



Report

Better Politics Index 2025 .

Political Leadership as Democratic Infrastructure

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Foreword



People around the world are fed up with politics as usual.

Recent uprisings from young people in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Philippines and the rise of populism in countries like Brazil, Germany and the UK show that citizens want different leaders. Survey respondents around the globe most frequently identify better or different political leaders as the key lever to improving democracy in their countries. Political violence appears everywhere. Assassinations and attempts in Japan, the US and Colombia make headlines, while the increasing rates of online and in-person harassment against women political leaders are the less publicized but everyday realities that damage democracy and effective public leadership.

Recently, I introduced the Better Politics Foundation's work to the head of a political party currently in government, and he simply asked me, "Well, is politics better?" The global scenario I outlined above certainly makes us feel like it isn't. But the honest answer is: it's impossible for me to know. That's a problem. Without systematic measurement, plus more investment and a breaking of the assumption, so well described by Robert Louis Stevenson, that "politics is perhaps the only profession for which no preparation is thought necessary," we can't tell if politics is getting better, what works and what doesn't.

You can't manage or fix what you don't measure. The Better Politics Index aims to fill a gap by measuring political leadership globally—a critical piece of democratic infrastructure that has been overlooked. We also bring attention to the lack of funding for political leadership development. Politics is often compared to sport or a competition. If we take that analogy, we should also apply the rationale that to get a better performance out of a sports team, we need to recruit thoughtfully and invest in training and development. Yet we consistently underfund these very elements in our political system.

At the Better Politics Foundation, we take the view that current and future political talent must be better supported and developed. Upskilling and empowering leaders to lead well and reimagine political systems is essential. The system will not improve on its own.

Since 2021, we have been mapping and building the political leadership innovation space. Our 2022 report, "[Better Leaders, Better Democracies](#)," was the first to map the field, identifying more than 400 organizations working globally on improving political leadership talent. We gave these organizations a name: political leadership incubators. More than 120 of them from 47 countries now form the [Political Leadership Entrepreneur Network](#).

The Better Politics Index is the next step in mapping the field: creating the first global measure of how political systems develop, support, and perceive leaders across 10 countries and four dimensions. This inaugural edition opens a field of measurement rather than closes debate. It reflects the limited data currently available and the constraints of an emerging field. This report highlights the many data gaps that need to be filled for the field to operate and evaluate at its peak.

The Index would not have been possible without the input of more than a dozen expert consultants and key members of the Political Leadership Entrepreneur Network, as well as the initial framing of development consultant Stefanie Conrad. The board and CEO of the Better Politics Foundation—Daniel Sachs, Paul Alarcon, Robyn Scott and Lisa Witter—were the impetus for embarking on this initiative. The entire Better Politics Foundation team contributed in some way, with special thanks to Naveera Amjad and Chirag Ramesh.

Kimberly McArthur
COO, Better Politics Foundation

01. Introduction

What is the Better Politics Index?

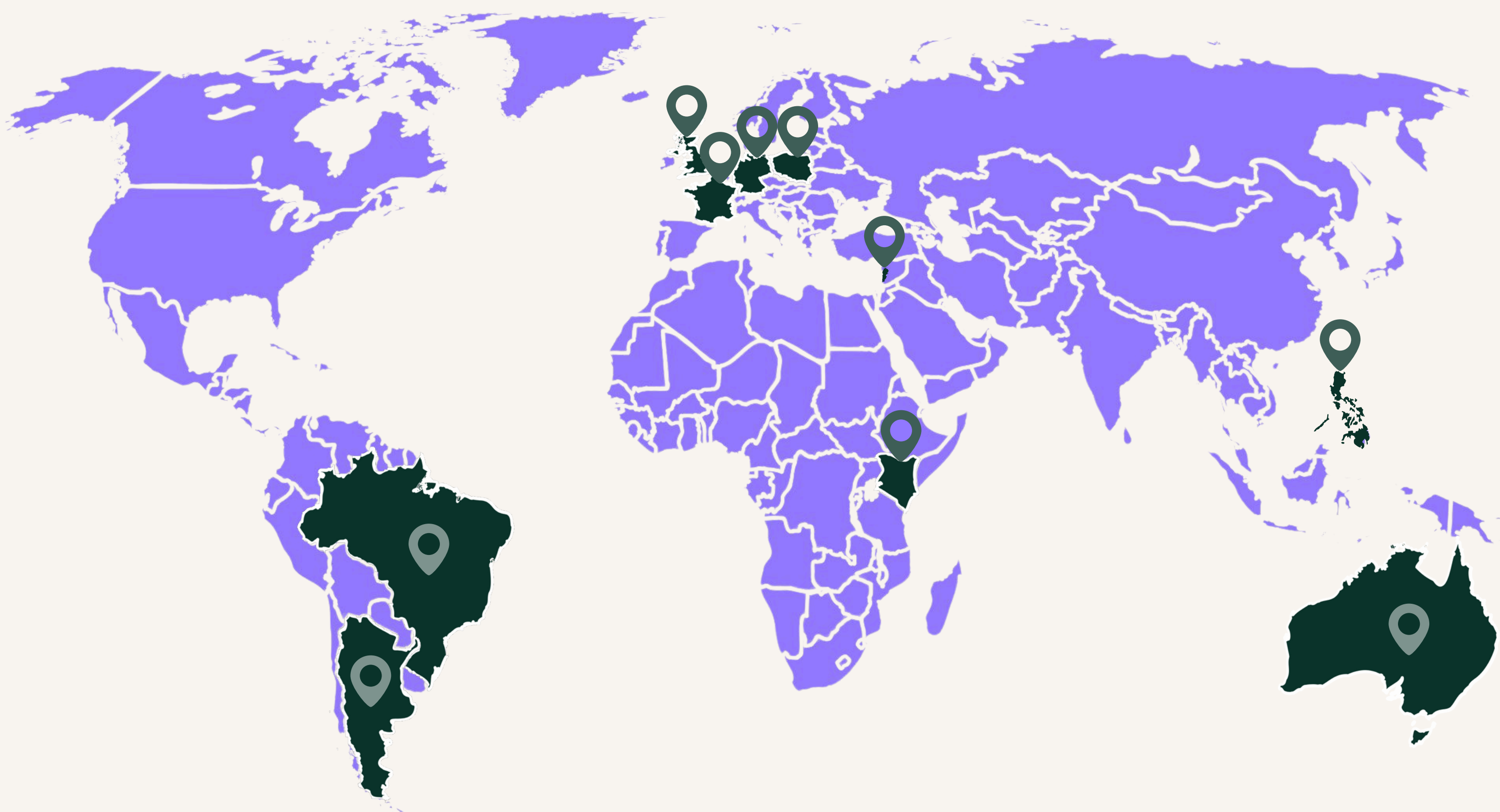
The Better Politics Index is the world's first index focused on measuring the development and support of political leaders as key democratic infrastructure. It offers an evidence-based starting point for analyzing the presence and nature of political leadership development, as well as people's confidence in the leaders at the center of our democracies—a key element of democratic health that lacks consistent global measurement.

The Index is designed to open a field of measurement, not to close debate. In the inaugural 2025 version, the gaps in the evidence and data are significant and illustrative. We don't, for example, yet have data to measure the quality or outcomes of programs to develop and support political leaders. These gaps will evolve as data availability matures. We welcome and value any feedback.

The 2025 Index covers 10 countries chosen for regional diversity, political system variety, democratic strength, population size, and data availability. They represent countries where the Better Politics Foundation has worked, researched, or has strong local partnerships. We look only at national level institutions for this version of the Index. The countries are:

- Argentina
- Australia
- Brazil
- France
- Germany
- Kenya
- Lebanon
- Philippines
- Poland
- United Kingdom

We dive into country spotlights in Chapter 5.



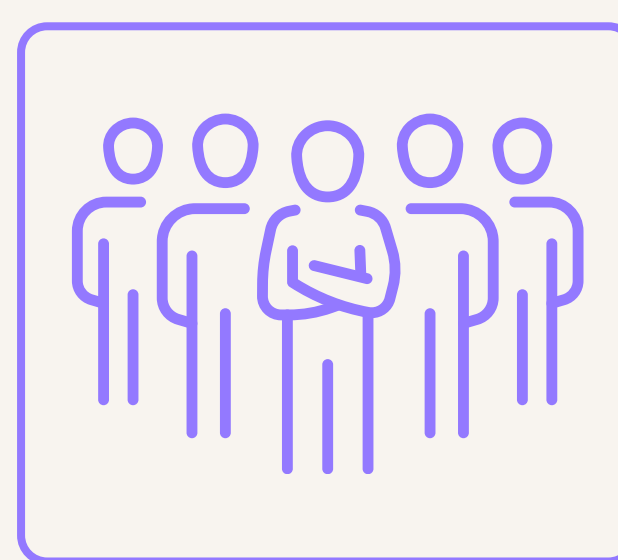
The Index examines four dimensions covering 16 indicators. We explore the dimensions in more detail in Chapter 4.



Dimension 1:
Formal Political
Leadership
Development



Dimension 2:
Institutional
Environment



Dimension 3:
Political Leadership
Ecosystem



Dimension 4:
Public Trust and
Confidence

Political Leadership as Democratic Infrastructure

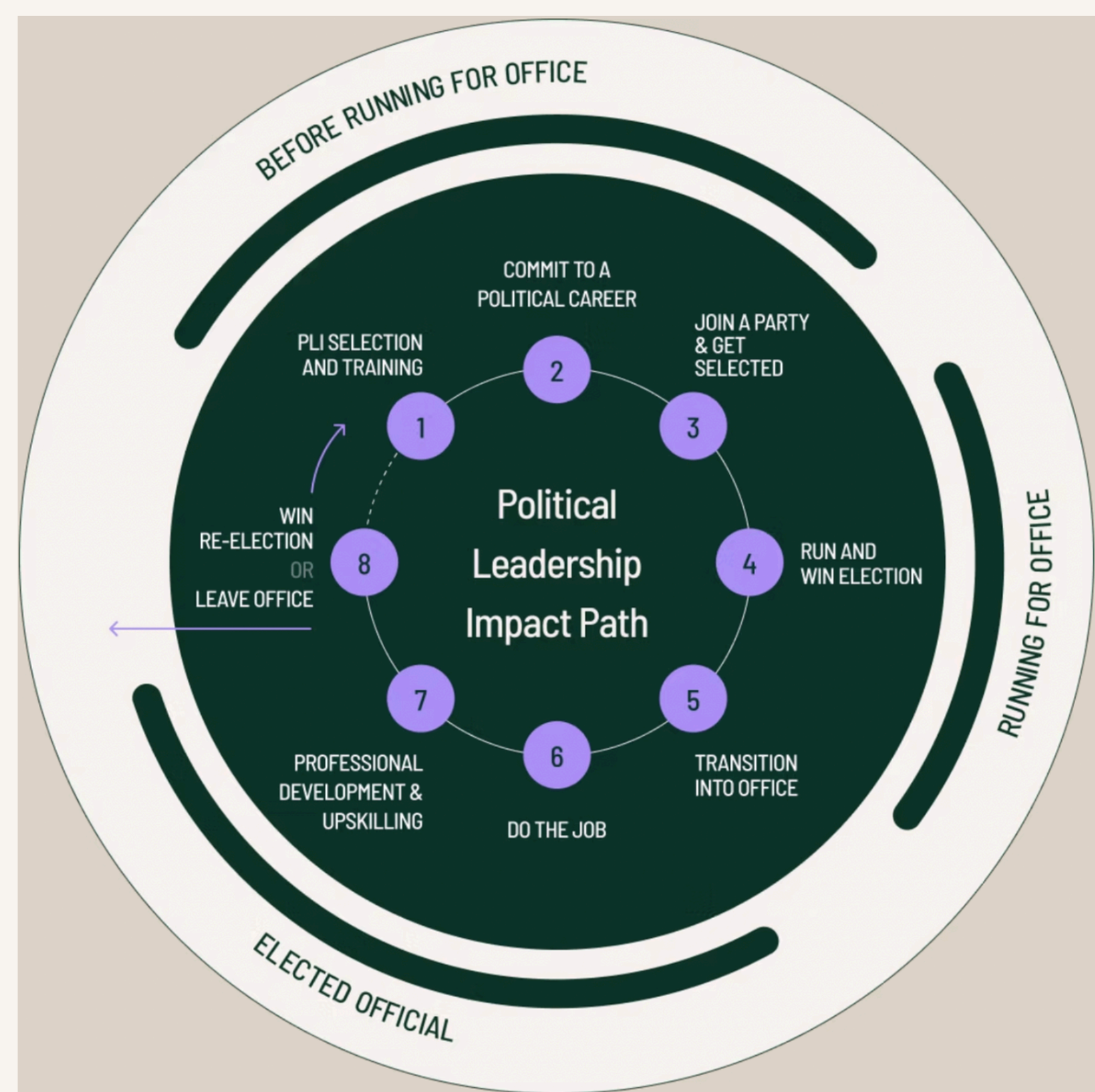
With democracy in decline globally, people identify better political leaders as the most important factor for improvement.¹ Yet political leadership development remains a profound blind spot in our thinking about democracy. While \$60 billion² is spent per year on corporate leadership training in the US alone, we estimate just \$15 million is invested in non-partisan political leadership education and development globally (this number does not include formal institutional training, which we estimate to be low as well). This reveals a fundamental oversight: we invest virtually nothing in selecting, developing and supporting the people who every day make decisions that affect all our lives.

This neglect manifests in measurement as much as in funding. We have no systematic way to measure formal political leadership training and development existence or quality. Political institutions, if they offer any programs, lack public documentation of their impact, quality, or reach. Measurement within the broader civil-society political leadership entrepreneur and innovation ecosystem is somewhat more progressed. Political leadership entrepreneurs and innovators can measure reach and program graduates, but are far from being able to link training outcomes to leadership effectiveness. Relatedly, we have no global dataset on violence against politicians, despite it being a global and growing phenomenon that impacts representative democracy.

These gaps reflect the field's early stage. Political leadership development lacks the measurement infrastructure that mature fields take for granted. We explore possible reasons why in Chapter 6. Building the foundations for measuring political leadership isn't about perfection; it's about progress. Each step toward better data, clearer standards, and shared accountability helps strengthen democracy's ability to renew itself from within.

Our Mission

The Better Politics Foundation is the world's leading global platform for political leadership transformation. Our mission is to renew leadership, reimagine politics and rebuild trust. We see political leadership innovation as a key lever for change and we work on projects across the Political Leadership Impact Path, though we do not work with leaders during candidacies.



This Index is one tool in that broader mission. It is not the final verdict on the state of political leadership, but the first systematic effort to measure what has too long gone unmeasured. We need to measure political leadership infrastructure, document innovation, and support the field of political leadership entrepreneurship to transform how societies develop their political leaders.

Our Vision

The Better Politics Index succeeds if it catalyzes better data collection, more sophisticated measurement, and therefore better political leadership. By making visible what has been overlooked, by documenting what we can and cannot measure, and by creating common metrics across contexts, this Index aims to shift our understanding of political leadership from an individual quality we passively observe to a democratic infrastructure we can actively strengthen.

If you think we have missed aspects, let us know. This is action research and we will be updating with new data and information in each version.

1. Pew Research Center. (2024, March 13). *What can improve democracy?* <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/03/13/what-can-improve-democracy/>

2. Fast Company. (2024, June 27). *Companies spend more than \$60 billion on leadership development annually. This is what they still get wrong.* <https://www.fastcompany.com/91146556/companies-spend-more-than-60-billion-on-leadership-development-annually-this-is-what-they-still-get-wrong>



Pew Research makes it clear: people think democracy gets better when political leadership gets better. The Better Politics Index is the first global tool to measure that leadership and to guide how we strengthen it."

Lisa Witter,
Co-Founder & CEO, Better Politics Foundation

02. Better Politics Index 2025

Country	Rank	Score	Formal Political Leadership Development	Institutional Environment	Political Leadership Ecosystem	Public Trust and Confidence
Germany	1	70.19	92.75	77.53	46.67	44.54
Australia	2	65.11	52	64.18	100	39.11
United Kingdom	3	57.24	65.25	72.28	46.67	31.12
Brazil	4	56.8	47.25	93.2	50.33	29.18
France	5	50.58	63.25	70.1	13.33	—
Philippines	6	49.65	50	49.38	46.67	54.29
Kenya	7	48.6	55	71.77	23.14	37.48
Argentina	8	47.84	30.5	79.19	—	36.06
Poland	9	43.3	70	47.24	1.96	—
Lebanon	10	32.31	32.75	34.05	—	28.39

03. Five Insights

The Better Politics Index 2025 attempts to build critical data infrastructure across 10 initial countries. Our current indicators measure presence more often than quality, and inputs rather than outcomes. We found that most political leadership training programs within formal political institutions, like parties or legislatures, lack public documentation of impact, quality, or participation rates. These constraints are not failures but honest acknowledgments of where the field stands. We have distilled five key insights from the Index data, our research and expert consultations.

01

Regulations Are a Positive But Not Sufficient Step

Several Index countries have strong legal requirements for leadership training from political parties (Brazil³ and Argentina⁴ mandate 20% of political party funds to some form of training, and German legislation requires it⁵). However, the provision of training and development to politicians varies widely. While regulations establish expectations, they don't guarantee meaningful support for current or aspiring leaders.

02

The Ecosystem Compensates

Strong political leadership entrepreneur (PLE) ecosystems and legislative support exist where formal party development systems are weakest. In Australia, Philippines and Kenya, parliamentary institutions provide structured training and support while political parties offer minimal development for candidates or current members. Dynamic civil society PLEs step in, creating alternative pathways into political leadership. This pattern raises questions about the role of political parties in developing political talent and whether compensation by parliaments and civil society is sufficient.

03

The Focus Is on Campaigning Not Governing

In most Index countries, political training and development emphasizes pre-election candidate

preparation over ongoing professional development for sitting politicians. Germany is the exception, providing support across the political spectrum for both candidates and current leaders. This lack of support of current leaders leaves a gap in continued support and upskilling for those who govern.

04

Rapid Change Requires Rapid Adaptation

The UK demonstrates that political leadership training infrastructure needs to be agile to adapt to quickly changing political environments. From 2010–2015, structured orientation programs existed for MPs in Westminster, but by 2024 they could not keep pace with the number of new MPs.⁶ This is a warning that development infrastructure cannot be taken for granted; it must be embedded in multiple layers of a political system.

05

We Have Data and Funding Gaps to Fill

To name just some of the gaps, we have no outcome measures linking training and development to leadership effectiveness, no systematic way to measure the quality of support, and no global dataset on violence against politicians. The emerging field of political leadership development is working to address these gaps, but requires much more investment to do this effectively.

3. Brazil. (1995). *Lei nº 9.096, de 19 de maio de 1995 (Lei dos Partidos Políticos)*, Art. 44. https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/19096.htm

4. Argentina. (2007, December 20). *Ley 26.215 – Financiamiento de los Partidos Políticos*, Art. 12 (as amended 2019). <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/ley-26215-124231>

5. Germany. (1967). *Parteiengesetz (PartG)*, §1(2) – Aufgaben der Parteien. https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/partg/___1.html

6. Rush, M., & Giddings, P. (2015). *A Fresh Start? The Orientation and Induction of New MPs at Westminster Following the 2010 General Election*. <https://academic.oup.com/pa/article-abstract/65/3/559/1438367>; Institute for Government. (2024). *What support are MPs given to do their jobs?* <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainer/support-mps-jobs>.



Kofi Annan often reminded us that ‘no one is born a good democrat, and no one is born a good citizen.’ Just as democracy is a habit that must be cultivated, political leadership is a craft that must be learned. Yet in most countries, politicians receive little systematic training or sustained support over the course of their careers. Assessing how political systems around the world shape and support political leaders is therefore both timely and essential.”

Corinne Momal-Vanian
Executive Director, Kofi Annan Foundation

04. The Four Dimensions

The Better Politics Index is built on four interconnected dimensions that together map the infrastructure shaping political leadership development, from how leaders are trained and the conditions in which they work, to the pathways available for political entry and the public's confidence in their representatives.



Dimension 1: Formal Political Leadership Development

Do formal political systems (parliaments, legislatures, parties, etc.) develop and support leaders?

This dimension measures: The presence within national legislatures of training and development for current leaders; the presence of training and development offered by political parties to pre-candidates, candidates and current leaders; and the presence of parliamentary codes of conduct. It includes everything from parliamentary inductions to policy training programs, from political party pre-candidate media training to coaching for newly elected members.

This dimension does not measure: The types or efficacy of support, nor does it assess the depth, rigor or attendance of any program. These measures lack data and are intended to be captured in future Better Politics Indexes.

Why this dimension: This dimension captures the structured opportunities for political leaders to develop the skills needed for effective governance.

Weighting rationale: This dimension assesses the offerings of institutions that have a direct impact on current and aspiring leaders—legislatures and political parties. There is significant, although not complete, data available. A high weighting of 35% was therefore used.



Dimension 2: Institutional Environment

How conducive to success are the institutional conditions within which political leaders work?

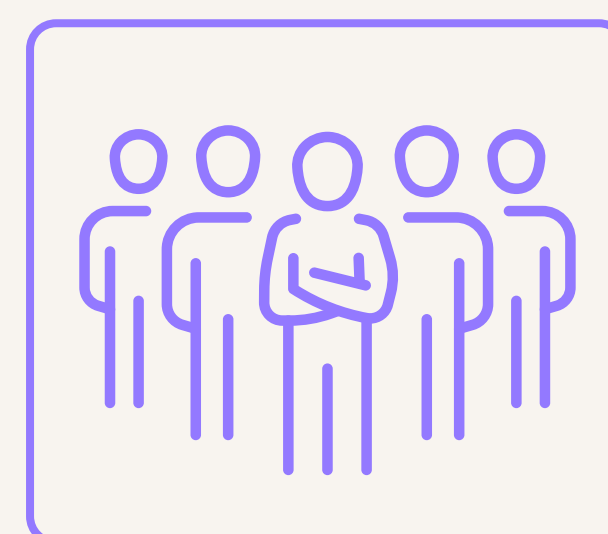
This dimension measures: The availability of legislative staff; the ratio of legislative support staff to members; the availability of office facilities; the representativeness of the legislature (across gender, ethnicity, religion and language); and the ability of the opposition to challenge the government.

This dimension does not measure: Violence against political leaders, despite this having a significant

impact on leaders and their ability to represent citizens. It does not measure the efficacy of support or safeguards, only their presence.

Why this dimension: Strong, representative institutions provide the support, resources, and protections that enable leaders to function effectively and ethically.

Weighting rationale: Systems change and the reimagining of political workplaces is necessary for leaders to operate to the best of their abilities. Reimagining institutions is critical to better politics, but the data that exist are merely proxies for good support, so a mid-level weighting of 25% was used.



Dimension 3: Political Leadership Ecosystem

What are the characteristics of the political leadership entrepreneur ecosystem that develops and supports leaders?

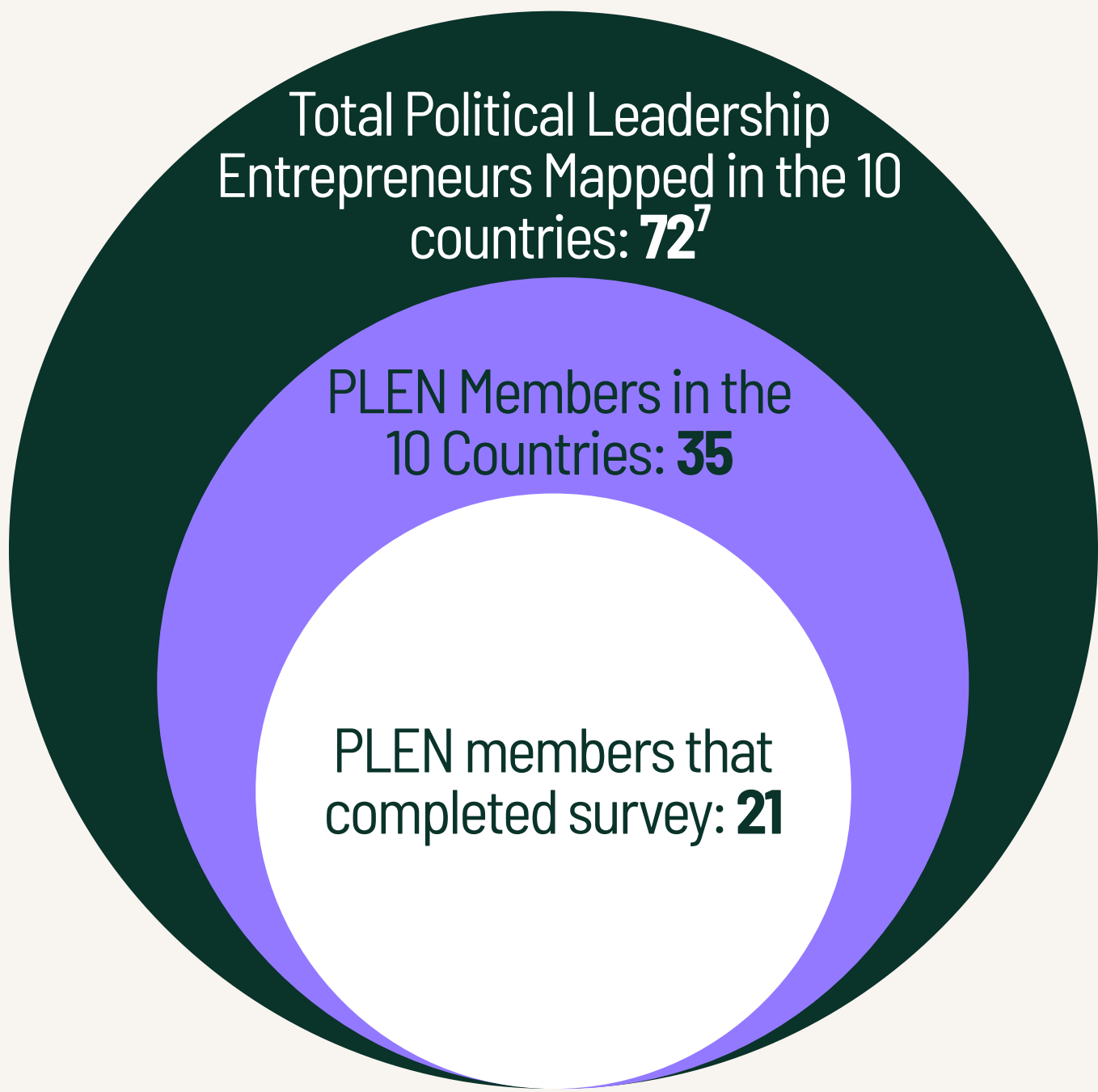
This dimension measures: The number of civil society political leadership entrepreneur (PLE) programs; the number of individuals trained and developed by these programs; and the number of months for which the programs can sustain themselves with their current funding.

This dimension does not measure: Indicators of the success or impact of the programs or eventual policy impact of alumni. This is something we are building into the impact measure of the entire political leadership entrepreneur field.

Why this dimension: Effective democracy requires diverse entry routes and robust support for emerging leaders outside traditional party structures.

Weighting rationale: A robust political leadership entrepreneur ecosystem is necessary for aspiring and current leaders to operate to the best of their abilities. This is a key focus area of the Better Politics Foundation but for now lacks robust data infrastructure. Twenty-one organizations across the 10 Index countries contributed data for this dimension, so a mid-level weighting of 25% was used.

Political Leadership Entrepreneur Data:



Dimension 4: Public Trust & Confidence

How do citizens perceive politicians and political institutions?

This dimension measures: How confident citizens feel in their government, political parties, and political leaders, as well as overall percentage voter turnout.

This dimension does not measure: The health of the country’s democracy, trust at the societal level, or perceived trust in other key institutions in society such as the judiciary and media. These could be added in future iterations.

Why this dimension: Public trust and confidence form the foundation of democratic legitimacy, and leaders operate within—and are constrained by—these perceptual environments.

Weighting rationale: Public perceptions of political leaders are key in representative democracies, but are volatile and influenced by a complex array of factors including policy delivery and implementation, and the media landscape. Hence, a lower weighting of 15% was used.

Data sources:

- **Dimension 1:** Desk Research, Inter-Parliamentary Union (Parline).
- **Dimension 2:** Inter-Parliamentary Union (Parline), Global Leadership Project, V-Dem.
- **Dimension 3:** Political Leadership Entrepreneur Network survey (21 organizations in this release).
- **Dimension 4:** World Values Survey, International IDEA Voter Turnout Database.

More information can be found in Chapter 8: Methodology.

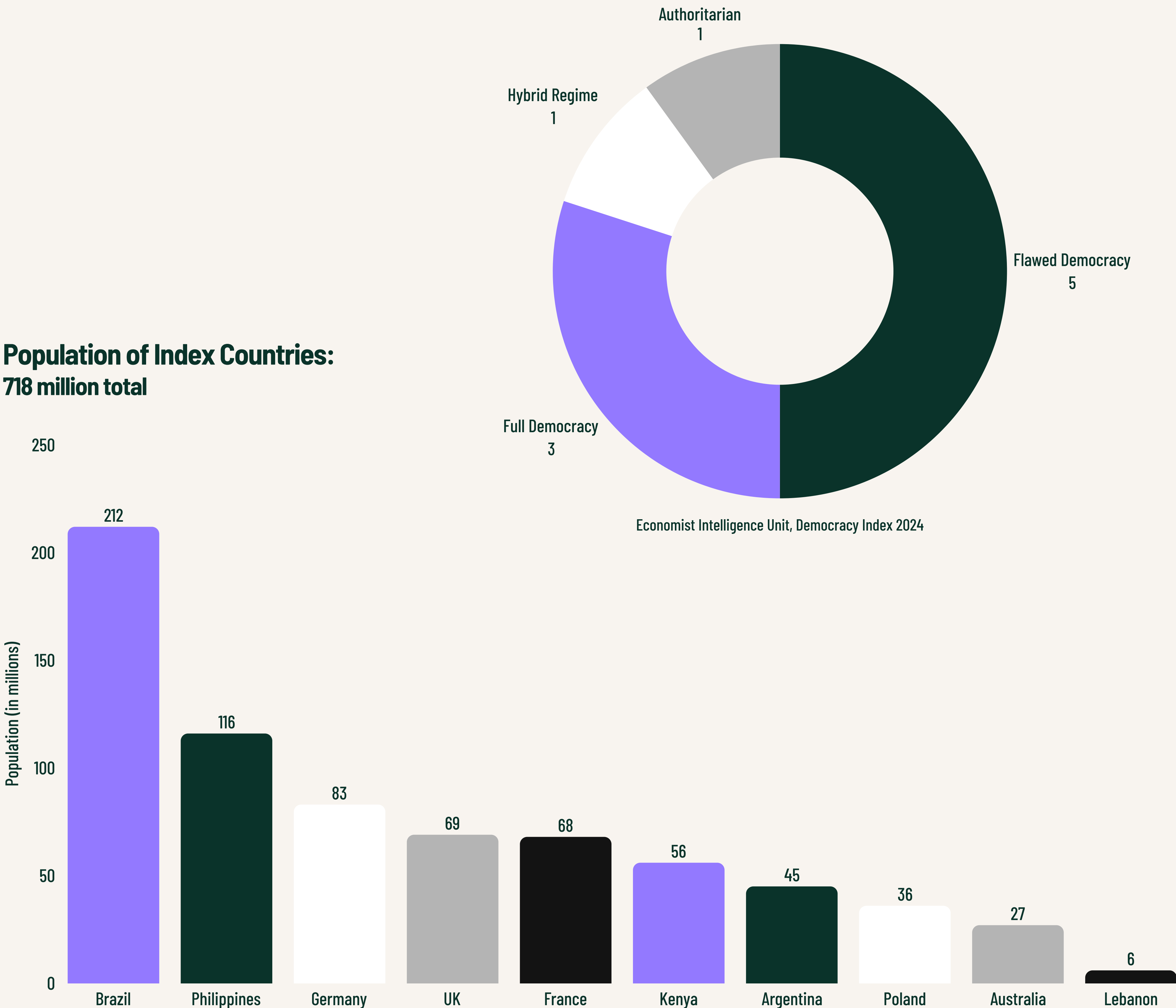
7. [Better Politics Foundation \(2022\), Better Leaders, Better Democracies: Mapping the Organizations Shaping 21st Century Politicians](#)

05. Country Spotlights

While we have a variety of countries in the 2025 Index, we want to acknowledge that the top three ranked countries—Germany, Australia and the UK—are all wealthy and have the top GDPs per capita.

As a result, it could be argued that the Index ranking is reflective simply of the wealth of a country. However, this correlation is not consistent. Poland, with the fifth highest GDP per capita of the Index countries, ranked ninth in the Index. The Philippines, with a per capita GDP of less than \$4,000, ranked sixth.

Of the 10 Index countries, one—Lebanon—has been classified as an authoritarian regime (since 2021). In the MENA region, only Israel is currently considered a democracy (though flawed).⁸ We included Lebanon to track how political leadership infrastructure develops in authoritarianism and to establish a baseline for measuring potential recovery.



8. Economist Intelligence Unit (2024), *Democracy Index 2024*, <https://www.eiu.com/n/democracy-index-2024/>



"The establishment of a well funded Parliamentary Workplace Support Service has been a very welcome development in Australia. However, the picture is not all rosy. Outside of this, training for MPs is limited and political parties are not well set up to provide support. We know from our research that many MPs continue to struggle and many crave better structures. The index highlights another core problem—while voters continue to hold Australia's democratic systems in high regard, this is undermined by distrust in politicians themselves."

Evan Swarten
Co-Founder, DemosAU

"This inaugural Index plays a crucial role in gathering and assessing the data on what support is out there for politicians, so that governments and political leadership entrepreneurs can identify and promote best practice. In the UK, we're proud to see our non-partisan, evidence-based support for politicians recognized as contributing to better political leadership. However, we know that more must be done to normalize professional development for politicians."

Sophie Daud
Institute for Government, UK



"Kenya's participatory democratic process makes for robust democratic engagement for the people, which is essential for better politics. Despite an unstable global democratic leadership, the kind of movements highlighted in the index are a true reflection that people vigilantly own the process of demanding better politics for themselves and their countries."

Scheaffer Okore
Former Ukweli Party VC, Kenya

"This index is crucial to raise awareness of the need of investing in preparing and supporting the people that do politics if we want a better democracy."

Marcos Peña
Former Chief of Cabinet of Deputies, Argentina and Author



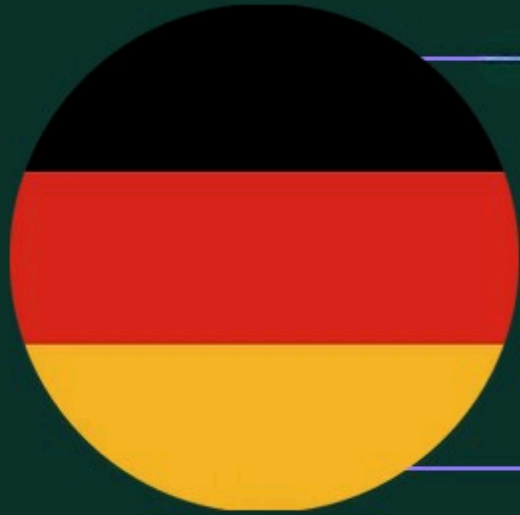
"In Poland, political leadership development largely remains outside formal parliamentary and party structures, with long-term development programmes still being relatively rare. For years the visible gap between formal onboarding and sustained, continuous leadership development has been addressed primarily by independent civil society organisations, such as the Zbigniew Pełczyński School of Leadership. This highlights the need to further strengthen Poland's political leadership development infrastructure if it is to meet the scale and complexity of contemporary democratic challenges."

Adam August Michalik
Head of Political Team & Programme, Zbigniew Pełczyński School of Leadership

"The Index will be highly valuable for Lebanese stakeholders, given the current focus on accountability and reforms."

Hania Knio
International Federation of Liberal Youth





Better Politics Index 2025

Germany

Country Ranking

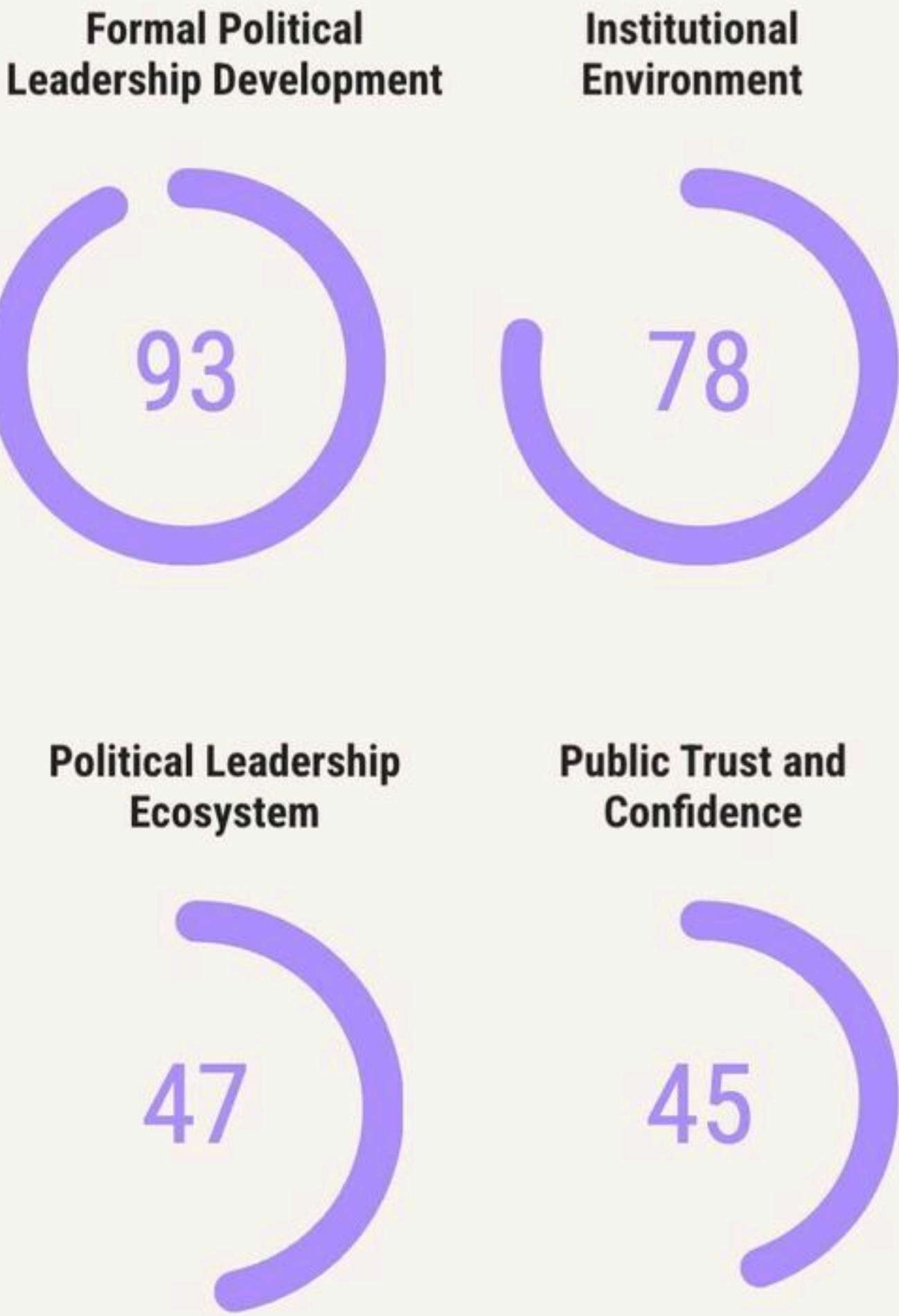
1 / 10

Overall Score

70.19 / 100

Comprehensive Multi-Level Development Ecosystem

Population Size:	83.5 Million
Democracy Status:	Full Democracy
Government Type:	Federal Parliamentary Republic
Legislative Structure:	Bicameral (Bundestag and Bundesrat)



There is systematic integration of political leadership training and support across parliamentary and party structures in Germany. It is the only country in the Index where this was found across the political spectrum. As a result, Germany ranks first in Dimension 1: Formal Political Leadership Development as well as first overall. The German Bundestag offers onboarding training for both parliamentarians and their staffers. At a political party level, most of Germany’s major political parties offer a broad range of training ranging from coaching to campaign communications.⁹ However, anecdotally, the focus of these is on aspiring leaders and candidates rather than current leaders.

Party-affiliated foundations also offer training and development, though this is restricted to aspiring leaders only. The German PLE ecosystem is relatively large and growing in innovation and connection, collaborating with and learning from the work of fellow organizations. Generally, Germany shows consistent strength across the first three dimensions of the Index, while not scoring above 50 for Dimension 4: Public Trust and Confidence. Feedback from experts and sitting politicians in Germany indicates there is much room for improvement in awareness of training as well as support, content, and quality.

9. Bündnis 90/Die Grünen. (n.d.). Workshops und Trainings für deine grüne Arbeit. <https://www.gruene.de/service/workshops-und-trainings-fuer-deine-gruene-arbeit>
SPD. (n.d.). Parteischule. <https://parteischule.spd.de/>; Die Linke. (n.d.). Politische Bildung. <https://www.die-linke.de/politische-bildung/>





Better Politics Index 2025

Australia

Country Ranking

2 / 10

Overall Score

65.11 / 100

Structured Parliamentary Support with Limited Party Training

Population Size:	27.2 Million
Democracy Status:	Full Democracy
Government Type:	Federal Parliamentary Democracy/Constitutional Monarchy
Legislative Structure:	Bicameral (House of Representatives and Senate)



Australia’s high rank in the Index is led by its strong political leadership entrepreneur ecosystem (Dimension 3), particularly considering the larger number of leaders being trained and supported by civil society organizations. There is a robust, growing and connected network of political leadership incubators and accelerators offering training both for aspiring leaders and those already in office. Additionally, new MP onboarding is provided by both houses of the Australian Parliament.¹⁰ General support is available to current leaders through the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service¹¹ and professional development is offered by the McKinnon Institute.¹²

There is, however, very limited evidence of systematic party training. There are no legal or constitutional requirements for such training, although some individual parties reference it in their constitutions. While Australia performed relatively well in Dimension 2: Institutional Environment, it ranks in the bottom three for representativeness of the national parliament (considering gender, ethnicity, religion, and language). Despite a strong ecosystem and strong democracy, trust in government and politicians is moderate compared to other Index countries, suggesting a legitimacy gap.

10. Australia. (2025, June 18). New Members’ Seminar. https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/About_the_House_News/Media_Releases/New_Members_Seminar
11. Australia. (n.d.). Training for Members. https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Members/Training
12. McKinnon Institute. (n.d.). Leadership Programs. <https://mckinnon.co/leadership/mckinnon-institute>





Better Politics Index 2025

United Kingdom

Country Ranking

3 / 10

Overall Score

57.24 / 100

Declining Parliamentary Support and Ecosystem Funding

Population Size:	69 Million
Democracy Status:	Full Democracy
Government Type:	Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy
Legislative Structure:	Bicameral (House of Commons and House of Lords)



British political parties focus on candidate preparation rather than ongoing MP development. Evidence of structured leadership development for current MPs across parties remains limited, with smaller parties showing little to no visible formal training activity. There are however notable tailored training offerings, such as campaigning, communications and female leadership. In contrast to Germany, there is no legal or constitutional requirement on parties to participate in training or development. However, there is a strong system of party-related think tanks as well as the non-partisan Institute for Government that supplement these support offerings. As the Institute for Government notes, in 2010 the House of Commons introduced a welcome and orientation package including a buddy system for new MPs.¹³

However, in 2015 this was scaled back to an 'on demand' service, and the large number of new MPs after the 2024 election further strained the offer. There is a dynamic PLE ecosystem in the UK, particularly for programs focused on women. However, British PLEs report the equal shortest number of months of funded operations, indicating a lack of funding in this space (Shown in Dimension 3: Political Leadership Ecosystem). Despite the maturity of the United Kingdom's democracy and democratic structures, it ranks in the bottom three for Dimension 4: Public Trust and Confidence in government, parliament and parties.

13. Institute for Government. (n.d.). Support for MPs in their jobs. <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainer/support-mps-jobs>





Legal Sophistication Meets Implementation Gaps and Low Trust

Population Size:	212 Million
Democracy Status:	Flawed Democracy
Government Type:	Federal Presidential Constitutional Republic
Legislative Structure:	Bicameral (Chamber of Deputies and Senate)

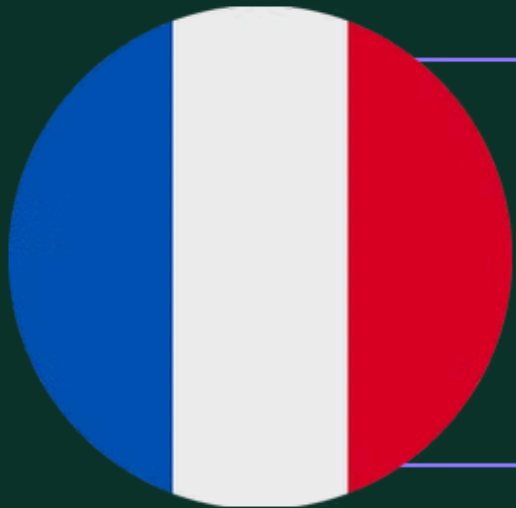


Brazil’s political leadership development ecosystem presents a dual reality: strong legal frameworks and institutions requiring and providing training, contrasted with a notable gap in ongoing development for sitting legislators. Brazilian parties are required to spend 20% of their public funding on establishing an institute or foundation for research and political education. There is no obligation to provide this education to candidates or sitting congress people, however. Brazil’s congress offers training and development through the Instituto Legislativo Brasileiro (ILB)¹⁴ and Centro de Formação, Treinamento e Aperfeiçoamento da Câmara dos Deputados (CEFOR),¹⁵ however these are focused on staff capacity building rather than elected congress people. As such, Brazil is the only Index country with no evidence of any congressional training or development.

The existence of these well-developed training institutions suggests a culture of legislative capacity building that could potentially extend to legislators. Brazil scored very high in Dimension 2: Institutional Environment, in large part because there is a high ratio of legislative staff to political leaders. However, it ranks relatively low on the representativeness of its congress compared to other Index countries. Brazil has one of the biggest and strongest political leadership entrepreneur ecosystems of Index countries, with PLEs growing in size and seeing alumni entering into politics in strong numbers. While Brazil shows relatively robust democratic structures on paper, it suffers from low levels of confidence in government and politicians as shown by Dimension 4: Public Trust and Confidence.

14. Instituto Legislativo Brasileiro. (n.d.). Saberes – cursos e capacitação. <https://saberes.senado.leg.br>
15. Câmara dos Deputados. (n.d.). Sobre a Escola – CEFOR. <https://www2.camara.leg.br/a-camara/programas-institucionais/sobre-a-escola>





Better Politics Index 2025

France

Country Ranking

5 / 10

Overall Score

50.58 / 100

Emerging Party Programs and Underfunded Ecosystem

Population size:	68.5 Million
Democracy status:	Flawed Democracy
Government type:	Semi-presidential Republic
Legislative structure:	Bicameral (National Assembly and Senate)



Some record has been found of structured onboarding procedures for newly elected deputies in the French National Assembly. These include information sessions for deputies and their collaborators on parliamentary work and IT training on internal systems.¹⁶ It is not clear whether this practice is currently in effect. While the Senate has a training structure for educating the public, there does not appear to be any training or development offered to senators. Party-based leadership development has historically been limited, however developments in the last 5 to 10 years suggest incremental expansion of party-driven education pathways. However, these programs are typically framed as cadre, candidate, or militant formation rather than dedicated MP development courses.

France scored low compared to other Index countries in Dimension 3: Political Leadership Ecosystem. Insights from the two respondents from the Political Leadership Entrepreneur Network indicate a low number of months the organizations can sustain operations with current funding, suggesting a particular need for greater funding in France in this space. Data for Dimension 4: Public Trust and Confidence, is taken directly from the World Values Survey, which was missing for France. We have weighted and scored the countries so this did not negatively impact its final score. However, the inclusion of this data in subsequent Indexes may shift France’s ranking.

16. Assemblée nationale. (2009). Rapport sur l'accréditation et l'accueil des collaborateurs parlementaires. <https://www.asgpf-francophonie.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2009-Laccueil-des-deputes-en-debut-de-legislature-France.pdf>; Sénat. (n.d.). Institut du Sénat. <https://www.senat.fr/le-senat-et-vous/institut-du-senat.html>; Sénat. (n.d.). Coopération interparlementaire – cycles de formation internationaux (Assemblée nationale & Sénat). <https://www.senat.fr/europe-et-international/international/cooperation/cooperation-interparlementaire-1.html>





Better Politics Index 2025

Philippines

Country Ranking

6 / 10

Overall Score

49.65 / 100

Public Legitimacy Outstrips Infrastructure

Population Size:	115.8 Million
Democracy Status:	Flawed Democracy
Government Type:	Presidential Republic
Legislative Structure:	Bicameral (National Assembly and Senate)



The Philippines ranks first in Dimension 4: Public Trust and Confidence, scoring particularly high in confidence in the government. Large scale protests in September 2025 against corruption in the legislative branch of the government raise the question of whether this position will be maintained in the future. The Philippines demonstrates strong congressional capacity-building infrastructure through the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP)¹⁷ and its Center for Governance – Policy Research Office,¹⁸ however there is reported to be a lack of taking the training “seriously” by members.

Additionally, professional staff in the House Secretariat are available to assist legislators, though utilization is reported to be limited. This congressional capacity-building contrasts sharply with the very limited training offered by political parties, which are often subsidiary to political dynasties, with almost 80% of congress members from a political family.¹⁹ Ranking in the middle of the Index countries for Dimension 3: Political Leadership Ecosystem, the Philippines has a dynamic and innovative PLE space, perhaps in reaction to the dominance of political dynasties and lack of party support.

17. Development Academy of the Philippines. (n.d.). Capability Building on Innovative Leadership for Legislative Staff (CBILLS) Program. <https://cbills.dap.edu.ph/cbills-program/>
18. Development Academy of the Philippines. (n.d.). DAP – Center for Governance: Training and development programs. <https://dap.edu.ph/tags/dap/>
19. Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ). (2024). The Dynasty of Decline: How Political Families Choke the Philippines. <https://currentph.com/2024/12/10/the-dynasty-of-decline-how-political-families-choke-the-philippines/>





Kenya

7 / 10

48.6 / 100

Transparent Parliamentary Infrastructure But Lacking Party Training

Population Size:	56.4 Million
Democracy Status:	Hybrid Regime
Government Type:	Presidential Republic
Legislative Structure:	Bicameral (National Assembly and Senate)



Kenya has established formal parliamentary training programs for current MPs and staff through the Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training (CPST).²⁰ Unlike other Index countries, the CPST publishes training curricula and calendars,²¹ showing a commitment to transparency and accessibility in its development of current parliamentarians. This contrasts to training offered by political parties, which remains inconsistent across the country's diverse political party landscape. No evidence was found of parties supporting current politicians, and there were very few examples found of training or support for aspiring leaders.

Where it does exist, women-focused training emerges as a recurring theme across the party programs. We also see innovative and well-designed political leadership incubator programs focused on women in Kenya. Finally, Kenya ranks in the middle of the Index countries in Dimension 4: Public Trust and Confidence, rating particularly high for confidence in government and parliament.

20. Parliament of Kenya. (n.d.). Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training (CPST). <https://parliament.go.ke/index.php/CPST>
21. Parliament of Kenya. (2024). Summarised Trainings 2024 – CPST Calendar. <https://www.parliament.go.ke/cpst/summarised-trainings%202024.html>



Better Politics Index 2025

Argentina

Country Ranking

8 / 10

Overall Score

47.84 / 100

Regulation Mandates Spending on Training With Varied Support of Current Legislators

Population Size:	45.6 Million
Democracy Status:	Flawed Democracy
Government Type:	Presidential Republic
Legislative Structure:	Bicameral (Chamber of Deputies and Senate)

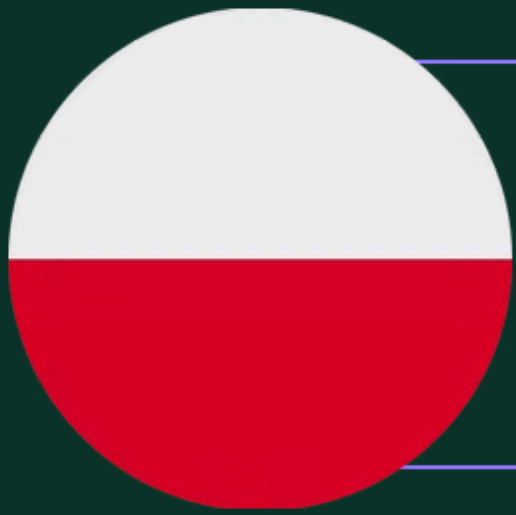


Argentina ranked last in the Formal Political Leadership Training dimension, in large part because it is the only Index country without a code of conduct in the national congress. Congressional training infrastructure does exist and is offered through a training institute²² that reports to the Parliamentary Secretariat of the Honorable Chamber of Deputies. Expert interviews reveal that very few deputies participate and there is little awareness among political operatives that this resource exists, nor are the offerings longer-term or based on leadership skills. Political parties must allocate at least 20% of their public funding budgets to support training activities for public service, leadership development and research.

Thirty per cent of that must be allocated to the training, promotion, and development of women's political leadership skills within the party. However, there is little public evidence of robust offerings for political candidates or current leaders, with the focus instead on party members and the general public. Argentina scores in the middle of Index countries for trust and confidence in its political leaders and institutions, with political parties having the least confidence from citizens. Argentina is missing data for Dimension 3: Political Leadership Ecosystem, which could alter its Index position in future years.

22. Honorable Chamber of Deputies (Argentina). (n.d.). Instituto de Capacitación Parlamentaria (ICAP) <https://www.diputados.gob.ar/icap/index.html>





Better Politics Index 2025

Poland

Country Ranking

9 / 10

Overall Score

43.3 / 100

Minimal Parliamentary Training,
Selective Party Programs

Population Size:	36.5 Million
Democracy Status:	Flawed Democracy
Government Type:	Parliamentary Republic
Legislative Structure:	Bicameral (Sejm and Senate)



Despite the relative wealth of Poland compared to several higher ranked Index countries, Poland’s national legislature has minimal political training infrastructure, with political leadership development concentrated on basic administrative onboarding and highly selective party investment in political education. Newly elected MPs in the Sejm receive short induction run by the Sejm Chancellery.²³ There is no evidence of ongoing professional development beyond this. There is an example of a political party with an academy for aspiring leaders—Polska 2050. The most prominently documented political leadership training program serving Polish MPs is run by an independent civil society organization—Zbigniew Pełczyński School of Leadership (formerly Szkoła Liderów)—rather than by political parties themselves.

Poland scored highest among the Index countries on the representativeness of its legislature, meaning a closer match between Polish leaders and citizens than in the other nine countries.²⁴ Poland is however more homogeneous in terms of ethnicity and religion than any of the other Index countries. Data for Dimension 4: Public Trust and Confidence, is taken directly from the World Values Survey, which was missing data for Poland. We have weighted and scored the countries so this did not negatively impact its final score. However, the inclusion of this data in subsequent Indexes may shift Poland’s ranking.

23. Onet.pl. (2023). Szkolenia dla nowych posłów: jak wyglądają i czego uczą się politycy? <https://kobieta.onet.pl/wiadomosci/szkolenia-dla-nowych-poslow-jak-wygladaja-i-czego-ucza-sie-politycy/p4nq1fk>
24. World Population Review. (n.d).Poland. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/poland>; Confidus Solutions. (2026). Demographics of Poland. <https://www.confiduss.com/en/jurisdictions/poland/demographics/>



Better Politics Index 2025

Lebanon

Country Ranking

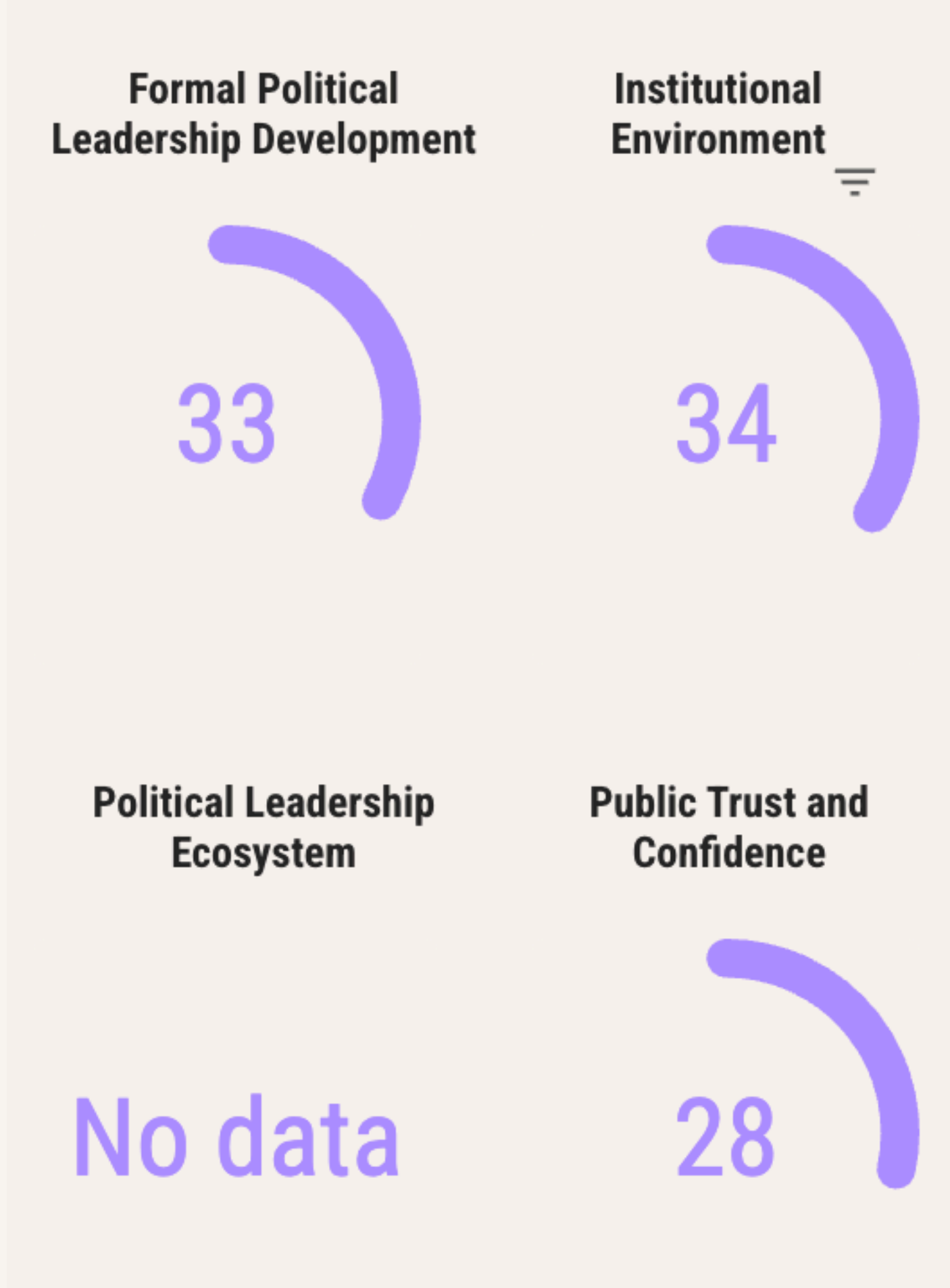
10 / 10

Overall Score

32.31 / 100

Building Leadership Amid Fragility and Reform

Population Size:	5.8 Million
Democracy Status:	Authoritarian
Government Type:	Parliamentary Republic
Legislative Structure:	Unicameral (National Assembly)



Lebanon lacks formal onboarding or training programs offered by the national legislature to MPs. We were advised by experts that training could be deemed disrespectful, leading to inconsistent participation if it did exist. Externally funded initiatives have existed in the past, for example from the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom and Westminster Foundation for Democracy.²⁵ A small number of parties maintain youth or student networks, and women's cross-party alliances have been gaining traction since the 2022 elections. However, political party training remains limited and largely confined to the informal realm and for candidates rather than current legislators.

Data for Dimension 3: Political Leadership Ecosystem was missing for Lebanon as we do not have any Political Leadership Entrepreneur Network members in the country. We have weighted and scored the countries so this did not negatively impact its final score. However, the inclusion of this data in subsequent Indexes may shift Lebanon's ranking. As indicated by Dimension 4: Public Trust and Confidence, confidence in political institutions and leaders is very low in Lebanon (and the lowest among Index countries). Since protests in 2019 there have been public protests for transparency, accountability, and a redefinition of what political leadership means in the country.²⁶

25. Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom. (2024). Shaping Lebanon's Future: Inside the Ecole des Cadres. <https://www.freiheit.org/lebanon/shaping-lebanons-future>; Westminster Foundation for Democracy. Lebanon. <https://www.wfd.org/where-we-work/lebanon>
26. Transparency International. (2025). A year into mass protests, Lebanon's leaders must finally take action against corruption. <https://ti-defence.org/lebanon-corruption-defence-beirut-explosion-protests/>

06. Gaps & Future Directions

While the Better Politics Index 2025 represents an important first step in measuring political leadership as democratic infrastructure globally, what we cannot currently measure is as revealing as what we can. This section documents the indicators we would like to explore in subsequent editions of the Index, and explores our hypotheses for why the gaps in data and evidence exist in this space.

Future Better Politics Index Indicators



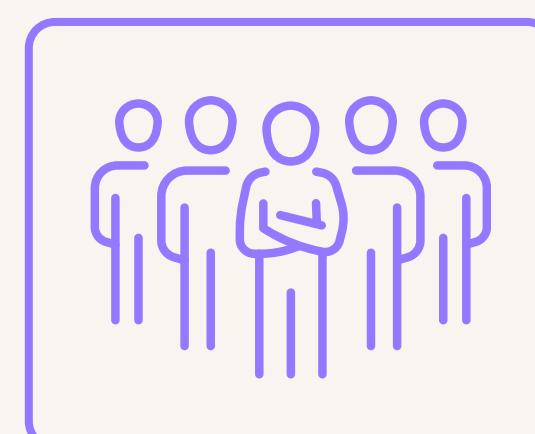
Dimension 1: Formal Political Leadership Development

1. **Quality, uptake and impact of training** and development of current and aspiring leaders, as provided by legislatures and political parties.
2. **Presence and nature of political party recruitment and selection processes.** Who leads is key to the performance of political leadership.
3. **A standardized competency framework** for political leadership, against which training and development programs can be compared as another indicator of quality and potential impact.
4. **Efficacy and enforcement of codes of conduct.** To move beyond measuring simply the presence of these potentially supportive institutional structures.



Dimension 2: Institutional Environment

1. **A global measurement of reported violence against politicians.** While regional research exists, such as that from the Inter-Parliamentary Union on violence against women parliamentarians,²⁷ this is a global issue. With no measurement or reporting, there is limited scope for addressing this issue.
2. **Legislative outputs and productivity.** To begin the complex process of linking training, development, and support to tangible policy outcomes.
3. **Efficacy and satisfaction with legislative staff.** To move beyond simply measuring the presence of these potentially supportive institutional structures.
4. **Additional representation metrics.** Assessments of education and career backgrounds would be instructive.



Dimension 3: Political Leadership Ecosystem

1. In general, **we need more PLEs to provide data.** For 2025, we had 21 organizations submit survey answers to get a picture of the field. We plan to expand this to more of the Political Leadership Entrepreneur Network members who are in Index countries.
2. **Funding for the political leadership entrepreneur ecosystem.** While we have estimates through our Political Leadership Entrepreneur Network, determining total political leadership funding per country is difficult and funding data is scarce. We know that funding to the Democracy, Rights, Governance, and Peacebuilding space, within which this would fall, declined by \$14 billion in 2025.²⁸
3. **Assessment of other barriers to entering political leadership.** Expert advisors suggested assessing electoral systems, party specific pipelines and the cost of running for office for individuals.



Dimension 4: Public Trust and Confidence

1. **More specific confidence and trust data.** Breakdowns by party affiliation, as well as local versus national levels could help to provide a more accurate picture.
2. **Corruption and integrity data.** This provides a comparative data point against the quality of training and development, as well as legislative outputs and productivity.

27. Violence Against Women in Parliament. (2025). Inter-Parliamentary Union. <https://www.ipu.org/VAWParliament>

28. Global Democracy Coalition. (2025). When Aid Fades: Impacts and Pathways for the Global Democracy Ecosystem. <https://globaldemocracycoalition.org/when-aid-fades-impacts-and-pathways-for-the-global-democracy-ecosystem/>

We plan to publish qualitative deep dives and best practices where comparable data is missing, to provide additional context that pure numbers cannot.

Why the Gaps Exist

Political leadership development remains decades behind other leadership fields, underfunded and undermeasured. We suggest that several reasons related to both structural barriers and the realities of politics may be the reason. We welcome other insights.

Structural Reasons

- **No shared standards:** There's no global agreement on what "good" political leadership looks like, therefore no agreement on how or what to measure. The Better Politics Foundation is teaming up with academics and practitioners to explore whether a framework of desirable political leadership competencies is possible.
- **No one has looked:** Politics is still seen as instinct or charisma, not a skill to be trained or selected for. Sometimes things don't happen simply because nobody has identified them as necessary. The data gaps might exist because no one has collected or collated the data.
- **Complex attribution:** Many factors shape outcomes in politics, making it hard to link training and development to policy results or positive impact

The Reality of Politics and Power

- **Political sensitivity:** Measuring leader quality beyond elections can be considered by some as risky, partisan or weaponizable.
- **Short-term politics versus long-term accountability:** Leadership investment pays off years later, long after election cycles end, which makes it politically unattractive.
- **Media incentives usually reward drama, not competence:** Scandals and soundbites sell more; effective, ethical political leadership does not.
- **Funders avoid politics:** Philanthropy fears being seen as partisan, so they fund around politics—governance, participation, civic tech—but not the development or support of political leaders.

07. Acknowledgement of Experts and Contributors

The Better Politics Foundation gratefully acknowledges the insights, time, and expertise of the advisors and experts who contributed to the Better Politics Index 2025.

Their input has been invaluable in shaping the methodological framework, refining indicators, and contextualizing findings across regions.

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Expert Contributors

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- Brand New Bundestag (Germany)
- Compassion in Politics (UK)
- Elect Her (UK)
- Emerging Leaders Foundation (Kenya)
- Fundacja Zryw (Poland)
- Hiraya Initiatives for Change and Progress (Philippines)
- JoinPolitics (Germany)
- Le Parlement des Exilés (France)
- Locale Learning (Australia)
- Pathways to Politics (Australia)
- PLACE (France)
- Politics in Colour (Australia)
- Raise Our Voice (Australia)
- Rede A Ponte (Brazil)
- Rede Nacional de Educação Cidadã (Brazil)
- RenovaBR (Brazil)
- Shout Out (UK)
- Victorian Local Governance Association (Australia)
- Women in Democracy and Governance (WIDAG) (Kenya)
- Women for Election (Australia)



08. Methodology

Data Sources (By Dimension and Indicator)



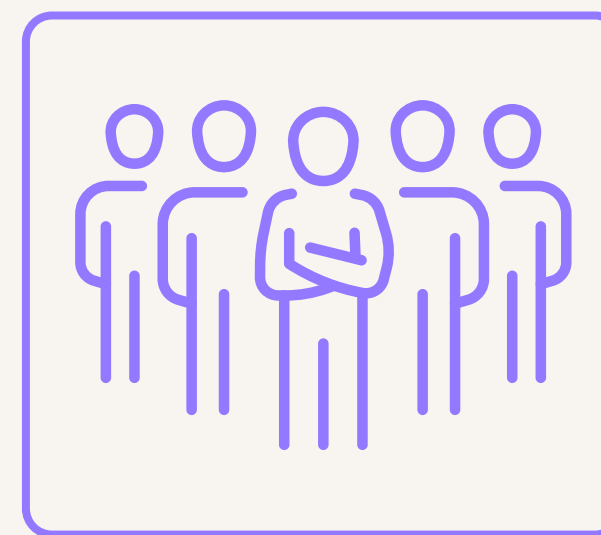
Dimension 1 – Formal Political Leadership Training

1. Existence of structured formal training/mentorship for MPs and staff in national legislatures – Desk Research.
2. Percentage of registered (currently seated) political parties offering training/mentorship/career support for members in office – Desk Research.
3. Percentage of registered (currently seated) political parties offering training/mentorship/career support for candidates – Desk Research.
4. Existence of formal ethical standards/codes of conduct in the national legislature – IPU²⁹ / Desk Research.



Dimension 2 – Institutional Environment

1. Availability of legislative support staff or advisory services (Yes/No) – IPU + Desk Research override where IPU entries are outdated or definition-misaligned (overrides flagged in our sheet).
2. Legislative staff per MP – IPU.
3. Availability of offices/day-to-day facilities for MPs – IPU.
4. Overall Representation Index (Gender, Ethnic, Religious, Language) – Global Leadership Project.³⁰
5. Opposition oversight/investigatory ability against government wishes – V-Dem.³¹



Dimension 3 – Political Leadership Ecosystem

Indicators were informed by our Political Leadership Entrepreneur Network Survey 2025 which was completed by 21 organizations in this release. Future versions aim to include more PLEs; interpret results with this sample size in mind.

1. Number of Political Leadership Entrepreneur (PLE) Programs – Political Leadership Entrepreneur Network Survey 2025.
2. Number of individuals trained in the latest fiscal year (0 → 0; 1-500 → 1; 501-1,000 → 2; 1,001-2,000 → 3; 2,001-3,000 → 4; 3,000 → 5) – Political Leadership Entrepreneur Network Survey 2025.
3. Number of months the organization can sustain operations at its current budget run rate with available funding – Political Leadership Entrepreneur Network Survey 2025.



Dimension 4 – Public Trust and Confidence

1. Confidence in Government (1-5) – World Values Survey, Wave 7³² (2017-2022).
2. Confidence in Political Parties (1-5) – World Values Survey, Wave 7 (2017-2022).
3. Confidence in Parliament (1-5) – World Values Survey, Wave 7 (2017-2022).
4. Voting-age population turnout (%) – International IDEA Voter Turnout Database.³³

29. Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2025). IPU Parline: Global data on national parliaments. <https://data.ipu.org/> IPU Parline. Accessed October 2025.

30. Global Leadership Project. (2025). About – Global Leadership Project. <https://globalleadershipproject.net/about/>. Accessed October 2025.

31. Coppedge, Michael, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, ... & Daniel Ziblatt. 2025. V-Dem Dataset v15. Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project. <https://doi.org/10.23696/vdemds25>

32. World Values Survey Association. World Values Survey, Wave7 (2017-2022), Version 6.0.0 (2022-05-31) <https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.24>. Accessed October 2025.

33. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. (2025). Voter Turnout Database. <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voter-turnout-database>. Accessed October 2025.

Weighting Methodology

The weighting of the four dimensions was determined based on their causal proximity to leadership outcomes and the quality and availability of data.

Dimension 1 (Formal Political Leadership Training & Competencies) = 35%: This dimension assesses the offerings of institutions—legislatures and political parties—that have the most impact on current and aspiring leaders and for which there is some, though not complete, data. We selected 35% because it establishes this dimension as the anchor without allowing it to dominate the overall Index, which would occur at weights approaching or exceeding 40%.

Dimension 2 (Institutional Environment) = 25%: Reimagined and highly supportive institutions are critical to better politics and better political leadership. The data that exists represents proxies for supportive institutions, such as the presence of legislative staff. We selected 25% because it gives supportive institutions a substantial weighting while noting that the indicators measure indirect inputs.

Dimension 3 (Political Leadership Ecosystem) = 25%: A robust political leadership entrepreneur ecosystem is necessary for aspiring and current leaders to reduce the barriers to people entering leadership and to operating to the best of their abilities once in office. This is a key area of the Better Politics Foundation but for now lacks robust data infrastructure. Twenty-one organizations across the 10 Index countries contributed data for this dimension. We selected 25% because it equals Dimension 2, signaling parity in strategic importance, while noting the limited data.

Dimension 4 (Public Trust and Confidence) = 15%: Public perceptions of political leaders are key in representative democracies, but are volatile and influenced by a complex array of factors, including policy delivery and implementation, and the media landscape. Perceived confidence is one way to indicate this and in this Index this data was not available for two of our 10 Index countries (though this did not penalize their scoring, see below). We therefore selected a lower weighting of 15% compared to the other dimensions.

Handling Missing Data and Availability

Within-dimension rule: A country must have ≥60% of a dimension’s indicators available to receive a dimension score; otherwise it is marked Insufficient data for that dimension.

Coverage display: We show how much of the weighted framework is present.

Formula: coverage = 1 – (sum of the weights of missing dimensions)

We do not penalize by imputing low scores for missing dimensions; overall scores are calculated from the available dimensions, while coverage clarifies completeness.

SI No	Indicator	Availability
1	Existence of structured formal training or mentorship for MPs and staff in the national parliaments.	100%
2	Percentage of registered (currently having seats in parliament) political parties offering any form of training, mentorship, or career transition support for members in office	100%
3	Percentage of registered (currently having seats in parliament) political parties offering any form of training, mentorship, or career transition support for CANDIDATES	100%
4	Existence of formal ethical standards or codes of conduct in parliament.	100%
5	Availability of legislative support staff or advisory services in parliament. (Yes/No)	100%
6	Number of Parliamentary Staff/Number of MPs	80%
7	Availability of offices and day-to-day facilities for MPs.	100%
8	Overall Representation Index (Gender, Ethnic, Religious, and Language)	90%
9	Ability of opposition parties to exercise oversight and investigatory functions against the wishes of the government.	100%
10	Number of Political Leadership Entrepreneur (PLE) Programs	80%
11	Number of individuals trained in the latest fiscal year (0 → 0, 1–500 → 1, 501–1,000 → 2, 1,001–2,000 → 3, 2,001–3,000 → 4, 3,000 → 5)	80%
12	Number of months the organization can sustain operations at its current budget run rate with available funding	80%
13	Confidence: The Government (1-5)	80%
14	Confidence: The Political Parties (1-5)	80%
15	Confidence: Parliament (1-5)	80%
16	Voting Age Population Voter Turnout %	100%