



## Transforming Protracted Conflict Through Women's Empowerment

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## **Executive Summary**

Women's Campaign International (WCI) is dedicated to enhancing women's involvement in political and democratic processes worldwide. WCI is a United States-based, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to increasing the participation of a diverse population of women in political and democratic processes worldwide. WCI works towards this goal by providing women of all groups with the skills and knowledge needed to participate fully in decision-making and policy formation activities. It is the vision of WCI that, if women are better incorporated into decision-making processes worldwide, legislative agendas will focus greater attention on children and families, education, environment, healthcare, social welfare, and women's rights. In pursuit of this goal, it is WCI's mission to promote and assist women leaders at all levels to influence policy, laws and social issues in these areas.

Under a grant awarded through H.R. 5631; House Report 109-676 – Making Appropriations for The Department of Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2007, WCI implemented its “Transforming Protracted Conflicts through Women's Empowerment” programs (hereinafter “conflict transformation programs”) in three countries: Colombia, Sri Lanka and Liberia. Through this program, WCI has worked to build the capacity of women from conflict-affected countries to participate in conflict transformation efforts.

The programs in the three selected countries focused on the following objectives as outlined in the Concept Plan:

- Increase women's abilities to participate effectively in political decision-making at all levels;
- Build women's capacity to advocate for conflict transformation reforms;
- Enhance women's capacity to develop, lead and participate in conflict prevention, conflict transformation, negotiation and peace-building projects;
- Improve women's teaching, communication and outreach skills so that they may build the capacity of other women to engage in conflict resolution and peace-building activities;
- Build the capacity of local organizations to develop stronger financial and organizational management to effectively manage WCI's sub-grants and future grants from other donors in an effort to improve sustainability.

Women's Campaign International (WCI) implemented a conflict mitigation program from August 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 to March 15, 2009 that built the capacity of women in decision-making processes, especially on matters of peace, security, and conflict as a means of reducing political violence, terrorism and extremism. The program worked with civil society groups to create trainings, programs, and media campaigns focused on increasing the number of women leaders, enhancing advocacy skills, increasing their ability to participate effectively in conflict resolution and peace building and providing them with resources to implement these new skills. Specifically, the program aimed to create, lead and participate in peace-building and conflict transformation efforts in cases of protracted conflict; impart the skills and knowledge necessary to ensure that women's programs are sustainable; and build productive relationships between men and women leaders.

Throughout the duration of the Conflict Transformation Program grant, WCI successfully supported 31 organizations from August 2007 – March 15, 2009. WCI has directly trained 1629 women in Sri Lanka, 1050 women in Colombia, and 1725 men and women in Liberia.

## **Sri Lanka**

### *Country Overview*

The roots of Sri Lanka's long-standing conflict can be traced back to 1948 when Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) gained its independence from the United Kingdom following a long history of colonial rule. Because the Sinhalese, the majority ethnic group, inherited most of the political power, the minority Tamils began to feel that their language, culture, identity and rights were being threatened. When the Sinhalese-led government changed the official language in Sri Lanka from English to Sinhalese in the 1970s, Tamil discontent grew even further. Tensions between the government and Tamil separatists exploded into a full scale war in 1983.

Although a cease-fire negotiated in 2002 was technically in effect until January 2008, large-scale violence between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the main separatist rebel group, resumed in 2006. Both sides are increasingly committing human rights violations and the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Sri Lanka increased at an exponential rate as the government continues to wrest territory away from the LTTE.

Although Sri Lanka elected the first female Prime Minister in the world in 1960, women's current political representation is a mere 4% at the national level and 2% at the local level. However, women's continual grassroots reconciliation work has made remarkable strides towards establishing peace at the community level and will be imperative to ensuring that future negotiations result in a peaceful and sustainable solution to the conflict. It is therefore crucial to build the capacity of Sri Lankan women to actively participate in political decision-making processes and conflict transformation efforts in their country.

### *Program Overview*

The partner organizations in Sri Lanka worked on issues that reflect WCI's program goals. They covered a wide geographic area, work with diverse populations, utilize multiple languages and aim to ensure that their programs have a sustainable impact. Many of the local organizations working on conflict transformation and women's empowerment have a great deal of institutional experience despite their small size and limited resources. WCI's support further enhanced institutional and programmatic capacity building efforts (such as technical expertise in the administration of funds, building and maintaining staff capacities, obtaining grants, providing program reports and creating and maintaining strategic links). Many of the trainings facilitated by these organizations were being carried out in the western and central regions of the country. WCI helped expand efforts to include women from minority-dominated and conflict-affected areas as well as underrepresented groups (such as the plantation workers in the central region, poor segments of the majority Sinhalese population and Muslims in the South).

WCI conducted nine programs with seven organizations in Sri Lanka between December 2007 and September 2008. The Conflict Transformation Program in Sri Lanka as a whole achieved most strategic objectives. The programs were tailored to the needs and goals of WCI's partner organizations and the targeted communities. The performance indicators were monitored monthly and reported on quarterly. The scope of this project included the following components: outreach to women through decentralized

programming and empowerment of local organizations; building women’s leadership abilities; enhancing women’s public profiles; fact-finding and raising awareness about conflict-affected populations; promoting education about health and social issues; and networking and peace-building amongst Sri Lankan women.

*Programs*

1. The Business for Peace Alliance (BPA)

BPA is a network of entrepreneurs and business advisers that promotes sustainable peace-building and business best practices. In December 2007, WCI and BPA collaborated to facilitate the travel and participation of 11 women entrepreneurs from the conflict-affected North and East to a trade fair in Galle, a city in the deep south of Sri Lanka, with nine other women entrepreneurs from other parts of the country. During the three-day trade fair, the women entrepreneurs participated in a workshop where they shared their individual expertise and business practices and networked with each other, creating linkages between women across regional and communal divides.

Through this initiative, WCI and BPA paved the way for informal linkages between women in the North, East and South. The women have maintained contact with one another and have continued to discuss peace-building and related issues with each other. These women are also participating in regional Reconciliation Committees, which are groups that work to strengthen civil society in the districts by exchanging ideas, sharing common problems and engaging in peace-building activities.

Since WCI’s collaboration with BPA, the women from the North and East have had two subsequent opportunities to participate in networking workshops. WCI also facilitated the participation of United Fisheries Welfare Society (UFWS), a community-based organization (CBO) from the south in the December trade fair. WCI staff met the UFWS chairwoman during the initial assessment visit to Sri Lanka last year and was impressed with her knowledge and enthusiasm to promote the organizations’ abilities and the staff’s skills, especially in handicrafts. These women make handicrafts and sell them at local markets and use the funds to provide a range of services including books for children of poor families and micro-credit loans for women in the local community. With WCI’s support, UFWS sent three staff members to set up, display and sell handicrafts they produced. The UFWS women used the opportunity to exhibit and sell their products and network with local businesses and BPA members.

Objective	Main activities	Number trained
I. Create links and relationships among women entrepreneurs from North-East and South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trade fair for women entrepreneurs from North-East and South</li> <li>• Training on market linkages, sales, and marketing</li> <li>• 4 subsequent events held with the BPA and chambers</li> <li>• Informal linkages developed between entrepreneurs</li> </ul>	20 women participated in trade fair and training
II. Empower women entrepreneurs through skills development		25 participated in regional chamber event
III. Build relationships between regional business chambers		35 women ran stalls at trade fairs
IV. Improve role of women in peace-building		

2. Association of War Affected Women (AWAW)

WCI and the Association of War-Affected Women (AWAW), which promotes conflict resolution, peace-building and enhancing women’s leadership skills, conducted a “training-of trainers” (ToT) program for 25 aspiring and established women leaders from across the country, including the conflict-affected regions in the North and East. The trainings focused on building a wide range of participants’ skills including advocacy, networking and political leadership.

At the end of the final workshop, the participants were asked to both provide oral and written feedback through surveys which WCI designed. The majority of the women (between 88% to 96%) agreed that their knowledge of each thematic area covered in the training had improved. All the women said they were interested in participating in an advocacy campaign within the next year. In addition, each of the 25 women committed to training 25 more women in their own communities on the subjects covered in these workshops. The participants will use a toolkit consisting of materials used during the initial trainings as well as background information on each workshop topic, ideas for group activities, an evaluation guide and sample participant surveys in their trainings.

In July, this core group of 25 women met with several government ministers and members of Parliament - including the Speaker of the House and the head of the Select Committee on Electoral Reforms - to advocate for a 33% quota for women’s representation in local government and on political party lists. The women are continuing to follow up with regional government and opposition representatives and are planning to work with national networks and NGOs to advocate for the quota in the future.

The survey results indicated that 84% of the women intend to contest in elections within the next five years. During the media training, the women gave several presentations, talking on-camera about an issue that was of particular interest to them. Many of the participants demonstrated improved abilities to communicate their ideas on camera with each additional effort. All of the women said that they were more confident about talking about issues relating to women when they were asked for feedback during the trainings as well as when WCI talked with each participant individually. Many of the participants demonstrated this newfound confidence during their interactions with each other and with the trainers, especially on the last day of the final training when the Minister of Urban Development conducted a session on effective ways to approach Sri Lanka’s Parliament to advocate for a women’s quota. Many of them felt confident enough to ask the Minister questions and to speak to him about their views regarding crucial legislative reforms.

Objective	Main activities	Number trained
I. Improve women activist abilities for public policies and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TOT training conducted</li> <li>• Trainings for additional 650 people</li> <li>• Advocacy plan created during the training and implemented</li> <li>• Informal coalition created to promote UNSCR 1325</li> </ul>	25 women TOTs trained
II. Increase number of women’s groups advocating to government		650 total women trained
III. Increase number of women seeking office		88- 96% demonstrated increased abilities and knowledge in conflict resolution and leaders
		84% interested in considering a run for office

### 3. Young Asia Television (YATV)

WCI and Young Asia Television (YATV), a leading independent television production company in Sri Lanka, produced 31 television and radio talk show/discussion programs that featured women leaders from throughout the country. Through the programs, WCI and YATV aimed to raise the profile of current and potential women leaders as well as to raise awareness and promote dialogue about issues of particular importance to women in Sri Lanka. YATV began broadcasting the programs on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2008.

The programs were produced in all three of Sri Lanka’s main languages (English, Sinhala and Tamil) and feature discussions on the following topics:

1. Women’s political representation and participation
2. Patriarchy and gender
3. Women and development, the economy and corruption
4. Women’s engagement in political discourse
5. Women in the plantation sector and women migrant workers
6. Reproductive health and sexuality
7. Identity politics and religion
8. Representations of women in the media
9. Constitutional law and citizenship, especially as they relate to women
10. Women’s involvement in the conflict and conflict resolution efforts
11. Racism, nationalism and their impact on women

This umbrella project also included two leadership and media workshops. WCI and YATV collaborated with the Women and Media Collective (WMC), an organization that works to promote women’s rights, advocate for policy reforms and facilitate discussions and debates on women’s issues. A cross-section of the women featured on the shows participated in these two workshops. In August, YATV pre-screened selected episodes from the 31 programs to a focus group consisting of 44 people (seven men and 37 women). Twenty-two people from amongst this group completed the survey that was designed by WCI and YATV. The two initial workshops brought together academics, NGO leaders, women activists and experts on an array of relevant subjects in an effort to design and plan the programs and draw up lists of potential participants. Participants’ input was later used to adapt individual programs to more closely target the intended audiences. All of the indicators for Workshops’ 1 and 2 objectives were met.

WMC conducted two one-day workshops on a range of topics including how to interact with the media, messaging and public speaking. One of the core activities for these workshops involved “live” interviews featuring the participants. The participants spoke on camera, while the rest of the group watched and critiqued each others’ performance. Several of the 25 women from the AWAW-WCI partnership participated in these workshops. Several of the participants said that they had found the workshops useful, especially for their participation in the television discussions.

I.	Raise awareness among Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim populations about the conflict’s effects on women and about women’s contributions to conflict transformation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content for 31 program created</li> <li>• 13 programs aired on 8 TV channels and</li> </ul>	Viewership is estimated at 250,000 people
II.	Generate dialogue on conflict resolution and women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 programs aired on 7 radio stations</li> </ul>	80 women appeared on the shows
III.	Raise profile of women leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadcast in English, Tamil and Sinhala and included diverse</li> </ul>	80 organizations
IV.	Increase the number of organizations interested in conflict transformation		

	breakdown of participants	participated
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#### 4. International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)

WCI and the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) collaborated on four initiatives all aimed at advancing human rights for marginalized populations in the long term. The first initiative involved four separate visits for women activists from across the country to internally displaced people (IDPs) camps in the cities of Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Welikanda and Puttlam. These women activists interviewed and documented women IDPs experiences, which were then used to create awareness-raising materials that were disseminated throughout IMADR’s network. The network includes 15 women’s organizations and many activists throughout the country.

For the second project, IMADR conducted a two-day national workshop on indigenous and rural women’s rights, where 75 women, including 10 women from the rural and indigenous communities, discussed the challenges these populations face. At the end of the workshop the participants formed a Rural Women’s Team that is continuing to reach out to and work with these communities. The participants drafted a series of recommendations including developing a formal network of organizations and activists that would address issues affecting rural and indigenous communities. They also suggested implementing programs to promote health education among these populations, a broad study on food security for these populations and conducting research on the impact of traditional practices on these women’s health and the effects of outward migration on these communities.

For the third project, IMADR conducted a training that focused on women’s rights in international law, gender budgeting, and understanding and overcoming barriers to women’s political participation, particularly for marginalized rural and minority populations in Sri Lanka. The three-day workshop featured discussions about the government’s obligations in relation to international conventions on women’s rights and minority communities. Participants included 23 women and 2 men leaders, many of whom were from indigenous and rural communities.

The fourth project involved two advocacy trainings for 50 participants (men and women) in Hambantota and Galle in the south of Sri Lanka. These two workshops aimed to build participants’ capacity to collectively advocate for local government reform and create opportunity for women to fill decision-making roles. IMADR shared its report on Sri Lanka’s obligations regarding human rights and women’s rights with the participants. This report has since been forwarded to the Parliamentary Select Committee that oversees the relevant issues. During the course of this program, IMADR has also facilitated several formal and informal meetings with its network members, activists and representatives from minority and disaffected communities.

I.	Increase capacity of women advocates	• Advocacy training conducted	35 trained in advocacy
II.	Develop strategy and tools to advocate for marginalized communities	• International law and gender training conducted	98 trained on international law and gender training
III.	Improve understanding of human rights (with a focus on ethnicity and gender)	• Status report on Sri Lanka’s adherence to CEDAW developed	
IV.	Increase public’s awareness on IDPs and gender issues	• Action plan created to	

	<p>promote gender equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 reports about IDPs experiences created</li> <li>• 6000 copies created and distributed</li> </ul>	<p>113 improved understanding of CERD/CEDAW</p> <p>50 participated in IDP forums</p>
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### 5. Centre for Women and Development (CWD)

WCI collaborated with the Centre for Women and Development (CWD), an NGO that works to increase women’s participation in politics, community development and peace-building. The WCI-CWD program focused on celebrating International Women’s Day and raising awareness about issues that disproportionately affect women in conflict-affected regions. The event also provided an opportunity for women in the north, who are often isolated because of the conflict, to network with each other. More than 500 women attended the event.

The majority of the women were keen to engage in collective efforts to resolve challenges they face as residents of the highly conflict-affected North. However, security and travel restrictions have created problems and prevented these women from meeting with each other regularly. Despite the challenges, CWD has launched efforts to continue short-duration leadership training for these women as a part of their regular programming. Such forums provide the women much-needed space and opportunity to gather, exchange ideas and work toward collective action to find solutions to their problems.

<p>I. Raise awareness about human rights abuses</p> <p>II. Improve networks of women from different communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women’s Day featured speeches, dramas, booths, etc.</li> <li>• Report on findings created</li> </ul>	<p>500 women attended</p>
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### 6. Soba Kantha

WCI and the Soba Kantha Environment Management & Community Development Foundation, an organization that promotes community-level conflict resolution, human rights and an improved standard of living for communities in the South of the country concluded a series of HIV/AIDS Awareness and Mobilization Trainings in August. This project was designed to address and mitigate the effects of the increasing prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Sri Lanka’s deep south. The southern belt of the country is a popular tourist area but also prone to widespread poverty due to a lack of comprehensive development, social services and limited job opportunities as well as the lingering effects of the 2004 tsunami. Many young men and boys are involved in a sex trade that caters to foreign tourists. Social stigma of those who contract HIV/AIDS and domestic violence are only two of the many consequences of tourism and increasing levels of HIV/AIDS.

Soba Kantha and WCI conducted 20 trainings for 400 women (each participant attended two trainings) from 10 villages. The trainings focused primarily on HIV/AIDS awareness, ways to convey information about the highly-stigmatized disease and how to deal with related issues of domestic violence and the high school drop out rate. In the workshops, which were conducted by doctors and experienced trainers, they stressed the importance of learning about HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment and encouraged participants to engage in open dialogue about HIV/AIDS within their families and communities.

Sobha Kantha also conducted a series of essay and art competitions for 500 male and female students in 10 schools in the area. The competitions, which were combined with trainings, aimed to raise awareness and stimulate dialogue about HIV/AIDS among the youth population.

I. Raise awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention and transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainings held in 10 villages</li> </ul>	900 people attended
II. Reduce Stigma associated with HIV/AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy campaigns conducted</li> </ul>	400 women launched community advocacy campaigns

7. Muslim Women’s Research and Action Forum (MWRAF)

WCI supported two women’s centers run by the Muslim Women’s Research and Action Forum (MWRAF) in Ampara, a highly conflict- affected city in Eastern Sri Lanka. MWRAF works with women from minority communities in the area and promotes their increased social, economic and political participation in their communities. The centers provide safe and accessible spaces for women who are often restricted by their communities from interaction with the wider community. Through this program, WCI supported six trainings at the centers on each of the following topics: health and nutrition; gender and conflict resolution; Muslim personal law; leadership and civic activism; peace-building; and progressive interpretations of the Q’uran. A total of between 54-70 women attended the trainings at both centers.

Following the trainings, MWRAF reported an increase in discussions and activities between the women affiliated with the centers. In particular, women are gathering at the centers more frequently to produce handicrafts and children’s clothes, which MWRAF then helps them sell. Since the trainings, more women who had previously been uninvolved with the centers have approached MWRAF to request the opportunity to participate in their activities. MWRAF reported that women from the Tamil and Muslim minority communities also engaged each and pledged to work toward mitigating tensions between the two communities which often lead to communal riots and tit-for-tat attacks. The tensions between the communities range from suspicion about the Tamil community’s affiliation to the separatists rebels, remaining trauma and anger over the ethnic cleansing of Muslims by the Tamil separatists rebels and competition over limited tracts of arable land in the East.

I. Enhance networks of women in East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainings conducted</li> </ul>	Approximately
II. Raise awareness about human rights abuses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal linkages</li> </ul>	140 women
III. Increase number of women with access to psycho-social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developed</li> </ul>	attended
IV. Increase number of financially independent women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurship and management training</li> </ul>	23 women added new income after center trainings
		22 women uses psycho social services

## **Colombia**

### *Country Overview*

Colombia has been plagued by pervasive political violence since its founding as a republic in 1819. Continuing clashes, mainly between guerilla, paramilitary and military forces, result in the deaths of approximately 3,000 Colombians annually. Approximately four million people have been displaced in Colombia – a displacement population second only to Sudan - with 2008 recording the highest level of Colombian forced migration recorded in 23 years. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Colombia lose their land, their property, their homes and communities to armed actors in search of strategic locations for rural base camps as well as drug cultivation and trafficking.

It is estimated that 54% of Colombia's IDPs are women, 30% of whom are now single heads of household caring for multiple family members with little to no income<sup>i</sup>. In addition, Colombia's displacement crisis is disproportionately affecting minorities. For example, while Colombia's Afro-descendent community account for 10% of the country's total population, 47% of displaced women are Afro-Colombian. In addition, indigenous groups in Colombia only account for 2% of the population, yet 49% of displaced women are of indigenous ethnicity.<sup>ii</sup> Most of these displaced women flee with their children and few possessions to urban centers as they seek security and work, mainly in the informal sector. Their search is made all the more difficult as jobs are scarce and they lack the documentation and finances needed for childcare, school enrollment or primary health care.

In addition to the issue of displacement, women in Colombia are both forcibly and voluntarily recruited into armed groups as combatants and sexual or domestic servants. A recent study estimated that 30-40% of those recruited into armed, non-state groups are women.<sup>iii</sup> However, only 6% of those exiting DDR programs are women and in the case of child soldiers, one quarter of those demobilized have been girls.<sup>iv</sup>

Despite the devastating impact Colombia's internal conflict has on women, they are consistently excluded from or under-represented at decision-making tables aimed at resolving national conflict. Quota systems to increase women's political representation have not been installed at the party level, only 12% of Colombia's national Congress is female, and the congressional women's caucus has been repeatedly denied official status, recognition or funding. In addition, Afro-Colombian and Indigenous women hold little to no presence in national elected offices. Nevertheless, in Colombian civil society, individual women and women's NGOs continue to be at the forefront of community-based advocacy, accountability and conflict transformation efforts country-wide.

### *Program Overview*

From March 2008 to March 2009, Women's Campaign International (WCI) officially launched a series of Conflict Transformation programs targeting women in Colombia. These programs were designed in partnership with five Colombian women's organizations of varying capacity and focus. While WCI has implemented programs in the Andean region in 1999 and 2000, program staff conducted an in-country assessment in October of 2007 to better examine the needs of conflict-affected women in Colombia specifically. After meeting with over 40 women-focused, grassroots organizations and government agencies in Colombia, WCI identified two major findings that would shape its program focus. The first key finding was that Colombia has an existing, highly advanced in-country civil society network and women's movement. Related to this finding was the fact that many organizations within Colombia hold general skepticism towards US organizations and their interests in conflict related issues. This finding

prompted WCI to operate solely in partnership with already-established program partners on the ground in Colombia, to both lend credibility to the programs and improve chances of sustainability.

The second key finding demonstrated that, while the women’s movement is very active and expansive in Colombia, its top-down linkages were fragmented. While there are various training programs established to promote women’s active political participation and conflict mitigation skills, these trainings mainly target elite women only. Subsequently, marginalized Colombian women of the non-elite, such as internally displaced, Afro-Colombian and indigenous women, have active program focuses, but mainly on relief and livelihood activities. Programs targeting marginalized women in Colombia rarely promoted their active participation in politics and rarely promoted that they form linkages with elite women or national-level politics and women’s networks. This finding led to WCI’s choosing of program partners that focused on better integrating internally displaced, indigenous and Afro-Colombian women into mainstream civil society and political processes as well as better networking them, as marginalized communities, with larger movements for women’s political participation and involvement in conflict mitigation processes.

### *Programs*

#### 1. Foundation for Community Support (FUNDAC)

On March 13, 2008, WCI worked with *Fundación de Apoyo Comunitario*, the Foundation for Community Support, (FUNDAC) to commemorate International Women’s Day in Bogotá. More than two-hundred women from various localities in Bogotá attended the forum. The event welcomed participants with a theater presentation and artistic commentary on the position of Colombian women throughout pivotal moments in the country’s history. The event also included a presentation on the current status of women and women’s rights in Colombia, a discussion on women within the context of national conflict, and an open-forum discussion on strategic action steps women can take in their various communities to advocate for change and greater attention towards the plight and leadership of women.

Objective	Main activities	Number trained
I. Review a history of women in Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theatrical presentation and social commentary</li> <li>• Status of women presentation</li> <li>• Community-based open forum discussion</li> </ul>	200 women
II. Identify current gender problems within the context of human rights and conflict in Colombia		
III. Generate discussion on these topics		
IV. Identify solutions women can take on the community level		
V. Engage local women to be leaders and demand change		

#### 2. Congreso Visible

From April to October 2008, WCI conducted a gender audit of the Colombian National Congress in collaboration with *Congreso Visible*, a University of the Andes-based for Political Science program. The program sought to critique the current gender-structure of the Colombian national Congress, the role and committee assignments of women members of Congress and the controversial debate over whether to install political party quotas and an official caucus for women elected officials. WCI and *Congreso*

*Visible* recruited the participation of two civil society organizations to launch the gender audit: Afro-America XXI in Cali and the City of Women for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Turbaco. Program participants thus included Afro-Colombian and Internally-displaced men and women interested in tracking the progress of gender-related legislation as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the Ad Hoc National Women’s Caucus in Congress. The program included the creation of a Congressional database available on the web for tracking gender-related legislation and members of Congress in the future. Activities concluded with program participants drafting policy critiques and presenting them in-person with women elected officials from the Colombian Congress.

Objective	Main activities	Number trained
I. Raise program participants’ awareness of the history, structure, functions and role of women within the Colombian National Congress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented training series on the Colombian Congress, public policy and gender analysis, and channels of political impact and communication in Cali and Turbaco</li> <li>• Drafted critiques/gender audits of Political Reform Act (related to caucus formation) and Quota-related draft legislation in Colombia with program participants</li> <li>• Drafted critique and action plan for Ad Hoc Women’s Caucus</li> <li>• Organized meeting between program participants and women members of Congress to present audit materials</li> <li>• Created gender portal on <i>Congreso Visible’s</i> online database</li> <li>• Facilitated meetings between Congressional staff members on the process of providing <i>Congreso Visible</i> with documentation for the website to increase transparency</li> </ul>	100 women
II. Increase the capacity of participants to critique public policy through the lens of gender analysis		
III. Identify current problems and potential solutions for national public policy related to women’s issues and gender mainstreaming		
IV. Increase the participation of IDP and Afro-Colombian women and their perspectives in Colombian politics and current and pending gender policy		
V. Increase channels of communication between marginalized women in Colombia and their nationally-elected officials		

### 3. Corporation for Social and Economic Research and Action (CIASE)

From May 2008 to March 2009, WCI and the Corporation for Social and Economic Research and Action (CIASE) implemented a program on the indigenous Arhuaco reservations in the Northwest region of Colombia. The Arhuaco are one of Colombia’s 27 indigenous groups at risk for extinction due to persecution and forced migration at the hands of armed groups. The Arhuaco community has been suffering in recent years from paramilitary violence, and the women of this indigenous community have become especially vulnerable due to acts of sexual violence and a lack of legal measures to address their specific rights and safety. WCI and CIASE’s program included various community-led activities – designed within the context of Arhuaco faith and spirituality – to generate discussion and gender- focused action plans within the Arhuaco reservation. These activities were extremely successful and culminated with a new needs assessment for recruiting Arhuaca women to serve as judges on the traditional Arhuaco legal Council. An incest case of a young Arhuaca girl violently raped and impregnated by her father prompted the inclusion of such discussions during WCI’s community sessions. WCI and CIASE are currently fundraising in order to implement a legal program for Arhuaca women in the future.

Objective	Main activities	Number trained
I. Uncover notions of gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community discussions on gender with</li> </ul>	100 men and

<p>equality within traditional Arhuaco teachings</p> <p>II. Build the capacity of Arhuaca women to address and advocate for their rights</p> <p>III. Build the capacity of Arhuaca women to serve as community leaders</p> <p>IV. Generate greater gender stability in a Colombian indigenous group at risk for extinction</p>	<p>Arhuaco men and women,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formation and strengthening of the Arhuaca women’s collective</li> <li>• Identification of new women leaders for tribal and religious posts with in the Arhuaca community</li> <li>• Capacity-building workshops for Arhuaca women to create community gender agendas</li> <li>• Trainings on effective communication techniques for discussing</li> </ul>	<p>women</p>
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#### 4. Management Systems International (MSI)

From July – November of 2008, WCI partnered with Management Systems International (MSI), to implement capacity-building trainings for three regional women’s networks in Colombia. The Colombian departments of Magdalena, La Guajira and Chocó were chosen for this program as they are marginalized and impoverished departments highly affected by Colombia’s conflict. In addition, Chocó’s population is overwhelmingly Afro-Colombian and one of the poorest departments in the country. Each of the three departments had existing women’s networks which sought to unite smaller women’s NGOs in each region under one umbrella group. However, the networks had not yet established strategic plans for joint programs and maximum impact within their membership and regions. WCI and MSI’s program thus designed a series of capacity-building and training of trainers activities for skill set development in networking, organizational management, institutional strengthening, gender issues advocacy and media.

Objective	Main activities	Number trained
<p>I. Strengthen regional women’s networks in Colombia</p> <p>II. Increase networking of women’s NGOs in three different regions</p> <p>III. Increase the capacity of three women’s networks to function as umbrella groups, form strategic alliances, development joint programs, and maximize program impact and membership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 training series for women NGO leaders/networks in Chocó, Magdalena and La Guajira</li> </ul>	<p>300 women members of NGOs (from 3 different women’s regional networks)</p>

5. Internally Displaced Women’s Collective: From July – December of 2008, WCI supported a partnership with the International Women’s League for Peace and Freedom in Colombia (LIMPAL) to create a collective of internally displaced women in the Meta Department. The displaced women in this region have mainly fled from the Northwest region of the country and settled in the city of Villavicencio, Meta in search of work. These program participants were single heads of household caring for multiple children. They have constructed make-shift housing out of scrap metal and currently live on a river bank. Through the WCI-LIMPAL program, a group of women leaders in this settlement established a common meeting space, became trained as leaders and provided local women with community-building activities. Trainings also covered topics such as human rights awareness and political impact. The activities culminated in a first annual national conference for internally displaced women in Cartagena, Colombia. One hundred women attended the conference from the internally displaced women’s camps in Villavicencio, San Jacinto and San Juan, Colombia.

Objective	Main activities	Number trained
I. Mobilize displaced women in Villavicencio to form a collective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify local women leaders</li> <li>Form a collective: recruit steering committee, members, develop constitution and activity assignments</li> </ul>	130 women
II. Increase the knowledge of the women's collective on human rights, advocacy, community planning and political impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide educational sessions and trainings on human rights, advocacy, community planning and political impact</li> </ul>	
III. Increase the capacity of the women's collective to advocate for their needs and rights from local elected officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess needs of Villavicencio's displaced women</li> <li>Develop individual and community action plans for displaced women</li> <li>Present action plans to local elected officials</li> </ul>	

In total, WCI's programs supported 15 new and existing organizations focused on women's rights in Colombia. Including the families of women participants and other women trained by WCI's program participants, 2,000 beneficiaries were impacted indirectly. Lastly, an estimated 500 people viewed the demonstration involved in WCI's International Women's Day Forum and 19,000 viewers visited WCI and *Congreso Visible's* online database of gender-related legislation and women's rights advocates in Colombian Congress.

## **Liberia**

### *Country Overview*

In early 2008, Women's Campaign International conducted its first in-country assessment in Monrovia and identified several key issues that disproportionately affect women through more than forty meetings with non-governmental organizations, government officials, and other stakeholders. As Liberia rebuilds and communities reconcile from almost fifteen years of civil conflict, it is critical that women are not only involved in this process but are leading it as well. Although Liberia is led by the first democratically-elected female president of Africa, there is still a great need to increase women's participation in decision-making processes especially at the regional and rural levels. Other pressing issues that WCI identified included networking women grassroots leaders throughout the country, skills and capacity building for local women's organizations, and gender mainstreaming among civil society and public officials.

### *Program Overview*

WCI's Liberia program partners were selected through a competitive process that assessed each organization's potential impact on enhancing women's leadership capacity and also promoting community conflict transformation. WCI supported 13 programs through 11 organizations. WCI then launched plans to work collaboratively with local organization to increase women's political, social and economic participation through sixteen programs benefitting participants from all of Liberia's fifteen counties.

### *Programs*

#### 1. Women's NGO's Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL)

WCI partnered with the Women NGO's Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL) to create and broadcast a series of radio interviews that featured prominent women political and civil society leaders. Twelve radio programs were recorded of which seven were publicly broadcast in two counties. Four follow-up town hall meetings were held to discuss issues raised through the programs and also those of concern to the relevant communities. These interviews and meetings created more awareness about leadership opportunities and WCI spoke with several women who expressed interest in becoming more involved in leadership and community development, and at least five women expressed interest in participating in national elections. Several obstacles were also identified during the meetings and radio broadcasts; the question of funding for women candidates also found a solution during one of the town hall meetings.

Objective	Activity	Numbers Reached
I. Raise awareness about individual women leaders and increase awareness on the importance of women's leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Series of radio programs</li> <li>• Community discussions</li> <li>• Town hall meetings</li> </ul>	170 women  25 men  More than 400 radio listeners

WCI also partnered with Women NGO's Secretariat of Liberia WONGOSOL to create a comprehensive database and directory of the various women's grassroots organizations operating throughout Liberia. Twenty people were trained in data collection and a total of 186 Liberian partner organizations were interviewed for this project. The information gathered includes details about the organizations their current and past work, their capacities and programmatic and institutional needs. The data collectors identified several fundamental problems in relation to the organizations that they surveyed. The most significant problems relate to the organizations' fundraising, human resource development, and institutional development. WONGOSOL has provided support to more than 10 of these groups to prioritize their organizational shortcomings and look for ways to improve their performance.

Objective	Activity	Numbers Reached
I. Collect comprehensive data relating to the relevant member organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training data collectors</li> <li>• Interviewing and profiling grass roots women's organizations</li> </ul>	15 women; 5 men trained in data collection techniques  186 organizations profiled

## 2. Society for Women's Action and Progress (SWAP)

WCI partnered with the Society for Women's Action and Progress (SWAP), a women's organization that works to address women's social and economic problems in under-served urban and rural areas on targeted HIV/AIDS and related awareness for vulnerable communities. Through this initiative WCI and SWAP created community awareness about the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, rape and violence against women, and female genital mutilation through a range of activities including trainings and workshops and through the setting up of Community Coordinating Committees and student Anti-AIDS Clubs. Participants were trained in HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence awareness/prevention in the 4 target towns/communities and the student population was sensitized community on HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence awareness/ prevention through the establishment of school Anti-AIDS Clubs.

The program directly trained 140 people in four communities in Gbarpolu County (Gbarma, Sappimah, Zuo and Wesuah) and reached more than 3000 people through direct and indirect awareness-raising

activities including door-to-door visits, public assemblies and meetings and through the distribution of awareness-raising materials.

Objective	Activity	Numbers Reached
I. Increase awareness about HIV/AIDS, prevention and care in targeted communities; II. Expand outreach of issues relating to HIV/AIDS and violence against women through community-led involvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community HIV/AIDS trainings</li> <li>Media campaign implemented including distributing more than 2500 HIV/AIDS leaflets, erecting 4 HIV/AIDS awareness billboards, and school assemblies.</li> </ul>	<p>140 community residents trained on HIV/AIDS</p> <p>1017 people reported an increased understanding of GBV</p> <p>996 students involved in school's Anti-AIDS club activities</p>

### 3. Society for Women and AIDS (SWAA)

WCI partnered with the Society for Women and AIDS Africa's Liberia branch (SWAA-Liberia) on a program to increase communities' awareness about preventing and mitigating violence against women, improve their conflict mediation skills and raise awareness on HIV/AIDS identification, prevention and care in Nimba county. SWAA advocates on issues related to women's health and welfare while building the capacity of women and girls to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS.

After first surveying more than 350 people, SWAA and WCI launched a range of program activities that included focus group meetings with community leaders, health care personnel, traditional midwives and members of civil society (men and women) to increase the communities' understanding about violence against women; workshops on the elimination of violence against women; capacity building workshops for peer educators. Six Violence Against Women Task Forces were set up as part of this program and trainings were conducted for 18 peer educators in door-to-door awareness work. SWAA also printed and distributed awareness-raising and publicity materials including T-shirts, posters and bags and pamphlets. SWAA and visiting WCI staff also participated in radio talk shows to raise awareness around the issue of HIV/AIDS and violence against women.

Objective	Activity	Numbers Reached
I. Increase community awareness about HIV/AIDS violence against women and II. Improve conflict mediation and prevention skills	<p>Conducted comprehensive community assessment of prior knowledge, attitudes, and awareness of HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Community HIV/AIDS trainings</p> <p>Gained community support of trainings through traditional and religious community leaders, women's groups, and community members who have supported and promoted the trainings and outreach activities</p> <p>Create violence against women task forces</p> <p>Policies and procedures, including a referral system, established and operational</p>	<p>18 peer educators trained and mobilized in communities</p> <p>325 participants interviewed</p> <p>750 people improved their understanding about HIV/AIDS, violence against women and its effects on the community</p> <p>24 people (6 communities)</p>

	for monitoring and reporting cases of violence against women – indicator met	trained to participate in task forces and trained in signs and symptoms of violence against women  11 cases of rape and violence against women reported
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#### 4. Women Aid Society (WAS)

WCI worked with Women Aid Society (WAS), which works to create awareness around HIV/AIDS, community development and peace-building. WAS is very successful in community outreach because of the wide use of drama and performance in its trainings. WAS uses these measures to reach out to a wide array of community members, especially those who are illiterate and would not normally benefit from formal trainings. WCI and WAS focused on training and awareness on preventing GBV, SEA and peace-building activities. Through this work, WCI and WAS trained and mobilized two communities in Klay and Salala Districts in Bomi and Bong Counties. More than 60 people were trained through workshops and retention trainings. The program mobilized the wider community through public forums, dramas, sports tournaments and through the distribution of awareness materials

Objective	Activity	Numbers Reached
I. Increase awareness about gender based violence (GBV); sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) among targeted communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SGBV and SEA trainings</li> <li>• Community outreach through songs, dramas and posters</li> </ul>	60 people (40 women; 20 men) were trained  200 people reached through community outreach activities

#### 5. National Women’s Commission of Liberia (NAWOCOL)

WCI and the National Women’s Commission of Liberia (NAWOCOL), one of the oldest Liberian women’s organizations, trained over 100 community members on conflict mediation skills and improved agricultural techniques in two volatile eastern border counties. The two communities were also encouraged to set up 13 peace clubs, each with a majority of women. These clubs are helping to improve women’s capacity to mediate in conflict and also to participate in community decision-making processes. Additionally, forty acres of land were communally farmed by women from different ethnic groups with a history of conflict.

NAWOCOL and WCI witnessed the strong interest among women about conflict resolution and ways to create and promote unity among the communities, especially relating to long-standing land disputes. The participants welcomed women from communities outside of their own with whom there remain tensions especially since the groups fractured along ethnic community lines during the 15-year conflict. However, many of the women have forged relationships and said they were willing to work across communal lines to promote peace-building and community development.

To foster the community resolution work, WCI signed another agreement with NAWOCOL in October 2008 to extend the program. During the extension, NAWOCOL provided refresher training workshops for program participants and formed facilitation teams to conduct a peace festival.

Objective	Activity	Numbers Reached
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<p>I. Improve women's capacity to mediate conflict and participate in community decision-making processes</p> <p>II. Enhance the agricultural skills of women and men farmers in 2 communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training men and women in conflict resolution techniques</li> <li>• Forming community peace clubs</li> <li>• Creating community agricultural plots</li> <li>• Hosting traditional peace festivals in two communities</li> </ul>	<p>110 people trained- 80 women and 30 men</p> <p>13 Community peace clubs formed</p> <p>130 participated in peace festivals</p>
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6. Women's Aid Inc. (WAI)

WCI and Women Aid Inc, a grassroots women's organization, provided skills training for one hundred fifty women and girls were in vocational skills (computer literacy and soap-making), literacy and numeracy. Additionally trainings were conducted for 200 women and girls, 30 law enforcement officers, 40 school authorities, and 30 health workers in Peace Building, Civic Education, and the prevention and management of Gender Based Violence (GBV), Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and HIV/AIDS to ensure their support of women's empowerment in the community.

Given the success of the first phase of the program, WCI extended the program with WAI to include additional trainings. From September through December 2008, WAI conducted 4 separate workshops which included women, adolescent girls, law enforcement officials, school officials and health workers, and trained 135 women and adolescent girls in skills training including computer literacy, soap-making and hair dressing, and business development skills. WAI conducted an impact assessment in September 2008, and provided support to 109 GBV/SEA cases referred to the center from June to September 2008. Survivors were escorted by WAI to and from the center for court proceedings, hearing and advance medical screening.

Objective	Activity	Numbers Reached
<p>I. Increase skills training for women</p> <p>II. Increase awareness on SGBV and violence against women</p> <p>III. Increase community understanding of women's roles in civic duty, community participation and peace-building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training men and women on women's civic engagement, SGBV, and HIV/AIDS</li> <li>• Training women in income generating and literacy activities including computer literacy, and soap making</li> <li>• Support given to facilitate the operation of a safe house for girls who have been victimized by sexual and gender based violence</li> </ul>	<p>250 people (25 men and 225 women) trained in civic education, community participation and peace-building</p> <p>35 women trained in computer literacy</p> <p>100 women and adolescents provided with basic literacy and numeracy skills</p> <p>75 women committed to ensuring that their daughters are educated and literate</p> <p>109 cases of SGBV have been reported to the center from June through September</p>

## 7. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC)

WCI partnered with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia to train community-based psychosocial counselors throughout the country and conducted sensitization trainings for male spouses and partners of women affected by the conflict. Through this partnership, WCI and the TRC also trained traditional female leaders on how to support communities dealing with post-conflict trauma and reintegration. Trainings were also conducted to target men on how to best support their female family members and partners who were affected by the conflict. The work culminated in a national women's conference, which was organized to bring together practitioners and experts to discuss and draft a series of recommendations for next-steps in the country's reconciliation process.

WCI extended the partnership with the TRC to also include trauma counseling for the Commissioners. It became evident during conversations with TRC Commissioner Massa Washington that the Commissioners themselves were becoming traumatized from listening to the difficult survivor testimony for months at a time. WCI provided funding for the 9 Commissioners to be professionally counseled over a period of four months.

Objective	Activity	Numbers Reached
I. Increase the number of community-based counselors and female elder leaders on how to support women affected by the conflict II. Provide sensitization training for spouses and partners of women affected by the conflict III. Provide psycho social training for the 9 Commissioners of the TRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainings conducted for psycho-social counselors from all counties</li> <li>• Training for female elders leaders on how to support female survivors</li> <li>• Training for men on how to support female family members and friends</li> <li>• National conference highlighting the importance of women's testimony as part of the TRC</li> <li>• Counseling for TRC Commissioners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>More than 2000 people</i></li> <li>• 15 community psycho-social counselors trained</li> <li>• 400 men</li> <li>• 24 Female elders</li> <li>• 9 Commissioners counseled</li> </ul>

## 8. Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation

WCI and the Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation at the University of Liberia launched a short-term project to conduct preliminary research into the possible religious radicalization among organizations in Liberia. The primary aim of the project was to develop an understanding about the role played by groups or organizations affiliated with various religions in Liberia's 15-year conflict. Five student researchers worked under the supervision of the Director of KAICT to gather the data through interviews and conduct other related field research. The final report is bound and due to the controversial nature of the study it is only available in hard copy at the University of Liberia's reading room.

Objective	Activity	Numbers Reached
I. Provide resources for the Conflict Transformation Center to be able to operate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computers secured</li> <li>• Research conducted</li> <li>• Report completed</li> </ul>	6 staff the Center  To be determined

## 9. Rural Integrated Center of Community Empowerment (RICCE)

WCI partnered with Rural Integrated Center of Community Empowerment, RICCE, a women’s organization, to implement a program that promoted the role of rural women as agents for community peace negotiations and mediation and to encourage inter-tribal reconciliation in Nimba County. Forty women were trained in community peace mediation techniques and these women reached over 3,600 participants through palava hut discussions and three peace festivals.

Objective	Activity	Numbers Reached
I. To promote the role of rural women as agents for community peace negotiations and mediation  II. To encourage inter-tribal reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct training of trainer peace workshops for women</li> <li>• Conduct trainings for community women, youth group leasers, local chiefs, Paramount Chiefs, Clan Chiefs, Elders and Zoes in community peace and women’s participation</li> <li>• Support participants in conducting a community inter-tribal peace initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 women received TOT training</li> <li>• 178 house to house discussions and 8 town hall meetings held, from which 3026 people benefitted</li> <li>• 160 people attended the inter-tribal roundtable discussion</li> </ul>

#### 10. CHF International

WCI partnered with CHF International to provide a one day refresher training for women leaders and conduct a Women’s Advocacy Day Celebration for ninety women in Lofa county. This program helped to build upon CHF’s previous leadership trainings for rural women in eastern Liberia.

Objective	Activity	Numbers Reached
I. To promote the role of rural women in local government through trainings and advocacy day celebration in Lofa county	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for ninety rural women leaders</li> <li>• Held Women’s Advocacy Day Celebration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90 women trained</li> <li>• More than 200 participants to Advocacy Day Celebration</li> </ul>

#### 11. International Women’s Colloquium

As part of the March 2009 International Colloquium for Women’s Empowerment, Leadership Development, International Peace and Security and WCI’s commitment to training the next generation of Liberia’s female leaders, WCI has been active in the planning of the Colloquium, served on the steering committee, and organized a campaign skills training for the Colloquium. As part of the Liberian launch of a National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 that ensures women’s involvement in issues of peace and security, WCI organized a half day training, “How to Run a Political Campaign and Craft your Message.” The training focused on creating an honest and strategic assessment of yourself as a candidate and how best to frame your message to voters. More than 100 participants including men and women attended the session, in addition to current Liberian Senators. The training featured:

- Television and radio campaign examples and campaign strategies from the current United States’ Vice President’s campaign manager, Valerie Biden-Owens

- Public speaking tips from Former member of US Congress and WCI founder, Marjorie Margolies
- Several important issues were identified during the question and answer portion of the training, including tips for using these skills in a more grassroots context.

Objective	Activity	Numbers Reached
I. To enhance the outreach of the International Colloquium with tangible leadership skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participated in Colloquium steering committee meetings</li> <li>• Training for 100 men and women interested in learning campaign skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90 women and 20 men trained</li> </ul>

WCI partnered with the Sirleaf Market Women’s Fund during the Colloquium to train forty market women in Kakata, a city about forty miles to the east of Monrovia. This training offered similar campaign skills to the training WCI conducted as part of the International Women’s Colloquium but with a greater focus on strategic planning for the market women, advocating for improvements to the marketplace, and contesting elections within the marketing association. Several participants shared not only their strengths, weaknesses, obstacles and threats as candidates but also their campaign slogans. WCI staff offered suggestions and critiques of example messages.

Objective	Activity	Numbers Reached
I. To build the leadership capacity of women marketers in the Sirleaf Market Women’s Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct training on strategic planning and media messaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 women received training</li> <li>• 10 market places reached near Monrovia</li> </ul>

WCI supported the International Women’s Empowerment and Leadership, Inc (IWEL) a non-profit organization created to support the outcomes and outreach of the International Women’s Colloquium. WCI helped to support the start-up expenses to create a mentoring and internship program at the Angie Brooks Center. Through Internships and Mentoring, MIAP goals are to empower women to be more effective leaders by linking with their peers from around the world and sharing best practices; engaging young people in supporting and embracing women’s empowerment, leadership development and contributions to international peace and development; and grooming future leaders. The Angie Brooks International Centre will provide leadership in the implementation of this effort. WCI funded capacity development such as office rental space, board insurance, financial management consultant and purchasing materials and supplies.

*Conclusion*

Under a grant awarded through H.R. 5631; House Report 109-676 – Making Appropriations for The Department of Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2007, WCI implemented its “Transforming Protracted Conflicts through Women’s Empowerment” programs (hereinafter “conflict transformation programs”) in three countries: Colombia, Sri Lanka and Liberia.

Women’s Campaign International (WCI) implemented a conflict mitigation program from August 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 to March 15, 2009 that built the capacity of women in decision-making processes, especially on

matters of peace, security, and conflict as a means of reducing political violence, terrorism and extremism. The program worked with civil society groups to create trainings, programs, and media campaigns focused on increasing the number of women leaders, enhancing advocacy skills, increasing their ability to participate effectively in conflict resolution and peace building and providing them with resources to implement these new skills.

The programs met the following objectives:

- Increase women's abilities to participate effectively in political decision-making at all levels;
- Build women's capacity to advocate for conflict transformation reforms;
- Enhance women's capacity to develop, lead and participate in conflict prevention, conflict transformation, negotiation and peace-building projects;
- Improve women's teaching, communication and outreach skills so that they may build the capacity of other women to engage in conflict resolution and peace-building activities;
- Build the capacity of local organizations to develop stronger financial and organizational management to effectively manage WCI's sub-grants and future grants from other donors in an effort to improve sustainability.

Specifically, the program has supported 27 initiatives and 31 organizations in Colombia, Liberia, and Sri Lanka. The organizations worked to create and participate in peace-building and conflict transformation efforts in cases of protracted conflict; impart skills and knowledge necessary to ensure that women's programs are sustainable; and build productive relationships between men and women leaders.

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<sup>i</sup> IMDC, 2008

<sup>ii</sup> CODHES, 2005

<sup>iii</sup> Kunz, Rahel. and Sjoberg, Ann-Kristin. "*Empowered or Oppressed? Female Combatants in the Colombian Guerrilla: The Case of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - FARC*" Feb 15, 2009 <2009-04-24> <[http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p310466\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p310466_index.html)>

<sup>iv</sup> WILPF, 2007