

## **Helpdesk Research Report: Donor Activities Supporting Women in Elected Political Spaces**

20.11.09

**Query:** Please provide an overview and case studies of the principal approaches, instruments and budgetary spend that donors (particularly bilateral donors) are using to support women's participation in elected political spaces (national and local level), results achieved, and lessons learnt about donor support. (This should include examples of where donors are supporting women's engagement in parliaments/parliamentary committees, political parties; women's campaigns and other relevant civil society support; legislative or electoral reforms that promote women's participation; voter education for women, etc).

**Enquirers:** DFID

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### **1. Overview**

Available information about donor policies, areas of activity, and lessons learned in supporting women's participation in elected political spaces is limited in the following ways: i) some donors do not appear to have specific policies in this area; ii) case studies presented on donor websites often take the form of 'success stories' which do not tend to discuss the challenges or obstacles faced, and provide only brief descriptions of programs; iii) there appear to be few evaluations of programs, or relevant activities within programs, available on donor websites in this area. Whilst there is a vast literature on the barriers to women's political participation, there is much less information available on how donors have engaged with and addressed these barriers through their programs. Similarly, there do not appear to be any systematic lessons-learned studies covering this broad area in its entirety, although a deeper analysis of lessons-learned in specific areas (e.g. supporting women in parliament, or civic education programmes targeting women) would probably provide more information in this regard.

It is also difficult to get a sense of the level of budgetary spend, priority and commitment of donors in this area: whilst some figures on the costs of particular programs are available, these obviously do not provide the bigger picture. Some donors have published figures on their overall support to gender equality, but these are not broken down into particular work streams, so do not specifically show the level of support for women's political participation.

From the patchy information available, it is nevertheless clear that donors mainly engage in certain types activities to promote women's participation in electoral politics. These include:

- Training women already in or aspiring towards leadership roles, either as legislators, councilors or leaders of civil society organizations. Workshops are common, and usually aim to build awareness of gender issues as well as provide training on basic skills needed for leadership roles.
- Strengthening the capacity of women's groups to monitor government commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Using the media to disseminate information about, and change attitudes towards, women's issues and to lobby for women's political participation.
- Supporting networks of women parliamentarians and cross-party women's groups.
- Supporting parliamentary quotas.

Specific lessons learned and recommendations from the available evaluations include:

- Ensure the inclusion of organisations that represent women facing multiple forms of exclusion - in particular, women with disabilities, older women, girls and women living with HIV/AIDS.
- Training should be sustained and continuous and should be aimed at building both the capacity of women who are already in political office, as well as of young women and non-elite women who have the potential to be future political leaders. Training for young women should start early (between the ages of 12-14).
- Programs need to be flexible enough to benefit from unexpected opportunities (e.g. by-elections), which can offer a surprise advantage to women. This requires flexible funding mechanisms.
- Increased representation of women in terms of numbers does not guarantee a substantive impact on the reduction of structural and gender inequalities.
- It is good practice to involve men in projects to support women's political participation.
- Certain activities are under-supported in post-conflict environments. These are promoting women's participation in local government, monitoring the elections process, supporting internal democratization within political parties, and better reporting on gender equality issues in the media.

## 2. Bilateral donors

### **Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)**

#### ***Policy***

**AusAID, 2007, 'Gender Equality in Australia's Aid Program – Why and How', AusAID, Canberra**

[http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/gender\\_policy.pdf](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/gender_policy.pdf)

Initiatives that increase the involvement of women in political leadership, decision making, peace building and democratic processes at all levels are a priority area for AusAID. This policy document notes that for women to be able to participate equally in decision making, changes in gender relations are essential: in the household, community, and in social, economic and political institutions at local and national levels. Key activities AusAID undertake in this area include:

- Strengthening leadership capacity through mentoring, networking and training to help women politicians and community leaders to represent their constituencies effectively.
- Education to raise women's and men's political awareness, and efforts to strengthen women's organisations, to help to ensure that political and community leaders are accountable and that women participate in political processes.

- Supporting the media's role in shaping community attitudes on gender stereotypes and women's capacity to lead.

### **Areas of activity**

#### **Aid Activities: Gender 2009 (web page)**

<http://www.usaid.gov/country/pacific/gender.cfm>

AusAID is supporting a new women's leadership program in the Pacific region, in partnership with UNIFEM. The primary focus of the program is to improve women's leadership and access to decision making at a local and national level. The program will train women at a local level in governance and leadership issues, undertake research on the barriers and successful pathways to women's leadership, and develop communication and training materials for use in the region. Specifically, it aims to ensure:

- More women understand their rights and responsibilities and being active as citizens and leaders in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu;
- Support for women standing for elections is provided in up to 15 Pacific countries where UNIFEM operates (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu).
- Increased support for women's leadership and participation in government by broad and diverse sectors of Pacific societies including governments, civil society organisations, male advocates, the media, electoral bodies, and political parties
- An increase in government structures, operations and procedures that support women and men and are more accessible by women.

#### **Integrated Program for Women in Leadership and Decision Making (IPWLDM), East Timor**

[http://www.usaid.gov/country/cbrief.cfm?CountryID=911&DCon=5901\\_3683\\_7838\\_3843\\_6784&Region=EastAsia](http://www.usaid.gov/country/cbrief.cfm?CountryID=911&DCon=5901_3683_7838_3843_6784&Region=EastAsia)

AusAID is providing funding (\$400,000) through UNIFEM to support the development of a political vision of women as citizens and decision-makers. The current focus is on transformative leadership, politics and communities, including capacity building support to women parliamentarians, support for the women's wings of political parties and the development of a Gender Resource Centre. Men are also included in key activities.

### **Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)**

#### ***Policy***

#### **CIDA, n.d. Equality Between Men and Women and Democratic Governance, CIDA**

<http://www.pakdevolution.com/Tip-Sheets/Democratic-Governance.pdf>

One of CIDA's corporate objectives is 'to advance women's equal participation with men as decision-makers in shaping the sustainable development of their societies'. Equality between men and women is a cross-cutting theme in CIDA's democratic governance work, based on the following principles:

- Equal civic education, and a voting system that addresses women's time, seclusion, mobility and literacy constraints are important to the development of a strong female voting constituency.

- Gender balance among parliamentarians is important for reducing the isolation of women parliamentarians and enhancing their ability to navigate, develop networks and function effectively in the system.
- Equal opportunities for women and men to occupy leadership and decision-making roles in civil society contributes to advancing women's equal participation with men as decision makers.
- The participation of both women and men in policy development, budget and program decisions enhances the management of economic and social resources.

### **Investment in Equality between Men and Women (web page)**

<http://www.cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/JUD-31195111-KF2>

Equality between women and men programming by CIDA involved an annual investment of 4.68 percent of all CIDA's Official Development Assistance (ODA) between fiscal years 1998-1999 and 2005-2006 (this figure is not broken down further).

### ***Areas of activity***

#### **'Equality Between Men and Women: Results' (web page)**

<http://www.cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/JUD-3111046-KP5>

The Election Support Fund for the Occupied Territories of Palestine trained 80 female community activists and volunteers on legal issues to promote women's rights via the Palestinian Legislative Council. It also trained 25 women to assist in monitoring of the electoral process during Palestinian Legislative Council elections.

In Pakistan, the Women's Participation in Local Government Elections project mobilized and supported women voters and female local councilor candidates during the 2005 local elections. Through the project, 39,000 women were assisted in obtaining identity cards required to vote, 31,000 women voters were registered, and women candidates were encouraged to run for office. With support of this project, more women candidates ran for office, resulting in a reduction in the number of uncontested seats from 25 percent to 15 percent vis-à-vis the 2001 local elections.

In communities assisted by the Gender Equality Fund Phase II in Colombia, women's political participation and leadership at the local and state levels has increased: of the 7,200 women who received training on gender issues, public administration and citizenship, 1,150 were elected to regional assemblies, local planning councils and boards or as mayors and municipal councilors. More than 800 men also participated in the above training, creating an enabling environment for the development and adoption of local projects, policies and plans supportive of equality between women and men.

#### **'Africa-Canada Parliamentary Strengthening Program (ACPSP) Gender Equality Network' (web page)**

[http://www.parlcent.ca/africa/Gender/index\\_e.php](http://www.parlcent.ca/africa/Gender/index_e.php)

The \$9million Africa-Canada Parliamentary Strengthening Program supports African parliamentarians in their efforts towards openness, accountability, democratic representation, gender equality, and participation in the implementation of NEPAD. Working with Canada's Parliamentary Centre, African parliamentarians have created networks on poverty reduction, gender equality, anti-corruption and NEPAD to support and carry out specific initiatives. In Niger, a gender network for African parliamentarians worked with parliament and civil society to produce a handbook for women candidates on how to conduct an effective campaign. After

the 2005 national election, the number of women parliamentarians increased from 1 to 14 women, and 6 women were appointed to ministerial posts.

**'Supporting Women's Political Participation at the Provincial Level' (web page)**

<http://www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/projects-projets/institutions20.aspx>

CIDA is funding the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to conduct a program helping Afghan women to compete in the 2009 provincial council elections, then, once elected, to serve their constituents. In advance of the elections, the Institute organized one-week campaign schools for women Provincial Council (PC) candidates. Following the elections, the NDI will hold seven one-week orientation workshops for women elected to the PCs from each of the 34 provinces. The workshops will aim to build the participants' basic skills and knowledge for developing policy and oversight and will focus on the unique challenges women councillors face and identify issues of interest to vulnerable constituencies, including women.

***Evaluations and lessons learned***

**CIDA, 2008, Evaluation of CIDA's Performance in Gender Equality', Report prepared for CIDA Evaluation Department**

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/61/15/42174775.pdf>

This evaluation briefly indicates the type of activities and results achieved under CIDA's objective of '*advancing women's equal participation as decision-makers*'. Investments in this area aim primarily to build awareness of and generate action on GE issues; build organizational capacity (particularly of women's organizations); and strengthen civil society generally. Results across CIDA's programs suggest that such investments have both an intrinsic value and an *instrumental value* in that they are seen to lead to greater gender equality in access to resources and the distribution of developmental benefits. Women who benefit from capacity building opportunities, for example, may subsequently make gains in other areas of their professional lives that lead to their accessing decision-making roles. Significant gains in women's participation have made through the following programmes:

- CIDA's investments in Bolivia have generated significant improvements in women's political participation and greater attention to GE issues in local development, particularly at the municipal level.
- Promising results have been generated in Senegal through greater proportion of women in elected positions in rural, municipal and regional and national decision-making bodies.

**German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)**

***Policy***

**GTZ, 2009, Steps for Action to Promote Gender Equality, GTZ,**

<http://www.gtz.de/de/dokumente/gtz-en-steps-for-action-2009.pdf>

GTZ policy states that in order to overcome the obstacles that hinder women's political participation, efforts have to be made on several levels:

- 'Gender quotas can significantly increase women's participation in politics.
- Civic education aimed at women as voters can impart knowledge about their rights and duties as citizens and provide information about the parties and candidates so that women can make sound decisions.

- Identification and training of women aspirants by the political parties or NGOs is also necessary. In order to enhance their influence on decision-making processes in the political arena, women need to be considered as candidates for public and political offices. Political parties play a vital role when it comes to locating and supporting women political candidates.
- Training women candidates to design professional election campaigns, to better handle the media and present oneself well in public is also crucial.
- Networking is important in order to be well-connected with the extra-parliamentary women's agenda and women's lobby groups.
- Women's fundraising capabilities must be enhanced to cover campaign expenses.
- Child-care services can be offered in order to ease the double burden of waged work and household responsibilities.' (p. 89)

### ***Areas of activity***

#### **'Mauritania: Self-confident Local Women Councilors: GTZ Organises Training Sessions for Women Politicians' (web page)**

<http://gtz.de/en/presse/20920.htm>

Through this project, GTZ trained 280 women for their duties as local councilors. The training courses included sessions on developing strategies, formulating interests, forging alliances and conducting negotiations. They also looked at how local councils work, the rights and obligations of elected members, and communication.

#### **'Enhancing the role of rural women in politics and decision-making, India'**

See p. 90 in <http://www.gtz.de/de/dokumente/gtz-en-steps-for-action-2009.pdf>

This program aimed to facilitate capacity building and empowerment of women, women's groups and political actors at the community level through self-help groups and self-education in core social, economic and political skills. The training provided was targeted at female leaders of women groups and selected female members of village committees, and included sessions on in development planning at the local level, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), data collection from outreach and government programmes, social service facilities and government institutions. As a result, the political participation of women, both as voters and candidates, has increased significantly. The most significant achievement has been the introduction of gender-related and developmental topics on the political agenda through the creation of committees in areas such as food security, water and sanitation, health, education and service infrastructure.

This case demonstrates that 'training in the style of academic public management schools and the rather theoretical dissemination of the legal facts are unsuitable for these situations because they do not enable most women to actively participate in the political decision making process because of a lack of formal education and low literacy rate.' (p. 90)

#### **'Cambodian Women's Network: Enabling and promoting full participation in parliamentary election, Cambodia'**

See p. 91 in <http://www.gtz.de/en/themen/politische-reformen/883.htm>

This program aimed to increase women's participation in political decision-making processes through three methodological steps:

- A target group of 250 female parliamentarians, representatives of NGOs and trainers were sensitized to women's issues through special workshops and advanced

- training, where they learned how to represent gender issues. Almost 500 potential candidates were trained in leadership qualities and running election campaigns.
- The mass media, as well as national women's networks, were used to mainstream and disseminate "women's issues". The mass media were also used to lobby for more and higher positions of females on party lists.
  - National and local debates were organized to promote a national women's network. Targeted campaigns introduced the candidates to female and male voters.

## **Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)**

### ***Policy***

#### **Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007, 'Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation 2007–2009', NORAD**

<http://www.norad.no/en/Tools+and+publications/Publications/Publication+Page?key=129738>

Women's political empowerment is one of four strategic priority areas for Norway under the goal of 'redistribution of power and resources between men and women'. Education, awareness-raising and mobilisation are key elements in its strategy to increase women's political participation. The following measures and processes are promoted and supported:

- 'women's participation in political processes, including elections and other democratic processes, for example through support for voter registration, information on various quota systems, training and support for networks of women parliamentarians and election candidates;
  - gender mainstreaming of reform programmes for good governance at local level;
  - awareness raising campaigns and measures that highlight women's potential and ability as decision makers and political actors at all levels;
  - political parties' and popularly elected bodies' own initiatives to increase the political influence and participation of women at all levels;
  - networks between women in politics, administration and NGOs at local and national level;
  - regional and interregional/international networks and cooperation between women in politics;
  - mobilisation of men and boys in the promotion of gender equality, for example through knowledge generation and attitude campaigns on the benefits of gender equality, with the aim of changing patriarchal norms and gender role patterns;
  - recognition of women as equal participants in all phases of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and involvement of women in these efforts in line with the Norwegian Government's Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security.
  - The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with its mandate of promoting good governance, is a key multilateral cooperation partner in efforts to strengthen women's political participation, as is the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which has defined gender equality in democratic governance as one of four strategic areas.' (pp. 16-17)

## ***Evaluations and lessons learned***

### **Saltmarshe, D., and Kouvo, S., 2008, 'Evaluation of UNIFEM's Programme: Supporting Women's Leadership in Rebuilding Afghanistan 2002-2006', NORAD**

<http://www.norad.no/en/Tools+and+publications/Publications/Publication+Page?key=109804>

(please note it was not possible to locate the full text of this evaluation online, but a summary is provided on the NORAD website).

This multi-donor, multi-pronged programme in Afghanistan focused on building women's leadership in the reconstruction process. It aimed to strengthen women's capacity and opportunities to participate in politics and governance, promote gender justice and women's human rights, and increase women's economic opportunities (livelihoods). Norway is a considerable supporter to the programme, which has a total expenditure in the period 2002-2006 of USD 523.908.

Findings of the evaluation include:

- UNIFEM has contributed to women's participation in governance and peace-building in various ways: by mainstreaming gender into key laws and policies; serving as a source of ideas for issues such as violence against women; and strengthening women's leadership through support to key individuals in government, parliament and civil society.
- Constraints and challenges to the achievement of outcomes include: conflict has undermined gains; there has been low level of awareness and willingness to question established norms; there are limitations of projectised funding in a number of ways - good projects were discontinued as a result of changes in donor priorities, other projects were pushed through to meet deadlines and delivery targets.
- Reporting appears to take place more for purposes of accountability than to understand the process. In addition to a shortage of systematically structured qualitative and quantitative data to judge performance, there was an absence of baseline data against which to measure change.
- The focus on government rather than civil society underutilises an important resource.

### **Berntzen, E., 2008, 'End-Review of the Programme "Democratic Values and Political Management", Guatemala', NORAD Evaluation**

<http://www.norad.no/en/Tools+and+publications/Publications/Publication+Page?key=124769>

This programme aimed to promote processes for democratic change within political parties and the party system in Guatemala. A key aim was more effective participation of women in political party leadership, in party structures, and on party lists. Activities included: the promotion of closer relations between political parties and actors within civil society through consensus-reaching discussions; training of women party members; a focus on strengthening the leadership of women; promoting and supporting inter-party networks of women; and the distribution of material promoting women's participation. Preliminary statistics indicate that as a result of these activities, women's registration on the electoral register has increased more than men's.

## **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)**

### ***Areas of activity***

**'Theatre Plays and Advice Encourages Women Voters', Sudan (web page)**

<http://www.sida.se/English/Countries-and-regions/Africa/Sudan/Programmes-and-Projects/Theatre-plays-and-advice-encourages-women-voters/>

SIDA is supporting UNIFEM, which working to strengthen the role of women in Sudan, both as voters and candidates, in the run up to the 2010 election. UNIFEM is strengthening the role of non-governmental organization and supporting a cross-party women's forum in order to develop a common agenda that will ensure women's rights are protected after the election. The media is also an important aspect of this program: UNIFEM is working with the media to spread information in support of women's political participation and women's issues. This includes broadcasting dramas: In northern Sudan, it is working with Sudan's Ministry of Communication to produce and broadcast dramas, songs and sketches that highlight women's rights in general and their engagement in the election, both as voters and as candidates.

### **Women Gaining Political Power, Burkina Faso (web page)**

<http://www.sida.se/English/Countries-and-regions/Africa/Burkina-Faso/Program-och-projekt-/Women-gaining-political-power-in-Burkina-Faso/>

Since 2005, Sida has been financing the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to give women a stronger voice in Burkina Faso. This has involved education on the political process, and ongoing support to women elected onto municipal executive boards.

### ***Evaluations and lessons learned***

#### **Chesoni, A., Muigai, S., and Kanyinga, K., 2006, 'Promoting Women's Human Rights and Enhancing Gender Equality in Kenya', SIDA evaluation 06/25**

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/62/9/38113189.pdf>

The multi-donor program 'Promoting Women's Human Rights and Enhancing Gender Equality in Democratic Governance' aimed to protect and promote women's rights through: capacity building of women's civil society organizations (CSOs); support to CSOs through the Gender and Governance Program (GGP); and support to key government institutions to enhance the space for gender and governance. The findings of this evaluation of the program suggest greater need for: dialogue on the question of sustainability of initiatives for the advancement of women and gender equality; a combination of long term goals (attitudinal change) with short term opportunities offered by unexpected happenings (e.g. by-elections); and a corresponding need for rapid response funding mechanisms.

More specific recommendations for enhancing women's participation in governance include:

- Ensure the inclusion of organisations that represent women facing multiple forms of exclusion - in particular, women with disabilities, older women, girls and women living with HIV/AIDS. Multiple forms of marginalisation call for multiple interventions - in this case one size does not fit all.
- Provide sustained and continuous training, particularly to those holding leadership positions in women's rights CSOs, and their board members.
- The program needs to be flexible enough to benefit from unexpected opportunities (e.g. by-elections), which can offer a surprise advantage to women.
- There is need to target and address the gender mainstreaming of political parties, as well as focusing on law reform pertaining to political parties. Currently, political parties are bottlenecks for women; they need to be converted into facilitative institutions.
- Consider using an independent funding mechanism for prospective women leaders. (pp.7-8)

**Forti, S., and Lamien Ouando, A., 2008, 'National Democratic Institute's Programme on Strengthening Women's Participation in Political and Decentralisation Processes in Burkina Faso', SIDA Evaluation 2008:28**

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/53/50/42143529.pdf>

This evaluation of the Sida-supported program run by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) 'Strengthening Women's political participation in Political and Decentralisation processes in Burkina Faso' presents the following lessons learned:

- Increased numbers does not guarantee a *qualitative* and *substantive* impact on the reduction of structural and gender inequalities.
- While strengthening democratic processes through technical tools can have direct effects in improving the technical capacity and communication/dialogue skills of the participants to the training courses, 'there is a sense that programmes may risk merely polishing the façade of democracy without reaching concrete changes in terms of corruption, power relations, structural and gender inequalities unless these are more explicitly addressed.' (p.9)
- It is good practice to involve men in essentially women-focused projects. Since the advancement of women and Gender Equality is as much dependent on women as it is on men, it is important to consider men's changing roles and masculinities. (pp.9-10)

### **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)**

#### ***Policy***

**SDC, n.d., Gender Equality: A Key for Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development, SDC**

Available via <http://www.sdc.admin.ch/en/Home/Themes/Gender>

This policy states that: 'unequal power relations and participation in decision-making between women and men are amongst the structural causes of social and political instability that generates poverty. Enabling women and men to participate equally in governance structures to define their development priorities and strategies, will make a critical contribution to addressing underlying inequalities.' (p.3)

#### ***Areas of activity***

**Grassroots Women's Leadership Project, Bangladesh (web page)**

[http://www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/bangladesh/en/Home/Local\\_Governance/RUPANTAR](http://www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/bangladesh/en/Home/Local_Governance/RUPANTAR)

This ongoing project aims to ensure the participation of women in local decision making processes and local development. It involves training poor rural women on leadership and negotiation skills, increasing their knowledge and awareness on laws and rights, and facilitating their participation in local development activities.

### **SDC, 2009, Evaluation of SDC's Performance in Mainstreaming Gender Equality**

[http://www.dsc.admin.ch/en/Home/Activities/Evaluation/Ongoing\\_evaluations/SDC\\_s\\_Performance\\_in\\_Mainstreaming\\_Gender](http://www.dsc.admin.ch/en/Home/Activities/Evaluation/Ongoing_evaluations/SDC_s_Performance_in_Mainstreaming_Gender)

This evaluation briefly describes (but does not evaluate) the program 'Supporting Free and Fair Elections in Pakistan' (a multi-donor initiative managed through a basket fund). This program aimed to increase citizens' participation, particularly women's, in the political process, and to address informal institutions forming a barrier to their participation. Specific activities to increase the participation of women as voters, and to ensure greater recognition of women's role in election and political processes, included:

- Developing and disseminating printed materials on women's political and electoral rights;
- Organising and facilitating meetings in union council, particularly in areas which are resistant to women's political participation;
- Organising training for CSO's in conducting programs on women's political and electoral rights;
- Organising and facilitating community theatres in selected areas, addressing women's political and electoral rights;
- Organising discussion forums in universities to mobilize educated women;
- Developing documentaries, theme songs, public messages and discussion shows for electronic media.

### **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**

#### ***Areas of activity***

#### **'USAID Supports Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment' (web page)**

<http://www.usaid.gov/press/factsheets/2009/fs090306.html>

Increasing women's political participation and leadership capacity are key ingredients for ensuring that women's needs are recognized and taken into account in policy formation and decision-making.

- 'The civil society-led campaign in Colombia, "Más Mujeres, Más Política" (More Women, More Politics) aimed to increase the participation of women in government. The campaign developed draft legislation to assure representation of women on party ballots at the national, departmental and municipal levels. In addition, USAID trained over 3,000 women on issues related to political parties, including their management and operations.
- USAID programs increased women's political representation in Bolivia by providing women with the skills necessary to run a successful campaign and be elected to political office. Working with the Association of Women Municipal Council Members, USAID helped women leaders introduce a draft law to combat violence against elected women representatives, a persistent problem that prevents more women from running for office and from continuing in that capacity once elected.
- Leadership must start early; a USAID public-private partnership has recently been initiated in Egypt, Honduras, India, Malawi, Tanzania and Yemen. The goal is to promote 10 to 14-year-old girl leaders in vulnerable communities by:
  - cultivating opportunities to practice leadership skills;
  - creating public-private partnerships to promote girls' leadership; and
  - enhancing global knowledge to implement and promote girls' leadership programs.'

### **'Women in Development: Cross-cutting programs' (web page)**

[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/cross-cutting\\_programs/wid/USAID\\_supports\\_gender.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/USAID_supports_gender.html)

- USAID supports the greater involvement of women in politics in Cambodia. In 2007, significant advances included a doubling of women at all local levels, increases in the number of women political candidates, and improved placement rank on the candidate list for the commune elections in 2007. The number of women councilors elected doubled as a result of capacity building and skill training.
- USAID sponsored post-electoral roundtable discussions in eight regions of Peru focusing on the participation of women in politics. These discussions informed concrete proposals for legislative reforms to increase opportunities for women to compete for elected positions.
- In Somalia, USAID provided assistance to civil society organizations to lobby for increased participation of women in political processes. In South and Central Somalia this led to the increased participation of women in the National Reconciliation Congress and the inclusion of women's issues in the agenda.

### **'Leadership Caucus Empowers Women', Afghanistan (web page)**

<http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/Article.852.aspx>

USAID provided training to six female Afghan ministerial staff to establish a forum to promote women's issues and encourage women's leadership at the government level. The women attended a week-long U.S.-funded leadership and management training course in Washington, D.C. The new group will work to overcome barriers limiting women's contributions to their country's economic and political development. The training provided the opportunity to learn about leadership, including how to develop an effective leadership style in a challenging environment.

### **'Women Mobilize for Election in Sierra Leone' (web page)**

[http://www.usaid.gov/sl/sl\\_new/news/women&elections.htm](http://www.usaid.gov/sl/sl_new/news/women&elections.htm)

This USAID-sponsored democracy program, managed by NDI, focused on increasing the participation of women in politics through activities such as; workshops focused on identifying voter needs, developing a campaign message, fund raising, budget skills, and training volunteers; encouraging political parties to award more significant party positions to women and to supports female candidates; organising town hall meetings to provide information about the electoral process; and voter education.

### **'Country Snapshot: Georgia and Political Participation' (web page)**

[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/cross-cutting\\_programs/wid/snapshot/ee/georgia/geo\\_dem.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/snapshot/ee/georgia/geo_dem.html)

USAID Georgia's program uses the following activities to foster women's participation at all levels of the political process:

- Training a select group of women from Parliament, executive agencies, labor unions, NGOs, local councils, businesses, and media, especially mid-level professionals who already have demonstrated leadership in their fields. In addition, support to women's groups.

- Support to 'Gender Mobilizers' Groups' working in regional areas. These groups help rural women identify and prioritize their concerns and then work with local governments and businesses to address these concerns.
- A "Women in Politics" campaign achieved notable success, with 26 female candidates in seven cities elected to office.

### 3. Multilateral donors

**UN-INSTRAW and Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR), 2009, 'Strengthening Women's Leadership and Participation in Politics and Decision Making Process in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia', UN-INSTRAW, Santa Domingo**  
<http://www.womenpoliticalparticipation.org/upload/publication/publication2.pdf>

This mapping outlines the range of activities undertaken by various multilateral donors as part of the project "Strengthening women's leadership and participation in politics and decision making process in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia", initiated by the United Nations' International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) and the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR). It presents the barriers and opportunities for advancing women's participation in each of the three countries.

**UNDP, 2007, 'Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening II Mid-term Evaluation Report', UNDP, New York**  
<http://sdnhq.undp.org/governance/parls/docs/GPPS%20Mid-Term%20Evaluation%20Final.pdf>

The Global program on Parliamentary Strengthening emphasized gender mainstreaming in its national, regional, and global activities. Examples of key field activities include:

- An international colloquium of women and men parliamentarians from Arab and Mediterranean countries, focused on women's political participation.
- A comprehensive programme of capacity-building and exchanges for the first large group of female deputies ever elected in Niger.
- The Parliament and Conflict Reduction global project paid special attention to the gendered aspects of conflicts and ways to ensure parliaments properly address women's needs in conflict recovery.

**UNDP, 2007, 'Quick Entry Points to Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in Democratic Governance Clusters', UNDP New York**  
[http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/GenderGovPr\\_EntryPoints\\_1.pdf](http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/GenderGovPr_EntryPoints_1.pdf)

This report presents a range of recommendations for entry points into supporting women's political participation and strengthening responsive government institutions. These include: training members and staff of electoral bodies in gender analysis; conducting research or disseminating data on gender equality issues; developing political parties' capacity to analyse issues from a gender perspective; supporting quotas; strengthening the capacity of women's groups to monitor government commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment; and networking with women's groups and allies in the political arena to share experiences across countries.

**UNIFEM, 2006, 'Beyond Numbers: Supporting Women's Political Participation and Promoting Gender Equality in Post-Conflict Governance in Africa: Review of the Role of the United Nations Development Fund for Women', UNIFEM**

[http://www.womenwarpeace.org/webfm\\_send/99](http://www.womenwarpeace.org/webfm_send/99)

This report describes UNIFEM's experience in supporting the political participation of women in post-conflict governance. It argues that in general, women's participation remains an afterthought in peace negotiations and post-conflict governance, despite UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the advocacy of numerous organizations.

- 'Women tend to face specific, practical challenges as a group and as individuals to participating in peace and governance processes, including a lack of physical security, time and mobility constraints, and family obligations.
- Key individuals—negotiators, facilitators, and others in leadership positions—can act as catalysts to help women secure important advancements.
- With support, women can overcome challenges to utilize the “window of opportunity” afforded by the post-conflict transition period and secure important legal gains for gender equality—the most effective of which are formal structures or mechanisms for women's participation, such as quotas.
- Without accompanying enforcement measures, official structures and mechanisms for gender equality are often overlooked, disregarded, or not implemented by government and political party leaders. Thus women may remain underrepresented in leadership positions, even when the legal mandate exists for their inclusion.
- The fact that some women attain leadership positions is no guarantee of greater gender awareness, and ongoing support and capacity-building for gender-sensitive governance is required for men and women in elected and appointed posts'. (p. 7)

The report recommends that beyond the challenge of bringing greater numbers of women to the peace table and into leadership positions, it is critical to build the capacity of post-conflict governance institutions to promote gender equality. UNIFEM and other groups are increasingly reaching out to male decision-makers in mainstream post-conflict institutions to raise awareness of gender issues and strategies to promote gender equality. There are several areas of post-conflict governance programming where support for women and the inclusion of a gender perspective is weak or nonexistent. These include promoting women's participation in local government, strengthening initiatives for transparency and anti-corruption campaigns, monitoring the elections process, supporting internal democratization within political parties, and better reporting on gender equality issues in the media.

**UNIFEM, 2007, Making Democracy Work for Women: Initial Experiences from 10 UNDEF Funded Projects, UNIFEM**

[http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/MakingDemocracyWorkForWomen\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/MakingDemocracyWorkForWomen_eng.pdf)

This report presents the experience of projects funded by UNDEF and managed by UNIFEM to enhance women's participation. These projects tend to focus on capacity building, building networks, communications and advocacy, and raising awareness.

**UNDP, 2007, 'Electoral Financing to Advance Women's Political Participation: A Guide for UNDP Support', UNDP, New York**

[http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/GenderGovPr\\_Elections\\_3.pdf](http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/GenderGovPr_Elections_3.pdf)

This report argues that money, or the lack of it, partly explains why women are so under-represented as legislators and ministers. It sets out some entry points for promoting women

in campaigns and elections (see p. 29), which include: training candidates, advocates, and the media; helping women access networks; and doing research on campaign financing.

#### 4. Additional case studies and lessons learned

**Lyytikäinen, M., 2009, 'Building Inclusive Post-Conflict Governance: How the EU Can Support Women's Political Participation', Initiative for Peacebuilding, International Alert, London**

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3487>

This paper from the Initiative for Peacebuilding argues the EU should help increase women's participation in post-conflict contexts by consolidating opportunities created by peace negotiations and increasing women's access to political spaces. Practical measures include proportional representation, quotas, training for female politicians, and steps to increase women's voting. The report recommends mobilising the support of men at all levels, supporting more research and data collection (including the integration of gender indicators into M&E), and ensuring a commitment to women's participation is reflected in all the EU's own policy, programming and practice.

**NDI, 2008, 'Assessing Women's Political Party Programs: Best Practices and Recommendations', National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, Washington**

<http://www.accessdemocracy.org/files/Assessing%20Women's%20Political%20Party%20Programs%20-%20Best%20Practices%20and%20Recommendations.pdf>

This National Democratic Institute (NDI) paper explores how policymakers can increase women's political participation in developing countries by analysing the progress of its women's political participation programmes in Morocco, Indonesia, Serbia, and Nepal. While there has been a definite increase in women's participation, there has not been a corresponding increase in the number of female political leaders. Future programming must focus on preparing women to take on these leadership roles.

The most effective programmes were those that reached across demographic and social boundaries, provided targeted capacity building, and provided opportunities for women to work together. Successful programmes included:

- Providing skills and leadership training for women
- Creating opportunities for women to work together across party boundaries
- Promoting intra-party reform in the areas that are boundaries to women's participation
- Empowering women to work together, build professional networks and forge mentoring relationships
- Engaging youth in programming that challenges existing, patriarchal leadership norms

Women's political participation has increased, but future programming must address the persistent socio-cultural barriers that prevent women from achieving political posts. This requires programmes that challenge existing perceptions of the role of women, promote partnerships involving both men and women, and address the structural issues that prevent female self-sufficiency. Recommendations include:

- More efforts to cultivate female role models and facilitate opportunities for women to network and engage in advocacy.
- Helping women manage personal and political roles and responsibilities.
- Greater integration of men into efforts to promote female participation.

- Creating opportunities for income generation and political financing for women who want to enter into politics.
- Increasing rural and grassroots outreach programmes in order to combat issues relating to illiteracy, poverty and lack of civic education.

**Castillejo, C., 2009, 'Women's Political Participation in Sierra Leone', FRIDE Working Paper 83**

<http://www.fride.org/publication/617/womens-political-participation-and-influence-in-sierra-leone>

This study presents opportunities and challenges in strengthening women's political participation in Sierra Leone. It concludes that donors' interest in, and support for, women's political participation should not just be confined to election periods (as is currently the case). Rather, donor support should also be aimed at building the capacity of women who are already in political office, as well as of young women and non-elite women who have the potential to be future political leaders.

While the majority of the support for women in politics has been to help them get elected, what appears to be lacking is support to women once they are elected – to enable them to perform effectively, take leadership positions and influence policy. Women politicians need training on their role and on how to operate effectively, especially given the significant barriers and discrimination they face. There does not seem to be any long term support provided to prepare women leaders who could run in future elections. "This short term focus on elections ignores the fact that what women are able to do when they have power is equally important as getting them there, and that transforming the position of women within political institutions, and the ability of these institutions to deliver for women, is a long term process. It appears that support is needed in the form of awareness raising outside election periods, for example women's organisations working on women's political participation report that they need funds well before elections in order to do the ground work, as well as sustained funds afterwards to follow up." (p.13)

A similar pattern emerges in support for voter education. Campaigns to educate voters about their role and the importance of choosing candidates only happen around election time. But transforming citizens' ideas on what they should expect from politicians, how to hold politicians to account, and how to make choices based on policy, is a long term process that involves transforming attitudes and beliefs.

**Related GSDRC Helpdesk Reports**

**GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report, 2009, 'Gender and Elections in Afghanistan'**

<http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD616.pdf>

This report presents literature on the barriers and opportunities for female participation in elections in Afghanistan and lessons learnt from gender work in other countries' elections commissions, focusing particularly on women's political and electoral participation.

**GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report, 2009, 'Quotas for Women's Representation in Africa'** <http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD515.pdf>

This report considers the key success factors in moving towards quota systems for women's participation in political decision-making in Africa. In particular, the forms "women's parliaments" have taken, and their role in advancing quota systems.

**GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report, 2009, 'Cross-party Caucuses'**

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=504>

This report considers the international experience in cross-party caucuses in Parliament, especially those of marginalized communities. In particular, how cross-party parliamentary forums/caucuses work in other countries and what lessons do they have to offer. Many of the resources are concerned with experience of women's caucuses.

**GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report, 2009, 'Gender Equality in Parliamentary Strengthening and Electoral Support'**

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=474>

This report examines the literature on gender equality in parliamentary strengthening and electoral support and summarizes the main issues and debates.

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**Websites visited**

BRIDGE, Pathways of Women's empowerment, DAC Evaluation Resource Centre, iKnowpolitics, Siyanda, CIDA, SIDA, SDC, NORAD, USAID, UNDP, UNIFEM, World Bank, GSDRC, Google, NDI, USAID, AusAID.

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