legislative decision-making spaces.



[Beijing + 25: Fulfilling the Commitment](#)

This toolkit houses the recordings and summaries of a series of webinars hosted by the UN Women Multi-Country Office – Caribbean and the University of the West Indies Institute for Gender and Development Studies – Nita Barrow Unit, with the support of ParlAmericas. Each session covered themes addressed in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including women and poverty, education and training, institutional mechanisms and women in power and decision making, and human rights of women and the girl child, which can serve as a reference for programming or can be shared directly with youth participants.



[Elena and the Ants: A Team to the Rescue](#)

This children's book, and its accompanying [video narration](#) and [learning guide](#), were produced by FONAMUPP. The story promotes civic engagement, girls' leadership and interest in politics, and environmental sustainability. The book has been translated into [English](#) and three Indigenous languages, and it has been shared with children across Panama. It has been presented in the National Assembly of Panama and is available in national libraries.



We invite you to request further information on any of the ParlAmericas resources or programs referenced. We would also be pleased to hear about your use of any of the above references in the planning and implementation of your youth programming with a gender equality lens: info@parlAmericas.org.



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