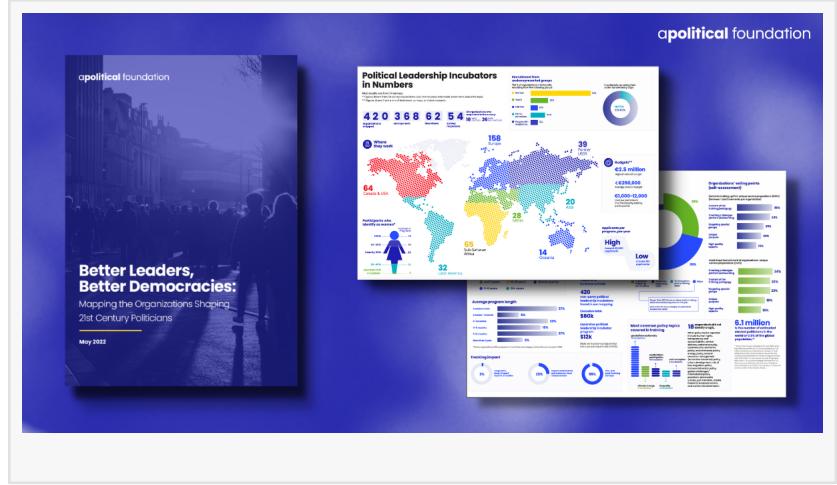


# How we get better politicians. New report investigates organizations shaping quality political leaders

BERLIN, GERMANY, May 13, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Democracy is in trouble.

Climate change, polarization and democratic backsliding will not be solved by carrying out business as usual. We need innovative, prepared and courageous politicians to address the 21st century's biggest problems.



Apolitical Foundation's new report, "Better Leaders, Better Democracies: Mapping the Organizations Shaping 21st Century Politicians", has located 420 political leadership incubators (PLIs) selecting, training and supporting politicians around the world. The report—which is the result of 10 months' work, 54 surveys responses, and 62 interviews—is thought to be the first global mapping of the PLI field.

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Like it or not, democracy doesn't work without great politicians. It's time to invest in approaches that find and cultivate political leaders who will deliver for the people and the planet.”

*Lisa Witter, CEO, Apolitical Foundation and Co-Founder, Apolitical*

“Do politicians matter? Yes. Can we work to bring diverse, better-equipped 21st century political leaders into the system? Yes. This report names and frames a growing field of political leadership incubators working to do just that. Like it or not, democracy doesn't work without great politicians. It's time to invest in approaches that find and cultivate political leaders who will deliver for the people and the planet in these tenuous times.” — Lisa Witter, CEO, Apolitical Foundation and Co-Founder, Apolitical

Here are some key takeaways from the report:

- The PLI field is seeing renewed energy, perhaps as a result of an increasingly authoritarian world. Almost half of the PLIs who returned surveys had programs started in the last ten years.
- Underrepresented groups are still underserved. There has been a surge of PLIs set up to get

more people from marginalized groups, including women, into politics. But more still needs to be done.

- PLIs and politicians present a missed impact opportunity. Social investors have tended to fund civil society. Politicians are currently neglected, even though they make policy. The estimated [46,000 members of parliament](#) around the world would fit in a football stadium. Investing in politicians could mean making big changes by targeting relatively few people.

- There's room for PLIs to address urgent issues, like climate change. Only one of the PLIs we found focused exclusively on climate and few others included it as a significant part of their curriculums. Technology and democratic reform were also significant gaps.

- PLIs and political parties could work together. Few non-partisan PLIs that were part of the report work with political parties, despite having a network of passionate alumni ready to get into politics.

- Politicians need mental health and mindfulness support. Twenty-first century leaders need mental health support to make good decisions and build resilience in the face of threats. [Four in five female politicians](#) interviewed for a 2016 report said they'd been victims of psychological violence, which includes hostile behavior that causes fear or psychological harm.

What others have said in the wake of the report:

"We (as political philanthropists) have to understand that this kind of work... is part of institution building, that is part of systems change and that is part of what we need to do in order to support democratic development." — Yael Ohana, Executive Advisor to the Managing Director, Europe and Eurasia, Open Society Foundations

"I'm very pleased to see that the Apolitical Foundation decided to run towards and not away from "political" in producing this work. A lot of the mindset around project support from donors... has tended to favor civil society and notions of non-partisan in what I think are counter-productive ways." — Scott Mastic, Vice President of Programs, International Republican Institute.

"The report put the finger on a phenomenon... (that is) there is a real demand from civil society, not just young people, to take a chance and say, 'Why not me?'" — Audrey Fortassin, Director General, Tous Elus

[You can read the full report here.](#)

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