

Topic Democratic Innovations for Civic Engagement

Speakers Ximena Docarmo Cohaila - Head of the Better Politics Accelerator, is a Peruvian political trainer and author specializing in adult education and political leadership, with expertise in political entrepreneurship, impact measurement, and the intersection of AI, politics, and democracy.

Key Takeaways Background

In a time of widespread disillusionment with political leadership, the Better Politics Accelerator aims to reimagine politics by equipping emerging political leaders with the mindsets, skills, and knowledge needed to rebuild trust and deliver transformative change. Through a global, non-partisan curriculum grounded in experiential and peer-based learning, the program prepares participants for a variety of political leadership paths, from elected office to grassroots mobilization.

Political Leadership for the 21st Century

Approach: Participants are screened and trained through an integrated model of:

- Inner Work (Mindsets): Building resilience, pro-social motivation, and ethics.
- Outer Work (Skills): Communication, negotiation, campaign strategy, grassroots organizing.
- Systems Work (Knowledge): Political systems, policy innovation, and global trends (e.g., climate, tech, gender, economy).

Key Insight: The program is transformational, not transactional, developing political maturity and preparing individuals for the personal and public demands of political life.

Curriculum Highlights

Core Competencies

- Ethics & Integrity: Moral courage and staying true to one's values in public life.

- Communication & Strategy: From speeches to misinformation management.
- Policy-Making: Evidence-informed decisions aligned with democratic principles.
- Representation & Participation: Engaging with citizens through participatory methods.

Experiential Learning

- Peer learning as a core methodology.
- Emphasis on adult learning principles: relevance, emotional engagement, and co-design.
- Blended formats (workshops, coaching, LMS access, dolphin tanks) for flexible and inclusive learning.

Key Insight: Peer-to-peer exchange is one of the most impactful methods in leadership development.

Real-World Application

Pathways to Political Leadership

- As Politicians: Campaigning and representing constituents.
- As Public Servants: Understanding governance structures and regulation.
- As Movement Builders: Mobilizing communities and civil society.
- As Family Members & Community Members: Balancing personal impact and public duty.

Key Insight: The personal is political, leadership readiness includes navigating family, identity, and community dynamics.

Other Tools

Tools and Framework introduced:

- Theory of Change (ToC): Adaptive vs. pre-planned intervention models to map out impact pathways.
- 4D Learning Model: Doing, Didactic, Discovery, Discourse.
- Learning Design Toolkit: Insights from behavioral science, adult learning theory, and unlearning practices.