



Report of

Regional Seminar

“Women’s Participation in Local Politics”

August 8-9, 2006

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Organized by FES in cooperation with CPWP and SILAKA

Submitted by

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TABLE OF COTENTS

| TITLE | PAGES |
|--|----------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1. BACKGROUND | 1 |
| 2. OBJECTIVES | 2 |
| 3. PARTICIPANTS | 2 |
| II. OUTCOME OF SEMINAR | 2 |
| 1. PROCESS OF SEMINAR | 2 |
| 2. PRESENTATIONS | 2 |
| 3. KEY MESSAGES AND LESSON LEARNT: | 3 |
| 4. RESULT OF GROUP DISCUSSION | 3 |
| 4. 1. Party Politics | 3 |
| 4.2. Quotas | 4 |
| 4.3. Capacity Building | 4 |
| 4.4. Voter's Education | 5 |
| 4.5. Media Involvement | 6 |
| 4.6. Network Building..... | 6 |
| III. CONCLUSION | 7 |
| IV. RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 8 |

Attachments:

- Annex 1: Regional Seminar Program
- Annex 2: Directory of participants
- Annex 3: Presentation papers/speeches

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Background

With the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women, 180 government committed themselves to gender equality. The enhancement Women's political participation is a crucial element of both of the documents. In the year 2005, only two countries, namely Sweden and Rwanda, have achieved equal participation in politics and decision-making. Worldwide, the representation of women in parliaments stands at about 15%. The political participation of women in Southeast Asia is even lower than the world average.

Involvement in local politics is, for many women, the most efficient possibility to positively influence and transform their immediate social and economic environment and improve the lives of their families and communities. Hardly any woman would claim not to be interested in the developments of her village, town or province. However, in most Southeast Asian countries, women's representation in local politics is even lower than in national politics.

It holds not longer true that women are not able to participate in politics due to their limited education and skills. There have been many efforts by civil society groups, governments and educational institutions in each of the countries as well as by international aid organizations to improve women's access to education and training. These efforts already began to take effect.

However, there are still many factors that negatively influence women's decision to get involved in politics. Just to mention some of them:

- The traditionally determined role and image of women
- The multiple burden that women have to carry (wage earning work, household, care for children and elderly)
- Women's perceived or actual lack of education and training
- The assumption that women are not capable of handling the responsibilities of public decision-making positions
- Lack of political awareness and experience
- Lack of support by families and parties
- Lack of financial resources
- The cruel and tricky image of politics which are perceived to be a men's world
- Perceived and actual political violence
- Insufficient networking among active women

Even if women –overcoming those obstacles- decide to get involved in politics, their chances to get elected are much lower than those of their male counterparts. Prejudices against women in leadership position that is deeply rooted in most cultures, does not only influence voter's decisions but also causes political parties to put women on the lower ranks of their party lists for the fear of losing votes. That means, in turn, that even if women are able to gain strong support from voters, they won't attain any office.

2. Objectives

1. Analyzing women's role and women's situation in local politics
2. Evaluating affirmative action measures for the promotion of women's participation in local politics
3. Developing strategies to increase the number of women in local government positions as well as to promote gender-sensitive policies on local level.

3. Participants

There are 65 participants attend the seminar in the first day (August 08) and 53 participants attend in the second day (August 09, 2006). The participants came from government officials, national assembly member, women political leaders, LNGOs and INGOs staff, donors, researchers, experts, mass media and local politicians coming from Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Timor Leste, Thailand, India, Singapore and Cambodia.

II. OUTCOME OF SEMINAR

1. Process of Seminar

The regional seminar on "Women's Participation in Local Politics", took place from August 08-09, 2006 at Sunway Hotel, Phnom Penh, the Kingdom of Cambodia. The session was welcomed by Ms. Thida C. Khus, Executive Director of Silaka and Ms. Rina Julvianty, FES representative, Jakarta office. The session was opened by H.E. Mrs. Ho Naun, chairperson of 8th commission of Cambodian National Assembly and was closed by H.E. Mrs. Khim Chamroeun, Secretary of State of Ministry of Women's Affairs of Cambodia. The seminar co-organized by of FES-Jakarta, CPWP and main organizer SILAKA. In the first day of the seminar there was a dinner reception at Romdeng restaurant with political leader and women leaders chaired by H.E Ho Naun, chairperson of 8th commission of Cambodian national Assembly and attended by other Cambodia senior officials such as H.E. Mrs. Hour Serey, Secretary of Cambodian National Council for Women (CNCW), H.E Mrs. Koy Veth, member of Cambodian National Election Committee (NEC). The event ended with a farewell dinner at Ta Ta restaurant, where participants learned to Cambodian dance.

2. Presentations

The below are the presentation done by regional speakers and Cambodia during the two-day seminar as following:

1. The Role of Women in Local Politics by Ms. Melanie M. Reyes, Technical Assistant, Women and Gender Institute, Philippines
2. Country report from Indonesia, by Ms. Nurul Akmal, member of KPU (General Election Committee) and Ms. Aryanti Paramuli, member of National Assembly of Republic of Indonesia.
3. Country report from Philippines presented by Ms. Marlene Requerque Magayanes,
4. Country report from Malaysia presented by Ms. Kung Chin Chin, Chief of DAP Women's Wing for Sarikei Branch, Sarawak, Malaysia
5. Country report from Cambodia presented by Ms. Uch Pongh, (CWPD)
6. Country report from Timor Leste, presented by Ms. Rosa Maria do Rosario de Sausa Coordinator Acampani-fokupus
7. Country report from Thailand, presented by Khun Maleerat Kaewka, member of the Thai Senate
8. Country report from India, by Ms. Medha Kotwal, Ph.D Lecturer/Researcher, Pune University, India

9. Lessons learnt from the Indian experience (strategies, evaluation), by Ms. Medha Kotwal, Ph.D, Lecturer/Researcher, Pune University, India
10. Channeling Efforts, by Ms. Thida C. Khus, Executive Director of SILAKA, and Secretariat of the CPWP, Cambodia.
(Please, see detail the schedule of regional seminar as in the attached)

3. Key messages and lesson learnt:

During the two-day seminar, the participants from Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, East Timor Leste, Philippines, India and Cambodia have some comment points of challenges for women entering politic:

- Gender stereotypes and hierarchies prevent women to enter into politics
- Lack of family support and network
- Insecurity and fear of political engagement
- Lack of community support and understanding of women's role and contribution in politics
- Inequity access to social and economic services for women
- Media bias
- Lack access to network and resource support that enable women to participate in politics
- Lack of legal framework and electoral system that guarantee women's participation in politics
- Fragmented and weak women movement and network to pressure for changes from political parties and government policy regarding women's role and participation in politics
- Woman is the responsible person and the peace keeper while having argument, because they would solve the problem by using good resolution than forcing and using power.
- The present of women will lessen the corruption at all level.

4. Result of Group Discussion

In the second day of the seminar there was a group discussion on the sixth topics as following: 1. Party politic, 2. quotas, 3. Capacity Building for women candidates and Voter's education. The below are results of group discussion of each topic:

4. 1. Party Politics

| BEST PRACTICES | WORST PRACTICES |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No discrimination again women and men - Encourage women : Improves their capacity - Local development - Create women movement - Women training - Ensure women and children's benefit - Build work group to support women and children - Other directory and political messages to support women and democracy - In the voting slate has set up the specific number of women. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The implement of women policy not yet good - Women candidate still in the bottom of the voting list - Not provide sponsorship especially for women - Small number of women in decision making in committee and political parties |
| STRATEGIZING | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To encourage women to participate in politic - Continue to set up net work and women movement with effectively - To push law implementation especially to gain violent and victim prevention | |

- Candidature list should put the women on the top and in alternative
- To promote gender indicator in political party
- Continue to train on women

4.2. Quotas

| BEST PRACTICES | WORST PRACTICES |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage more women to participate - Regulation on quotas for chief of village (in among of 5 councilors, there must have 2 females; and for youth, among 2, there must have 1 female) - Regulation for political parties member - Regulation for candidate in constitutional assembly - Village fund law - Human rights commission law = women and men are equal - Quota for public administration during transition and still applicable (30% female) - Party list system (20%) national level - Party quota i.e AKBAYAN (30%) In Philippines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No sanction for political parties - Local administration law (No quota but fighting for amendment) - The participation of women composition not enough to quotas in grassroots level - Men can criticize on women about not completed the quotas which fought for women themselves. |
| STRATEGIZING | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National and regional advocacy In East Timor, quota law in the process (General election law) - Net working (all stake holder including female and male in parliament) - Learn the policy process - Lobbying with female political leaders to have sanctions for non-compliance of quota law - Lobbying with political parties to institute their own quota - Information campaign/popular education - Build alliance with media - Encouraging more women to participate in politics - Mapping - Increase women quantity in politic - The women themselves have to strengthen their own capacity to participate in political - Do the advocacy to promote and encourage women by showing of women's advantages - Try to build women's capacity through workshop and media campaign - Quota determination have to stimulate in law - All political party should carry out the double quota - Cooperate with leaders of legislative and executive institution to punish political party which not carry out quotas determination. - Cooperate closely with other NGOs. | |

4.3. Capacity Building

| BEST PRACTICES | WORST PRACTICES |
|--|---|
| 2 days training: Module I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training need assessment of women candidates • Women situation in the world and local | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vote buying • False and broken promises • Harassment • Nuisance candidates |

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstacles faced by women in politics <p>2-3 days – Module 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws particular to women and women rights • Gender sensitive awareness training • Basic leadership training • Political skills • Public speaking skills <p>1 weeks training (each of one week)</p> <p>Module 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral campaign and management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to present yourself • Developing materials • Campaign machinery • Political strategy (media, door to door campaign?, post posters, etc..) • Getting family support • Rooted your presence in the community • Platform agenda (connect local/personal platform to political party agenda) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats • Unqualified candidates (cronyism) • Not giving importance to women candidate • Organize and educate women leaders women political leaders and potential leaders • Organize support system within the political party • Train master trainers within the political party |
| STRATEGIZING | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should organize training on politics and leadership skills for women • Organize structural support to political parties • Organize training workshop for each political party’s master trainer • Door to door campaign is very important to educate people, because some of them do not know well about what is called Vote • Government should have materials for citizen and education campaign to tell them why do they have to vote and why do they need to register. | |

4.4. Voter’s Education

| BEST PRACTICES | WORST PRACTICES |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TV spot - Broadcast on TV channel - Workshop on people participation - Produce Poster, leaflet, booklet - Movie show in commune or district - Radio call show - Training course: Democratic to youth and women - Door to door campaign | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Party pressure - Vote buying - Lack of awareness - Dirty politic - Government use money for own party - Media monopoly - People have negative image |
| STRATEGIZING | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education in school, local level (Community) on human rights and women, participation process, gender role, gender equality and equity. ▪ Advocacy and lobby political party- Parliamentary ▪ Strong civil society ▪ Media strategy | |

4.5. Media Involvement

| BEST PRACTICES | WORST PRACTICES |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sign contract with Media Company in program of: News, Entertainment, etc.....to increase more dissemination. - Meaningfully and deeply messages about women's advantages. - Organize and contact regularly with net work such as: Radio, TV to disseminate. - Organize workshop and invite female leader to provide meaningful speech for female candidates to know about the important of female. - Publish leaflet to spread out female activities. - NGOs pay for air time to produce female program. - There are newspaperwomen, so they can write about women. - Develop Website - Interview with women - There is Prime minister's councilor provide Gender Issue training course to pressman. - TV show one time a week which has one hour duration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The dissemination of other information not reach the local target - Media just only disseminate the good never raise about women issue. - Have to pay for pressman |
| STRATEGIZING | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Door to door awareness raising or organize forum ▪ Organize campaign of freedom of receiving information ▪ Provide training of Gender Issue to media ▪ Share other information among local people ▪ Spread out the information through art performance ▪ Spot promotion of women activities ▪ Publish on daily, weekly, monthly newspapers. | |

4.6. Network Building

| BEST PRACTICES | WORST PRACTICES |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep our communication advocacy through technical means (mobile phone, mail, network...) - List of gender NGOs, POs, CBOs that yourself for gender program (Inter-local) - Build proletarian gender and gender in society/ Politic Department - Supporting from Funding Agencies - Clear on common Global/objective - Same languages - Memorandum of Agreement " Clear" and nobody will go against that Agreement; - Follow up and encourage among women's groups; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discrimination among women: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. poor and rich 2. Educated and Not Educated 3. Racial 4. Religion 5. Occupation 6. Culture 7. Direct and Indirect discrimination - Communication's problems(direct discrimination) - Passive/ lack of interest - Competition instead of Cooperation - Difficulty of Political Parties - Individualism (dictatorship) |

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience sharing and regularly meeting and continuing activities; - Keep track of the members detail maintain; Good working relationship with partners. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dependant on others |
| STRATEGIZING | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good communication 2. Improve Gender Equality (stop Gender stereotype) 3. Fund raising; 4. Build Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and Support; 5. Build role of responsibility for Local women on good governance and accountability; 6. Workshop /seminar to promote and build women capacity; 7. Promote democracy inside the network. | |

III. CONCLUSION

The country presentations, and the group and plenary discussions that followed during the second day, raised important messages and strategies on six aspects of this seminar--party politics, quotas, capacity building for women candidates, media involvement, and network building.

- **On party politics:** There is a need to provide equal opportunity for women and eliminate all kinds of discriminations; to promote and encourage women to participate and join political parties; to enhance women's capacity and confidence; for clearer disclosure of party agenda on women and gender, and the resources and timeframe to fulfill that agenda more effectively in response to women's needs/concerns; to create and support women's network and movements at all levels in demanding for increase women's participation in decision-making. There is also need to create strong gender support groups within the parties to follow up on performance and to pressure political parties in fulfilling the party gender indicators, as well as a need to commit and institutionalize a quota system of the political party policy.
- **On quotas:** There is need to legalize quota system into the Constitution, the Electoral Law, and the Policy of political parties, and to enforce such legal framework. Preference quota systems recommended are, first the percentage system with a fixed percentage of women candidates placed on top of the candidate lists; and second the alternative system which alternates women candidates on top of the candidate list with men candidates. There is also a need for women to support women candidates and public campaign on the significance of the quota systems to ensure increase participation of women in politics. A mapping of activities and candidates which provide linkages between potential women candidates, political parties, and NGOs activities to better target capacity building and needs of women candidates and political parties.
- **On capacity building for women candidates:** There is a need to identify and level up profiles of potential women candidates/politicians for intensive trainings before and after election period to strengthen their confidence and enhance their effectiveness in running their offices. Specifically, there is a need to organize and educate women leaders who include potential, candidates, and forthcoming generations; to organize support and train master of trainers within political parties in order to maximize the capacity building supports provided by NGOs. Three fundamental training modules are recommended which will cover needs assessment, obstacle analysis, legal framework on rights and obligation, leadership and political skills training, public speaking skills, and importantly training focusing on electoral campaign and management.

- **Voters' education:** There is a need for local community participation, and resources to support that participation and to build local capacity; and the need for a better understanding by citizens in local communities of their roles and responsibilities in participating more effectively in local governance and local decision-making. Specific strategies include door-to-door education at various levels provided by experts and peer education, and civic education through regular educational curriculum to younger generations. A national survey in Cambodia on community's attitudes and perceptions in relation to women in political leadership and, in particular, how the community in general, and women in particular, see the possible benefits of greater political representation and leadership by women. The findings of a national survey on these issues will help inform government policy making, the platforms of political parties in forthcoming elections, and the advocacy strategies and messages of civil society organisations in Cambodia, and enable the CPWP to develop a media and education campaign.
- **On media involvement:** There is a need to better engage with, and share information with, the local community regarding women's role in local politics, their performance and achievement before and during offices, their decision making process, their management of sources and expenditure transparently etc. A mechanism and resources are needed to better support these women in ensuring that this important information is easily accessible for local citizens through the media. There is a related need to more effectively inform and educate local citizens about the role of elected Councils, their responsibilities and mandate so that citizens understand better the potential impact female candidates contribute if they become councilors. For example, many local citizens are still not aware that Commune/Sangkat Councils have authority over Commune/Sangkat Funds and are the owners of commune development projects.
- **On network building:** This is a critical factor that enables women's participation in politics, and is used as a resistance, mean for social change, and mean to access correct knowledge. Networking creates stimulus to support and reward women candidates and politicians, and to cultivate women leadership qualities from grassroots level. In order to level up perception and creating incentive for women candidates, a group or network can work to identify women strengths and equate them to men strengths. For example: This network group can also grow to include larger community as they mature and hence influence perception and behaviour of community and society toward women candidates and women politicians.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations from the SILAKA team after the two-day seminar:

- Summary information from the seminar should be sent to Cambodian participants in local language;
- Information among women networks should be shared and exchanged;
- Each countries shall take out key points and lessons learned from the seminar to applies in their respective countries accordingly to their contexts;
- Training curriculum should be collected and to share among women activists
- Build a network among women leaders and political leaders; and
- Develop a 2 pages lessons learned and share it with the other network.