



NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE LIBERIA



A GRTL participant practices communication skills by presenting to her peers during a five-day women's leadership boot camp.

When legislators and citizens work together on tackling issues, they open space for new, creative solutions to arise. This kind of collaboration also helps to strengthen citizen confidence in government. With support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), NDI is supporting legislative structures and civil society organizations (CSOs) to cooperate on addressing the issues that most greatly affect Liberians.

Supporting strategic legislative advocacy

NDI is helping CSOs to better understand how to navigate legislative structures and advocate more strategically for policy change. Prominent CSOs in Liberia are already working on issues such as women's political participation, natural resource management and youth unemployment. Many citizens groups effectively organize protests and public information campaigns; enhancing their direct engagement and collaboration with legislators will increase the strategies they can employ to compel concrete results in policymaking on issues of concern. To that end, NDI is training selected CSOs on the policymaking process and identifying entry points for engaging with legislators. The training is particularly focused on the budget process, an important avenue for influencing policies and government priorities. NDI is also organizing issue roundtables with legislators and CSO leaders to open doors for collaboration on tackling common policy challenges.

Establishing pathways to legislative action

To help legislators effectively develop and implement policies that address Liberians' needs, NDI is working with legislators to enhance the use of legislative caucuses and committees in the policymaking process. For the first time in Liberia, the two largest political party coalitions with representation in the legislature have functioning legislative caucuses, a platform through which elected representatives can pursue common policy objectives. Building on progress made during prior NDI programming, NDI is working with these legislative caucuses to set policy agendas and translate those priorities into legislation.

Legislative committees also play important roles in the legislative process as the platforms where lawmakers conduct oversight of bills, discuss policy options, and draft or amend new pieces of legislation. NDI is supporting legislative committees to play an enhanced role in policy debate and development. Specifically, NDI is providing technical assistance to committees on agenda setting and conducting oversight including through organizing investigative missions.

Past Programs:

NDI has worked continually in Liberia since 2003. This work has included strengthening legislatures, educating voters, and observing elections.

From 2010 to 2013, NDI provided support to strengthen the legislature. NDI held study missions and legislative policy seminars for members of parliament, focusing on decentralization, gender-responsive budgeting, and natural resource regulation, among other topics. These programs strengthened legislators' knowledge in specific policy areas, encouraged collaboration with the executive branch and civil society organizations, and aimed to improve lawmakers' oversight abilities.

Between 2013 and 2016, NDI, with funding from the Embassy of Sweden, bridged the divide between citizens and the lawmakers elected to represent them on issues of importance to citizens. NDI worked with CSO partners to collect, reflect and amplify these issues and strengthen their political organizing and legislative advocacy. At the same time, the Institute supported lawmakers to create opportunities for citizens and increase access to information about the legislative process.

During the 2017 elections, NDI promoted civic engagement during the election process, partnering with a coalition of civic groups dedicated to enhancing the credibility of Liberian elections by systematically observing electoral and political processes. NDI also supported a network of community radio stations and four civil society organizations to deliver country-wide civic and voter education campaigns ahead of the polls, reaching over a million Liberians, including half a million women. In January 2017, NDI launched "Getting Ready to Lead" (GRTL), a leadership program to train prospective women political leaders. Through the GRTL program, NDI trained over 200 party activists, campaign managers, civil society leaders, and aspirant candidates – 68 of whom received nominations to run for office in the 2017 elections.

Most recently, NDI, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), worked with political parties to help them better represent citizen interests and engage peacefully with other parties and democratic actors both during and outside of election periods. NDI also worked with parties to become more inclusive of women, youth, and other marginalized groups. The institute organized training academies for politically engaged youth to enhance their skills in political organizing and policy development, and supported political party women's wings to increase opportunities for women's leadership within political parties. In addition, NDI partnered with the Liberian Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD) to help parties improve their accountability to stakeholders and constituencies.



Party representatives participate in a "Trainer of Trainers" workshop to build the skills to train poll watchers for their respective political parties.

Funding

NDI's current program in Liberia is funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

Contact Information

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