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EXAMINING GENDER EQUALITY IN GUATEMALA: A CASE STUDY OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GUATEMALA

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Abstract

Gender equality has been identified as the 5th Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations, aiming to end violence against women and girls, establish fairness in the distribution of capabilities, and promote women in decision-making positions. The Global Gender Gap Report of 2023 revealed that Guatemala ranked the lowest in Latin America, and 117th among the 146 countries measured in the report. This research aims to identify the gender equality challenges experienced by women in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala and propose recommendations for improvement of the situation, especially in gaining promotions. A qualitative design was utilized in this research, and semi-structured interviews were employed among nine participants holding executive positions in the Ministry. The data revealed two main challenges in the study. The first is Guatemala has no governing authority to enforce gender laws to the fullest extent. The second is strong patriarchal norms affect executive roles and skills training opportunities among women. This study proposes three recommendations. The first is to pass the bill for the creation of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family to fully enforce the law and create a system for gender-responsive actions. The second is to employ a gender quota policy to achieve a fairer distribution of executive roles within the government. The final recommendation is to provide flexible work options and support facilities for working women. This would enable women to cope with work and family obligations and afford nursing or care facilities while training and networking.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Diplomacy, Executive Roles, Women Representation, Gender Parity

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Introduction

The United Nations recognizes gender equality as a fundamental human right, that is the basis for peaceful societies, the full realization of human potential and sustainable progress. Women face different forms of discrimination such as fair access to employment, education, and political participation. In addition, they are more prone to become victims of violence, poverty, and persecution compared to men.

Addressing gender inequality is key in creating a more prosperous and inclusive society, as it has been shown that empowering women increases productivity and economic growth (United Nations, n.d.a). Statistics on women in executive positions are key indicators of broad changes across the economy. Globally, women mark up 46 percent of the public sector workforce but remain constantly underrepresented in executive roles. As of July 2022, only 14 percent of the countries (27 in total) around the world have a female head of government/state (UN Women, 2022). In Latin America and the Caribbean, women only constitute 27 percent of parliamentary seats in the national government while only 36 percent has been recorded in the local government (UN Women, 2023).

Encouraging the need for inclusive programs or initiatives to support gender equality has led to the creation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and subsequently, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), of the United Nations. MDG 3 was created to improve women's opportunities in local and international political decision-making whether that would be at the regional, national, and domestic level. However, the 3rd MDG did not address other areas such as equal employment opportunities, control over assets and property, and division of unpaid care and household work. Reasons for this was due to global recession and intrinsic challenges unique to each goal. According to the United Nations, gender inequality persists despite more participation of women in parliament and more girls having access to education. Women continue to face discrimination in areas of key participation such as in private and public decision-making, employment, and economic asset-building (Gibbs, 2015).

The MDGs were targeted to be achieved in 2015. Yet time was not sufficient that is why the United Nations adopted the SDGs in 2012 (United Nations, n.d.b) as a continuation of the process. The 5th SDG, "Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls," has three main areas for action: (1) end violence against women and girls, (2) promote gender equality in decision-making positions in the government, public and private institutions, and (3) establish gender equality in the distribution of capabilities (Chemonics, 2017). Statistics show that as January 2023, women increased up to 26.50 percent in lower and single chambers of national parliaments from 22.30 percent in 2015. At the local level, women increased up to 35.40 percent in deliberative bodies from 33.90 percent in 2020. Gender parity in political institutions continues to be rare with only 6 countries having 50 percent or more women in their lower chambers of national parliaments and 3 in local legislatures. Globally, women only held 28.20 percent of management positions in 2021. Only a single percent increase since 2015 was achieved despite having almost 40 percent of total employment held by women.

In Guatemala, gender equality has been an issue of concern over the years. Only 1 in 3 Guatemalan women of working age are employed, while the rest of them stay at home spouses (Almeida & Viollaz, 2022). Moreover, in the country's poorest areas, the number of women in the workforce is even lower with only 1 out of 10 women working. In 2022, Guatemala scored 0.58 in the gender gap index area of economic participation and opportunity which meant that women are 42 percent less likely to have equal economic participation and opportunities than men (Statista, 2023a). The 2023 Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum (2022) also reported that Guatemala ranked 119th out of 146 countries in political empowerment. The lack of women's participation in politics demonstrate how excluded they are from political life and that half of the country's population has already suffered and will continue to suffer (Demo Amlat, 2020).

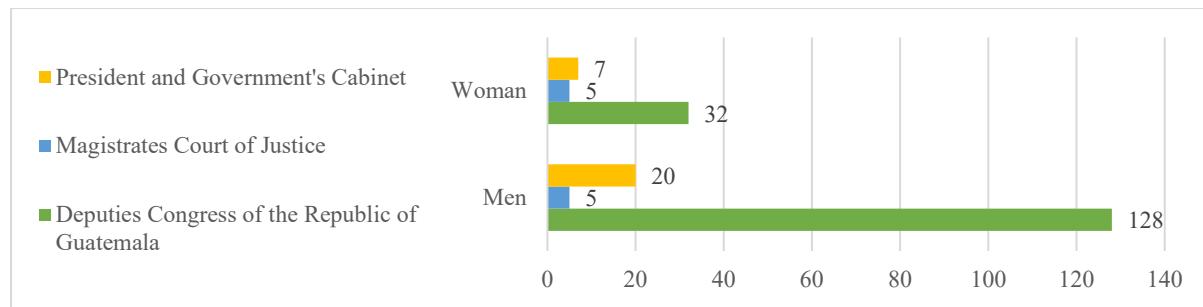


Figure 1 Gender Distribution in the 3 Powers of the Government of Guatemala

Source: Government of the Republic of Guatemala (2023); Judicial Branch of the Republic of Guatemala (2023); Congress of the Republic of Guatemala (2023)

Figure 1 demonstrates that Guatemala has a huge disparity in male and female participation in national politics. The Guatemalan government has 14 Ministries and 11 Secretariats as of April 2023. Of the 25 positions available, only seven are occupied by women (Government of the Republic of Guatemala, 2023). In Congress, out of 160 deputies, only 32 positions are occupied by women (Congress of the Republic of Guatemala, 2023). Meanwhile, in the Court of Justice, men and women occupy the same number of seats but is currently void of 3 more justices (Judicial Branch of the Republic of Guatemala, 2023). This could serve as an opportunity for women to take more space in the national courts. The lack of female representation in decision-making process tends to harbor gender imbalance in politics. Furthermore, it limits the range of perspectives and ideas that the country may benefit from a shared and equal representation of men and women.

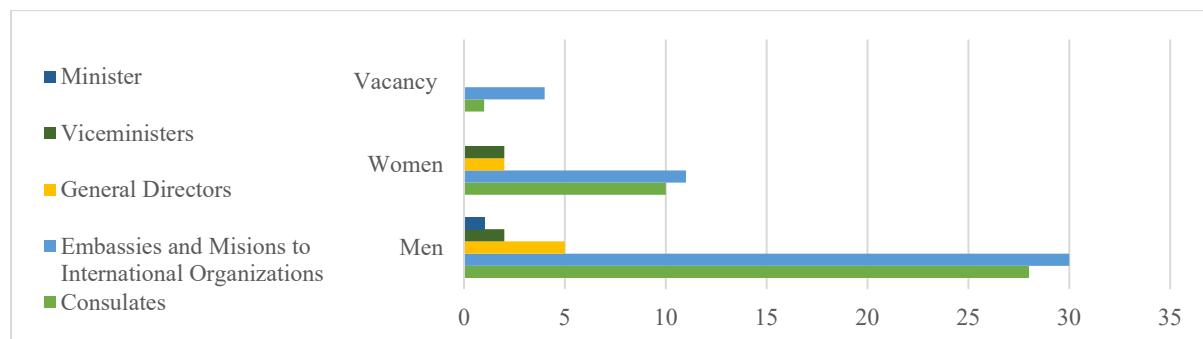


Figure 2 Gender Distribution in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala (2023)

Figure 2 indicates that as of 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala employs 276 men and 261 women. In the foreign service, there are 176 men and 148 women (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, 2023). Based on these figures, it seems gender parity within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is possible. However, looking closer into the executive positions such as Ministers, Vice Ministers, Ambassadors, Representatives to Missions and International Organizations, Consuls General and Consuls, and General Directors, these roles are still largely occupied by men.

Guatemala has been identified as a country with strong patriarchal and conservative views (Demo Amlat, 2020; Guinan, 2015; Hartviksen, 2021; Ruiz, 2018; United States Agency for International Development, 2023). The effect of patriarchal norms is strong in Guatemala. The society dictates women to fulfill first the role of a wife and a mother before anything else. Women who flourish in their careers without getting married or bearing children are subjected to discriminating conversations about being too self-absorbed, career-obsessed, undesirable for men, potentially infertile, or taunted with spinster jokes. In the work context, women always

have to be good in both their jobs and at home in order to be deemed competitive and successful.

Further to this, men are never pressured to be good in child-rearing and helpful in domestic work. A good father only is only required to be successful at work and sufficiently provide the needs of the family, financially and physiologically. In professional settings, men are praised for their assertiveness, their unceasing drive to be successful, and are considered to be desirable if a man is still in his bachelor years. The same cannot be said with women who are still single in their prime years, as they are thought to have settled down already at that age. Men get to enjoy such disproportionate views about gender and can advance more in executive positions because they are free of matters such as pregnancy, childcare, and domestic labor. Men are also believed to have more time and energy for academic pursuits, extended trainings, and networking which are essential for jobs such as the foreign service.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, for example, women are more concentrated in the main office compared to the foreign service. There are only 11 women holding ambassadorial positions in contrast to 30 men at present. Consuls general and consuls have only 10 women in total while men occupy 28 of these positions. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, 2023). This is because work in the foreign service is not easy and often requires an officer to spend most of their waking time at work. Additionally, officers have to undergo continuous training in fields such as economic, cultural, political, and defense diplomacy. At certain extents, they may also be required to expand their academic knowledge through post-graduate degrees and courses, and invest spare time in networking for work. But because patriarchal norms put domestic work exclusively to women alone, female officers do not have the luxury of time to fulfill training requirements, expand their academic qualifications, and improve their network of connections to qualify for executive roles or in the foreign service. Simply put, patriarchal norms create a double standard in what it means to be a successful man and woman. Men only need to be competent at work, but women have to be competent both at work and at home to receive the same respect and recognition. If left unaddressed, female professionals will always stay one step behind their male colleagues and will have to struggle harder to overcome an unfair professional and societal system. Having these issues at hand, studying gender inequality in Guatemala is indeed important not only in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also in other ministries of the Guatemalan government. Examining gender equality will challenge the country in terms of its international image and build an effort to strike a balance of opportunities across all genders within the institution. Another significant impact of this study is to achieve the 5th SDG of the United Nations. This paper aspires to contribute meaningful information to the current literature and assist the academic and political community in formulating progressive ideas for female leadership and overall gender equality.

Literature Review

Definition of Gender Equality

Scholars define gender equality as the identical participation of men and women in different life areas such as in education, politics, economy, or social life (Michalos, 2014). Martinez defines gender equality as the state in which the approach to rights or chances is unaffected by gender, not only women are affected by gender disparity—all genders are included. This impacts individuals of all ages and circumstances (United Way of the National Capital Area, 2022). The frame defines women as the largest victim group of discrimination among minority groups, each of whom suffers from specific forms of discrimination (Verloo, 2007). United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (2017) defines gender equality as:

The concept that women and men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural and political development. Gender equality

is, therefore, the equal valuing by society of the similarities and differences between men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in the home, community, and society. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men and girls and boys are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups and that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes and prejudices about gender roles. Gender equality is a matter of human rights, and is considered a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.

Global Scale of Gender Equality

Caruso (2020) found that gender equality is a problem around the world, and women and girls are more affected by gender inequality daily. The Global Gender Gap Report of 2023 data reveals that out of the 117 countries with available data since 2017, only 18 countries, including Bolivia (50.40%), India (44.40%), and France (42.30%), have achieved representation of women of over 40% in local governance. In contrast, 24 economies, mostly in the Middle East, North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa, such as Saudi Arabia (1.20%), Ghana (3.80%), Türkiye (10.10%), and Japan (14.31%), have below 15% representation. The remaining 75 economies fall within the 15%-30% range, including diverse nations such as Brazil (15.70%), Indonesia (15.70%), China (28.10%), Ireland (23.90%), Germany (30.30%), and the United Kingdom (35.30%) (World Economic Forum, 2023). Caruso (2020) further argued that equal representation in government is essential to accomplish gender equality. Governmental positions should be representative of all constituents so that all people can be listened to.

Equal representation in government is crucial to achieving gender equality. Governmental bodies should be representative of every constituent so that all individuals can be heard and have a say. Women make up around 24 percent of legislative bodies around the world, according to the Pew Research Center. While this has increased significantly from the previous decade, women are still severely underrepresented in government. To close the gender gap and achieve gender equality, countries across the globe must increase the number of women in government, ensure education is accessible to all women and girls to get the same opportunity in government. (Caruso, 2020)

National Scale of Gender Equality and Gender Equality Law in Guatemala

In terms of gender equality, Guatemala is in the lowest rank within the Latin America and the Caribbean region (World Economic Forum, 2023). According to Montenegro (2002), the lack of women's participation in politics is partly due to the disinterest on women themselves along with political parties having no will to support the presence of women in politics. The country has established a law to promote gender equality namely the Law on the Dignity and Integral Promotion of Women (1999). This legislation aims to promote the full development of women and their participation in economic, political, and social life while upholding their fundamental rights. The government has also established several institutions to give effect to the law such as the Special Prosecutor for Crimes Against Women, the Presidential Secretariat for Women or SEPREM, the Office for the Defense of Indigenous Women or DEMI, the National Coordinating Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women or CONAPREVI, and the Integrated Support Centers for Women Survivors of Violence or CAIMU. However, poor implementation of these laws and mechanisms made little effect in reducing levels of violence against women.

Guatemala also adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women or CEDAW. But the country remains not fully compliant with the CEDAW instrument and the 5th SDG of UN. Implementation and enforcement of these laws are its most formidable issue in addition to socioeconomic challenges, access to justice, and patriarchal

norms that are deeply entrenched in society. If women are given space for executive roles and other leadership opportunities, these laws can be enforced harder because female leaders understood how dangerous domestic violence and gender inequality is.

Model Countries with Promising Gender Equality Laws and Successful Implementation
Mexico adopted a gender quota system in 2002 in its electoral process (Gurría, 2020) and applied a constitutional reform in 2019 seeking parity in all governmental processes (Sheridan, 2021). Kahn (2022) reported that in 2022, half of the Congress is now comprised of female legislators. Female legislators have been making waves since such as passing a 2019 legislation that establishes labor protections for female domestic workers. In the judicial branch, authorities have also advocated to triple the number of female district judges and circuit court magistrates and started handling women-only examinations for the positions available. Incumbent Chief Executive, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, was the first president to have half of his entire cabinet occupied by women (Sheridan, 2021). All these shifts are not only due to modifying attitudes about women, but also with respect to gender equality laws and strong female personalities pushing Mexico's gender equality movement forward. These efforts created major strides in female representation since the turn of the century.

Canada is a model country for gender equality considering that is a pioneer country in the adoption of different public policies, which was represented as one of the formation precepts in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Furthermore, the country had ratified international treaties for the equality of persons, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Canada assumed a series of initiatives over the past half-century to promote gender equality and takes the lead in having appointed the highest share of women ambassadors and permanent representatives, with 51% of its ambassadorial posts being held by women (Chehab, 2023). In Global Government Forum's latest women leaders index, Canada was found to have the highest proportion of women in its senior civil service and reached a gender balance in public service and leadership positions (Hunt, 2022). The success to be in the top ranks of government is built on long-term obligations and an extensive range of projects.

Research Methods

This research used semi-structured interview to gather information from the 9 participants of the study. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to focus on the main issues with the autonomy to discover any relevant opinions or thoughts that may occur through the interview.

Participants

There are 5 female and 4 male interviewees who were invited to share their experiences while working within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala. Selection of the participants were considered based on the following criteria: 1) they are an incumbent employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2) they have at least 10 years of experience working in the diplomatic and administrative service, and 3) they are currently holding executive positions in any of the following ranks: Minister, Vice-Minister, Ambassador, Chief of Mission, Representatives to International Organizations, Consul General, Consul, General Director, and Director.

Using the criteria above, 3 Ambassadors, 3 Directors, 2 Consuls General, and one General Director were selected for the research, reaching 9 participants in total. In addition to this, alphabetical labelling such as Participant A, B, C, etc. was utilized in to protect the participant's name and identity. The period of interview was conducted from September-November 2023 via tele-conferencing in Zoom since the participants are based in various geographic and temporal zones around the world. Table 1 below provides a summary of the participant's background:

Table 1 Participant's Information

No.	Participant	Gender	Position	Work Experience
1	A	Male	Ambassador	30 years
2	B	Male	Ambassador	10 years
3	C	Female	Consul General	10 years
4	D	Female	Consul General	10 years
5	E	Female	General Director	25 years
6	F	Female	Director	10 years
7	G	Male	Director	15 years
8	H	Male	Director	20 years
9	I	Female	Ambassador & Former Minister	30 years

Scope Limitation

The researcher planned to interview the Presidential Secretariat for Women to gather information and insight about the institution's efforts and constraints in promoting gender equality in all sectors of the government. However, due to the precarious political situation brought about by the Presidential elections in Guatemala, time constraints, and internal processes of the government, the researcher is unable to get a chance to interview and deepen the data and analysis of the study. Therefore, this study is unable to identify what relevant information and initiatives are currently being done to address the problem of gender inequality in government service. Nonetheless, the study attempted to fill this gap with secondary data from existing bodies of literature, research, and official publications from the government.

Research Findings

Current Challenges on Gender Equality within the MFA

Findings reveal that there are 3 main issues related to gender equality within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala. These are: a) legal issues, b) gender equality in the workplace, and c) societal and cultural influences.

Legal Issues: The first issue that the participants have mentioned relates to the existing laws of Guatemala. On one side, Participant A, B, and E expressed that the laws of the country do cover the gender inequality issue and have referred to the Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala as the basis of these laws. Participant B elaborated this idea by saying:

All Guatemalans have the same rights and consequently there is a level of protectionism that is equality of the sexes. It is true that to some extent, not only in the private sector, but also in the public sector, there has been a predomination of male participation but perhaps it was not so much a conception of the State, but rather a cultural conception. (Participant B, Personal Communication, October 6, 2023)

On the other hand, Participants D, F, G, and H, are not fully convinced that the laws are effective in promoting gender equality and that there is still a lot of work to do. Participant D elaborated this argument by stating:

I recognize that Guatemala has made some progress in terms of gender equality, but I must also recognize that there is still a long way to do. Current laws provide the framework, but when implementing them, gender equality should be guaranteed in all sectors so that there is a greater opportunity. (Participant D, Personal Communication, November 10, 2023)

Participant A, B, and E, believe that societal and cultural norms tend to shape gender-assigned roles more than the law. However, Participant D, F, G, and H, argued that the existence of a law is merely not sufficient, and that enforcement and updating of its provisions to mirror modern-day challenges is necessary for anyone to say it is effective.

Gender Equality in the Workplace: The second most observable issue pertains to gender equality in the workplace. Most of the participants, namely Participant A, C, D, E, F, G and H

have stated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs still has a lot of work to do in the gender equality spectrum, especially in gender parity in the foreign service. In addition to this, Participant E expressed that the Ministry is more concerned in filling out the vacancies in the quickest time possible rather than exploring the potential of women for these positions:

It is not an agenda or priority issue, it is more about filling out the profiles that are required now, the higher authorities do not urgently address the issue of appointing more women in the foreign service. It is more evident in the central plant where there are more women occupying high-level positions, unlike in the foreign service, the heads of mission are fewer women than men. (Participant E, Personal Communication, September 25, 2023)

For Participants A, C, D, E, F, G and H, equal female executive representation in the foreign service is still a matter of lesser priority within the Ministry.

Impact of Cultural and Societal Influences: Across countries and cultures, women have always had a greater burden because of socio-cultural norms placed on them as mothers and daughters. As explained by Participant C, (Personal Communication, September 20, 2023), "When women start to have families, they tend to have more responsibilities at home." Participant B further the following:

There has been a predomination of male participation, it is a cultural conception, for our country and our culture. Women used to be seen as, let's say, as a devoted mother who, in the past, was dedicated only to the home, to the administration of the home. And I don't mean that in pejorative terms. On the contrary, I mean it in very heroic terms, ... it's difficult to manage especially when resources are limited. (Participant B, Personal Communication, October 6, 2023)

As women embrace marriage and motherhood, their careers are compromised because of new responsibilities on top of existing ones. Compared with men, these problems are not carried at all by male members of the family because patriarchal norms only require them to provide.

Possible Recommendations to the MFA and the Government of Guatemala to Improve Gender Equality Especially in Gaining Promotions

There are 3 possible recommendations address the gender equality within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala. These are: a) policy improvements, b) gender balance through quota implementation and c) culture shift and gender-sensitive approach.

Policy Improvements: Participant D and F suggested that emphasis on gender specific policies and investment of programs based on these laws could raise awareness and create a safe space for conversation, deliberation of issues, and promotion of diversity within the Ministry. Participant D shared more of this point by saying:

One of the recommendations that I can give at this moment are specific gender policies, the investment of programs to be able to have fair equality is necessary to also create awareness, it could also help us to create the culture of values of diversity in our Ministry and not only in Minex but in all government institutions. (Participant D, Personal Communication, November 10, 2023)

Improvement of policies that put women's issues on the table and acknowledge the role they can contribute to international stability, peace, and security, are still underway and requires more female presence within the Guatemalan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Gender Balance through Quota Implementation: 7 out of 9 participants reported that there is higher concentration of men in the foreign service than women. As such, applying gender quotas on executive roles within the foreign service would help achieve balance of perspectives and diversity in opinions and ideas. Such was the suggestion of Participant D by stating:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be one of the pioneers when it comes to implementing quota policies, programs, or specific places for women with due respect for systematic evaluation of equal opportunities. In addition, gender biases must be addressed in all personnel selection processes. (Participant D, Personal Communication, November 10, 2023)

More than just prioritizing the filling of the vacancies in foreign service posts, selection of candidates should also be highly considered based fair representation of gender perspectives, character, expertise, and meritocracy. Whether ambassadorial or clerical, the impetus for gender equality should be felt by everyone in the Ministry.

Culture Shift and Gender-Responsive Approach: The final recommendation is to break up established patterns of thoughts, behaviors, and ideologies through consistent application of workshop and information drive campaigns aimed at correcting myths and stereotypes about gender roles:

First, we can employ a campaign or information drive about what the foreign service is, what are the contributions of women in society and in this career. And second, we can change the mindset of the authorities believe that women are indeed truly capable and that there is tangible evidence of the good contribution women have made to the country of Guatemala. (Participant E, Personal Communication, September 25, 2023)

Programs such as nursing facilities and flexible work schedules for expectant mothers, single parents, and primary caregivers for the elderly, should also be made available for women:

Let's attack the problem for women who become mothers or have their families. Let's give conditions, let's give training, let's give everything I was talking about of day care, special care, special work schedules. (Participant A, Personal Communication November 2, 2023)

By taking a complete cultural shift and thinking paradigm, women's contribution and capabilities will be more recognized and supported. Furthermore, taking consideration of women's intrinsic challenges such as housekeeping and child rearing can give them some leverage to compete for executive positions without being held back by domestic roles.

Conclusion and Discussion

Current Challenges on Gender Equality within the MFA

There are 2 main challenges identified in the study that hinder women officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala in aiming for executive positions. These are: 1) patriarchal norms affect executive positions and skills training among women officers, and 2) the laws to promote gender equality cannot be implemented effectively due to the absence of a governing body or authority to execute the law.

The first problem is that strong patriarchal norms affect executive roles and skills training opportunities among women officers. Patriarchal societies position men as providers, decision-makers, and the voice of authority while women are perceived to be nurturers, subservients, and are obligated to care for the home and children. Similar to what Participant B said, women in Guatemala are expected to stay at home while the men are expected to be seen at the workplace. Statistics further support this observation as only 37 percent of women are active in the labor market (United States Agency for International Development, 2023). This percentage is not even close to half of the current population of women who are plentier than men as of 2023 (Statista, 2023b).

Hartviksen (2021) identified that patriarchal norms in Guatemala exists due to what is referred to as patriarchy by ancestral origin. During colonial and pre-colonial periods, gender power relations establishes that male ownership is not only owning land and property but also control over women's bodies (Hartviksen, 2021). This control is demonstrated through raping women. During the colonization period, rape was considered a policy to humiliate the men of the enemy side and demonstrate power over them. This in turn, ruptures the social and community fabric of the indigenous groups and aids in winning the war (Santos et al., 2023). In an attempt to emulate the colonizers' power, indigenous men adopted the same violent model which today reflects the issues of femicide, gender-based violence, and gender inequality in Guatemala (Hartviksen, 2021; Ninen, 2020). Segato (2023) also adds that since ancient times, it has been men's domain to deliberate on the village commons, to go on hunting expeditions, make

contact with other villages, to parley or go to war with them. It is men that the colonizers fought wars and negotiated. The choice of men as interlocutors was deliberate and functional to the interests of colonization and its efficacy in control. Thus, it has resulted into coopting men as the class predestined with the roles of public space due to the characteristics they held pre-colonization in Latin America. This historical delegation of gender roles has been regrettably carried across generations throughout the community and family (United States Agency for International Development, 2022; United States Agency for International Development, 2018). In executive roles, women tend to get punished and criticized because patriarchal norms prefer them to be submissive, gentle, and non-assertive. According to Ketchiowou & Dzansi (2023), when women exhibit male-attributed traits and act in the same manner as successful men do, they are usually punished socially, economically, and professionally because they do not fit with the established norms. An example of this punishment is with the case of Yassmin Barrios, presiding judge in the historical Guatemala genocide and Sepur Zarco cases. Judge Barrios convicted Efraín Ríos Montt, former president and dictator, with crimes against humanity for his campaign against the Mayan Ixil peoples in the western highlands of Guatemala (Masek, 2019). By going against the norm and demonstrating her authority and power, she has received several violent threats, attacks on her home, an intensive media campaign to discredit her reputation, and a politically-motivated year-long suspension of her judicial authority (Micklethwait, 2024). After the genocide and Sepur Zarco cases, the High Risk Court Tribunal also attempted to undermine Barrios's authority and capability by diminishing the work load in her court (Hanna et al., 2023).

Aside from getting punished for being in the executive role, women are also pulled down by patriarchal norms such as taking care of the husband and the family before anything else. United States Agency for International Development (2022) revealed that among the 22 Guatemalan female political figures they interviewed, one female participant shared that before they become doctors or anything professional, they were told by their families that their first and foremost role is to become a mother. Furthermore, as women, they needed to be their for the families all the time. Another female participant said that culturally-assigned roles are constantly being mobilized in social discourse to point out that women who choose to lead are abandoning their own families. If a woman fails to support her husband and raise her children well, she would then be perceived as a bad family member or an embarrassment to her own kin (Ali et al., 2011).

Those women who are exceeding in their careers are often confronted with two dilemmas. First, if they choose their careers, they will be put in a box. Second, if they choose their families, they will often have to give up their career. An example of choosing career is reflected with one female justice of peace assigned in the eastern region of San Francisco El Alto in Guatemala. Constituents refused to seek her services because she was young and she was a woman. One man even questioned her presence at the courthouse and asked why she was not staying at home (Sieder et al., 2022). On the otherhand, choosing her family left one female judge to resign from her post because it became too difficult for her to balance both her professional and personal life. This damaged her personally and limited her professionally (Sieder et al., 2022).

Similarly in Peru, Jáuregui & Olivos (2018) discovered that female executives in private organizations are often confronted with issues about family. Majority of the 14 female executives reported that the prevailing organizational behavior in their companies negatively framed women as sensitive and/or burdened with children. One of the male interviewees even pointed out that during recruitment stage, women are already at a disadvantage because some companies are already thinking that a woman is riskier to hire because they are expected to balance home, family, and pregnancy. Unmarried female executives were also told to become mothers instead, which again restrains women from being career-driven.

Because of the patriarchal nature of Guatemalan and Peruvian societies, men often have very little contribution to the home. This gave them more time to develop their skills at work and participate in activities that would showcase their leadership qualities. Women, on the other hand, had to juggle both responsibilities and are forced to dedicate their remaining hours to domestic work. All these findings resonate to what Participant C shared when she claimed that as women in embrace marriage and motherhood, new responsibilities pile up to the existing ones which often causes them to struggle with both areas. Without the necessary support and allowance from both the organization and their spouses at home, women will likely find it difficult to maintain a career without compromising their families.

Skills training to gain promotion is one more area tainted with patriarchal norms. Women could not obtain or complete further training and education because filial expectations and responsibilities overpower their desire for growth. One of the Guatemalan female judges in the study of Sieder et al. (2022) reported that due to family and time issues, she chose not to apply for a doctorate degree in Labor Law despite trainings being closely linked to performance evaluation. Postgraduate studies such as master's and doctor's have corresponding credit scores or points scaled and added in order to get promoted in higher roles in the Guatemalan courts. One more female judge shared that during evaluation periods, certain training credits and qualifications were required of them. But she could not provide nor earn such credit because of her existing responsibilities at home and with the family. These results support the statement of Participant G citing that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs needs to act more on providing specific help to address the needs of women officers who are mothers, wives, and primary care providers to fully achieve gender equality and equity.

The work of Jáuregui & Olivos (2018) also revealed family issues as one of the problems for professional advancement among female executives. One of the participants shared that obtaining an MBA deprived her of time for children and her family which almost led to a divorce. Skills training also includes networking and social capital. Women are put to a disadvantage because Peruvian culture expects women with families to stay at home after working hours. Thus, limiting their social engagement and networking hours. One key informant in the work of United States Agency for International Development (2022) highlighted the same problem. The participant argued that a woman's support networks are different from a man's since the latter gender has a longer history of civic engagement. Statistically speaking, men have denser social networks compared to women with a ratio of 1.30 people out of 3 connections for men while women only have exactly 1 to 3 ratio (United States Agency for International Development, 2022).

In the judicial sphere of Guatemala, informal networks such as labor affiliations and membership in judges' association also play a crucial role in advancing a judge's growth as they can be used as a reference on the day-to-day performance of a judge and how judges relate to each other and to individuals and groups within the socio-cultural environment surrounding them (Sieder et al., 2022). Additionally, informal networks can also be used to counter or employ corporate politics and patronage when court appointments become eminently political. Thus, a female judge gains more protection and advantages by widening her circle of connections. But this can be impeded if family responsibilities come to play. Networks also increase the visibility of an executive to other key people in the industry and help them develop business opportunities (Jáuregui & Olivos, 2018). If women are constantly pressured to dedicate their remaining time off work to domestic roles, they will find themselves having lesser spheres of influence and fewer opportunities for training and education.

The second problem is that there is no governing body or authority with the power to execute the law on gender equality. Institutions such as ministries have the power to enforce the law and construct guidelines or systems that would help in the implementation of the policies. In the case of Guatemala, no ministry exists to promote gender equality and enforce gender laws

in all sectors of the government. According to Choi (2021), for a law to be implemented, it needs certain agencies and institutions that would enforce it since policies and the constitution itself is not self-executing all the time. A government's lack of will to make concrete actions on gender equality can contribute to the containment of women in the home and in the lower ranks of public and private organizations. As Gatto (2017) explained, it is the role of the executive in drafting gender-related legislation such as quotas, providing resources to legislators to support these policies, and the courts' willingness to assure the compliance of these laws that would effectively strengthen the law. Participant D observed this by stating that the lack of a government authority to monitor the law is a key problem in Guatemala.

The absence of a ministerial authority for gender equality has led to bad organizational culture (Sull & Sull, 2023), bias opinions about women's capacities (Cakra Wikara Indonesia, 2021), lack of educational support (Quiñones et al., 2021), and denigration of women as company risks more than assets (Jáuregui & Olivos, 2018). At present, all concerns related to women's issues and development in Guatemala is handled by the Presidential Secretariat for Women or Secretaría Presidencial de la Mujer (SEPREM). SEPREM operates under the watch of the Office of the President. Despite working under the Chief Executive of the country, SEPREM serves only an advisory institution. It only provides technical and methodological assistance on how gender equality can be applied in public policies (Presidential Secretariat for Women of Guatemala, n.d.a). SEPREM monitors and evaluates public policies based on the implementation process and not in compliance actions. Thus, its fundamental task is only to conduct analysis and assessment of the impacts of the policies and provide feedback to complement the information (Presidential Secretariat for Women of Guatemala, n.d.b). It does not have the legal authority to sanction government agencies that are not compliant to their proposed strategies and methods to achieve gender equality.

SEPREM can only enforce gender equality policies and uphold the law if it achieves a ministerial status since a ministry has the power to formulate, execute, and administer government policies (Rizzo, 2021). Quintela (2020) reported that on July 23, 2015, a bill was already created seeking for the establishment of a ministry for women to the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala. Known as Initiative 4977 or the "Ministry of Women" bill, this proposal intends to absorb the functions of SEPREM but remains pending due to COVID-19. Recently, in a letter addressed to the President of the Congress of Guatemala dated January 25, 2021, signatories Hernández et al. (2021) sought to resume the deliberation of the pending bills related to gender equality and request its eventual approval. Initiative 4977, which aims to design, regulate, execute, verify, monitor, and evaluate public policies aimed at "promoting equity and equality between sexes, security and integral development of women", and ensure that public institutions "promote non-discrimination against women and the exercise and development of their human rights, in order to achieve equity and equal opportunities", is waiting to pass the third reading of the Congress before it is carried out to the President for approval.

With no ministerial power, SEPREM cannot explore the formulation of a specific set of guidelines and systems to streamline the implementation of gender equality across the Guatemalan government, including promotions (Choi, 2021). Participant E reported that in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the selection process puts more emphasis in filling up quickly the vacancies in foreign service, and less so with putting gender perspective on the selection. As of the moment, there is only 1 female for every 3 male Guatemalan ministers. This over-representation of men in the foreign service is also reflected regionally, with only 20 percent of the top diplomatic positions assigned to women in Latin America (Erlandsen et al., 2022). Guatemala has the lowest rates of female political participation in Latin America (World Economic Forum, 2022).

A good example of having a ministerial authority for gender equality is with South Korea. The Korean government has its very own Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF), in charge of executing the Gender Impact Analysis and Assessment (GIAA) Act of 2012; both a law and a system to combat low gender sensitivity among government offices and scale the awareness of its personnel (Choi, 2021; Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of South Korea, 2014). For example, GIAA examined the relief facilities for men and women in Korean public spaces. Initially, local public servants resisted that their policies were non-discriminatory as both sexes were given access to toilets. However, women may need to relieve themselves longer than men need to, resulting to a different number of toilets for men and women. GIAA results are used to prepare plans for policy improvement by 1) selecting projects with greater social effects, 2) improving budget analysis, 3) reflecting assessment results to improve policies, and 4) strengthening implementation systems (Choi, 2021).

Before the application of Gender Impact Assessment in South Korea in 2012, the country was governed largely by men and embodied strong patriarchal views about society. Park (2001) explained that in traditional Korean society, for a male patriarch to function effectively as representative of his family, connect them to other members of the agnatic line, and ensure continuation of the patrilineal descent, his power had to be absolute. The wife's power is relatively low. The same is true with the position of a daughter as she is destined to be married off to another man's family. Economic power in the family rests entirely under the authority of the patriarch such as the purchase of a home, disposal of assets, and management of income. Traditional marital relationships also dictate that women are devoted only to domestic labor while the men work. Despite an increase in female employment, domestic chores and child-rearing are still regarded as female duties which then becomes a reason for dispute between the couple (Park, 2001).

According to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of South Korea (2014), the population of South Korea grew from 48,229,948 in 2002 to 50,948,272 in 2012. Although male-female ratio of population remained close to 50:50, data shows that 73-75 percent of the male population are active in the employment force, while women only remained at 49-50 percent. The employment rate for men is around 70-72 percent while female employment rate stayed behind at around 47-48 percent (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of South Korea, 2014). Both sections indicate a 20 percent difference. In gender pay gap, female income earned only 65-68 percent in comparison with male income, the widest gap among OECD countries. In political participation, there has been an increase within 10 years from 5.90 percent in 2002 to 15.70 percent in 2012. However, in global gender gap index, the country ranked 92nd among 115 countries in 2006, 115th among 134 countries in 2009, and 108th among 136 countries in 2012 (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of South Korea, 2014). For further illustration, Table 2 provides a summary of the conditions of South Korea 10 years before the time of Gender Impact Assessment Introduction.

Table 2 Conditions of South Korea 10 Years Before GIAA Introduction

Year	2002	2005	2006	2009	2012
GDP (\$/position)	608.90B	898B	1.01T	902.30B	1.22T
*B(billion)/T(trillion)	(11)	(10)	(11)	(14)	(14)
Labor Force Participation Rate (%)	Total	62.00	62.00	61.90	60.80
	Male	75.00	74.60	74.10	73.10
	Female	49.80	50.10	50.30	49.20
Employment Rate (%)	Total	60.00	59.70	59.70	58.60
	Male	72.20	71.60	71.30	70.10
	Female	48.40	48.40	48.80	47.70

Year		2002	2005	2006	2009	2012
Gender Pay Gap (%)	Female to Male Earnings Ratio	64.80	66.20	66.60	66.50	68.00
Gender Pay Gap (%)	Female to Male Earnings Ratio	64.80	66.20	66.60	66.50	68.00
Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliament (%)	Female to Male Earnings Ratio	5.90	13.40	13.40	14.70	15.70
Global Gender Gap Index Rank		-	-	92/115	115/134	108/136

Source: Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of South Korea (2014)

Upon the introduction of the GIAA system, significant changes have been made to the country. For example, in 2022, the employment rate of women increased up to 60 percent from 57.70 percent in 2021. In economic participation, women increased up to 61.80 percent in 2022 from 59.90 percent in 2021. Women in high-ranking positions also witnessed an increase of 11.20 percent from 10 percent in 2021 (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of South Korea, 2024). Table 3 below summarizes the following data.

Table 3 Statistics on Women's Participation in South Korea from 2021-2022

Item in Percentage (%)	2021	2022
Employment Rate (Ages 15-64)	57.50	60.00
Economic Participation	59.90	61.80
Women in High-Ranking Positions	10.00	11.20

Source: Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of South Korea (2024)

The inclusion of gender equality in financial management also lead to an increase of above 3 percent of the government's annual budget. For fiscal year 2022, a total of 307 billion won was allocated to support gender equality involving 341 businesses, accounting for 4.50 percent of the government budget. For 2023, a total of 187 billion won was approved, encompassing 302 businesses and 5.20 percent of the government budget. For 2024, a total of 197 billion won was applied for 282 business, comprising of 3.70 percent of the government budget. For better illustration, Table 4 is provided below.

Table 4 Gender Perspective Budget of South Korea from 2022-2024

Year	Budget (KRW)	Number of Businesses Involved	Budget (KRW)	Percentage of Total Government Budget
2022	27 trillion	341	307 billion	4.50%
2023	33 trillion	302	182 billion	5.20%
2024	24 trillion	282	197 billion	3.70%

Source: Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of South Korea (2024)

Women in executive roles also spread out after GIAA. Female directors in central agencies reached a total of 20.80 percent in 2019 from 13.50 percent in 2016. Female executives in public organizations grew to 21.10 percent in 2019 from 12.60 percent in 2016. Female government committee members, meanwhile, noticed a growth of 43 percent in 2019 from 37.80 percent in 2016 (UN Women, n.d.). Table 5 below illustrates the summary of the following.

Table 5 Women in Executive Roles from 2016-2019 in South Korea

Position (%)	Area of Assignment	2016	2019
Director	Central Agencies	13.50	20.80
Executive	Public Organizations	12.60	21.10
Committee Members	Other Government Entities	37.80	43.00

Source: UN Women (n.d.)

The impact of the GIAA system can also be seen in areas outside of leadership and public administration. A year after the implementation of GIAA, there was an increase of support centers for women-directed violence from 53 locations in 2012 to 66 in 2013. The arrest cases also increased from 8,762 in 2012 to 16,785 in 2013 (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of South Korea, 2014). The prosecution rates for sexual assault also grew steadily in numbers from 41.10 percent in 2009 to 48.80 percent in 2012 (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, n.d.).

Suffice to say, the establishment of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in South Korea has made significant strides to improve the situation of women at home and at work environments. This proves the point that granting gender-based institutions with sufficient political and legal authority to implement policies not only brings significant structural changes, but also drives the point that inclusion of women allows the economy to grow further and for the government to see all issues at hand and provide solutions to enable maximum participation and development for all citizens.

Possible Recommendations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala and the Government of Guatemala to Improve Gender Equality Especially in Gaining Promotions

There are three recommendations that this research suggests to improve gender equality in promotions among women officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Government of Guatemala. The first recommendation is to pass Initiative 4977, otherwise known as the bill for the “Ministry of Women,” to turn into a law. The second recommendation is to propose a gender quota policy to achieve a fairer distribution of executive roles in the government. The final recommendation is to provide flexible work options and support facilities and programs for working women.

The first recommendation is to pass Initiative 4977. The study further recommends that the new government agency should be named as the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family to appropriately represent the objectives and functions it is designed for. South Korea’s Ministry of Gender Equality and Family and its GIAA system can be one example to emulate. New public policies such acts, ordinances, decrees, are submitted to GIAA to be examined for their gender-inclusiveness. Education is also a key element for the success of the system. The Korean government found it important to educate their employees because of the low gender sensitivity in public service. Government officers associated with GIAA were educated by gender specialists. The overall result can be traced back with the growth rate of female participation in society and the addition of support facilities for women, especially towards gender-based violence response (Choi, 2021).

Upon the application of GIAA, the proportion of seats held by women in the Korean parliament increased from 5.90 percent in 2002 to 15.70 percent in 2012. By 2019, women in high-ranking positions of the government increased to 20.80 percent for directorships, 21.10 percent for executive leadership, and 43.00 percent for committee memberships. Employment rate of women also rose from 48.40 percent in 2012 to 60.00 percent in 2022. Labor force participation rate of women rose from 49.90 percent in 2012 to 54.60 percent in 2022 (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of South Korea, 2014; World Bank, 2024). Prosecution rates for sexual

assault also grew steadily in numbers from 41.10 percent in 2009 to 48.80 percent in 2012 (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 2015).

Guatemala's SEPREM does not have the same power and authority as MOGEF does in South Korea. SEPREM can only advise how to promote gender equality. As such, the result lead to persistence of patriarchal norms and lower participation rates for women. Statistics have shown that political representation of Guatemalan women remains the lowest in Latin America (World Economic Forum, 2022), 42 percent of women are less likely to have equal economic participation (Statista, 2023a), and only 37 percent are active in the labor market (United States Agency for International Development, 2023). More importantly, 96 percent of women tend to abandon their education due to household chores (96 percent), and 99 percent do so due to pregnancy (Quiñones et al., 2021). Government agencies do not know how to systematically curb gender inequality and create a more inclusive space for women in their respective offices and responsibilities. Without quantitative and qualitative indicators produced through a set of guidelines, public officials cannot make concrete and realistic corrections in their systems and processes. Future public policies will also go unchecked for possible disproportionate features against women.

Having programs and public policies that will promote the participation of women, protect them from discrimination and harassment, and enforce government institutions to be gender-sensitive will help retain women's interest and contribution to nation-building. Guatemala can use the experience of South Korea in terms of setting up the scope and breadth of the new gender ministry, the tools and systems such as GIAA, and the best practices to break down strong patriarchal norms through learning programs and workshops. The more gender equality is examined through systematic and quantifiable tools and guidelines, disseminated through extensive educational programs and workshops, and consulted in the creation new public policies, the easier it is to implement and see the changes towards a more gender inclusive society.

The second recommendation is to propose a gender-quota policy to achieve a fairer distribution of executive roles in the government. Gender quota system is a necessary tool to ensure fairer representation of women in executive and legislative roles. With a ratio of 1 woman in every 3 men in chief rank, Participant D recommended applying gender quota policy to ensure bias is removed in the selection process of the ministry and achieve a balance of roles and opportunities. Consequently, by having more women in executive roles, it challenges long-held stereotypes about women's inferiority and sends a strong message to the public to emulate and change their views about male dominance. More importantly, gender quotas allow women to voice issues that male legislators and decision-makers otherwise would oversee in the policymaking table. A fair number of women in executive roles and decision-making bodies would also diversify ideas resulting to a more inclusive approach to societal issues.

Mexico is an example of a country that applies gender quotas as part of their electoral process. In 2019, Mexico applied a constitutional reform seeking parity in everything, giving women an equal shot at top jobs in the legislative, judicial, and executive branches. The quota for congressional candidates is now at 50 percent. Female lawmakers at Congress have been making changes since the application of the law, such as passing a 2019 legislation that establishes labor protections for female domestic workers. In the judicial branch, authorities have also advocated to triple the number of female district judges and circuit court magistrates and started handling women-only examinations for the positions available. In the executive branch, the president is now required to have women lead half of the government ministries. Incumbent chief executive, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, was the first president to have half of his entire cabinet occupied by women. In the gubernatorial race, women successfully occupied 6 of the 15 seats available (Sheridan, 2021).

Similar to Mexico, Guatemalan female lawmakers can unite and draft new policies or reinforce existing ones to combat issues such as femicide, gender pay gap, violence against women, and sexual harassment which continue to plague the country. Female judiciaries can work together with women lawmakers in reviewing the constitutionality of these new policies and proposed amendments to strengthen the power of justice for women. Furthermore, female leaders in the executive branch can bring in a different perspective, diversify ideas, and highlight issues such as child pregnancy, forced marriages, unpaid domestic work, security and lawful protection, education, and access to essential needs such as child support and hygiene care to be part of the government's priorities.

Scholars have already contended that gender-quota is a major strategy to promote better societal environments for sustainability (Niner et al., 2022). At present, 130 countries have already adopted gender-quotas as part of their electoral rules (Maillé, 2022), and this transnational diffusion of gender quota laws suggests that countries learn from each other's policy experiences, prompt them to imitate the policy with the goal of strengthening their own quota provisions and designs to achieve better goals (Gatto, 2017).

The last recommendation is to provide flexible work options, leave programs, and support facilities for working women. Female leaders and workers often struggle with two responsibilities. The first is their corporate or public service jobs, and the second is their domestic roles. Women who are pregnant, have children, or are primary care providers for their ageing parents, are often at a greater disadvantage because their time is restricted to fulfilling their obligations at home. As a result, they cannot enjoin in skills training opportunities nor aspire for more leadership roles. However, employing a flexible work schedule can help women adjust their time to fulfill both areas of work. Additionally, providing sufficient access to support facilities such as day care, nursing or breastfeeding rooms, and increased accessibility to menstrual and maternal leaves can greatly improve their work-life balance.

Sweden's emphasis on work-life balance and gender equality is a strong example of providing policies that cater to women's role as a parent. Presently, 80-85 percent of parents in Sweden are fully employed, and the Swedish government makes certain that children will still receive the best care by letting parents take a more active role in nurturing and raising children (Summerfield Government, 2024). Under the Paternal Leave Act and Social Insurance Code of Sweden, parents are entitled to 480 days of paid leave when a child is born or adopted. A single parent is entitled to take a full 480-day leave. In addition, childcare policy in Sweden grants children aged 1-6 years old with the right for access to a nursery school. Affordable childcare also allows parents to go back to work after their parental leave (Sweden Sverige, 2024).

In terms of flexible work schedules, Finland is a pioneering country that has enacted Act 872 otherwise known as Working Hours Act of 2020. Under this act, employees can independently schedule their working hours and place of work with their employer's consent. This arrangement can cover at least half of the employee's regular 40 hours in a week or 48 hours with overtime in a week (Mercer, 2019). According to Wood (2019), more than 80 percent of a total of 18,000 respondents in 96 different countries reported that flexible working hours increased their productivity. More than 50 percent of the sample felt their work is more efficient and thus, increased their job satisfaction. Poor work-life balance was cited by almost two-fifths of the respondents as a reason why they quit their jobs.

Taking these into consideration, Guatemala may explore implementing family-oriented policies such as the Paternal Leave Act of Sweden to allow working women with extended time to raise their children and afford cheap nursing and day-care facilities when they need to resume to work already. Furthermore, legislating flexible working schedules such as the Working Hours Act of Finland will allow women officers to manage their time efficiently in

both career and domestic areas. These policies can be created and executed through the family welfare arm or department of the proposed Ministry of Gender Equality and Family.

All these legislative proposals are in line with the recommendation of Participant A that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala should have programs such as day care and special work schedules for pregnant employees, single parents, and caregivers for the elderly. Participant F further added that the workload in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is quite heavy and the schedules often force employees to come either very early at work or leave very late at night. Implementing such policies would allow women officers who are single mothers or married with children to make up for the time lost in the exigency of service. As stated by Cakra Wikara Indonesia (2021), a flexible working arrangement anchored on results assessments is necessary to overcome barriers for women who have the burden of public and private responsibilities.

Conclusion

There are two main problems found in examining the gender equality within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Guatemala. The first problem is that there is no governing authority with the power to execute the law on gender equality. Without a ministry and a system to measure equality, gender policies such as quotas fair selection and promotion process cannot be regulated. Furthermore, correcting discriminatory behavior in the workplace cannot be enforced resulting to women remaining undervalued. The second problem is that patriarchal norms affect leadership roles and skills training of women officers. Women who assume leadership roles are punished and criticized for not fitting with the established norms as a wife and mother. Women are constantly derided and portrayed to have abandoned their own families for choosing their careers. Additionally, women are burdened to stay at home and limit their access to trainings, further education, and networking amongst peers.

There are three recommendations to resolve the gender equality issues within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The first recommendation is to pass Initiative 4977 to create a specific ministry to address gender equality issues and create a safer and more equitable workplace and society for women in Guatemala. The second recommendation is to propose a gender quota policy to achieve a fairer distribution of executive roles in government, achieve a balance of perspectives while eroding stereotypes and increasing women visibility in public spaces. The final recommendation is to provide flexible work options and support facilities and programs for working women. The participants suggested that flexible work schedules for expectant mothers, single parents, and care providers for the elderly can greatly alleviate the domestic burdens of working women.

Recommendations

The recommendations are divided into 2 parts which are (1) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala and (2) The Government of Guatemala.

For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala is recommended to create programs such as flexible work schedules and leave benefits to help women maximize their time between work and home. Additionally, support facilities such as day-care access including breastfeeding rooms could help women officers to nurse their infants if they have to report for duty. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala is also recommended to plan and implement internal regulations that adhere to gender equality within its own jurisdiction and organizational structure. As a ministry, the organization can create its own gender quota regulation and enforce a strong, neutral selection process for promotion to executive roles.

For the Government of Guatemala: The Government of Guatemala is recommended to pass Initiative 4977 into law, change its name into the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, to implement gender equality laws and programs across all sectors of society and government. Having a ministry for gender equality strengthen the compliance of all other agencies and

impose appropriate sanctions if necessary. Furthermore, the new ministry can create a system or a set of guidelines to objectively measure gender equality in the workplace. This would ease the implementation and assessment processes for the government. The government is also recommended to propose a gender quota law on executive positions in all government agencies and in the electoral system of the country. An equal representation of men and women would allow the diversification of ideas, highlight issues specific to each gender, and facilitate specific solutions to eradicate the problem. Finally, investing in education is another way to address the long-term process of re-orientation and cultural-shifting from patriarchal to a gender-sensitive society. Adding gender subjects in school curriculums, gender programs in broadcast media, and gender sensitivity workshops in the government can help stimulate a different cognitive and behavioral disposition about women and apply these newfound values in real life.

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