

2003 Annual Report



Women's Learning Partnership for
Rights, Development, and Peace
4343 Montgomery Ave., Suite 201
Bethesda, Maryland 20814, USA
Tel: (1) 301 654-2774
Fax: (1) 301 654-2775
Email: wlp@learningpartnership.org
Web: www.learningpartnership.org

Executive Summary

WLP completed the following activities during 2003:

- Expanded the diverse network of international and regional women's organizations, academic institutions, and women leaders and activists who work with WLP through **partnerships and collaborations**. WLP mobilizes cross-regional and multi-disciplinary networks of individuals and organizations to maximize women's learning, empowerment, and participation in civil-society building. WLP works in partnership with women's organizations in 12 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East and collaborates with individuals and organizations from over 20 countries around the world.
- Produced **culture-specific multimedia educational materials** including:
 - (i) publication of five local-language, culture specific editions of WLP's handbook *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women* in Assamese, Persian, Russian, Swahili, and Uzbek. Editions of the handbook in Hausa, Lebanese Shamy-Arabic, Malay, Meiteilon, Shona, and Turkish are being prepared for publication in 2004;
 - (ii) publication, distribution, and initial field-testing of the prototype multimedia leadership package entitled *Leading to Choices: A Multimedia Curriculum for Leadership Learning*. The package is designed to enhance users' facilitation, communication, and advocacy skills through horizontal and participatory leadership techniques. WLP created a CD ROM version of the multimedia leadership package that will be available for use in distance learning courses; and
 - (iii) implementation and evaluation of an English-language prototype online distance learning course designed to strengthen participants' leadership and communication skills. WLP is in the process of adapting the curriculum for development of courses in other languages including Arabic and Persian.
- Conducted comprehensive **leadership training workshops** with over 1,300 women in collaboration with partner organizations in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Workshop participants include women's rights activists, civil society advocates, journalists, refugees, religious leaders, community activists, teachers and other educators, students, and local government officials. Each workshop establishes a cooperative learning environment in which participants develop negotiation, communication, advocacy, and conflict resolution skills using culturally-appropriate leadership methodologies. WLP's curricula and method of learning has proved successful in creating an atmosphere of tolerance, building self-confidence, and honing conflict prevention skills.
- Convened the **Middle East/North Africa Regional Roaming Institute for Women's Leadership and Training of Trainers** in Jordan. Thirty women leaders and activists from eleven countries took part in the week long Institute. The goal of the Institute was to empower and train participants to become better trainers and advocates for women's rights and equal participation in civil society. The Institute provided an opportunity for

South-South exchange of experience, information, and knowledge among women's rights activists who come from nations that have similar social, political, economic, and cultural conditions. WLP also initiated the planning and organization of the **Afghan Roaming Institute**, to be held in Kabul in Spring 2004.

- Enhanced the **ICT capacity-building program** that enables organizations to increase their access to information technologies that enable them to implement women's empowerment programs, participate in knowledge networks, and create sustainable advocacy and civil-society building efforts. In Afghanistan WLP launched the Herat eLearning Center in 2003 to provide women with computer training, vocational skills-building, and other education programs, and implemented a technology training and capacity-building workshop in Herat and Kabul. WLP's websites in Arabic and English are cyber resource and exchange centers that promote multimedia communication and facilitate South-South and South-North networks and exchange of information on women's leadership, political participation, human rights, peace, and development.
- Strengthened the **Events and Outreach** program by organizing and participating in a series of conferences, symposia, and policy meetings. WLP uses these opportunities to mobilize a broad network of international women leaders, activists, and organizations to promote women's human rights, cultures of peace, and women's empowerment. WLP organized several events during 2003, among them the fifth annual human rights event entitled *Life Lines: The Literature of Women's Human Rights* and the international human security conference *Clash or Consensus: Gender and Human Security in a Globalized World*. WLP also published four editions of its online e-newsletter that serves as a mobilization and advocacy tool to inform the WLP network about the activities of partner organizations and WLP programs and events.
- Expanded **media outreach activities** through numerous interviews and print articles that enhance public awareness of the importance of increasing women's power at all levels of decision-making, their full participation in civil society, and the use of ICTs for advocacy and democratization. Print, radio, and television media that featured stories about WLP and its work include, among others, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), *The Daily Star* (Lebanon), National Public Radio (NPR), *Super Power: Global Affairs Television*, and "Think Tank with Ben Wattenberg."

Partnerships and Collaborations

WLP's programs strengthen the capacity of individuals and organizations in the Global South by building collaborative partnerships that maximize their learning potential and capability. WLP has developed a framework and methodology for transnational cooperation built around ongoing and continuous communication and full cooperation between partner organizations. WLP's collaboratively designed programs are implemented in 12 countries: Afghanistan, Cameroon, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Palestine, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Zimbabwe. In collaboration with these partner organizations WLP implements programs that encourage women's leadership, political participation, and social change within a dialogical framework. Furthermore, WLP develops learning materials in cooperation with its partner organizations, tests its materials in workshops attended by its partners' constituents, and facilitates capacity-building and resource exchange among collaborating organizations. WLP's programs and materials are based on a concept of leadership that is participatory, horizontal, and communicative.

In addition to our partner organizations, WLP works collaboratively with an international network of experts— the International Advisory Council (IAC)— that includes heads of U.N. agencies, leaders of international NGOs, lawyers, scholars, and activists from Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Middle East who represent diverse professional, cultural, and religious perspectives. WLP seeks the advice of these experts in analyzing and fine-tuning the social, cultural, political, and gender implications of our programs and learning materials.

To mobilize support for women's rights, social change, and democratic development, WLP builds cross-regional multi-disciplinary networks with civil society organizations, women's groups, academic institutions, and individual activists around the world. During 2003, WLP worked in collaboration with, among others, American University, the Children's Defense Fund, the Ethical Globalization Initiative, The Gender@Work Collaborative, Human Rights Watch, the School for Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, the Middle East Studies Association, Ohio State University, State of the World Forum's Commission on Globalization, the United Nations Population Fund, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and the World Movement for Democracy.

Appendix A includes additional information about WLP's partner organizations, the International Advisory Council, and NGOs and academic institutions that WLP collaborated with during 2003.

Culture-Specific Multimedia Educational Materials

WLP produces culture-specific, multimedia educational materials that empower women, especially Muslim women and girls, and enable them to develop the necessary skills for their full participation in local, regional, and global decision-making. These tools comprise a central part of WLP's leadership curricula and build on the leadership concepts presented in WLP's prototype handbook *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women*.

Prototype Leadership Handbook

WLP's prototype leadership handbook *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women* is based on the concept that inclusive, horizontal, and participatory leadership empowers women and leads to the development of gender equitable and democratic societies. *Leading to Choices* is used by WLP's partner organizations in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East to conduct leadership training workshops for grassroots activists, women's organizations, social service organizations, and professionals who work to empower women and strengthen civil society in the Global South. The innovative handbook curriculum strengthens women's leadership skills and enhances 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. The workshops foster cooperation, bridging of differences, and coalition-building among individuals divided along gender, ethnicity, religious, educational, age, and class lines, and enable them to work collaboratively to advance women's rights and engender social change. As workshop participants engage in the activities of their communities, they disseminate the knowledge and skills acquired during the workshops and work towards creating strong civil societies based on tolerance, gender equity, and social justice.

Throughout 2003, WLP continued to receive enthusiastic responses from colleagues and other prominent members of the women's activist community conveying their belief that *Leading to Choices* is an invaluable tool for women's empowerment and leadership. For example, Kam Thi Htun of the Burmese Women's Union wrote "I am very impressed with *Leading to Choices*. The handbook is special and different from other women's handbooks because it provides helpful information about how to organize workshops, how to be an effective facilitator, and how to ensure that participants have a meaningful experience. The personal life stories of women around the world that are featured in the handbook are very inspiring and will serve as excellent models for the women I work with. I think this is an excellent handbook for both individuals and organizations, and I encourage my colleagues to use it in their communities."

Additionally, numerous women's and non-governmental organizations, policy makers, and academic institutions contacted WLP requesting a copy of *Leading to Choices* and information about the leadership training program. They included, among others, CARE International in Afghanistan, the Free Iraq Foundation, Johns Hopkins University, the International Human Rights Law Group, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, Princeton

University, the United Nations Population Fund, Vital Voices, and the World Conference of Religions for Peace. See Appendix B for more details.

Customized Local-Language Leadership Handbooks

WLP works continually with its partner organizations to adapt *Leading to Choices* to the specific cultural, religious, economic, and educational conditions in their target communities.



Customizing the training materials for specific cultures takes place in three stages. In the first stage, the English prototype handbook is translated into the local language using the simplest and most familiar idiom. WLP engages translators with established bilingual proficiency and with knowledge of women's rights, leadership, and democracy issues to ensure that the information is conveyed in culturally appropriate language. In the second stage, local experts including activists and academicians, as well as participants in workshops that utilize the handbooks, review them for content. Workshop facilitators and participants identify supplementary materials such as religious, folkloric, literary, historical, and legislative texts, and current event news items that may be added or substituted in the handbook. In the last stage, the handbooks are amended, enhanced or abridged based on suggestions obtained through the process of testing and adaptation. The final product is a language/idiom-, culture-, and issue-appropriate learning tool covering women's leadership and communication skills for fostering democratic development. Culture-specific editions of *Leading to Choices* exist in **Maghreby-Arabic, Shamy-Arabic, French, and Persian.**

During 2003, WLP and its partner organizations translated, adapted, and published five local-language editions of *Leading to Choices*. The **Assamese** edition of *Leading to Choices* was published for use primarily in northeastern India with organizations engaged in peace building training for women living in conflict situations. The **Persian** edition of the handbook was published and distributed for use with grassroots women's organizations in Afghanistan, Iran, and other linguistically-appropriate areas. The **Swahili** edition of *Leading to Choices* was published by WLP's partner in Zimbabwe for use in neighboring East African countries and in leadership training workshops with refugee populations in Zimbabwe. The **Russian** and **Uzbek** editions of the handbook, translated and tested by WLP's partner organization in Uzbekistan, were finalized and published. The Russian edition is being distributed in linguistically-appropriate areas of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The Uzbek edition is being distributed to women's organizations in Uzbekistan.



The expert review process for the **Hausa** edition of the handbook is nearing completion and it will be published in Spring 2004. The Hausa handbook will be used primarily in Nigeria, and in neighboring West African nations where significant sections of the population speak Hausa. WLP's partner in Zimbabwe is testing, adapting, and reviewing the **Shona** edition of *Leading to Choices* for use in other areas of South and East Africa. In Turkey, WLP's partner organization is in the final stages of the expert review process and the **Turkish** edition of *Leading to Choices* will also be published in Spring 2004. WLP's partner organization in Lebanon is continuing the

process of testing and adapting the **Lebanese Shamy-Arabic** edition of the handbook. In Malaysia, WLP's partner organization has tested the draft **Malay** text in one workshop and continues to revise the handbook based on feedback from workshop participants and organization staff and advisors. WLP's partner in India is developing a **Meiteilon** edition of *Leading to Choices* for use in the Manipur region of northeastern India.

WLP is in the process of locating expert translators to begin creating draft translations of *Leading to Choices* in Spanish, Bahasa Indonesia, and Filipino for use in leadership training workshops in Nicaragua, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

Prototype Multimedia Leadership Learning Package

During 2003 WLP created an innovative prototype, scenario-based, multimedia learning package designed to (a) enable facilitators to become more effective in creating interactive workshop settings that engage participants in their own leadership development, and (b) enable women to create culturally-appropriate leadership solutions and increase the effectiveness of their advocacy for women's human rights. Entitled *Leading to Choices: A Multimedia Curriculum for Leadership Learning*, the package includes three learning guides and three companion videotapes that complement the material in WLP's prototype leadership handbook.

The guide *Learning To Facilitate Interactively* contains discussion and role-play exercises for developing facilitation techniques that reflect the principles of inclusive and participatory leadership. Through skill-building exercises, facilitators gain the skills to promote participative listening, share responsibility for leading activities, stimulate discussion, encourage enthusiasm for divergent opinions, and work cooperatively. The video *Learning to Facilitate Interactively* showcases facilitation techniques used by WLP partners to conduct leadership workshops for women in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Through simulating workshops and critiquing facilitation techniques used, participants discuss innovative methods for creating learning environments that are engaging and democratic.

The guide *Communicating for Change* contains exercises for improving personal and organizational communication skills through developing persuasive communication styles, creating compelling messages, devising communications campaign strategies, and using the media effectively to communicate a message. The video *Communicating for Change* focuses on two crucial aspects of communication: developing media messages and conducting media interviews. WLP partners in consultation with a communications expert, and through simulations of television interviews, discuss strategies for developing powerful messages and effectively conveying them through broadcast media.

The guide *Developing Effective Advocacy Campaigns* contains exercises on defining and carrying out successful advocacy for social change. Exercises enable participants to explore the various stages of formulating and implementing advocacy campaigns, including building pluralistic coalitions and creating locally appropriate advocacy strategies. The video *Developing Effective Advocacy Campaigns* features activists from WLP partner organizations in Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, and Palestine who share their experiences using advocacy strategies to fight

violence against women and to promote women's human rights. Zainah Anwar describes the campaign to develop and implement a Domestic Violence Act in Malaysia. Amina Lemrini of Morocco talks about the ongoing campaign to amend legislation to protect women from sexual harassment in the workplace. Suheir Azzouni describes Palestinian women's efforts to reverse regulations requiring them to obtain permission from male guardians before applying for a passport. Asma Khader talks about the campaign to eliminate honor crimes in Jordan.

The *Leading to Choices* multimedia curriculum is designed for use in sessions where participants are at the center of the learning experience. Participants engage in "learning by doing" and simulating scenarios that do not require a right answer but encourage a cooperative and respectful exploration of concepts and strategies. This democratic structure engages each individual in critical analysis and purposeful application of the ideas discussed. The curriculum is flexible and meant to be adapted to each setting where it is used. The adaptation process includes replacing case-study scenarios with culturally relevant material and modifying sessions and exercises to address the needs of participants. Sample schedules included in the multimedia package show how various components of the *Leading to Choices* curriculum have been used in workshops to train trainers, promote leadership learning, develop communication skills, and formulate advocacy strategies.

WLP has distributed the multimedia package to its partner organizations in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, as well as to civil society organizations, women's human rights groups, and individual activists around the world. WLP's partner in Jordan, SIGI/J, has begun the process of



translating and adapting the *Multimedia Curriculum* into Shamy Arabic and drafts of the three learning guides and subtitled videos were tested during the Middle East Regional Roaming Institute which took place in December 2003. Participants' response to the *Multimedia Curriculum* was overwhelmingly positive. They found the *Multimedia Curriculum* a well-designed tool for improving participatory facilitation techniques, fostering effective communication styles, and developing dynamic advocacy campaigns. Participants' only critique was to express the hope that future editions of the multimedia package would include more personal stories and additional culture-specific examples. (For more information see the section below on Roaming Institutes.)

WLP also created the CD ROM version of the *Multimedia Curriculum* during 2003. The 2-disk CD ROM set contains the *Leading to Choices* leadership training manual, three learning guides, and digitalized versions of the three companion videos on facilitation, communication, and advocacy. Its compact format makes it easy to distribute, especially to individuals and organizations in closed societies. Among its intended uses is the integration of the CD ROM in WLP's online distance learning course on participatory leadership skills development.

Distance Learning Courses

WLP designs, adapts, and implements prototype online distance-learning courses to strengthen women's participatory leadership, communication, decision-making, negotiation, and advocacy skills. The goal of these courses is to expand the reach of WLP's leadership material to those unable to participate in face-to-face training workshops for economic, social, or cultural reasons.

(a) Prototype English eLearning Course

During 2003 WLP developed, tested, and evaluated a prototype online English-language eLearning course designed to create a stimulating learning environment that fosters communication and negotiation skills, mutual respect, decision-making abilities, development of a personal vision, and collaboration to achieve common goals.

WLP's leadership curriculum *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women* served as the primary text for lessons and group activities in the eLearning course. WLP worked with the two course facilitators to adapt the curriculum for an online course environment that would promote dynamic and interactive learning. Sessions and exercises from the handbook, originally written for face-to-face interaction in a workshop setting, were adjusted and re-written for online learning and email communication. New activities and sessions were developed specifically for the eLearning course. The curriculum development process also served as a forum for WLP to train the two facilitators to conduct the course using the *Leading to Choices* participatory methodology.

The course used a variety of methods to facilitate interaction and learning: website, online discussion board, email, real-time chat rooms, video, and live streaming audio webcasts. The course website provided participants with access to the curriculum, syllabus, readings, weekly schedule, facilitators messages, and archives of online discussions. Participants could choose to engage in the course using a web-only mode, web and email mode, and email-only mode. Most participants in the prototype course chose the web and email mode.

After taking part in the eLearning course, participants from Canada, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Argentina plan to conduct workshops with their constituencies, including farmers' cooperatives, NGOs, and local government officials. The participant from Thailand plans to provide two-week leadership training workshops based on the eLearning course curriculum to various Burmese ethnic groups living in Thailand. A participant from Iran plans to use the session on creating a shared vision in her monthly community meetings.

Lessons learned during the development, implementation, and evaluation of the prototype eLearning course provide WLP with a framework and base curriculum for the development of online distance learning leadership courses in other languages, including Arabic and Persian. WLP plans to translate and adapt the course curriculum for further online eLearning courses. A full report of the prototype English eLearning course is included as Appendix C.

(b) Prototype Persian eLearning Course

During 2003, WLP began developing and adapting the curriculum for the prototype Persian eLearning course designed to strengthen and improve Afghan and Iranian women's participatory leadership, communication, decision-making, negotiation, and advocacy skills. Participants will include women's rights activists, educators, and development practitioners. The pilot course is scheduled to take place in February-March 2004.

WLP has identified, and is the process of training, the two facilitators who will conduct the pilot Persian eLearning course. WLP conducts weekly meetings with both facilitators, training them to implement in an online format the participatory facilitation methodology found in WLP's *Leading to Choices* curriculum in order to create a dynamic, interactive online learning environment. Mahnaz Afkhami, WLP staff, and the facilitators are collaboratively adapting the Persian edition of *Leading to Choices* for the eLearning course. The curriculum is being adjusted, and certain sessions and exercises are being re-written and developed specifically for the eLearning course to facilitate online learning and email communication. The course will include interactive skill-building exercises, and simulations and analysis of real-life case studies from around the world. WLP is also working with Persian technology experts to identify software that is being used most widely in Persian-speaking areas in order to adapt this software for use in the eLearning course. Based on this information, WLP will adapt the website and communication technologies used in the pilot Persian eLearning course to ensure ease of use by participants facing a wide range of issues related to technology accessibility.

Leadership Training Workshops

Using the customized local-language curricula, WLP's partner organizations conduct leadership training workshops with women's rights activists, civil society advocates, community activists, religious leaders, teachers and other educators, students, journalists, and local government officials, among others. Men are included as appropriate to engage them in support of women's empowerment and leadership development. By creating dialogical learning environments, the workshops and training materials promote horizontal, participatory leadership skills and enhance 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. WLP's curricula and method of learning has proved successful in creating atmospheres of tolerance, building self-confidence, and honing conflict prevention skills. Participants move gradually but consciously from concepts and methods relevant to individual leadership learning to the concepts and methods focusing on the creation of learning organizations and societies—that is, societies that are interactive, responsive to their constituents, flexible and evolving, and ready to accommodate change.

An increasing number of women are participating in WLP's leadership program: in 2003 more than 1,300 women, and some men, took part in leadership training workshops. This expands the base of individuals and organizations who are being influenced by non-hierarchical, inclusive leadership methodologies and practices that enable them to establish power-sharing leadership arrangements, to reform the political and cultural institutions in their communities, and to engage in advocacy campaigns that promote women's human rights, conflict resolution, and democracy.

Individual Leadership Skills Development

WLP's training programs help develop leaders who aspire to create egalitarian, pluralistic societies based on collaborative decision-making, coalition-building, and gender inclusiveness. The impact of WLP's leadership program can be measured in its influence on participants' conception of effective leadership and how participants incorporate newly-developed participatory leadership styles into their daily lives.

Using WLP materials and curriculum, workshop participants moved from concepts and methodologies that foster effective leadership and communication skills to sessions and exercises focused on initiating advocacy campaigns and mobilization efforts. In **Malaysia**, for example, participants who particularly enjoyed the role playing exercises in the workshop are working to create a theater troupe that will present skits, short plays, and other activities designed to raise public awareness about women's rights, violence against women, and the sex trade. Other participants are developing a plan to create a media watchdog organization to research which elected officials are supporters of women's rights and to advocate with these officials about women's issues. **A number of participants were interested in building a network of women's NGOs that would be actively involved in promoting women's rights issues during the elections that took place in March 2004.**

In many cases, the WLP leadership curriculum and workshop learning environment also generated change in men's perceptions of leadership styles and of women's role in social and political decision-making processes. In **Lebanon**, the participatory leadership methodology of the workshop created a dynamic paradigm shift for both the female and male participants in a workshop for Palestinian refugees. The training helped male participants accept that both women and men can be effective leaders at all levels of society, and understand that there are alternatives to the authoritarian leadership they were accustomed to. They acknowledged that until encountering WLP's leadership material and training they had never imagined they could take control of their lives and shape their destiny. As refugees, they had always felt themselves to be at the mercy of external events within their host country. **The workshop gave them a sense of self-worth and the skills that many hoped would lead to greater opportunities and positive changes in their lives.** Most importantly, the men came to understand that for a society to evolve and progress women and men must be equal partners in its development.

Not only have workshop participants experienced changes in their understanding of effective leadership, but they have also developed a new appreciation for their own personal leadership skills. **For example, a Jordanian participant commented, "I have come to understand that as a teacher I am a leader in the community and in the lives of my students. I hope I can encourage others to recognize their leadership skills and make a difference."** At the conclusion of a workshop in Zimbabwe, female and male participants stated, "Now we know that we are all leaders. We have to work hard in unity and with common objectives towards the improvement of our educational, social, and economic status."

Furthermore, the leadership workshops helped bring about changes in the beliefs, actions, and decision-making processes of women and men, influencing the way they relate to one another and helping them become partners in creating gender equitable societies. For example, since the inception of WLP's leadership program in Afghanistan, female workshop participants have expressed the need for men to take part in the leadership training. They believe that women alone cannot transform Afghan society or family norms but that it is necessary to accomplish this in partnership with men. Participants felt that husbands, fathers, and brothers would be more likely to make personal or communal changes if they participated in training workshops that demonstrate the benefits of communication and cooperation between men and women. The inclusion of men, according to participants, would result in a more just and equitable rebuilding of Afghanistan. At the conclusion of the first workshop which included both women and men, a female participant commented, "This workshop has helped us all, both women and men, realize our rights and our potential. I think including men in other workshops will go a long way to reducing gender discrimination and violence against women." **One of the male participants had this to say: "I now understand how important it is to ensure that women have the same rights as men. In our society people rarely think about this point, but I now believe that everyone should accept this reality. It is important that Afghan women and men work side by side with equality to bring our society together."**



Societal Impact of WLP's Leadership Program

By promoting participatory leadership styles and power-sharing leadership arrangements, WLP seeks to help change social, economic, and cultural institutions to better serve the needs of not only women but all members of society. Increasing numbers of women are developing leadership capabilities that lead to their equitable participation in family, community, and global decision-making. Indicators of WLP's success are also found in examples of women who feel empowered to play a defining role in encouraging tolerance, conflict-resolution, gender equity, democratic governance, and sustainable development in their communities.

WLP leadership training materials and workshops help participants think differently about traditional social norms and to change the way hierarchical social structures influence their personal decisions. For example, during a discussion on leadership skills in workshop in Uzbekistan, one young man stated, "Women must only do housework and bring up children. They should not be in leadership positions and should certainly not be involved in politics.

The political world is too rough for women, and only men should take part." However, by the end of the workshop this same young man had changed his mind and was proud to acknowledge that, "I thought this workshop would not be helpful but after taking part in the handbook sessions I realized that many of the skills are useful for both men and women. I think that in many ways women are, and can be, leaders in all aspects of society."



In other cases, WLP workshops have motivated participants to develop cooperative strategies for addressing communal and national issues that are often not dealt with by traditional government institutions. **In Cameroon, after several women took part in a leadership workshop they established a Women and Youth Information Technology and Communication Center in their community.** The Center conducts outreach programs with rural women, works with local government representatives to promote the use of information technologies, and broadcasts two radio programs entitled "Global Voices for Women" and "Women in Action."

In a similar example, a workshop participant from **Uzbekistan** identified the lack of information and communication technologies in her community as a serious problem for women in particular: not all houses have radios, television does not provide full coverage of current problems, and newspapers are inaccessible to most of the population because of low literacy rates. **Using mobilization strategies from the leadership workshop, the participant plans to create a radio program that will broadcast from a nearby village with more advanced technology. The program will focus on distributing information among women in the surrounding area, with a particular focus on reproductive health, women's rights and gender awareness.**

In **Morocco**, conservative religious and cultural values discourage discussion about HIV/AIDS, rape, and sexual relations outside of marriage. However, leadership training workshops are

providing a safe space for participants to talk about how these issues impact women in Morocco. **Participants at one workshop agreed on the need to raise awareness about these topics and plan to organize a mobilization campaign through local radio and television stations on December 1, World AIDS Day, in order to initiate a public debate about these issues.**

Having grown up with limited educational opportunities, access to health care, or chances for economic advancement, participants at a workshop in **Palestine** were particularly interested in mobilizing for action in order to create positive changes in their society. However, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict continues to overshadow participants' desire to initiate change within Palestinian society. **Participants agreed that it is the responsibility of their generation to bring about social, cultural, and political development in Palestinian communities.** They plan to work together to convene a conference on issues that affect young refugee women and men, and work cooperatively to establish educational, economic, and social programs in the refugee camps.

WLP's curricula and workshops have also motivated participants to address issues that affect women on a national level. Women are able to identify a common problem and work cooperatively to make positive changes in their lives. For example, there is continuing tension between Muslim and Christian communities in northern Nigeria over Shari'a law. Workshops were organized to bring the two groups together to discuss religious strife between Christian and Muslim communities and focus on conflict resolution strategies.



Sessions and exercises in *Leading to Choices* helped Nigerian participants identify ways to negotiate and build consensus with one another despite different cultural, religious, or ethnic backgrounds. The workshops succeeded in initiating dialogue between Christian and Muslim community representatives and set the groundwork for building trust and faith within and between the communities.

At a workshop in Afghanistan participants created a plan to establish a "Women's Rights Council" in Kabul. The Council will conduct community outreach, hold seminars and discussion sessions, and develop materials that educate women about their rights and support them in defending those rights in situations of divorce and domestic violence. Similarly, groups of participants from other workshops in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan have developed several projects to benefit women in their communities. One group is planning to create a sewing course to teach needlework to women in the refugee camps. The course will be aimed at women who have no other source of employment and have children to look after. Another group is working to establish a women's health and gynecological center to care for refugee women along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In another instance, Turkish workshop participants came together to establish a Women's Cooperative that would elect representatives who negotiate with the municipal authorities about issues such as access to clean water, gender discrimination, and violence towards

women, among others. Following the workshop, one participant was nominated to be a spokeswoman for the Women's Cooperative at meetings with the municipality and district governor. At these meetings, she presents the concerns and requests of the Women's Cooperative and submits proposals for collaborative projects.

Strengthening the Capacity of Civil Society Organizations and Regional Networks

One of WLP's goals is to enhance the organizational capacity of its partner organizations through the creation and strengthening of national, regional, and international networks of individuals and organizations. By promoting participatory leadership and advocacy through cooperation and communication, WLP fosters knowledge networks and partnerships that support democratic values, strengthen civil society building efforts, and enhance women's human rights.

Reports from the field indicate that participants often form communal networks to disseminate the workshop information and training to women who were not able to attend the workshop. Networks are also formed, based on *Leading to Choices* training, to provide support for poverty alleviation, women's continued education, medical care, and victims of violence, among others. In Afghanistan, participants are developing community networks as a source of communal empowerment, particularly networks that support women, such as health clinics, education centers, employment agencies, and resources for victims of violence. One participant from Afghanistan created a network that brings together other concerned parents in the community to cooperatively enhance curricula at local schools.

At a workshop in Cameroon, participants developed plans for several projects that would benefit their community. One involved creating a community market or coop in which those involved shared both the labor and the profits. Another focused on finding ways to provide safe, affordable housing for everyone in Limbe. A third project involved creating a course on computers and communication technologies for young women.

Increasingly, WLP's partners are forming alliances with other local and national NGOs that enable them to build networks that help strengthen grassroots civic movements for women's rights and democratic governance. In Morocco, for example, the use of a quota system in recent general elections ensured an increase in the percentage of females elected to office at the national level. This led to expectations that a higher number of women would be elected during local elections. However, the combination of a low number of female candidates and a lack of quotas at the local level created an outcome in which less than 1% of those elected were women.

WLP's partner in Morocco is working with a network of organizations to evaluate the election results and develop strategies for changing the voting system at the local level in order to increase the number of female candidates and the percentage of women elected to governing institutions.

During workshops in **Zimbabwe** that took place in camps for refugees from Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, **participants gained skills that helped them to accept their differences and to work together with other workshop participants to establish a committee— composed of women representatives of each nationality and religion in the**

camp– to pursue building a common vision of peace-making and conflict resolution in their families and within the refugee camp as a whole.

In Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, WLP’s leadership program has enabled a greater number of women to take ownership of their own leadership potential and become better advocates for gender equity, women’s human rights, and dynamic civil societies. WLP-trained women, girls, and men are beginning to use horizontal and inclusive decision-making styles to positively impact their societies. The continued expansion and strengthening of WLP’s programs will help achieve the goal of creating a critical mass of women leaders who will work to transform legal and political institutions, promote egalitarian social relations, and influence governance in ways that lead to social justice, conflict prevention, and democracy. Pictures from leadership workshops conducted by WLP’s partners are included as Appendix D.

Roaming Institutes for Women’s Leadership and Training of Trainers

WLP’s national and regional Roaming Institutes for Women’s Leadership are learning centers for training trainers and facilitating capacity building of women leaders including NGO leaders, political candidates and other professionals. At the Institutes, participants gain the skills to: (a) become better advocates for gender equity, social justice, and women’s equal participation in civil society; and (b) become better leadership trainers to enable a greater number of women to take on dynamic leadership roles.



The Institutes provide an opportunity for South-South exchange of experience, information, and knowledge among women’s rights activists who come from nations that have similar social, political, economic, and cultural conditions. The multiplier effect of the training becomes evident as Institute participants and their local constituents gain the ability to apply their learning to all spheres of social interaction and decision-making, thus impacting the political, economic, and cultural landscape of their nations, and leading to greater gender equality and strengthening of civil society.

During 2003, Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan (SIGI/J) convened the MENA Regional Roaming Institute in Petra, Jordan and the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL) began organizing the Afghan National Roaming Institute.

Middle East/North Africa Regional Roaming Institute

WLP and SIGI/J cooperatively convened the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) Regional Roaming Institute for Women’s Leadership and Training of Trainers from December 9-15, 2003 in Petra, Jordan. Thirty women leaders from twelve Arab countries including Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen took part in the week-long Institute for training of trainers. The goal of the Regional Roaming Institute was to empower and train Arab women activists to become better trainers and advocates for women’s rights and full participation in civil society. The MENA Regional Institute built upon the material and expertise developed in WLP’s pilot international Roaming Institute for Women’s Leadership held in Maryland in 2002.

Institute Training Schedule

The Shamy-Arabic translation of *Leading to Choices: A Multimedia Curriculum for Leadership Learning* served as the primary curriculum for the week-long MENA Institute, which consisted of a 5-day training on developing skills in interactive facilitation and communication and a 2-day training on using information and communication technologies for developing effective advocacy campaigns. Institute participants included lawyers, educators, grassroots organizers, and activists working to promote democracy, human rights, and women’s political participation. Institute participants from SIGI/J were experienced workshop trainers who facilitated several

sessions in the Institute and also engaged in the training of trainers' exercises to enhance their facilitation skills.

After ice-breaking sessions in which participants introduced themselves and got to know one another, the Roaming Institute commenced with participants discussing the innovative leadership concepts and methodologies found in the *Multimedia Curriculum*. To further participants' understanding of the innovative leadership methodologies, WLP's partner organizations from Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Morocco shared their experiences in implementing the leadership program in their communities. As the Institute progressed, participants used the learning guide and video "Learning to Facilitate Interactively" from the *Multimedia Curriculum* to develop and hone their facilitation skills. In small groups, participants analyzed the dynamics of power, redefined leadership in terms of horizontal, participatory interactions, and discussed ways to transform leadership within their organizations, communities, and nations.

In addition to facilitation training, the Institute focused on helping participants improve their communication skills. The learning guide and video entitled "Communicating for Change" from the *Multimedia Curriculum* included sessions and exercises that enabled participants to develop effective and persuasive communication techniques. Participants from Egypt shared their experiences in developing organizational communication and outreach strategies, and Jordanian participants presented tactics for establishing a good working relationship with the media.

Participants were particularly interested in creating and enhancing advocacy strategies for their organizations. Using the learning guide and video entitled "Developing Effective Advocacy Campaigns" from the *Multimedia Curriculum* participants engaged in a session that focused on the different components of a successful advocacy campaign and how to develop a plan of action for an advocacy effort. Participants from Morocco gave a presentation discussing the strategies they had utilized in implementing several advocacy campaigns. Institute participants analyzed the information and discussed how to adapt it for use in their own organizations.

The final two days of the Roaming Institute were an opportunity for participants to explore ways to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) to create and enhance advocacy campaigns for women's rights, social change, and democratic development. The ICT training was designed for both individual and organizational capacity-building, and training sessions enabled participants to develop skills in conducting online research, designing publications, and developing media strategies for executing advocacy campaigns. Participants identified an advocacy campaign they intended to work on in their communities and developed a plan of action using relevant ICTs. Using their new technology and advocacy skills, participants created comprehensive campaign strategies that focused on political participation, citizenship rights, election law reform, health and education, marriage law reform, and female circumcision.

Institute Curriculum

In preparation for the Roaming Institute, SIGI/J translated into Shamy Arabic the three learning guides and subtitled the three videos that comprise WLP's *Multimedia Curriculum*. The guides and videos were used throughout the Institute, providing participants with the opportunity to experience, test, and evaluate the information and exercises in the *Multimedia Curriculum*. Participants found the sessions that focused on designing and implementing advocacy campaigns useful for grassroots, national, and regional organizations. They were particularly interested in exercises that focused on how to communicate using the media, commenting that it is important for women's organizations to be able to communicate a cohesive and compelling message through print, radio, and television media. Institute participants agreed that there is a vital need for organizational capacity-building that promotes the creation of effective advocacy campaigns that support human rights and democratic processes.

Participants requested that in forthcoming editions of the *Multimedia Curriculum* more sessions and examples from the Arab world be included in the learning guides and videos to reflect culture-specific norms and values. Based on feedback from the Roaming Institute, SIGI/J will continue adapting and revising the Shamy-Arabic edition of the *Multimedia Curriculum* for use throughout the Middle East, and WLP's partner organization in Morocco will translate and adapt the *Multimedia Curriculum* into French and Maghreby-Arabic for use in North Africa.

Institute Evaluation

The Institute was evaluated on three levels. At the first level, participants evaluated the Institute through daily questionnaires that provided them the opportunity to comment on whether the day-to-day objectives of the Institute were met, how the content of the Institute was useful to their work, and what other issues they would like to have addressed during the Institute. Each day, two participants volunteered to observe the proceedings and take notes, and their comments were shared with the group the next day. Throughout the week participants' observations, evaluations, and suggestions were incorporated into the Institute's program. At the second level, Institute facilitators evaluated their own participation and the overall functioning of the Institute. At the third level, SIGI/J evaluated the Institute from an operational perspective, providing feedback and recommendations on how to enhance the Institute. Information from the three evaluation levels are being compiled and used as the basis for designing and organizing future national and regional Roaming Institutes in cooperation with WLP's partner organizations in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Outcomes and Next Steps

The innovative leadership techniques, training, and materials of the Roaming Institute for Women's Leadership and Training of Trainers had a significant impact on the participants from the MENA region. Several participating organizations plan to incorporate the horizontal, participatory leadership methodologies and ICT training into the functioning of their organization. Others plan to incorporate leadership-skill building projects into existing

programs, and a number of organizations will use the facilitation training and leadership-learning materials to conduct leadership training workshops with their constituencies.

For example, the Algerian Society for Human Rights will use WLP's leadership curricula for organizational capacity-building and to train young women to take on leadership roles in their families, work environments, and the community. The Bahrain Human Rights Society plans to use WLP's curricula in a training program they are developing for teachers and police. In Egypt, the Al-Nadeem Center will build WLP's innovative leadership methodologies into the operation of their organization. The Egyptian Center for Human Rights will mainstream the leadership curricula into their training workshops for young, politically active women in Cairo.

In Iraq, the Al-Amal organization will use WLP's curricula for organizational capacity-building and will begin developing leadership training workshops for Iraqi women. Fowziyah Abdullah, a human rights activist and professor from Saudi Arabia, plans to establish advocacy coalitions that raise awareness about human rights and women's empowerment. The Al Khartoom Center for Human Rights and Environmental Development in Sudan is interested in incorporating WLP's curricula into the human rights and conflict resolution program that they implement. The organization plans to translate WLP's leadership materials into four Sudanese dialects. In Yemen, the Sisters Arabic Forum for Human Rights will begin integrating WLP's leadership curricula into their political empowerment program.



SIGI/J in Jordan and ADFM in Morocco plan to use the MENA Regional Roaming Institute as a prototype for national Roaming Institutes that will provide facilitation and communication skill-building and advocacy campaign development for human rights and civil-society organizations. Additionally, audio and video material from the Institute, combined with interviews with Institute participants, will be used to develop training videos based on Arab scenarios. These videos, along with the translated and adapted learning guides from WLP's *Multimedia Curriculum*, will be used to create a culturally- and linguistically-appropriate Arabic edition of the *Multimedia Curriculum* for use in leadership training programs and Roaming Institutes throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

WLP documented the process of designing, organizing, and implementing the MENA Regional Roaming Institute for Women's Leadership and Training of Trainers in cooperation with SIGI/J. WLP will use this information to create a capacity-building module to help grassroots women's organizations convene their own national or regional Roaming Institutes using the WLP *Multimedia Curriculum*. WLP is following up with all participants to monitor the impact of the Institute at the personal and organizational level and will provide support for organizational capacity-building projects, leadership training programs, and advocacy campaigns created as a result of the MENA Regional Roaming Institute. A full report of the MENA Regional Roaming Institute is included as Appendix E.

Afghan National Roaming Institute for Women's Leadership

During 2003, WLP and AIL began planning for and organizing the Afghan Roaming Institute for Women's Leadership and Training of Trainers, which will be held in Kabul from April 9-13, 2004. The Institute will be based on the draft Persian edition of WLP's *Leading to Choices: A Multimedia Curriculum for Leadership Learning*. The training handbook has been adapted and customized in Persian and the three learning guides and transcripts of the three videos are being translated into Persian. Through a collaborative process, WLP and AIL are further adapting these training materials for the Institute, customizing them based on a preliminary needs assessment of the participants.

AIL is identifying the approximately 30 participants who will take part in the Institute—at least five participants will represent the major ethnic groups in Afghanistan, including the Aimaqs, Hazaras, Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Uzbeks; five will be heads of NGOs located in Kabul; and five will be government representatives. Participants will include teachers, trainers, and community activists involved in women's rights education, democracy advocacy, and civil-society building efforts. Due to increasing security concerns, AIL will host the Institute at its offices in Kabul and participants will be housed at a nearby hotel with only a short distance to travel in order to reach AIL's offices. This is an important consideration as women in Afghanistan continue to face safety concerns when they travel outside their homes.

Information and Communication Technology Capacity-Building Program

WLP's information and communication technology (ICT) capacity-building program enables women and girls in the Global South to increase their access to knowledge and information on rights, democracy, and leadership, and to become more involved in civil society building in their communities and nations.

Herat eLearning Center

WLP and AIL launched the Herat eLearning Center in 2003 to provide Afghan women, and young girls and boys, with computer training, Internet literacy courses, vocational skills-building, and women's leadership and human rights education programs. These programs will enable them to increase their self-confidence, establish or strengthen micro-enterprise businesses, secure jobs, improve their family's well-being, and participate in the economic and socio-political development of Herat.

The majority of those who use the Herat Center are women; and the rest are young girls and boys from local schools. During this reporting period, AIL conducted several computer training courses at the Center with girls and boys from local high schools and women from local NGOs



in Herat. The training courses are designed to help participants become proficient at using Windows, Word, and Excel software programs and to teach them about the many uses of the Internet. The facilitators of these courses are graduates of the first technology training of trainers workshop that was held in September 2003 (for details see the section below). There is a waiting list for those who wish to take part in the training courses, and AIL continues to expand the number of technology trainers to increase the number of computer courses it can provide.

The Center continues to have a very positive impact on the community in Herat and there is growing enthusiasm for the programs it provides. In addition to technology educational programs, the Center has become a stable resource for a community with restricted access to even basic information and communication technologies. AIL is working with select trainers to develop programs that focus on vocational skill-building and women's leadership and human rights education.

Technology Training and Capacity-Building

In 2003 WLP and AIL implemented a technology training of trainers workshop at the Herat eLearning Center for 24 women and men, including representatives of local NGOs, community activists, and AIL program officers. The workshop took place from September 18-October 2, 2003 and was designed to provide training to participants with varying levels of computer skills and experience. Two women trainers from the Datamation Foundation in New Delhi, India,

facilitated the workshop. Women trainers with experience in providing gender-based technology trainings were specifically chosen because of the rules set down at the time by the governor of Herat, Ismail Khan, that only women are allowed to provide training to women.

WLP worked with the trainers over email to refine the schedule and curriculum to be used during the training workshop and to adapt the materials to the technology training needs of Afghan women. Sakena Yacoobi of AIL was instrumental in providing the trainers with onsite guidance regarding the needs of the Herat participants prior to commencing the workshop. Since participants were unable to complete the needs assessment questionnaire distributed in advance of the workshop, the training began with facilitators evaluating participants' training needs and ascertaining their computer skills and experience.

Based on the identified training needs, facilitators divided participants into two groups and adapted the lesson plans to meet the needs of each group. Participants with very little technological experience received training in basic computer skills, primarily focused on computer setup and operation, the use of various operating systems, basic word-processing, and an introduction to web-browsing. Those with greater technological skills received instruction in advanced word-processing, spreadsheets, file sharing tools, discussion boards, listservs, and basic web-based research on women's human rights and health education.

In evaluating the workshop, participants expressed appreciation that the training had been adapted to accommodate the different levels of experience. Many are eager to receive additional training in areas such as website development, database management, and administrative and secretarial skills training. Workshop participants are encouraged to work with other women and men who come to the Herat Center and share with them the training and skills gained.

WLP and AIL are developing plans for the implementation and focus of the second technology training and capacity-building workshop, and discussing the development of an information technology curriculum that can be tested in the next workshop, which will take place in Spring 2004. The technology workshop will include representatives from local NGOs and AIL staff.

Multilingual Websites

WLP's user-friendly websites in Arabic and English, produced by and for women from the Global South, are cyber resource and exchange centers that provide culture-, language-, and community-relevant content pertaining to women's leadership, political participation, human rights, and development issues, with a particular focus on Muslim women. The websites promote multimedia communication and facilitate South-South and South-North with a particular emphasis on women's leadership, political participation, human rights, peace, and development. In 2003 the websites received over 3.8 million hits.

WLP's websites were accessed from over 80 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Web statistics indicate a continued increase in the number of visitors to the websites from Muslim countries and there was a marked growth in those accessing the websites from Asia, Europe, and Latin America. The most popular sections of the websites were those that provide

facts on women's political participation and economic leadership, comparative charts on family laws in Muslim societies, and information about culture-specific leadership curricula. Those who access WLP's websites consistently are NGOs, academic institutions, government agencies, and funders. Visitors from Bahrain, Indonesia, Israel/Palestine, Kenya, Malaysia, Qatar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Syria, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates rank among the top 20 countries accessing the websites during 2003.

Over the past year WLP has been developing the content for its French website, which will be launched in Summer 2004. All the material for the website has been translated and the designing process is nearing completion. Material that will be featured on the French website include, among others, information about WLP's leadership project and multimedia curricula, 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, and news items and alerts relating to the promotion of gender equity in the Global South.

WLP has received many positive responses regarding its website from individuals and organizations worldwide, including the following comment from Dr. Myra Torres, Associate Director, Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program at Texas A&M University-Kingsville: "We are celebrating Women's History Month here at Texas A&M University and I am in charge of putting together a panel to discuss leadership and women. I have a lot of female students that need empowerment and encouragement. I was browsing your site to see if there was any information that would help me. There was, and your site has now become one of my "favorite" sites where I can get up to date information on women's leadership issues. Thank you!"

Events and Outreach

WLP raises awareness of, and mobilizes support for, women's human rights, cultures of peace, women's empowerment and development, and the importance of women's full participation in civil society. Through conferences, symposia, virtual meetings, and South-North and South-South dialogues, WLP mobilizes a broad network of international women leaders, grassroots and human rights activists, academic institutions, human rights organizations, and individual activists around the world in order to promote tolerance, gender equality, social justice, democracy, peace, and human rights.

WLP organized several events during 2003, among them the annual women's human rights and literature reading and an international human security conference. WLP also collaborated on, and took part in, numerous public events both nationally and internationally.

Women's Human Rights Poetry and Literature Series

On March 6, 2003, in celebration of International Women's Day, WLP convened the fifth annual human rights event entitled *Life Lines: The Literature of Women's Human Rights* which seeks to raise public awareness about human rights conditions through women's writings. The event brought together four outstanding international women poets and writers including Nathalie Handel (Palestine/US), poet and activist; Azar Nafisi (Iran), Director of the SAIS Dialogue Project at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies and best-selling author of *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir In Books*; Sonia Sanchez (US), poet and activist (due to illness, Ms. Sanchez's work was read by Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon); and the late Reetika Vazirani (India/US), former Writer-in-Residence at the College of William & Mary. Common themes that emerged during the event included the impact of war, racism, immigration, and exile on women's lives. The authors also celebrated each individual's role in creating a just, equitable, and peaceful world for all. The discussion is available for online access at www.learningpartnership.org/WLP/events/lifelines.



WLP Human Security Conference

On October 8-9, 2003, more than 250 activists, academics, policy-makers, and NGO leaders from over 20 countries gathered at WLP's human security conference *Clash or Consensus: Gender and Human Security in a Globalized World*. Organized in collaboration with the Global Fund for Women, the conference provided a forum for women leaders and human security experts from the Global South— particularly from Muslim societies— to explore ways to discuss and define human security goals and challenges from a perspective that is people-centered.



WLP's conference advanced the debate on the new vision of human security by (a) analyzing human security issues from a gender perspective, and (b) exploring ways to implement human security goals including conflict prevention, sustainable development, gender equity, and strong civil societies that promote democratic processes. Panel discussions and strategy sessions provided an opportunity for participants to identify the conditions under which citizens can live in safety, peace and dignity,

exercise their fundamental right to health, education and well-being, exert the freedom to choose, and participate fully in governance.

More information about the conference, and audio recordings of conference panels, can be accessed at <http://www.learningpartnership.org/events/2003/clashorconsensus/>. A full report of WLP's human security conference is included as Appendix F.

Public Events

During 2003, WLP collaborated on symposia, panels, and meetings with such leading institutions and organizations as the Center for Women's Global Leadership, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, the Ethical Globalization Initiative (EGI), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 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.

March 12-13 WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami took part in a meeting of the Advisory Board of the Ethical Globalization Initiative at the Aspen Institute's Wye River Conference Center in Maryland. Participants included Peter Eigen, Chairman of Transparency International; Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General of CIVICUS; Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, UN Independent Expert on Violence against Children; and Mary Robinson, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Participants discussed ways that human rights principles and human security concerns can be integrated into national and international policy making. The Board framed their discussion around issues of culture and diversity, migration, and HIV/AIDS.

March 27 WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami gave a lecture at Rockford College, Illinois on the topic of women in the Muslim world which was attended by almost 1,000 academics, professors, and students. She discussed women's contribution to the development of civil society and the realization of democratic values.

April 8 WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami gave a keynote address at the opening plenary of the Children's Defense Fund's 2003 National Conference attended by more than 2,000 activists, leaders, and policy makers. She spoke about the connection between the struggle for women's rights and the well-being of children.

- April 17 WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami and WLP Program Advisor Suheir Azzouni took part in the World Bank’s training program on “Gender Mainstreaming and Analysis in Development Plans and Projects.” Ms. Afkhami addressed World Bank directors and senior staff regarding the status of women in Muslim societies and the challenges and potential for positive change. Ms. Azzouni conducted a training on gender and women’s leadership in which the primary curriculum included *Leading to Choices*.
- May 22 WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami was a panelist at a symposium entitled “Women’s Liberation: Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran” at the Washington Press Club. The event was organized by the Independent Women’s Forum and the other panelists included Rend Rahim Francke, Executive Director of the Iraq Foundation (currently US Representative of the Iraqi Governing Council), and Paula Dobriansky, Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs.
- July 10-13 WLP Research and Technology Director, Rakhee Goyal, and WLP International Advisory Council member, Nancy Flowers, conducted a two-day leadership training workshop for high school educators from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and from Hispanic, African-American, and Native-American communities in the US. Conducted in collaboration with St. Mary’s College Center for Women’s Intercultural Leadership, the training was based on WLP’s *Leading to Choices* curriculum.
- July 22 WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami gave a talk on “Globalization, Information Technology, and the Human in Development” at the Vail Symposium in Vail, Colorado. The Vail Symposium is a lecture series that features internationally recognized professionals, politicians, journalists and professors who speak about issues of current global and national concern. Approximately 100 people attended the event.
- July 23-24 WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami took part in the Ethical Globalization Initiative’s Human Rights Policy Action Group Meeting in Aspen, Colorado. Participants included Robert Archer, Director of the International Council on Human Rights Policy; Lloyd Axworthy, Director & CEO of the Liu Institute for Global Issues; Francis Deng, UN Special Representative on Internally Displaced Persons; and Mary Robinson, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, among others. Discussions focused on the importance of integrating human security issues such as human rights, health and education, culture and diversity, sustainable development, and democracy-building.
- August 14 WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami participated in a meeting of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, hosted by Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian, Director of the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University. The Advisory Group was mandated by the US Congress to

study and provide recommendations for improving the efficacy of US public policy initiatives in Muslim societies. Ms. Afkhami gave a presentation that focused on Iran and the use of media to enhance the image of the US in the Muslim world.

- October 16 WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami gave a talk at Ohio State University entitled “Religion, Culture, and Identity: Future Trends in International Gender Equality Work.” Over 200 faculty, students, and other members of the academic community attended the event.
- Nov. 2-6 WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami took part in the Ethical Globalization Initiative’s 2004 Planning Meeting held in Bellagio, Italy. Ms. Afkhami led discussions that focused on EGI’s work with women leaders and policy makers.
- Nov. 17-20 WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami took part in an “International Strategic Directions Consultation” to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights. The event was convened by the Center for Women’s Global Leadership and brought together international women leaders to discuss the interrelation between women’s human rights, violence against women, militarism, fundamentalisms, globalization, development, and human security.
- Nov. 20-21 WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami took part in an international policy and expert group meeting hosted by the United Nations Population Fund and The Aspen Institute which focused on “Religion, Culture and a Human Rights-Based Approach to Population, Reproductive Health and Gender Equality.”
- December 4 WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami took part in a forum hosted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations entitled “The Future of Iran and U.S.-Iran Relations.” Ms. Afkhami focused her remarks on women’s rights, human rights, and social and political reforms in Iran.

WLP also conducts extensive outreach with national and international policy makers to raise awareness about issues relating to women’s empowerment, including the importance of their full participation in civil society and the use of technology for advocacy and democratization.

During 2003, WLP’s President Mahnaz Afkhami took part in a briefing by Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky about the situation of women in Afghanistan and held a brief discussion with Habiba Sarabi, Minister of Women’s Affairs in Afghanistan, who spoke at the briefing. WLP’s President met with Vivienne Taylor of the UN Commission on Human Security to discuss WLP’s efforts to promote human security. Ms. Afkhami also met with Elizabeth Cheney, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, to discuss women’s human rights and democracy-building strategies in Muslim societies.

At a private event hosted by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, WLP's President met with the recently appointed Yemeni Minister of Human Rights, Amatalaeem Al-Suswah, who is the highest-ranking woman in Yemen's government and the only female cabinet member. While taking part in WLP's Middle East Regional Institute for Women's Leadership, WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami met with Her Royal Highness Queen Rania of Jordan to discuss the work of the Arab Women's Summit and future opportunities for collaboration on women's rights, democracy, and leadership in Muslim societies. Ms. Afkhami also met with Princess Basma of Jordan to discuss women's and children's rights in the Arab world.

Online e-Newsletter

As part of its outreach program WLP issues a quarterly online e-newsletter is a mobilization and advocacy tool that informs and updates the WLP network about the activities of partner organizations and WLP programs and events.

During 2003 WLP published four issues of the e-newsletter that included articles analyzing leadership training workshops implemented by WLP partner organizations in which participants used the *Leading to Choices* curriculum to help develop strategies for addressing the numerous challenges women face in making personal decisions in their families and achieving leadership positions in their communities. The newsletters highlighted appointments and awards received by women's human rights and democracy activists involved in WLP's network, and featured articles that addressed advocacy and civil-society building efforts by WLP's partner organizations. The newsletters also included information about WLP events such as conferences and symposia; and publication announcements for WLP's culture-specific leadership training materials. Over 5,000 individuals and organizations received the e-newsletter, issued quarterly to WLP's network of human rights organizations, women's groups, academic institutions, and individual activists around the world.

Media Activities

WLP's media program emphasizes the importance of reaching out to mainstream media and raising awareness of issues traditionally neglected by the media, such as women's empowerment and equity in developing countries, and the importance of women's full participation in civil society. In addition to other outreach activities, WLP President Mahnaz Afkhami held interviews with numerous media outlets.

During 2003, WLP's President was interviewed by **BBC Radio 4** about the history of the Iranian revolution and the future of women's political participation in Iran. Ms. Afkhami took part in *Super Power: Global Affairs Television* several times, where she discussed women's rights in Muslim societies and democratic development in Iran. Ms. Afkhami also took part in the TV program "**Think Tank with Ben Wattenberg**" where she spoke about US policy toward Iran and current social movements in Iran.

WLP's President was interviewed by Nazi Azima of **Radio Liberty** to discuss WLP's Middle East Regional Roaming Institute for Women's Leadership, convened in Jordan from December 9-15, 2003. Ms. Afkhami took part in **National Public Radio's** (NPR's) talk show "To The Point" where she discussed the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Shirin Ebadi, women's rights and democracy in Muslim societies, and US-Iran relations. Ms. Afkhami was interviewed by **Radio Farda** about women's political participation in the Global South, and by Ms. Safari of **Sedaye Iran Radio** about women's roles in decision-making processes in the Muslim world. Ms. Afkhami also took part in NPR's "The Koyo Nnamdi Show," where she discussed democracy and the development of civil society in Iran.

Ms. Afkhami was interviewed by Mr. Sajadi of Radio Liberty about issues related to International Day Against Violence Against Women. While traveling in the Middle East, Ms. Afkhami was interviewed by *The Daily Star*, one of Lebanon's leading newspapers, about the innovative concepts of leadership and empowerment found in WLP's handbook *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women*. Furthermore, *The Daily Star* also featured an article about the leadership training workshop conducted by WLP's partner organization MACMAG GLIP with Palestinian refugee youth.