



3701 Chestnut St. \* Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Friends,  
Women's Campaign International has had a very active year. Our financial situation is currently secure—thanks, in part, to a one-year extension of our USAID grant. That achievement follows the outstanding performance of our teams on the ground. We now have field offices up and running in Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Malawi. Both Rakeb Abate, our Program Manager in Addis, and Roger Yocheison, former USAID head of mission in Malawi, have done remarkable work in Ethiopia. Despite security concerns, we were able to run two very successful trainings in Kabul. Thanks to our staff's efforts, WCI will likely be partnering with other outstanding organizations in the field, including CARE, the United Nations Development Fund, and the United Nations Population Fund, to name a few.

Developing partnerships with such organizations has provided new opportunities for WCI throughout the world. I recently traveled to Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Ghana with the International Financial Corporation. WCI participated in and helped to organize conferences for the empowerment of women entrepreneurs. The feedback we received was delightful. WCI was extremely proud to have aided so many women gain the confidence and resources they need to help their small businesses grow.

### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

One of WCI's most groundbreaking programs is currently being implemented in Malawi. After WCI trainings helped double the number of women in Malawi's Parliament, we mobilized the Women's Caucus and initiated an inspirational HIV/AIDS training. Following that training, the women Members of Parliament (MPs) agreed to be publicly tested for the virus. This was a difficult decision for the women, but they were determined to set a positive example for their communities. It was a dramatic moment – which we were delighted to send it to anyone who is interested.



WCI likes to expand the ABCs of the pandemic (Abstinence, Being faithful, and Condoms) to 'D' and 'E' as well: Detection and Education. As always, I am trying to receive my 'black belt' in fundraising. WCI received quite a few grants from the Pennsylvania Department of Community Economic Development this year, and we continue to maintain good relations with this resource. Although fundraising is a constant challenge, we are making progress. Any thoughts or suggestions on the subject of fundraising are always wildly appreciated.

Have a happy and healthy 2007!  
Marjorie Margolies

# Taking on the big issues

## MALAWI

In August, WCI's Malawi office became fully operational. The office's first major accomplishment was successfully uniting the Ethel Mutharika Foundation (EMF) and the Women's Caucus in order to launch the HIV/AIDS Advocacy Campaign.

With 940,000 HIV-positive Malawians, and most of them women, the epidemic remains the country's largest concern.

The HIV/AIDS Advocacy Campaign aims to increase the influence of the Women's Caucus on related public policy by training them about important aspects of the pandemic.

As part of the program, WCI launched a media campaign designed to educate the public about HIV/AIDS, specifically focusing on the ways that the virus is transmitted. The campaign utilizes billboards, television and radio programs in order to reach as many citizens of Malawi as possible. Radio programs featuring the First Lady and members of the Women's Caucus are broadcast daily on three popular radio stations in Malawi. Additionally, four television advertisements are currently being broadcast four days a week on Television Malawi. These advertisements are followed by an eight minute documentary in which women MPs encourage citizens to get tested for HIV (women MPs led by example by undergoing HIV testing in November 2004). The documentary also advocates for changing policies that contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

A survey conducted by WCI confirmed that the advertisements were well-received by the public. Recently, one MP, Callista Chapola-Chimombo, wrote to WCI saying that "I have been listening to the HIV/AIDS messages by the Malawi Women's Caucus and they are so good. Everyone is talking about them." It has



also been encouraging that, due to public demand, the TV and radio stations have been broadcasting some material about HIV/AIDS of their own volition. Additionally, the local print media has carried newspaper articles echoing the messages from the HIV/AIDS Advocacy Campaign, also indicating that the campaign has been successful thus far.

In the coming months, in addition to continuing the media campaign, WCI will facilitate meetings between the First Lady, the Women's Caucus, the government, civil rights groups, local leaders and the faith community in order to strategize more tactics to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Malawi.



**THINKING IT THROUGH:** At a training in Afghanistan, participants brainstorm about the issues faced by women.

## Activities commence in Afghanistan

### AFGHANISTAN

Despite Afghanistan's deteriorating security situation, WCI began program activities in the country, including an intensive training workshop for Provincial Councilors.

In August 2006, both men and women Provincial Councilors from three provinces came to Kabul and participated in an intensive holistic training. WCI trained nine women and 26 men in afternoon sessions over an eight day period.

The curriculum of the program included the following topics: Introduction to Empowerment; Core Beliefs and Values Manifestation Principles; Personal Power and Emotions; Self Awareness and Gender; Self Perception, Relationships, Body and Mind; Money, Power and Corruption; Work Vision; Work Relationships; Leadership and Power Dynamics at Work; and Communications and Conflict Resolution.

To effectively work with traumatized participants, the sessions used holistic teaching approaches including meditation, creative arts, empowerment methods, role playing, drawing and group work. Post-workshop evaluations indicated that the response to the training was overwhelmingly positive.

As a result of the training WCI conducted, a national NGO pledged to donate funds for purchasing school desks for the province of Wardak. WCI is currently coordinating this purchase and delivery.

## Strategic thinking, coalition-building, and taking action in Ethiopia

### ETHIOPIA

This summer, WCI continued its gender and leadership programs in Ethiopia, where our efforts to mentor and train MPs were extremely well received. In July, WCI held a successful three-day "Strategic Thinking, Coalition-Building and Taking Action" workshop for women MPs, allowing WCI to help provide information about the gender related issues they find most important.

The workshop participants chose HIV/AIDS, fistula, girls' school drop out rates and sexual harassment as areas of particular interest. WCI then asked local experts to speak at the workshop, so that the MPs could develop working relationships with the people in Ethiopia who are at the forefront of dealing with these issues.

During discussion, participants created drafts of action plans for advocacy campaigns on the four issues they had chosen, and are preparing to submit them to the parliamentary leadership.

In evaluations following the training, many of the MPs indicated that the workshops had increased their knowledge on gender related issues, and had provided them with the skills necessary to address such issues.

One woman MP wrote, "I used to think Fistula was caused as a result of labor

and early marriage but I did not have in-depth knowledge about the issue. But now I also know how to generate solutions for the problem."

Others said that they felt the trainings had empowered them, helped them understand the relevance of the aforementioned issues, and provided them with the knowledge necessary to address them.

Based on this positive feedback, WCI has already begun planning additional workshops and trainings in Ethiopia. This month, WCI intends to hold a leadership training session for parliamentary staff and committees, focusing on bill review, oversight and gender analysis.

In an additional workshop, WCI will lead committee members through an interactive exercise to improve participants' ability to analyze gender as it relates to legislation, and to oversee government activity in the future.

Finally, WCI is also planning a new program in Ethiopia with the goal of building the skills of the Women's Affairs Standing Committee to perform its oversight, legislative and outreach roles effectively. These efforts will serve to improve the political and electoral climates in Ethiopia, especially as they pertain to women.

*WCI trainings help women leaders to tackle issues like obstetric fistula, a devastating but entirely treatable complication of childbirth*



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