

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Meeting the Challenge — Women In Leadership

Women face many obstacles in their quest to become equal partners with men in the process of democratic development and economic growth. Global statistics show that women are notably under-represented as voters, political leaders and elected officials. However, there is a growing recognition that women's participation is essential to the inclusive nature and representative character of democratic institutions worldwide.

Around the world, women are finding their voices as they assert their rights. International treaties and agreements are helping to create a legal and normative framework for equality and inclusion. NDI is helping women acquire the tools to engage in the political process, with programs that help create an environment in which women can advocate on matters of policy, campaign effectively for political office, be elected, govern skillfully, and participate meaningfully in every facet of civic and political life.

Although in many countries legal obstacles to women's political participation have been lifted, women often do not understand their rights. Even in countries with an active civil society, women do not always advocate for inclusion in the policy arena, or for constitutional changes to ensure their legal equality. At election time, many traditional voter education programs fail to reach women for reasons that include disproportionately high rates of illiteracy, and social constraints and familial responsibilities that prevent women from leaving the home to participate in community activities. This often translates into lower rates of turnout for women voters, even though

it is well known that when women do turn out to vote, they will elect sympathetic candidates, frequently (though not always) women.

For many women who lack the confidence and special skills to effectively run for office, candidate training in such skills as campaign strategy, message development, media relations and constituent outreach is an important first step.

Political parties in many countries have patriarchal structures that do not encourage the recruitment of women into leadership positions or as candidates onto party lists. Women often find their efforts to break into politics marginalized by the failure of parties to support their viability as candidates and to appeal to female voters who would help to elect them. Advocates of women's political participation must engage with male party leaders to win their commit-

ment to increasing the role and visibility of women, both as party candidates and as voters.

Once women gain elected office, they often are challenged by unfamiliar procedures and an unwelcoming, if not hostile, environment. They find their effectiveness as legislators limited by being marginalized, assigned to work on "women's issues," and viewed as tokens within the political establishment. Many women have found that forming women's caucuses helps not only to promote women's interests, but also to break down barriers that exist across party lines.

NDI has conducted more than 50 programs for women in more than 30 countries. On the pages that follow, we highlight three of NDI's current programs that demonstrate ways in which women are working to overcome challenges to their political participation.



Nepali women discuss strategies to strengthen their roles within their political parties. For more on NDI's Nepal program, see page 2.

YEMEN

A Growing Role for Women in Politics

Yemen's constitution grants women full political rights, equal to those of men. Women can vote, run for office, and hold ministerial and higher positions — and they do, but only in small numbers. There is only one female parliamentarian and women have not traditionally played an active role in political life. Their absence results most often from their lack of political experience and the failure of male leaders to reach out to women.

In 2001, 36 women were elected to Yemen's newly established local councils. They come from all sectors of Yemeni society, but face numerous challenges. None have held public office before. Many are the only women in their council, some the only female councilor in their region. Several are from tribal areas of the country and are fully covered, including their faces. All are literate, and are deeply committed to local development and to increasing women's political participation.

Since assuming office, these women have requested assistance with networking, gaining support from their male

council colleagues and committee chairmen, creating realistic programs for their community and, most important, understanding the newly drafted laws that established their positions. NDI brought them together, along with their male council colleagues, in a series of planning sessions to develop strategies to address these needs. A steering committee, made up of both men and women councilors, was established to assist in the long term planning and implementation of assistance programs. Through these efforts, NDI also involved the councils in the national effort to increase the registration of women voters for the April 2003 parliamentary elections.

With NDI's assistance, a number of local groups fielded over 10,000 observers to monitor voting procedures on election day in April. Almost one third of these monitors were women. In the months leading up to the elections, NDI also offered training specifically for potential women candidates and their campaign staff. As a result of a national campaign, women now make up



NDI sponsored a training for female voter registration monitors, since women and men register to vote separately in Yemen.

approximately 42 percent of the total eligible voters in Yemen.

While these elections saw only one woman re-elected to parliament, women activists have begun to prepare for the local council elections in 2006.

Despite the mixed results, Fatima Hureibi, a local council member from Sana'a, believes opportunities for women are improving. "Men's knowledge and women's knowledge is not always the same," she said. "We often know the needs of our family and community better than the men do. Yemen needs us both."

NEPAL

Women Activists Forge Ahead

The past year has been a tumultuous one for Nepal. Over the course of 12 months, a state of emergency was declared, local government dissolved, the King dismissed the parliament and snap elections were called and then abruptly cancelled. At present, the King has assumed executive powers and the country is operating without elected government at all levels.

The escalation of attacks by rebel Maoists against political leaders, schoolteachers, businesses and government offices has impacted an

already volatile political environment. In rural areas, political activists have been threatened and harassed by the Maoists and political meetings have been disrupted.

Despite the deteriorating political environment, women are struggling to be engaged in the process, and are poised to contribute to the advancement of democracy once the security situation is stabilized. Since 2001, NDI has been working with women political party activists at the grassroots to help them organize, campaign for elections and to strengthen their

parties' outreach to constituents. In the course of these programs, NDI engaged thousands of women activists, who even now, despite security threats, continue to organize and play a leading role in the political process.

Many of these women are conducting meetings quietly, and sometimes travel long distances late at night to meet with their colleagues so that they can find ways to maintain women's involvement in the political process. Although elections have been postponed indefinitely and the Maoists continue to target political leaders,

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Increasing Women's Representation in Local Government

Historic presidential elections in February 2000 led to Senegal's first-ever change of power through the ballot box and ushered in a period of democratic reforms, which included significant gains for women. A constitutional referendum in January 2001 included the granting of equal property rights to women.

While President Abdoulaye Wade appointed an unprecedented number of women to the highest levels of government, representation by women at the national and local levels still remains low. However, these advances have stimulated a growing demand to increase women's involvement in politics and generated a new focus on women's public policy issues.

The nomination of candidates in Senegal is controlled by the political parties. Therefore, the first step towards changing the status of women was for the parties to accept, and then support, the idea that women have a significant role to play in the party as leaders, candidates, and ultimately, as elected representatives.

In advance of the May 2002 local elections, NDI launched a program to help party leaders develop practical steps to increase the role and responsibilities of women within their parties.

Agreements reached with the parties included a commitment to place women candidates higher on party lists at election time.

NDI organized an open forum for party leaders to draft action plans for women's participation, and followed up with specialized campaign training for more than 2,100 aspiring women candidates. Of these, more than 1,700 were ultimately nominated by their parties to run for office.

In addition, an assessment revealed that women faced additional obstacles to being effective candidates and elected officials. Some of these were cultural, in a social environment that did not support the idea of women participating in politics, and some were self-imposed, in that women simply lacked the confidence or skills to be effective in these positions. In response, NDI's candidate training program emphasized many of the techniques needed to effectively run for office, such as public speaking, organizing a campaign, message development and constituency outreach.

More than 1,500 women ultimately won seats in the local elections. The vast majority had never held office before, so to help these women transition into their new roles as elected officials, NDI provided almost one

thousand of them with an introduction to local governance and other technical skills. Women from civil society groups were invited to participate in these sessions in order to deepen the linkages between citizens and their elected officials.

Progress still remains to be made in increasing women's representation in the Senegalese parliament and in top regional posts such as governors. At the same time, for the strides it has made in women's representation at the local and cabinet levels, Senegal continues to set a positive example for other countries in the region.



NDI/Senegal Resident Representative Christiane Pelchat (left) attends an NDI workshop on local government candidate training in Dakar.

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women continue to organize their parties at the local level and call on the government to hold elections.

More women are now equipped with important skills to campaign, organize and support Nepal's fragile democratic institutions. Without elected officials at any level of government, these women activists remind villagers and national party leaders that women are ready to take the lead in advancing democracy in Nepal.

"NDI was the first organization to train us about roles and responsibilities, and because of NDI's training we have built great deal of confidence. We will never forget NDI."

NDI has been conducting programs to increase women's political participation in Nepal since 1997. Programs include conducting the first-ever opinion polling of women within political parties. More than

1,100 female elected representatives were polled from within their own parties about their experiences campaigning and holding elected office.

In late December, NDI offered 80 women political party leaders an opportunity to increase their knowledge of running campaigns, delivering messages to the public, designing local projects and monitoring public funds. These party "master trainers" are expected to train over 4,000 potential female candidates for the next local elections.

2002 DEMOCRACY AWARDS

NDI Presents 2002 Democracy Awards to Oswaldo Payá and the OAS

On September 30, NDI presented its 15th annual W. Averell Harriman Democracy Awards to Oswaldo Payá of the Varela Project in Cuba, and the Organization of American States (OAS). The Awards Dinner was attended by over 700 guests, including members of the diplomatic corps, the U.S. Congress and Administration, the media, the democracy policy community, and supporters and friends of NDI.

The Cuban government denied Payá permission to travel to Washington for the award event. He was honored *in absentia* for his courageous leadership of the Varela Project, an initiative calling for a referendum on open elections, freedom of speech, freedom for political prisoners and free enterprise in Cuba.

The OAS was recognized for its growing role in promoting and defending democracy in the hemisphere. In particular, NDI honored the leadership of OAS Secretary General César Gaviria. In presenting the award to Mr. Gaviria, NDI Chairman Madeleine Albright praised the OAS for its transformation into a force for democracy under Gaviria's leadership.

The highlight of the evening was the premiere screening of a new documentary, *A Patriot's Path to Democracy: Oswaldo Payá and the Varela Project*. Produced by NDI and filmed largely in Havana, the documentary features rare footage of Payá, as well as interviews with Nobel Peace Laureate Oscar Arias, then-Czech President Vaclav Havel, Spanish President Jose Maria Aznar, and Madeleine Albright.

The film was introduced by Genaro Arriagada, coordinator of the "No" Campaign, which defeated General Augusto Pinochet in the 1988 Chilean plebiscite. Arriagada received the Harriman Award for his leadership of the Campaign, which was an inspiration for the Varela Project.

In December, Payá received permission to travel to Europe to receive the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. Before returning to Cuba, Payá visited Washington D.C., where NDI held a special ceremony to personally present him with his Award.

Since March, over 80 human rights and democracy advocates have been arrested in a wave of repression by the Cuban

government. Among those arrested were journalists, independent trade union members and 45 Varela Project organizers. In secret court proceedings, the activists received prison terms of up to 28 years.



Top: In a January ceremony, NDI Chairman Madeleine Albright presents the Institute's 2002 Democracy Award to Oswaldo Payá.



Bottom: Madeleine Albright with César Gaviria (right) and Genaro Arriagada (left) during last September's Awards dinner.

TRIBUTE TO A BRAVE YOUNG DEMOCRAT



Miljan Medenica, one of Serbia's up-and-coming political leaders and a dedicated staff member in NDI's Belgrade office, passed away at the age of 25 on November 21. He had been suffering from non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

Miljan first attended an NDI training session in 1998 when he was a member of the youth section of his party, the Civic Alliance of Serbia. Less than a year later, as president of Civic Youth, he helped to found a coalition of young political party activists opposed to the authoritarian rule of Slobodan Milosevic.

In 2000, Miljan joined NDI's team of Regional Trainers, working in Serbia at a time when that country was closed to other NDI international staff. Miljan was one of 12 party

activists who brought basic political training to the opposition in more than 50 towns and cities throughout Serbia. Working conditions were difficult. Power outages meant that they often trained by candlelight in rooms without heat. Many were detained by police, and all knew the danger they faced when they crossed the border for monthly meetings with NDI staff temporarily based in Hungary. Together, the 12 trained more than 5,000 party members in message development and door-to-door canvassing. This "army" of trained volunteers was critical in the electoral campaign that defeated Slobodan Milosevic.

On October 5, 2000, Milosevic was removed from office in a spectacular and peaceful popular uprising. In the same election, Miljan became a member of the local council of Belgrade. He continued to work half time for NDI, training

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Elections Bring Historic Change in Kenya

After 30 years of political dominance by President Daniel Arap Moi and his KANU party, Kenya's political opposition united to secure a landslide victory in presidential and parliamentary elections last December. Mwai Kibaki of the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC), a coalition of leading opposition parties, won the presidential race, and the NARC won a significant majority in parliament.

The peaceful conduct of the elections and ready acceptance of the outcome surprised most analysts, many of whom had predicted the same levels of violence, fraud or irregularities in the electoral process that have marked Kenya's past elections.

Throughout the pre-election campaign, the NARC's message of teamwork, an end to authoritarianism and corruption, and the need for a greater balance of power between parliament and the presidency resonated with rural and city voters alike. In addition, NARC's ability to reach consensus on a single presidential candidate contributed to its election victory.

In the lead-up to the elections, NDI conducted a series of activities with Kenya's political parties. These included providing technical assistance to the NARC on internal mechanisms necessary to maintain and strengthen multi-party coalitions, and helping both ruling and opposition parties develop programs to guard against election violence.

NDI helped establish Inter-Party Provincial Committees (IPPCs) in a number of provinces to promote dialogue, debates and tolerance among political parties. Attention was focused on "hotspot" districts where violence frequently occurred. Party leaders and candidates, religious figures, local government officials and others met to discuss the causes of violence and insecurity in the electoral process, and,

in an atmosphere of growing mutual trust, developed practical strategies for minimizing inter-party tensions. Under the auspices of the IPPCs, members of all the major parties signed on to a "code of conduct" in each province, and agreed to the creation of an Electoral Peace Charter.

"NDI's work to train and consult the young leaders of our party has been exceptional and extensive... Training of NARC youth on non-violent election monitoring strategies is a primary concern of this party..."

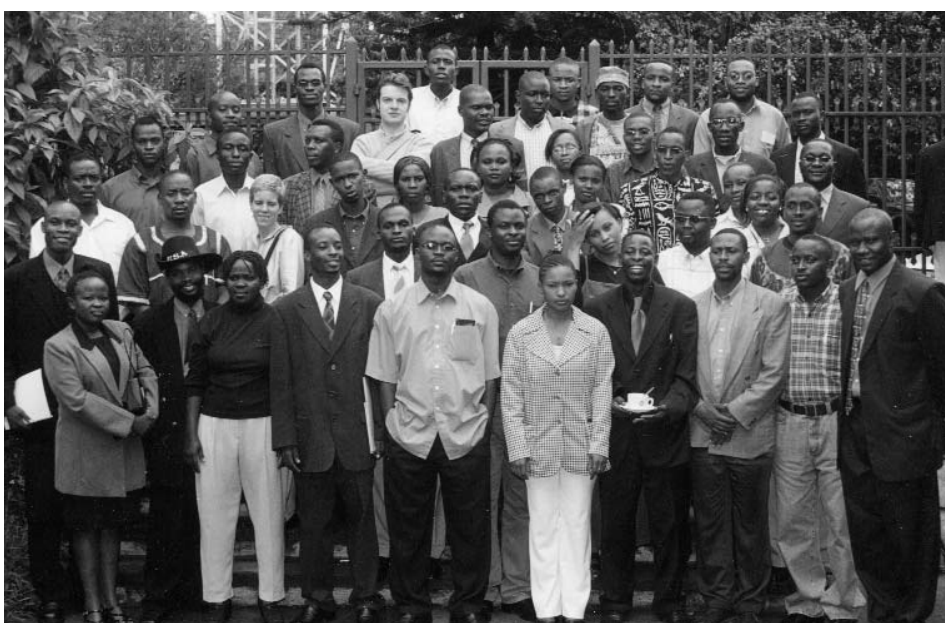
Hon. Moody Awori, NARC

NDI also worked with the parties to help them enhance the role of women and youth in the election. A Youth Political Leadership Academy was established to bring together groups of young activists from different political parties, especially in violence-prone areas. NDI helped women in one party create an informal coalition to lobby their party leadership to nominate women as candidates and to support them in the primaries.

In an effort to decrease tensions between the parties and the election authorities, the Electoral Commission of Kenya consulted with political parties on contentious issues such as the recruitment and training of official polling agents; voter registration; the inspection of ballot papers, boxes and materials; the training of party poll-watchers; the availability of voter registers; and electoral security and violence. They were able to reach agreement on many of these topics, which also helped the elections take place in a relatively violence-free environment.

To assist in the formation and development of the NARC, NDI sponsored the visits to Kenya by South African and Ghanaian experts who consulted with opposition leaders on coalition-building. These consultations assisted efforts of the NARC to maintain cohesion throughout the election period.

NDI plans to continue working with the political parties in Kenya to foster dialogue between the parties, strengthen party structures and assist communication and decision-making efforts by the new coalition government.



Participants in the Youth Political Leadership Academy learned non-violent ways to be involved in the electoral process.

Citizens and Parliament Collaborate to Monitor Government Spending

In order to qualify for debt relief under the World Bank's Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, developing countries are required to develop a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), detailing their strategies for economic growth and poverty reduction.

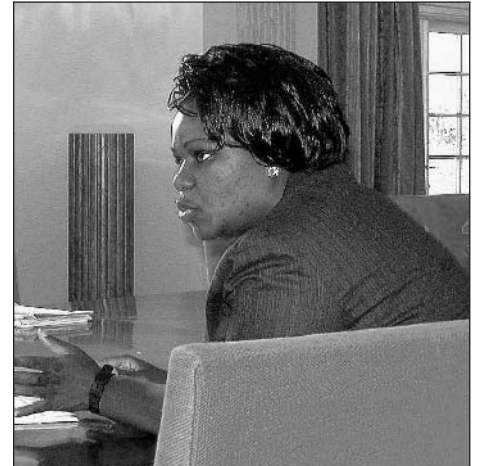
Concerned that the legislature and civil society could be left out of the process of implementing the PRSP, NDI designed its current program in Malawi around monitoring and overseeing the national budget and ensuring the delivery of key services.

In May 2002, for the first time in the country's multiparty history, four civil society networks, representing more than 80 organizations, testified at a public hearing before the Budget and Finance Committee. They presented information regarding government performance in key sectors of the economy including health, education and agriculture, which was later used in the Committee's formal report to Parliament.

This unprecedented hearing was the culmination of more than a year of collaboration between the legislature

and civil society. Together, the Budget and Finance Committee and civic groups had agreed on the priority areas regarded as essential for poverty reduction, and lobbied the government to budget adequately for these expenditures. They also agreed on a process by which dozens of civic monitors would fan out across the country, obtaining data on spending for, and outputs from, government programs at the grassroots level. The networks subsequently reported their findings back to the relevant parliamentary committees, providing information vital to analyzing the government's budget.

Dozens of civic monitors obtained information and comparative data from: health workers at district hospitals, local clinics and health training institutions; education specialists at district education offices, primary schools and almost all teacher training institutions; and extension services supervisors in all three regions of Malawi. NDI helped the civic groups overcome the challenges of tracking government expenditures by making economists available to design questionnaires and analyze data, and providing practical support to conduct the surveys.



Doreen Sanje of Malawi's National AIDS Commission testifies at a recent Parliamentary Health Committee hearing. NDI supported this and other hearings as part of its PRSP oversight program.

In a country where until recently parliamentary committees rarely met, committee hearings had never been held and civil society had never testified before parliament, this collaboration between the Budget and Finance Committee and civic organizations provided the basis for an ongoing program to monitor the budget and the implementation of the PRSP — the first of its kind in Malawi, and one of the first in the region.

NDI is also conducting programs related to the PRSP in Nigeria, Niger and Georgia.

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party activists for the December 2000 parliamentary elections.

In 2001, Miljan worked as press officer for the first woman mayor of Belgrade, Radmila Hrustanovic. In December of that year, Natasa Micic became the first woman Speaker of the Serbian Parliament. Miljan was recruited as her Chief of Staff. He drafted communications plans, wrote speeches and developed initiatives to open the parliament to citizens. He was the driving force behind the creation of a virtual library in the parliament, a project that NDI continues to support.

While on a trip to Stockholm where he was studying the

Swedish electoral system, Miljan became ill. On his return to Belgrade he was admitted to the hospital and diagnosed with cancer. Throughout the summer and fall of 2002 Miljan maintained a positive outlook and continued to look to the future. He fought the disease to the end.

It was that same fighting spirit and vision that made Miljan so valuable in the struggle against tyranny. We will always honor his memory and be inspired by his tireless efforts for a democratic Serbia.

Paul Rowland
NDI Country Director
Serbia

Citizen Participation Ecuador

Allegations of electoral fraud, coup attempts, economic hardship, endemic corruption and political divisions have undermined public confidence in democratic institutions and practices in Ecuador.

In an effort to re-engage citizens, particularly youth, in the country's political process, Ecuadorian civic leaders launched a nationwide civic organization, *Participación Ciudadana Ecuador* (Citizen Participation Ecuador – PCE).

With NDI's assistance, PCE leaders developed a strategic plan and organized a national network of volunteers to conduct election monitoring activities in the lead-up to October's national elections. NDI introduced them to *Acuerdo de Lima* — a regional network of domestic monitoring groups — which brings together leaders from around the continent to share their experiences in campaign finance monitoring, volunteer recruitment and developing candidate codes of conduct.

Within a few months, PCE was attracting national attention. It undertook an evaluation of the quality of the voters' lists and monitored campaign spending. By August, PCE had secured the commitment of virtually all the presidential candidates to sign on to a code of ethics (*Compromiso Electoral*) which would govern their activities during the final months of the campaign period.

A group of Ecuadorian civic groups, operating under the PCE's auspices, conducted a series of candidate debates and public forums on policy issues. These debates helped stimulate public interest in the campaign, and because of their added transparency, provided a mechanism to limit unreasonable campaign promises.

The October 20 first round of the elections forced a run-off between two presidential candidates from outside the political establishment — business magnate Alvaro Noboa, and former military officer and coup leader Lucio Gutierrez. This outcome was generally interpreted as a reflection of Ecuadorians' alienation from traditional politics and politicians. Gutierrez won the run-off election on November 25.

PCE mobilized thousands of young people — many of them secondary school and university students — to monitor the two rounds of elections. More than 4,000 volunteers observed the elections and conducted a “quick



PCE's work gained national media attention.

count,” a statistical projection of the election results.

Since the November election, PCE has remained active by promoting dialogue between political groups in the coastal and highland regions, mediating between the executive and legislative branches of government, and monitoring parliamentary adherence to the code of ethics. PCE continues to engage with its youth volunteers through civic education programs and democracy clubs.

For more information about PCE, please visit their website at www.participacionciudadana.org.ec



Volunteers from Citizen Participation Ecuador fan out to polling stations.

Accountability in Hong Kong

An NDI-sponsored report has concluded that the introduction of a ministerial system in Hong Kong does not advance democracy in the territory.

The report, *“Accountability without Democracy? The Principal Officials Accountability System in Hong Kong,”* was released in October by NDI and a Hong Kong-based think tank, Civic Exchange.

In July 2002, Hong Kong’s Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa, implemented the Principal Officials Accountability System, which shifts the top policy-making positions from civil servants to professional politicians who are accountable to the Chief Executive. The stated intent was to make government more accountable by making it easier for the Chief Executive to remove officials for poor performance. However, since the Chief Executive is not directly elected and legislators do not approve the ministerial appointments, the ministers are not accountable to any popularly elected official or body. Furthermore, the new system was designed and

imposed quickly without meaningful input from the legislature or public.

“The failure [of the new system] to link the issues of accountability and democracy is a missed opportunity,” the NDI-Civic Exchange report concluded. While the change demonstrated a degree of flexibility and innovation in how Hong Kong is administered, the new system “does not provide greater accountability to the public or to the legislature... Thus, the principal officials and executive branch policy-making still lack a democratic mandate.”

NDI has conducted several study missions in Hong Kong since 1997, examining the development of its post-reversion framework, the status of autonomy, rule of law and civil liberties under Chinese sovereignty, and has published a series of reports assessing the prospects for democratic development. NDI opened an office in Hong Kong in October 2002 to support these efforts as well as its work with political parties and civil society organizations.

The full text of the report can be found on NDI’s website at www.ndi.org.

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