

2001 Annual Report



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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Executive Summary..... | 1 |
| Partnerships and Collaborations | 4 |
| Culture-specific Multimedia Educational Materials | 7 |
| Leadership Training Workshops | 12 |
| Women’s Human Rights Program | 20 |
| Culture of Peace Program | 23 |
| South-North and South-South Dialogues..... | 26 |
| Media Outreach Program | 29 |

Executive Summary

Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and Peace (WLP) is an international non-governmental organization that works to empower women and girls in the Global South to re-imagine and re-structure their roles in their families, communities, and societies. To secure a healthy, safe, and democratic society for all, WLP strives to foster international collaboration and leadership among women who seek to gain knowledge, promote justice, and achieve equality; to encourage education for peace, human rights, tolerance, and international understanding; to promote human rights and confront all forms of discrimination; to advance sustainable development and the equitable distribution of resources to women and women's organizations; and to cultivate a culture of peace based on equity and justice. WLP works in collaboration with women's organizations in the Global South to develop programs and materials that further women's empowerment, leadership training, women's human rights, technological capacity-building, and multimedia education, among others.

WLP's current focus is on women's empowerment in Muslim societies, where women's movements for rights are gaining ground. The current expansion in education has resulted in a critical mass of Muslim women with both the education and networks to advocate for and promote women's rights. WLP supports Muslim women in their quest for individual human rights, economic independence, and democratic pluralism by ensuring that our programs and materials are designed to be culturally-relevant for and meet the needs of women and girls in Muslim societies.

During 2001, WLP expanded and bolstered its programs for women in the Global South. Over the past year, WLP:

- Mobilized cross-regional and multi-disciplinary networks by cultivating close relations with international and regional women's organizations, academic institutions, and women leaders and activists who work with WLP through **partnerships and collaborations** to maximize women's learning, empowerment, human rights, and democratic participation. WLP works in partnership with women's organizations in Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan (with Afghan refugees), Palestine, and Uzbekistan; and collaborates with international organizations and networks such as the Association for Women's Rights in Development, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, State of the World Forum's Commission on Globalization, Vital Voices, and the World Movement for Democracy, among others.
- Produced **culture-specific multimedia educational materials** including:
 - (i) a women's leadership handbook, *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women*, created by WLP through a power-sharing, collaborative process with its partner organizations. The prototype English handbook was published in December 2001, and distributed to numerous women's human rights organizations, civil society organizations,

scholars, activists, and policy makers around the world. WLP received many enthusiastic responses from, among others, the Center for Women's Global Leadership, the Center for Development and Population (CEDPA), Sisters In Islam (Malaysia), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), expressing their belief that *Leading to Choices* is a vital resource for all women seeking to claim their rights, develop leadership skills, and become strong participants in the social and political development of their communities and nations. Culture-specific editions of the handbook in Arabic, French, Hausa, Persian, Russian, and Uzbek are forthcoming.

(ii) a website that is a cyber exchange-center produced by and for women in the Global South to provide information on women's leadership, political participation, and human rights. Since the website's launch in June it has been accessed from over 100 countries worldwide and received an average of 90,000 hits each month. In the later part of 2001, the facts and legislative sections were increasingly accessed. There was a marked growth in the number of hits from Muslim countries, and also an increase in those accessing the website from Asia, Europe, and Latin America. WLP also initiated the preparation of material for the Arabic version of the website, to be launched in April 2002, part of our ongoing work to provide culture-specific, linguistically-relevant, and accessible resources for Arab women in the Middle East and North Africa.

- Conducted extensive **leadership training workshops** with over 600 women through partner organizations in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East using the prototype and customized leadership handbooks as the primary curriculum. Each workshop establishes a cooperative learning environment that is participatory and dialogical. The workshops focus on exploring definitions of leadership and the characteristics of effective leaders, formulating a personal vision, communicating effectively, negotiating, power-sharing, accommodating cultural diversity, building consensus, and cultivating skills in order to mobilize for action. The workshops also help women examine the meaning of empowerment and consider the long-term value of empowering themselves and others.
- Strengthened a **women's human rights program** that raises public awareness of and mobilizes international support for improving the human rights conditions of women around the world. WLP issued international alerts on women's and human rights in Afghanistan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, and Morocco; the alerts received widespread response. WLP also organized the third in a series of women's human rights poetry and literature events entitled *Life Lines: The Literature of Women's Human Rights*, in which international women writers/activists shared their reflections on their personal quest for justice and equity within the broader political context.
- Initiated a **culture of peace program** to encourage cooperation among individuals and NGOs working to build global solidarity for rule of law, tolerance, and the peaceful resolution of

conflicts across regions and faiths. As part of this program, WLP has produced an anthology of essays entitled *Toward a Compassionate Society* that is being prepared for web-publication in February 2002. To respond to recent events, WLP organized a series of dialogues in the aftermath of September 11th designed to bring women's voices into the international discourse.

(i) *Toward a Compassionate Society* focuses on women's roles in conflict resolution, peace building, and democracy in a culturally and politically diverse world. It addresses the importance of cultural pluralism and women's role in promoting peace in the rapidly globalizing world of the 21st century.

(ii) In September, WLP developed a project using simple communication technologies to produce a live radio webcast that created a forum for women activists and leaders from the Global South to discuss the need for conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives, particularly in Muslim societies, to help women shape their communities in ways that respect diversity, human rights, and peace. In November, WLP organized an Interfaith Dialogue, bringing together prominent women leaders from the three Abrahamic faiths to discuss mobilizing individuals, organizations, and communities to build bridges through faith, dialogue, and a commitment to peaceful resolutions of conflicts across regions and religions.

- Conducted several **South-North and South-South dialogues** to ensure that the voices of women from the Global South are heard in international dialogue, and to promote public awareness of issues relating to women's empowerment and development, the importance of their participation in civil society, and the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for advocacy and democratization. WLP organized a variety of conferences, meetings, and symposia including, among others, a panel entitled *Women Shaping Globalization: A New Feminism for the 21st Century* on new ways of re-imagining the women's movement in light of the realities of globalization; and a public event entitled *Leading to Choices: Women's Leadership and Institutional Change* in which a panel of international activists and leaders discussed new approaches to participatory leadership and gender equity based on cross-regional approaches to women's leadership, and the nexus between leadership, gender, and institutional change.
- Organized a **media outreach program** through a series of meetings, conferences, presentations, and interviews that promote public awareness of issues such as women's human rights, women's empowerment and equity in developing countries, the use of ICTs for advocacy and capacity-building, and the importance of women's full participation in civil society. Print, radio, and television media that have featured stories about WLP and its work include, among others, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), National Public Radio (NPR), *The New Republic*, *The New York Times*, Radio Free Europe, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Toronto Globe & Mail*, TV Ontario, the U.N. Wire, Voice of America (VOA), and WorldNet TV.

Partnerships and Collaborations

Partnerships

The emphasis of WLP's programs is on maximizing the learning, collaboration, and empowerment of women in the Global South. To expand its grassroots reach, WLP establishes partnerships with women's organizations in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. WLP has developed partnerships with l'Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM), one of the largest organizations in Morocco working to reinforce the rights of women through advocacy, awareness raising, literacy campaigns, and education; BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights (BAOBAB), a non-governmental organization working for women's human rights and legal rights in Nigeria; and the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), a non-governmental organization in Palestine working to eliminate discrimination against women by fostering a strong civil society that respects women's human rights. WLP develops materials collaboratively with its partner organizations for their target communities, tests and retests its materials in workshops attended by its partners' constituents, and facilitates the exchange of ideas, strategies, and resources between and among collaborating organizations.

During 2001, WLP established new partnerships with women's organizations in Jordan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan to collaboratively develop programs that encourage women's leadership, political participation, and social change within a dialogical framework.

Sisterhood Is Global Institute (SIGI/J) in Jordan is a non-profit organization established in 1998 working to promote women's rights through education, skills training, and modern technology. SIGI/J works in cooperation with a large network of prominent Jordanian scholars, human rights and women's rights activists, journalists, lawyers, jurists, NGOs, and representatives of the government. SIGI/J's programs promote women's human rights education, development of strategies to eliminate gender-based violence, and training of trainers to amplify women's advocacy efforts.

The Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL) is a leading Afghan women's organization based in Pakistan that supports girls' schools within and outside Afghanistan. AIL was founded in 1995 to help address the lack of educational access for women and girls, their subsequent inability to support their lives, and the impact this has on society and culture. AIL assists Afghan women and children by providing human rights training for women in Pakistan's refugee camps; supporting refugee camp primary and secondary schools; conducting teacher training for female Afghan teachers (pre-school through high school); establishing home schools and home literacy classes in Afghanistan; and providing health education and mobile health clinics for women and children within Afghanistan.

Women's Resource Center of Tashkent (TWRC) in Uzbekistan is a non-governmental organization founded in 1995 to develop a strong civil society through empowering women to achieve their political,

social, and economic rights. TWRC works to develop programs that help raise public awareness of women's human rights, empower women socially and economically, and achieve greater political participation for women within Uzbekistan. TWRC establishes resource centers for Uzbek women, conducts educational workshops, organizes meetings for women and girls in local communities and schools, and hosts symposia and conferences to address women's issues.

International Network of Experts

WLP's International Advisory Council (IAC) includes heads of U.N. agencies, leaders of international NGOs, lawyers, scholars, and activists from North and sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas who represent diverse professional, cultural, and religious perspectives. These experts assist WLP by reviewing, analyzing, and evaluating the social, cultural, political, and gender implications of our materials.

Members of the IAC include Hafsat Abiola, Founder, Kudirat Initiative for Democracy; Afifa Dirani Arsanios, Advisor to the Lebanese Minister of Culture; Suheir Azzouni-Mahshi, Former Director General, Women's Affairs Technical Committee, Palestine; Charlotte Bunch, Executive Director, Center for Women's Global Leadership; Thais Corral, Coordinator, Centro Mulher Informação, Assessoria, e Execução de Projetos, Brazil; Nancy Flowers, Human Rights Education Consultant; Noeleen Heyzer, Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); Ayesha Imam, Former Executive Director, BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Nigeria; Zahira Kamal, Former General Director, Directorate for Gender Planning and Development, Palestinian Ministry of Planning; Farhad Kazemi, Vice Provost, New York University; Asma Khader, Lawyer and Women's Rights Activist, Jordan; Amina Lemrini, Executive Committee Member, l'Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc, Morocco; Afaf Mahfouz, Former President, Conference of Non-governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO); Ann Elizabeth Mayer, Associate Professor of Legal Studies, University of Pennsylvania; Rabéa Naciri, Executive Director, Collectif 95 Maghreb Egalité, Morocco; Kumi Naidoo, President, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation; Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); Ayo Obe, President, Civil Liberties Organization, Nigeria; Regan Ralph, Vice President and Director of Health and Reproductive Rights, National Women's Law Center; Aruna Rao, President, Association for Women's Rights in Development; Kavita Ramdas, President, The Global Fund for Women; Bouthaina Shaaban, Professor, Damascus University, Syria; Zeneberworke Tadesse, Founding Member, Association of Africa Women for Research and Development, Ethiopia.

Collaboration with NGOs

WLP builds cross-regional and multi-disciplinary networks by cultivating close relations with civil society organizations, women's groups, and individual activists who work to advance women's human rights, gender equity, and democracy in the Global South. During 2001, WLP collaborated with, among others, the Association for Women's Rights in Development, the Children's Defense Fund, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Development Alternatives with Women in a New

Era, Gender@Work Collaborative, Human Rights Watch, State of the World Forum's Commission on Globalization, Vital Voices, Women's Environment and Development Organization, and the World Movement for Democracy.

Additionally, WLP explored potential collaborations with individuals and NGOs, including: Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); Gracia Hillman, President of the WorldSpace Foundation; Nafisa Hoodbhoy, radio producer and broadcaster; Devaki Jain, women's rights activist; Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); Renee Taft and Alice Armitage of the Fulbright Program at the United States Department of State; Freida Werden of WINGS radio service (Women's International News Gathering Service); and Deborah Winsten, radio producer.

Collaboration with Academic Institutions

WLP is actively engaged in reaching out to scholars, students, and the academic community to mobilize international support for women's human rights, cross-regional dialogue, and peace. During 2001, WLP organized and participated in over twenty symposia, panel discussions, and conferences that focused on women and globalization, the women's human rights movement, bridging the digital divide, and empowering women in Muslim societies. WLP worked collaboratively with numerous academic institutions and universities, including Georgetown University, George Washington University, the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, Howard University, the School for Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, the Library of Congress, the Middle East Studies Association, the Hagop Kevorkian Center at New York University, Trinity College, and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Culture-Specific Multimedia Educational Materials

Prototype Leadership Handbook

In March 2001, WLP completed drafting the full text of the prototype handbook entitled *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women* in collaboration with partner organizations in Morocco, Nigeria, and Palestine. At every stage of its development, WLP's partners provided extensive feedback, comments, and suggestions on the text. Additionally, WLP distributed the handbook to colleagues, collaborators, the Board of Directors, IAC members, and other preeminent members of the women's activist community for in-depth and comprehensive review.

On June 7, 2001, WLP hosted a multi-regional expert group meeting that included members of its International Advisory Council (IAC) to review and evaluate *Leading to Choices*. The meeting was also attended by WLP's partner-collaborators Amina Lemrini and Rabéa Naciri of Morocco, Asma Khader of Jordan, and Ayesha Imam of Nigeria as well as select individuals with legal, political, and social science expertise. At the meeting, participants explored WLP's model of women's leadership—the possibilities it offers, the challenges it presents, and its potential contribution to institutional transformation, gender equality, and the development of civil society—that forms the theoretical basis of the prototype handbook. They examined the ideas, concepts, and experiences that went into creating the leadership model; reviewed preliminary field results from the Middle East and Africa where the leadership model was tested in workshops; discussed the strengths of this alternative model of leadership; and suggested ways of enhancing the prototype handbook.

Throughout the discussions, members of the IAC commended the strengths of the handbook's leadership model. They agreed that the alternative leadership model for women presented in *Leading to Choices* responds to the need for leaders who aspire to create egalitarian, democratic and pluralistic societies that are based on consensual decision-making, coalition-building, and respect for the contribution of every individual. By encouraging leadership styles that focus on the creation of a shared vision and collaborative partnerships for achieving commonly defined goals, the leadership model will help develop learning societies/organizations that are non-hierarchical, participatory, and inclusive. Although this model will undoubtedly face challenges because it offers an alternative to the traditional hierarchical and centralized style of decision-making, it is an important and substantial step towards helping women's organizations achieve their egalitarian aspirations.

Members of the IAC offered concrete suggestions for refining the leadership model. They called for an added emphasis on the development of gender-consciousness in the leadership model, and debated whether the focus should be on the process of developing women into leaders or on the types of agendas women leaders should pursue. Some participants recommended that attention be given to the challenges women in leadership positions face within existing power structures so that emerging women

leaders are prepared to face similar challenges.

Revisions that were recommended and then made to the prototype handbook in the following months included:

- (1) creating a new appendix of additional culture-specific scenarios and exercises developed by the partner organizations specifically for the local-language customized leadership handbooks. This provides handbook users with the flexibility of selecting from among a wide range of scenarios those that are more relevant to their socio-cultural needs;
- (2) providing further guidance for facilitators on ways to engender participatory and stimulating discussions in the leadership workshops;
- (3) developing supplementary scenarios, exercises, and questions that integrate gender-consciousness, gendered leadership, and women's human rights concepts throughout the handbook;
- (4) presenting challenges that women in leadership positions face within existing power structures, such as the struggles endured by women's human rights activists and defenders, so that emerging women leaders are prepared to overcome similar challenges.

The multi-regional expert group meeting was the concluding step in the process of evaluating the text of the draft prototype handbook. After compiling and reviewing the comments and suggestions shared by the participants, WLP incorporated them into the finalized prototype handbook.

In December 2001, WLP published the English edition of *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women*. The handbook was distributed to WLP's partners, colleagues, collaborators, the Board of Directors, IAC members, and other prominent members of the women's activist community. WLP has already received many enthusiastic responses from, among others, the Center for Women's Global Leadership, the Center for Development and Population (CEDPA), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), conveying the importance of the handbook for women's leadership and its impact on the field of women's rights and empowerment, as well as its usefulness in their work.

For example, Ruzana Udin of Sisters in Islam, located in Malaysia, wrote to say: "Thank you for sending us the prototype handbook *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women*. It is a great book, and one that we believe will help us in running our public education and training programs. In 2002, Sisters in Islam is focusing on educating Muslim women about their rights through training workshops and we are in the process of coming out with our own training module. With WLP's handbook, we will be able to learn about enhancing our own personal leadership potential and communication skills, which will enable us to better train and empower other women based on *Leading to Choices* and our own handbook." WLP has received requests for copies of the handbook

from Cameroon, India, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, among others.

Adapting and Customizing Local-Language Leadership Handbooks

In Spring 2001, WLP's partners in Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, and Palestine began the process of translating the draft prototype handbook into local languages and creating preliminary adaptations to meet the specific socio-cultural, religious, economic, and educational needs of their constituents. ADFM in Morocco translated the prototype handbook into French and Arabic, and sent the Arabic text to SIGI/J in Jordan and WATC in Palestine. While conducting test workshops with their constituents, SIGI/J and WATC began customizing the Arabic translation of the handbook to their communities' needs. BAOBAB in Nigeria is in the final stages of translating the handbook into Hausa, and is customizing and adapting it to conform with local socio-cultural conditions and idioms. Moreover, a Persian translation of the handbook is nearing completion, and AIL is using it in test workshops with women and girls in Afghanistan and Pakistan. TWRC in Uzbekistan has translated the handbook into Russian, and is in the final stages of producing a draft Uzbek translation.

As part of the process of creating customized local-language handbooks, the partners have added culture-specific scenarios and exercises to the prototype handbook that reflect local concerns and priorities. For example, SIGI/J in Jordan included a scenario that focuses on women's participation in the upcoming 2002 national elections in Jordan. The objective is to generate dialogue about the leadership skills women candidates and voters need to develop. ADFM in Morocco included a scenario that addresses sexual harassment in the workplace and examines pending reformations to Morocco's legislative code. The scenario focuses on fostering communication, negotiation, and cooperation among advocacy groups. BAOBAB in Nigeria added a scenario based on a recent event in which a young girl was wrongfully punished under Nigerian secular and religious law. BAOBAB used this scenario to explore methods of mobilizing various community resources, including utilizing information and communication technologies, to raise awareness of women's rights and educate the public. WATC in Palestine included two scenarios, one that addresses women's citizenship issues in Palestine by focusing on how to develop a plan of action and use the media as an avenue to mobilize the community and achieve their goals. The second scenario examines one woman's role as a leader in her community and is designed to help participants think about definitions and characteristics of leadership and formulate their own leadership visions.

The culture-specific adaptations of *Leading to Choices* in Arabic, French, Hausa, Persian, Russian, and Uzbek will be published in 2002 and distributed internationally.

Website

WLP's website, produced by and for women from the Global South, was launched in June 2001. It promotes multimedia communication and works to facilitate South-South and South-North exchanges

of ideas, helping to cultivate new networks for women's mobilization and advocacy efforts. The website provides information pertaining to women's leadership, political participation, human rights, health, and development issues, with a particular focus on Muslim women. In recent months, WLP also began the process of developing the website in Arabic and creating three database-driven sections: Profiles, Bibliographies, and Articles. WLP's websites are hosted on an off-site dedicated webserver.

Since the launch of the website in June, it has received more than 600,000 hits. On average, the website receives 90,000 hits every month, with a notable increase each month of approximately 10,000 hits. Over time there has been a qualitative change in the sections that were accessed. In the first few months after the website's launch, there was greater interest in information about WLP and the events and activities organized. In recent months, however, the focus has been on the statistics and legislation sections. WLP's website was accessed from over 100 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, including among others Armenia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, China, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Fiji, Georgia, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and Zambia. There was a marked growth in the number of hits from Muslim countries, and also an increase in those accessing the website from Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

WLP undertook the development of its Arabic website this year. It will be launched in April 2002. The design process is nearing completion and the content is being developed simultaneously. The design takes into consideration technical elements that would enable users from any part of the world to view the site with maximum ease and minimum download time. Materials that will be featured on the Arabic website include, among others, gender-disaggregated statistics concerning women's political participation and rights, a comparative chart of family laws governing women's rights in Africa and the Middle East, news items and alerts relating to the promotion of gender equity in the Global South, information about WLP's leadership project, and contact information for organizations based in the MENA region so that individuals can use this section as a resource to network with one another.

Those who access WLP's website consistently are NGOs, academic institutions, government agencies, and funders. Moreover, the website is connected to a growing number of other websites around the world. It currently lists approximately 170 regional, national, and international organizations working on leadership, human rights, civil society, and development issues. In addition, many organizations have written to WLP requesting to be cited on the website. Through reciprocal links, the majority of these organizations now provide access to WLP's website via their own websites. This serves to strengthen WLP's online women's information network and to promote WLP's work around the world.

WLP has received many positive responses regarding its website from individuals and organizations worldwide. Ra'ida Al-Zu'bi of UNIFEM wrote: "Congratulations on the launch of your most interesting and informative site. I am certain that it will prove a good resource for women all over the world." From the University of Maryland, Professor Emeritus and Founding Editor of *Human Rights*

Quarterly Dr. Richard Pierre Claude commented: “Great website, really a potential tool and force for liberation and human rights.” Diane van Roden of WebTV sent the following accolade: “A wonderful site, brilliantly composed.” Women’s Human Rights Net, the Aga Khan Foundation, Women for Women’s Human Rights, the International Monetary Fund, and the Global Fund for Women all wrote WLP with excellent reviews and supportive comments concerning the website.

WLP continues to receive positive responses from organizations and individuals around the world for whom the website is a useful resource. Recently, the World Bank’s HNPSStats (a component of the Knowledge Management System of the World Bank’s Human Development Network) listed WLP’s website under its Cool Websites & Tools category. The website is accessible at <http://www.learningpartnership.org>

Leadership Training Workshops

Throughout 2001, WLP's partners in Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan (with Afghan refugees), Palestine, and Uzbekistan conducted extensive test workshops with their constituents to evaluate the effectiveness of the prototype handbook *Leading to Choices*. The leadership workshops are designed around an adaptable curriculum that may be customized to suit the diverse cultural, political, and socio-economic needs of participants. The flexible workshop methodologies and handbook curriculum work toward strengthening women's leadership skills and enhancing the viability and effectiveness of women's advocacy efforts by engaging workshop participants in their own leadership development and in the creation of culturally-appropriate leadership solutions. Reports from the field indicate that over 600 women, and some men, have taken part in the leadership training workshops. As the workshop participants engage in the activities of their community, they disseminate the knowledge and skills acquired during the workshops and are able to implement many of the power-sharing horizontal leadership arrangements emphasized in the handbooks and workshop methodologies.

Afghan Women

The Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL), based in Peshawar, Pakistan, began preparing for implementation of the leadership program in July 2001. In October, they conducted a training of trainers workshop with 15 women who were trained to facilitate workshops in which Afghan women are enabled to identify for themselves, and then develop, the best means to communicate effectively, listen, build consensus, create shared meaning, and work cooperatively with others in their community to achieve common goals. The training workshop was conducted using a draft of the Persian translation of *Leading to Choices* which is being simultaneously adapted to the specific socio-cultural, educational, religious, and economic conditions of AIL's constituents in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Later in October, AIL held its second leadership training workshop for 25 women from different areas of Afghanistan including Herat, Kabul, Laghman, Logar, Mazar-e-Sharif, Panjsher, Qandahar, and Wardak. The participants were all Muslim, between the ages of 25-50, and were educated or trained as teachers, nurses, doctors, journalists, and scientists, among others. The workshop was conducted in Dari, and was based on the draft Persian edition of the handbook.

AIL reported that the women participated actively in all sessions of the handbook, discussing the characteristics of a leader, how to make decisions, how to listen to each other, respect one another's opinions, work as a group to achieve a common goal, and communicate effectively, among other topics. AIL facilitators noted that the women were particularly interested in sessions and discussions that dealt with women's human rights, and that many of the women expressed a desire to find solutions to the problems of exercising women's human rights in Afghanistan. Participants were also intrigued to

learn about advocacy efforts for the rights of children, and expressed a desire to ensure that their children and other generations will attain their rights. The women enjoyed sharing stories and anecdotes about their own lives and learning about how other women solved problems or dealt with crises. At the end of the workshop, the women commented that the workshop methodology helped them speak with ease and feel empowered. AIL reported that the women had learned to think of themselves as leaders and were eager to put into practice the information and skills they had acquired through the workshop.

Furthermore, WLP conducted a leadership training workshop for ten Afghan women now living outside Afghanistan, in the U.S., and in refugee camps in Pakistan. Held on November 27, 2001 in Washington, DC, the workshop was conducted in collaboration with Vital Voices. Participants included women's rights, child rights and peace activists, NGO leaders, educators, and medical practitioners. Many are planning to return to Afghanistan and participate in reconstruction and nation-building.

Mahnaz Afkhami, President of WLP, began the session by sharing with the participants her experiences as an NGO activist and subsequently as a member of cabinet in pre-revolutionary Iran where women faced a situation similar in many ways to that confronted by Afghan women, namely the need to accommodate the requirements of culture, tradition, and religion while seeking to achieve their individual rights and an independent and pluralistic society. She described some of the strategies used to advocate for change, among them mobilizing support among the progressive *ulama* (religious scholars) who helped create language that allowed reform of family laws in ways that would be compatible with religious texts. She outlined the formulation of the position of Minister of State for Women's Affairs in Iran—a post that was sought by Afghan women and lately created by the interim administration of Afghanistan—pointing to the ways in which this position can be used to mobilize the enormous resources of women in Afghanistan for the task of reconstruction without "ghettoizing" women's issues into one section of the governing body. She shared Iranian women's debates on ways of helping to evolve and transform their culture and traditions in harmony with the demands of modernization, without destroying the fabric of the culture.

After a lively discussion, Rakhee Goyal, Director of Research and Technology at WLP and Haleh Vaziri, a co-author of *Leading to Choices* facilitated a session that aimed to demonstrate patterns of collective action and norms of reciprocity. The group began by each member formulating and articulating a personal vision statement that encapsulated her aspirations for her community. They expressed a variety of individual goals ranging from providing health services and education, increasing literacy, enhancing vocational skills, enabling women to become leaders, and establishing women's constitutional rights in Afghanistan. In the next session, based on negotiation and conflict resolution methods, the group developed a statement shared by all participants:

“To establish an independent, democratic, broad-based, stable society where women and men from all ethnic groups and backgrounds are empowered through education and training to participate in all aspects of decision-making in Afghanistan.”

Finally, participants engaged in a role-play exercise where they used this vision statement to negotiate with members of opposing groups. They discussed assumptions and pre-suppositions made about each other, the ways these impeded or assisted them in achieving consensus, and various communication strategies for developing common ground for women's rights advocacy.

Jordan

SIGI/J used the customized Arabic handbook to conduct ten workshops in six cities in Jordan: Ajloun, Amman, Aqaba, Ramtha, Wadi Araba, and Zarqa. Overall, more than 300 people were trained, with groups of approximately 20-70 women from local non-governmental and development organizations participating in each workshop. The majority of the participants were between the ages of 20-35, though some of the women were over 50. Over half of the participants were single, many held either a high school or university diploma, and seventy percent of them were employed.

During one workshop in Amman, the leadership workshop provided a forum for participants to discuss the many obstacles that women face in achieving leadership positions, such as unequal opportunities with men, lack of support and encouragement from their communities, and the stereotype that women are incapable of maintaining a leadership role. The women identified possible solutions to these obstacles, be they social, political or religious and emphasized that women are qualified to occupy leadership positions if they have equal opportunities. The women were enthusiastic about the discussions that the workshop engendered, and enjoyed being able to learn from each other's experiences. By the end of the workshop, participants identified ideal leadership as fair-minded, community-conscious, respectful of other's opinions, and goal-oriented, among others.

SIGI/J reported that during the course of other leadership training workshops, participants discussed leadership qualities important to them, including the ability to make decisions and take initiative, readiness to serve others, confidence in oneself and others, the ability to communicate effectively, the ability to implement a plan of action, and a belief in human rights without discrimination. In addition to addressing the need to help women achieve equity and increased participation in Jordanian public life, participants discussed ways to bring men and women together to work side by side to build a stronger community and improve the quality of life for all. One workshop participant defined leadership as "the ability to implement dreams." A male participant said, "If all of civil society is looking at leadership in this way and will evaluate and participate with others in discussing how leadership is going to open up participation and choice, then many of our problems can be solved." Following one of the workshops, participants produced a statement defining leadership as "a process of sharing and exchanging in order to gain knowledge, specify needs, and develop a vision, and the ability to implement that vision in programs, policies, and actions."

One group of workshop participants consisted of domestic worker trainees, who found the leadership training especially encouraging because they realized that leadership is not just for people who hold high-level positions. SIGI/J facilitators noted that after completing the workshops, the domestic workers started to view themselves as leaders. One participant said, “If we don’t see ourselves as leaders and are not discussed in the literature as leaders, then how will others see us as leaders?”

SIGI/J reported that the facilitator of a five-day intensive workshop in Ajloun was nominated to the local council following the workshop. She believes that her role in the workshop and the relationships fostered during the training helped secure her nomination. SIGI/J also reported that the mayor of Aqaba attended and participated in the leadership training workshops conducted there. He subsequently established a committee for women’s affairs in Aqaba.

There is a high demand for leadership training workshops in Jordan due to the upcoming parliamentary elections, scheduled for November 2002. SIGI/J workshop facilitators and participants are finding that the workshops provide a much-needed venue for women to network and offer support for one another before the upcoming elections. In their discussions, participants emphasized that women still face a great deal of social pressure about their traditional roles in society, something that becomes very apparent during an election year when women struggle to gain parliamentary representation. The participants reiterated their commitment to increasing the number of women elected in the upcoming parliamentary elections. The women found that among the most effective sessions was the culture-specific scenario developed by SIGI/J that dealt with women’s groups mobilizing for action prior to the elections. They have requested more leadership training workshops to gain further training and benefit from follow-up sessions.

Morocco

ADFM in Morocco conducted seven leadership training workshops during 2001. Workshops were conducted in Arabic and French. The first two workshops were held in Rabat, with 7-12 Muslim women per workshop. One group consisted of women trained as legal assistants between the ages of 30-35, and the other consisted of Muslim women trained as literacy teachers between the ages of 26-32. Both groups of participants quickly grasped the benefit of exchanging ideas, listening, and respecting one another’s opinions. They especially liked the participatory approach of the leadership model as it enabled each participant to voice her opinion, share her story with the others, and reflect on her own experiences. They found the handbook sessions to be helpful in initiating empowering discussions on leadership. After completing the workshops, participants came to understand that even “ordinary women” can be leaders.

The next three workshops took place in Casablanca, with approximately 10 women per workshop, all of whom were literacy teachers. They were between the ages of 20-30, all were Muslim, and the majority were single. The initial workshops focused on exploring definitions of leadership and characteristics of effective leaders, as well as defining a personal vision. Participants learned about the

importance of communicating effectively, negotiating, and compromising in the midst of a diversity of cultures and opinions. They also examined the meaning of empowerment and discussed the long-term value of empowering themselves and others. The workshop sessions enabled the participants to discover how their professional skills may be used effectively to advocate for women's rights and social change, and they were inspired to identify leadership strategies that they could implement in their workplace.

The final two workshops were held in Rabat with groups of seven and eight middle class Muslim women between the ages of 30-35, most of whom were married. The women were trained as legal aides and literacy teachers and participated in a comprehensive workshop in which they learned about the qualifications of an effective leader, how to empower themselves and others, and how to mobilize individuals and organizations around a plan of action. The workshop focused on training the advocates and activists to recognize their own leadership skills and to work collaboratively as they mobilize to achieve common goals. It was designed to encourage the participants to take initiative and enable them to further the cause of their organization and constituents.

ADFM facilitators noticed an increased sense of understanding and solidarity among the workshop groups, improved mutual listening, and greater respect for the ideas and beliefs of other participants. The facilitators found that the participants felt most comfortable speaking when the discussion focused on personal experiences. It was noted that during the final workshop sessions, women who had initially been reticent now began to express themselves freely. By the end of the workshops, the women had arrived at the conclusion that "leadership is within the reach of each person."

Nigeria

In 2001, BAOBAB conducted seven workshops in Abuja, Illorin, and Lagos. Overall more than 150 people participated in the workshops, some of which included men. The workshops were conducted in English and Hausa.

The first workshop took place in Lagos and consisted of 17 young women activists just entering the women's rights field. This group participated in all twelve workshop sessions of the prototype handbook, with particular emphasis on sessions that dealt with cultivating communication skills for capacity building and mobilizing individuals and organizations around a plan of action. This leadership training workshop was designed to focus on skills that would enable the participants to become more effective advocates of human rights. At the conclusion of the workshop, one of the young women activists wrote, "I realized I had visions inside of me that I could achieve, and I was empowered to go ahead and achieve them." Another said, "I was able to see the shortcomings of my organization, and I hope to improve the standards of my organization."

A group of domestic workers between the ages of 18-30, primarily from southeastern Nigeria and Ghana, who work as nannies, cooks, and cleaners, took part in the second workshop. This group engaged in a one-day intensive workshop consisting of five handbook sessions. They focused on developing a personal vision statement and styles of effective communication, as well as exploring strategies for finding shared meaning and common ground. At the end of the workshop, one female domestic worker reported, “I can now stand and talk about my rights and I will not be afraid and that is what I hope to achieve.”

The third workshop consisted of a group of experienced women’s rights activists between the ages of 25-50 who had worked with one another for approximately five years. This group came primarily from the northern part of Nigeria and spoke Hausa. Many of the participants were trained as teachers or counselors, in addition to being activists. Their leadership training emphasized the sessions in the handbook that dealt with envisioning, power-sharing, and effective communication. One participant remarked that the leadership handbook was very useful in that its case studies enabled her to envision the situation of women in other countries and understand that they share many of the same goals. Other participants felt that the workshop training taught them important skills that would improve their work as human rights activists.

The fourth workshop focused on training two groups, one consisting of Muslim teachers, lawyers, human rights activists, housewives, and religious leaders, and the other consisting of Christian teachers, lawyers, clergy, human rights activists, and housewives. The participants were between the ages of 27-60 and most had a university education. During the year there was growing tension between Muslim and Christian communities in the northern states in Nigeria over the possible introduction of Shari’a law. These two groups were brought together to discuss religious strife among Christians and Muslims in Nigeria in the hopes that the workshop would initiate the process of bridge-building between the two communities. In the workshop, participants from both groups explored how to listen to each other, dismantle their assumptions and presuppositions about one another, compromise, negotiate, build consensus, and develop common ground. They discussed the difference between tolerating human diversity and embracing it, and how to work cooperatively for a common cause.

The fifth workshop consisted of thirteen participants from diverse middle-class backgrounds whose ages ranged between 30-65. Most participants were married, the majority of them were women, and a number were Muslim religious leaders. The main purpose of the workshop was to foster better communication and understanding among the participants, who did not know one another well even though they are part of the same community. The workshop centered around sessions of the handbook that emphasize strategies for identifying shared meaning and developing effective communication and negotiation skills. Participants discussed whether or not it is always possible to find common ground, and if this should be a goal of an effective leader. They also explored the importance of dismantling assumptions about one another and practicing good listening skills when engaged in negotiation.

The sixth workshop included domestic workers who had participated in a previous leadership training workshop with BAOBAB. The women were aged 18-30, most were unmarried, and their education did not extend beyond the primary school level. They began the workshop with a great deal of motivation and an increased sense of ease with one another. This workshop was designed to teach the women skills enabling them to take on leadership roles in their own lives and employment situations. By the end of the workshop, the domestic workers agreed to work together in the future and collaborate to achieve their common goals.

The seventh workshop was held in Kano, in northern Nigeria, with 25 Muslim women. The participants spoke Hausa and the workshops were conducted using a draft of the Hausa translation of *Leading to Choices*. The majority of the participants were in their twenties or thirties. Most of the women were married and had several children. Over the course of the workshop the participants began to identify themselves as leaders and many took on facilitator roles within the workshops; for example, reading a scenario or organizing one of the handbook exercises. Several participants noted that they especially enjoyed the group exercises because they were able to share opinions, experiences, and thoughts which enabled them to learn from one another and brought the group closer together.

Participants in the Nigeria workshops reported that they felt empowered because they were able to identify leadership skills in themselves after participating in the workshops. Facilitators observed that their communication, negotiation, and decision-making skills had improved. They also noted that decisions made by groups were being taken with mutual respect for each participant's opinions and that they were working cooperatively with one another to find common ground, identify a shared vision, and articulate a strategy for mobilizing the community to achieve its goals. The leadership training workshops are designed to enhance the participants leadership skills, grassroots-organizing skills, and organizational capacity-building skills, thus empowering the women to achieve their goals on both a personal and professional level.

Palestine

Despite the difficult situation in Palestine over the past year, WATC was able to conduct two leadership training workshops during 2001. The groups consisted of Muslim and Christian women between the ages of 16-25, most of whom were single. Many of the participants were university students, some were still in high school/secondary school, and a few were employed as social workers or legal assistants. There were ten participants in each group.

Facilitators began the workshops by encouraging each participant to illustrate her relationship with the workshop group and the rest of society by making drawings and creating cartoons. This session helped to break the ice and enabled participants to become comfortable with one another. Approximately half of the participants described themselves as leaders at the beginning of the leadership training, while the other half did not initially identify themselves as leaders. Over the course of the workshops, both groups of women learned to think of themselves as leaders and became more outspoken and active.

They learned to work collaboratively with one another, developing effective listening and communication skills. A facilitator commented about one workshop participant: “She identified herself as a leader at the beginning. She is outspoken and likes to do all the work by herself. During the training, she learned to be more cooperative and developed skills to work with a team. Her relationship with the other participants changed and became more cooperative.”

Discussing the impact of the leadership training workshops, one participant said, “I have a strategy in my life, and I must work hard to develop myself more.” Another participant was pleased with the leadership training, saying: “Finally, I have found a group in which everyone listens to each other.” A university student commented, “In this training I changed very much. I now know myself and what I want.” She also said, “I believe I must share with other young women the new information I learned in these workshops.” A young participant stated: “In this training, I found that I have leadership skills that I did not know I had before.” Another university student explained: “These workshops made me think hard about what we can do as young women.”

Many participants expressed a strong desire to continue fostering their leadership skills and developing projects with the other women from the workshops. Workshop facilitators felt that several participants had gained the necessary skills to become effective facilitators of future leadership training workshops.

Uzbekistan

WLP’s partner organization, the Women’s Resource Center of Tashkent (TWRC), has translated *Leading to Choices* into Russian and is in the final stages of producing a translation in Uzbek. In November, TWRC held a training of trainers program in Russian with a group of women from Tashkent. Using *Leading to Choices*, the women were trained to conduct participatory and dialogue-based workshops. Instead of leading the group to a specific conclusion or understanding, trainers were taught to be responsible for creating a space for participants to learn from the ideas and experiences of others, disagree within a safe environment, and work together to form consensus. TWRC noted that the concept of horizontal, participatory leadership is not an easy topic for women living in a post-Soviet society to discuss. This is because they have been accustomed to a system in which all leaders were appointed and followed a hierarchical communication style, and independent leaders were discouraged.

TWRC has initiated the process of identifying and forming groups of women in rural and urban areas in and around Tashkent who will take part in the leadership training. In the coming months, they will convene a series of extensive test workshops using the two translations of the handbook and will tailor them to meet the specific socio-cultural, educational, religious, and economic needs of women in Uzbekistan.

Women's Human Rights Program

WLP raises awareness of, and mobilizes international support for, women's human rights around the globe. WLP engages in human rights campaigns by collaborating on and responding to alerts sent by our colleagues and partner organizations, by organizing email campaigns through our website, by mobilizing a broad network of human rights organizations, NGOs, women's groups, academic institutions, and individual activists around the world, and by creating fora in which women's human rights issues are given voice.

Women's Human Rights Poetry and Literature Series

As part of the human rights program, WLP convenes a semi-annual international poetry and literature series entitled *Life Lines: The Literature of Women's Human Rights* that seeks to raise public awareness about human rights conditions around the world through women's writings. On March 8, 2001, WLP coordinated the third session of *Life Lines*, bringing together Leila Ahmed, Egyptian author and professor of Women's Studies at Harvard Divinity School; Abena Busia, Ghanaian poet and professor of English at Rutgers University; Emma Sepulveda, Argentinian columnist and professor at the University of Nevada; and Azar Nafisi, who read the work of Goli Taraghi, prize-winning Iranian short story writer and novelist. The writers read from their work on human rights at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. They shared with the audience their reflections on their own struggles to provide understanding of the personal quest for justice and equity within the broader political context. The event was attended by more than 200 women's rights activists, scholars, professionals, and students. The discussions can be accessed online at www.learningpartnership.org/WLP/events/lifelines/html#march01.

International Action Alerts

South Asia

In the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, WLP became increasingly concerned about the condition of the people of Afghanistan, including Afghan women refugees in Pakistan. When the bombing of Afghanistan commenced on October 7, 2001, the already difficult situation in Afghanistan and in the refugee camps within Pakistan began deteriorating rapidly. Thousands of Afghans were fleeing across the border into Pakistan every day. The refugee camps were already over-crowded and desperately in need of food, clothing, medical care, and increased shelter for the growing number of refugees.

At the time, mainstream media focused almost exclusively on the war effort with minimal attention being given to the plight of Afghan women and children. On October 10, 2001 WLP issued an alert to its

global network of women's organizations, academic institutions, and individual activists around the world to raise awareness about the condition of Afghan women refugees as well as the efforts of WLP's Afghan partner, the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL), on their behalf. Through the email and web campaign, WLP was able to assist AIL in raising over \$30,000 to provide emergency aid to newly-arrived Afghan women and children refugees fleeing Afghanistan. AIL continues to provide emergency assistance to incoming refugees, in addition to maintaining its existing programs to educate and empower Afghan women and girls.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Through its cross-regional network of women leaders and activists, WLP learned that in September 2001, the Ethiopian government abruptly shut down the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), an independent women's organization working to defend women's human rights and improve civil society throughout Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government provided no substantive reason for suspending the organization's work or freezing its bank accounts. EWLA was established in 1995 and labors through legal channels to defend the rights of women by providing legal services to battered, raped, and abducted women, and to those suffering from all forms of violence. EWLA advocated for the revision of gender-insensitive articles in Ethiopian law. One of the major successes of its advocacy efforts was the revision of the Civil Code, as a result of which a new Family Law was passed by the Ethiopian parliament.

On September 26, 2001, WLP issued an alert about EWLA's situation. The alert was posted on WLP's website and was emailed to our vast international network of women's organizations and individual activists. WLP's mobilization effort and the numerous faxes received from women activists and organizations from around the world helped change the situation, and on October 17, 2001 the Ethiopian Ministry of Justice lifted the suspension imposed on EWLA.

Middle East/North Africa

WLP has on two occasions mobilized international support for issues concerning women's human rights in the Middle East and North Africa during 2001.

On July 23, 2001, WLP used its website to start an online consciousness-raising campaign regarding the status of women in Morocco. WLP raised international support for the planned legislative reforms to Morocco's civil code, that would give Moroccan women greater social and economic rights. Over 200 individuals representing more than 40 countries lent their support to this campaign. They included prominent women's rights and human rights activists, professors and students, development practitioners, writers and researchers, lawyers, business people, film producers, health specialists, composers, and scientists. WLP subsequently sent the letter with all the signatures of support to Moroccan Prime Minister Abderrahmane Youssoufi. On September 27, 2001, WLP received a written response from Prime Minister Youssoufi regarding its website and email campaign, in which he

pledged to use all of his prerogatives as Prime Minister of Morocco to ensure the success of the reforms.

In December 2001, WLP posted a news alert on its website concerning recent legislative reforms in Jordan and Kenya that provide enhanced protection of the rights of women and girls. In Jordan, the Cabinet approved several amendments to the Civil Status Law at the recommendation of the Royal Commission for Human Rights. The legal age for marriage was raised from 15 for women and 16 for men to 18 for both sexes, and Jordanian women now have legal recourse to divorce, subject to certain monetary compensations. Moreover, new restrictions on polygamy require a man to inform his first wife of plans to marry again and to submit evidence of his financial ability to support more than one wife. In further legislation, perpetrators of honor crimes are no longer exempt from the death penalty, although judges are still allowed to commute the sentences of the convicted. This is a first step in recognizing honor crimes as a capital offense, although many challenges clearly still remain.

In Kenya, female genital mutilation (FGM) was outlawed for girls under the age of 17 in December. The prohibition is a measure included in the 2001 Children's Bill recently passed by the Kenyan parliament. FGM, which remains widespread in much of rural Kenya, is now a crime punishable by at least one year in jail. President Moi clarified that older girls have the choice to be circumcised or not, and that their rights are also protected by the new law. The President has promised police protection for those at risk.

In May 2001, WLP learned that Nawal El Saadawi, a medical doctor and prominent Egyptian feminist author and activist, was being charged with apostasy and would face imprisonment and severe punishment if convicted. Additionally, an Egyptian court was seeking to have her forcibly divorced from her husband, thus constraining her rights and freedoms as an Egyptian citizen and violating international law. WLP immediately began mobilizing support amongst the international human rights community. Subsequently, other international organizations disseminated the alert and garnered support for Saadawi within their own networks. As a result of this worldwide campaign, on May 23, 2001 the Egyptian general prosecutor dismissed the case against Saadawi.

WLP has created an archive of news bulletins and alerts. For more information, please visit www.learningpartnership.org/events/newsalerts/index.html.

Culture of Peace Program

WLP's Culture of Peace Program encourages the cultivation of values, attitudes, and ways of life that promote equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and commitment to dialogue and cooperation. WLP focuses on organizing symposia and developing literature on women's roles in conflict resolution, peace building, and democracy.

Publication of an Online Anthology

WLP is in the final stages of publishing a web anthology entitled *Toward a Compassionate Society*, which addresses the importance of cultural pluralism and women's role in promoting peace in the rapidly globalizing world of the 21st century. The issues are examined from a variety of cultural and inter-disciplinary perspectives including sociology, gender, human rights, and philosophy. Elise Boulding, leading expert and author of *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History*; Charlotte Bunch, executive director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership; Uma Narayan, professor of philosophy at Vassar College; Aruna Rao, President of the Association for Women's Rights in Development; and Arvind Sharma, professor of comparative religion, McGill University are among the contributing authors. The anthology is edited with an introduction by Mahnaz Afkhami, President of WLP. It will be available at <http://www.cultureofpeace.net>.

Live Interactive Radio Webcast

In the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States, national and international media coverage and discussion of the event and the ensuing situation was dominated by the perspectives of male reporters, commentators, and leaders, particularly from the Global North, and the voices of women were notably absent. The marginalization of women in these discussions was affecting the understanding and analysis of what had happened and what should happen next. Given the lack of diversity in the dialogue, WLP felt it imperative to bring the voices of women leaders and human rights activists from the Global South and North to impact the international discourse.

A proponent of using simple technologies to improve communication and information-flow along South-South and South-North lines, WLP joined with Feminist International Radio Endeavor (FIRE), a women's Internet radio organization based in Costa Rica, and Women's International News Gathering Service (WINGS), an independent radio production company that produces and distributes programs by and about women around the world, and combined our networks with their technological resources to organize live one-hour discussions broadcast over the Internet from September 24-27, 2001. Entitled "In the Aftermath of Terror: Women Leaders Discuss Peace, Justice, and Conflict Resolution in a Globalized World", the webcast was interactive and listeners were able to join the program, make comments, and ask panelists questions by placing collect phone calls, participating in a real-time chat

room, and sending emails. WLP mobilized its international resources to bring together prominent women leaders and human rights activists from all regions of the world to participate in the webcast. Participants included Mahnaz Afkhami (Iran), Suheir Azzouni (Palestine), Charlotte Bunch (U.S.), Rakhee Goyal (WLP), Devaki Jain (India), Azza Karam (Egypt), Joanna Kerr (Canada), Asma Khader (Jordan), Huguette Labelle (Canada), Ayo Obe (Nigeria), Jacqueline Pitanguy (Brazil), Aruna Rao (India), Zieba Shorish-Shamley (Afghanistan), María Suárez (FIRE), and Frieda Werden (WINGS). Website statistics indicated that over 1,000 listeners tuned in daily over the four-day period.

In the electronic colloquium all participants expressed their grief and shock at what happened in the U.S. on September 11th. They told how the events affected them both on a personal and community level in their own countries. Many of the women were gravely concerned about the response of civil society in the wake of the terrorist attacks, and were troubled by the possibilities of racial profiling and the curbing of civil liberties. They spoke of the repercussions of the (then) possibility of military reprisals, and the devastation it would cause to Afghanistan and the effect it would have in other regions of the world. The discussion often focused on the significance of this endeavor, which gave them an opportunity to use an alternative form of media to communicate with one another and dialogue across South-South and South-North lines. Participants reinforced the fact that across the world the voices, perspectives, and analyses of women were being excluded from their own national dialogue and media. They further emphasized the need for post-conflict reconstruction and for Muslim women to take a leadership role in shaping their societies and communities in ways that respect life, human rights, human dignity, and peace.

Participants focused their discussions on what steps should be taken to find just, peaceful, and democratic solutions to the current situation. Many spoke about the need to address the root causes of violence and terrorism, be it individual or state terrorism, inter-communal or interfaith violence, or any other form of conflict. They identified some of the root causes of violence as poverty, illiteracy, under- and un-employment, and particularly the lack of grassroots participation in policy making and the development of civil society. Other participants discussed the need for U.S. and international women's movements to work together, and noted the importance of using the momentum already generated during the U.N. conferences in the last decade to help build this coalition. They stressed that a global coalition for peace should include democracy, human rights, and peace networks in addition to the women's movements. They added that it is imperative to integrate men into women's movements and re-socialize the existing traditional male norms.

Numerous mainstream radio stations, among them Radio Netherlands, Radio Free Europe, and the Women's Desk of the National Radio Project, have broadcast programs based on the webcast discussions. Journalists from print and electronic media have contacted WLP to write about the program or upload it on their own websites. Following the webcast, Ms. Afkhami was interviewed by the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Chicago Reporter Magazine* concerning topics addressed during the live program. Publications in Colorado and Mexico featured stories, and Radio4All.net and

Women's Radio uploaded the webcast onto their site and disseminated it to other mainstream media locations. The webcast has been archived and can be accessed online at www.learningpartnership.org/WLP/events/projects/multimedia.html.

Interfaith Dialogue

Following the events of September 11th in the U.S., discussions of religion, particularly Islam, and its purported role in furthering conflict was a central topic of media coverage and public debate. WLP felt it imperative to help dismantle the misconceptions and foster discussions about the common values underlying different religions as well as the role of religion in violence prevention and conflict resolution.

On November 7, 2001 WLP in collaboration with the International Student Services at American University presented "Faith & Freedom: Women From the Three Abrahamic Religions Talk About Terror, War, and Peace," the first of a series of Interfaith Dialogues developed by WLP. The event featured Marian Wright Edelman, Founder and President of the Children's Defense Fund, and WLP Board Director; Blu Greenberg, Co-Founder of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance; Azza Karam, Director of the Women's Program at Religions for Peace; and Mahnaz Afkhami (Moderator), WLP President. "Faith and Freedom" created a space in which the public could come together to express their sympathy for the victims; to discuss the effect of the tragedy on the future of world peace, inter-communal justice, and human rights; and to explore ways of mobilizing individuals, organizations, and communities to build bridges through faith, dialogue, understanding, and a commitment to peaceful resolution of conflicts.

The Interfaith Dialogue emphasized the richness of each religion, and illustrated how individuals and communities alike are able to draw strength from their faith in times of great tragedy, turmoil, and doubt. Speakers addressed the common values underlying Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, pointing to shared texts, parables, and beliefs found in all three faiths. Referring to the prevalent political rhetoric labeling recent conflicts as a "Clash of Civilizations" and the use of terminology such as "Muslim versus Christian," they stressed that political posturing and misuse of religion calls for a renewed emphasis on the idea that we are all, regardless of religion or politics, part of the same community. This is an opportunity to re-evaluate ourselves and our communities and consider what needs to be changed. In order to build a coalition for peace, it is essential to hear women's voices and center women in conflict situations as active peace-makers and peace-builders. They concluded by affirming the need to empower women and children to create a new moral leadership that will create hope, build bridges, re-weave the fabric of community and unity, and work towards developing peace worldwide. The event drew a large audience of women's rights activists, scholars, professionals, and students.

Following the Interfaith Dialogue, WLP was contacted by a number of media organizations requesting interviews with Mahnaz Afkhami and inviting her to participate on national radio programs. They included National Public Radio's (NPR) *Radio Times* program hosted by Marty Moss-Coane, NPR's *To the Point* program with Frances Anderson, and Voice of America.

South-North and South-South Dialogues

To ensure that the voices of women from the Global South are heard in international dialogue, and to promote cross-regional multi-disciplinary networks, WLP organizes face-to-face gatherings and virtual meetings of, among others, women leaders, grassroots and human rights activists, academics, and heads of international NGOs, using the Internet, radio, and television.

Women and Globalization Symposium

On February 13, 2001, WLP sponsored a panel entitled *Women Shaping Globalization: A New Feminism for the 21st Century* at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) of Johns Hopkins University in Washington, DC. WLP brought together Zenebeworke Tadesse, member of WLP's Board of Directors and development specialist from Ethiopia who has worked extensively on gender and social policy issues with various U.N. agencies and African NGOs; Azar Nafisi, visiting scholar at the Foreign Policy Institute and Director of the SAIS Dialogue Project at Johns Hopkins University; Angela Blackwell, founder and president of PolicyLink, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing a new generation of policies that achieve social and economic equity; and Mahnaz Afkhami, President of WLP. The panelists, all of whom have played key roles in changing the status of women in their countries, discussed ways of re-imagining the women's movement in the face of the realities of globalization, maximizing the potential of the information revolution, and strengthen a universal human rights agenda through culturally nuanced communication and dialogue. The event drew a large audience of women's rights activists, scholars, professionals, and students.

Panel on Women's Leadership and Institutional Change

On June 7, 2001 WLP collaborated with the Hagop Kevorkian Center at New York University and SAIS Dialogue Project at Johns Hopkins University to organize a panel discussion entitled *Leading to Choices: Women's Leadership and Institutional Change* at the School for Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University in Washington, DC. The event featured five prominent activist leaders from Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Middle East who addressed new approaches to participatory leadership and institutional transformation for gender equity. The speakers were Charlotte Bunch, Executive Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership; Ayesha Imam, Executive Director of BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Nigeria; Kumi Naidoo, President of CIVICUS; Aruna Rao, President of the Association for Women's Rights in Development; and Mahnaz Afkhami, President of WLP. The panelists addressed the nexus between leadership, gender, and institutional change. They discussed a wide range of topics including the potential for integrating women's concepts of leadership into the standard model of leadership; the challenges of building gender equity at the local, national, and global level; leadership that focuses on institutional transformation; and the importance of

mobilizing men around women's issues in order to strengthen social justice in every community. The public event was attended by over 200 people including heads of non-governmental organizations, academics, activists, students, and journalists.

Public Events

By organizing and participating in conferences, meetings, and interviews, WLP promotes public awareness of issues relating to women's empowerment and development, the importance of their participation in civil society, and the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for advocacy and democratization. During 2001, WLP engaged in numerous conferences, meetings, and interviews with policy-makers, international agencies, NGOs, media, and potential partners. WLP collaborated on symposia, panels, and workshops with such leading institutions as the Hagop Kevorkian Center at New York University, the Library of Congress, the Middle East Studies Association, the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, the State of the World Forum, and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, among others. These collaborations provided the opportunity for WLP to benefit from the resources available at these institutions and to expose new audiences to WLP's programs.

- August 23: WLP collaborated with international civil society organizations— The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Development Alternatives with Women in a New Era (DAWN), and Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)— to launch a public awareness campaign using a poster educating the public on the fact that women must assume more leadership positions at all levels of the government, including the highest levels. At the United Nations Millennium Summit only 7 of the 149 world leaders present were women. Today, only 11 of over 180 countries are headed by women. The poster is available in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish, and WLP distributed it to our network of colleagues and organizations in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Middle East.
- August 1: At a "Culture of Peace" seminar Afifa Dirani Arsanios, Vice President of Sisterhood Is Global Institute (SIGI) and Advisor to the Lebanese Minister of Culture, discussed WLP's model of women's leadership as presented in the *Leading to Choices* handbook. The seminar was attended by 24 participants from France, Greece, Holland, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, UNESCO, and the U.S.
- May 1: At the Council on Foundations' annual conference "Preserving the Public Trust: Responsible Use of Private Wealth for Public Good," WLP hosted a session on *Technology Solutions that Foster Grantee-to-Grantee Collaboration*. Mahnaz Afkhami gave a presentation on WLP's programs for developing, in collaboration with women's organizations in the Global South, culture-specific multimedia curricula and materials that help women in developing countries bridge the information divide.

- April 27-28: At the U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office's Wilton Park Workshop on the Internet and Democracy Building, WLP participated in a panel focusing on *Women Democracy Builders: Factoring in Gender*. Mahnaz Afkhami gave a speech on using the Internet as a tool for efficient communication among women's rights and civil society organizations so that they can strategize effectively and network to strengthen democratic practices at the grassroots level.
- April 23: At the State of the World Forum's Commission on Globalization's Community Building and Planning Meeting WLP organized a session entitled *Strategic Collaborations and Challenges*.
- April 18: As part of the Children's Defense Fund's annual national conference, WLP organized and hosted a panel on *How Women Can Transform the World for Children*. Mahnaz Afkhami addressed the importance of building closer networks between the women's and children's movements both nationally and internationally.
- April 11: In collaboration with Howard University, WLP presented *Gender, Globalization and Technology* at Howard University in Washington, DC. The panel featured speeches by Jeanne Maddox Toungara, Professor of History, Howard University; Dennis Foote, Vice-President, Global Communications, Academy for Educational Development; Nancy Taggart, Project Officer for Gender Strategies, Academy for Educational Development; Gracia Hillman, President & CEO, World Space Foundation; Claire Smith, Senior Lecturer, Flinders University, South Australia; and Mahnaz Afkhami, President of WLP.
- February 12: In collaboration with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Asma Khader, a prominent lawyer and human rights activist and Coordinator of Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan, and Mahnaz Afkhami discussed the ways in which women activists in the Middle East use modern technology such as computers, radio, fax, and mobile telecenters to network, organize, and advocate for women's leadership development, equity, and women's human rights.
- February 7: At USAID, Mahnaz Afkhami gave a speech and presented WLP's video entitled *Cultural Boundaries & Cyber Spaces: Women's Voices on Empowerment, Leadership, and Technology*. Ms. Afkhami spoke about women developing new strategies and innovative uses of radio, video, computers, email, and the Internet to educate and improve the status of women in their communities.

Media Outreach Program

WLP's media program emphasizes the importance of reaching out to mainstream media and raising public awareness of issues traditionally neglected by the media, such as women's empowerment and equity in developing countries, particularly in Muslim societies, the use of ICTs for advocacy and democratization, and the importance of women's full participation in civil society, among others. In addition to presenting lectures on a wide variety of topics, WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami, WLP Board Directors, and WLP collaborators granted more than 30 interviews during 2001. They included:

In December, WLP's President was interviewed by Ms. Safari of Sedaye Iran Radio about women and globalization; by Radio Liberty about Muslim countries signing on to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the affect of the reservations they have registered; by the BBC (English edition) about women in Iran and Afghanistan; by Kathleen Schalch of National Public Radio's (NPR) *Morning Edition* program about women and economics in Muslim societies; and by Mark Fore of *The New Republic* about Reza Pahlavi and the current political situation in Iran.

In November, WLP's President took part in NPR's *Radio Times* program hosted by Marty Moss-Coane, where discussion focused on how to help women participate in creating a functional government in Afghanistan and around the world; was interviewed by Judith Latham of Voice of America on the topic of possible warming relations between Iran and the U.S., as well as Iran's involvement in the war on terrorism; and took part in NPR's program *To the Point*, where discussion focused on the importance of bringing women's voices into the international dialogue during the current conflict.

In October, WLP's President was interviewed by Farah Jahangiri of Voice of America's Persian Service about WLP's live radio webcast following the September 11th attacks; by Camiyo Naka of the *Chicago Reporter Magazine* about Muslim immigrant women in the U.S. and how they balance their traditional values with those of their adopted home; by Nanette Asimov of *The San Francisco Chronicle* concerning feminism and Islam; by Voice of America about women and violence and the current international situation surrounding Afghanistan; and took part in a live program by KGO Radio in San Francisco that focused on Muslim feminism around the world.

In September, WLP representatives were interviewed by Voice of America for their "French to Africa" radio program about WLP's live radio webcast organized in the aftermath of September 11th; and participated in an interview and discussion entitled "Anti-Terrorism: International Cooperation" on WorldNet TV's *Africa Journal* program.

In August, WLP's President was interviewed by Terry McCloud of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) on the subject of violence against women around the world; and by Mr. Mohri of

Sedaye Iran Radio on the political participation of women internationally.

In June, WLP's President was interviewed by Murray Campbell of the *Toronto Globe & Mail*, and by Rose George of *The Independent*.

In April, WLP's President was interviewed by Homayoun Majd of Radio Free Europe and by Michael Janofsky of *The New York Times*, who published an ensuing article entitled "Family, Culture, and Law Meet in a Utah Court Case."

In March, WLP's President was interviewed by Mr. Dayemi of Sedaye Iran Radio. Homayoun Majd of Radio Free Europe interviewed *Life Lines* speaker Azar Nafisi, and Esther Barrera of *La Nacion* interviewed *Life Lines* speaker Emma Sepúlveda. The *Washington City Paper* published a piece on the WLP-sponsored March 7, 2001 *Life Lines* event.

In February, WLP's President appeared on the TV Ontario show *Going Global*, and was interviewed by Shelley Thakral of the BBC's Washington Bureau; by Nancy Ramsey of *The New York Times*; by Angela Stephens of U.N. Wire, who published an article entitled *Racism: NGOs Sidelined From Tehran Talks, Rights Group Claims* on the U.N. Wire Website; by Homayoun Majd of Radio Free Europe; by Pari Safari of Sedaye Iran Radio. WLP Board Director Zenebeworke Tadesse was interviewed by Jennifer Parnelee of Voice of America; and the *Washington City Paper* published a piece on the WLP-sponsored February 13, 2001 symposium entitled *Women Shaping Globalization: A New Feminism for the 21st Century*.