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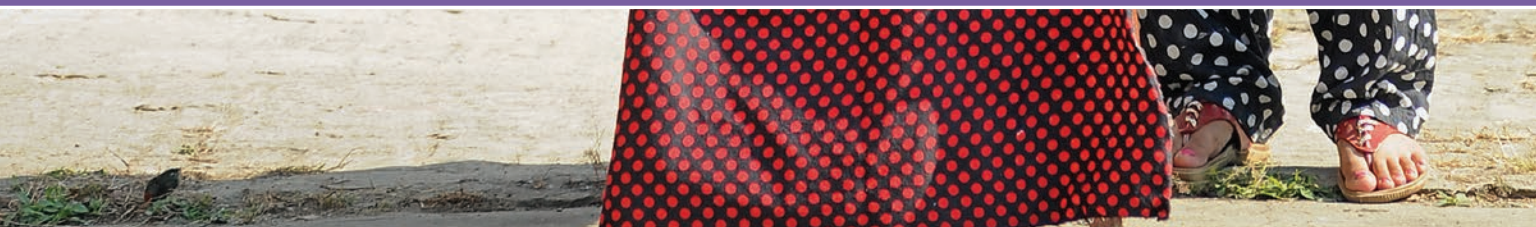
United Nations Development Programme

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE:

LESSONS LEARNED IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

2011-2013



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PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE: **LESSONS LEARNED IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE** 2011-2013

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ACRONYMS

AU	African Union	GPECS	UNDP Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections	ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CA	Constituent Assembly	IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
CAWTAR	Center of Arab Women for Training and Research	IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
CEB	Chief Executives Board for Coordination	ISIE	Independent Board of Elections (Tunisia)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	LCW	Lebanese Council for Women
CENI	Independent National Electoral Commission (Burundi)	NDI	National Democratic Institute
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CO	UNDP Country Office	ODIHR	(OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
CPRW	Convention on the Political Rights of Women	OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
CSO	Civil Society Organization	Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor	TtF	Train the Facilitators (BRIDGE)
DFID	UK Department for International Development	UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
DFS	UN Department of Field Support	UN	United Nations
DPA	UN Department of Political Affairs	UN Women	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
DPKO	UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
EAD	Electoral Assistance Division of the UN Department of Political Affairs	UNMIN	United Nations Mission in Nepal
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council	UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
ECN	Election Commission of Nepal	USAID	US Agency for International Development
EMB	Electoral Management Body		
GA	General Assembly		

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every election is an opportunity to strengthen women's political participation and make progress toward achieving women's equal participation in the political sphere (and sustaining it where it has been achieved). This study seeks to glean recognized good practices that enhance women's meaningful and equal participation in the electoral process and identify lessons learned on gender mainstreaming initiatives to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in international electoral assistance programming.

It is based on internal evaluations and lessons learned exercises conducted by the UNDP, involving in-depth interviews and surveys with a range of stakeholders and practitioners as well as five national case studies undertaken (Bolivia, Burundi, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, and Tunisia) from 2011 to 2013. The study primarily covers the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) electoral assistance programmes, but also draws on examples from other United Nations (UN) agencies and international organizations and aims to:

- Fill a gap in knowledge on strategies to enhance women's participation as voters and candidates in electoral assistance programming through country cases and analysis
- Position UNDP to better support Country Offices (and their partners) in mainstreaming gender equality throughout election assistance programming activities and share good practices that can be leveraged for future success
- Offer ideas to UNDP Country Offices (CO) on how to contribute and implement the broader UN policy framework of electoral assistance that, *inter alia*, seeks to increase women's electoral and political participation

The examples and methods in the study cover two main areas: (a) electoral assistance programmes undertaken by UNDP that aim to provide support on electoral administration and processes and (b) governance or women's empowerment programming, which has a broader focus than electoral assistance and covers interventions like aspirant and candidate training, political parties and women's political empowerment programmes.

This review of UNDP electoral assistance programming has uncovered four main lessons:

- First, gender equality could be addressed more holistically in electoral assistance.
- Second, gender equality and women's empowerment should be both mainstreamed into all components of electoral assistance and specifically supported through gender-targeted interventions.

- Third, electoral management bodies (EMBs) need to be supported in mainstreaming gender equality across the broad range of activities they implement and should be encouraged to support women's increased participation and leadership within the institutions themselves.
- Finally, continuing work is required within broader governance projects and programmes to support capacity-building of aspiring and elected candidates in elections with a long-term perspective.

A holistic gender equality approach to electoral assistance ensures that supporting and advancing gender equality is a stated aim from the very beginning of the project. The most effective programmes address gender issues from the outset, during needs assessments and programme formulation; adapt the electoral cycle approach in planning programme interventions; and integrate gender equality considerations at all stages and in all the structures. Support in elections should consider the roles women can and do assume as voters, candidates and elected officials and be mindful of the laws, policies and procedures that affect their participation. Programming must also be relevant to the local context, structures and social conditions and therefore must be flexible enough to be adaptable. In addition, support can be provided over the whole cycle rather than in discrete periods in the lead-up to elections.

There are different ways to ensure that a gender equality perspective is integrated into electoral assistance, including by (a) adopting a gender mainstreaming approach to the project, whereby every policy, practice and procedure is considered in terms of its potentially differential impact on men and women and by (b) integrating gender-specific or gender-targeted interventions to tackle specific areas, including through affirmative action measures. UNDP's strategy includes a combination of the two.

Four aspects relevant to promoting gender equality in electoral assistance were identified:

- An understanding of gender mainstreaming on the part of electoral assistance partners and their staff cannot be assumed, but must be fostered and supported.
- Dedicated gender advisors on elections have the farthest-reaching impact on gender mainstreaming, but are still new in terms of the UNDP's institutionalization of the position or institutionalization by an EMB.
- The policies of donor and bilateral organizations can be extremely influential in determining how gender mainstreaming is addressed in the election project.
- Cooperation among UNDP and other entities, including UN Women, the Department for Peacekeeping Operations/Department for Field Security (DPKO/DFS) and the Department of Political Affairs/Electoral Assistance Division DPA/EAD, and between UN entities and donors, creates opportunities for innovation and more effective use of resources.

The overall strengthening of EMBs to apply a gender equality approach in the electoral process is growing, but critical gaps must still be addressed for elections to be administered in a gender-sensitive manner. Ensuring a gender equality perspective throughout an EMB requires thorough analysis and a corresponding action plan that also addresses the policies and procedures affecting internal and external operations. The presence of senior election officials and dedicated expertise and staff who consider the gaps in women's participation and seek policies and activities to address them is essential in transforming EMBs into bodies that understand the efficacy of gender mainstreaming at a technical level. The provision of gender-awareness training for EMB staff is noted as a good practice in electoral assistance programming, although it has not been widely applied in UNDP electoral assistance programmes. Other good practices include the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data on voter registration and turnout, the facilitation of women's voter registration, the targeting of voter outreach specifically to women and the presence of dedicated gender expertise within an EMB.

The research identified programming entry points to support the capacity-building of women candidates. The case studies, for example, noted several impediments to women's reaching office, such as lack of campaign finance, lack of support by political parties, the multiple roles of women in families and caring responsibilities, and negative portrayals of women political leaders, including in the media. Several areas for programming interventions were identified: normative framework and electoral law reforms, including temporary special measures; capacity-building of aspiring women candidates and those who are elected; facilitation of networks of elected women leaders; media coverage and access to funding; support to political parties and women in civil society; and focus on violence against women in politics.

Funds dedicated to gender programming, commitment to gender mainstreaming by leadership at a senior level, gender focal points, requiring sex-disaggregated data and the use of gender-sensitive indicators by international organizations create models and standards for partners and establish a framework that improves outcomes on gender and enhances accountability to gender mainstreaming. Programme support that is provided on a continuum and not only immediately before or during the campaign period, can create increased opportunities for enhancing gender equality and women's electoral participation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Every election is an opportunity to strengthen women's political participation and to make progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment in line with targets established in international norms and standards. Elections also offer opportunities for advancing women's participation and leadership in state institutions, including the EMBs that administer elections, and for enhancing their participation as voters.

Despite the growing number of international electoral assistance programmes aiming to strengthen the conduct of free and fair elections over the past two decades, the attention given to the empowerment of women across the electoral cycle has generally been *ad hoc* and kept separate from the broader ('mainstream') electoral assistance

programme. As this study shows, there is a need to more systematically mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in this work, not only because gender equality is now a key cornerstone of the UNDP's mandate and intrinsic to its development approach (UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017), but also because elections are a critical opportunity to address the discrimination against civil and political rights that women have historically faced.

This study seeks to glean recognized good practices in this area in order to enhance women's meaningful and equal participation in the electoral process and to support more gender-targeted policy and programmatic interventions. This study will be useful to those working to increase the participation of women in electoral and political

GENDER EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS ACROSS THE ELECTORAL CYCLE

Women's involvement in electoral and political processes refers to a broader range of actions than simply voting. Freedom of expression, assembly and association, and the freedom to take part in the conduct of public affairs, hold public office at all levels of government and participate in the formulation of government policy are subsumed under this heading as well. UN international human rights instruments affirm that women are entitled to enjoy all these rights and freedoms on the same basis as men. Women's equal participation is therefore essential to the conduct of democratic elections. For elections to be truly free and fair, women must have the same opportunities as men to participate in all aspects of the electoral process. Women should have an equal chance to serve at all levels within local and national EMBs. Women should be engaged on an equal basis as election monitors or observers. Women should be able to participate fully in all aspects of political party operations. Women candidates and issues of special concern to women should be given fair and equal treatment in the media. Focusing on areas of the greatest potential impact can help ensure that women's participation in the electoral process is more than a pro forma exercise and that free and fair elections fulfil their potential for contributing to the advancement of women.

Source: United Nations, *Women and Elections: Guide to promoting the participation of women in elections*, March 2005

processes and electoral administration. It shares existing practices to assist the work of EMBs and assistance providers such as UNDP, UN Women and other UN agencies. When considering options for programme support to increase women's participation in electoral processes, it is useful to know what others have done, particularly where it has been successful. While the study does not prescribe a particular methodology or path, it does provide options for use and lessons learned based on good practices and country experiences.

1.1. Purpose

Electoral assistance refers to initiatives and activities that are intended to improve the quality of electoral processes and institutions in partner countries or Member States. UNDP's support for elections covers all aspects of the electoral cycle, from building the long-term, sustainable capacity of national entities to administer free and fair elections to working with civil society and individuals to raise their awareness of their rights and capacity to meaningfully participate in all aspects of the electoral and political process. The equal participation, leadership and empowerment of women in electoral processes are gaining increasing importance within UNDP electoral assistance programming as important components of gender mainstreaming, which has been recognized by UNDP (and the UN system as a whole) as the main strategy to achieve gender equality. The UNDP approach to gender mainstreaming is a dual one: UNDP supports the empowerment of women and girls through gender-specific targeted interventions and also addresses gender

concerns in the development, planning, implementation and evaluation of all policies and programmes.

This approach is evident in UNDP's work on electoral assistance through its Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS), which includes, as one of its four pillars, the goal of achieving the full and equal participation of women across the electoral cycle. GPECS is building a body of knowledge to address the constraints faced by women as voters, candidates and electoral administrators and stimulate policy dialogue on gender equality, including women's equal participation. UNDP seeks to share and learn from interventions in the electoral and political process that have had a significant outcome for women so that it can systematically integrate gender mainstreaming into its electoral cycle support and ultimately enhance women's participation and achieve gender equality in electoral and political processes.

This study is based on research that aimed to identify lessons learned on the way in which gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives have been promoted in international electoral assistance programming. This includes identifying the types of support provided to women voters and candidates and to EMBs during the electoral cycle. UNDP compiled good practices, including how programmes have tried to empower women voters and address systemic gender discrimination and the concrete obstacles they face (registration procedures, lack of documentation, distances to travel, electoral violence, etc.) and other good practice solutions that

need further investigation, documentation or scaling up. The study primarily reviews UNDP electoral assistance, but also draws on the work of other UN agencies and international organizations, including UN Women, the UN Department for Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO), the Electoral Assistance Division of the UN Department of Political Affairs (EAD), the Carter Center, the Electoral Institute of South Africa (EISA), the European Union, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), International IDEA, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Support has included political party assistance, recruitment, training and assistance to domestic monitors, voter education, assistance to electoral administrators, and training of women aspirants, candidates and representatives. Bringing these experiences together is intended to facilitate better cooperation between actors within the UN system as well as other partners providing electoral assistance. Through the identification of good practices, positive lessons and

missed opportunities, donors and assistance providers will be better equipped with tools to facilitate women's increased electoral participation and ultimately achieve gender equality in electoral and political processes.

1.2. Methodology

Having noted that there was little systematic tracking of gender and elections programming in UNDP Country Offices (COs) and limited baseline data to measure results in this area, GPECS began a mapping exercise in 2011. UNDP's Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment in Electoral Processes aimed to document the lessons learned and good practices from COs' past electoral support in order to better integrate gender mainstreaming into future programming. Fifty-one COs responded to this survey, highlighting significant challenges in existing processes and recommendations to address these.

This paper has also benefited from the gender-related findings in recent evaluations and reviews of UNDP's electoral assistance programmes, including the Independent Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Strengthening Electoral Systems and Processes (2012) and the Longer-Term Impact of UNDP Electoral Assistance: Lessons Learned (2014).

In addition, UNDP conducted in-depth research in five countries (Bolivia, Burundi, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal and Tunisia) on the types of interventions used to support gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in electoral assistance programming.

THIS STUDY IS DESIGNED TO:

- Fill a gap in knowledge on strategies to enhance women's participation as voters and candidates in electoral assistance programming through country cases and analysis.
- Position UNDP to better support COs (and their partners) in mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment throughout election assistance programming activities and share good practices that can be leveraged for future success.
- Contribute to the implementation of the broader UN policy framework of electoral assistance that, inter alia, seeks to increase women's electoral and political participation.

To ensure a balanced sample of case studies, countries were selected on the basis of the following criteria: presence of a UNDP election programme or an integrated mission, regional balance, scope of international electoral assistance providers' work, combination of post-conflict and transitional countries, indigenous population and level of engagement of other international organizations. Countries were also selected where there was some prior knowledge of good practice examples.

Interviews were conducted with individuals who worked with the electoral assistance teams and other key stakeholders. Interviewees included current or former EMB staff, representatives of UN and other international organizations, including gender focal points, civil society organizations (CSOs) and women's groups, electoral reform experts, government representatives, political party members and leaders, and others.

Country reports were compiled between 2011 and 2013 and examined past programming support on electoral assistance and outreach support provided by UNDP, usually covering the last election cycle, but, in some cases, earlier cycles as well. The case studies include an analysis of gender mainstreaming efforts in electoral administration and the work of EMBs, and of policies and programming to create an enabling environment that fosters the participation of women. The reports also look at achievements and challenges to increasing women's participation as candidates, specifically temporary special measures including quotas, training, financial support and media access and voters.

Responses from the UNDP questionnaire, a desk review and the in-depth country reports have informed this consolidated analysis on lessons learned, which answers the following questions:

- What have been the main types of interventions implemented to promote women's electoral participation?
- What structural or institutional opportunities exist, and what changes need to be made, within electoral assistance to facilitate a better outcome for women during elections?
- How is the electoral assistance community currently supporting women as candidates and voters in elections?
- What are key lessons learned and recommendations on how to better mainstream gender across the electoral cycle?

This study is divided into three sections, this introduction being the first. The second focuses on the lessons learned from the evaluation exercises, desk reviews and country case studies. It highlights four areas or entry points to ensure that the electoral assistance provided by the UN system benefits from a comprehensive gender analysis, ensure that women and men have equal opportunity to participate in the electoral process, and vigorously promote the empowerment of women across the electoral cycle. The final section presents recommendations primarily for UNDP, but they might also be applicable to a wider range of UN entities, electoral assistance providers, donors, CSOs and EMBs.



2. LESSONS LEARNED

A study of interventions by UNDP and other international assistance providers that have supported a gender equality perspective in electoral assistance uncovers two predominant types: (a) electoral assistance programmes that aim to support electoral administration, operations and processes and (b) governance or gender equality and women's empowerment programming, which have a broader focus than electoral assistance and can cover interventions like candidate training, political parties and women's political empowerment programmes.

While examining these types of interventions, this review has uncovered four main lessons: first, there is a need for a more holistic approach to gender equality in electoral assistance and gender mainstreaming must be included from the very start of the project; second, gender equality and women's empowerment should be mainstreamed into the different components of all electoral assistance and gender-targeted interventions should be part of

this mainstreaming; third, EMBs could be supported to mainstream gender equality across the broad range of activities that they implement and should be encouraged to increasingly support women's participation and leadership within the EMB institution; and, finally, broader governance work to support capacity-building of aspiring and successful candidates in elections must continue. This section details each of these lessons further.

2.1. A Holistic Approach to Gender Equality in Electoral Assistance

Electoral assistance refers to initiatives and activities that are intended to improve the quality of electoral processes and institutions in partner countries or Member States. Electoral assistance stresses the transfer of professional skills and operational knowledge to, and the long-term capacity and institutional strengthening of, different stakeholders of an electoral process. UN technical assistance on elections includes the legal, operational and logistic assistance provided to develop or improve electoral laws, processes and institutions and often supports the EMB, which is the body responsible for one or more elements of essential electoral actions.

UN electoral assistance is governed by a policy framework that the UN Focal Point for Electoral Assistance, the Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs (in DPA), develops, issues and disseminates. This policy framework is grounded in the UN's normative framework of human and political rights and provides prescriptive guidance that applies to all UN entities providing electoral assistance. Two policies in particular – Policy Directive on Principles and Types of UN Electoral Assistance (2012) and Guideline on UN Electoral Needs Assessments (2012) – have defined the different types of electoral assistance that the UN can provide and the conditions needed for COs to work on electoral assistance, including the process by which the Focal Point approves requests for electoral assistance and any recommendations for its implementation. The electoral assistance policy framework should be consulted for further guidance.

Since 2012, this framework has provided avenues by which gender equality issues may be considered in all aspects of technical electoral assistance by the UN. One of the most common themes that UNDP COs working in gender and electoral assistance report, is the need for a holistic approach and work across the complete electoral cycle.

“The past experience has highlighted the importance of following a holistic approach and working on the complete electoral cycle targeting a wide array of women stakeholders, from all Lebanese regions. Most importantly, the work should ensure national ownership and transfer of knowledge and skills to the Ministry's administration for implementation of gender-related policies and the different women's organizations, while making sure that all different stakeholders collaborate and coordinate their work.”

Lebanon Country Office

This section describes elements that could be addressed as part of a holistic approach to gender equality in electoral assistance:

- Highlighting the normative frameworks and mandates for the inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment
- Applying the mandates in practice
- Using the needs assessment and project formulation process
- Understanding the particular circumstances in post-conflict and transitional settings
- Considering a range of interventions that might ensure that electoral assistance meets the needs of women and men alike.

2.1.1. UN mandates promoting gender equality in electoral assistance

Women's full participation in political and electoral processes has its origins in the principles of non-discrimination and equal enjoyment of political rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted in 1948. Other international instruments and treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966) and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (CPRW, 1952), together with regional conventions, reiterate and expand on the UDHR and explicitly state that the enjoyment of such rights shall be without distinction of any kind, including sex or gender.

Article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted in 1979, articulates "women's right to equal participation in political and public life as encompassing the right to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies". CEDAW further commits state parties to "take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women". Furthermore, the UN Economic and Social Council Resolution (E/RES/1990/15), the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (1995), the Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions 2006 (E/2006/27-E/CN.6/2006/15) and the General Assembly (GA) Resolution 66/130 (2011) have consistently urged governments to implement measures to substantially increase the number of women in elective and appointive public offices and functions at all levels, with a view to achieving equal representation of

women and men, if necessary through positive action, in all government and public administration positions.

Supporting Member States' national efforts in ensuring inclusive political processes and promoting women's political participation is high on the agenda of the UN system. UN entities and personnel are obliged to respect, and aim to further, the rights and standards enshrined in this normative framework. In 1997, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted the strategy of "mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system" by "assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels". The Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) endorsed the UN System-wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in October 2006 to further the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment within the policies and programmes of the UN system and to implement the ECOSOC's agreed conclusions 1997/2. The CEB policy notes "a United Nations system-wide action plan that includes indicators and timetables, allocation of responsibilities and accountability mechanisms and resources is essential to make the strategy of gender mainstreaming operational". In response to this policy, the CEB endorsed the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in April 2012. UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 also contains gender-specific targets in relation to promoting women's political and electoral participation. The Gender Equality Strategy is aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017. As such, progress toward

achieving the development results of the Gender Equality Strategy will be measured against the relevant outcomes, outputs and indicators of the UNDP Strategic Plan.

In the area of electoral assistance, the UN system is now guided by the recent adoption of the following policy directives and guidelines:

- Policy Directive on Principles and Types of UN Electoral Assistance (2012), which not only highlights the importance of “the participation and representation of traditionally marginalized groups, in particular women and minorities”, but suggests that assistance will include, *inter alia*, measures “specific to electoral events, temporary special measures, and longer-term programs”.
- Guideline on UN Electoral Needs Assessments (2012), which serves as the framework for determining whether, and how, the UN will provide electoral assistance. These assessments should include analysis and recommendations “to ensure gender mainstreaming in all UN electoral assistance activities and that priority is given to the promotion of the participation and representation of women” (e.g., a gender checklist is used to collect data that will inform the recommendations).
- Policy Directive on Promoting Women’s Electoral and Political Participation through UN Electoral Assistance (2013), which provides clear strategies and entry points for gender mainstreaming in electoral assistance (see section 2.1.5 on the range of interventions).¹

In line with the UN system-wide mandates on gender mainstreaming cited above, these guidelines and policy documents establish responsibilities for all UN entities involved in electoral assistance to ensure that their engagement with national stakeholders on electoral processes or electoral systems takes into account a gender equality and women’s empowerment perspective.

2.1.2. Gender mainstreaming in UNDP’s electoral programming

A broad review of UNDP project documents and reports from roughly 60 COs from 2010 to 2012 revealed that a gender equality perspective had not been applied systematically in elections projects. That is, more often than not, no specific attention was paid to whether, or how, electoral assistance would systematically promote women’s empowerment. Moreover, an explicit gender equality outcome was not included in most project designs, although there may have been gender equality results emerging from the assistance. Gender equality concerns were often added as an afterthought and/or became a silo in electoral assistance programmes. A gender component or side project might be added after the whole programme was already designed or a responsibility for gender might be tagged at the end of someone’s terms of reference. The concern with gender-blind programming is that it can perpetuate existing inequalities and have a long-term negative effect on women’s participation and equality.

¹ See also DPKO/DFS/DPA *Guidelines on enhancing the role of women in post-conflict electoral processes* (2007), which specifically outlines the need to integrate a gender equality perspective into electoral assistance in post-conflict settings.

Where systematic gender mainstreaming in electoral assistance has been applied, however, gender equality was often stated as a priority goal from the very beginning of the project, including in the formulation and design of the project. Within UNDP, this kind of intervention has been made possible because of a dedicated component and budget on gender-related work within GPECS. The UNDP corporate evaluation on UNDP's Contribution to Strengthening Electoral Systems and Processes found that over 30 percent of the total programming budget went to gender equality related interventions in 2012 following the creation of the Programme. By early 2013, GPECS estimated that more than one third of UNDP elections projects had integrated gender equality results as an outcome of the project and had dedicated gender activities or a mainstreaming approach.

Including a gender advisor or tapping into a source of gender advice has led to more coordinated and comprehensive gender mainstreaming in some countries (see section 2.2.2 for more on gender advisors):

- In Burundi, the UNDP senior gender advisor took the lead on ensuring mainstreaming throughout electoral

programmes, with strong support from the leadership of the CO. This led to concrete activities for women, which provided targeted and timely assistance at pivotal stages, such as during advocacy for temporary special measures or when women feared the country would return to violence amidst an election boycott.

- Likewise, gender advisors on the UNDP Electoral Assistance team in Nepal and Tunisia were afforded a greater opportunity to support national electoral staff and worked directly on assistance to the EMB; this, in turn, gave them better leverage for promoting gender mainstreaming.

UNDP COs in Comoros, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe emphasized the importance of funding gender-related projects throughout the electoral cycle. Donor funds are often made available too late in advance of the main electoral event – the election. As this period, however, is particularly busy, gender mainstreaming and gender-targeted interventions can be *ad hoc* and may have counterintuitive effects on women's involvement in the electoral process.

“Support for the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia follows the electoral cycle approach, aiming to provide a comprehensive long-term capacity development programme. However, the programme began implementation only a few months before the general election. It was thus challenging to engage the Board on issues related to gender, as it was heavily engaged in preparing logistically and delivering various trainings. Hence, the emphasis and specific attention given to gender issues was not systematic. Further programming should therefore aim to effectively integrate gender across all electoral assistance programmes. Opportunities for systematic work on gender exist particularly in the period between elections where the EMB is not heavily engaged in managing elections.”

Ethiopia Country Office

Gender mainstreaming mandates and the priority placed on gender equality in electoral assistance by the UN System as a whole are relatively new. This notwithstanding, in working toward the goal of women's equal political participation, a greater commitment could be made in implementing the strategy of gender mainstreaming across the electoral assistance work of the UNDP and across different stages of the electoral cycle. Gender equality should be a stated aim from the very beginning of all electoral assistance projects, including in the formulation and design of the project.

The most effective programmes address gender issues from the outset and during needs assessments and programme formulation, adapt the electoral cycle approach in planning programme interventions, integrate gender considerations at all stages and in all the structures and have a dedicated budget for gender mainstreaming.

2.1.3. Needs assessments and project formulation

From the evaluations, desk review and country case studies prepared for this report, it is clear that gender equality concerns must be included as criteria from the beginning of the process in order for them to be addressed in electoral assistance. The electoral needs assessment mission (NAM) provides a very specific window of opportunity for this. Since mid-2012, ensuring a gender analysis applied to the design of UNDP projects has been aided by the system-wide Guideline on UN Electoral Needs Assessments. In line

with the Secretary General's 2010 report on women's participation and peace-building and the 2013 report on measures taken in the promotion of women and political participation, electoral needs assessments should identify areas where electoral assistance can promote gender equality, including (but not limited to) an assessment of the potential value of adopting various possible temporary special measures.

Electoral needs assessments require consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, including government, legislators, electoral experts, political parties, gender experts and women's organizations on the ground to inform specific recommendations for gender mainstreaming and the promotion and representation of women and other groups. The Electoral Needs Assessment Guidelines include a comprehensive Checklist on Gender and Electoral Assistance that must be used by the assessment team, in addition to the wide ranging consultations, to ensure that gender equality concerns are adequately addressed throughout the electoral process and to guide the formulation of recommendations. While many reports assess the applicability or otherwise of temporary special measures and have made recommendations on these, almost all reports make recommendations on the need to more generally promote women's participation and representation and integration of gender in all aspects of electoral assistance. As per the Guideline on UN Electoral Needs Assessments, the specifics of implementation are left to the assistance implementers on the ground.²

² The Electoral Assistance Division analysis of the reports of the NAMs conducted in 2012 shows that all reports include a gender-related analysis and recommendations and made specific recommendations on electoral system quotas/temporary special measures in about 70 percent of cases (8 of 12).

Comprehensive support for women’s electoral participation requires acknowledging the range of barriers that they face across the whole electoral cycle and identifying solutions to overcome them. Once a needs assessment of these barriers is undertaken, then the UNDP project design should identify the appropriate programming options, including gender mainstreaming and gender-targeted interventions.

2.1.4. Integrating gender into post-conflict and transitional settings

Post-conflict and transitional settings, and institutional reforms undertaken in these contexts, provide windows of opportunity for the integration of gender equality considerations and the adoption of special measures to support women’s equal participation and leadership. Rapid response and timely funding by assistance providers such as the UN DPKO/DFS can be critical in seizing these time-sensitive opportunities. If those opportunities are missed, existing barriers to women’s equal participation and leadership could be reinforced or additional barriers created.

These transitional settings can be highly tense political environments for women and men and the time-sensitive nature of interventions has sometimes been used to justify their limited focus on women’s participation. Gender equality may not be considered or prioritized in the programming responses on the assumption that it might ‘detract’ from ‘urgent’ issues at hand. Irrespective of these attitudes, the UN GA Resolution on Women and Political Participation “stresses the critical importance of women’s political participation in all contexts, including

in times of peace and of conflict and at all stages of political transition, concerned that many obstacles still prevent women from participating in political life on equal terms with men, and noting in that regard that situations of political transition may provide a unique opportunity to address such obstacles.”

Given this mandate, greater efforts need to ensure that gender equality has priority in interventions carried out by international organizations, in electoral assistance programmes and in electoral reform processes of EMBs and other political stakeholders at these times of transition. Failure to ensure this may significantly impact electoral and political processes for years.

For international assistance providers, making funds available quickly can shape the political situation for women and serve to build women’s capacity to participate and advocate in such environments. UN entities have also developed useful guidelines to promote women’s participation in electoral processes in post-conflict settings. At the end of the conflict in 2005 in Burundi, for example, women were able to push for their demands in the final peace agreement and the new constitution, including the adoption of temporary special measures. With initial assistance from DPKO, followed by support from UN Women and partners, a constitutional provision securing 30 percent representation of women in parliament paved the way for significant gains for women in the 2008 and 2010 elections.

Post-conflict and transitional settings provide unique opportunities for significant and rapid change and therefore

require a strong commitment to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are a priority from the outset in all interventions.

2.1.5. A broad range of interventions

Assistance that aims to promote women's participation in elections must focus on the different roles women assume, including as voters, candidates, electoral staff and elected officials, and on the laws, policies and procedures that affect their participation, as well as on the underlying attitudes and practices that support and reinforce gender-based discrimination and stereotyping. For example, efforts that support EMBs and media outlets to provide greater access for women to register as candidates or gain visibility in the campaign, respectively, must occur in concert with capacity-building for women candidates. As required by the UN electoral assistance regulatory framework, programming must be relevant to the local context, structures and social conditions. Support should be provided over the whole cycle rather than in discrete periods in the lead-up to elections.

The electoral needs assessment could also be able to identify and consider programmatic solutions that might lie outside of UN-prescribed electoral assistance. For example, it may be appropriate to support women's leadership not only as candidates, but also in a variety of electoral roles, including in EMBs, CSOs and the media. Flexible, cross-sectoral responses may address the broader contextual issues of women's political participation and leadership and result in more targeted and effective programming.

Lessons learned indicate that supporting women's leadership capacities and investing in nascent or burgeoning women's movements establish a foundation for lasting and sustainable progress. Strategic programming that strengthens women's individual capacities and the capacity of civic groups and institutions results in greater numbers of women in office and a stronger influence in electoral politics.

By devising longer-term programmes of assistance with a range of interventions aimed at candidates, voters and EMBs, more effective support can be provided and structural barriers to women's electoral participation can be addressed.

2.2. Cooperating to Ensure Gender Equality in Electoral Assistance

There are different ways to ensure that a gender equality perspective is integrated into electoral assistance, including by (a) integrating a gender mainstreaming perspective throughout the project, whereby every aspect of the project gives consideration to differential impacts on men and women, and (b) integrating gender-specific or gender-targeted interventions to tackle specific areas, including through affirmative action measures. A successful gender equality strategy often includes a combination of the two.

This section outlines successful strategies through which a gender perspective has been integrated into electoral assistance programmes. The research undertaken for this paper identified four aspects relevant to promoting gender equality in electoral assistance:

- Understanding gender mainstreaming and gender-targeted interventions
- Seeking the advice of gender advisors
- Finding and allocating sufficient and effective donor support
- Cooperating with other UN entities and international organizations

2.2.1. Understanding and applying the strategy of gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is defined in the ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions, 1997/2, as “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.”

The term is often misunderstood within international organizations and therefore tends to be applied inaccurately. For example, an EMB might be analysed

according to how many women and men work there. While equal representation of men and women is important, looking only at the overall numbers and presence of women can obscure the multiple, systemic ways in which women’s status remains low generally and in electoral politics. Women might be overrepresented in underpaid and time-consuming positions within local EMB structures and underrepresented in its powerful positions involved in central decision-making. Applying an equal representation approach instead of gender mainstreaming by only looking at the numbers can actually perpetuate systemic gender inequalities, because it could appear as if systemic gender inequalities do not exist or have been addressed.

- In Bolivia, gender mainstreaming was not adopted as a process within UNDP election programming. UNDP’s Bolivia CO primarily addressed gender equality within political parties as part of ongoing programming, but did not systematically apply a gender lens to electoral assistance efforts. Recent UNDP support to Bolivia’s Electoral Tribunal found that the concept of gender mainstreaming was not well understood.

The UNDP survey asked COs how they had been implementing gender mainstreaming. Of the 51 responses, 32 answered this

What has been done to mainstream gender?	#	%
Tracking women’s participation in trainings, workshops	22	68.8
Sex-disaggregated data	18	56.3
Budget analysis from the gender point of view	6	18.8
Other	6	18.8

Source: UNDP Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Women’s Empowerment in Electoral Processes

question, noting that gender mainstreaming was undertaken by tracking women's participation in trainings and workshops (68.8 percent), by collecting and analysing gender-disaggregated data (56.3 percent) and/or by analysing the budget from a gender perspective (18.8 percent).

The most successful cases of gender mainstreaming resulted from collaboration between electoral support projects (or support to political institutions) and gender focal points within international organizations. In Kyrgyzstan, international organization representatives often credited their organization's internal gender-awareness training for substantive changes in their thinking and ability to mainstream gender in their work. The collaboration between UNDP's Gender Team and the Electoral Assistance Project and New Legal Framework Project has also made a positive impact.

Gender-specific targeted interventions are a part of UNDPs' two-pronged approach to gender mainstreaming. Examples of

gender-targeted activities in electoral assistance programmes have started to emerge in the last three to five years. The UNDP Survey found that programmes with targeted gender equality activities included training of women candidates (50 percent), providing civic and voter education for women (47.8 percent) and women leaders (34.8 percent) and providing support to political parties to promote women candidates (34.8 percent).

That gender mainstreaming is not widely understood as a concept or strategy is evidenced by its continued conflation with women's numerical representation within a project, activity, or structure. Gender mainstreaming requires a rigorous assessment of the differential impact of policies, structures and processes on women and men and any potential sources of discrimination. In addition, gender-targeted interventions seek to address previous discrimination by bolstering women's opportunities through specific activities, projects or programmes.

Gender-targeted interventions	#	%
Training of women candidates	23	50.0
Civic and voter education for women	22	47.8
Support to political parties to promote women as candidates	16	34.8
Civic education of women as leaders	16	34.8
Support to EMBs for gender mainstreaming	11	23.9
Voter registration of women	11	23.9
Induction training/preparation for office of women candidates	10	21.7
Other	4	8.7

Source: UNDP Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment in Electoral Processes

A second area of concern is the inconsistent application of gender mainstreaming in electoral assistance design and programming. Despite the adoption of various gender mainstreaming policies on electoral assistance programming and projects and of UNDP's broader Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, which clearly outlines the UNDP approach to gender mainstreaming, this has not yet translated into consistent gender mainstreaming across UNDP electoral assistance programming.

The surveys and case studies revealed that staff and consultants often do not fully understand gender mainstreaming as a concept, let alone as a programming approach. Moreover, the level of commitment to gender mainstreaming among some senior-level staff has been uneven. Resources have not been invested in generating or facilitating the technical knowledge and capacity required to apply the strategy across the board. This has resulted in a gap between the organizational requirements to systematically mainstream gender and the ability of all staff to meet them. Responsibility for gender mainstreaming is often left in the hands of a few individual staff members, rather than giving all staff the opportunity to learn and apply the strategy to their own areas of expertise. This also

has an impact on partners or grantees of international assistance providers, few of whom have fully experienced the significance and impact of gender mainstreaming as a conceptual and methodological tool, but who are expected to integrate it in their work.

This gap is particularly evident among Chief Technical Advisors (CTAs) on elections. CTAs usually possess a high level of expertise in electoral operations and/or managing election support projects, but the integration of a gender equality perspective into this area is new for many of them. Some of these advisors have not yet understood the mandate for gender mainstreaming or its immense value and purpose. The case studies illustrated differing levels of awareness in this regard. One CTA noted that, over the last 20 years, electoral experts have not readily integrated gender analysis into their work. Another CTA acknowledged that, while CTAs themselves need not be gender experts, it is incumbent upon them to identify areas of work and invite relevant expertise to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into election programming. Ensuring that CTAs, and indeed all electoral staff, receive gender-awareness training would help mitigate concerns and common misunderstandings.

"For gender mainstreaming to be effective at all, it is imperative that resources and technical advisors be present in the pre-election phase of the electoral cycle. This allows the structures, strategic planning and operational planning to involve gender elements at their foundation and to be sewn into the framework documents. Applying the same during the election phase only inevitably means that gender components are sidelined due to the pressures of the operation."

Afghanistan Country Office

Short-term, gender-targeted interventions can promote women's electoral participation, but may not be sufficient on their own. UNDP's approach to gender mainstreaming is a dual one: it supports the empowerment of women and girls through gender-specific targeted interventions and also addresses gender concerns in the developing, planning, implementing and evaluating of all policies and programmes.

2.2.2. Getting the right advice: The role of gender advisors

An important strategy to combat the misunderstanding and the misapplication of gender mainstreaming has been to include gender advisors at various stages of the electoral assistance process. Because of the increased exposure and adoption of gender mainstreaming policies by international organizations, gender experts are increasingly employed to bring these skills to electoral projects.

UNDP has been a forerunner in this respect, particularly through GPECS, which includes gender mainstreaming as one of its four priority areas. As identified in UNDP's evaluation of its electoral assistance programme, GPECS provided UNDP with a mechanism to more systematically promote women's empowerment across the electoral cycle. It created a strong model of collaboration between its Global Adviser, the Democratic Governance Group and the UNDP Gender Team based at headquarters and in the field. This partnership allowed UNDP to more effectively leverage in-house technical expertise in electoral assistance and gender equality.

Growing internal capacity and increased focus within UNDP on the importance of gender equality as a goal in its own right and as a driver of development has made gender mainstreaming a greater priority within COs. UNDP's study on the longer-term impact of its electoral assistance found that gender advisors have been particularly helpful in devising appropriate and effective indicators by which to measure progress on activities related to gender equality and in training national and international staff in gender equality. On some occasions, gender advisors have also assisted in the development of terms of reference for the recruitment of CTAs.



Gender advisors, where they are employed as part of the electoral assistance teams, have enabled a more integrated approach to mainstreaming gender in elections. Having dedicated staff who can work directly with the EMB has helped the institutions recognize the gender dimensions of their work and address it more comprehensively and systematically. It has also helped to increase the understanding of gender mainstreaming within UNDP COs by having dedicated staff who could share their knowledge and skills.

There are different ways to include a gender expert. Some international assistance providers have used gender advisors and focal points, who often also maintain other responsibilities, as well as consultants, to develop the capacity of their own staff and

their partners. Increasingly, international organizations are relying on specialized consultants, who are in country for less time and have less involvement overall. Dedicated gender advisors on elections, however, while still relatively rare, tend to have the most far-reaching impact on gender mainstreaming and gender equality outcomes on electoral assistance.

It is clear that the creation of a gender advisor position has helped some COs elevate their gender programming. Engaging a dedicated gender advisor has been a more effective approach than the gender focal point model where a staff person is tasked with gender among several other, unrelated programming responsibilities. The dedicated gender advisor has provided ongoing guidance and technical assistance in the lead-up to elections, which has been seen as invaluable support to EMBs, most of which have not been able to systematically consider gender in their long-term strategies. This opportunity for consistent advice and dedicated support in planning processes has had a visible impact on various aspects of the EMBs' work. Success cases have been in:

- Burundi, where the broad range of gender-related programming and significant progress on women's electoral participation could be clearly attributed to the gender advisor.
- Nepal, where UNDP's electoral support project conducted an analysis of the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) and provided a gender advisor to support the ECN in implementing the gender-related recommendations. IFES and UNDP also worked with the ECN to create gender-sensitive advocacy materials. In

response to the mandate, the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) deployed a Gender Adviser in 2007, with substantive and technical support from the DPKO Gender Team, to provide a gender lens to the work of the mission vis-à-vis women's engagement in the political process, specifically related to the promotion of a 33 percent quota for women's participation.

- Tunisia, where the UNDP gender advisor helped the EMB leadership to become more familiar with the different electoral processes, receive technical support and develop legal texts while considering the gender dimensions in each of these activities. This enabled experts to amend the electoral code to support illiterate women during voting and ensure that their vote was not exploited. Having a dedicated gender advisor to the EMB also enabled UNDP to provide the Commission with guidance and technical advice on voter education content with regard to gender. In part through a meeting organized with NGOs, the EMB reviewed its voter education content – posters and manuals – to ensure that it was gender-aware.

Importantly, dedicated gender advisors should not be left with the sole responsibility for gender mainstreaming. In Tunisia, for example, UNDP's deployment of a gender advisor may have paradoxically resulted in other international partners deprioritizing gender equality. This meant that, despite good coordination between UNDP and other election assistance partners in areas such as electoral reform, advisory services and trainings, gender mainstreaming was unevenly integrated

across the individual programmes of the different assistance partners, as the impression was that UNDP had gender sufficiently ‘covered’. This example also reflects the importance of building the awareness and understanding of gender mainstreaming of electoral assistance partners so that it is not siloed but rather integrated at all stages and in all interventions.

When gender equality is addressed within regular coordination meetings or discussions, it can be better mainstreamed into the work of all organizations. At a minimum, other organizations would have a clear sense of what was covered by UNDP programmes, what was not, and potential gaps that they could fill to ensure that gender is mainstreamed across all areas of support by all stakeholders.

2.2.3. Donor support for gender equality in election programming

The policies of donor and bilateral organizations can be extremely influential in determining how gender mainstreaming is addressed in the election project. They can demonstrate commitment, establish standards and tools for improved gender outcomes and enhance accountability mechanisms that create more investment in gender mainstreaming. The fact that many donors require their partners to mainstream gender equality in programme design or report gender equality results has led to increased commitments.

- In Bolivia, the Government of Sweden had strict requirements for partners to mainstream gender in every project and to prove how this was accomplished.

This represented a fundamental shift in how gender equality was approached in democratic support programmes.

- In Nepal, donor interest contributed to promoting gender mainstreaming efforts in several areas. IFES, for example, noted that donor requirements ensured that they included a gender perspective in their design, implementation and reporting, which was clearly reflected in work on voter registration and voter outreach.
- In Burundi, UNDP supported IFES to work with the EMB to collect sex-disaggregated data on the number of women who registered and voted. Likewise, the reporting requirements of UNDP, Oxfam Novib, Peace and Development of Canada, and Belgian NGO 11-11-11 influenced Burundian CSOs COSOME and OLUCOME to recruit over 40 percent women in their domestic observer missions in 2010.

2.2.4. International cooperation and coordination

Cooperation among UN entities and between UNDP and other donors creates opportunities for innovation and more effective use of resources. Collective planning allows international assistance providers the chance to mainstream gender equality more efficiently across programmes.

The UNDP study on the longer-term impact of its electoral assistance found that collaboration between UNDP and UN Women had

“There is a need for more funding to implement gender mainstreaming activities and increase women’s political empowerment.”

Malawi Country Office

been useful in supporting gender mainstreaming efforts. Importantly, however, the study noted that sensitizing national counterparts and UN staff to the importance of gender equality was critical. Gender mainstreaming in the electoral process works well when it is linked with the broader national governance gender mainstreaming strategy and worked on in collaboration with the relevant national women's machinery and gender advocates, including CSOs.

Sharing of information among international organizations can enable better strategy and long-term results. Often, international assistance providers do not create time to learn about the work of other agencies or partners, particularly regarding the promotion of gender equality. Regular coordination meetings among electoral assistance providers and donors (including UNDP-convened donor basket fund meetings) that explicitly include a focus on gender equality can enable international organizations to do more programme activities with fewer resources and accomplish more in less time. Efforts among organizations to collaborate on gender equality provide a space for gender concerns to be discussed and coordinated and facilitate creative thinking within electoral assistance programming. This is particularly important when there is a scarcity of resources or when donor funds are being channelled to one main agency, often UNDP.

A clear example of collaboration on information and resource-sharing has been the partnership between the UN, UNDP, International IDEA, IFES and the Australian Election Commission (AEC) in developing the Building

Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) methodology. More specifically, the BRIDGE Module on Gender and Elections has had repeated success in training EMB staff in gender mainstreaming practices. In February 2012, through GPECS, UNDP organized two BRIDGE workshops on gender and elections for EMB and UNDP representatives from the Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (ECIS) region. The workshop included discussion of the gendered aspects of electoral administration and programming, the impact of electoral systems and temporary special measures on women's political participation, gender mainstreaming in EMBs and some of the constraints that women within political parties commonly face. Evaluations of the workshops showed that participants were subsequently more appreciative of the complex obstacles to women's participation as voters and candidates and were more interested in promoting gender-sensitive policies in their respective EMBs.

The BRIDGE methodology and partnership also demonstrates how responsibility can be shared between organizations to meet pressing training needs for electoral administrators and other stakeholders. Due to the low number of women BRIDGE training facilitators in Nepal before June 2011, IFES funded a Train the Facilitators (TtF) BRIDGE training targeting women from different stakeholder groups to help reach beyond the constituencies of women already invited to participate. As a result, 17 more prospective women facilitators were recruited and became semi-accredited in the BRIDGE TtF and, later, many of them became fully accredited. Similarly, in the African region,

a BRIDGE workshop held in October 2010 aimed to develop a cadre of facilitators and trainers and a community of practice for gender and elections experts.

In the case of Tunisia, good coordination between UNDP, NDI and the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) yielded a ground-breaking joint training for women candidates ahead of the election. Through this partnership, a series of trainings were conducted, covering a gamut of campaign topics to help women become comfortable with facing the media and reaching out to citizens systematically. The breadth of coverage, in terms of trainees and issues covered, was possible because of the partnership fostered between the organizations. COs highlighted other examples of international collaboration and coordination:

- In Afghanistan, where the CO worked with USAID, DFID and Canadian CIDA to promote women's empowerment in the electoral processes
- In Bhutan, where the CO has an ongoing program and partnerships with UN Women, National Commission for Women and Children, Respect Educate Nurture and Empowerment of Women (RENEW, a local NGO) and the Department of Local Governance in the area of gender and gender mainstreaming
- In Zimbabwe, where the CO networks with the African Union (AU), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and has supported the participation of national stakeholders at these regional networks' conferences



2.3. Support to Electoral Management Bodies

As the bodies charged with conducting elections, EMBs are one of the key partners in UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects. A gender-sensitive EMB ensures that women's and men's concerns and experiences are taken fully into account in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all activities. EMBs can also seek to reduce the gaps in development opportunities between women and men and work toward gender equality as an integral part of their strategy, policies and operations. The research revealed good practices and lessons learned in regard to supporting EMBs to integrate gender equality into their work.

The overall strengthening of EMBs to apply a gender equality approach in the electoral process is growing, but remaining

UNDP Gender-Sensitive Support to Electoral Management Bodies	N	%
Support the EMBs to promote women's participation, registration and turnout on polling day	11	35.5
Support to the development of legislation, manuals and codes of conduct related to elections	9	29.0
Provision of gender mainstreaming training to staff	7	22.6
Support increased participation of women in the EMBs, including commissioners and polling station officials	5	16.1
Assistance with gender mainstreaming in operational procedures and policies of EMBs	3	9.7
Support to the nomination of a gender focal point within the EMBs	2	6.5
Support for research and publications on gender	2	6.5
Election related gender-based violence	2	6.5
Study tours/capacity-building with other EMBs	0	0.0
Others	0	0.0
<i>No support provided</i>	10	

Source: UNDP Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment in Electoral Processes

gaps must be addressed for elections to be administered in a gender-sensitive manner. The UNDP survey highlighted the tendency among COs to support EMBs more in preparation of election day (35 percent) and on the electoral policy framework (29 percent) and less on assisting focal points within the EMB (6.5 percent) and gender mainstreaming internal operational policies and procedures (9.7 percent). A further 10 COs noted that no support was provided to EMBs on gender equality measures.

Ensuring a gender equality perspective throughout an EMB requires thorough analysis and a corresponding action plan that also address the policies and procedures affecting internal and external operations. This section outlines specific strategies that have had some success. In the case studies and the lessons learned reports, seven main programming interventions were identified:

- Undertaking gender assessment or mapping
- Supporting senior management to include a gender perspective
- Appointing or deploying gender advisors and focal points
- Providing gender-related election training for EMB staff
- Collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated data on voter registration and turnout
- Facilitating voter registration
- Targeting voter outreach to women

Mainstreaming gender equality from the beginning of the electoral process and at all stages of electoral assistance can have a measurable impact on women's electoral participation and on gender equality

generally. Although the gender dimensions of elections are often ignored, the technical components that are fundamental to the operational and logistical components of an election impact men and women differently and therefore have an impact on electoral participation.

2.3.1. Gender assessment or mapping

Election preparation in many instances is ‘gender-blind’, where electoral preparations are made for voters and candidates with little analysis of gender considerations, which is fundamental to gender mainstreaming throughout the electoral process. A gender assessment or gender-mapping exercise that looks at EMB composition and practices can provide an overview of ‘the status’ of gender equality within the EMB. Any such mapping can examine the current situation for women as voters and candidates, which is an important early step; to be comprehensive, it can also be accompanied by an assessment of the state of gender equality inside the EMB.

The UNDP’s study on the longer-term impact of its electoral assistance concluded that a well-structured mapping exercise can deliver an all-embracing analysis of the situation and provide a base for planning the changes necessary to close identified gaps. The study cautioned, however, that strategies and incentives may need to be devised for national counterparts such as EMBs, parliaments and political parties, to consider gender mainstreaming properly. UNDP’s technical assistance to EMBs has demonstrated some leadership in this area and yielded specific recommendations that can improve EMBs’ ability to mainstream gender:

- Nepal provides a good example of identification of programming priorities through a gender assessment or mapping. In 2010, the ECN requested support from UNDP to integrate a gender perspective in its work. UNDP and IFES commissioned a gender expert to undertake a mapping exercise, examining lessons learned from the 2008 election and assessing current practices. The objective of this mapping exercise was to identify gender and social inclusion initiatives and gaps institutionally within the Commission and in specific electoral processes and to propose recommendations based on the findings. This mapping formed the basis of the support provided by UNDP to the ECN on gender equality in electoral administration and included recommendations like the adoption of a gender policy, the establishment of a gender unit and the formation of a consultative expert group to provide gender-related inputs to the work of the ECN.
- Similarly, in Bolivia, CIDA and Sida cooperated to hire a consultant to conduct a gender analysis of the National Electoral Court to determine how best to support the institution in mainstreaming gender.
- In Malawi, Moldova and Pakistan, UNDP and UN Women have supported gender assessments in the EMB.

Ideally, gender assessments would be accompanied by an action plan which outlines how the EMB proposes to address any gender equality shortcomings.

2.3.2. Support of senior management

The commitment of senior election officials to consider the gaps in women's participation and develop policies and activities to address them is essential in transforming EMBs from non-gender-sensitive institutions to bodies that understand the efficacy of gender mainstreaming at a technical level. Without support from the EMB leadership, mainstreaming gender throughout this institution, which often operates under extreme time pressures, would be challenging and lack sustainability.



One way to achieve increased awareness of gender mainstreaming is to recruit more women within the EMB at all levels of decision-making. The UNDP study found that recruitment of women depended on the specific policies in place within EMBs to promote women and the overall

'attractiveness' of EMBs as workplaces for women.³ In post-conflict and transitional contexts in particular, recruiting or appointing women appears to be a challenge. In Afghanistan, for example, the ELECT project worked with the Independent Electoral Commission to develop working hours and internal procedures that accommodate the cultural and security challenges faced by women employees.

- In Burundi, the placement of women in executive positions of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) as well as throughout its local offices helped to promote reform while sending a clear message in support of women's inclusion.
- In Afghanistan, approximately 30,000 women were hired to manage polling stations and more than 7,500 women assisted as 'searchers'. Aside from enabling women to enter polling stations without fear or posing a threat, this meant that women were empowered to be employed and to play active roles in the administration of elections.
- However, in Tunisia only two of 16 EMB members were women. Despite the significant efforts of those two senior women, many of their recommendations on enhancing women's involvement in electoral management were not addressed.

Of critical importance is the role of senior male managers as champions of gender equality reforms within the EMB. In Mongolia, a male parliamentarian launched

³ Additional information on women's equal participation and leadership in public administration and the challenges to good practices can be found in UNDP, 2014. Global Report on Gender Equality in Public Administration.

a 45-day campaign to promote women's political participation after participating in the UNDP 2011 Asia-Pacific Electoral Community of Practice Meeting.

2.3.3. Gender advisors and focal points

Dedicated expertise and staff have enabled a more integrated approach to addressing gender equality in the EMB. Gender advisors can provide an effective way for institutions to identify the gender dimensions of their work and ensure follow-up action to respond to shortcomings or reach targets systematically. The case studies illustrate that consistent advice and dedicated support in planning processes has visibly impacted the gender aspects of EMBs' work.

UNDP gender advisors were integrated into the electoral assistance teams in Nepal and Tunisia. The advisors were co-located with the EMB to provide regular support. In Nepal, UNDP's gender advisor assisted the ECN to conduct an internal gender mapping and supported the ECN in implementing the gender-related recommendations. The UNDP gender advisor worked closely with the ECN to draft key documents, such as the gender mainstreaming policy, a concept note for a gender unit and a concept note for a consultative expert group. This resulted in the ECN appointing a gender focal person (of a joint secretary rank) in the Commission. UNDP further supported the ECN focal point to gain gender expertise by providing BRIDGE training and supporting practical learning on gender mainstreaming in EMBs through a study visit to the Electoral Commission of South Africa in 2011.

UNDP's technical assistance to EMBs has demonstrated leadership in this area and illustrated that dedicated advisors significantly improve the likelihood of EMBs implementing sustainable reforms to promote gender equality.

2.3.4. Gender-related election training for EMB staff

For an EMB to work consistently on gender equality, staff may require gender awareness training. There are several ways in which training can be used to promote gender equality:

- Gender awareness training for all staff
- Specialized training, including for gender focal points or on specific policies or topics
- Mainstreaming gender considerations into all training done by the EMB to ensure that electoral procedures are gender-sensitive
- Training to ensure equal employment opportunities and build capacities in specific areas

The provision of gender awareness training for EMB staff is a noted good practice in electoral assistance programming, although it has not been widely applied in UNDP electoral assistance programmes. The BRIDGE Gender and Elections Module is recognized as a useful and intensive training tool for electoral administrators, UNDP staff, prospective trainers and other stakeholders. A revised and updated model, with a customized agenda developed by UNDP, addresses gender mainstreaming

throughout the gamut of electoral administration issues and uses a cascading model to accredit new facilitators, maximizing its reach. In Nepal, BRIDGE training has been used extensively to build the capacities of all electoral administrators in the ECN, including taking the training to the regions. As noted above, the ECN gender focal point also received targeted training through a peer learning exchange with the EMB in South Africa.

The revised BRIDGE Gender Module, used to train EMB staff on gender and elections, is the first of its kind and has been recognized as a useful and intensive training tool for electoral administrators, UNDP staff, prospective trainers and other stakeholders.

2.3.5. Sex-disaggregated data on voter registration and turnout

Sex-disaggregated data on voter registration and turnout is required for basic analysis of voter participation so that EMBs can adequately address the needs of all voters. This data provides key information for EMBs to address any particular challenges related to women's participation, such as low registration rates in different regions, and to devise programming to respond appropriately.

This data is not systematically collected, however, as the CO in Albania reported:

- Women's voter turnout was around 46 percent of the total number of people who voted (in the May 2012 elections), but the EMB lacks a previous baseline to allow for comparison.

Of the five case studies, only those from Nepal and Tunisia provided sex-disaggregated data on voter registration and turnout. Bolivia, on the other hand, had no system for collecting sex-disaggregated data, despite an upgrade to a biometric voting system. In Burundi, civic groups took up the responsibility to collect sex-disaggregated data, but did not have resources for an analysis of the data.

2.3.6. Facilitating voter registration

The registration process is fundamental to participating in the electoral process. If women are excluded from registration efforts, this will likely prevent them from voting on election day. Registering women to vote requires an understanding of the political environment and the potential barriers that they face as well as the devising of specific strategies, if needed. Tailored steps may be needed from EMBs and the appropriate ministries to facilitate women's voter registration, as the research demonstrates:

- One potential challenge for women consists in not having the requisite identification method to enable them to register. In Burundi, national identification cards served as voter ID cards and Burundian women were at risk of low voter registration because more women than men lacked ID cards. With Peacebuilding Funds to supplement existing election funds, UNDP and others implemented a major campaign for ID cards that would allow women and men to register and vote. The campaign provided one million Burundians, 560,000 of whom were women, with

voter ID cards. In partnership with the Ministry of the Interior, UNDP targeted poor, rural women because they were the least likely to have an ID.

- UNDP's support to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal in Bolivia between 2002 and 2010 strengthened several internal processes, including cleaning up and updating the electoral register and improving the civil registry. The project had positive results by closing the gap in the registration of male and female voters and correcting an earlier data cleaning process that had erroneously eliminated hundreds of thousands of women from the system because they had changed names after marriage. The project also supported issuing identity documents to undocumented Bolivians, especially poor women and members of indigenous groups. The objective was not only to ensure women's right to obtain the ID, but also to motivate them to have their children registered.
- The UNDP project in Bolivia has significantly contributed to updating the Biometric Electoral Registry by closing the traditional gap in the registration of male and female voters and correcting an earlier cleaning process that had erroneously eliminated hundreds of thousands of women from the system and the register. In 2011, the electoral biometric registry recorded over 5.2 million officially registered voters, of whom 51 percent were women and 49 percent men.
- More recently, in Egypt, UN Women and UNDP supported the Women Citizenship Initiative project with the Ministry

of State for Administrative Development. The project aimed "to ensure women's basic citizenship rights during the democratic transition in Egypt" by enabling poor and marginalized women living in rural or marginalized areas to obtain their national ID cards and thus access their full rights as citizens. The project aimed to issue two million national ID cards for Egyptian women.

Tailored steps may be taken by EMBs and ministries to facilitate women's voter registration. The registration of women by EMBs is fundamental to their participation throughout the remainder of the electoral process.

2.3.7. Targeting voter outreach to women

Voter outreach comprises activities that inform and educate people about the election specifically and democracy more broadly. Experience shows that targeted outreach to women voters at the grassroots level has expanded participation in elections and raised the awareness of gender issues and political participation more widely. EMBs and citizen groups have reached out to voters using media and advocacy materials.

- In Tunisia, the EMB focused heavily on mainstreaming gender into its external outreach processes that targeted greater civic engagement in the elections with a distinct gender perspective. The primary goal was to increase access to information from CSOs on the procedures decided by the Independent Board of Elections (ISIE), harmonizing the content of awareness-raising tools and ensuring their compliance with the procedures

decided by the ISIE and, finally, raising the awareness of CSOs about their roles in informing voters.

- In Nepal, UNDP and other assistance providers supported media campaigns on voter education and women's political participation. Radio jingles, TV spots and TV interviews widely disseminated information to support women's participation in elections. As radios are accessible to 90 percent of Nepal's population, media campaigning focused on providing voter information through gender-sensitive radio messages. UN Women supported a women's media organization named Sancharika Samuha to launch a media campaign that included publication of articles on different issues of gender and elections in various print media, as well as interviews and discussions in the electronic media.
- Also in Tunisia, UNDP supported significant media awareness-raising tools, including audio songs and social media tools. The interactive game DemocraTweet was a tool designed for young voters, in Arabic and French, to provide information on the elections, encourage learning about the principles of democracy, and strengthen citizenship. Prior to the 2011 election, UNDP also supported the recording of a popular song, "enti essout" (You are the voice), which a group of talented volunteer artists recruited by UNDP wrote and registered. The song 'went viral' and became the election anthem.

"The evaluation of the electoral assistance project shows the need to target women on their own as group. There is a need to allocate specific funds to support women candidates."

The Gambia Country Office

Every effort should be made to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed into voter education and civic outreach materials in external communications and voter education materials of EMBs and civic groups. For example, voter education and civic outreach materials could visually reflect both genders and address the respective participation concerns of women and men voters.

2.4. Women's Participation as Candidates in Elections

In parallel, or sometimes together with electoral assistance, UNDP has implemented comprehensive programmes of support to women as candidates and women in elected positions. This work usually falls outside of UN-prescribed electoral assistance and within broader governance or parliamentary support or gender equality projects. In all five case studies, some programming to support the capacity-building of women candidates was identified. The research noted several impediments to women's reaching office, such as lack of campaign finance, lack of support by political parties and negative portrayals of women political leaders, including in the media.

Some programme interventions by UNDP and other organizations have sought to overcome these challenges. Synergies with other electoral programmes are also important. Assistance to women as candidates in elections must also consider the roles that women assume as voters, candidates and elected officials, as well as the laws, policies and procedures that affect their participation. For example, efforts that support EMBs and media outlets in providing greater

access for women to register as candidates or gain visibility, respectively, must occur in concert with capacity-building for women candidates.

This section will outline the seven main programming interventions identified in the research:

- Normative framework and electoral law reforms to support women's participation, including temporary special measures, where appropriate
- Capacity-building of aspiring women candidates
- Facilitating networks of elected women leaders
- Media coverage and access to funding
- Support to political parties
- Support to women in civil society
- Addressing violence against women in politics

Another area that is not covered in this summary report, but that is referenced in the case studies, is support provided to women post-election through parliamentary assistance projects or programmes directed at constitutional reform.

2.4.1. Normative framework and legislative reform

International conventions and declarations provide the framework for Member States to legislate on key issues such as human rights, gender equality and other global issues. The international framework is a key advocacy tool to push for legal reforms to promote women's access to political decision-making bodies, including establishing targets for numerical representation.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325 and related resolutions, including UNSCR 2122, continue to be important advocacy tools for women's groups and assistance organizations alike. This is especially so in relation to ensuring greater involvement of women in peace-building, peace-keeping and conflict prevention and recovery. UNSCR 1820, in particular, confronts sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

- In Nepal, several CSOs noted that they had used UNSCR 1325 to raise awareness and give global validity to their advocacy efforts. UN Women supported Shantimalika, a women's network working on peace and security in Nepal, to carry out a national- and district-level sensitization programme on UNSCR 1325 and 1820 for political parties, government representatives and civil society groups. The focus of the sensitization programme was to promote women's political participation in the Constituent Assembly (CA). Several senior male managers in the EMB noted that they had received training on UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 from UN and other agencies, which was instrumental to their sensitization on gender equality awareness.
- In Burundi, the Synergy of Partners Promoting Women's Rights and other women's groups benefited from conducting training that used UNSCR 1325 to educate women and lobby their male colleagues. Regional targets were also used, from the AU, to advocate and prepare other women to lobby for greater electoral participation of women.

All case studies revealed that advocacy support by UNDP, UN Women and other organizations was important to achieving the intended result of increasing the number of women elected to office. It is crucial that this support be provided as quickly as possible. In Nepal, for example, the UN supported women's CSOs that sought to influence CA members regarding the electoral law. The electoral law was submitted to the CA with very little time for any intervention, yet UN Women played a critical role in helping women become familiar with the details, analysing the law and supporting women's advocacy with CA members. Similarly, in Kyrgyzstan, UNDP provided gender expertise to the parliament to work with women on the electoral law.

The normative framework has provided a foundation to advocate for changes to electoral and other laws to ensure women's increased presence in decision-making in line with international targets. The adoption of parity legislation or laws introducing reforms like electoral quotas has been effective in increasing gender balance in elected institutions.

2.4.2. Capacity-building of aspiring women candidates

Candidate training for women is consistently found to be highly beneficial and was a predominant feature in the work undertaken in UNDP COs. Oftentimes, it is a vital complement to significant legislative reforms, such as the introduction of temporary special measures, including quotas. First-time candidates often lack experience or knowledge about how to campaign. This lack of experience manifests itself in low confidence and discomfort with being in

the public eye. Women frequently stated a lack of confidence in dealing with the media and the public, which suggests a greater need for capacity-building training. Candidate training can be focused on a variety of learning strategies, but commonly includes election campaign elements and effective campaign strategies; leadership tools; communication and advocacy techniques; avenues for resource mobilization; and conflict management.

- In Tunisia, the law requiring parity for candidate lists resulted in a sudden increased demand for women candidates by political parties in a context where few women had previous political experience. It is therefore especially important to provide appropriate trainings to encourage women to run for office and to provide support to build capacities to devise a campaign plan and platform, target voters and fundraise.
- In Nepal, significant support from donors also focused on candidate training in the lead-up to the Constitutional Assembly elections. NDI, UN Women and Jagaran Nepal, a local NGO, were primarily focused on training candidates, before and after the election. Training was provided on parliamentary functions and how to interact with media by strategically putting forward their views and issues.
- In Kyrgyzstan, the Soros Foundation hosted meetings to develop joint action plans between gender specialists, civil society groups and women candidates. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation was instrumental in supporting this collaborative process by financing travel expenses for many women from

different provinces. For the 2004 local elections and 2005 national elections, UNDP and Sida encouraged women to participate as candidates, building their capacity by offering leadership training and networking.

- In Lao PDR, UNDP collaborated with UNIFEM/UN Women, women's associations and the Lao Women's Union in providing international and national experts to serve as resource speakers during the Training on Campaigning Techniques for Women Candidates. The CO was also involved in targeting more women to participate in capacity-building workshops. These have improved the capacities, knowledge and confidence of women participants to seek higher positions or to run for public office.

Training programmes are especially effective when they are structured as mentoring or skills-transfer activities between experienced women politicians and women aspirants/candidates. Under the project Winning with Women that NDI promoted in Bolivia from 2002 to 2008, the Women's Political Forum revitalized a skill-transfer process for women candidates and potential candidates before, during and after the elections. In partnership with the Women's Coordinating Office, the Forum participated in initiatives promoted by UNDP, International IDEA and the Bolivian Foundation for Multiparty Democracy.

The Benin CO highlighted some of the challenges inherent in candidate training, following the recent election of only two women across 77 districts. The CO noted the importance of timely and intensive

training support, particularly at critical moments, including before and during the electoral campaign.

Preparing to become a candidate is a multi-step process that requires extensive preparation long before the election period. Programme support that is provided continually, not just immediately before and during the campaign period, can increase candidates' opportunities. This is particularly important for female candidates who face different barriers to campaigning such as fewer financial resources, less support from political parties and more family commitments that make claims on their time.



2.4.3. Facilitating networks of elected women leaders

Facilitating networks of elected women leaders can contribute a stronger voice in advocating for electoral reform from those who have experienced gender-based challenges first hand. Convening disparate women's groups can be effective in developing coordinated strategies, sharing learning and ultimately promoting the greater political participation of women.

Networks can build confidence and camaraderie among women, as can mentoring and other valuable relationships that support their legislative and personal endeavours. The value of such networks for issues of national importance cannot be underestimated. Establishing international partnerships is also effective, providing

mentoring opportunities and moral support that can lead to productive political alliances and political credibility.

- In Burundi, UNDP facilitated the establishment of a local councillor's network, ABELO, which provided a platform for local councillors to share experiences. A women's network was created within ABELO, which helped women understand their responsibilities as legislators and provided a platform for greater advocacy efforts.
- In Tunisia, CA members benefited from linkages with the party internationals, which were facilitated through their individual party. Individual women within the CA travelled to visit with European party partners, using their own resources, and developed mentoring relationships as a result. Denmark and Germany also formed networks to interact with parties in Tunisia, enabling political activists to obtain training abroad. Such opportunities can be further developed into long-term partnerships rather than one-time exchanges.
- In Cape Verde, the CO has supported the design of the Plan for Gender Equality and the Plan for Gender-Based Violence. The plans have been implemented in partnership with women NGOs and municipalities. Specifically, the plan for gender-based violence has been implemented in partnership with the network of associations (Rede Sol), the police and the other actors. As the result of coordinated advocacy of all relevant public institutions and CSOs, Cape Verde now has a law against gender-based violence approved by the Parliament.

- In Nepal, UNDP's Support to Participatory Constitution Building in Nepal (SPCBN) project supported the CA members and various stakeholders, including various caucuses (such as Women's Caucus, Indigenous Peoples Caucus, Dalit Caucus) to discuss and develop their agendas and plans of action. They worked toward achieving the representation of women, indigenous peoples, Dalits and other marginalized communities in proportion to their population in organs of the state and toward designing an electoral system that would facilitate this objective in elected bodies.

2.4.4. Media coverage and access to funding

Broadening the access of women candidates to the media can increase their public profile and enable them to compete with male candidates. However, the cost of political advertising and paid media coverage can be prohibitive for women, who have less access to campaign resources. The cost of media access must be considered to enable women to campaign more equitably with men. Assistance provided by international organizations may help identify incentive policies for the media or possible programmes to manage coverage of campaigns by women where appropriate. The media can also be encouraged or supported to provide gender-aware and responsible coverage of women candidates.

- In Tunisia, CAWTAR worked with journalists in joint training sessions with women candidates where they could understand the experiences of women candidates and become sensitized to the issues that they cared about. According to CAWTAR,

these efforts helped to secure greater and fairer coverage of women candidates during the CA elections.

- In Bolivia, AMUPEI, a nationwide network of 11 regional committees that coordinate several women's organizations, launched two advocacy campaigns, Ready for the Lists and Women Ready for Voting, using the media to promote the importance of women voting and to raise the profile of women candidates.
- In Kyrgyzstan, the UNDP Elections Project supported the production of bilingual (Kyrgyz and Russian) public service announcements and radio reels and organized roundtables and discussions to promote the electoral participation of women and youth. NDI also supported the regular broadcast of political debate television programs on several Kyrgyz television stations since 1999, promoting public awareness of various issues including women's rights.
- In The Gambia, there was a nationwide sensitization campaign on the social benefits of having women in leadership positions in order to break cultural barriers. Different media outlets were used and there were trainings in advocacy, leadership and confidence-building. The campaign created an environment conducive for all political parties and CSOs to access information, training and engage in policy dialogues. In the 2008 elections following the campaign, 20 women contested and 15 were elected.

In addition to media coverage, access to campaign finance was highlighted as an ongoing challenge for women candidates. The high cost of campaigns, uneven distribution of public funding (where applicable) and lack of access to credit can make campaigning prohibitive for many women, who often have less access to financial resources. Additional incentives or measures may need to be considered in this area.

"The way gender equality messages are communicated tends to put men to one side – it has been treated as just a women's problem, not a family/society problem. Gender equality is not just a woman's cause, but also men's. A plan of communication that involves the whole society is needed. A gender agenda for the short, medium and long terms must be an instrument of negotiation among all members of society."

Cape Verde Country Office

In Tunisia, modest public funding was provided to political parties for each registered candidate list. Access to public funding in Tunisia reduced the gender gap only to a small degree. As public funding was distributed to those who headed a party's list, this benefited mainly male candidates, who headed 93 percent of political party lists overall. Only a handful of women were able to benefit directly, while many others struggled to finance their campaigns.

2.4.5. Support to political parties

UNDP can play an important convening role with political parties and encourage them to be more inclusive within their own organizations in line with international commitments. Fostering support among the leadership of political parties is necessary for sustainable opportunities for women candidates and political reform.

- In Bolivia, UNDP and International IDEA, with Sida support, aimed to strengthen the political party system amidst significant political complexity, tension and uncertainty. This political environment provided an opportunity to reform political parties. Through different projects, parties were encouraged to be more inclusive of women and youth participation, including through the implementation of temporary special measures.
- In Tunisia, UNDP hosted discussions with party leaders to engage them in a dialogue on candidate selection and leadership positions within the parties. UNDP also worked with women in the parties to help them coordinate, define issues of common concern and play as active a role as possible from within the party.
- In Nepal, UN Women supported Jagaran Nepal to review political party manifestos ahead of the 2007 CA election.

The objective was to encourage political parties to take concrete steps toward promoting women's rights, including through their party manifestos. Based on the review, seven priority recommendations were made to parties.

- In Cambodia, candidate training by NGOs was supported, as were awareness-raising and the lobbying of political parties. In provinces where the NGOs carried out these activities, the number of women elected exceeded the national average. Advocacy to political parties also resulted in informal measures to increase numbers of women on candidate lists.

2.4.6. Support to women in civil society

Early and consistent support to women in civil society served as a major building block for women's capacity and the development of women's movements. This investment has revealed itself as fundamental to improvements in women's electoral participation. It has created a foundation for organized women's movements, which have played an essential leadership role in advocating for electoral reform measures. Continued support to already-established coalitions and partnerships has also been highly effective.

It is a consistent finding that women's movements play a leading role in advocating for women's political participation and, specifically, for election reform. Without a strong women's movement, strides made on behalf of women in elected office would be impossible. UNDP, UN Women and many other

"For more meaningful results in gender equality, it is important to develop a programme with political parties to ensure that women are not left behind and women can assume their role and propose themselves for important positions in the political parties and be ready for disputes."

Cape Verde Country Office

international organizations have a long history of supporting women's groups to become influential voices in civil society.

Partnerships with entities and agencies across the UN System have proven instrumental in the development and capacity-building of key women's organizations. Key to success is early assistance and the convening of different groups of women who then eventually form their own organizations and networks.

- In Burundi, the achievements of the 2010 elections were the product of over a decade of partnership between local and international actors, including DPKO, DPA and UN Women, in concert with the evolution of a coherent and organized women's movement. This enabled women to organize themselves to lobby for a quota in 2005 and advocate for improvements to the law with list placement requirements in 2010. The long-term assistance to CSOs contributed to a strengthened women's movement that built on collective successes and learned from failures.
- In Bolivia, the adoption of gender parity resulted from women's ability to establish partnerships around a specific agenda and collectively pursue advocacy strategies. UN Women (then UNIFEM) convened women even before Beijing to help them develop a common issue agenda countrywide. After Beijing, support from UNIFEM and European donors contributed to the establishment of women's organizations, which continue to work together today.
- In Lebanon, the CO closely coordinated all of its activities with a number of

counterparts, including national NGOs such as the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) and the Civil Campaign for Electoral Reform (CCER). It also worked closely with the Lebanese Council for Women (LCW), an umbrella coalition of more than 170 women organizations throughout the country. The CO coordinated all of its activities, targeting women with LCW, especially the implemented training and voter education activities. Finally, the main counterparts among UN agencies were the Office of the UN Special Coordinator Office for Lebanon (UNSCOL) and UN EAD.

CSOs have also proven themselves very capable of implementing assistance projects funded by the international community:

- In Mauritius, UNDP supported the NGO Women in Networking to organize a forum on women in democracy; meetings with potential women candidates and electors; seminars for women on the electoral and voting system and their rights and civic duties; and lobbying for and support of women candidates.
- In Kyrgyzstan, support for an emerging women's movement and gender-sensitive electoral support were among two major investments by the international community. Early engagement with women's NGOs that began to form a movement was essential for promoting the country's legislative gender quota as well.

Future support by UNDP and other agencies should continue to bolster the individual capacities of women and women's organizations so that they can continue to play a prominent role through advocacy.

2.4.7. Addressing violence against women in politics

Violence against women in politics is often unreported and there is little evidence of international assistance in this area. The case studies illustrated that women in politics are increasingly concerned about and additional attention to mitigation measures and programming responses is required. Left unaddressed, election-related violence will continue to deter women candidates and voters from participating in elections. The types of violence that women candidates and voters face are different from the types most commonly experienced by men, and include intimidation, sexual assault and domestic violence, which may require different responses than the measures already in place.

- The phenomenon of political violence against women in Bolivia prompted the first-ever piece of legislation specifically designed to address the issue. The detail of the law is ground-breaking and the extended struggle by parliamentarians and civil groups to achieve its passage is exemplary. The law now faces challenges, however, in attracting sufficient resources and building political will for its implementation.
- In Burundi, the Amatora Mu Mahoro collaborative initiative monitored incidents of election violence and generated sex-disaggregated results. This allowed stakeholders and policy makers to recognize the extent of violence and its gender-specific nature. This type of data provides a basis for future legal and policy reforms.

- In Tunisia, aspiring women candidates reported giving up on their political ambitions because of verbal or physical violence. Expert evaluations revealed violence toward women (candidates and political activists, in particular), despite an otherwise mostly peaceful election. While the EMB received reports and complaints, it was not legally equipped to intervene or to defend candidates against the insults and intimidation.
- The project From Peaceful Elections 2010 to Development of Kyrgyzstan was implemented in all seven provinces of Kyrgyzstan through the network of women organizations, the Alliance of Women Legal Initiatives. In this electoral violence prevention project, women's NGOs collaborated closely with local authorities and law enforcement agencies to respond proactively to emerging conflicts through seven hotlines in all seven provinces of Kyrgyzstan, press conferences, regional Civic Control Headquarters and a series of round tables and working meetings in the areas recognized as 'hot spots'.

Violence against women in politics is an important emerging area for programming by international organizations, and additional research is needed to develop, pilot and document appropriate responses. While legislation with penalties and a framework for implementation is clearly one mitigation measure, political parties and EMBs may also adapt policies to prevent and address the problem of violence against women in elections.



3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following summary recommendations are primarily addressed to UNDP, but may resonate with a wider group of UN entities, electoral assistance providers, donors, CSOs and EMBs.

3.1. Needs assessment, project design and evaluation

A holistic gender equality approach requires the development of tools for UNDP staff that outline possible gender-targeted activities and programmes and gender mainstreaming strategies, with corresponding outcomes and indicators that can be used in project documents. It also requires sufficient funding to implement the gender mainstreaming and targeted interventions.

- Within the parameters set by the UN electoral policy framework, systematically apply a gender mainstreaming approach to the design and assessment of all electoral assistance projects. Develop a results framework that can monitor implementation. Use gender experts to review project documents, as appropriate.
- Ensure that the strategy of gender mainstreaming is applied to all electoral assistance activities and interventions in order to effectively encourage the participation of women in elections as voters, candidates and electoral management staff, and manage the gender-related impacts of election administration.
- Coordinate electoral assistance efforts that seek to increase women's participation with various actors, including EAD, UN Women and, in post-conflict settings, DPKO/DFS. Ensure that opportunities for collaboration are identified and that funding opportunities for complementary programmes are coordinated at the country level.

3.2. Build internal programming capacity

This study has shown that, among the many lessons learned, the capacity to adopt gender mainstreaming is a strategy that needs to be developed and nurtured, including within UNDP itself.

- Nurture and sustain internal capacity to respond to the specific needs of Member States and to offer informed and gender-sensitive programming responses. This may require investment in internal capacities, the establishment of indicators and other internal engagements.
- Institutionalize gender-awareness training for all electoral staff, male and female, at UNDP headquarters and in COs. Focusing on focal points or dedicated gender advisors alone prevents the full value and impact of gender mainstreaming from becoming manifest. Target organizational leadership to ensure sustainability and oversight.
- Ensure that staff training reflects the shared responsibility associated with implementing gender mainstreaming. Review existing training methodologies with regard to expectations of staff and performance monitoring tools. Develop greater accountability mechanisms for staff and with partners on implementation of gender mainstreaming.
- Develop internal gender expertise and seek to retain staff with required skills. Ensure that gender experts are able to collaborate and contribute to broader electoral assistance – not in a silo – so that the entire electoral process can be considered from a gender perspective.

- Commit to developing a cadre of gender and elections advisors who can work with EMBs as well as CSOs and women candidates.
- Consider support to increase the number of gender advisors who can work with EMBs and work to ensure that short-term assistance by gender advisors is institutionalized within the EMBs.

3.3. Ensure coordination with partners

Assistance is more comprehensive when it is coordinated and inclusive partnerships are developed with a range of stakeholders. Donors have played an effective role through their policies that require that specific attention be given to gender mainstreaming in all projects.

- Promote ongoing learning and exchange through the collections of lessons learned and sharing of experiences with UN entities, international and regional assistance providers, CSOs and EMBs.
- Ensure synergies among donors to allow for adequate coverage and responsive programming and use coordination meetings to ensure that gender equality is integrated as widely as possible in electoral projects and across organizations.
- If necessary, convene a dedicated gender working group to enable effective coordination not only with respect to joint programming, but also among donors.
- Consider the feasibility of requiring, in each donor funding agreement, a gender component in all new electoral assistance projects implemented by the UNDP.

3.4. Make an early and long-term investment

A deliberate and long-term approach to supporting women candidates can yield benefits and directly impacts their influence in electoral politics. Support to women that helps build their confidence and capacity as well as support to burgeoning women's movements have created a strong foundation for women's electoral advances. Strategic programming that continues to build up women's individual capacities as well as civic groups and institutions will bring more gains in their numbers and influence in electoral politics.

- Adopt a long-term view of building women's capacity to lobby for their electoral rights and influence electoral policies. A concerted effort to support women over time by a variety of international assistance providers has influenced electoral advances, either through training, outreach to citizens with messages about women's participation or the creation of a pipeline of role models, among others. This type of strategic investment by assistance providers builds a more sustainable foundation for change.

3.5. Support inclusive, gender-sensitive EMBs

Historically, efforts to promote women's political participation have focused on candidates, voters and, to an increasing extent, political parties. The international community has yet to fully exploit the opportunity to support EMBs' efforts to systematically integrate gender into their internal operations and overall election strategies. Support

to EMBs is essential for ensuring gender-sensitive policies and procedures in election administration and management that would allow for greater institutional change.

- Encourage and foster political will within the EMB to address gender equality shortcomings and build a cadre of gender-responsive leaders and male champions.
- Support EMBs to develop policies and procedures that consider gender at every step of the electoral administration process and institutionalize the strategy of gender mainstreaming. Encourage EMBs to adopt a gender policy, establish a gender unit and/or form a consultative expert group to provide strategic gender advice.
- Support efforts to regularly review electoral and policy frameworks and their impact on gender equality and women's participation. Conduct post-election assessment or reviews to identify shortcomings in the electoral process to be addressed during the next electoral cycle.
- Assist EMBs to conduct internal reviews or assessments of policies and operations – including voter registration, polling day and voter outreach – with the view of identifying gender equality shortcomings and agreeing on an action plan and targets to address them.
- Ensure that EMBs systematically collect, disseminate and report on sex-disaggregated data, especially on voter registration, voter turnout, staffing levels and candidate registration.

- Promote the representation of women in senior decision-making levels of EMBs, including through the adoption of targets.
- Ensure that the concepts, strategies and objectives of gender equality and gender mainstreaming are widely understood, including by assisting the EMB to provide gender awareness training to staff at all levels.
- Support continued sharing of knowledge and lessons among candidates, leaders, party members and CSOs to assess progress; ensure coordination and refine strategies for the promotion of women's political participation.
- Establish post-electoral assessment reviews with women elected to national parliaments and local governments and build alliances and networks between parliamentarians and gender advocates to promote gender-sensitive institutions.
- Continue and strengthen engagement with political parties at the national and local levels. This includes supporting the skills-building and capacity development of aspiring women candidates.
- Scale up efforts in new and emerging areas, including appropriate programming responses to mitigate violence against women in election, and political finance for campaigns.

3.6. Promote women's political participation

Improving women's access, participation and leadership in politics is important, not only as a matter of human rights, but as a means of ensuring that women have a say in the decisions that affect their lives as well as the lives of their families and communities. With women's representation in national level politics still far from parity, much work remains to be done.

- Ensure sustained support for civil society and women's movements that is consistent over time, instead of short-term interventions focused around electoral events.
- Support the early and sustained development of women leaders and CSOs and support connections between local NGOs, international organizations and donors.
- Expand support to women's participation at the local level, which current programming has largely not addressed. This is reflected in the lack of data on women's participation at this level and few programmes of support.

Funds dedicated to gender mainstreaming and programming, commitment to gender mainstreaming by leadership at a senior level, gender focal points, requiring sex-disaggregated data and the use of gender-sensitive indicators by international organizations create models and standards for partners and establish a framework that improves outcomes on gender and enhances accountability to gender mainstreaming.

ANNEX: CASE STUDIES

Synopsis of case studies

The case studies prepared for this report outline specific interventions and lessons learned in each country context and can be consulted individually. Below is a summary of some of the key findings in each case study. The full length case studies are available in the full report.

Bolivia

The case study primarily covers support to women's CSOs and the women's movement and capacity-building of aspiring women candidates and office holders.

The good practices include:

- The formation of partnerships and coalitions to support women's political empowerment
- Electoral law reform and adoption of temporary special measures and electoral quotas
- Women's access to the media and public messaging
- Combating violence against women in politics

Opportunities for further work include the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data, supporting the contribution of women in politics and applying a gender-equality perspective and mainstreaming to all programme activities, including electoral support.

Burundi

The case study highlights several interventions that contributed to the high level of participation of women as voters and candidates, including support to civil society and electoral administration.

The good practices include:

- Long-term engagement with the women's movement
- Successful engagement with political actors
- Electoral law reform and oversight
- Gender-equality mainstreaming in the EMB
- Staff capacities and gender advisors

Opportunities for further work include encouraging broader sensitization around the role of women in public life, expanding support to the local level and addressing the challenge of political finance for women.

Kyrgyzstan

The case study examines UNDP's electoral assistance project, the impact of legislative reform on women's participation, and support to the women's movement.

The good practices include:

- Sustained support to the women's movement

- Investing in building the capacities of women to engage in political life
- Supporting engagement at the local level
- Coordinating for better results

Opportunities for further work include ensuring that gender equality is mainstreamed into electoral assistance, that the electoral framework and temporary special measures are implemented in practice and that there is broader sensitization around the role of women in politics.

Nepal

The case study illustrates how gender equality is integrated into the electoral assistance work of international organizations and the work of the EMB. It also shows the importance of electoral arrangements for promoting women's political participation.

The good practices include:

- International support for gender equality promotion
- Gender-aware electoral support
- Capacity-building within the EMB and gender mapping
- Voter outreach and awareness-raising

Opportunities for further work include ensuring that gender reforms in election programming and within the EMB are institutionalized and that gains registered to date are maintained and built upon.

Tunisia

The case study covers the preparations and programming interventions ahead of the 2011 election against a short timeframe and illustrates the gains resulting from a programme that included gender equality results from the initial design of the electoral assistance project.

The good practices include:

- Legal reform to include women – namely, the parity measure
- Coordination among partners and assistance providers
- Engaging a specialized gender advisor
- Gender-aware voter outreach and media campaigns

Opportunities for further work include sustaining gender equality gains within the electoral law and within the EMB, adapting the language of 'gender', pursuing data disaggregation, addressing violence against women in elections, and building upon and maintaining the early gains in UNDP's election support.



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