



**WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN INTERNATIONAL  
PRELIMINARY PROGRAM IDEAS REPORT  
PALESTINE**

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## Summary

Women's Campaign International (WCI), funded by USAID, is considering implementing a program in Palestine. Palestine is being considered, along with Azerbaijan and Afghanistan, as it meets WCI's country selection criteria. WCI made this determination by conducting desk research and two assessments, one in Washington, DC, and the other in Palestine. At this time, WCI has not made a final decision whether it will implement a program in Palestine, and if so, what that program would entail. That decision should be made by the end of the second week of August after WCI determines its program plans for Azerbaijan and funding that will remain.

Based on the desk research and the information received during the assessments, WCI has developed five programming ideas, in order of current preference: 1) Promoting young women's participation in politics; 2) Supporting a local watch group to ensure that women are included on party lists of candidates; 3) Improving the capacity of municipal and legislative council women representatives after the elections in West Bank and Gaza; 4) Building capacity of women to participate in the peace negotiations; and 5) Supporting women candidates, focusing on rural women and "soft Islamists". Based on a preliminary determination, WCI is inclined to implement a program to promote young women's participation in politics.

## Background

In 2002, WCI was awarded a grant from USAID to increase women's participation in democratic and political processes so they are a part of the decision-making processes that impact their lives. Under this grant, WCI has implemented programs in Tanzania and Namibia and has ongoing programs in Malawi and Ethiopia. WCI will choose one to two additional countries, depending on funding availability and costs for current programs, in which to implement programs. The criteria that WCI uses in selecting countries for new programs are:

1. Scheduled elections within 12 months of assessment visit;
2. Articulated governmental interest in women's involvement in political participation;
3. Political parties have shown understanding and commitment to women's participation;
4. Local network of existing, effective NGOs, women's organizations, etc; organizations are present to cooperate in implementing and complement WCI programs;
5. USAID presence in country; and
6. Expressed support for a WCI program by government agencies.

WCI had "Identification as a fragile, failing, failed, and recovering state" (failing state criteria) as a selection criteria; however, after recent consultations with USAID, it was removed as, with its Ethiopia program, WCI had already met USAID's requirement that WCI implement a program in a fragile or failing state.

After conducting initial desk research, with failing state criteria in tact, WCI had narrowed its selection to Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine, and Afghanistan. WCI eliminated Lebanon and Egypt primarily due to lack of evidence under criteria number 3, demonstration of political party commitment to women's participation. After an assessment in Washington, DC, and consultations with USAID Afghanistan, WCI and USAID determined that a pre-election program in Afghanistan would be too risky for women candidates. Therefore, WCI eliminated

Afghanistan as a consideration for pre-election program activities; however, WCI may conduct post-election activities, depending on funding and costs for other programs. After further consultation with USAID Washington and the removal of the failing state criteria, WCI reconsidered Azerbaijan, a country which met other criteria and for which WCI had earlier conducted desk research.

During July, WCI conducted in-country assessments in Azerbaijan and Palestine to determine whether it would implement programs in those countries and what those programs would entail. WCI has concluded that there is both a high need and demand for a program in Azerbaijan, much higher than in Palestine as women in Azerbaijan have become highly organized, forming their own coalition amongst multiple parties, and there aren't many organizations focusing on the issue. However, there is also political risk involved in implementing a program in Azerbaijan due to political tensions between the ruling party and opposition. WCI is currently determining what type of program it will implement in Azerbaijan, the corresponding costs, its current budget and then determine what type of program it would implement in Palestine. WCI is currently inclined towards implementing a program to increase young women's participation in political decision-making. However, human resource demands and funding must be considered before a final determination is made.

## Methodology

WCI began its assessment of a potential program in Palestine by conducting desk research. Following the desk research, WCI conducted telephonic and email interviews with representatives from international organizations implementing programs in Palestine and a representative from the Palestinian Authority and local organizations. WCI then conducted a two-day assessment in Washington, DC, on June 1 and 2. Finally, WCI conducted an in-country assessment from July 17- 22. The purpose of WCI's assessment was to:

1. Determine current program coverage and gaps in increasing women's participation in political decision making and supporting women candidates;
2. Identify potential program needs in supporting women's participation in political decision making;
3. Obtain an overview of issues/themes of importance to women and women's groups;
4. If training is a need, identify specific and relevant training needs;
5. Identify potential in-country partners, resources persons, consultants and/or hires;
6. Obtain logistics and security advice.

In Palestine, WCI met with representatives from six international and eight local civil society organizations, two Palestinian Authority representatives, two candidates for PLC and Municipal Councils, two political party representatives, and two representatives from USAID. Please see the attached schedule for more details.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Research document and meeting notes will be referenced and attached once finalized.

## Findings

WCI's findings, with a focus on issues being considered for program ideas, are as follows.

### **Selection Criteria**

#### *1. Scheduled elections within 12 months of assessment visit;*

Palestine has ongoing municipal elections. Two rounds have been held, one in January and one in June. However, the largest (and according to some, most contentious) municipalities, such as Ramallah, Bethlehem, Gaza City, etc have yet to hold their elections. Some are expected to be held in September, while others may be in December, but dates are still unclear. In addition, Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections should be held in January, although the date is not firm for those elections either. However, the Palestinian Authority is under a lot of pressure to hold the elections by the end of January.

#### *2. Articulated governmental interest in women's involvement in political participation;*

After intense lobbying by local women's groups, the PLC passed legislation that mandates that two out of the nine to thirteen seats in each municipal council is filled by women. Half of those filling the 132 PLC seats will be elected based on block vote, the other half by proportional representation. Women must represent 20% of those on the party lists on the proportional representation ballot. This legislation is a fairly explicit expression of the government on their support for women in political decision-making. However, WCI found some degree of skepticism during the assessment that women will be placed high enough to meet the 20% quota

#### *3. Political parties have shown understanding and commitment to women's participation;*

At this time, there are essentially four parties/groupings of parties: FATEH; small parties, most of whom are secular, that are currently part of the PLO; Hamas and other Islamist parties; and a potential "third way", consisting of individuals and groups who would like to present an alternative to those tired of the current government but who do not represent the Islamist point of view. The "third way" has not yet formed a formal political coalition or list. There was much speculation regarding whether that would happen. Of those parties/groupings, according to the participation and results of the municipal elections, Hamas has demonstrated the strongest commitment to women's political participation. However, some felt that fielding women candidates by Hamas was not a commitment to women's participation but rather a strategy to win more municipal seats as women were guaranteed two seats in each municipality. However, FATEH and the smaller parties with representation in the PLC passed the legislation and are demonstrating a superficial commitment to greater women's participation. According to those WCI met with, it is anticipated that the "third way" would probably demonstrate the strongest commitment to women's political participation.

#### *4. Local network of existing, effective NGOs, women's organizations, etc; organizations are present to cooperate in implementing and complement WCI programs;*

While in Palestine, WCI learned of a loose coalition of approximately 12 local NGOs (names of members needs yet to be determined) that have been working actively to increase women's participation in political decision-making. That group was the one whom lobbied for a change in the law to include a quota for women's representation. In addition, there are several women's organizations working towards increasing women's participation in political decision-making. The most well-know and well-funded is MIFTAH (the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of

Global Dialogue and Democracy, which is headed by Hanan Ashrawi). MIFTAH has a grant from IRI to provide support to women candidates. The Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC) has also provided support to women's organizations, but unfortunately WCI did not have the opportunity to meet with them and therefore the details of their program are unknown. Although there are several groups working towards an increase of women in political decision-making, many of the efforts are fairly ad hoc and all expressed the need for more support.

*5. USAID presence in country; and*

USAID has a large portfolio in Palestine. USAID supports the development of a Palestinian democracy through one of their six strategic objectives focused on democracy and governance. The programs promote the establishment of a modern legislature, strengthen critical political processes such as elections, lay the foundations for the rule of law and a viable justice system, and empower a robust civil society. USAID has supported free and fair elections through international observation, technical and material assistance to the Palestinian Elections Commission, and civil society grants for domestic observation and voter education. USAID helps key Palestinian partner organizations in the process towards elections and provides technical assistance on the administrative conduct of elections. The program focuses particularly on women's inclusion in all aspects of the electoral process.

*6. Expressed support for a WCI program by government agencies.*

WCI met with only two government entities, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, represented by Khadijeh Abu Ali, Deputy Minister, and the Prime Minister's office, represented by Amal Jadou, Foreign Policy Advisor. Ms. Abu Ali expressed a strong interest in WCI implementing a program in Palestine. She was a former leader in the coalition of women lobbying for the quota and stated that support for women candidates is still needed. Although the Ministry has a program to build the capacity of women recently elected to the municipal councils, the program is limited in scope and funding and the Ministry would welcome complementary programs. Ms. Jadou is a leader in the FATEH youth movement and stressed the need for more support to be provided for this segment of population, particularly for girls. She stated that there are very few young women within any of the ministries who are not in clerical or support positions and feels that their representation needs to be increased through leadership programs.

**Assessment Purpose**

As stated above, the purpose for conducting the assessment was as follows:

*1. Determine current program coverage and gaps in increasing women's participation in political decision making and supporting women candidates*

WCI's initial assessment (desk research and DC visit) indicated that perhaps there weren't any gaps in programming for supporting women's participation in political decision-making. With regards to support for candidates in the municipal and PLC elections, IRI and NDI are both implementing programs to train women candidates, IRI through MIFTAH and NDI through its political party program. MIFTAH has technical assistants posted in nine districts (Women Election Support Points – WESP) providing training and technical assistance to approximately 15-20 women candidates in each district for both the municipal and PLC elections. MIFTAH conducted four trainings for 25 women held in both Ramallah and Nablus. In addition, MIFTAH is implementing a media campaign promoting women candidates. MIFTAH also has a program

to build the capacity of women to participate in the peace negotiations. The NDI is training primarily women candidates from FATEH and some of the smaller parties.

Other ad hoc programs exist as well. Often, during the assessment, interviewees would mention that there were other programs but when pressed for details, the only effort that they were familiar with was MIFTAH. Many individuals mentioned WATC as well, but were not familiar with WATC's program. In addition, WCI met with several individuals and groups that allegedly had programs to support women candidates, but many were unable to give details of those programs, and often the programs were ideas for programs rather than programs actually being implemented. The Palestinian Working Women for Society (PWWS) was the most specific stating that they were conducting an awareness campaign in Bethlehem, Ramallah and Jenin. The program encourages women to participate in politics by working with women's groups, showing films and training women leaders and candidates. They also hosted women from South Africa to discuss and learn about conflict resolution and peace and reconciliation. PWWS is implementing a media campaign (magazine, television and radio) encouraging women to vote and to vote for women.

After further and deeper exploration, WCI determined that there were several gaps that needed to be filled. Those needs are addressed below under Program Ideas.

*2. Identify potential program needs in supporting women's participation in political decision making*

Program needs are discussed below under Program Ideas.

*3. Obtain an overview of issues/themes of importance to women and women's groups*

WCI met with men and women, older women and younger women, well-educated and less-educated, government representatives, civil society organizations, candidates, secularists, devoutly religious, and internationals and Palestinians. Most of those with whom WCI met expressed a concern about the growing influence of Hamas and Islamists. Several expressed concern about the potential "Talibanization" of Palestinian society. Most expressed a need to raise awareness and acceptance of women's participation in leadership positions in order to influence the formation of the Palestinian state. There was a particular emphasis on the need to increase young women's participation in political decision-making and on providing support to women once they are elected, particularly at the municipal level as there is now a quota and women may not be well-accepted or qualified. In addition, women expressed a desire to be involved in peace negotiations with Israel and to increase their capacity to do this.

*4. If training is a need, identify specific and relevant training needs*

Normally, when WCI is conducting an in-country assessment desk research and the US-based assessment have indicated that women candidates are in need of support, often that support is in the form of training. During this assessment however, WCI was not focused on training women to run for office. The assessment was much broader, looking for other entry points for increasing women's participation in political decision-making. Therefore, we did not identify specific training needs.

5. *Identify potential in-country partners, resources persons, consultants and/or hires*

Same as above.

6. *Obtain logistics and security advice*

Same as above.

### **Young Women**

During the assessment, many different people with whom WCI consulted emphasized the need to increase the interest and capacity of young women in political decision-making. In Palestine, the “old guard”, the colleagues of Yassir Arafat and other leaders in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), are currently defending what they feel is their entitlement to lead all aspects of government due to many years in which they led the Palestinian struggle against Israel. One individual stated that approximately 200 current FATEH members expect that they will be included in FATEH’s party list for proportional representation seats. The result has been that those who are 10-20 years younger who have an interest in and capacity to govern have been left out of the process. Also many feel that because of their participation in the struggle but the grip that Arafat and his colleagues hold on political power, that they have been deprived of their “right” to lead. Yet, another group, those under 35, have a rising yet different interest in political leadership. The ones we met with expressed a strong concern about the influence of Hamas. WCI learned of the limited number of women involved in University-level politics, where student council representatives are elected according to their party, and the limited number of women who are in the government aside from support positions. The need to increase women’s interest in ability to take leadership positions is needed. This early involvement in political party politics provides a good entry point for preparing women to take leadership positions and to assist in forming policy towards women within the political parties.

### **Watch Group**

In the upcoming PLC elections, half of the 132 seats will be chosen using block vote and the other half will be elected according to proportional representation. WCI asked several interviewees how the party will select who will be on the list. Although one or two thought it would be by popular vote, most thought the individuals will be chosen by a few elites within the party. As mentioned previously, groups are training candidates in campaign methods to increase their ability to run and get elected in the block vote system. However, emphasis has not been on increasing the number of women on the political party lists. Several individuals mentioned that strategies need to be developed to help women in this area.

### **Post-election Capacity Building**

As mentioned above, the municipal councils will have, at a minimum, two women on each 9 – 13 member municipal council. These women may win their seats based on the highest number of votes of all candidates; however, they may win based on having the highest number of votes for a “women’s seat”. It is anticipated that the number of women who win by the popular vote will be limited. It is also anticipated that women may have problems being received by their male colleagues. Men can place logistical barriers to women’s participation, such as holding meetings very late at night, and can make it difficult for women to assert their voice, especially in representing other women. Therefore, assistance is needed for women to be able to participate effectively in their new positions and to affect change. This assistance is needed in both the

municipal councils and PLC; however, several individuals felt the need would be greater and the acceptance of women would be less in the municipal councils. The Ministry of Women's Affairs will be implementing capacity building trainings in several municipalities but their capacity is limited and welcome efforts that will compliment their activities.

The difficulty in proceeding with this option is the ban on providing material support to Hamas. Hamas won a significant number of seats in the municipal councils that have been elected thus far. We don't know how many seats Hamas will win in the PLC elections, but it looks likely that they will be represented. When WCI spoke with USAID OTI, which has a program to provide support to the councils, they were also facing this issue. They are awaiting further word from the USG. WCI will continue to monitor the situation to determine whether this option is viable.

### ***Participation in the Peace Process***

The Women's Affairs Technical Committee was formed to support the work of the negotiating teams during the Peace talks. However, women have had limited impact and participation in these talks. New efforts are being made through the International Women's Commission with 15 Palestinian, 15 Israeli, and 15 from other countries being represented. MIFTAH has a program to increase women's ability to participate in peace negotiations but the program is limited in scope and funding. Several individuals we met with felt that more assistance is needed.

### ***Supporting Candidates***

As mentioned previously, women are receiving training to run for office. However, mostly elite women are being targeted. Rural women have been left out. Some individuals interviewed believed that by targeting women in areas that are considered to be more conservative, WCI would be filling a unique niche in areas in which there is still need. In particular, it was mentioned that WCI should focus on the devoutly religious, those who might be frustrated by FATEH and, therefore, inclined to support Hamas, but if provided a third alternative, would likely choose it.

## **Program Ideas**

To reiterate, as a result of this assessment, WCI has developed five programming ideas: 1) Promoting young women's participation in politics; 2) Supporting a local watch group to ensure that women are included on party lists of candidates; 3) Improving the capacity of municipal and legislative council women representatives after the elections; 4) Building capacity of women to participate in the peace negotiations; and 5) Supporting women candidates, focusing on rural women in Gaza and the West Bank and "soft Islamists". For all programming ideas, the current funding level is unknown and therefore details are not provided. WCI will determine by the second week of August the budget ranges for Azerbaijan and Palestine or another sentence to determine how we will know funding levels. Once funding is known, details will be added. However, WCI's current grant is until the end of May 2006 and it is not anticipated that it will be extended and therefore, program activities would take place between September 2005 and May 2006.

### ***Young Women***

Under this option, WCI is considering a leadership training program for approximately 15 to 20 young women (under 35) in increasing their interest and participation in political decision-

making and leadership through a combination of trainings, internships, and exchanges. The targets of these trainings could include women who are currently in the ministries or are active participants in political parties in the Universities and would be chosen through a competitive selection process. The training would focus on basic leadership skills as well as political skills. An illustrative list of topics could include the following. Based on further assessment, WCI would determine the needs of those participating.

**Leadership Skills:** WCI would focus on improving women's participation in political decision-making. In order to participate more fully, women need to gain leadership skill that can be used in public office as well as in nongovernmental organizations and in the private arena. Topics could include:

1. Identifying and overcoming barriers to women's leadership and political participation
2. Qualities of an effective leader
3. Identifying and mobilizing potential leaders
4. Public speaking
5. Confidence building
6. Grassroots organizing

**Running for Political Office:** A significant part of participating in political decision-making is increasing women's representation in political decision-making bodies. In this case, WCI would focus on women interested in running for the student councils with an interest in running for higher political office. Topics could include:

1. Qualities of a viable candidate
2. Mobilizing potential woman candidates
3. Campaign planning and strategies
4. Election Laws and Processes
5. Gathering Support
6. Campaign messages
7. Voter outreach strategies
8. Using the Media/Media relations
9. Budgeting and financing a campaign

**Being an Elected Leader:** Getting beyond the numbers is a central focus of WCI's programs. Women need to be effective elected leaders once they get into office, in this case, the student council. WCI works with women elected leaders to improve their capacity. Topics include:

1. Strategies to Prepare Women as Elected Officials
2. Building and Strengthening an Effective Women's Caucus
3. Roles and Responsibilities of Elected Officials
  - a. Drafting and amending legislation
  - b. Government oversight
  - c. Committees
  - d. Political Parties
4. Roles and Responsibilities of Government Institutions and Structures
5. Using the Media/Media relations
6. Constituent outreach
7. Relationships, alliances and networking with civil society
8. Representation of Women
9. Gender Analysis of Policies and Legislation

10. Lobbying
11. Coalition building
12. Political Party relations

**Civic Education:** In order for women (both citizens and elected officials) to pressure government to respond to their needs, they need to understand how government works. WCI trains women in understanding decision-making bodies and the types of decisions they make. In addition, in order for women to make more informed choices about who will represent them in these offices, they need to understand how election processes work. Topics include:

1. Roles and Responsibilities of Government Institutions and Structures
  - Overview of Public Policy Decision-Makers: Roles and Responsibilities of the Three Arms of Government
  - National Policy-Making Processes
  - Rules, Regulations and their Enforcement
  - From Bill to Law: The Legislative Process and How It Can be Influenced
2. Roles and Responsibilities of Government Officials
  - The Legislature: Role and Functions of Parliament (National Assembly) and Members of Parliament
  - Parliamentary Committees
3. Election Laws and Processes
4. Legal Literacy

**Advocacy:** In many countries in which WCI works, change in public policy needs to occur in order for women to participate in political life. Nongovernmental organizations and elected officials need to understand how to create that change. WCI conducts training advocacy training for women to target the issues that they identify as most important to advancing women's rights. Topics include:

1. Identifying Your Issue
  - a. Identify the Issue
  - b. Define the Problem
  - c. Identify your Solution
  - d. Consider the Risks
  - e. Develop Goals and Objectives
2. Identifying Your Targets
  - a. Primary
  - b. Secondary
  - c. Identifying allies and obstacles
3. Conducting Your Research
4. Building Coalitions
5. Developing your Core Message
6. Taking Action
  - a. Public Education and Public Awareness Campaigns
  - b. Meetings
  - c. Petitions
  - d. Protests
  - e. Persuasive meetings with decision-makers (Lobbying)

7. Evaluating
8. Taking Follow-up action

**Training Skills:** Experience has demonstrated that a separate session focusing on these skills is important in order for participants to be able to share what they have learned with others. Topics include:

1. Adult Learning
2. Facilitation Skills
3. Training Techniques
4. Managing Group Dynamics
5. Giving and Getting Feedback
6. Preparing for a Workshop
7. Preparing a Workshop Session Plan
8. Pre- and Post-Workshop Knowledge Assessment and Evaluation

**Conflict:** WCI aims to increase both the level and quality of women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution, and peace building initiatives in their countries.

1. Examine effects of conflict on women (gender-based violence, increase in trafficking, abuse by military)
2. Introduce a definition of national security that examines it as one of human security.
3. Explore the gender differences in conflict resolution and peace building
4. Determine ways in which the Koran, Hadieth, and Bible can be used for resolution of conflict
5. Improve negotiation and communication skills
6. Build conflict prevention, resolution and peace building skills

### **Watch Group**

Under this option, WCI would provide support a watch group that would monitor the development of the political party lists for the proportional representation seats. The watch group would consist of men and women, youth, representatives from political parties, NGOs, and elected representatives. WCI might partner with the existing coalition of NGOs who lobbied for the quota or another group that might be interested. Using a media campaign consisting of a combination of radio, TV, newspaper, billboards and other media, the watch group would make it known that they are carefully monitoring the development of the lists. Once the lists were created, the watch group would analyze the list and publicize, once again using the media, their recommendations on the lists. The Watch Group might also consider putting forward a list of women whom it considers viable candidates.

### **Post-election Capacity Building**

Under this option, WCI would provide training and technical assistance to the newly elected women municipal councilors or PLC representatives. WCI is inclined to focus on the municipal councilors because the training could take place starting immediately and, due to the quota, many individuals stated that the municipal councilors are more likely to need support. Training would include basic skill building in areas discussed above on *Being an Elected Leader* and potentially on *Advocacy*. WCI could also consider providing a subgrant to a group of newly elected women councilors to carry out an advocacy campaign on an issue of importance to them.

### ***Participation in the Peace Process***

MIFTAH currently has a program to support women to participate in the peace negotiations with Israel although the program is limited as mentioned above. They indicated that additional support is needed. MIFTAH is providing support and training to the IWC. Bisan, the program officer for election-related programs at MIFTAH, mentioned the need for more support but said that WCI should get in touch with the program officer responsible for conflict and peace negotiations. Unfortunately, WCI did not have the time to meet with her and so more details regarding what types of support were needed were not discussed. However, WCI has a relationship with CMPartners, a Boston-based conflict management organization that recently put together a proposal with MIFTAH, and WCI could partner with them to provide additional support.

### ***Supporting Candidates***

WCI has provided training and technical assistance to women candidates in many different countries. Topics that would likely be covered are those listed above under ***Leadership Skills*** and ***Running for Elected Office***. Other programs exist to training women candidates; however, the two gaps that WCI identified were rural women and those living in areas that are Hamas-strongholds, but for which there are women candidates who could provide an alternative to Hamas.

## **Conclusion**

As stated above, at this time, WCI is leaning towards implementing a program for young women. In our interviews, an emphasis on young women was the area in which there was the greatest consensus of need and the least amount of focus. Although some programs exist for promoting youth in leadership, according to our knowledge, a particular emphasis on building the political skills of young women does not. In addition, a focus on young women is not bound by a particular schedule, as any program tied to the elections would be, such as the Watch Dog group, post-election training, and supporting candidates. Given the finite dates of WCI's funding (with an end date in May) and the fluidity of the situation of the elections, a focus on young women would allow us to implement a program that would not be derailed by further postponement of the elections. Final details of that program will be available soon.