

## Letter from the President



Dear Friends,

Women's Campaign International has grown so much since our last newsletter there is barely enough space here to discuss it all! The acceptance of our Conflict Transformation grant from the U.S. Department of Defense has truly transformed WCI's programs and staff.

I am pleased to announce that, after a very extensive search, WCI has hired a new Executive Director, Nina Covrijan. Nina brings international banking expertise from her 14-year experience with Wachovia and Sovereign Banks, and where she also worked with USAID to provide financial capacity-building workshops in emerging market economies. WCI is excited to work with Nina in developing these themes as new competencies for WCI trainings in our countries of operation. In addition, since our last newslet-

ter, WCI hired a Director of Programs, Dilshika Jayamaha, to guide the process of implementing our new Conflict Transformation Program. Dilshika has worked with branches of the United Nations on the development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks for various programs. We are confident that the structure she brings to WCI's program plans will solidify our commitment to measurable and sustainable results. Last but certainly not least, WCI has also hired a new Program Assistant, Jocelyn Braddock. Jocelyn, an honors graduate of Swarthmore College, joined WCI this October after serving as an agriculture volunteer in Peace Corps Senegal.

Many of WCI's new developments, including the recruitment of new staff and the move to wonderful new office space on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of International House, is attributable to the hard work of WCI's interim Chief Operating Officer, Cathy Zurbach. I am excited to announce that Cathy will now be serving WCI as the Director of New Initiatives and Strategic Partnerships. In this role, Cathy will guide grant mak-

ing and exploratory opportunities to help WCI expand our reach and serve women leaders in new and innovative ways worldwide. I am very proud of this new team and I know that all of our skills combined can take WCI to even greater levels of success.

In this newsletter, you will also read about the exciting details of WCI's new program developments. WCI has completed successful assessments in Sri Lanka and Colombia for our new Conflict Transformation programs, our offices in Ethiopia and Afghanistan received new grants from international donors and WCI recently completed a trip to Malawi to reconnect with women Members of Parliament and to explore how WCI and local women leaders can best prepare for Malawi's upcoming 2009 General Elections.

Please enjoy the newsletter and your holiday season!

Sincerely,

Marjorie Margolies

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WCI  
WOMEN'S  
CAMPAIGN  
INTERNATIONAL

### Check out our new and improved website!

WCI is excited about the upcoming launch of a new, expanded website. Check us out in cyberspace by mid-January, at [www.womenscampaigninternational.org](http://www.womenscampaigninternational.org). The new site has additional features, so be sure to sign up for our newsletter via the online subscription. You can also now donate online through the site! We hope you enjoy the new look and the added services.

## Building peace at the grassroots



**Sri Lanka:** The International Movement Against All Forms of Racism and Discrimination, a new WCI partner in Sri Lanka, hosts women from around the country to provide testimonies on experiences of violence against women.

## Conflict transformation initiatives under

### SRI LANKA, COLOMBIA, LIBERIA

WCI's new Conflict Transformation and Women's Empowerment programs are under way. This ambitious new effort will utilize WCI's experience empowering women to be effective political leaders and will push for sustainable change in the cycles of violence in Colombia, Liberia and Sri Lanka.

WCI has conducted and completed comprehensive assessments in Sri Lanka and Colombia, including desk research, meetings with local organizations and in-country visits. WCI met with 88 organizations and identified more than a dozen potential partners. An assessment visit to Liberia is planned for early 2008.

WCI plans to collaborate with dynamic local and international organizations to implement a range of projects in Sri Lanka and Colombia. As always, local partnerships are the key to WCI's success. Thus WCI will support women's organizations at the grassroots level to build local networks and link them to national organizations. These projects will focus on capacity-building for women, as well as improving leadership and advocacy skills. The programs will include trainings on crafting media campaigns that highlight and promote women's leadership and their ability to transform conflict. WCI will also provide tailored sub-grants to civil society organizations and community based organizations in order to build their institutional and programmatic capacities.

The first workshop under the Conflict Transformation program will begin on December 18th in Sri Lanka. WCI is partnering with the Business for

Peace Alliance, an organization which promotes peace-building through business linkages, to bring together women entrepreneurs from diverse communities including the conflict-affected areas in the North and East. These women will participate in a trade fair, knowledge exchange and peace-building workshop.

WCI also plans to partner with the International Movement Against All Forms of Racism and Discrimination (IMADR) and the Association of War Affected Women to conduct workshops for potential women leaders on legislative reform and legal mechanisms for international peace-building. WCI hopes to launch a media campaign that features women leaders through public discussions on television and radio.

In Colombia, WCI is exploring partnerships with several organizations including Fundación de Apoyo Comunitario (Community Support Foundation), Iniciativa de Mujeres por la Paz (Women's Peace Initiative) and Management Systems International on a range of programs including capacity-building workshops to train women leaders to analyze and implement budgets and economic development plans in their communities. WCI is also discussing ways to address governance and security issues and how they impact men and women differently in Colombia.

Programming should be up and running in all three countries by the spring, with WCI supporting new opportunities for the women of Colombia, Sri Lanka and Liberia to lead efforts for sustainable peace in their communities and nations.

## Expanding networks

### ETHIOPIA

The WCI office in Ethiopia recently completed a new small grants project: a two-day advocacy session entitled "Harmful Tradition and Practices Against Women" which helped male Members of Parliament (MPs) understand how obstetric fistula, sexual harassment, HIV/AIDS and girls' dropout from school are detrimental to women in Ethiopia.

Through its new cooperative agreement with USAID, WCI Ethiopia now turns its attention to strengthening the recently established Ethiopian Parliamentary Women's Caucus (EPWC) through technical support and skills training. After talking with members of the caucus, WCI has narrowed its focus to helping in several key areas. WCI will hire a consultant to facilitate EPWC's strategic plan, provide technical assistance in writing proposals and creating promotional materials and develop a publication that will focus on legislative issues affecting women, children and families. WCI will also promote EPWC within the country and region and help the caucus network with other African caucuses. Finally, WCI intends to assemble a directory of women-focused NGOs and civil society groups that can help the Caucus initiate programs that promote the interests of women.

One of the ways WCI will assist EPWC is by sponsoring a study tour to South Africa for nine women delegates from the EPWC to meet with and learn from the effective women's caucus in South Africa. The study tour will familiarize the caucus delegates with governmental, parliamentary and civil institutions, addressing public policy on gen-



**Ethiopia:** Women political leaders listening attentively at a WCI pre-election training

der equity, empowerment of women and participation of women in public affairs in South Africa. The trip will allow the MPs to network with other female parliamentarians. In addition, the EPWC delegates will visit the South African Women's League and meet with female ministers.

In the upcoming months, WCI will train women members of regional state councils on three main themes: gender inequity, effective communication and arenas for raising gender issues. Currently, WCI is providing support to Ethiopia's MPs through the provision of a public hearings manual, website development for the legislature and the implementation of short programs for effective bill-writing in Parliament.

WCI Ethiopia will also be conducting pre-election trainings for women candidates in the upcoming local elections. Training topics include leadership and public communication, resource mobilization, running an effective campaign and understanding election laws and regulations. WCI has continued to support efforts to enhance women's political participation in Ethiopia, after helping to significantly increase women's representation in Parliament in 2005.