

A public policy and regulation expert. As a local congresswoman in the Local Congress of Mexico City, Laura Ballesteros Mancilla led the enactment of the Mobility Law along with civil society organizations and the former Head of Government, Miguel Angel Mancera. As Sub-Minister of Planning in the Secretariat, Laura Ballesteros Mancilla introduced the road safety policy known as Visión Cero. She is also one of the founding members of the Mujeres en Movimiento (Women in Motion).

Laura Ballesteros Mancilla

ALTERNATE SENATOR, FORMER
MOBILITY MINISTER OF MONTERREY
AND DEPUTY MOBILITY MINISTER
IN CDMX, FOUNDING MEMBER OF
MUJERES EN MOVIMIENTO

MEXICO

In your view, what is a feminist transport system?

It is a whole system. It is to imagine a city that is built for everybody, including women and children. It is the dream of a city that belongs to everyone, that involves women as decision-makers and users at the same time. At this moment in time, we don't have that. If we are not empowered on the streets, in the government, in the private sector, then we experience a lot of weakness in the public space and transportation system because they are not designed for us. Feminist transport systems address that.

How does the experience for women and girls in Mexico City influence your work?

In Mexico and Latin America, having women in leadership in the government is not common. When I began working in the public sector fifteen years ago, the first thing I did was introduce hiring women for these jobs and having them lead some of our most important projects. I knew having women's voices inside the government and making decisions would be a benefit to Mexico City. For me, I believe that if we are trying to create more inclusive cities, we have to act as the example.

Secondly, as a team we introduced this intersectional vision and planning for the mobility agenda, one that included the perspectives of women as users of the transport system. We built a technical approach to how we are moving inside our cities, using indicators to take into account

women's mobility patterns, like the mobility of care. With the support of CAF (Corporación Andina de Fomento – Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina, development bank of Latin America), we gathered the first data of its kind when it comes to gender perspectives in transport and mobility.

Third, and most important of all, we put the financial resources behind what we were saying. It is powerful to advocate for gender perspectives. It is better if you can put the money where your mouth is. We introduced a lot of funding for infrastructure, with consideration for public spaces and how important it is to invest in sustainable mobility. Women and girls are the first to use these spaces, and are often the main occupiers of them. Transport space is public space, making it a core reason to invest in sustainable mobility.

Finally, it was important to me to build a strategic alliance of all women involved in the feminist transport agenda. One of my most important legacies has been co-founding the Women in Motion initiative. To create a huge collective of people who want to be part of this change, and know that we are not alone and don't have to work alone in this very toxic patriarchal environment is something I'm very proud of.





Have you had a transformational experience that has influenced your work?

In 2018, I was invited as a keynote speaker to the first Women Mobilize Women Conference in Germany. I was asked to write about my experiences as a woman in this field, and as I began writing, it was the first time I really understood how I was a victim of gender violence in politics. At the time I wasn't ready to understand what had happened, but in that moment of reflection, I knew I had to do something, and understood a key way to address it was to build a network of women, starting in Latin America. That is how Women in Motion began.

How do you stay motivated?

When you walk with the right people and understand that we are part of a larger collective of persons who want to make real change, that is one of the most important sources of inspiration. I have found that you reflect the people you work with and find strength in each other. The Women in Motion initiative is so important for me because through it we created our own tribe. Getting outside of the patriarchal system that makes people feel like they don't belong and are welcome and understanding we don't need them to create a better world, it is a powerful moment that keeps you moving forward. I find inspiration in working with the people who are improving the quality of life and creating safer, better transport.

What advice would you have for your younger self or for others who want to be part of a feminist reshaping of transport systems?

You are not alone. We are stronger together, and we have to break the patriarchal pact, taking this first steps of collectiveness. Yes, you can, we need you!