Campaign Skills Trainer's Guide

Module 1
Political Parties and Elections
Key Institutions in a Democratic State

المدارس الإقليمية لتنظيم الحملات

CAMPAIGN SCHOOLS

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE

CAMPAIGN SKILLS TRAINER'S GUIDE

MODULE 1: POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS
Key Institutions in a Democratic State

SESSION OVERVIEW:

This module gives an overview of elections and political party work in democracies. Providing a strong foundation of general principals of democratic practices puts the subsequent skills trainings into a broader context, and allows for discussion of work that needs to be done between electoral cycles.

SECTIONS:

1. Democratic Actors
2. Best Practices for Political Parties
3. The Guiding Principles of Elections

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Introducing concepts of democratic principles and practices, and the role of different actors in a democracy
- Exploring the role of political parties in a democracy
- Importance of free and fair elections in a democracy

TIME: 100 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Flipchart and paper, markers and tape
- Training agenda (optional – can be written on the flipchart)

HANDOUTS:

- Triangle of Political Party Best Practices
- Internal Audit on Women's Participation
- Internal Audit on Youth Participation

PREPARATION:

Write on the flipchart in advance:

1. Agenda (optional – if it is not copied)

2. Learning Objectives

3. DEMOCRATIC ACTORS:
   - Political parties
   - Civil society
   - The media

4. 4 FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES:
   - Citizen Participation
   - Policy Development
   - Electoral Competition
   - Governing Institutions

5. POLITICAL PARTIES – CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:
Political parties create mechanisms and means for **individual citizens to become directly involved** in how a country is governed and run through their campaign structures during elections and outreach efforts outside of elections.

6. POLITICAL PARTIES – POLICY DEVELOPMENT:
Political parties are **factories of ideas, policies and plans** for how the country should be run and how challenges facing the country should be addressed.

7. POLITICAL PARTIES – ELECTORAL COMPETITION:
Political parties provide a means to **compete peacefully for political power** through elections, both by accepting the responsibility of governance when they have won an election and by respecting the choice of the voters when they have lost.

8. POLITICAL PARTIES – GOVERNING INSTITUTIONS:
Political parties promote **healthy governing institutions** by working to deliver results for the people and run effective agencies and departments when in government; they also advance higher levels of accountability by the scrutiny they provide when in opposition.

9. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS:
   - community groups
   - trade and labor unions
   - non-governmental organizations, issue-based groups
   - charitable organizations
   - faith-based organizations
   - professional associations

10. ROLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS:
    - Express the interests of its members
    - Raise awareness of key issues
    - Influence policy (advocate and mobilize)
    - Provide evidence and knowledge for the development of policy and legislation

11. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES AND CSO's:
    - Engagement in the political process
    - Range of specific issue areas they focus on
    - Participation in government
    - Independent vs. associated

12. ROLES OF THE MEDIA:
    - Facilitate and host discussions
    - Inform
    - Mediate
    - Create awareness

13. Characteristics of a high-functioning political party:
    - Clearly defined roles, responsibilities, rights and powers at all levels
    - Clear and transparent decision-making processes
    - Regular and accessible communications, internal and external

14.   To play a critical role in building a democracy, political parties must be democratic themselves. If parties do not practice and honor democratic values internally, they are less likely to do so when they are contesting elections and governing.

15.   GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ELECTIONS:
- REPRESENTATION
- TRANSPARENCY
- INCLUSIVENESS

KEY FOR THE TYPE OF ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THIS WORKSHOP:

TP – Trainer's Presentation

PEE – Participants' Experiences or Exercises

DBR – Facilitated Discussions, Brainstorming and Reflection

CLL – Conclusions and Lessons Learned

ANK – Application of New Knowledge

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

SECTION 1 – Democratic Actors – 40'

Steps	Description	Type	Min	Note to the Trainer
1	Introduce the session and review the learning objectives.	TP	1	
2	Open the session by asking participants to define what a democracy is. Write some of their answers on the flip chart. Accept all opinions, but look for concepts such as free and fair elections, government held accountable to the people, balance of power, and/or the rule of law. This brief brainstorm will allow you to segue into a discussion of democratic actors. Explain that: *In a healthy democratic society, a number of actors play vital roles in a country's social, economic and governing systems, and shape the manner in which policy is made and how the government conducts itself. Several of these serve as conduits and systems of organization for the ideas and opinions of individual citizens.* *This section explores the functions and influence of a number of these non-state actors, including:* *- Political parties* *- Civil society* *- The media* *These various sectors play critical roles in democratic systems, developing ideas, providing information, delivering services and shaping public policy. The relationship among these actors is dynamic and can be defined by both tension and codependence at the same time. Each makes a qualitative difference in the functioning of the other organizations even when there is a conflict of ideas about how the country should be run.*	TP	2	Democratic non-state actors: DEMOCRATIC ACTORS: - Political parties - Civil society - The media

Module 1: Political Parties and Elections

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Steps	Description	Type	Min	Note to the Trainer
3	Explain that the discussion on democratic actors will start by focusing on political parties. Introduce the four primary functions of political parties: 1. Citizen Participation 2. Policy Development 3. Electoral Competition 4. Governing Institutions Invite participants to think about what each of these functions are and how political parties can fulfill each of them.	TP	1	Political parties serve 4 primary functions in democratic societies: 4 FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES 1. Citizen Participation 2. Policy Development 3. Electoral Competition 4. Governing Institutions
4	Ask the participants how political parties play a role in "Citizen Participation". Have the description written on the flipchart in advance and, after a few contributions from the participants, offer it as a summary. Discuss the summary you have offered and ask participants to name different ways political parties engage citizens. Write their answers on the flipchart. Accept all reasonable answers and ensure that the followings ways are mentioned as well: • *Recruiting new members* • *Training members in political skills* • *Encouraging participation in election campaigns* • *Encouraging participation in policy development* • *Building strong party branches and internal structures* • *Meeting and communicating regularly with members and voters* • *Creating mechanisms to collect the opinion of voters and members, such as survey canvasses and community meetings*	DBR	3	POLITICAL PARTIES – CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: Political parties create mechanisms and means for **individual citizens to become directly involved** in how a country is governed and run through their campaign structures during elections and outreach efforts outside of elections.

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Steps	Description	Type	Min	Note to the Trainer
4	Point out that: *The value of these very simple activities should not be underestimated. Each of these activities helps political parties communicate more effectively with voters, and builds a stronger and healthier political system. The more that citizens feel involved, engaged and represented, the more stable and effective a country's systems of governance will be.*	DBR	3	
5	Move on to the topic of "Policy Development." Describe the role political parties play in this area by offering the following description on the flipchart: *Political parties are **factories of ideas, policies and plans** for how the country should be run and how challenges facing the country should be addressed.* Once you have reviewed this description, ask participants to share a few examples of how this has been done within their own parties. Briefly discuss these.	TP + PEE	5	Write the following on the flipchart in advance: POLITICAL PARTIES – POLICY DEVELOPMENT: Political parties are **factories of ideas, policies and plans** for how the country should be run and how challenges facing the country should be addressed. If participants struggle to come up with examples of policy development within their parties, ask them what the primary issue was that the party ran on in the last election and how the party came up with its policy on this issue. If you are doing this session as the beginning of a longer course which will include the session on "Issue Identification and Policy Development", you can tell participants they will learn more about what it takes to develop successful policies in that session.

Steps	Description	Type	Min	Note to the Trainer
6	The next area is "Electoral Competition", the most obvious one. Share the content written on the flipchart in advance and ask the participants to list some of the things parties do to fulfill this function. Ensure that the following are mentioned: • *Promote the policies they have developed as solutions to problems, in the context of their overall message* • *Offer sound candidate choices* *Engage in a healthy public debate* • *Create opportunities for individual citizens to get involved* • ***Abide by the outcome of these contests*** • *Play a role in leading debate on the electoral system setting the rules for competition and ensuring the integrity of the voting process* • *Help to ensure that elections are true expressions of the will of the people*	TP	5	<u>POLITICAL PARTIES – ELECTORAL COMPETITION:</u> Political parties provide a means to compete peacefully for political power through elections, first by campaigning vigorously, fairly and non-violently, then by accepting the responsibility of governance when they have won an election and by respecting the choice of the voters when they have lost.

Steps	Description	Type	Min	Note to the Trainer
7	Move to a discussion of "Governing Institutions" by sharing the description written on the flipchart and adding: *When a party wins an election, they must take on the exciting and extremely challenging task of governing. This means running the affairs of the country, further developing policy for implementation, overseeing the conduct and performance of government departments and agencies, taking responsibility for how money is spent, and delivering on promises made during the electoral campaign.* *How well a party is developed as an organization and institution will impact its readiness to take on the responsibility of running a country effectively.* *However, it is not just the victorious parties that play a key role after an election. The parties that did not enter government now become the opposition which, when well-organized, makes a critical contribution to the accountability of government institutions:* ● *Opposition parties have both a direct interest and a responsibility to monitor the actions and check the power of ruling parties, including putting forward viable policy alternatives that challenge those put forward by the government and provide citizens with both a contrast and a choice.* ● *At times, rather than countering the government, the opposition may work constructively with it to find compromises and better solutions to pressing problems.* Ask participants if they have any other thoughts or opinions about the functions of political parties in a democratic system. Then explain that you are moving to the next democratic actor in this system, civil society.	TP	3	POLITICAL PARTIES – GOVERNING INSTITUTIONS: Political parties promote **healthy governing institutions** by working to deliver results for the people and run effective agencies and departments when in government; they also advance higher levels of accountability by the scrutiny they provide when in the opposition.

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Steps	Description	Type	Min	Note to the Trainer
8	Introduce and review the **role of civil society:** *Civil society refers to all groups outside government such as community groups, trade and labor unions, non-governmental organizations, issue-based groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, and professional associations. Civil society expresses the interests of social groups and raises awareness of key issues in order to influence policy and decision-making. In recent decades, civil society organizations (CSOs) have been successful in shaping global policy through advocacy campaigns and mobilization of people and resources.* *The increasing global trend toward democratization has opened up the political space for CSOs to play a more active role in influencing policy. Additionally, because they are frontline organizations with first-hand experience of the impact of a policy or a problem on the ground, CSOs often have information that government or political party experts do not. In this way, CSOs provide critical evidence and knowledge to the development of policy and legislation, which means that these are more likely to be effective when implemented.* *Some of the key distinctions between political parties and civil society organizations are:*	TP	5	Prepare the following flipcharts in advance: Civil society refers to: CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS: - community groups - trade and labor unions - non-governmental organizations, issue-based groups - charitable organizations - faith-based organizations - professional associations Roles of civil society organizations are: ROLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS: - Express the interests of their members - Raise awareness of key issues - Influence policy (advocate and mobilize) - Provide evidence for the development of policy and legislation

Steps	Description	Type	Min	Note to the Trainer
8	• Civil society organizations may choose whether or not they engage with the political process. Some CSOs choose not to get involved; others actively try to influence the political and public agenda. Regardless, CSOs should not be excluded from politics. • Civil society organizations are more likely to concentrate on a focused range of specific issues. Political parties are obliged to deal with all issues that have an impact on society. • Political parties aspire to participate in government unlike CSOs, whose purpose is to advocate from outside to see their agenda fulfilled. • Civil society organizations can be both non-partisan and multi-partisan. When CSOs are independent, they are able to discuss and negotiate with all political parties for support for their agenda, as well as to criticize parties in the context of their programs, promises (fulfilled or unfulfilled) and actions.	TP	5	Differences between roles of political parties and CSO's are: POLITICAL PARTIES AND CSO's DIFFERENCES: - Engagement in the political process - Range of specific issue areas they focus on - Participation in government - Independent vs. associated
9	Facilitate a brief discussion with participants about civil society. Ask participants to think about civil society in their areas. Is there a clear distinction between political parties and civil society? Would they consider civil society strong or weak in their areas? As political activists, do they engage regularly with civil society organizations? Why or why not?	DBR	5	

Steps	Description	Type	Min	Note to the Trainer
10	Introduce the role of the media: *In order for government to be accountable, the people must be aware of what is happening in the country. The media plays a big role in providing people with information on governmental performance, what decisions are being made that affect them, how they are being made, by whom, and why. No democracy can thrive unless citizens have the information they need to make free and informed choices.* *The media – newspapers, television, radio, billboards, Internet, social media platforms, etc. – play a critical role in providing information and a space for political dialogue in a democratic state. While media takes many different forms and has a range of audiences, there are some clear roles these outlets can play to support democratic development.* • *A **forum for discussion** of important social, economic and political questions facing a society;* • *A **source of information** on which citizens can base the decisions they make about these questions and issues;* • *A **mediator** between citizens and their elected representatives which provides both with platforms to express concerns, actions and positions on issues of common concern; and,* • *A **tool to create awareness** among a diverse and geographically dispersed society.*	TP	5	Prepare the following on the flipchart in advance: The roles of the media are: ROLES OF THE MEDIA: - Facilitate and host discussions - Inform - Mediate - Create awareness

Steps	Description	Type	Min	Note to the Trainer
10	*The degree to which media outlets are wholly independent – i.e., not controlled or used as a mechanism for political or individual agendas – can have a big impact on the quality of the political engagement in a country. The emergence of more autonomous channels, such as video uploads sites on the internet, individual blogs, and social media forums, has created important mechanisms to challenge biased media where it exists. But private, political agendas can still limit the vital information that citizens need to make informed choices in many democracies.*	TP	5	
11	Ask the participants to consider the description of the role of the media in a democratic society that you have just offered. How would they rate the country's media according to these criteria? Discuss which currently has more influence: traditional media outlets such as television and newspapers, or newer platforms such as online blogs, social media forums, and video upload sites? Why?	DBR	5	

SECTION 2 – Best Practices for Political Parties in a Democracy – 45'

Steps	Description	Type	Min	Note to the Trainer
1	To begin a discussion about best practices for political parties in a democracy, summarize the points about primary roles of political party from the beginning of the workshop, adding a few more dynamics to the description: *Parties are expected to organize ideas, mobilize citizens, govern effectively, raise their own resources, communicate consistently, compete in elections, solve a multitude of societal problems and, while doing all this, consistently behave in a manner which is accountable, transparent, ethical and legal.* Ask the participants what characteristics a high-functioning party has to have to meet all these expectations. Guide participants to think about how a party has to operate as an organization to fulfill these roles. Write their answers on the flipchart, and guide participants towards the following: • Clearly defined **roles and responsibilities**, rights and powers among all levels of the party; • Clear and transparent **decision-making processes** and procedures inside the party; and, • Regular and accessible **communications**, both within the party and with external audiences. *Once you have characteristics listed, invite the participants to elaborate more about each one. Why is it important? How the party can benefit from it? What can be the consequences if any of the traits are missing?*	PEE	10	Characteristics of a high-functioning political party : • Clearly defined roles and responsibilities, rights and powers among all levels • Clear and transparent internal decision-making processes and procedures • Regular and accessible communications, both internal and external To play a critical role in building a democracy, political parties must be democratic themselves. If parties do not practice and honor democratic values in their internal affairs, they are less likely to do so when they are contesting elections and governing.

Steps	Description	Type	Min	Note to the Trainer
1	Wrapping up the brainstorming and discussion with the following conclusion: *To play a critical role in building a democracy, and especially in transitional democracies, political parties must be democratic themselves. If parties do not practice and honor democratic values in their internal affairs, they are less likely to do so when they are contesting elections and governing.*	PEE	10	
2	Hand out the **Triangle of Political Party Best Practices** worksheet and ask the participants to use it to examine and rate their political party in three key areas: internal democracy, outreach and transparency. Provide participants with sufficient time to fill out the worksheet, and then debrief their findings by answering and discussing the questions listed at the bottom of the page.	PEE	10	
3	Remind participants that reaching out to new sectors of society is considered a best practice for effective political parties. This type of outreach often focuses on bringing women, young people, disabled people, members of ethnic minorities and other under-represented groups into the party and its leadership positions. Distribute the following materials: • Worksheet, Internal Audit on Women's Participation • Worksheet, Internal Audit on Youth Participation Instruct participants to take a few minutes to read the briefing materials on each sheet on their own, but not to answer any of the audit questions yet. When participants have finished reading, ask whether anyone has any questions or comments about the content. Once the information is clear, ask participants to answer the questions on each of the worksheets and prepare to discuss them.	PEE + DBR	25	If you are training participants from different parties, it is not required to have them report back to the larger group after they have completed the 3 internal audit worksheets as some of this information will be sensitive. However, if you are working with participants from the same party, facilitate an open discussion about the issues in these audits. Many will be sensitive and some will be controversial. Additionally, some participants will have very different assessments of the same situation. All of this merits as much discussion, as time will allow. It is also important that, as the trainer, you have fully read and understood all of the segments of the internal audit worksheets, including the briefing sections on the political participation of women and young people.

SECTION 3 – The Guiding Principles of Elections – 13'

Steps	Description	Type	Min	Note to the Trainer
1	Explain that the final element of democratic systems we will be discussion is elections. Introduce this section with following: *An election is a decision made by voting. In political elections, the eligible population of voters makes important decisions about what should happen in their country. All of the political parties, political leaders, and authority figures in the country are expected to respect those decisions.* And then introduce and explain three guiding principles of elections: - *Representation* - *Transparency* - *Inclusiveness* *REPRESENTATION – When citizens cast their vote for a candidate, they are giving that person the right to represent their interests in government. This right is not given without responsibilities; it is given under the assumption that the individual in government will act responsibly and will to the best of his/her abilities truly represent the constituent's interest.* *TRANSPARENCY – It is important that the mechanisms of the electoral system be as transparent as possible and known to both voters and political parties and candidates well in advance in order to avoid confusion and distrust in the results they produce at elections.*	TP	5	Prepare the following on the flipchart in advance: Three guiding principles of elections: Guiding principles of elections: - REPRESENTATION - TRANSPARENCY - INCLUSIVNESS

Steps	Description	Type	Min	Note to the Trainer
1	***INCLUSIVENESS –*** *The electoral system will have a greater chance of being accepted as fair and legitimate if it is considered to be inclusive of all groups in society. This means not only that the electoral law allows as many citizens as possible to vote (this includes universal suffrage, making sure that the system is easily understandable, and ensuring access for all to the polling station), but also that the mechanisms of the electoral system do not overtly discriminate against any one group in society, minority or otherwise.*	TP	(5)	
2	Ask the participants how these guiding principles can be met and facilitate a brainstorm on what provisions have to be set by the state so these principles exist. Elicit the following: ● *Each and every citizen of legal age has the right to participate as a voter and as a candidate no matter what his or her class, caste, tribe, gender, economic or marital status or religion;* ● *Elections take place at regular intervals, so that people can review or change their choice of governing party;* ● *The voting procedure gives everyone the right to a vote, maintains the secrecy of the ballot and ensures all cast ballots are accurately counted; and,* ● *An election management body, which is recognized as neutral and free of political influence, controls the operation of elections. This may be a stand-alone commission or part of a government agency as long as it functions independently and without prejudice. Members of the body should be trustworthy members of the community. Anyone should be able to complain to the body about election irregularities. The body should act quickly and fairly and everyone should respect its decisions.*	DBR	8	

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CONCLUSION – 2'
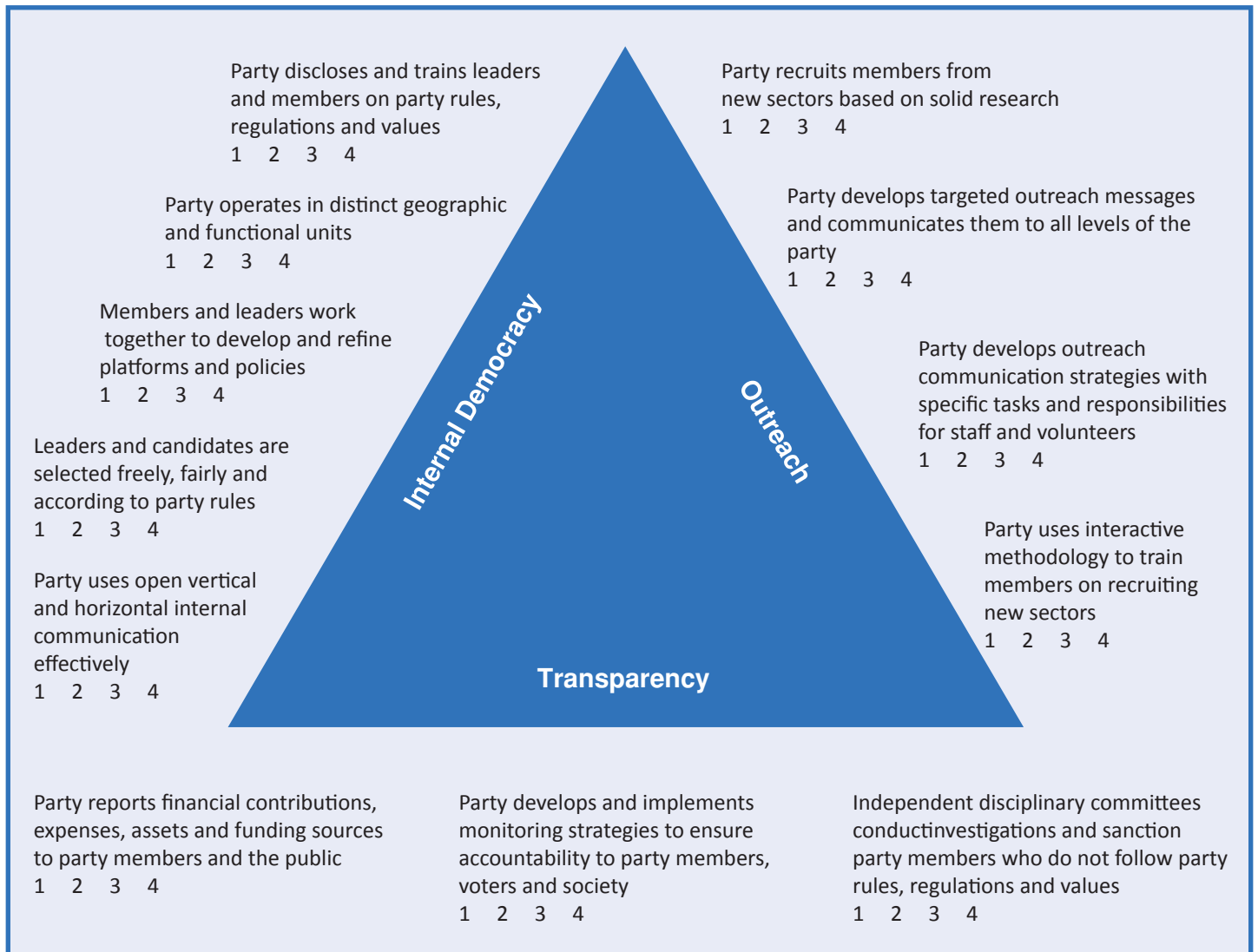
Political parties, civil society and the media play critical roles in democratic systems. Their roles are clearly defined and relationship among them is dynamic and can be both codependent and tense.

To play a critical role in building a democracy, political parties must be democratic themselves.

Regular, transparent, and inclusive elections provide legality and legitimacy to government.

Triangle of Political Party Best Practices

Party discloses and trains leaders and members on party rules, regulations and values
1   2   3   4

Party recruits members from new sectors based on solid research
1   2   3   4

Party operates in distinct geographic and functional units
1   2   3   4

Party develops targeted outreach messages and communicates them to all levels of the party
1   2   3   4

Members and leaders work together to develop and refine platforms and policies
1   2   3   4

Party develops outreach communication strategies with specific tasks and responsibilities for staff and volunteers
1   2   3   4

Leaders and candidates are selected freely, fairly and according to party rules
1   2   3   4

Party uses interactive methodology to train members on recruiting new sectors
1   2   3   4

Party uses open vertical and horizontal internal communication effectively
1   2   3   4

Internal Democracy

Outreach

Transparency

Party reports financial contributions, expenses, assets and funding sources to party members and the public
1   2   3   4

Party develops and implements monitoring strategies to ensure accountability to party members, voters and society
1   2   3   4

Independent disciplinary committees conduct investigations and sanction party members who do not follow party rules, regulations and values
1   2   3   4

1. How did you rate your party in Internal Democracy?

2. How did you rate your party in Transparency?

3. How did you rate your party in Outreach?

4. In which areas do you believe your party has demonstrated relatively good practice?

5. In which areas do you think there is room for improvement?

6. Were you surprised by any of your findings? If so, in what way?

Internal Party Audit on Women's Participation

Women's Political Participation

In politics, women's participation is more than a matter of fairness or equality; gender balance in decision-making has a direct impact on a country's stability and its ability to develop. When women share decision-making power with men at meaningful levels, countries experience a higher standard of living.[1] Positive developments can be seen in key areas, particularly education, health and infrastructure – all of which fuel economic development.

Women are force multipliers when it comes to economic growth. Programming and services that deliver better outcomes for women, e.g., higher levels of education and literacy or lower levels of poverty, also increase the well-being of their family members, in part because women reinvest 90 percent of their wealth in their families and communities.[2]

Women's participation also results in tangible gains for democratic governance and higher levels of satisfaction among the electorate regarding how the government is performing. When there is greater gender balance in government, voters experience:

- Greater responsiveness to citizen needs;
- Increased cooperation across party and ethnic lines; and,
- In conflict situations, more sustainable peace.[3]

Women are more likely to work across party lines and strive for consensus, even in partisan and polarized environments. Peace agreements and post-conflict reconstruction have a better chance of long-term success when women are involved.[4]

There is also substantial evidence that gender-balanced decision-making bodies, including boards of governors, executive committees and judicial bodies, function better. Boards with better gender balance pay more attention to auditing their work and to controlling risk, which suggests that they may be better able to minimize corruption and financial mismanagement.[5]

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1   The tendency of women policy-makers to prioritize education, health and infrastructure in particular leads to better outcomes for citizens and a higher quality of life. This has been documented in a number of studies. See: Chen, Li-Ju (2008) "Female Policymaker and Educational Expenditure: Cross- Country Evidence." Research Papers in Economics 2008: 1 Stockholm University, department of Economics, revised, Feb 27, 2008, http://ideas.repec.org/p/hhs/sunrpe/2008_0001.html; and, UNICEF (2007) "Women and Children: The Double Dividend of Gender Equality," http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/report/report.php. See also the background papers for the UNICEF report, including Beaman, L. et al. (2007) "Women Politicians, Gender Bias, and Policy-making in Rural India;" and Schwindt-Bayer, L. (2006) "Female legislators and the promotion of women, children, and family policies in Latin America," http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/docs/schwindt_bayer.pdf.
2   By contrast, research suggests that men reinvest 30-40% of their wealth in their families and communities. See Half the Sky Movement, www.halftheskymovement.org
3   Strickland, R. and N. Duvvury (2003), "Gender Equity and Peacebuilding: From Rhetoric to Reality: Finding the Way." International Center for Research on Women, http://www.icrw.org/docs/gender_peace_report_0303.pdf; Powley, E. (2003) "Strengthening Governance: The Role of Women in Rwanda's Transition," Women Waging Peace and The Policy Institute, Hunt Alternatives Fund, http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/10_strengthening_governance_the_role_of_women_in_rwanda_s_transition.pdf; International Crisis Group (2006), "Beyond Victimhood: Women's Peacebuilding in Sudan, Congo and Uganda" in *Crisis Group Africa Report N°112*; Women for Women International (2007), "Stronger Women, Stronger Nations 2007 Kosovo Report," http://www.womenforwomen.org/news-women-for-women/files/8254_Kosovo_Report_Spreads.FINAL_000.pdf.
4   Ibid.
5   There is substantial evidence on this point, primarily from the private sector. See coverage of the Association of British Insurer's report on effective boards, http://www.ivis.co.uk/PDF/ABI_1684_v6_CS4.pdf and the European Union report (2012), *Women in Economic Decision Making in the EU*, pg. 7, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/women-on-boards_en.pdf

Political parties that take women's participation seriously stand to gain on a number of fronts. Most significantly, women voters outnumber men voters in most countries simply because women tend to live longer than men. As such, women voters have the potential to deliver the margin of victory in many elections for parties that take their issues seriously.

To achieve these gains, political parties must look for women's participation to be both quantitative (in sufficient numbers around 50 percent) and qualitative (women must be given genuine power and authority, not just be there to fill a quota or make the party look like it's sympathetic to issues affecting women).

In most countries there are no legal barriers to women standing for election. Women's under-representation is a result of other obstacles such as candidate selection processes and the dominant political environment, which is less likely to value their contribution or accommodate their needs. Women are less likely to be selected as candidates or to have access to the resources necessary to run a competitive campaign.

For most political parties, genuinely committing to women's participation requires a fair amount of self-reflection, internal review and significant change.

1.   Think about your own political party. How many women are in the party's senior leadership? Do they play a significant role in decision-making? Do they have the same level of power and authority as their male peers?

2.   What is your party's candidate selection process? Do you consider it gender blind? Are specific mechanisms used to recruit women as candidates? Are women given viable positions on party lists or selected in constituencies where the party has a chance of winning?

3.   How many elected women parliamentarians do you have, and what percentage of your party's MPs are women? How many of them hold senior posts within the party's parliamentary caucus or the legislature itself?

4.   How many women elected officials does the party have at the regional or local level, and what percentage of the party's elected officials are women?

5.   Does your party have recruitment and advancement mechanisms for women, such as training programs or outreach campaigns focused on bringing women into the party?

6.   Does your party have a mechanism for policy development focused specifically on issues affecting women?

7.   Does your party have a women's wing? If so, does it have its own budget? Does it have the authority and autonomy to make its own decisions?

8.   The six most common barriers to women's participation are listed below. Review them and consider whether your political party has any specific mechanisms or programs to address these barriers.

Childcare/Caring Responsibilities – Women are much more likely to be the primary caregivers of children and to carry most of the household responsibilities. This may mean that they simply don't have time for politics. When women are able to enter politics and take on those additional duties, their workload at home often stays the same, creating overwhelming demands on their time.

Cash – The cost of a viable campaign can be prohibitive for many women. Worldwide, women's financial earnings do not match those of men. In situations where women are also expected to be the primary caregivers, women candidates may have the additional cost of childcare or household support, making time away from families to campaign even more expensive or unaffordable.

Confidence – Women are less likely to perceive themselves as qualified for political office, even though they may have the same abilities as male peers, and are also less likely to receive encouragement to pursue positions of political leadership.

Culture – Cultural barriers to women's political participation exist both in society and within political parties. There may be societal expectations for women that make it difficult for them to be perceived as political leaders. Additionally, the culture within political parties and the accepted norms of behavior can make them uncomfortable places for women. Political meetings may be held in locations where women feel – or are – excluded, or they may be held at times that are unsuitable for those with caring responsibilities, or unsafe times for women to travel.

Class – Social and economic class can be a barrier to women's political participation. There is often an expectation that politicians will have a degree of formal education and social status; less value can be placed on life experience and practical skills. These expectations can impede the ascent of women, particularly those with fewer official educational qualifications, those from a poorer or economically deprived background, and those from rural areas.

Candidate Selection Processes – Candidate selection processes have the single greatest impact on a woman's ability to stand for office and be elected. Confidence and childcare become irrelevant for campaigning and holding office if a woman cannot make it through a candidate selection process with any chance of being elected.

Internal Audit on Youth Participation

Today's generation of young people is the largest in history. By 2015, nearly half the world's population – more than three billion people – will be under the age of 25.[6] Young people are the fastest growing segment of the population in countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), with children and young people under the age of 25 comprising about 60 percent of the current population. The median age of the total population in the region is 22 years, compared with the global average of 28.[7]

These numbers are a serious call to action for political parties worldwide, particularly in the MENA region:

- Political parties must view young people as an asset who can make significant contributions to the growth, development and stability of their countries. However, they require the appropriate support and investment to achieve their potential.

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6 UK Department for International Development (2010), Youth Participation in Development, pg. 7, see http://www.ygproject.org/
7 George Mason University, Children and Youth in History website, http://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/primary-sources/424

- The policy needs of children and young people must be taken seriously by political parties and lawmakers. For example, it is projected that the MENA region will require more than 51 million new jobs by 2020 to employ these young people, whose current rate of unemployment is more than twice that of the rest of the adult population.[8] This will be a particular challenge as more than 100 million of these young people currently do not attend school.
- This large population of young people must be perceived as representing new ideas, new energy and new opportunities, and not as a problem to be contained or controlled.

Political parties that seize the opportunity offered by this large population of young people stand to gain substantially in the coming years, in terms of electoral support and increased membership. Acting on the issues which affect young people is also likely to lead to more success in governing.

Maximizing the potential of young people starts with recruiting them as political party members. From there, the opportunities that parties offer to young people will have a direct impact on whether or not they become active members, or chose to stay as members. The more a party implements an internal merit-based system for promotion within the party – rather than expecting young people to quietly wait their turn for leadership opportunities behind older members who have been their longer, regardless of ability – the more likely it is that the party will retain young people as members and supporters, and benefit from their energies and talents.

1. Does your party have a youth wing and/or a student wing? If so, does it have its own budget? Does it have the authority and autonomy to make its own decisions? Is it represented in the executive of the party?

2. How does your party define youth? What is the cut off age to belong to the youth wing? Is it applied to the leadership of the youth wing? Does this genuinely represent a youthful age, or are people well beyond their youth involved?

3. What are some of the priorities for youth in your party?

4. What are the barriers or obstacles to youth participation in your party?

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8 Ibid.

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