

CHANGING THE FACE OF LEADERSHIP

# WOMEN *in* POLITICS



With **WIN WOMEN**  
GLOBAL INITIATIVE



NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE

NDI believes that the equitable participation of women in politics and government is essential to build and sustain democracy. Comprising over 50 percent of the world's population, women continue to be under-represented as voters, political leaders and elected officials. In its programs and activities, NDI seeks out women as full partners and participants.

NDI programs around the world engage women in legislatures, political parties and civil society as leaders, activists and informed citizens.

## BREAKING NEW GROUND

The **Women's Parliamentary Club of Macedonia** led reform efforts that increased opportunities for women to run and win as candidates for public office. Working across party lines on initiatives to improve the lives of all Macedonians, this multi-ethnic group of legislators has championed ground-breaking measures to improve conditions for women in the workplace - including guaranteeing the right to maternity leave and increasing women's access to healthcare. NDI provided day-to-day support to the club in its early stages and now offers technical advice and assistance.



*"The Women's Parliamentary Club plays a key role in the representation process as well as putting on the political agenda issues that are important to women and to the development of Macedonia. At the same time, this Club is an example of cross-party cooperation and dialogue with one priority: devotion to voters."*

— Daniela Dimitrievska, Executive Director of the Macedonian Women's Lobby

The advocacy efforts of the **Indonesian Women's Political Caucus**, or **Kaucus Perempuan Politik Indonesia (KPPI)**, led to the adoption of a voluntary quota system that helps women compete more effectively for public office. Launched by nine women representing seven political parties, KPPI's membership now includes women from 17 political parties as well as leaders from civil society organizations and academic institutions. In partnership with KPPI, NDI identified and trained a group of women political leaders to improve governance and women's political leadership in **Aceh**, a war-torn Indonesian province that suffered massive devastation from the 2004 tsunami and years of civil war. In 2005, KPPI was the first recipient of NDI's Madeleine K. Albright Grant.

Women are helping to transform politics in **Mauritania**. In advance of the country's 2006 transitional elections, lobbying by a steering committee of women leaders from political parties and civil society led to the adoption of a quota mandating that 20 percent of all candidates be women. That battle won, the committee worked in partnership with NDI to develop a broad media campaign that included the production of a documentary, TV and radio spots, and print ads — such as a giant billboard placed in a busy intersection in the capital - to raise awareness of women candidates. Mauritania emerged from these elections with the second-highest proportion of women representatives in the Middle East and North Africa region.





## CREATING ALLIANCES

**Afghanistan's** quota system led to the election of 68 women to the National Assembly in 2005. A group of these newly-elected parliamentarians created the **Parliamentary Women's Network** to help women gain the basic resources, skills and experience to become effective political advocates and leaders. The network, a multi-party women's caucus that includes representatives from civil society and government, is dedicated to shaping legislation on issues of importance to women. With NDI support, the network's projects include work on a draft law to eliminate violence against women and advocacy efforts to allow women to participate in all aspects of Afghanistan's political, social, economic and cultural life.



In **Colombia**, a coalition of civil society organizations leveraged support from NDI and other international partners to launch **Más Mujeres, Más Política** or **More Women, More Politics**, a campaign to advance women's political participation. *Más Mujeres, Más Política* created strategic alliances with political parties, government representatives and civic organizations at the national and local levels to encourage public support to increase the number of women elected to decision-making positions through specialized media and general campaign support.

## BUILDING SKILLS

Thousands of Burkinabe women, most of whom had never been active in politics, took advantage of the country's nascent decentralization efforts to compete for over 18,000 newly-created local government positions during **Burkina Faso's** 2006 elections. An unprecedented 6,400 women won local council seats,

To encourage women's participation and effectiveness in political life around the world, NDI, with a group of international partners, created the



International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics). A virtual forum, iKNOW Politics is an online portal to resources and expertise that provides opportunities for women to share their experiences, access information and build a supportive online community. Participating in the project with NDI are the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

The Win With Women Global Initiative promotes strategies to help political parties broaden their appeal by becoming more



inclusive and representative. Launched in 2003 at a forum of women political party leaders from around the world, and since translated into more than a dozen languages, the Win with Women Global Action Plan addresses women's engagement in politics as voters, political party leaders, candidates and elected officials. Activists and dozens of political parties, civic organizations and intergovernmental institutions from more than 100 countries have signed on to the plan, and many are using it to achieve their goals.

Established in 2005, the Madeleine K. Albright Grant builds on the Win with Women Global Initiative to honor organizations that



exhibit exceptional promise in creating a greater role for women in political and civic life. With support from the Mel and Bren Simon Foundation, NDI selects the recipient from a competitive pool of applicants who submit proposals to receive \$25,000 to support specific initiatives that further women's political participation. Past recipients include the Women's Political Caucus of Indonesia and the Mostar Women Citizens' Initiative of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 2007, the 50/50 Group of Sierra Leone received the award.

many of whom had received training on campaign techniques and the fundamentals of electoral politics from NDI. After the election, NDI conducted orientation sessions and distributed training manuals to the majority of the newly elected women councilors. NDI advisors and in-country staff continue to serve as mentors as they take on the challenges of public office.

Hundreds of politically active women from 18 countries across the **Middle East and North Africa** have sharpened their political skills at the **Partners in Participation Regional Campaign School**, a program sponsored by NDI to strengthen women's ability to compete for public office. Working together to demonstrate the benefits of including women in decision-making structures and supporting their candidacies for public office, women in this diverse group have learned from each other and created support networks that span the region.

***“I can first use the training during the campaign to support the candidates I appreciate, and later, for myself as a candidate.”***

— Loubna Amhair, Moroccan participant in the Partners in Participation Regional Campaign School

## PROMOTING PEACE

Inspired by the work of Indonesia's KPPI, women activists in the **Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM, or Mindanao)** in the **Philippines** launched the **Political Caucus of Women Leaders in Mindanao (PCWLM)** in 2007 to



promote women as candidates for elected office. In a region marked by a violent separatist struggle, the caucus emphasizes the critical role women in Mindanao play as peacemakers. Bai Normalah Lucman, a former vice governor and caucus member, plays a leading role in settling clan feuds, known as *rido*, as does fellow caucus member and *Barangay captain* (village chief) Myrna Lou de Vera. Inspired by the image of the barefoot individual as a symbol of humility, NDI helped the caucus develop the Barefoot Candidate Training program to support first-time women candidates for public office.

***“In working with women activists from the Philippines and the rest of Asia, NDI continues to empower women to participate meaningfully in public life and fulfill key roles in the democratic development of this critical region.”***

— Corazon Aquino, former President of the Philippines

## INFLUENCING POLICY

When a measure to legalize polygamy surfaced in **Kyrgyzstan**, the **Women's Political Discussion Club (WPDC)** held a public roundtable to raise awareness and build consensus on how best to defeat it. The WPDC drafted a position paper, held press conferences, organized a rally, and met with legislators and other government officials to argue against the measure. Success came a month later when Kyrgyzstan's parliament voted to uphold the current law outlawing the practice. In a country where women have had few opportunities to engage in the political process, members of this core group of 25 women leaders from political parties, civic organizations and the media have emerged as effective and respected citizen advocates. NDI has helped the WPDC organize regular roundtables on other issues of concern, including the promotion of women's political rights and the effects of labor migration on women.





## WHY WOMEN IN POLITICS

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- Countries that encourage and support the participation of women as equals, in the workplace and at the ballot box, have correspondingly higher standards of living and lower levels of corruption.
- The engagement of women in governance leads to the development of local and national policies that are more likely to address the socio-economic and political challenges facing women, their families and disadvantaged groups.
- In countries emerging from war, reconciliation and reconstruction efforts take root more quickly when women are involved.

These facts help guide NDI's work to expand women's roles as leaders in political parties, legislatures and civil society. NDI's programs aim to improve public perceptions of women in politics, help women compete more effectively as candidates, and create opportunities for women to formulate, implement and oversee public policy.

The Institute's ability to convene women across ethnic and political divides has helped to increase their level of participation in political and civic life in more than 60 countries. NDI has worked to create neutral political space where women from diverse backgrounds can converge around shared goals to solve problems in ways that contribute to the development and well-being of their societies.

***“Success without democracy is improbable; democracy without women is impossible.”***

— Madeleine K. Albright, NDI Chairman

***“NDI has been instrumental in equipping women here and in other emerging democracies with the skills to participate - as effective party and government leaders, as public policy advocates, as voters.”***

— Nino Burjanadze, Speaker of Parliament, Georgia



The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs is a non-profit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

NDI programs that help women play more active roles in the political life of their countries have been conducted in partnership with the following governments and institutions: The Canadian International Development Agency, the Christian Democratic International Center, the Government of the Netherlands, the National Endowment for Democracy, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United States Agency for International Development, and the United States Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.



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