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# Policy Analysis Exercise

## GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MEXICAN FOREIGN SERVICE

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for the degree of Master in Public Policy*

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# Executive Summary

The recommendations in this policy analysis exercise stem from a careful analysis of the available human resources data of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (SRE, Spanish acronym). They were consolidated for this project from information scattered in different locations of the Foreign Service and Human Resources Department (DGSERH) of the Ministry. This exercise revealed that despite the SRE's effort to promote fairness and equality, there is evidence that women are disadvantaged in certain parts of the Foreign Service entrance and promotion processes.

In the entrance examination, I found a substantial gender gap in success rates in advancing from the first stage to the second stage of the exam, mostly due to score differences in the General Culture and English multiple-choice examinations. In the promotion process, I found a 0.19-point difference in scores for post level of responsibility favoring men. This is approximately equal to the average score difference between the lowest scoring promoted official and the runner-up. I also found a significant gender gap in assignment to hardship posts, which award a bonus point in the promotion exam to those who hold them, and seem to be more accessible to men. The causes for this phenomenon and attitudes towards it merit further research.

This policy analysis exercise recommends that the Ministry implement several measures to investigate the causes of differential performance by men and women in its entrance examination, rectify identified biases, provide better preparation opportunities for test takers, recruit more women to hardship posts, and launch a long-term sponsorship program for female diplomats. De-biasing measures might include a temporary gender quota, removing the guessing penalty and eliminating biased questions from the multiple-choice portions of the exams, relaxing time constraints, conducting interviews with one interviewer at a time instead of in panel format, and taking advantage of support from the Office of Gender Equality throughout the process. The sponsorship program would aim to prepare women to navigate the organizational system throughout their careers. These policies are designed to help the Ministry achieve a target of 50% women in the two highest ranks of the Foreign Service (Ambassador and Minister) and promote an institutional culture that understands and values gender equality.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs can implement these policies immediately and expect support from key stakeholders within and beyond the organization. At the same time, it should carefully consider the sequence in which different policies will be implemented as well as which aspects to emphasize when communicating about them in order to gain the support of actors that may present resistance. The selected policy options are not overly aggressive, to avoid causing excessive controversy; they are designed to bring the organization to confront the fact that more reforms are necessary for its inward policies to live up to the gender equality standards that Mexico promotes in international fora.

# Introduction

## Gender Equality: An Ongoing Challenge for Mexico

In September 2015, The United Nations adopted seventeen Sustainable Development Goals to guide the global agenda for the next fifteen years. The goals feature unprecedented scope and significance. Goal number five on the list is to Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls. It requires member states to take specific steps listed in several targets, which include fighting discrimination, adopting legislation that promotes gender equality and empowerment, and ensuring women's full participation at all levels of decision making in political, economic, and public life.

Mexico subscribed and enthusiastically promoted the SDGs as well as several international instruments that protect women against discrimination. The country is a State party to the UN Convention on the Eradication of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Inter American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women. These instruments provide the international legal framework for the Mexico's commitment to women's rights. National legislation is coherent with the international instruments, and stems from the Constitutional declaration that men and women are equal in the eyes of the law. The General Law for Equality between Men and Women, passed in 2006, provides additional guidance and protection of these rights.

The current National Development Plan is the first in Mexico's history to incorporate the gender perspective as a cross-cutting principle to be incorporated in all government activities. The Plan dictates that all sectorial, special, institutional, and regional plans produced by the Federal Public Administration will explicitly incorporate a gender perspective and affirmative actions that allow the decrease in gender gaps between men and women (PND, 2012).

Despite these important advances, many voices are expressing concern over the issue of gender equality in all areas of private and public life in Mexico. Gender roles remain a constraining factor for people who want to reach their full potential. The conditions for women are particularly challenging. In the words of the National Institute for Women (INMUJERES), Mexican society is immersed in stereotypical images that promote and perpetuate prejudice and negative or demeaning attitudes and value judgements of women and girls. To achieve a true transformation, we need to deeply understand the structure of inequality for women (INMUJERES, 2013).

In the 2014 Gender Gap Index published by the World Economic Forum, Mexico ranks 80 out of 142 countries on gender equality when taking into account health, education, economic opportunity, and political participation. Disaggregating the scores paints a very peculiar picture of the Mexican panorama. The country ranks first on the health and survival indicators as well as in primary and secondary school enrollment. It has relatively high numbers of women in parliament and in Ministerial positions compared to other countries. In contrast, the country's economic participation and opportunity rank is abysmal, clocking in at 120 out of 142. Wage inequality, low labor participation of women, and lower estimated income are much more significant problems in comparison to other countries, developing or developed. Participation of Mexican women in paid work is the lowest in the Latin America region, given its income level, at under 40%. The ratio of female to male workers is 5.4 male workers for every female worker (Figure 1).

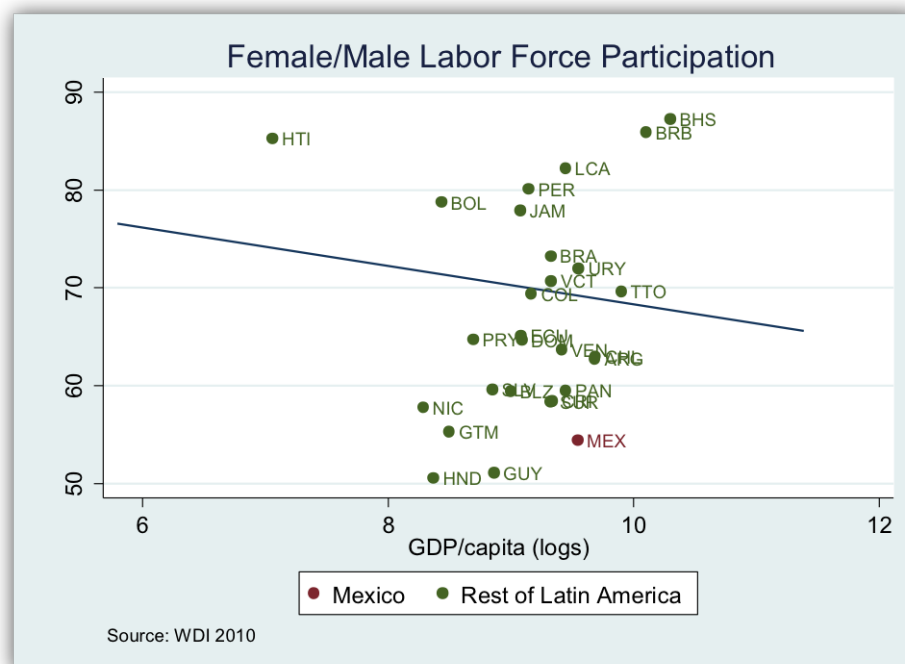


Figure 1: Compared to countries with similar income levels, Mexico has the lowest female labor participation in the Latin America region. Only Honduras and Guyana have lower female labor participation rates.

There is a persistent gender wage gap that disproportionately affects two groups of women: low income women and the highly educated (Arceo & Campos, 2013). These phenomena are coupled with higher expectations for women to perform domestic duties in the home relative to men. Irrespective of their work status, women in Mexico perform on average between ten and twenty more weekly hours of domestic work than their male counterparts, and eight to fifteen more hours of care work (CONEVAL, 2014). The gendered division of labor contributes to systemic conditions of disadvantage for women in the Mexican economy.

This policy analysis builds on the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote gender equality. The institution has been at the forefront of government entities in promoting women's rights within and beyond Mexico's borders for a number of years. While actively promoting the equality agenda on the world stage, the SRE is also looking inward, applying a gender perspective in all areas of its operation, and also looking to reduce inequalities that persist within the institution. In early 2016, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Claudia Ruiz-Massieu, in stating that the consolidation of the gender agenda would be one of her 2016 priorities, remarked that "no country can do without the talent and energy of half of its population; no country trying to overcome its challenges can exclude more than 50 percent of its inhabitants from the decision-making process and deny them opportunities" (SRE, 2016). She announced that 50% of upcoming Ambassadorial appointments would be women, sending an encouraging signal that there is tremendous political will behind the equality agenda at this point in time. It is vital to seize this window of opportunity to continue to work on gender equality. Momentum is building thanks to significant interest from key stakeholders in government, the international community, and civil society. It is my hope that this project may assist the institution in moving forward with its worthy commitment to gender equality.

## Achieving Gender Equality in the Mexican Foreign Service

The mission of the SRE is to *“Conduct Mexico’s foreign policy through dialogue, cooperation, promotion of the country, and attention to Mexicans abroad, as well as coordinating the international actions of the Federal Government.”*

Its vision is to *“Make Mexico a country with a constructive global presence, through an active and responsible foreign policy that promotes the achievement of national objectives from an innovative and strengthened institution.”*

In line with its vision of being an innovative and strengthened institution, the SRE needs working teams that design and execute effective policy decisions. There is some evidence suggesting that gender-balanced teams produce better outcomes than male-dominated teams (Hoogendoorn 2013). Research also shows that members of a group with very low representation face more personal stress, struggle to have their technical abilities properly recognized, and can become entrapped in a role (Moss Kanter, 1977). By increasing the representation of women and other minorities within its ranks, the Foreign Service can better take advantage of the human talent already present in the institution and promote the wellbeing of its workers.

However, the SRE faces serious obstacles to constituting a truly diverse Foreign Service. The organizational culture in the SRE, and specifically

in the Foreign Service, strongly emphasizes meritocracy. There is evidence pointing to the existence of a phenomenon known as the “paradox of meritocracy”, where organizations that emphasize meritocratic values, like fairness and performance-based pay, distribute rewards in a biased way, disadvantaging women (Castilla & Benard, 2010). Studies also suggest that token female representation in high-prestige groups, which the Foreign Service certainly is, can undermine gender diversity (Dugid, 2012).

The SRE has established internal regulations to face this and incorporate the gender perspective into all its policies, actions, and activities. These actions include the creation of the Office of Gender Equality in 2011, whose mission is to incorporate the gender perspective into the work of the SRE. This unit produced the SRE Program for Equality between Men and Women 2015-2018 (PROIGUALDAD), conducted a diagnostic survey of gender equality in 2012, and activated a worldwide network of 240 ‘gender focal points’ that operate in each of the Embassies and Consulates, as well as units within the Ministry in Mexico City. It also created three online courses that cover different critical topics for the SRE incorporating the gender perspective in the content, and conducts ongoing training for staff in Mexico City and abroad.

In spite of these efforts and others undertaken to build an equal opportunity meritocracy through competitive and objective recruitment and promotion processes, women are underrepresented at all levels of Mexican diplomacy<sup>1</sup>, with even wider gaps at the highest levels. In its observations to Mexico’s sixth periodic report to the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women of the UN Convention on the Elimination and Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Committee made two recommendations to the Mexican State specifically related to the SRE and the Foreign Service:

*“28. While recognizing the efforts made to increase the representation of women in public administration, the Committee notes with concern the small number of women in decision-making positions, in particular at the municipal level and in the Foreign Service.*

*29. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen measures to increase the number of women in decision-making positions at all levels and in all areas, in the light of its general recommendation 23, on women*

<sup>1</sup> This analysis will be restricted to the Diplomatic-Consular branch of the Mexican Foreign Service, which has higher decision making power, responsibility, and salaries than the Technical-Administrative Branch, where women are not underrepresented.

*“One of the main obstacles facing the Ministry is, without a doubt, the rigid hierarchical structure that makes difficult the ascent of young and talented men and women to different levels of the Foreign Service hierarchy. In this sense, it is very important to modify and diversify the composition of the Foreign Service, for that, it is necessary to make considerable changes in the current mechanism in place to access the highest hierarchical levels.”*

Senator Gabriela Cuevas, President of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

*“The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a place where women have the opportunity to fulfill our potential, and this culture goes beyond the Ministry to the country level.”*

Vanessa Márquez Rubio, Deputy Secretary of State for Latin America, SRE

*in political and public life. It also recommends that the State party introduce temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and general recommendation 25, to accelerate efforts to promote women to positions of leadership, including in the Foreign Service.” (CEDAW, 2006).*

In February 2015, the Senate Committee on Gender Equality approved a resolution requesting that the Ministry provide information on the mechanisms it put in place to achieve gender equality in the Foreign Service, in compliance with the CEDAW recommendations. The Committee concluded that “there is a significant bias against the active participation of women in public administration which should be analyzed and addressed by the Ministry, to achieve a more equal participation” (Senado de la República, 2015).

During an interview for this project, Senator Gabriela Cuevas provided insight into the considerations that resulted in the resolution: “The Senators emphasized the need to analyze the importance and reality of women’s participation in diplomacy, especially considering the limited access to Ambassadorial posts for women and the small number of women in decision-making posts in the Ministry. This results from a practice of discretionary appointments and the lack of affirmative actions that promote equal opportunities for men and women to become Ambassadors.”

Figure 2 illustrates this situation. The share of currently active Foreign Service Officers (FSO) who are female is 38% in the rank of Third Secretary, the lowest rank, and decreases further up in the organizational ladder. The ranks of Minister and Ambassadors, with 87 and 100 active officers respectively, are 20% and 27% female:

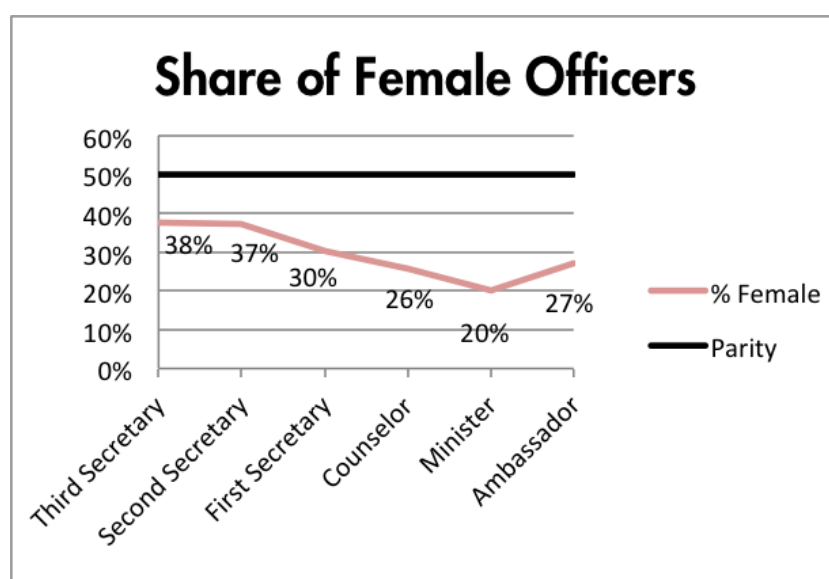


Figure 2: The share of women drops in higher ranks of the organizational hierarchy.



The recent announcement by Secretary Ruiz-Massieu is encouraging evidence that the SRE might be ready to embrace the CEDAW recommendations in a proactive way. If the SRE is motivated to take strides towards accelerating the incorporation of more women into senior leadership positions and is open to new policy options to make this a reality, the recommendations in this document can provide a starting point.

## The 2012 Diagnostic

*“The Diagnostic really is the cornerstone of the work of our office. The problems we have at the SRE are not minor and not different from those of the rest of the Federal Government.”*

Margarita Cortés Cid, Director of the Office of Gender Equality

The SRE has been working on this issue for some years through the Office of Gender Equality, which is tasked with “incorporating the gender perspective in the policies, programs, and activities carried out by the SRE.”<sup>2</sup> It has worked to institutionalize the gender perspective to ensure that efforts towards equality do not depend on the goodwill of individual decision makers, but make sure it is incorporated as a permanent line of work of the SRE.

The 2012 Diagnostic on the Incorporation of the Gender Perspective in the SRE established a starting point for the work of the SRE on the topic of gender. It was conducted in 2012 with the goals of i) knowing

the perception of SRE staff on gender equality and its relationship with their work conditions, ii) identifying factors that generate gender inequalities, iii) detecting specific thematic needs for staff training on gender that can be applicable to their work, iv) evidencing areas of tension between the work lives and the personal and family lives of SRE employees; and iv) quantifying the degree of unreported sexual and work-based harassment.

The Diagnostic shed light on elements of the institutional work environment that are not easily evidenced by the dataset this policy analysis exercise draws upon. For example, there is a strong sense of loyalty among diplomatic staff to the institution, with over 85% of FSOs, male and female, saying they always or very often feel proud to be members of the Foreign Service as well as feeling like they belong. At the same time, it revealed the prevalence of work-based harassment with victims of all genders and salient gender differences in terms of job satisfaction and quality of professional relationships within the institution.

On the subject of sexual harassment, relatively high numbers of women report having experienced unwanted advances at some point in their careers: 17.5% answered that they have been made to feel uncomfortable by the way coworkers have looked at their body; 14.4% has received unwelcome sexual comments; and 10.3% has received unwelcome comments about their sexual activities. This compares with 2.2%, 2.7%, and 2.7% of men respectively. In addition, 2.1% of women report being punished or reprimanded by a hierarchical superior after rejecting a sexual request. The Diagnostic also sadly reported that 1.8% of male diplomats indicated having experienced at least once a situation where they were forced to consume alcohol in order to engage in sexual intercourse and also 1.8% of male respondents said that at least once, they had been physically coerced into having sexual relations.

The SRE has put in place a mechanism to report incidences of sexual abuse and harassment, which relies on the crucial role of a large network of FSOs that serve as “gender focal points”, and are in charge of receiving and reporting any harassment complaints within an SRE office abroad or a Department in the Mexico offices. There remains work to be done in terms of awareness: 47% of male officers and 58% of female officers in the Diplomatic/Consular Branch reported not being aware of the existence of the mechanism. This may have changed since 2012, but it is impossible to know without a follow up survey.

The survey also revealed that over one third of the surveyed women FSOs stated that they seldom or never feel satisfied with their professional trajectory within the Foreign Service. Only 20% of men responded the same. Slightly more than 10% of women stated that the Foreign Service did not fulfill their professional expectations, while only 1% of men felt the same way. These figures imply

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Margarita Cortés Cid, Director of the Office for Gender Equality.

*"There are bosses that do not know how to behave around women at work."*

Male, Foreign Service Officer

*"Women in the Foreign Service, especially those who have reached high posts, are very conscious of the personal cost they pay to be a part of the Foreign Service. The cost to their personal lives of a diplomatic career is really significant."*

Edith Olivares, independent consultant to the SRE for the Diagnostic

*"My personal life is tremendously influenced by my work, from the place I live to the number of hours I have available for personal activities."*

Male, Foreign Service Officer

*"Entering the Foreign Service demands much higher costs from women. They certainly face many more problems when it comes to motherhood and life as a couple; more is asked of them."*

Male, Foreign Service Officer

*"I've handled it very easily because I am not married and don't have children. But if I was, like many of my friends, I know this would be a nightmare. For starters, the job I am performing today would be impossible with a husband and kids, because of the time commitment... For me, it was a conscious decision, but what I would hope for all young women is that they have the opportunity to have options, that they do not have to choose between their professional lives and having a family."*

Female, Foreign Service Officer

that overall, women are having a less positive experience of the Foreign Service than men are.

Women also feel less comfortable with the work environment: 43% of women and 31% of men responded that they sometimes or never have positive feelings about the environment. Differing perceptions on the quality of vertical and horizontal professional relationships may provide clues as to why. Among women, 47% do not like the treatment afforded to FSOs by their hierarchical superiors, and 35% disapprove of the way male and female FSO peers interact with each other. Among men, these percentages are 35%, 29%, and 21%, representing differences above ten percentage points in each case. Another striking difference pertains to teamwork; while 54% of male FSOs believe teamwork is not encouraged, a full 70% of women agree that teamwork is not encouraged by SRE:

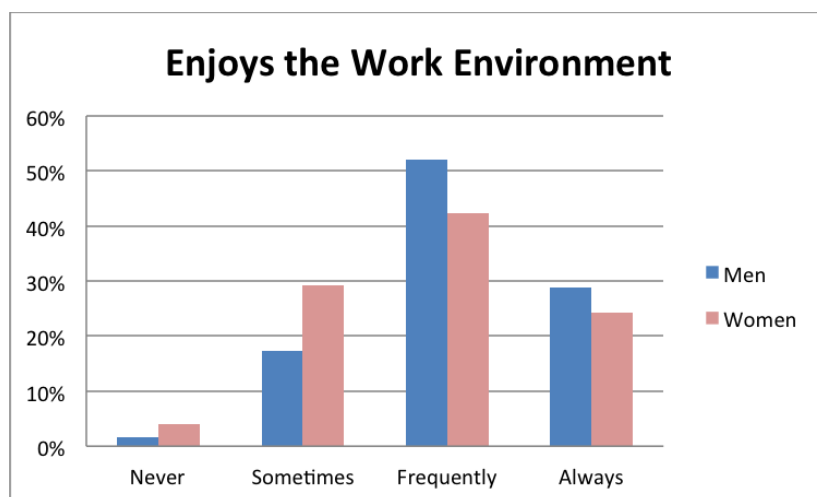


Figure 3: More women are dissatisfied with the work environment.

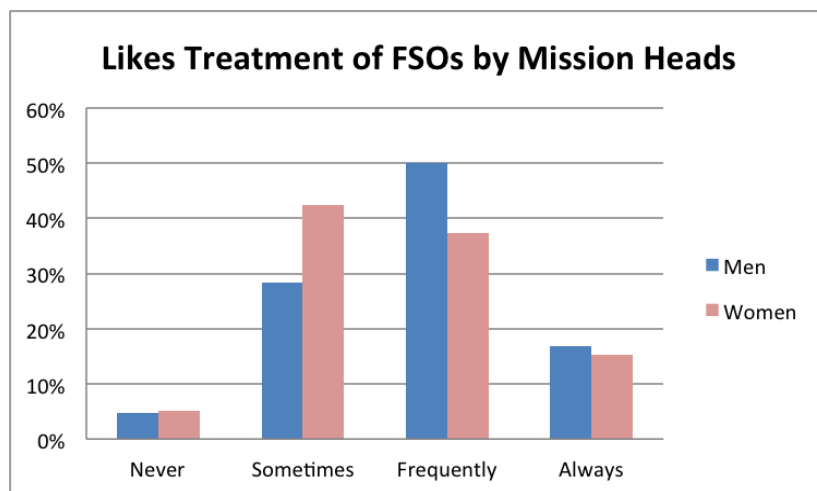


Figure 4: Women are less enthusiastic about the treatment received from their bosses.

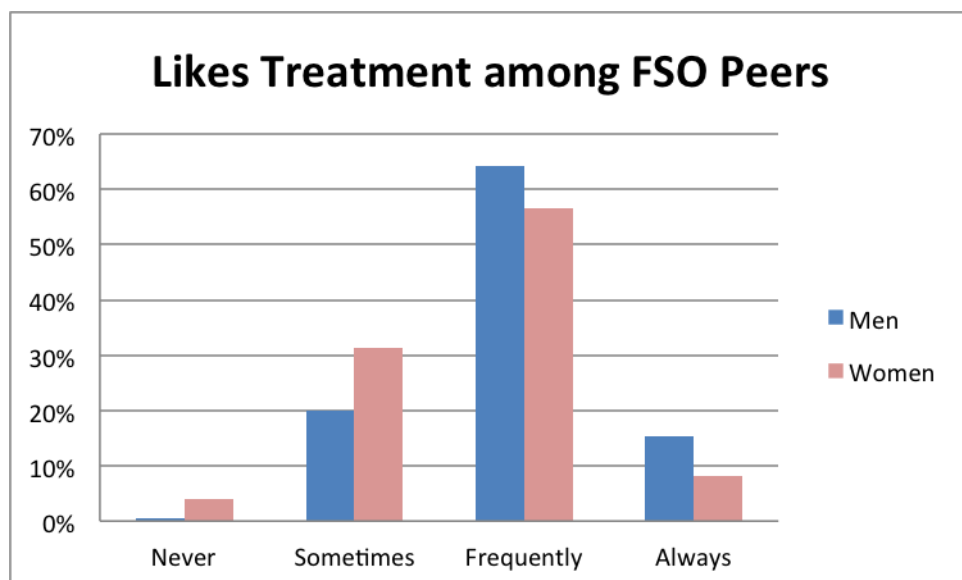


Figure 5: Women are less comfortable with the way peer-to-peer relationships unfold in their work environment.

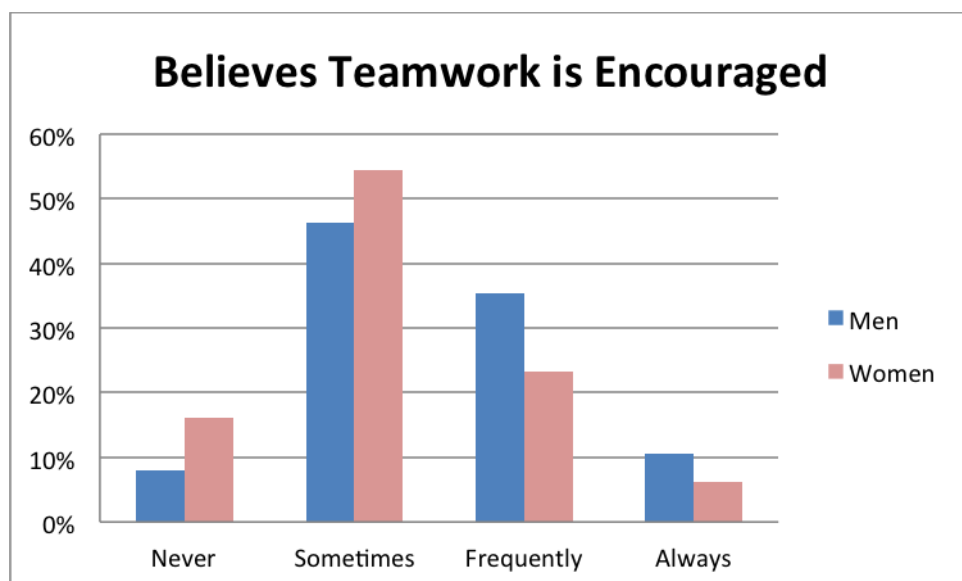


Figure 6: Women perceive less encouragement for teamwork from the institution.

The Diagnostic also showed that the topic of personal life and work-life balance for diplomats is a difficult one. Men and women face a host of challenges that come with the fact that the job requires them to uproot their lives every few years and move to a new country. These difficulties are amplified for women, who often find it impossible to reconcile their personal and professional lives, and feel that they must choose between the two. In several interviews, female FSOs mentioned this perceived binary choice and their conscious decision to forego family life in favor of diplomatic life, or vice versa, leaving diplomacy altogether in order to have a family life. In this sense, female diplomats may be displaying very high levels of loyalty to the institution, since they are willing to pay very high costs to be a part of it.

This is reflected in the Diagnostic data in different ways. First, female diplomats remain single in greater proportions than male diplomats. As mentioned, in many cases, this is a very conscious decision. It is therefore not surprising that a quarter of the women surveyed consider that the Foreign Service almost eliminates their possibility of maintaining a romantic relationship, while fewer men reported facing this dilemma. Also, female diplomats more often “go at it alone”, reporting no economic dependents much more frequently than men:

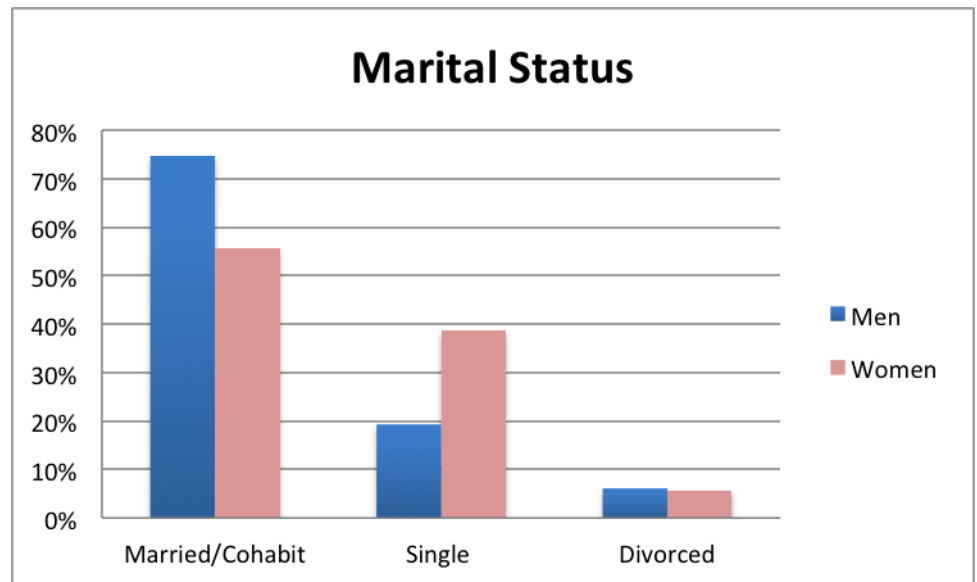


Figure 7: Women are less likely to be married than men. They are more likely to be single. When they do marry, they do so successfully, with low divorce rates equal to the men's.

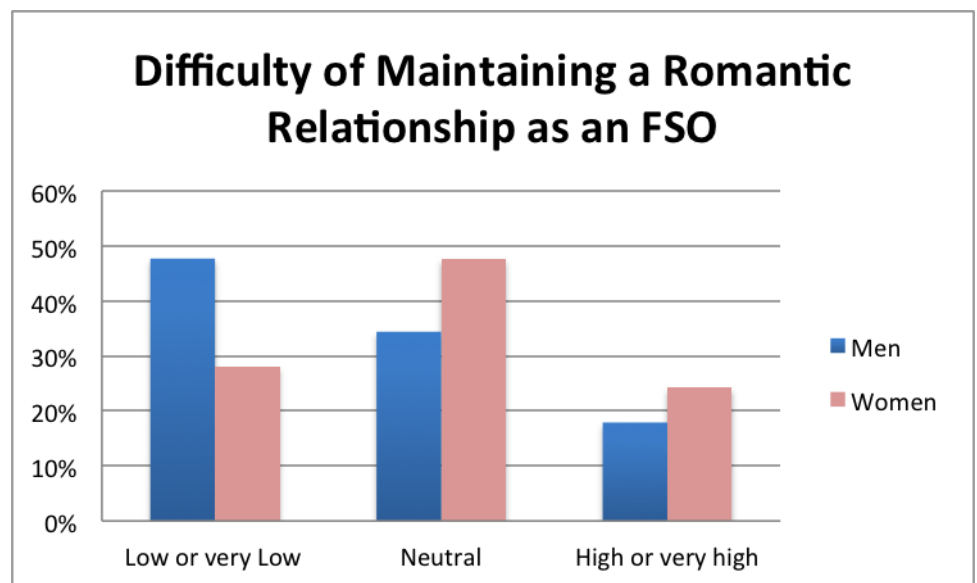


Figure 8: Female diplomats find it more difficult than male diplomats to maintain a romantic relationship as a member of the Foreign Service.

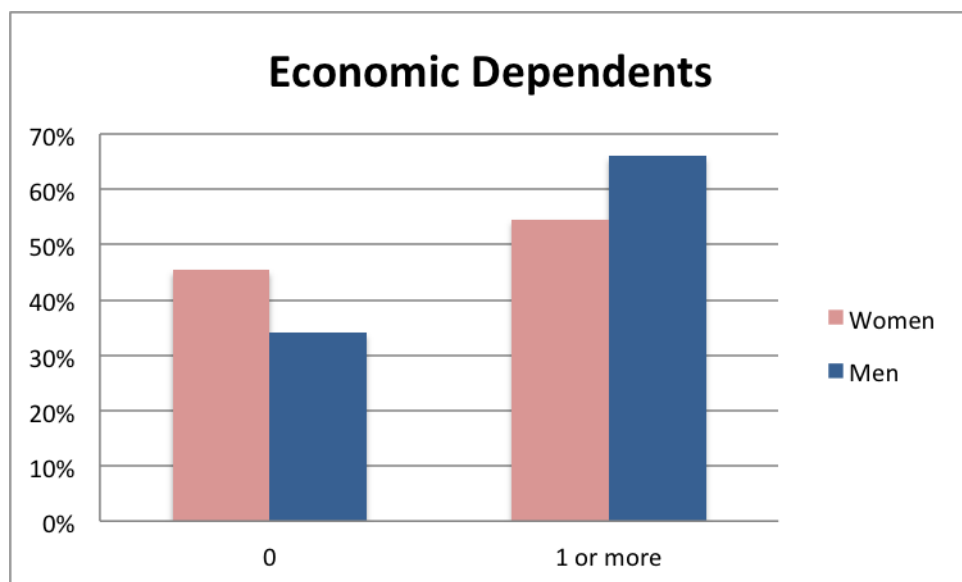


Figure 9: Female diplomats are more likely than men to have no economic dependents like children, spouses, or parents.

Finally, perceptions of opportunity for professional advancement are very diverse within the surveyed population and feature some interesting gender differences. In general, men believe the process fairer than women do. For example, 84% of men believe it is equally difficult for men and women to reach the rank of Ambassador, while only 48% of women agree. Most women, believe it is easier for men. Almost 91% of men believe that there is an equal chance for male and female FSOs to reach high decision-making posts at headquarters, but a significant share of women is not convinced: 41% believe men are advantaged.

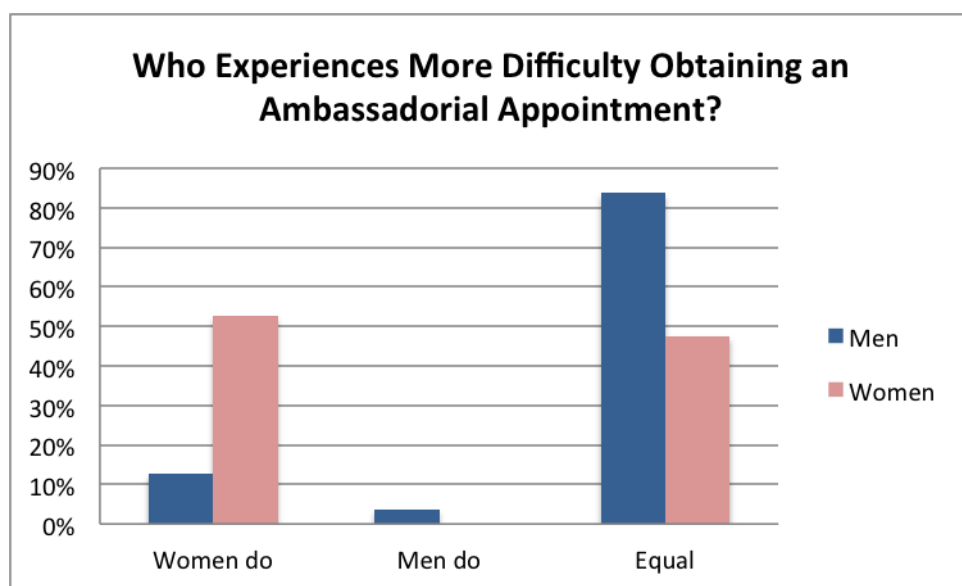


Figure 10: Women perceive than men are advantaged in the process, men think it is fair.

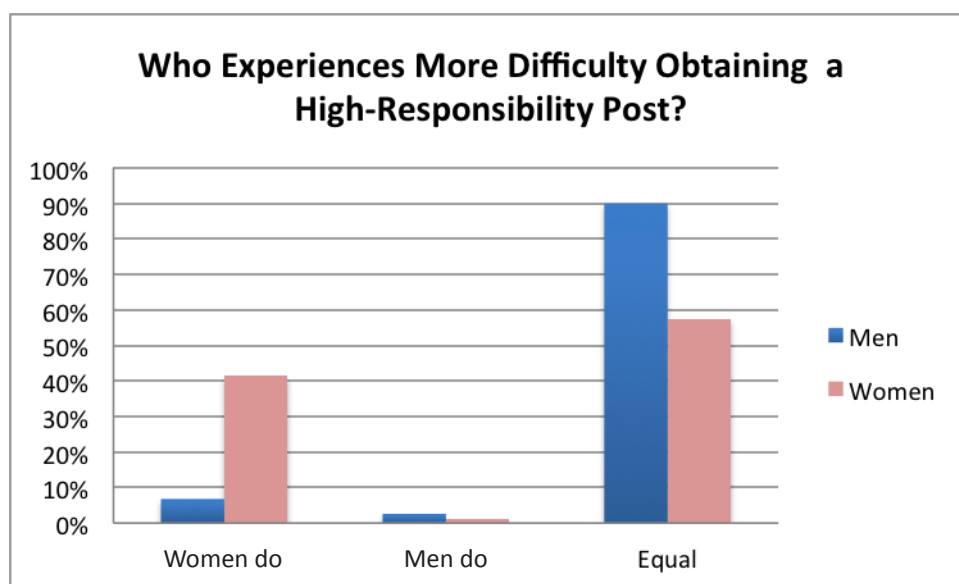


Figure 11: A significant proportion of women think men are advantaged. Almost all men believe the process is fair.

The Diagnostic concludes that in large part, the application of the gender perspective in the institution up to that point had depended on individual decision makers within the SRE. Thus, it states that there is an important need for institutionalization. It notes that a strong sense of belonging and pride are characteristics of the institutional culture that are positive, but elements of dissatisfaction such as salaries and lack of teamwork should be improved. It stresses the issue of vertical gender segregation in the Foreign Service, and proposes to implement temporary affirmative action policies, as recommended by the CEDAW. It also recommends implementing flexible or compact work schedules, extending paternity leave to equal maternity leave, and extending staff training about incorporation of the gender perspective, in order to successfully achieve gender equality within the institution. This was the situation of which the Ministry was aware at the onset of this project.

# Methodology

My analysis builds on the 2012 Diagnostic and is oriented by a set of guiding questions, following critical points in Foreign Service Officers' (FSO) careers, which define their progression. These critical points are Entry, Promotion, and Exit. I observe gender representation changes at each stage to provide a diagnosis of the problem and policy options to address it. The target outcome for the policy is to achieve 50% representation of women in the rank of Minister, the highest possible rank without a Presidential appointment, and in the rank of Ambassador, the highest possible rank for an FSO.

The guiding questions for the research are the following:

## Entry

1. Do men and women enter the Foreign Service at the same rates?
  - a. If not, what factors can explain this?
  - b. If not, has the institution implemented actions to address the issue?
  - c. If not, what further actions can be implemented to address the issue?

## Promotion

2. Are female and male Foreign Service Officers promoted at the same rates?
  - a. If not, what factors can explain this?
  - b. If not, has the institution implemented actions to address the issue?
  - c. If not, what further actions can be implemented to address the issue?

## Exit

3. Do male and female Foreign Service Officers exit the Foreign Service at the same rates?
  - a. If not, what factors can explain this?
  - b. If not, has the institution implemented actions to address the issue?
  - c. If not, what further actions can be implemented to address the issue?

To answer these questions, I considered three types of evidence. The first is quantitative evidence on the career progression of active FSOs. I assembled a database using information provided by the SRE, which contains 844 observations, 780 of them belonging to active FSOs and 64 are FSOs who have resigned. The data points for each observation include demographic information such as age, gender, educational attainment, and number of economic dependents, and career-related information, such as date of each promotion, scores for each element of the promotion exams that the officer has taken since 2002, and posts to which the officer has been assigned. The SRE also provided information about the scores and gender of applicants in Foreign Service entrance examinations



since 2002. I consolidated this information into a dataset with 7,982 observations. Unfortunately, I was unable to match the entrance exam results and the rest of the data available for active officers because the entrance exam data does not identify the applicants by name.

The second source of evidence is the 2012 Diagnostic on the Gender Perspective in Institutional Culture described in the previous section. This document was produced with the “purpose of establishing guiding principles to shape a program to strengthen and institutionalize the policy of incorporating the gender perspective as a cross-cutting principle in the SRE”. The Diagnostic provides valuable insights collected through surveys of representative samples of the population within the SRE about the organizational culture, work-life balance, awareness of gender issues, discrimination and violence, and regulatory barriers to gender equality. It also provides recommendations that were taken into account for this analysis.

Finally, to compliment the above information, a third source of evidence is a series of interviews conducted to inform this analysis qualitatively. I conducted twenty-three interviews; nine of them with female FSOs, seven with male FSOs, three with staff or consultants from the Office of Gender Equality, two with FSOs from other countries, and two with Mexican authority figures in the realm of Foreign Policy, Senator Gabriela Cuevas, President of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and (former) Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs for Latin America in the SRE, Vanessa Rubio Márquez. The comments from all these participants were insightful in many ways and helped shape my thinking around these issues.

# Analysis

*"Getting a diplomatic passport has been one of my greatest accomplishments in life."*

Foreign Service Officer, male

*"It was my first job and has been my only job. After twenty eight years, I am still motivated."*

Foreign Service Officer, female

*"My motivation to enter the Foreign Service began at the age of 12, when I realized that diplomacy was my calling and my dream was to represent Mexico."*

Foreign Service Officer, female

I begin my analysis by looking at the entry point to the Foreign Service. The research questions that guide this section attempt to determine whether the process presents disadvantages specific to women. I find that the entry process does indeed filter out women disproportionately, especially in its first stage.

## Entry

Entering the Foreign Service is a very difficult task. Those who have accomplished it, feel a significant amount of pride. During interviews, the most often cited motivation for joining was having a "calling". Men and women report knowing they would attempt to join years in advance.

The process begins with a contest that is open to the public. To be eligible to participate, applicants must meet citizenship, age, and educational attainment criteria. Once the applicants meet these criteria, they can participate in an entry process that has three stages.

The first stage involves four written tests: General Culture, which is akin to a series of trivia questions, Spanish and English multiple choice language tests, where applicants must show a high level of mastery, and a test of proficiency in a third language. Applicants with the highest scores (the top 13% historically) move on to the second stage, where they are interviewed once in Spanish and once in English, produce a written essay on a topic related to Mexican foreign policy, and undergo a psychological examination. Applicants with the highest scores advance to the third stage, FSO training. With only rare exceptions, officers complete the training and then become part of the Foreign Service.

1: Do men and women enter the Foreign Service at the same rates?

Answer: NO. Even though as many women apply as men, more men enter.

Women apply to enter the Foreign Service in the same numbers, and even slightly more frequently than men. Since the establishment of the public examination for entry into the Foreign Service in 2002, out of 7,914 applicants who participated, 4,066, or 51.4% were women.

Unfortunately, they did not find success nearly as often as their male peers. Before the year 2014, the cohort with the highest proportion of accepted women was the 2006 cohort, which was 42% female. The share of women in that cohort may not seem worthy of attention until we take into account the fact that applicants that year were 52% female, so representation dropped by ten percentage points. This is not far from the ordinary. The average gap between the share of female applicants and the share of female hires in this period is 12.8% (Figure 12). The gap ranged from 9 percentage points

in 2008 to 24 percentage points in 2002. The only exception is 2014, when women outnumbered men in the admitted cohort for the first time in history<sup>3</sup>. In that year, the entering cohort was 51.4% female, coming from an applicant pool that was 52.9% female. It is unclear if the 2014 outcome is the result of chance or an institutional decision to promote the entry of more women into the Foreign Service.

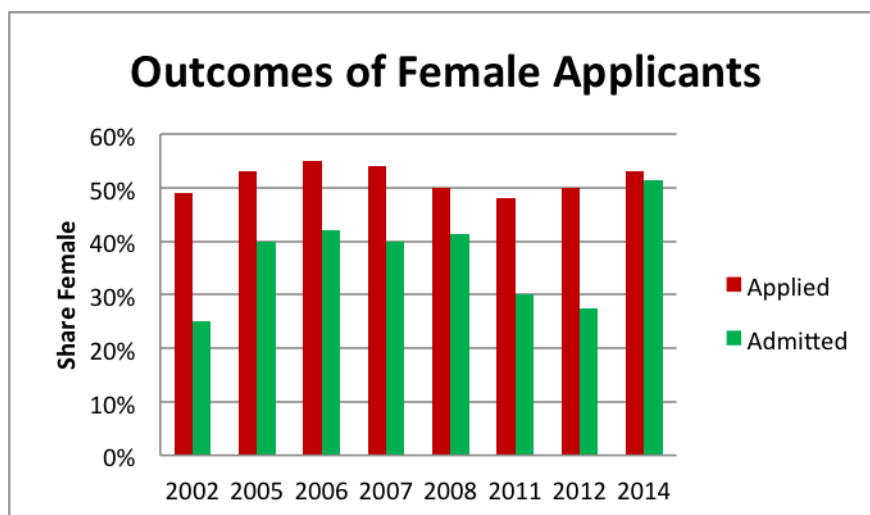


Figure 12: Female applicants apply in similar or greater proportion to men but are much less successful in gaining admittance.

70% of men and 78% of women in the Foreign Service believe there is at least a few instances of discrimination during the oral entrance exams; 41% of women and 22% of men believe they are frequent.

67% of women and 54% of men in the Foreign Service believe there is at least one instance of discrimination in the written portion of the entrance exam; 16% of women and 11% of men believe they are frequent.

Diagnostic of Incorporation of the Gender Perspective

The institution works hard to make the exam as objective and fair as possible. It takes several measures to anonymize the written examinations and staff supervises test takers at all times. Interviewers are selected because of their expertise and neutrality. Nevertheless, there is a significant sense of doubt among FSOs about the degree of bias or discrimination in the process. High percentages of men and women believe that there are at least a few instances of discrimination in the entrance exam. The lack of trust is much more salient for women: the share of women who believe discrimination is frequent is 19 percentage points higher than for men in the oral interview, and 5 points higher for the written examination (SRE, 2012).

In previous decades, before the entrance exam in its current form was in place, entry was also not gender balanced. Figure 13 shows the composition of incoming FSO cohorts in recent history. In the 1980s, 80% of new entrants were men. This gap began to close in the 1990s, when female entrants amounted to about 30%, almost reaching 40% by the end of the decade. This tendency remained in place through the 2000s and into the 2010s. The shape of the graph resembles the graph that shows the shares of women in each rank, hinting at the relationship between the share of the entry cohort that is female and the share of females active at each level of the organizational hierarchy. Because the 2014 group was relatively small, the fact that it was 51% female did not offset the overall composition of the 2010 and later entry group:

<sup>3</sup> This cohort is not included in the databases compiled for this project because their entry was not finalized by the time the dataset was put together for this project.

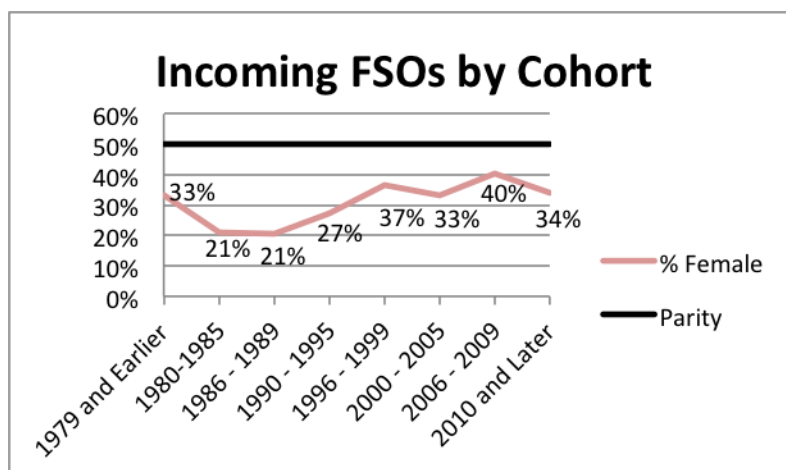


Figure 13: Women's representation in incoming cohorts has never surpassed 40% in the last decades. Even though the 2014 cohort was 51% female, it was relatively small and did not offset the trend from the 2010 and 2012 cohorts.

1.a: What factors can explain the difference?

Answer: Female Underperformance in First Stage Multiple-Choice Exams.

Since 2002, 51.3% of the total applicant pool is female. This means that the SRE is having no trouble finding enough women who are interested enough in the Foreign Service to apply. The problem is that not enough women make it through the first stage of testing. From an applicant pool that is over 50% female, the group that advances to the second stage is merely 37% female. Breaking up these results by cohorts shows that this pattern has been constant over the last decade. Each year, female applicants in the first stage equal or outnumber the male applicants, but make up the minority of candidates in the second stage, and eventually enter in smaller numbers.

In 2014, the pattern of female underperformance in the first stage reappeared, but unlike previous years, it reversed during the second stage. I was unable to determine during interviews whether this was due to chance or due to an institutional decision to seek equal gender representation. Worth noting is that in November 2014, the Senate Committee on Gender Equality presented a proposal for a resolution to “respectfully invite the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to inform on the mechanisms it put in place to achieve equality of opportunities and treatment for access and promotion of women in the Foreign Service”, which was later approved. It is unclear whether this had an effect on the 2014 hiring decisions. In any case, the SRE should closely observe whether these patterns remain or revert in future entry processes.

The following graph provides the information by cohorts:

Table 1: Share of Female Applicants in the Entrance Examination by Stage. Female representation drops dramatically after the First Stage in all years.

Year	Applied	Advanced to Second Stage	Admitted	Difference Applied – Admitted
2002	49%	34%	26%	-23 percentage points
2005	53%	42%	40%	-13 percentage points
2006	55%	46%	42%	-13 percentage points
2006 - 2007	54%	37%	40%	-14 percentage points
2008	50%	38%	41%	-9 percentage points
2011	49%	30%	30%	-19 percentage points
2012	50%	32%	28%	-22 percentage points
2014	53%	38%	51%	-2 percentage points
<b>All Cohorts</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>-13 percentage points</b>

What is causing the filtering of a large number of women during the first stage and in a lesser degree during the second stage? To answer the question, I broke up the process into each of its elements. The following figures show the score distributions by gender of all applicants for each component of the first stage exam: The general culture test, the English language written test, the Spanish language written test, and the third language translation test. I found that men outperform women in all the exam components, and a higher number of men score in the 90th percentile in each area, thus having a greater chance of advancing to the second stage<sup>4</sup>. This trend is more pronounced in the Culture and English exams. The figures show results pooled for all years, although the patterns are similar for all individual cohorts.

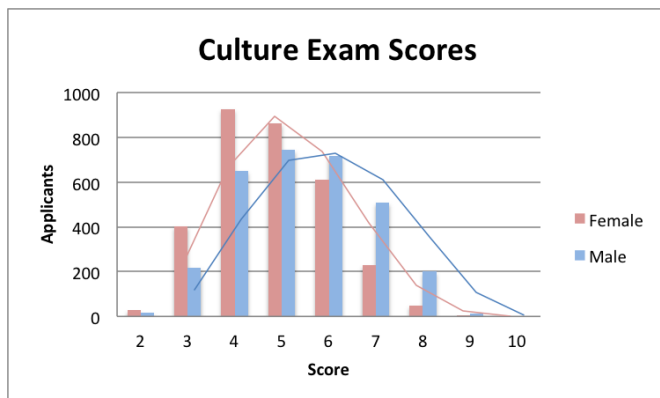


Figure 14: Too few women score in the 90th percentile (7.4 or above) and fail to move on the next stage of the entry process.

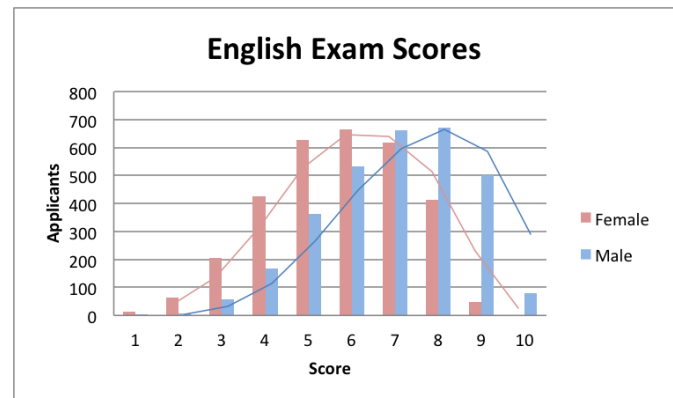


Figure 15: Very few women score 9 or 10 in the English exam and too many score a 6 or below.

<sup>4</sup>T-test difference in means results: Culture section: -.59 point difference (5.9%),  $p=0.0000$ . English section: -.24 point difference (2.4%),  $p=0.0000$ . See Appendix for full table. Spanish section: -.12 point difference (1.2%),  $p=0.0000$ . Third language section: -.18 point difference (1.8%),  $p=0.0001$ . The pattern is the same in all cohorts.

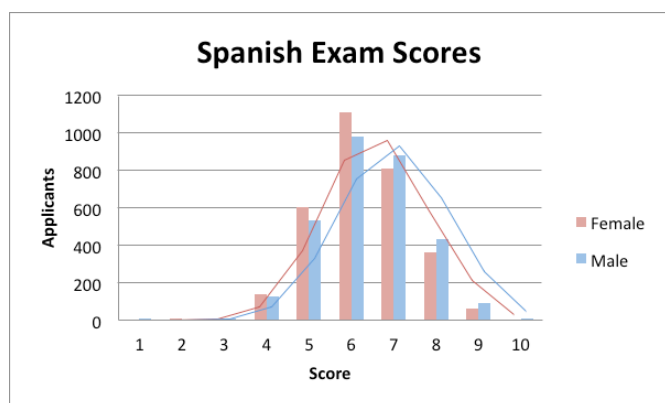


Figure 16: Too few women score 8 or above in the Spanish test.

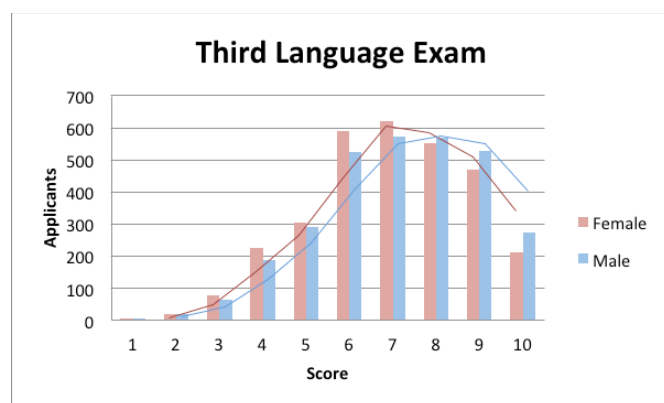


Figure 17: Very few women score 9 or 10 in the English exam and too many score a 6 or below.

There may be several possible explanations for this. We could hypothesize the following:

1. The Mexican school system is not preparing men and women equally academically.
2. The Mexican school system equally prepares men and women academically but the SRE is attracting a set of female candidates that is not sufficiently prepared for the test.
3. Men and women are equally prepared for the test but the test is biased.

Testing each hypothesis is beyond the scope of this project, but this does not mean that there is not much work to do by the SRE to resolve this matter. The Recommendations Section will discuss policy options to consider. They include evaluating applicant performance by gender on each question of the General Culture test and doing away with questions that feature significant gender differences, implementing different modalities of recruitment efforts and providing guidance to prospective applicants to perform better in the test.

The second stage of the exam plays out differently. I found no significant differences<sup>5</sup> in performance by gender in any section except the psychological examination, where more women received favorable scores<sup>6</sup>. The psychological examination is not meant to be competitive, however, it is only meant to filter out profiles that are incompatible with the Foreign Service, and therefore, as long as applicants do not receive a score of zero, they can move forward in the process. Slightly under 20% of applicants are eliminated due to psychological incompatibility, 76% of which are male (out of an applicant pool that is 63% male). In sum, there seems to be performance gaps worth paying attention to in the first stage but not in the second stage.

#### 1.b: Has the institution implemented actions to address the issue?

Answer: The institution has incorporated the gender perspective in some parts of the entry process but there is room for further action.

<sup>5</sup> T-test difference in means results: Written exam: -.01 point difference (0.1%),  $p=0.90$ . Oral exam: -.02 point difference (0.2%),  $p=0.84$ . English oral exam: -.06 point difference (0.6%),  $p=0.34$ .

<sup>6</sup> T-test difference in means results: .19 point difference,  $p=0.0000$ . See Appendix for full table.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with junior staff from the Office for Gender Equality.

The Office of Gender Equality provided input to ensure that the language of the 2014 public call for applications to enter the Foreign Service was inclusive. The office reports having had limited influence on exam content beyond requesting to eliminate interview questions that could be biased against women<sup>7</sup>. Examples of such questions are those regarding the impossibility of achieving work-life balance or difficulties in the personal aspect of life as a diplomat previously directed exclusively towards women. These actions, although valuable, probably did not fully address gender gaps in the entry process.

## Summary

This analysis finds that the entry process has historically presented a higher hurdle for women than for men. Even though more women than men have applied to become Foreign Service Officers, men have consistently dominated entry cohorts. The exception was the year 2014, when the incoming class was 51% female. Because the reason for this difference is unknown, is not yet clear whether the result from 2014 will repeat itself in future years or whether the pattern will revert to its previous form. What is clear is that the first stage of the exam is a very critical point: the share of women drops by fourteen percentage points from the first to the second stage. The SRE would do well to look for the underlying causes for this phenomenon.

In the first stage, women underperform in all sections of the exam, especially General Culture and English. They also underperform in the Spanish and Third Language exams, although the gap is slightly smaller. In the second stage, there is no difference in performance between men and women, except for the psychological exam, which is the least competitive part of the process and in which women do better than men do.

# Analysis

*"The promotion process does not reward a job well done, rather, it rewards your capacity to network and obtain a high post. Assigning such heavy weight to the office you occupy incentivizes preferring networking over working."*

Male, Foreign Service Officer

*"It is a source of disillusionment and frustration. The evaluation criteria for our work and performance are arbitrary and subjective. They clearly favor people who occupy certain positions in certain Representations abroad or at Headquarters"*

Male, Foreign Service Officer

*"I will not participate in upcoming promotion exams if the number of slots available is not reasonable or proportional to the number of candidates presenting the exam."*

Female, Foreign Service Officer

*"They got promoted ahead of me even though my score was one of the best up until the written exam. Seeing that this type of thing can happen was one of the biggest disappointments in my career."*

Female, Foreign Service Officer

In this section, I will analyze the promotion process to define whether women are achieving different outcomes than their male colleagues. I find that men and women achieve similar outcomes in most evaluation items except two: post responsibility level and hardship posts, where equally qualified and equally senior men receive higher scores than women.

## Promotion

Diplomatic/Consular officers enter the Service as Third Secretaries, the lowest rank (excluding temporary ranks such as Attaché). They then progress up the organizational ladder via competitive examination processes, which take into account seniority, supervisor's evaluation, self-evaluation, and performance on a written and oral examination. Officers in each rank compete with each other to obtain a limited number of slots available in the next highest rank. Promotion exams are held at irregular intervals, usually every one to three years.

FSOs interviewed for this project cite the lack of promotions as the number one demotivating factor in their professional lives. They mentioned it more often than salary issues, problems with work-life balance, and post transfers. The most frequently mentioned negative aspects of the process are perceived subjectivity of the evaluation and the disconnect between the abilities required for on-the-job performance and the abilities assessed by the test. These were closely followed by the issue of rules changing for each new iteration of the exam and perceived instances of unfair treatment or unethical practices.

Despite the fact that all genders voiced roughly the same concerns regarding the promotion process, their experiences and outcomes are not necessarily identical. Quantitative data show that female offices are disadvantaged in two sections of the exam: level of responsibility of the post and hardship.

The interviews also showed that women might be more inclined to self-select out of participating in the promotion process. Three women reported having willfully abstained from participating either as a sign of protest or because they considered a promotion at a certain point in time to be undeserved. No men reported abstaining. More evidence is necessary to understand differences in attitudes towards the exam more fully.

**2: Are female and male Foreign Service Officers promoted at the same rates?**

**Answer:** It is complicated. Disaggregating the exam into its different sections, I find that women and men perform equally well in all but two: Men are advantaged in post responsibility level and points from



hardship posts.

Also, in cohorts where there are lower shares of women, their likelihood of promotion is higher than men's; but when women made up at least 30% of the officers in a cohort, men were favored. The result is that women are overrepresented in the lowest rank but underrepresented in all other ranks.

The following graph shows a picture of the Foreign Service by rank and gender. Both gender groups feature a pyramid-like structure, with decreasing representation from the rank of Third Secretary to the rank of Minister and a slight clustering in the top rank, with more Ambassadors than Ministers. However, the drop is much steeper for women as rank increases, with increasing pace of representation reduction beginning at the rank of First Secretary:

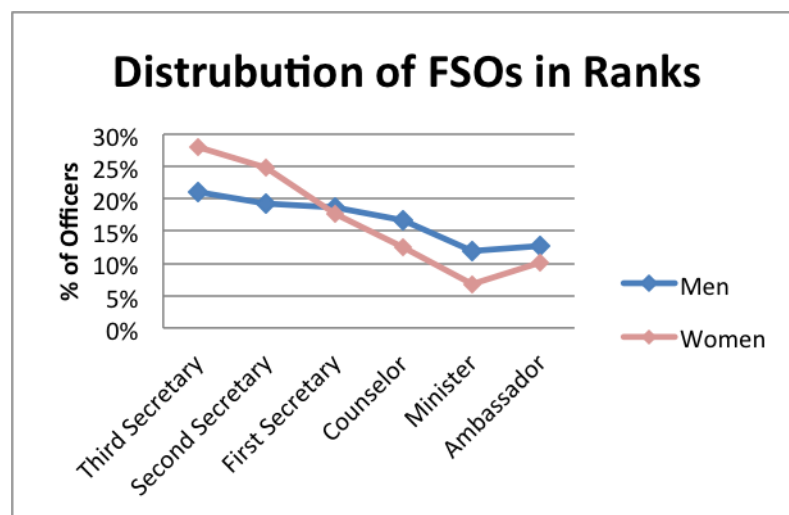


Figure 18: More than half of female FSOs are Third and Second Secretaries, while 60% of male FSOs are First Secretaries or higher.

How much of this difference is the result of newer cohorts having larger shares of women and how much is the result of different promotion outcomes by gender in each cohort? To answer this question, I constructed a table of estimates of officers' ranks given their entry year. Because seniority is highly correlated with rank<sup>8</sup>, we can predict reasonable ranges for officers' entry year given their rank. To do this, I took the average time between promotions for male and female officers, which is slightly over five years for both<sup>9</sup>, and predicted an entry year range within one standard deviation. This yields a narrow range for the lower ranks, but for ranks that require more promotions, it can be quite wide.

Once we have an idea of the expected rank of an officer given their entry year, we can compare the share of women in each cohort to the share of women in the rank. The following table provides that information. It shows that women seem to get stuck in the ranks of Third and Second Secretary. Also, we can see that the ranks with the largest gap between the share of women we would expect to see in that rank and the share of women actually in the rank are First Secretaries and Counselors.

<sup>8</sup> Regression coefficient -.13,  $p=0.0000$ , controlling for gender and education level,  $R^2$  of .70. See Appendix for full regression table.

<sup>9</sup> Average of 5.5 years for women and 5.45 years for men. The mean for all officers is 5.47 with a standard deviation of 2.9 years.

The data also shows an interesting pattern that emerges in ranks above Second Secretary regarding the relationship between cohort composition and advancement. In cohorts with more women, above 35%, the underrepresentation in the expected rank is more significant, like in years 1996-2000 and 2006-2010. In contrast, cohorts with fewer women, like 1981-1985 and 1986-1990, have very small underrepresentation or even overrepresentation.

Table 2: Advancement of Women to Higher Ranks

Cohort	Expected Rank	% Women in Data Range	% Women in Rank	Difference
Pre - 1980	Ambassador	27%	27%	0%
1981 - 1985	Minister	21%	20%	-1%
1986 - 1990	Minister	19%	20%	+1%
1991 - 1995	Counsellor	29%	26%	-3%
1996 - 2000	Counsellor	37%	26%	-11%
2001 - 2005	First Secretary	31%	30%	-1%
2006 - 2010	First Secretary	41%	30%	-11%
2011 and After	Secondary Secretary	30%	30%	+7%
2011 and After	Third Secretary	38%	38%	+8%

Source: SRE

### 2.a: What factors can explain the difference?

Answer: Lower scores for female officers on post responsibility level and hardship posts on promotion exam.

### Post Scores

Out of the nine elements assessed in the promotion exam, women are disadvantaged in two: Post degree of responsibility and hardship. Posts are assigned through a highly subjective and unregulated process which offers officers little control. They may be assigned to a post through the rotation program, although the Head of Mission retains the right to move the officer around between different posts within an Embassy or Consulate. It is also possible that officers are asked to fulfill certain roles by Department Heads or Heads of Mission. Many of these assignments result from networking, specialization of officers in certain functions, or other considerations. It seems that this informal arrangement seems to disadvantage women.

To provide context, the following table shows the points awarded to officers in a promotion exam according to the post to which they are assigned:

Table 3

Post	Points
Head of Mission	5
Department Head or Chief of Staff	5
Deputy Head of Mission	4
Deputy Director	4
Head of Delegation	4
Section Head	3
Area Director	2
Support Section Head	1
Support Delegation Head	1

Source: SRE

Controlling for rank, year of entry, age, educational attainment, and number of economic dependents, women were less likely to be assigned to high-responsibility posts, and thus, received on average 0.19 points less than did men in this part of the evaluation. For perspective on the potential promotion implication of this type of gap, it is worth highlighting that the average difference between the last officer to earn a promotion and the runner-up is coincidentally 0.19 points as well.

The differences were more significant especially in exams to attain the ranks with the largest gaps between expected and real share of women, First Secretaries and Counselors. The results for exams to become Second Secretary or Minister did not feature these patterns.

In the exam for promotion to Counselor, the average difference between men and women in post scores was 0.44 points, with men outscoring women. In the exam for promotion to First Secretary, the difference was 0.14 points, also favoring men. The following graphs show the scores by gender from 2002 to 2014. It is clear that fewer women obtained the top scores: Of those seeking to become Counselors, 32% of women obtained top post scores, in contrast to 54% of men. Of those seeking promotion to First Secretary, 38% of women compared to 43% of men obtained top scores:

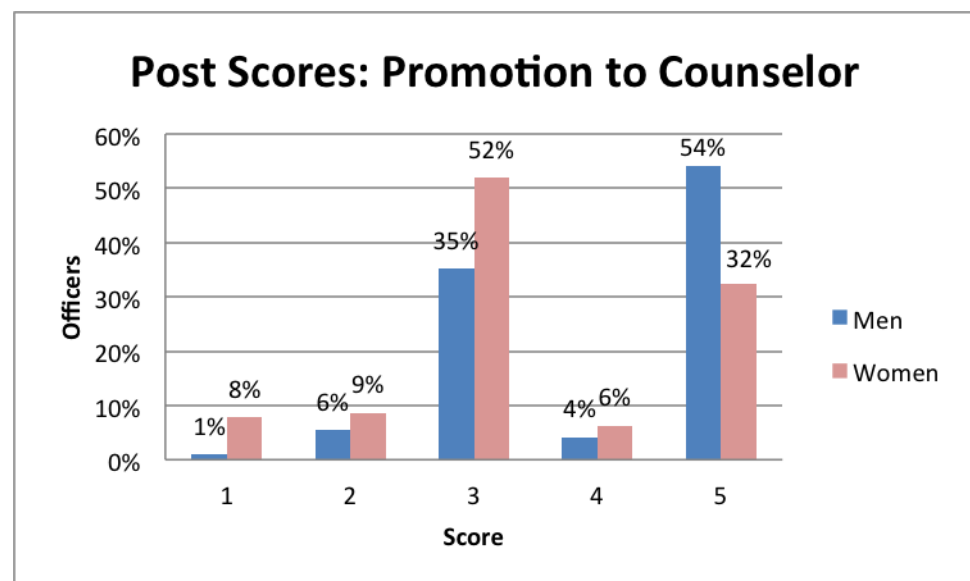


Figure 19: 54% of men receive the highest possible post score versus only 32% of women.

<sup>10</sup> Statistically significant at the 1% level, P value= 0.007, see Appendix for regression table.

<sup>11</sup> T-test difference in means results: Promotion to Counselor: -.44 point difference, p=0.0001. Promotion to First Secretary: -.14 point difference, p=0.0799. See Appendix for full tables.

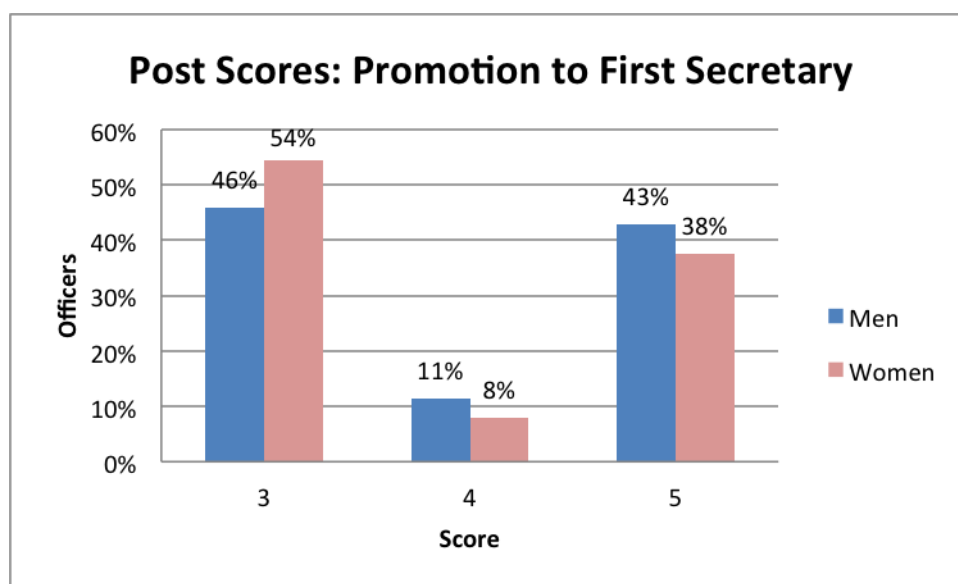


Figure 20: 43% of men receive the highest possible post score versus 38% of women. No officers received scores lower than 3.

This dynamic, where women are given lower-reward assignments than men, has been observed in different contexts, like the banking sector, where differentiated assignment to low and high quality accounts caused a gender gap in commissions (Madden, 2012). In this case, we may be observing a test score gap resulting from lower responsibility post assignments for women. In the 2015 edition of the exam the effects were magnified because in addition to receiving points for post in accordance to the table above, the table was also used to weight self-evaluation cores, and thus had a larger effect on the total exam score.

## HARDSHIP POSTS

*"There is still a very paternalistic idea about what women are capable of doing. There are certain tasks that are considered risky, complicated, and difficult, and they are still thought of as only fit for men."*

Female, Foreign Service Officer

*"I also sought to participate in support missions to El Salvador, Nicaragua, and other countries, and I was always denied, that was a job for men."*

Female, Foreign Service Officer

*"This is not the type of post where you should require or force officers to be posted, men or women. It has a very particular set of challenges for which you need to be very prepared and willing to take on. There should be a choice."*

Female, Foreign Service Officer

*"It was a huge professional challenge... it forced me to update myself and study... It was disconcerting at first, but I am very thankful for having received this opportunity... I was always treated with professional respect."*

Female, Foreign Service Officer

## Hardship Posts

Assignments to places designed as hardship posts can be instrumental to an FSO's career advancement. Beginning in 2004, officers who have held such an assignment received an additional point on their promotion exam. Considering that the average difference between a promotion or a near promotion is 0.19 points, this boost is far from negligible. Women are 15% less likely to be assigned to a hardship post than equally qualified men, controlling for entry year, education level, age, and number of economic dependents.

The 2009-2012 PROIGUALDAD stated the following about how the gender perspective applies to assignment of hardship posts: The Rotation Subcommittee of the Human Resources Committee has been sensitive when assigning women to hardship posts or to places where the rights of women are inferior in comparison to men. Nevertheless, in the assignment of these posts, women that wish to work in this type of context are not automatically excluded.

Despite this policy, in practice, hardship posts are disproportionately assigned to men, and some women have in fact been automatically excluded. Women are 31% of officers, but only hold 17% of the hardship posts. Out of all female FSOs, only 17% have ever had the chance to be assigned to a hardship post. Men have double the probability of being assigned to a hardship post, even those with families and children (and earn the bonus point); 33% of male FSOs have been in such an assignment over the course of their careers.

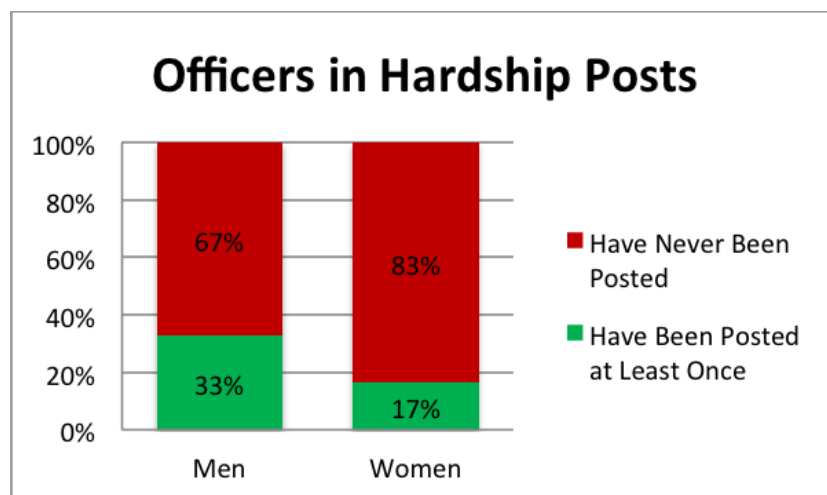


Figure 21: 33% of male FSOs have been posted to a hardship post; only 17% of women have had that opportunity.

<sup>12</sup> The Foreign Service Law refers to them as "Vida Difícil".

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix for regression table.

There is not enough information available to determine what the general sentiment amongst FSOs in relation to hardship posts and the assignment of women to them. During the interviews, I identified three cases of women who had aspired to a hardship assignment and were denied in two cases, and in a third, was only assigned after a long negotiation that involved the intervention of more senior officers on her behalf. More research on the subject of attitudes towards hardship posts within the Foreign Service would be useful.

## Promotion Time

I was able to include in the dataset information on the number of months it took officers to earn each promotion. Each officer can be promoted up to five times in the course of his or her career. At the aggregate level, promotion time averages of male and female FSOs do not differ very significantly. Figure 22 shows the distributions of average time between promotions for female and male officers. Most officers, whether male or female take between three and six years to reach the next rank, averaging five and a half years as a group.

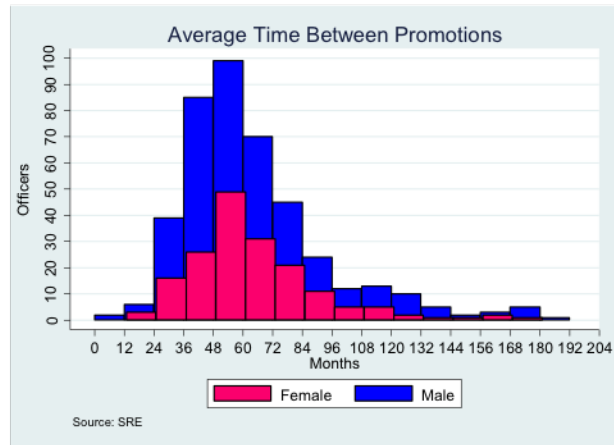


Figure 22: Men and women that do not plateau, advance roughly at the same speed.

The Appendix includes figures showing the break-down by cohort. I found no discernible pattern or differences easily attributed to gender. From this information, we can then infer that the lack of representation of women in ranks above First Secretary shown in Table 2 does not arise as a result of women taking longer to achieve promotions, rather, it arises from women reaching plateaus. Most are promoted after five years to the rank of Second Secretary, in the next five years, some will be promoted to First Secretary, but many will not be promoted at all. Those who do manage to become Counselors, do so equally as fast as men, and continue advancing to become Ambassadors also at the same pace.

2.b: Has the institution implemented actions to address the issue?

Answer: The institution was not aware of these differences.

## Summary

This analysis finds that the promotion process features complicated dynamics. It seems that there is a bottleneck for female promotion beyond the rank of Second Secretary, especially for entry cohorts with larger female representation. This phenomenon is happening despite efforts for the SRE to conduct a fair and objective promotion process.

The two main pieces of the promotion evaluation that may be driving this difference are the post level of responsibility and hardship posts. Women are assigned to posts designated as lower responsibility than their male counterparts, controlling for relevant variables like education and seniority, which results in a 0.19 point disadvantage for them during promotion exams. Women are also not assigned as frequently to challenging hardship posts, including instances when they have been actively excluded from them, and therefore do not have the same opportunity to earn the bonus point awarded to officers in those assignments. These factors contribute to a pattern of women falling behind and being underrepresented in all ranks except for the lowest two.

# Analysis

## Exit

Very few officers decide to leave the Foreign Service. Out of the 844 officers in the database, only 64 (7.6%) decided to exit. Because of the relatively small number of such cases, it is safe to assume that turnover does not play the most significant role in driving or perpetuating gender underrepresentation in the higher ranks of the Foreign Service. Nevertheless, it is useful to look at the statistics in order to detect anomalies.

3. Do male and female Foreign Service Officers exit the Foreign Service prematurely at the same rates?

Answer: Yes, for the most part. Third and First Secretaries have slightly higher female turnover.

Instances of officers quitting the Foreign Service are quite rare. From the sample of 844 people, only 64 left. Of them, 24 are women (38%). This percentage is above the total percentage of women in the dataset, 31%, by seven percentage points. The following table presents the statistics of officers that exited the service by rank:

Table 4: Exits of Foreign Service Officers by Rank

Rank	Average Age	% Female	FSOs Quitting	Expected Female Quitting	# Female Quitting	Within Range?
Ambassador	58	27%	6	1 - 2	1	YES
Minister	57	21%	1	0 - 1	1	YES
Counsellor	54	26%	6	1 - 2	1	YES
First Secretary	50	30%	14	4 - 5	6	NO (+1)
Secondary Secretary	42	37%	16	5 - 6	6	YES
Third Secretary	35	37%	21	7 - 8	9	NO (+1)
All Ranks	47	31%	64	18 - 24	24	YES

Source: SRE



*"I have always prioritized my family and I feel like subtly, the Ministry looks down upon that decision."*

Female, Foreign Service Officer

*"The differences in the work experiences of men and women are similar to what they would be in any other workplace. They have to do with the role women play as mothers, which gives them additional responsibilities not assigned to men. While abroad, these differences are magnified by the absence of a support network that generally exists in Mexico."*

Female, Foreign Service Officer

The table shows that female officers in the rank of First Secretary are more likely to leave than officers in other ranks, followed by Third Secretaries. In the case of First Secretaries, three more female officers than would be expected left their job. In the case of Third Secretaries, one more officer left than would be expected given the cohort size and share of women in the cohort.

There is not enough data available to find out if the reasons for exiting differ among men and women. However, the 2012 diagnostic pointed out important differences between genders mentioned before in terms of job satisfaction and workplace quality that may be related to turnover.

Recall that over 10% of women considered that the Foreign Service had not met their professional expectations (rating of 0-1 out of 5), while only 1% of men reported such low scores. Women also reported more negative outlooks on job satisfaction, workplace environment, treatment by supervisors, peer-to-peer relations, and encouragement of teamwork. Additionally, during interviews, both male and female officers

mentioned the difficulty they faced with balancing their personal and professional lives, especially when stationed at Headquarters. Most officers of all genders considered this challenge to be magnified for women due to higher expectations of them in the household. The choice between family and work seems to be binary for women to a greater degree than for men.

It would be very useful for the SRE to compile exit interview data in a systematic manner to shed light on this issue. Through publicly available information, such as LinkedIn profiles and media interviews, or through the in-person interviews I conducted, I was able to identify the current occupation of 31 ex-officers, 21 men and 10 women, and the reason for leaving for 10 officers, six women and four men. The following table provides that information:

Table 5: Reasons for Exit of Foreign Service Officers

Reason for Exit	Men	Women
Family reasons	0	3
Professional/academic reason	4	2
As a sign of protest	0	1
Unknown	17	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>

Source: Various

*"The challenge of maternity vis a vis work is an area of opportunity for all of us who work in the public sector. If we could provide more assistance for mothers who work, for example with child care, it could really help."*

Vanessa Márquez Rubio, Deputy Secretary of State for Latin America, SRE

Table 6: Current Occupations of Foreign Service Officers who Left the Service

Reason for Exit	Men	Women
Private Sector	8	0
Government	5	4
Academia	4	0
Arts	2	2
Retired	1	0
NGO	1	0
International Organizations	0	2
Homemaker	0	1
Unknown	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>

Source: Various

Women were more likely to cite family reasons than men, who mostly cited professional reasons. After their exit, men tended to enter the private sector or another area of government, while women tended to stay in government.

The SRE needs more data relating to FSOs who leave, to understand the driving forces behind those decisions. Nevertheless, the available information can provide clues as to what factors are at play when an officer decides to leave the job. They point in the direction that conflicts between family life and professional life emerge more often for women than for men, due to higher expectations for their role as caretakers.

## Summary

Instances of officers quitting the Foreign Service are relatively rare and likely do not affect the overall gender composition of the Foreign Service. There is not enough data available to observe significant gender differences among those who do leave, although there might be a tendency for women to be more likely to leave for family reasons as Third Secretaries and First Secretaries.

# Evaluation Criteria

Based on the analysis in the preceding section, I will propose several policy options to tackle the gender inequalities facing diplomatic staff. I will assess each option according to the following criteria to make recommendations for the best courses of action.

## Effectiveness

Effectiveness is the degree to which a policy helps the Ministry get closer to the goal of 50% female Ambassadors and Ministers. A policy may achieve this by increasing the number of women who enter the Foreign Service, helping active female FSOs increase their likelihood of promotion, or reducing turnover among women.

The process of estimating a policy's impact is riddled with uncertainty because Ambassadorial appointments are dependent on Presidential decisions and promotions to Minister depend on exam results, both of which are highly unpredictable. Turnover and individual officer choices or life situations, which are also highly volatile, make this exercise more difficult.

I used different methods to estimate effectiveness of each option. The easiest to estimate was quotas because they mandate a 50% gender makeup of incoming cohorts. To estimate the effects of a quota for promotions, I will be assuming that the Ministry will maintain its current average of appointing two new Ambassadors and two new Ministers per year. I will also assume that for each person who is promoted into a rank, the same number of officers will retire, maintaining the number of officers in each rank constant. Outgoing cohorts will reflect the current gender makeup of the rank, while incoming cohorts under a quota system would be 50% female in both cases. As time passes, the gender makeup of the ranks will slowly change as a result. The following graph projects the effect

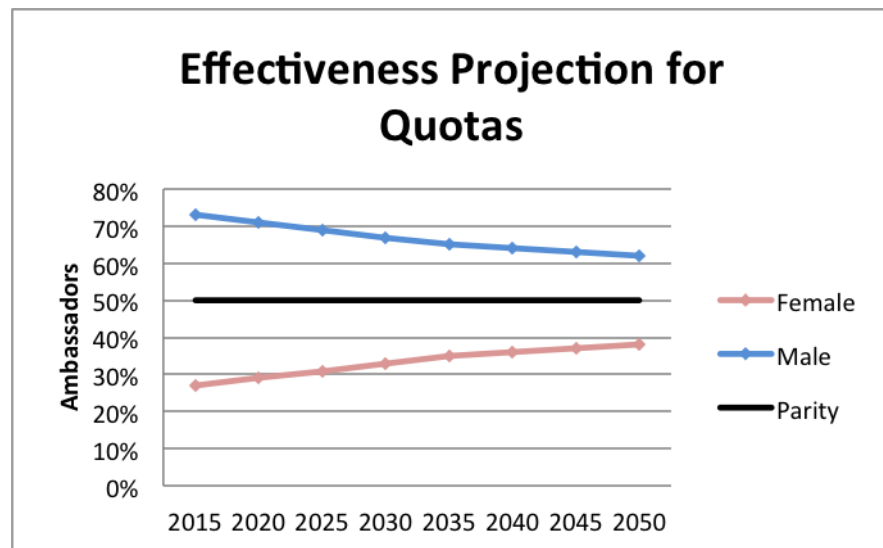


Figure 23: It will take longer than thirty-five years to reach gender parity in the Foreign Service using quotas alone.

<sup>14</sup> Assuming average promotion rate of two officers per year and average retirement of two officers per year.

of quotas into the future. If no other actions are implemented in conjunction, by the year 2050, Ambassadors will be 38% female and Ministers will be 36% female<sup>14</sup>.

The effectiveness of other policy options will be estimated in relation to quotas, which are assumed to be the most effective and quickest option short of replacing male officers with female ones.

**INDICATOR:** Percentage point increase in the share of female officers in the ranks of Ambassador and Minister.

*"The informal organizational culture is still molded by an absolutely patriarchal model that prioritizes women adapting to the model but not the model adapting to the women."*

Edith Olivares Ferreto, SRE Consultant

## Impact on Organizational Culture

This criterion tries to capture difficult-to-quantify advances in organizational culture. Individual and group attitudes towards gender have a crucial role in shaping organizational norms about the kind of people that have access to opportunities, perform certain jobs, or receive certain salaries. Some policy options may not directly move the needle in terms of the number of women in senior posts, but they may go a long way in sending signals to members of the organization about how gender roles play out in the professional setting, and thus, indirectly contributing towards the ultimate goal. Such options may receive a high rating in this criterion.

**INDICATOR:** Potential to move organizational culture in the direction of gender equality (High, medium, low).

*"The challenge is resistance. There is resistance at all levels. There is the notion that working toward equality means exclusively working for women, in a vision that is overly associated with 1960s feminism. That is not the vision of the SRE"*

Margarita Cortés Cid, Director of the Office of Gender Equality

## Political Feasibility

I will use a version of the Anderson, Bryson, and Cosby Problem-Frame Stakeholder Map to identify players that must be taken into account and assess their capability to influence outcomes regarding policy implementation (Bryson, 2004). This tool is useful for determining coalitions to be encouraged and groups from whom to obtain 'buy-in' for the recommendations to work. The focus will be on leveraging support from those in the top quadrants to obtain buy-in from those at the bottom, especially at the bottom right. An option that requires the buy-in of a high number of stakeholders will score low on political feasibility, more so if the stakeholders are located in the bottom-right quadrant. The more stakeholders are in the top-right quadrant, the higher the score. I will try to place each option on the corresponding quadrant by using information obtained through interviews with different SRE insiders and knowledgeable stakeholders, as well as using my personal knowledge of the organization as a Foreign Service Officer since 2010.

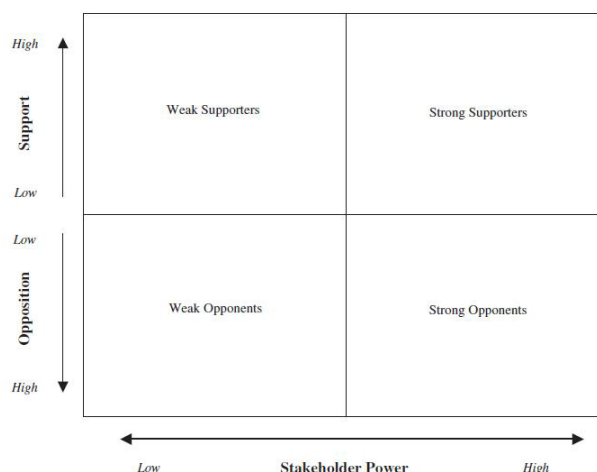


Figure 24: The Bryson Problem Frame Stakeholder Map

INDICATOR: Expected overall support (Strong/Weak, Opposition/Support).

## Administrative feasibility

Administrative feasibility refers to the availability to the institution of resources necessary to implement the proposed policy. This may include staff, office space, technology, infrastructure, or any other element. It may be the case that the institution does not possess the resources in-house, but may be able to procure them through strategic alliances or contractors. I will assess each option under this criteria based on information from interviews with SRE officials.

INDICATOR: Availability of in-house or outside resources (High, Medium, Low).

## Cost

I have made an estimate of the total cost to the institution of each policy option based on commercial prices of the required products and services. The institution may undertake high cost projects if they have a high return in terms of effectiveness and as long as they are affordable overall. I recommend that the SRE review these estimates critically because it may be possible for the institution to procure the items or services at lower prices by using preferred vendors or buying in bulk.

INDICATOR: Estimated yearly financial cost (USD) and dollars per percentage point increase of women in Ambassador and Minister rank.

# Policy Options

This section includes a brief description of each of the policy options considered to address the challenges facing the SRE on the issue of gender equality. A more detailed description of each option and a full evaluation of each one under each one of the established criteria is provided in the Appendix.

Some of these policy options may serve as corrective actions for the short term, but others, more importantly, could promote systemic change that correct for biases against women in the organizational culture in the medium and long term.

## Entry

The analysis of the SRE's human resources dataset identified the most important source of gender underrepresentation is the entry process. There is no shortage of female applicants, but they are not nearly as successful as male applicants are. Modifying the process so it can yield a higher share of women can have important effects down the road.

Since it takes a minimum of ten years to reach the rank of Minister, the policy proposals in this section would not result in an increase the share of women in the ranks of Minister or Ambassador until 2025 or later. For this reason, I recommend the SRE adopt a joint strategy, placing great emphasis on options to increase entry, but not overlooking options that aim to equalize promotion and reduce turnover.

### 1.c: What further actions can be implemented?

#### SET A TEMPORARY GENDER QUOTA FOR ENTRY.

As recommended by CEDAW, the SRE could introduce a temporary quota to correct for any bias in the testing process. The quota would ensure that a set share of Foreign Service entrants, ideally 50%, is female. This option would be akin to the quotas for indigenous peoples and women set by the Ecuadorian Foreign Service in 2011 (Andes, 2014) or the special measures for aboriginal people established by the Australian Foreign Service (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2014). Quotas have been found to improve general attitudes towards women in leadership and reduce long-term gender discrimination (Pande & Ford, 2014). With this policy, the SRE would simply take the total number of slots available and reserve half for the highest scoring men and the other half to the highest scoring women.

#### TARGETED RECRUITMENT.

This policy option aims to improve the quality of the female applicant pool, so their exam scores will be more competitive. The SRE could carry out recruitment efforts to attract highly qualified young women. Strategies include collaborating with top universities in the country to recruit the top female students in the areas of international relations, economics, public administration, law, and political science, or any other academic area of interest for the Foreign Service. Successful communications involve contacting career counselors at the universities and communicate to them that the institution

has set the goal to recruit more women, and providing informational material that includes female images as well as information on the experiences of women in the organization (Milgram, 2011). Another effective recruitment tool is “snowballing”, which involves asking active staff and current participants in the examinations to nominate people in their network who would be good fits for the Foreign Service, and conducting outreach activities with them (Hicks Patrick, Pruchno & Rose, 1998). Recruits would be encouraged to apply for entry through the procedure already in place.

*“It’s a recruiting tool, it is targeted largely towards underrepresented groups within the Foreign Service... women, people of color, this includes black Americans, Hispanic Americans, and other Americans... People who may be good fits for the Foreign Service to start but who would not have the sort of connections to the Foreign Service that would have incentivized them to apply on their own.”*

U.S. State Department Pickering Fellow, male

### CREATE A FELLOWSHIP

The SRE could create a fellowship program, in partnership with designated universities, to jointly fund academic preparation of students from underrepresented groups, including women, who will commit to three to five years of service to the institution. Fellows would be required to pass the entrance exam upon conclusion of their studies. The program would be modeled after the Pickering and Rangel Fellowships of the U.S. Foreign Service. The Pickering Fellowship “provides undergraduate and graduate students with financial support, mentoring and professional development to prepare them academically and professionally for a career in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Service. Women, members of minority groups historically underrepresented in the Foreign Service, and students with financial need are encouraged to apply” (Pickering Program, 2015). The Rangel Fellowships seeks to

“attract and prepare outstanding young people for careers as diplomats in the Foreign Service of the U.S. Department of State” and “encourages the application of members of minority groups historically underrepresented in the Foreign Service and those with financial need.” (Rangel Program, 2015). In this proposed option, the fellows would attend some additional training sessions run by the SRE during the course of their studies in order to prepare them for the entry examination and life as diplomats. While this program would aim to recruit more women, men would not be excluded.

### CREATE A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR POTENTIAL CANDIDATES.

The SRE could conduct a training program for potential candidates to the Foreign Service Entrance Exam. Similarly to the fellowship option, while this training would target women, it should be accessible to men as well. The program would include week-long classroom sessions and an internship in the SRE headquarters, domestic delegations, or Embassies or Consulates abroad, or a state Delegation. It is important that the training be available in multiple cities, to ensure that all Mexicans have equal access. The cost estimates allow for five week-long sessions in different cities, and consider groups of 30-50 students for each one.

This policy option is closely modeled after the Indigenous Cadetship Program (ICP) of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT, 2014). The focus of that program is to provide indigenous undergraduate students assistance during their studies and practical work experience during their summer breaks. In the ICP, upon completion of their studies, DFAT offers a permanent position to the cadets. This option would be different in the sense that those who complete the program would not be ensured a spot in the Foreign Service; rather, they would have to earn their place through the regular entrance examination. This policy option will also include an online component, so that those who are not selected for the program may complete a free training program online.

### DE-BIAS THE TEST.

The gender gap in performance is significant enough that we may not rule out the possibility of a bias in one or more elements of the test. Under this option, the SRE would take several steps to



remove the bias from the exam. This option involves several actions towards that objective.

*Written Exams:* The SRE would eliminate the time constraints on the test and penalties for guessing on the multiple-choice sections, which may affect women disproportionately (Baldiga, 2013; Fairtest, 2007; Tannenbaum, 2012). This is exactly what the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) started doing in 2016 in order to remove gender bias from the test (Bohnet, 2016). Further, the SRE would also remove individual test questions that have large response differences between genders, as suggested by Loewen for the SAT (Loewen, 1998).

*Interviews:* Interviewers will use techniques that reduce the effect of prevailing stereotypes, such as replacing panel interviews in favor of separate conversations with each interviewer (Bohnet, 2016), asking all candidates the same set of questions, and comparing candidate responses immediately after the interview (Bohnet, Bazerman, and Van Geen, 2012). Additionally, the SRE should consider insights provided by Google's data analytics that have shown that the optimal number of interviewers is four, by which point evaluations tend to converge. The SRE traditionally uses three simultaneous interviewers, so adding an additional interviewer could be a useful nudge (Bohnet, 2016).

*Support:* The Office of Gender Equality would be invited to provide input on all parts of the process and would conduct training on gender equality for members of the jury.

*"One of the main obstacles facing women in the Foreign Service, particularly for Ambassadors, is that they are appointed by the Executive, so it is necessary that affirmative actions on this matter are implemented from the Executive in collaboration with the Ministry."*

Senator Gabriela Cuevas, President of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, LXII Legislature

## Promotion

As noted in the analysis, the promotion exam is not yielding a proportional number of women moving up the ranks, especially for cohorts with larger shares of women. Equally significant is the fact that the promotion process is the number one factor producing job dissatisfaction among FSOs. It is important to note that any proposed change should not be applied in the next exam, because officers' preparations are ongoing and during interviews, they expressed discomfort with unannounced and unexpected rule changes. Modifications should apply with at least two years' notice in order to give FSOs enough time to make the adjustments they deem necessary.

### 2.c: What further actions can be implemented?

#### SET A GENDER QUOTA FOR PROMOTIONS.

As recommended by CEDAW, the SRE could introduce a temporary quota to correct for any bias in the promotion process. The quota would ensure that the percentage of women up for promotion is equal to the percentage of women actually promoted. In other words, if for example, 40% of test takers are women, then 40% of those promoted should be women.

#### DE-BIAS THE TEST.

This option would include the elements of the similar policy option described for the entry process that could apply to the promotion exam. These include structured and separate evaluation for interviews,

*I think the interviewers were not fair because they only asked about my previous responsibilities, including my first one over eight years ago, and they asked nothing about my current performance or job."*

Male, Foreign Service Officer on the need for a more structured interview process.



eliminating time constraints for the written test, increasing the number of jury members to four, and having the Office of Gender Equality provide input throughout the process and conduct training for members of the jury. Due to the different nature of the promotion test, this option would include further modifications applicable to specific sections of the promotion exam.

*Supervisor Evaluations:* To de-bias supervisor evaluations, it can help to use quantitative metrics as much as possible for prompts (Bohnet, 2016). For example, instead of asking, “On a scale of 1-10, how punctual is this employee?” the question should read “How many times per month did this employee arrive on time?” or “How many days per month is this employee tardy?” Instead of asking “On a scale of 1/10, how responsible is this employee?”, ask instead “Out of every ten tasks assigned to this employee, how many tasks did they complete satisfactorily?” Another surprising “nudge” that can help eliminate bias is to have the signature space for the evaluator at the beginning of the form instead of at the end, which has been shown to help people act more ethically and may help evaluators achieve greater fairness (Shu, Mazar, Gino, Bazerman, 2012).

*Self-assessment:* The promotion exam contains an element called the Merits and Trajectory Presentation (PMT), which is a self-assessment in essay form. There is ample evidence of gender differences in self-confidence, which establishes that men display overconfidence to a larger degree than women and that it is almost impossible for people to judge themselves objectively (Bohnet, 2016). For this reason, I would recommend doing away with the PMT altogether.

## RECRUIT WOMEN TO FILL HARDSHIP POSTS.

The discussion in the analysis section outlines salient gender differences in the assignment of hardship posts. Considering that officers who have been posted to these places are awarded an additional point, this is an important missed opportunity that women could be invited to take. Recruitment could begin via survey, by asking officers to name any places of hardship that they would be interested in experiencing. If interest by women is low, the Ministry could launch an email/phone outreach campaign to talk to officers about the possibility. FSOs currently posted to hardship posts could volunteer to provide information for their colleagues by giving testimonials or participating in calls. Assignment to these posts should remain voluntary.

In the same way, the Ministry should include a provision in its internal regulations explicitly stating that officers cannot be excluded from hardship posts due to their gender. This is necessary because although the current Presidency of the Human Resources Committee has not allowed exclusionary practices to happen during his term, exclusion of women from hardship posts was observed in past Presidencies. It is possible that if women’s right to equal opportunity to these assignments is not institutionalized the decision on whether to respect it or not will once again be subject to the personal discretion of the decision-maker in turn.

## APPOINT SENIOR POSTS THROUGH A COMPETITIVE APPLICATION PROCESS.

Currently, many appointments for high responsibility posts such as Embassy or Consulate Mission Chiefs, General Directors, or even Deputy General Directors, are made through a closed and opaque selection process. This results in an underrepresentation of women in high responsibility roles. This option would open these posts up to a competitive application process, open to FSOs and external candidates. It would allow the SRE to take advantage of a richer talent pool and would provide career growth opportunities for talented FSOs. Research shows that when the number of applicants to a position is public, which would be the case for this option, more women will apply (Gee, 2014); so the pool may not just grow, it could diversify as well.

## Exit

### 3.c: What further actions can be implemented?

Even though exit seems to be the least critical point in the process, it is still worth the effort to consider initiatives to improve retention. Many aspects of the work environment perpetuate conditions of inequality and could be addressed by the institution as part of the effort to increase female representation in decision-making posts. Some of these initiatives might even increase female promotion rates. Options to consider are:

#### PROVIDING SPOUSAL SUPPORT.

Interviews for this project evidenced that prevailing gender norms make it difficult for many women diplomats to lead a fulfilling personal life. For those who have partners or families, it is critical that there be enough support to avoid situations where female FSOs are faced with a choice between family and work. Very frequently, spouses cannot continue their professional development when the FSO is assigned to a post in a different country because migratory regulations do not permit them to work. The result is that many FSOs decide to forego important professional opportunities in the interest of their family life. Under this policy option, the SRE would give high priority to negotiations with all host countries to issue work permits for spouses of FSOs. Spouses could also gain access to online courses offered by the SRE, especially language courses that correspond to the language of their host country.

#### CREATE A WOMEN'S SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM.

Recent research shows that the presence of more senior members of the same sex decreased junior staff's likelihood of exiting a firm, especially for junior women. A 10% increase of women in senior positions was associated with a 21% decrease in the likelihood that junior female staff exit a firm (McGuinn & Milkman, 2012). Senior women can serve as role models, which is beneficial as there is evidence that suggests exposure to role models can boost performance in leadership tasks for women (Latu, Schmid, Lammers & Bombardi, 2013). They can also play an important role as mentors, or better yet, sponsors.

Research suggests that sponsorship, which involves advocacy for advancement, and not just advice, can help women achieve promotions, especially if sponsorship happens through a formal program (Ibarra, et al, 2009). Without sponsorship, women not only are less likely than men to be appointed to top roles but may also be more reluctant to compete to obtain them (Ibarra, et al, 2009). Studies also show that being chosen by a mentor could encourage top-performing women to be more competitive (Bohnet, 2016).

Under this policy option, the SRE would try to boost women by making role models more visible to them and promoting interaction that could help them improve performance. Female Ambassadors and Ministers would select a female Second or Third Secretary mentee. The mentee would be notified that she was chosen by the mentor to participate in the program and that they would provide ongoing professional support. This relationship would look like the model of sponsorship defined by Hewlett in her research on sponsorship: "Sponsors advocate on their protégés' behalf, connecting them to important players and assignments. In doing so, they make themselves look good. And precisely because sponsors go out on a limb, they expect stellar performance and loyalty" (Hewlett, 2013). The effect of the role model could decrease the odds of exit and even increase the chances of promotion for the mentee. The SRE would follow up with the mentees to assess how useful this is to them and try to measure the effects.

*"Paternity leave was a great achievement by the Office of Gender Equality, a very notable improvement."*

Male, Foreign Service Officer

### EQUAL PATERNITY LEAVE.

The SRE provides three months of paid maternity leave and three weeks of paid paternity leave. This is a step in the right direction, as recent research on the Canadian case shows that fathers' participation rates increase dramatically when the leave is labeled specifically for fathers, and paternity leave schemes result in men taking more responsibility in household chores (Patnaik, 2015). This helps promote a culture of

equality in the long term. However, the difference in length of maternity and paternity leave at the SRE reinforces the idea that women should carry a more of the load when it comes to childcare and domestic work, and frames men's participation as secondary. Interviews suggest that take up rates are low, although no precise data has been collected. Under this policy, the SRE would grant the same amount of paid leave time for men as for women to care for newborn children.

### CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE.

The SRE provides childcare assistance to the majority female operative staff in the Mexico offices, but not for FSOs, whether stationed in Mexico or abroad. Under this policy, the SRE would provide child care assistance for FSOs in two ways. Officers stationed in Mexico would be allowed to use the child care services already available at the SRE (CENDI) for a fee. The CENDI would continue to be provided free of charge for operative staff. The CENDI would likely have to be expanded, but ideally, user fees should cover all costs. For officers abroad, the SRE would provide vouchers to subsidize childcare, in a similar way to how it provides education and rent assistance.

# Policy Recommendations

*"We must build an environment for equality. You cannot carry out an action without an environment that is friendly to it. To reach a solution to our problem we must work more towards changing the institution's culture and propose actions to that end. We need awareness, a change of paradigm, a different culture than the one that currently dominates. We need to work not only at the level of decision makers, but we need to convince operative staff in charge of the entry and promotion examinations".*

Margarita Cortés Cid, Director of the Office of Gender Equality

The following table presents a summary of the policy options and the rating I assigned them on each of the established evaluation criteria. I used a point system to score each policy option to make the results more accessible. A full discussion on the reasoning behind all ratings and a matrix containing the extended version of the rating assigned to each policy option on each criterion is found in the Appendix.

For the effectiveness criteria, I assigned 3 points to impact above 0.66 percentage points per year, 2 points to impact between 0.33 and 0.65 percentage points, and 1 point for impact below 0.32 percentage points. For high, medium, low indicators, I assigned 3 points to a rating of High, 2 points to Medium and 1 point to Low. For the Political Feasibility ratings, I assigned 4 points to the top right quadrant (strong support), 3 points to the top left (weak support), 2 points to the bottom left (weak opposition), and 1 point to the bottom right (strong opposition), using half-points for borderline ratings. Finally, for cost, I assigned three

points for costs under \$1,000 per percentage point of impact, 2 points for costs above \$1,001 and below \$100,000, and 1 point for options with higher costs. I then added the points for each option to determine the most promising ones.

Table 7: Summary Table of Policy Option Scores on Point System for Evaluation

Policy Option	Effective-ness	Impact on Organizational Culture	Cost	Political Feasibility	Administrative Feasibility	Total	Recommended
<i>Entry</i>							
Gender Quota	3	3	3	2	3	14	YES
De-biasing Test	3	2	3	3	2	13	YES
Training Program	2	2	2	2	4	13	YES
Targeted Recruitment	2	1	1	2	3	2.5	NO
Fellowship	1	3	1	2	1	8	NO
<i>Promotion</i>							
Hardship Posts	1	2	2	4	3	13	YES
De-biasing Test	2	3	3	3	3	13	YES
Gender Quota	2	3	3	2	2	12	NO
Competitive Applications	2	2	2	2	2	1.5	NO
<i>Exit</i>							
Sponsorship	1	2	2	4	3	13	YES
Paternal Leave	1	1	1	3	3	11	NO
Spousal Support	0	1	1	1	4	3	NO
Childcare	0	1	1	3	2	8	NO

Source: Own assigned ratings, see Appendix for detailed explanations.

I am recommending that the SRE implement the policy options with the highest scores (13 points).

These recommended options are effective, fall within a reasonable budget constraint, and do not elicit excessive opposition from internal or external stakeholders. The proposed option bundle is: Gender quota for entry, a training program for test takers, de-biasing the test for entry and promotion, recruiting women for hardship posts, and a sponsorship program for women. Other actions may be pursued in later stages, once these options have sent a strong signal to SRE staff that the organization is moving forward towards gender equality. The aim is to promote organizational transformation gradually.

Considering that decision-makers in the SRE are pressed for time and constantly handle a large inflow of information, I created an infographic that succinctly summarizes the analysis and recommendations in this document. It can be found in the Appendix and has already been presented to several key actors.

The SRE should be as methodological as possible in implementing these options, in order to measure impact and be able to adapt its strategy to new learning. The first step would be to conduct a follow up survey to the 2012 Diagnostic. It should repeat the original questions and add new ones where there is a gap in our understanding. Based on the analysis in this exercise, I recommend adding a section on attitudes towards hardship posts, a section on post assignments, and a section about attitudes and practices toward maternity and paternity leave. The survey would allow the SRE to establish an updated baseline to measure any improvement that could result from the proposed interventions. Ideally, it would be updated yearly or biyearly.

The following are individual implementation considerations for each recommended policy option. The SRE should take them into account when devising a comprehensive implementation strategy:

*"It is very complicated to express my opinions, as a man, because I recognize they might be biased and because I respect the fact that there are female colleagues who have had a different experience. However, in my daily work, I see that conditions are similar for men and women and there are even some –logical and positive – advantages for women with children, for example."*

Male, Foreign Service Officer

### Gender Quota for Entry

Gender quotas are not costly and are the most effective interventions. However, they face some opposition and may cause controversy. Nevertheless, there is a window of opportunity is currently open to use this policy option because the Minister has announced her willingness to use them. Congress instituted a quota of their own, and there are already three official documents recommending the SRE institute them: The 2006 CEDAW recommendations, the National Development Plan (PND), and the SRE's own 2012 Diagnostic. This would be the fourth. The biggest obstacle is the bureaucracy itself. How can the Human Resources Committee, the Office of Gender Equality, and the Office of the Secretary gain buy-in?

My proposed strategy is that the Office of Gender Equality and the President of the Human Resources Committee directly present the proposals to the Office of the Secretary. She would be in charge of obtaining buy-in from senior officials, including Undersecretaries and General Directors. In turn, the Office of Gender Equality would be in charge of communicating the proposal to all FSOs and gather reactions or suggestions. The President of the Human Resources Committee would help on that front as well, with the collaboration of the elected FSO rank representatives, in addition to persuading the members of the relevant Subcommittee.

Other key stakeholders in this process are non-FSO staffers in the Foreign Service and Human Resources Department (DGSERH) who are in charge of organizing the entrance and promotion examinations. Also, the members of the Human Resources Committee, which are the full-time President, the Official Mayor, the General Director of DGSERH, the Director of the Matias

Romero Institute, and the General Director of Legal Affairs. For the entry process specifically, there is an Entry Subcommittee presided by the Director of the Matias Romero Institute. The other members are the General Director of DGSERH, two members of academia, and one external expert on human resources. All of these actors need to be brought on board.

The quota for entry is less contentious than the quota for promotions. Support is slightly higher among FSOs for entry quotas possibly because they will not be directly affected. The 2012 Diagnostic asked respondents to indicate whether they favored or opposed affirmative actions in favor of women and these were the results:

Table 8: FSO Support for Gender Quotas

Respondents who favor:	Men	Women
Affirmative Actions for Entry	49%	58%
Affirmative Actions for Promotions	40%	70%

Source: SRE

Almost half of male FSOs and the majority of women are in favor of instituting quotas to help more women succeed in joining the Foreign Service. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs will probably be supportive of the policy option, as she has recently announced a quota for upcoming Ambassadorial appointments. However, the share of FSOs of both genders who do not support the policy is important; 51% of men and 42% of women. During my interview with Edith Olivares, gender consultant to the SRE, she indicated that men and women in positions of authority within the SRE opposed the policy when she conducted the 2012 survey. Although it is possible that the situation has changed, it likely has not. Outside the Ministry, there is enough support for this policy, as evidenced by the quotas recently implemented by Congress for the election of legislators in both chambers, and applauded by citizens.

For the promotion process, the challenge is more daunting because of lower male FSO support. A quota for this process is not recommended at this time because it could result in unproductive backlash or stigmatization of those benefited by the quota. More work is needed to produce an organizational culture that would welcome such an option. However, the goal is to get the organization ready for its medium term implementation, in order to accelerate full incorporation of women into decision-making positions in the Ministry.

## De-Biasing the Entry and Promotion Tests

This option enjoys moderate support for both, the entry and promotion process, and acceptable administrative feasibility. It is also effective and not costly. The SRE could develop some technical capabilities in-house or hiring consultants to polish the entrance examination, as this is not an insurmountable challenge. I would recommend developing the talent in-house because the test is a recurring event. The test is also a very important opportunity for the SRE to develop data-collection and analytic capacity.

The Office of Gender Equality and the President of the Human Resources Committee should follow a similar sequence as the one described for quotas to obtain the support of relevant actors within the organization. This option does not necessarily have to be framed in terms of gender equality, although it should feature into the arguments, rather, it should be presented as a general proposal for improvement of the test. The reason for this is that the two options I am recommending for immediate implementation, gender quotas for entry and the sponsorship program, will likely take



up all the available “emotional bandwidth” of the organization to take on gender equality work that explicitly favors women. De-biasing the test should be framed as a separate effort, geared towards increasing fairness in general, which it is likely to do.

### **Training Program**

The SRE should include a preparation program in its process for the next entrance examination. The Instituto Matías Romero (IMR), in collaboration with the academic institution that designs the test, could put the Program together to adequately prepare candidates for the test. The IMR should appoint one staff member to conduct each training, and staff could alternate in order to share the travel load. IMR should also run open online sessions for applicants and make available an online platform to respond to questions about the study material.

The Program would ideally begin a year prior to the publication of the application for the entry exam. This will give the IMR enough time to budget for the trainings and to complete them. Each training would last one week and host from 30 to 50 students. If the plan is implemented In this way, there is the potential to impact between 150 and 250 prospective applicants through in-person trainings, plus possibly over 1,000 online.

### **Recruit Women to Fill Hardship Posts**

The SRE is currently in the middle of modernizing its post-assignment procedure with the goal of providing FSOs more certainty and increasing fairness. This new system might help to fill hardship posts in a more efficient way, matching FSOs who wish to be posted there to the specific post. However, if the SRE finds that it needs to recruit additional officers to serve in hardship posts, it should preferably seek out female candidates. In addition, in its current revision of the SRE’s internal regulations, the SRE should incorporate language that explicitly indicates women are not to be excluded from hardship posts. This is important in order to avoid situations in which women are excluded as a result of decision-maker discretion. Because this policy does not result in additional expenditures and is relatively easy to implement, the SRE should begin work on it as early as possible.

### **Women’s Sponsorship Program**

The sponsorship program is exclusively for women, so the SRE will have to be mindful of the framing in which it presents the initiative. The organizational culture may produce some backlash. The ideal time to roll this out would be around International Women’s Day, and prior work should be done to recruit sponsors. When the program begins, mentees will voluntarily sign up to request a sponsor.

The SRE should even use this opportunity to test the effectiveness of the program through a careful impact evaluation. The Office of Gender Equality and DGSEH can track officers’ progress to measure effectiveness and observe how long it takes to observe results.

This bundle of options together combines very effective albeit controversial measures like quotas, with less polarizing interventions like de-biasing the test, and support initiatives like sponsorship. I believe these actions could be implemented immediately and with success.

# Conclusion

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is facing an extraordinary opportunity to advance on the issue of gender equality. There is support from the highest level, with the Secretary, who happens to be a woman and has expressed her commitment to work towards gender equality through the Ministry. There is enough (if not wide) support from officers. There is also a mandate coming from international and domestic institutions and from the legal commitments Mexico has acquired as a player on the international stage.

Implementing the recommendations set forth in this document will not bring women and men to parity in representation in the short term, but it could set the stage for it in the medium term, especially if successful implementation of these strategies is followed by implementation of a new set of actions, including some also described here. This project seeks to promote a data-oriented approach to respond to this pressing challenge currently facing the SRE.

*"I think women in the Foreign Service are respected for their achievements and dedication. However, I think there should be more women in the Foreign Service and in high responsibility areas in the SRE, until we reach a target of 50/50."*

Male, Foreign Service Officer

After conducting an analysis that identifies gendered patterns in the entry, promotion, and exit points in Foreign Service Officers career trajectories, I conclude that the most critical points driving women's underrepresentation in higher ranks of the Foreign Service are the entry process, especially the first stage, and the promotion process, especially the post and hardship scores. My recommendations to address these challenges include establishing a quota for entry that mandates that each cohort should be 50% female and 50% male; taking steps to eliminate gender bias in the entry and promotion exams; creating a test preparation training, recruiting women to fill hardship posts; and

implementing a sponsorship program for women. These policies when implemented simultaneously should greatly advance gender equality within the Ministry. The Ministry should monitor its progress by first establishing an updated baseline, building on the 2012 Diagnostic, and repeat this data collection exercise yearly or bi-yearly.

The SRE already has an incredibly important resource at hand in the Office of Gender Equality. This Office needs to become more integrated into the work of all other SRE Departments if the gender perspective is to be truly cross-cutting. It has already begun with training of some actors, but to be truly effective, teams should go through the trainings together, in order to realize that all staff members have a role to play. In other words, gender issues should not only concern the gender focal points, or women, they should concern every member of the organization.

Implementation of these recommendations could produce important results for the Ministry. In this way, it could answer the call of the CEDAW, the Mexican Senate, and the mandate established in the National Development Plan to work to provide women an equal opportunity workplace. Just as importantly, it will be able to fully take advantage of the talent that female Foreign Service Officers have to offer. It is the right thing to do, and it is the smart thing to do.



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# Appendix

1. T-test difference in means for male and female scores in the General Culture of the Entrance Examination. (x=women, y=men). The scores of women are 5.9% lower than men's on average:

```
. ttesti 3109    5.276901    1.189982 3068    5.869257    1.356645, unequal
```

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
x	3,109	5.276901	.0213418	1.189982	5.235056	5.318746
y	3,068	5.869257	.0244928	1.356645	5.821233	5.917281
combined	6,177	5.571113	.0166594	1.309325	5.538455	5.603771
diff		-.592356	.0324864		-.656041	-.528671

diff = mean(x) - mean(y)

t = -18.2340

Ho: diff = 0

Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 6050.42

Ha: diff < 0

Ha: diff != 0

Ha: diff > 0

Pr(T < t) = 0.0000

Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000

Pr(T > t) = 1.0000

2. T-test difference in means for male and female scores in the English section of the Entrance Examination (x=women, y=men). The scores of women are 2.4% lower than men's:

```
. ttesti 3077    6.20638    1.593274 3032    6.444717    1.594119 , unequal
```

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
x	3,077	6.20638	.0287228	1.593274	6.150062	6.262698
y	3,032	6.444717	.0289505	1.594119	6.387952	6.501482
combined	6,109	6.324671	.0204454	1.598013	6.284591	6.364751
diff		-.238337	.0407815		-.3182831	-.1583909

diff = mean(x) - mean(y)

t = -5.8442

Ho: diff = 0

Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 6105.58

Ha: diff < 0

Ha: diff != 0

Ha: diff > 0

Pr(T < t) = 0.0000

Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000

Pr(T > t) = 1.0000

3. T-test difference in means for male and female scores in the Spanish section of the Entrance Examination (x=women, y=men). Women's scores are 1.2% lower than men's:

```
. ttesti 3090 5.731503 1.075129 3048 5.854512 1.125482, unequal
```

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
x	3,090	5.731503	.0193411	1.075129	5.69358	5.769426
y	3,048	5.854512	.020386	1.125482	5.81454	5.894484
combined	6,138	5.792587	.0140666	1.102049	5.765011	5.820162
diff		-.123009	.028101		-.1780968	-.0679212

```
diff = mean(x) - mean(y)                                t = -4.3774
Ho: diff = 0                                             Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 6114.42

Ha: diff < 0                                           Ha: diff != 0                                           Ha: diff > 0
Pr(T < t) = 0.0000                                Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000                                Pr(T > t) = 1.0000
```

4. T-test difference in means for male and female scores in the Third Language section of the Entrance Examination (x=women, y=men). Women's scores are 1.8% lower than men's:

```
. ttesti 3067 6.421735 1.779396 3018 6.596743 1.803392, unequal
```

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
x	3,067	6.421735	.0321304	1.779396	6.358736	6.484734
y	3,018	6.596743	.0328269	1.803392	6.532378	6.661108
combined	6,085	6.508534	.0229895	1.793327	6.463467	6.553602
diff		-.175008	.0459344		-.2650557	-.0849603

```
diff = mean(x) - mean(y)                                t = -3.8100
Ho: diff = 0                                             Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 6077.71

Ha: diff < 0                                           Ha: diff != 0                                           Ha: diff > 0
Pr(T < t) = 0.0001                                Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0001                                Pr(T > t) = 0.9999
```

5. T-test difference in means for male and female scores on the psychological examination of the Entry Examination; all non-zero scores make candidates eligible for entry; 80% of candidates earn non-zero scores.

```
. ttesti 364 1.104396 .5892353 605 .9140496 .6271065 , unequal
```

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
x	364	1.104396	.0308843	.5892353	1.043661	1.165131
y	605	.9140496	.0254955	.6271065	.863979	.9641202
combined	969	.9855523	.0199092	.6197488	.9464821	1.024622
diff		.1903464	.0400482		.1117347	.2689581

```
diff = mean(x) - mean(y) t = 4.7529
Ho: diff = 0 Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 802.382

Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0
Pr(T < t) = 1.0000 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000 Pr(T > t) = 0.0000
```

6. Rank depends heavily on seniority (entry year), controlling for gender and education level:

```
. reg rank female entryyear education
```

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	726
Model	1377.25157	3	459.083856	F(3, 722)	=	581.02
Residual	570.47846	722	.790136372	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Total	1947.73003	725	2.68652418	R-squared	=	0.7071
				Adj R-squared	=	0.7059
				Root MSE	=	.8889

rank	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
female	-.0807544	.0711883	-1.13	0.257	-.2205152	.0590065
entryyear	-.1391822	.003388	-41.08	0.000	-.1458338	-.1325306
education	.2247568	.0584273	3.85	0.000	.110049	.3394646
_cons	280.7714	6.773031	41.45	0.000	267.4742	294.0686

7. Women receive .19 points less points than men on the responsibility level of their posts, controlling for educational attainment and seniority:

```
. reg postavg female education entryyear
```

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	560
Model	7.02865485	3	2.34288495	F(3, 556)	=	3.99
Residual	326.370748	556	.586997748	Prob > F	=	0.0079
				R-squared	=	0.0211
				Adj R-squared	=	0.0158
Total	333.399403	559	.596421114	Root MSE	=	.76616

postavg	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
female	-.1851987	.0692816	-2.67	0.008	-.3212843	-.049113
education	.0309553	.0582137	0.53	0.595	-.0833904	.145301
entryyear	-.007331	.0042172	-1.74	0.083	-.0156147	.0009526
_cons	18.33654	8.432246	2.17	0.030	1.77359	34.8995

8. Women testing to become Counselors receive 0.44 points less for post scores than men:

```
. ttesti 127 3.606299 1.055278 287 4.045296 1.100558, unequal
```

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
x	127	3.606299	.0936408	1.055278	3.420987	3.791611
y	287	4.045296	.0649639	1.100558	3.917428	4.173164
combined	414	3.910628	.054276	1.104353	3.803936	4.01732
diff		-.438997	.1139689		-.6634547	-.2145393

```
diff = mean(x) - mean(y)                                t = -3.8519
Ho: diff = 0                                             Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 250.872

Ha: diff < 0                                           Ha: diff != 0                                           Ha: diff > 0
Pr(T < t) = 0.0001                                Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0001                                Pr(T > t) = 0.9999
```

9. Women testing to become First Secretaries receive 0.14 points less for post scores than men:

```
. ttesti 213 3.830986 .9464818 432 3.969907 .9421908 , unequal
```

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
x	213	3.830986	.0648519	.9464818	3.703149	3.958823
y	432	3.969907	.0453312	.9421908	3.880809	4.059005
combined	645	3.924031	.0372148	.9451392	3.850954	3.997108
diff		-.138921	.0791245		-.2944498	.0166078

diff = mean(x) - mean(y) t = -1.7557

Ho: diff = 0 Satterthwaite's degrees of freedom = 420.408

Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0

Pr(T < t) = 0.0399 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0799 Pr(T > t) = 0.9601

10. Women are 15% less likely to be assigned to a hardship post in the course of their career compared to equally qualified and equally senior men:

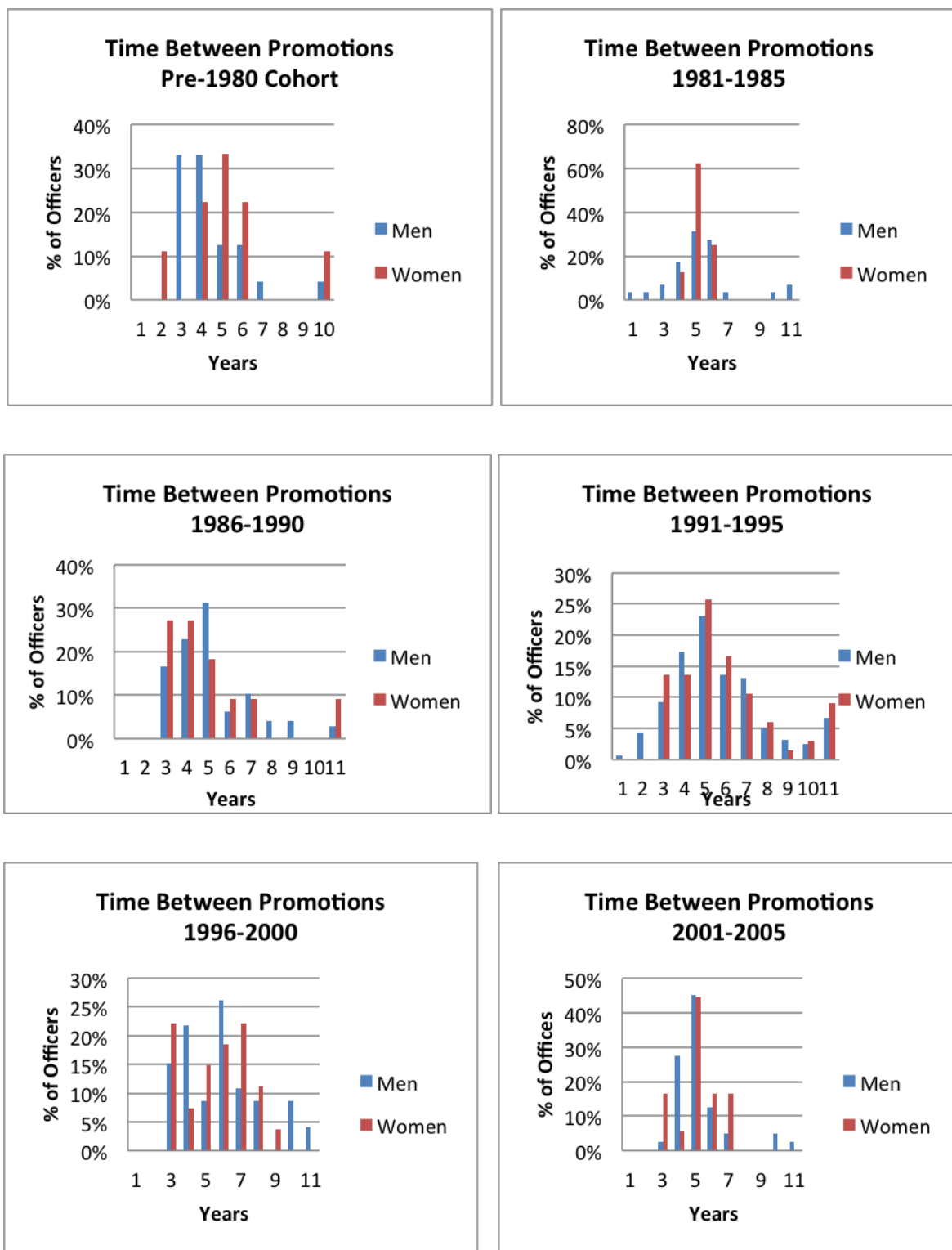
```
. reg hardshipdummy female education dependents entryyear
```

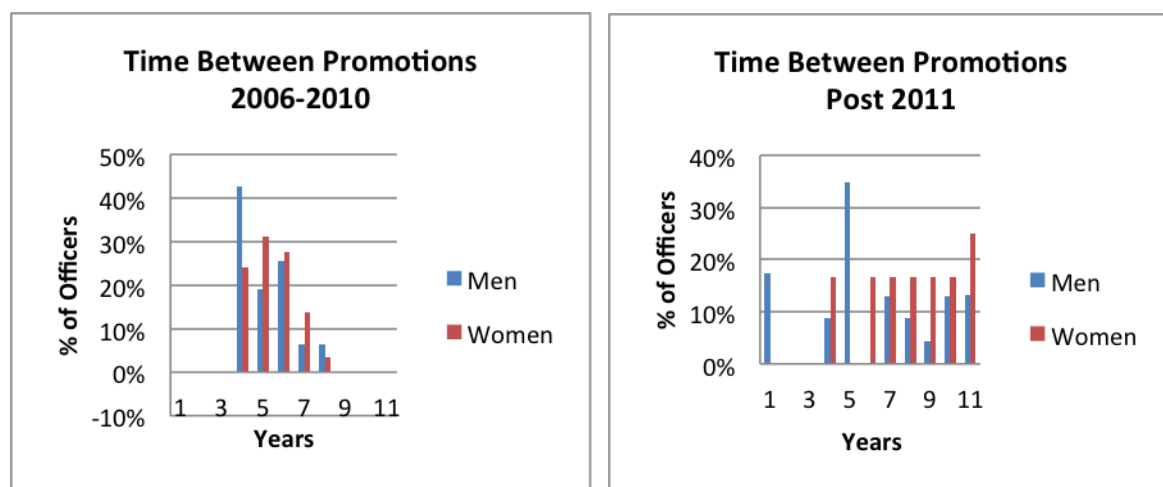
Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	724
Model	5.48172795	4	1.37043199	F(4, 719)	=	7.27
Residual	135.601145	719	.188596864	Prob > F	=	0.0000
				R-squared	=	0.0389
				Adj R-squared	=	0.0335
Total	141.082873	723	.195135371	Root MSE	=	.43428

hardshipdu~y	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
female	-.1469735	.0352217	-4.17	0.000	-.2161231	-.077824
education	-.0217655	.028592	-0.76	0.447	-.0778994	.0343683
dependents	-.0056848	.0131734	-0.43	0.666	-.0315478	.0201781
entryyear	-.0054823	.0020271	-2.70	0.007	-.0094621	-.0015026
_cons	11.31212	4.063946	2.78	0.006	3.333505	19.29074



11. Average time between promotions by cohort:





12. Evaluation of policy options:

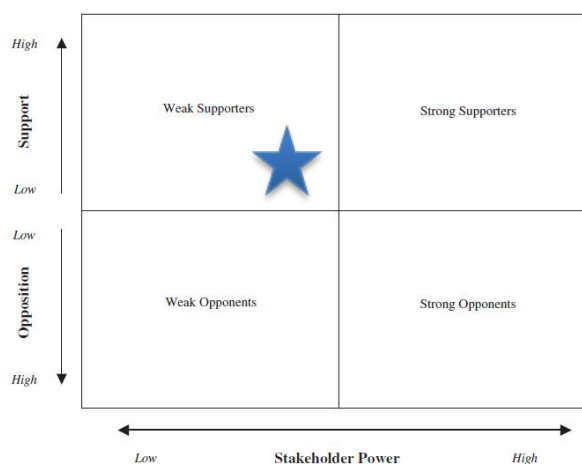
### SET A TEMPORAL GENDER QUOTA FOR ENTRY:

*Effectiveness:* This policy is expected to be the most effective because it forces the process to be gender neutral by yielding 50% successful candidates of each gender. The quota for entry would create cohorts that are 50% women and 50% men, which would take on average 25 years to reach the rank of Minister or Ambassador. The effect of this policy would be that during the first 25 years, the share of female Ambassadors and Ministers would mirror incoming cohorts and naturally rise by 11 and 17 percentage points respectively. By year 30, the quota would “kick in” and bring the numbers from 37% and 38% to 50%, which would represent an average increase of .77 and 1 percentage points yearly over the span of 30 years.

*Organizational Culture:* On the organizational culture dimension, this option has high potential to send a signal to staff about the need to change attitudes towards gender roles.

*Cost:* This option does not require any additional expenditure by the SRE because the examination process itself would remain unchanged. It simply requires that from the top performers in a given cohort, it reserve half of the spots for the top men, and half for the top women.

*Political Feasibility:* There are different levels of support for this policy within different factions in the Ministry as mentioned in the Policy Recommendations section. The policy has more supporters than detractors, but the latter may have decision-making power and they are not a small minority. Nevertheless, the supporters outweigh the detractors, so I place political feasibility in the top left quadrant, weak support, as a result.



*Administrative Feasibility:* The SRE already has the resources and staff available to implement this policy, so administrative feasibility is high.

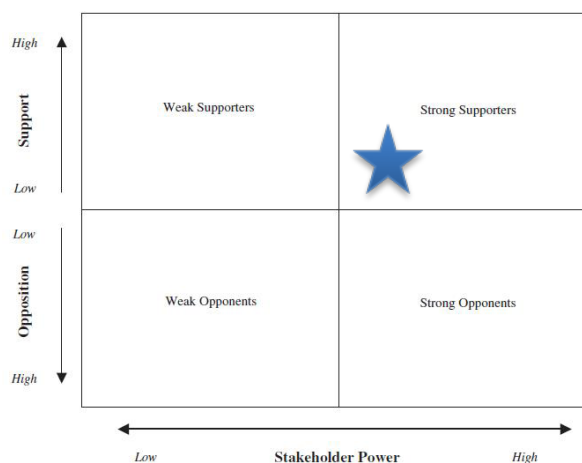
### TARGETED RECRUITMENT:

*Effectiveness:* There is a degree of uncertainty about the effectiveness of this policy because it would only work if it were the case that the female applicant pool is lower quality than the male applicant pool. If female underperformance is actually due to bias in the test, then the intervention will not be effective. Assuming that the quality of the applicant pool could be improved, what would be the effect? Researchers Hicks, Pruchno and Rose conducted a comparative study on recruitment strategies for medical research, and found that by contacting 909 eligible participants, they were able to recruit 313 additional qualified participants using the snowballing method. If the SRE contacted the 742 active FSOs to this end, it could be eventually able to recruit 256 additional applicants if the study's findings are externally valid to Mexico's context. With the addition of recruitment efforts through contact with universities, the female applicant pool could be improved further. I will assume that the effectiveness of this policy could range from 0 to as effective as a quota, with a 50% probability of each. Thus, the expected value will be equal to half of the effectiveness of a quota.

*Organizational Culture:* On the organizational culture dimension, this option has low potential to send a signal to staff about the need to change attitudes towards gender roles because of its low internal visibility.

*Cost:* The SRE would have to spend \$500 to produce recruiting materials and \$10,000 in travel expenses for a recruiter from the Office of Gender Equality to travel to all 32 states and meet with academic institutions.

*Political Feasibility:* This policy would be probably be accepted by FSOs and decision makers within the SRE. The Office already has a travel budget, but the challenge would be to obtain the support from the Treasury Ministry (Secretaría de Hacienda) to approve the additional required funding. If the Office of Gender Equality and the Office of the Secretary can present strong arguments in favor, the Treasury will probably approve it because it is not a very large expenditure. Therefore, the policy receives a score of medium support.



*Administrative Feasibility:* The SRE has the capacity to elaborate a recruitment program and to contact universities in every state through the domestic delegations. It is necessary that the Office of Gender Equality convey the reasons why it is necessary to target women specifically, and for that reason, staff from that Office would have to conduct the recruitment themselves or train staff at the delegations in each state to do it. The funding for this specific activity is not contemplated in the Ministry budget, but it could likely be allocated from the Office of Gender Equality's travel budget or from another Ministry activity. It is not certain whether the SRE would have to request the funding from the Treasury. For this reason, the rating on administrative feasibility is medium to high.

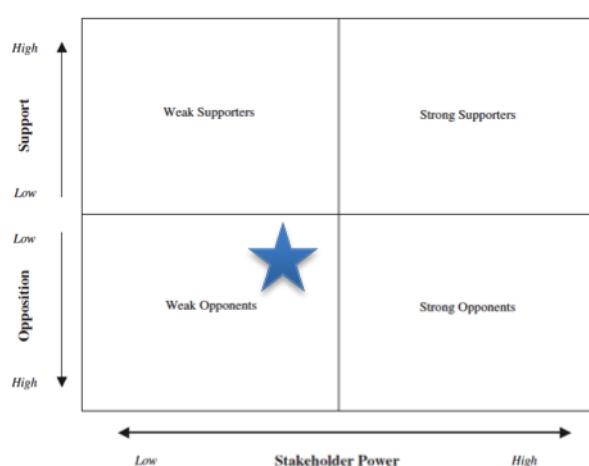
## CREATE A FELLOWSHIP:

*Effectiveness:* This option involves a more long term approach that aims to equip members of minority groups, including women, not only to enter the Foreign Service but to acquire skills that will promote their upward mobility once they have joined. The Program would not be exclusively for women, although gender and other demographic elements will receive additional weight at the time of reviewing applications. The impact of this option is limited because the fellowship cohort will be small, between ten and fifteen students. Keeping in mind that not even all ten will be women, the effect will be limited.

*Organizational Culture:* On the organizational culture dimension, this option has high potential to send a signal to staff about the need to change attitudes towards gender roles because it will be highly noticeable.

*Cost:* This option is the most costly, because it involves payment of college or graduate school. The SRE could negotiate with academic institutions to come up with cost-saving arrangements and it could collaborate with public universities to that end as well. Based on the average yearly tuition of a private university in Mexico City, which is approximately \$6,600, I am estimating the total yearly cost for ten students to be \$40,000, assuming that six students will attend a private university and four students will earn spots in public universities reserved for the SRE through negotiations.

*Political Feasibility:* This option could potentially encounter resistance both within the institution and outside. Within the SRE there might be concerns around fairness, as the culture heavily prizes the idea of a meritocracy where equal opportunity is guaranteed by the public entry examination. Some would question the reasons behind granting additional support to some. Outside the institution, the SRE would have to negotiate with the Treasury to obtain the funding. One way to navigate this would be to work with CONACYT, the government entity that grants most scholarship money, to create a special program for the SRE. Because there are some obstacles to implementation, I am rating this option as weak opposition.



*Administrative Feasibility:* The institution does not have the budget to run this program. It does have the in-house capacity to host the additional training sessions. It has never run such a program before so the funding would likely have to be requested from the Treasury. This makes the administrative feasibility low.

### CREATE A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR POTENTIAL CANDIDATES:

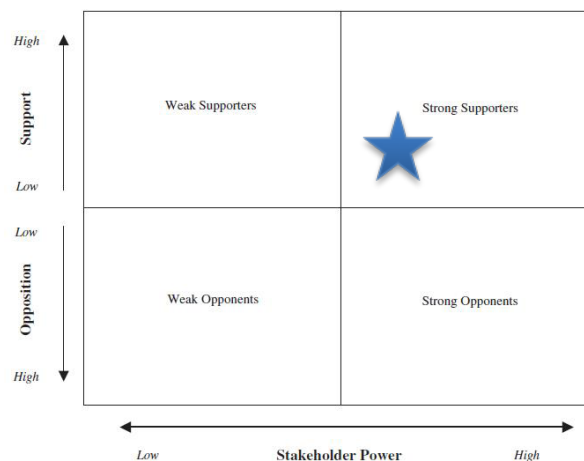
*Effectiveness:* Evidence on the effectiveness of test preparation for standardized tests is mixed. Studies find differentiated impacts depending on the format of the coaching, its length or curriculum. For example, a coaching program lasting ten weeks, with four hours of classroom time per week and unlimited access to study tapes from the sessions had a significant impact on student SAT scores, while a program that provided 24 hours of classroom time had no effect (Sesnowitz, Bernhardt, Knein, 1982). The effects of this option are difficult to project. I will assume that the effects will not be as high as the quota because the training is not exclusively for women and because entry for those who receive the training will not be guaranteed. My estimate is that it would be half as effective as a full quota.

*Organizational Culture:* On the organizational culture dimension, this option has medium potential to send a signal to staff about the need to change attitudes towards gender roles.

*Cost:* Staff from the Instituto Matias Romero would have to travel to several Mexican cities to carry out the classroom sessions. The program would be a week long. Travel expenses to five regional hub cities will total \$4,000 and there would be a \$1,000 budget for course materials.

The SRE would have to develop an online component for the training that would be publicly available. This would represent expenditure in the order of \$3,000. Internships would be unpaid. The institution already has the capacity for teaching online courses; it would only have to develop the content. The SRE could hire a consultant who would be in charge of delivery of the complete online content project.

*Political Feasibility:* There will probably be no significant opposition to this option, especially if it remains open to all categories of applicants. The program will have to admit a limited number of applicants because internship opportunities are not unlimited, so the SRE will set admission criteria that include gender as one of the most important aspects to consider. The online component will be open to all. This makes the policy very palatable for a broad range of parties who may otherwise be concerned with equal access or fairness. The option will receive strong support.



*Administrative Feasibility:* The SRE, through the Instituto Matías Romero, already has the capacity and years of experience to run online courses, as it does several times each month for continuing education of diplomats. It also has the capacity and experience to host in-person teaching sessions at the Institute. The institution may need to use outside sources to develop the content of the course, although this may even be possible to do in-house. In sum, administrative feasibility is high.

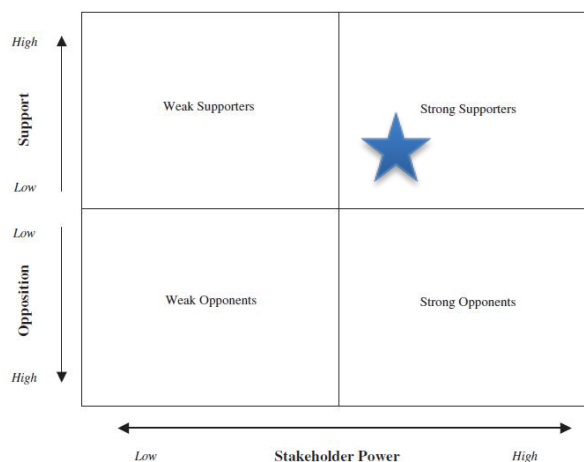
### DE-BIAS THE TEST:

*Effectiveness:* As in the option for entry, there is a degree of uncertainty associated to the result of these actions. Similarly to that option, I am assuming that if these actions were 100% effective, the promotion exam would yield approximately the same share of promoted women as the share of women taking the test. This would result in the elimination of the 'leak' in the pipeline due to promotion, so the share of women Ambassadors and Ministers would become the same as the share of women in the cohort. The share of Ambassadors would drop to 20% in five years, equaling the current share of female Ministers, and would then rise to 38% by the time current Third Secretaries become Ambassadors, around the year 2035. This would roughly equal a 0.5 percentage point yearly increase in the share of women. For Ministers, this would be a 0.6 percentage point increase per year. Assuming that the policy will not be 100% effective but actually around 80% effective, the values then become 0.44 and 0.72 respectively.

*Organizational Culture:* On the organizational culture dimension, this option has medium potential to send a signal to staff about the need to change attitudes towards gender roles.

*Cost:* The cost for this option is not as high as for the entry option because the exam is not multiple choice, and therefore, there is no need to find individual test questions that have a gender bias. The only additional cost would be to include an additional interviewer, at \$250 for two days. The rest of the modifications involve no additional expenditures.

*Political Feasibility:* No buy-in from outside institutions is required. Within the SRE, there will not be a high level of opposition if officers are given enough notice to prepare. I expect the elimination of the PMT to be very well received among FSOs but conversely, the separate interviews might not be so welcome because it means each officer would have to give four interviews instead of just one. Evaluators might feel like losing the PMT limits the available information to differentiate between candidates for promotion and might oppose its elimination. In addition, FSOs have expressed inconformity with the constant format changes in the exam, so the idea of one more round of modifications might also meet some resistance. This can be overcome if the changes are adequately socialized and communicated with at least two years of advance notice. Assuming this happens, I would expect this option to receive medium support.



*Administrative Feasibility:* The SRE already possesses the budgetary and human resource capabilities to carry out this option.

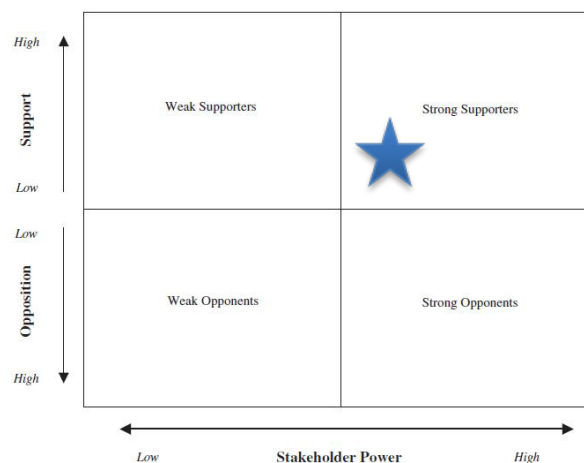
### RECRUIT WOMEN TO FILL HARDSHIP POSTS:

*Effectiveness:* The lack of women in hardship posts only accounts for part of the gender difference in promotion success. If this option were to be 100% successful, the share of women assigned to a hardship post during their career would be as high as the men's, going from 16% to 33%. While this would help their promotion chances, it still only would affect the minority of officers. My estimate, assuming that the intervention would be slightly less than 100% effective and would have a modest impact because the additional beneficiaries are only about 16% of female officers, is that it would be one quarter as effective as a quota.

*Organizational Culture:* On the organizational culture dimension, this option has high potential to send a signal to staff about the need to change attitudes towards gender roles.

*Cost:* This policy would not require significant additional expenditures by the SRE. The survey could be conducted via email and the recruitment calls or emails can be included in the budget of each participating Embassy or Consulate. The SRE would maybe spend up to \$2,000 on telephone calls.

*Political Feasibility:* It is difficult to assess this option because there is not enough information about officers' attitudes about assignments of hardship posts. Building on research that finds that people are more likely to accept negative outcomes when they perceive that they result from a fair process (Tyler & Lind, 1988), I would recommend the SRE frame this option as an exercise in fairness, trying to offer women opportunities for which they have traditionally been passed over. The SRE has traditionally had difficulties filling hardship posts with willing FSOs, so decision makers will very likely favor this option. Since the recommendation does not involve mandated assignment to hardship posts, it is not likely to elicit opposition from women, and men will also probably not object it because if they are interested in a hardship post, it will still not be difficult to obtain because of overall low demand. In sum, this policy option has strong support.



*Administrative Feasibility:* The SRE has the budgetary and human resource capabilities to carry out this option.

### SET A GENDER QUOTA FOR PROMOTIONS:

*Effectiveness:* This policy is expected to be the most effective because it forces the process to be gender neutral by yielding a share of successful female candidates equal to the proportion of total female candidates. As discussed in the Evaluation Criteria section, assuming perfect replacement of outgoing cohort by the incoming cohort, the effectiveness of this policy is 0.05 yearly percentage points for Ambassadors, so the 50% target would take longer than 30 years to materialize.

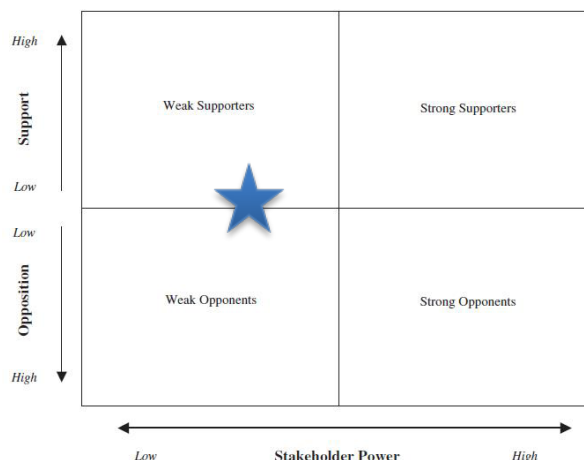
*Organizational Culture:* On the organizational culture dimension, this option has high potential to send a signal to staff about the need to change attitudes towards gender roles.

*Cost:* This option does not require any additional expenditure by the SRE because the examination process itself would remain unchanged. It simply requires that from the top performers in each rank, the SRE reserve half of the spots for the top men and half for the top women.

*Political Feasibility:* There are different levels of support for this policy within different factions in the Ministry, as mentioned in the Policy Options section. Quotas seem to be a controversial, and within the Foreign Service, polarizing. Support among female FSOs is 70%, but only 40% among male FSOs.

The policy counts and important supporter among its ranks: The Secretary of Foreign Affairs would probably be supportive, as she has recently announced a quota for upcoming Ambassadorial appointments. During the interview with Edith Olivares, gender consultant to the SRE, she indicated that men and women in positions of authority within the SRE opposed the policy when she first conducted the survey. Granted that the situation may have changed, it likely has not. Outside the Ministry, there is enough support for this policy, as evidenced by the quotas recently implemented by Congress for the election of legislators in both chambers, and applauded by citizens and the Senate resolution on the Foreign Service which invites the Ministry to instate them.

On net, the policy probably has more supporters than detractors, but the latter may have decision-making power and they are not a small minority. I place political feasibility in the border of weak support and opposition.



*Administrative Feasibility:* The SRE already has the resources and staff available to implement this policy, so administrative feasibility is high.



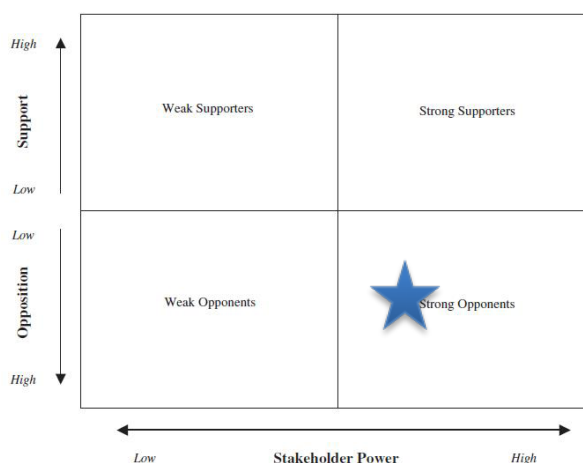
### APPOINT SENIOR POSTS THROUGH A COMPETITIVE APPLICATION PROCESS:

*Effectiveness:* This policy option has the potential to correct the 0.18 point disadvantage that women have as a result of not being assigned high responsibility posts. Similarly to the de-biasing option, I am assuming that if this action was 100% effective in removing bias from the promotion process, the exam would yield approximately the same share of promoted women as the share of women taking the test. I am also assuming that this option would not remove all bias, because it does not take care of the inequality arising from non-assignment of women to hardship posts. My estimate is that the option can be around 75% as effective as a quota.

*Organizational Culture:* On the organizational culture dimension, this option has low potential to send a signal to staff about the need to change attitudes towards gender roles, because it may not be clear that it is addressing gender specifically.

*Cost:* This option requires the SRE to make an application available to the public and to internal candidates via electronic means and possibly by putting ads in different publications. The cost of these advertisements will be estimated at \$1,500.

*Political Feasibility:* This policy would face high resistance because those who currently have decision power to appoint trusted colleagues to these important positions will probably not welcome the increased competition and oversight that comes with an open application process. Most Foreign Service Officers would welcome this idea, with the exception of well-connected officers who stand to lose the advantage they have cultivated through networking. Politicians outside the SRE who often recommend people to occupy these positions also stand to lose. In all, the majority of the Foreign Service would support this, as well as the general public, but powerful stakeholders with decision power would oppose. In sum, I would rate political feasibility of this option as medium to strong opposition.



*Administrative Feasibility:* The SRE already has the resources and staff available to implement this policy, but it entails a very important departure from the prevailing organizational culture. Many stakeholders would offer resistance. My rating is medium to low administrative feasibility.

### PROVIDING SPOUSAL SUPPORT:

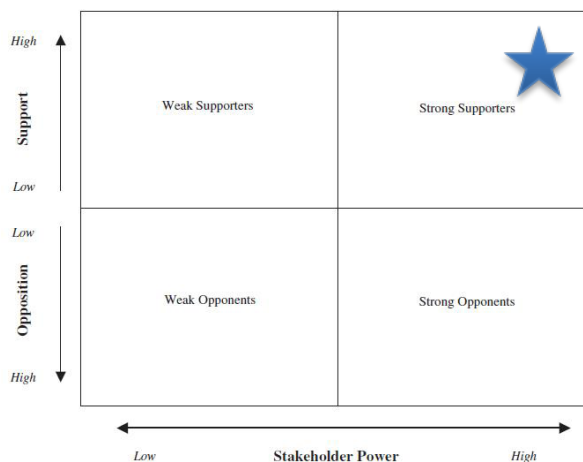
*Effectiveness:* The extent to which this option will bring the SRE closer to the established target is minimal. There is the potential of preventing the exit of twenty to thirty officers, assuming past turn-over patterns remain constant. This represents less than 1% of the total number of women in the

Foreign Service. Nonetheless, it could significantly improve the experiences of FSOs of all genders qualitatively.

*Organizational Culture:* On the organizational culture dimension, this option has medium potential to send a signal to staff about the need to change attitudes towards gender roles because it would not be clear that it is aimed specifically to achieve gender equality, although it does send a signal that family is important for workers.

*Cost:* This option requires the SRE to open the existing online courses to spouses, which would likely not result in a very significant additional cost. My estimate is \$3,000 in additional salary for course instructors, who will have a heavier workload. Diplomatic negotiations to receive work permits would be carried out by Embassy staff and would not signify additional expenditures. Possible costs would also include those associated with giving reciprocity to countries who ask for it by extending the same benefits to spouses of diplomats of those countries in Mexico. Those would not be incurred by the SRE directly though, they would be incurred by the Immigration Institute of the Ministry of the Interior, and further, by Mexican workers eventually displaced by those few new workers. I expect this effect not be negligible though. Foreigners in Mexico are less than 1% of the population.

*Political Feasibility:* This policy would be very well accepted by FSOs and many would be happy to actively work towards it. Spouses would appreciate access to the language courses and many would take advantage of new opportunities available to them. It would be surprising to find parties who opposed this.



Administrative Feasibility: The SRE already has the resources and staff available to implement this policy, feasibility is high.

### CREATE A WOMEN'S SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM:

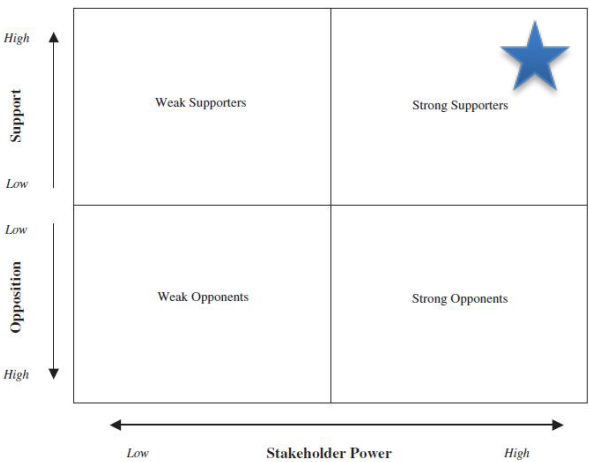
*Effectiveness:* This program could have effects on turnover but also on women's competitiveness during promotion exams, and the size of the potential impact is, again, hard to estimate, especially because rigorous evaluations of these programs are not commonplace. I will assume that this option can produce an outcome half as good as the de-biasing option, by helping women compete better throughout the different elements of the promotion process and by decreasing exits.

*Organizational Culture:* On the organizational culture dimension, this option has high potential to send a signal to staff about the need to change attitudes towards gender roles.

*Cost:* This option does not require additional expenditures by the SRE. Mentors and mentees will

not receive additional resources. An optional addition would be to host an annual lunch or breakfast during the annual meeting of Ambassadors and Consuls in Mexico City, where mentors meet with those mentees who are stationed in Mexico City. This would cost about \$2,000.

*Political Feasibility:* Participation would be optional and would operate in an opt-in basis, so there would likely not be opposition. If the SRE facilitates a meeting though, there might be some backlash from FSOs who are not in the program and may feel excluded. On net though, support should be high.



*Administrative Feasibility:* The SRE already has the resources and staff available to implement this policy, feasibility is high.

EQUAL PATERNITY LEAVE:

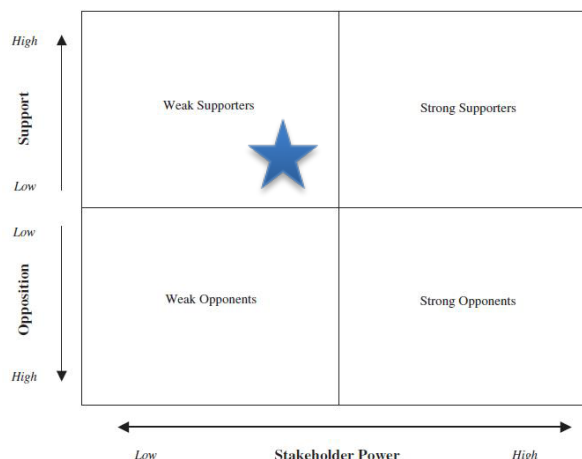
*Effectiveness:* This option has a strong cultural and symbolic component, but can it result in a higher share of women in senior posts? This is an open question. I am willing to assume some effect, in the order of 25% the size of a promotion quota, although as in all other ratings, I invite the SRE to review it critically.

*Organizational Culture:* On the organizational culture dimension, this option could go a long way towards changing the prevailing organizational culture that perpetuates existing gender roles. As mentioned in the introduction, existing gender norms in Mexico undervalue the potential economic contributions of women. Changing social norms and doing so visibly could help promote convergence on a new norm (Bohnet, 2016). This option may help remove the stigma for men who partake in domestic care work and household activities. Women who partner with such men will benefit, as they will have additional time and energy to dedicate to professional activities. In sum this option has high potential to send a signal to staff about the need to change attitudes towards gender roles.

*Cost:* This option does not require additional expenditures by the SRE, but it may involve a productivity loss from workers’ extended absence. I will quantify this as a yearly loss that would equal the wage of people on leave during a three-month period minus their wage for a three week period, which is the current duration of paternal leave. Assuming thirteen fathers will go on leave each year (reflecting the country’s 1.8% birth rate) and a mean salary of \$4,000/month, the total loss would be \$117,000.

*Political Feasibility:* The former Director of the Office of Gender Equality related her experience pushing through the policy of paternity leave. She found it to be enormously challenging and faced

significant resistance. Once the policy was in place, many men have decided not to exercise their right to take paternity leave. This may be in part because the policy lacks visibility and many are unaware of its existence, and it may also be a result of deeply ingrained beliefs. In any case, the fact that paternity leave exists is in itself a sign that this policy is feasible. We can expect resistance and opposition, but not strong enough to derail all efforts. I am rating this weak support.



*Administrative Feasibility:* The SRE already has the resources and staff available to implement this policy, feasibility is high.

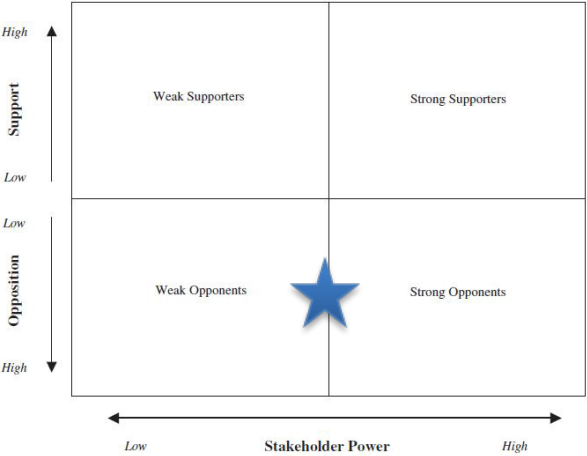
### CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE:

*Effectiveness:* It is unclear whether lack of childcare arrangements has to do with the decisions of women who exit or if there is a motherhood penalty in effect for promotions. Interviews did show that it is a service that both male and female FSOs would like to have, even just in subsidy form, but the link with underrepresentation of women in senior positions is far from established. The effectiveness of this policy could range from zero to a modest effect.

*Organizational Culture:* On the organizational culture dimension, this option has medium potential to send a signal to staff about the need to change attitudes towards gender roles because although it will draw attention to a very important issue, it may be interpreted as a policy to help women, reinforcing the idea that childcare is exclusively their responsibility.

*Cost:* I am considering a subsidy of 80% of the average cost of daycare in Mexico City, during the first five years of a child's life. This would roughly equal \$100 per month, per child. The SRE could be expected to have 65 people taking advantage of this possibility in any given year. Therefore, the cost would be approximately \$338,000 per year.

*Political Feasibility:* Officers would support this option for very obvious reasons, but they may face resistance from factions concerned with the SRE's and the government's financial obligations. This option is the most costly and requires coordination with the Treasury. Also, there is already a perception among non-Foreign Service staff that FSOs receive privileges in the form of higher salaries and other perks, so there may be some backlash if this move is perceived as unfair. It is also not common practice among government employees in other Ministries, so in sum, this may be an uphill battle. I estimate medium to strong opposition.



*Administrative Feasibility:* The SRE already has the necessary staff and know how to implement this policy, although it may have to adequate the current daycare facilities to accommodate more children. Feasibility is medium.

13. Summary of policy option ratings:

Policy Option Ratings Summary Table:

Policy Option	Effectiveness	Impact on Organizational Culture	Cost	Political Feasibility	Administrative Feasibility
	Yearly percentage point increase in share of female Ambassadors / Ministers	High, Medium, Low	Dollars per year & Dollars per percentage points	High, Medium, Low	High, Medium, Low
	High, Medium, Low				
Entry (Effects begin in year 30)					
Gender Quota	0.77 (Ambassadors) 1.0 (Ministers)	High	\$0/year \$0/point (Ambassadors) \$0/point (Ministers)	Weak support	High
Targeted Recruitment	0.39 (Ambassadors) 0.50 (Ministers)	Low	\$10,000/year \$26,641/point (Ambassadors) \$20,000/point (Ministers)	Medium support	Medium - High

Policy Option	Effectiveness	Impact on Organizational Culture	Cost	Political Feasibility	Administrative Feasibility
	Yearly percentage point increase in share of female Ambassadors / Ministers High, Medium, Low	High, Medium, Low	Dollars per year & Dollars per percentage points	High, Medium, Low	High, Medium, Low
Fellowship	0.10 (Ambassadors) 0.50 (Ministers)	High	\$40,000/year \$40,00/point (Ambassadors) \$2666,666/point (Ministers)	Weak opposition	Low
Training Program	0.39 (Ambassadors) 0.50 (Ministers)	Medium	\$8,000/year \$20,512/point (Ambassadors) \$16,000/point (Ministers)	Strong support	High
De-bias Test	0.62 (Ambassadors) 0.80 (Ministers)	Medium	\$3,250/year \$5,242/point (Ambassadors) \$4,063/point (Ministers)	Medium support	Medium
<i>Promotion (Benefits begin in year 5)</i>					
Recruitment to Fill Hardship Posts	0.13 (Ambassadors) 0.15 (Ministers)	High	\$2,000/year \$15,385/point (Ambassadors) \$13,333/point (Ministers)	Strong support	High
Gender Quota	0.50 (Ambassadors) 0.60 (Ministers)	High	\$0/year \$0/point (Ambassadors) \$0/point (Ministers)	Weak support - Weak opposition	Medium
De-bias Test	0.40 (Ambassadors) 0.48 (Ministers)	Medium	\$250/year \$625/point (Ambassadors) \$521/point (Ministers)	Medium support	High
Competitive Application Process	0.38 (Ambassadors) 0.45 (Ministers)	Medium	\$1,500/year \$3,947/point (Ambassadors) \$3,333/point (Ministers)	Medium - Strong opposition	Low - Medium

Policy Option	Effectiveness	Impact on Organizational Culture	Cost	Political Feasibility	Administrative Feasibility
	Yearly percentage point increase in share of female Ambassadors / Ministers High, Medium, Low	High, Medium, Low	Dollars per year & Dollars per percentage points	High, Medium, Low	High, Medium, Low
<i>Exit (Effects begin immediately)</i>					
Spousal Support	<.01 (Ambassadors) <.01 (Ministers)	Low	\$3,000/year \$300,000/point (Ambassadors) \$300,000/point (Ministers)	Strong support	High
Sponsorship	0.20 (Ambassadors) 0.24 (Ministers)	High	\$2,000/year \$10,000/point (Ambassadors) \$8,333/point (Ministers)	Strong support	High
Extend Paternal Leave	0.13 (Ambassadors) 0.15 (Ministers)	High	\$117,000/year <sup>15</sup> \$900,000/point (Ambassadors) \$780,000/point (Ministers)	Weak support	High
Childcare Assistance	<.01 (Ambassadors) <.01 (Ministers)	Medium	\$338,000/year \$33,800,000/point (Ambassadors) \$33,800,000/point (Ministers)	Medium-Strong opposition	Medium

<sup>15</sup> Not an additional expenditure; represents productivity loss.



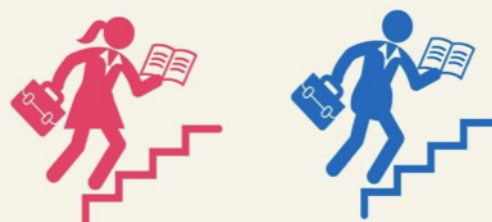
15. Infographic tool to share results and recommendations to SRE decision-makers:



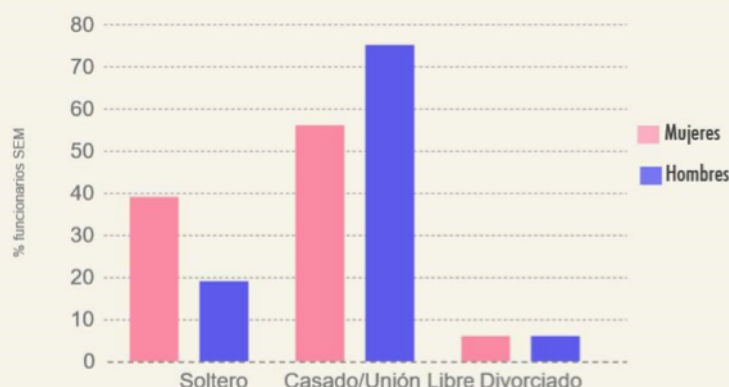


# Las diplomáticas reciben en promedio 0.19 puntos menos que los diplomáticos en el rubro de 'adscripción' en los exámenes de ascenso.

Este valor equivale coincidentalmente a la diferencia promedio entre el puntaje mínimo de quien logró un ascenso y el más alto de quien no ascendió (0.186 puntos).



La cultura organizacional replica roles de género estereotípicos que exigen más de la mujer en el ámbito doméstico, volviendo incompatible en mayor grado su vida familiar/personal y profesional.

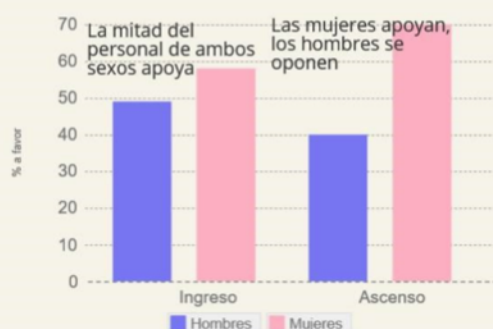


Se proponen acciones encaminadas a evolucionar la cultura organizacional, entre ellas, ampliar la duración de la licencia de paternidad. Con ello, la institución reconoce que el cuidado del hogar y de los hijos es un derecho y responsabilidad de los hombres en el mismo grado que de las mujeres.

## Proyección con acciones afirmativas



## Actitudes sobre acciones afirmativas



Se recomienda implementar un paquete de acciones de alto impacto, en secuencia estratégica, que permita contar con el apoyo de la mayoría de los miembros del SEM. Ello requiere llevar a cabo un proceso de consulta abierto y transparente sobre las propuestas a considerar.

## Contacto:

[tdelrio@sre.gob.mx](mailto:tdelrio@sre.gob.mx)

+1 (857) 999 1801

## Nota:

Esta infografía contiene algunas de las observaciones obtenidas por medio de un análisis cuantitativo de datos de la Comisión de Personal del SEM y la Dirección General del Servicio Exterior y Recursos Humanos y un análisis cualitativo con base en 23 entrevistas con miembros del SEM y actores relevantes. Para mayor información, véase el documento final en su totalidad.