



CaliBaja Moving Forward Together *CaliBaja Avanzando Juntos*

Takeaways from meeting “Dialogue of Women Leaders at the Border”

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Women have made significant progress in their political participation in the United States and Mexico. In Mexico, in addition to electing the first female president in 200 years, 13 women currently govern 44.7% of the population.

When in positions of power, women have significantly contributed to building more inclusive, resilient, and equitable communities. It is essential to facilitate women’s access to power because they bring new perspectives and are more likely to foster caregiving ethics and horizontal organizational structures. For example, the election of Baja California’s first female governor was pivotal in advancing efforts to issue a gender-based violence alert, decriminalize abortion in the state through a decree, and open new Centers for Women’s Justice. Meanwhile, the election of the first Latina mayor in Imperial Beach has led to special considerations encouraging political participation among single mothers.

However, women still face significant obstacles in their professional development. School systems have a bias in their academic programs by encouraging men to participate in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines, while steering women toward the social sciences. In the business sector, women continue to be silenced, and their contributions are less recognized, resulting in significant implications for gender-based wage disparities. For women of color, these inequalities are even more pronounced, as they face dual discrimination based on both their gender and culture.

Kamala Harris’ identity as a woman of color played a crucial role in her loss during the last U.S. presidential elections. Throughout her campaign, opponents frequently focused on stereotypes tied to her ethnic roots rather than her governing capabilities, a criticism often directed at women in male-dominated professions like politics and engineering. In San Diego, women are estimated to be 82% more likely to experience political violence than the general population.

It is also important to consider the differences in how women experience discrimination based on the intersection of gender with other historically marginalized identities. For instance, migrant women face unique challenges during their migration processes, such as increased exposure to sexual violence and their objectification as a means of negotiation between organized crime and male migrants.



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People of all genders need to question the ways they perpetuate stereotypes and identify how they can individually contribute to equity within their contexts. For example, women in positions of power can be more assertive in demanding and implementing measures that offer professional growth opportunities to other women. This requires privileged men and women to acknowledge historical debts to minorities and be willing to gradually share and relinquish power.

Additionally, it is crucial to integrate a gender perspective across all areas of society. In this regard, higher education institutions in Mexico have developed good practices, such as creating divisions or departments dedicated to gender equality. These initiatives help ensure equality principles in university regulations, raise awareness, implement protocols to reconcile work and family life, promote inclusive and non-sexist language, among others. Likewise, Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has promoted a feminist foreign policy, which allows individuals to request gender identity recognition on birth certificates through consulates.

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