



NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE LIBERIA



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

Fifteen years after Liberia's democratic transition, the country faces a new set of challenges in strengthening its institutions and making them more representative. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is implementing a five-year initiative to **strengthen the capacity of political parties** to participate in Liberia's electoral and political processes. With support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), NDI is providing a range of technical assistance to all registered political parties in Liberia.

Enhancing Internal Democracy and Accountability

NDI is working with the leadership of selected political parties to help make their parties more inclusive and internally democratic and develop platforms that represent citizen's priorities. This assistance includes holding political party academies to train party leaders and staff in strategic planning, platform development, constituency outreach, membership recruitment, and party operations. NDI is also working with political parties to better reflect citizen priorities through the use of public opinion research and more inclusive platform and policy development. In addition, NDI is working to increase the involvement of women and youth in all party-related activities. For example, NDI works with youth and women to develop their political skills by working with youth party members to develop policy proposals and advocacy strategies, strengthening women's wings, and running a campaign school.

Increasing Peaceful External Engagement

Prior to the 2017 elections, NDI prepared political parties to train their members to engage constituents and monitor election day process. NDI conducted 10 party pollwatching workshops, through which the Institute trained 169 party trainers representing 23 political parties. NDI will continue to work with parties in advance of the 2020 Senatorial Elections to expand their membership recruitment, identify and develop additional party leaders and foster improved intra-party communication, information sharing, and data management.

Increasing Accountability to Constituents

NDI is working with legislators and political parties to build their capacity to respond to the needs of constituents. In February 2018, NDI facilitated a legislative orientation for all elected members of the House of Representatives and their chiefs of staff. This orientation enhanced their understanding of legislative processes and structures, the roles and responsibilities of legislators, and the importance of building relationships with constituents and civil society organizations. Following the orientation, NDI is working with lawmakers and party leadership to build stronger party caucuses to translate party platforms, policy priorities, and citizen interests into a legislative agenda.

NDI is also supporting civil society partner Liberian Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD) to monitor the activities of political parties and their elected officials. Following the 2017 elections IREDD released a list of legislators' campaign promises and platforms in order to track whether their actions in office reflect their promises and to increase their accountability to constituents. IREDD also developed a website to track attendance, participation, and initiatives created by each lawmaker: www.liberianlawmakerswatch.org.

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.

NDI has also previously provided assistance to Liberian civil society organizations to deliver country-wide civic and voter education on critical electoral issues and events. NDI supported CSOs that work to foster notions of active citizenship and build relationships among diverse civil society organizations, in the hope of sparking future collective action on issues of common concern.

During the 2017 elections, NDI promoted civil society and 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 addition, NDI worked with its partners and a group of community-based organizations to facilitate community dialogues in rural districts to develop priority issue platforms that candidates pledged to address if elected. 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. NDI also assisted a coalition of women activists to develop a Liberian Women's Policy Platform (LWPP) that represented issues most relevant to women's livelihoods ahead of the 2017 election.

Stay connected!

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Women and youth party activists conduct a community needs survey as part of NDI's campaign school training.