

2006 Annual Report



Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and
Peace

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I. Executive Summary

The goal of the Women's Learning Partnership (WLP) is to empower women and girls in the Global South, particularly in Muslim-majority societies, and to strengthen their capacity to take on leadership roles in household, community, national, and international decision-making in order to advance their human rights and achieve economic and political justice, peace, and equity.

There are many hopeful signs that women are achieving greater equality and justice throughout the world. There is unprecedented awareness globally of the importance of the full participation of women in decision-making and there is agreement that neither sustainable development nor creation of equal and just societies will be possible without women's full involvement in the process. The level of education of women at the grassroots level has increased. More women leaders are elected to top political positions, among them Michelle Bachelet in Chile, Angela Merkel in Germany, and Africa's first woman president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, in Liberia. In addition, legal reform in some societies has improved the more egregious breaches of women's rights. In October, a new law in India took effect protecting women from domestic violence. Georgia and Zimbabwe also enacted legislation against domestic violence. In Nepal, the Supreme Court ruled against a law that allowed men to divorce their infertile wives. The court also banned the selling of daughters as indentured laborers. In Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), women were granted suffrage, and one woman won a seat in UAE's Federal National Council.

Despite these positive developments, many impediments to equality persist. Seventy percent of the almost one billion illiterate people in the world are female. In 2006, Nicaragua banned all abortions, even if the life of the mother is in danger. In Iraq, women's rights suffered a setback. The new constitution undermines rights guaranteed under the previous constitution. In Darfur, sexual and other violence as a result of conflict continuously erode women's rights.

WLP seeks to strengthen women's agency worldwide by empowering them to re-imagine and re-structure their roles in their families, communities, and societies towards becoming leaders and participants in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. In order to help create a critical mass of women working towards justice, equality, and peace, WLP trains women at the grassroots level in a new style of leadership, one that is participatory, inclusive, and dialogue-based. In

WLP's Goals:

- To build more vibrant and effective partnerships supported by a structure based on shared values, trust, accountability, effective leadership and management, and a shared identity.
- Increase the number of women taking leadership and decision-making roles at the family, community, and national levels, and to improve the effectiveness of civil society by strengthening the organizational capacities of partner organizations and enhancing their ability to fortify feminist movements in Muslim-majority societies and globally.
- Develop and sustain a secure financial foundation for WLP International and to support partner organizations in doing the same. Maintain a lean organization with increased efficiency that excels in all aspects of institutional capacity in order to fulfill our mission and achieve our goals.

cooperation with partners in 18 countries, WLP has trained thousands of women – teachers, students, politicians, journalists, housewives, and activists, among others – with the knowledge and skills to become more involved in political, educational, and economic decision-making at all levels.

WLP's programs employ strategies that bridge religion, culture, and tradition with concepts of international human rights to empower women and girls and increase the number of females in leadership roles. To minimize the risks inherent in the implementation of women's empowerment projects, WLP works with credible partners rooted in their cultures and communities. These partners co-create nuanced, culturally-relevant curriculum and organize workshops which are always implemented through representatives closest to the communities in which they work. Moreover, by promoting cooperation, communication, and power-sharing leadership arrangements, and through encouraging a culture of inclusiveness, justice, and tolerance, WLP and its partners help transform institutions in ways that better serve the needs not only of women and girls but of all members of society.

In 2006, WLP conducted over 40 **leadership training workshops** in developing countries for over 1,400 activists, academics, journalists, students, politicians, and rural women who gained communication, facilitation, advocacy, negotiation, and networking skills in order to transform their families, communities, and nations. We convened two National Institutes in **Morocco** and one National Institute in **Mauritania** in order to build stronger networks of women's rights activists to advocate more effectively and engage in collective action. We also trained over 100 participants in **Afghanistan, Cameroon, Jordan, Palestine, and Zimbabwe** in information technology in order to improve their education and employment prospects and gain access to the world of online information in order to strengthen their advocacy efforts for gender equality. We launched the **Young Women's Learning Partnership (YWLP)** initiative to develop the leadership skills and capacity of young girls between 12-17 years of age.

WLP developed a Five-Year Sustainability Plan and a Three-Year Operational Plan. WLP partners in **Nigeria, Palestine, and Turkey** also developed multiyear organizational plans.

WLP launched an **international campaign**, *Claiming Equal Citizenship: The Campaign for Arab Women's Right to Nationality*, in order to raise awareness of discriminatory laws that deny women equal nationality rights and undermine women's status as equal citizens in their home countries.

We produced a 28-minute **documentary**, *Against All Odds: Women Partnering for Change in a Time of Crisis*, which relates the experiences of WLP partners and their strategies for overcoming challenges to their work resulting from war, conflict, and growth of fundamentalism, among other obstacles.

WLP convened an annual **Transnational Partners Meeting** in order to deepen solidarity among partners; share experiences and exchange views on best practices under crisis; examine potentially positive developments and ways and means of supporting one another; reflect on the strategic use of existing resources, linkages and networks that sustain our work; and identify new resources, methods, and strategies that will strengthen and expand our work, especially under difficult conditions.

We launched a new **website** in order to increase visibility, expand outreach, and strengthen the identity of the Partnership.

WLP published the **Portuguese edition** of *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women*, its 17th culture-specific training manual. WLP's manuals are used to carry out high quality leadership training that is locally-appropriate and culturally-specific and therefore has a more powerful impact because the material speaks to participants' own experiences. We widely **publicized** *Guide to Equality in the Family in the Maghreb*, an advocacy tool for reform of family law, with activist and academic audiences in order to contribute to the growth of South-South and South-North informational exchange and to raise awareness about knowledge production in the Global South.

II. Building a vibrant and effective partnership

WLP's most significant accomplishment since our founding is the establishment of a unique partnership model that allows for a geometric increase in the human and

WLP's partner in Nigeria, BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, suggested that in order to ensure consistent branding of the Partnership, all partners should identify themselves as WLP national or regional.

material resources available to partner organizations, maximum use of shared learning across regions, and increased impact of our collective networking and solidarity building capabilities. There is unprecedented close and ongoing communication and exchange between partner organizations in four regions of the world—communication and exchange that is based on mutual respect and reciprocity. WLP strengthens the Partnership by strengthening the

evaluation, fundraising, technology, advocacy, communication, and institutional capacity of our partners in 18 countries and by helping to bolster their effectiveness at the national, regional, and international levels.

The impacts of a strong Partnership are manifest in the strong sense of identity and solidarity, shared vision, and close cooperation that exists between partners. This enables WLP to communicate more powerfully to stakeholders, increases our visibility, and helps us to more effectively mobilize resources.

The activities below demonstrate the ways in which WLP made progress toward building a vibrant and effective partnership.

Transnational Partners Meeting

WLP convened its annual **Partners Meeting** in Washington, DC from September 2 – 6 bringing together women activists from 15 countries in order to deepen solidarity among partners; share experiences and exchange views on best practices under challenging conditions; examine potentially positive developments and ways and means of supporting one another; reflect on the strategic use of existing resources, linkages and networks that sustain our work; and identify new resources, methods, and strategies to strengthen and expand our work.



WLP partners also conducted a two-session meeting in Istanbul, Turkey on April 1st, just prior to the Fourth Assembly of the World Movement for Democracy. New and prospective partners attended an orientation session where they were introduced to the concept and workings of the Partnership, the

methodology of the leadership training curriculum, and WLP programs. Participants included WLP International, regional and

“Sharing our rich experiences, outlook, and future hopes was invigorating and infectious.” Odilia Kukah, Cameroon at the 2006 Partners Meeting

national partners from **Egypt, Mauritania, and Turkey** as well as prospective partners from Iraq and Yemen. Executive Director of WLP Jordan, Lina Quora, co-facilitated the meeting and shared her experience of implementing WLP programs at the grassroots. The orientation session provided partners and prospective partners with the opportunity to get to know each other's priorities and to address issues of concern in the early stages of exploring possible collaborations.

ICTs

Our work requires regular and sometimes daily interaction with partner organizations, and information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as email, Internet, and telephone are the primary means of communication. Not only are ICTs important in maintaining linkages within the Partnership, they are vital in disseminating our message to the world public.

WLP launched a new website (see Appendix A for excerpts) in March 2006 at www.learningpartnership.org in order to increase the marketing, communication, and technology capacity of partners, many of whom do not have their own websites. The website makes partners more visible to funders and donors and provides a platform for increasing awareness of the scope of their work. We are nearing completion of the translation of the **website into French** and development of open source, multi-lingual content management system capabilities, the first step in creating an open source web portal in **Arabic**.



WLP conducted an **ICT Needs Assessment** among partners to examine priorities in hardware, software, training, and online presence, as well as to identify longer-term visions for technology-supported programs. Results from the needs assessment survey were shared at the September Partners Meeting and helped establish Partnership-wide priorities as well as in-country priorities for ICT programs.

WLP created an **Intranet** for the Partnership to strengthen communication and sharing of documents, information, and knowledge among partners. The Intranet acts as both a repository for activity reports as well as a space for sharing successes and concerns.

WLP launched a **weekly news wire** in November within the Partnership to share current events that impact partners' work, news items that feature partners, and other news clippings relating to women's rights achievements and setbacks.

WLP conducted a **technology capacities review and upgraded campaign coordination and online advocacy** capabilities of the Partnership. After implementation was complete and WLP started using these tools, we gathered and

analyzed data in order to benchmark performance metrics. Many of the more manual and cumbersome processes were automated to reduce staff time and manual intervention. This resulted in productivity gains, strengthening organizational capacity. Another major benefit of the technology upgrade was the growth of WLP's supporters. The email list size at the beginning of the review was 10,647 and the list size at the end of the review period was 11,188, a 5.1% growth rate in 4 months.

WLP supported partners in Afghanistan and Cameroon through the initial stages of developing IT Center sustainability plans. We engaged in numerous discussions with WLP **Cameroon**, Community Education and Development Services, regarding ways to increase the professionalization of computer services and to generate revenue to sustain the IT Center. WLP **Afghanistan**, Afghan Institute of Learning, held a meeting to discuss the development of its IT Center sustainability plan.

Organizational Needs Assessment

In order to build a vibrant and effective Partnership, each individual partner organization must be sustainable. At the September Transnational Partners Meeting, WLP International and partners in Palestine and Turkey shared their experiences



conducting organizational needs assessments and developing sustainability plans. (See Appendix B for sustainability plans from partners in Palestine and Turkey). These experiences serve as prototypes that partners can replicate as they devise their own tailored sustainability plans. At the meeting, all partners engaged in a needs assessment of their own organizations. They deliberated upon and shared with the group the added value of the work of their organization in the national and international context. They described their vision for the organization in 3-5 years, and discussed the resources and capacities they would need to arrive at their goal.

In winter 2006, WLP **Nigeria**, BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, decided in its annual organizational assessment to develop for the first-time a multi-year organizational plan. Program Director, Bunmi Dipo-Salami, stated, "The WLP Partner Meeting really helped us plan for our own organizational assessment and think beyond our usual one-year planning phase. Hearing about the experiences of **Palestine, Turkey**, and WLP **International** at the September Transnational Partners Convening helped us to have a focus for our meeting." BAOBAB decided to devise a five-year strategic sustainability plan from 2007-2011.

III. Increasing the number of women taking participatory and inclusive leadership and decision-making roles

In order to achieve gender equality, development, and peace, there needs to be an increase in the number of women taking on leadership and decision-making roles. However, an increase in the number of women leaders, while desirable, is not enough. There needs to be a qualitative change in the practice of leadership. WLP has created a manual, *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women*, that models the kind of qualitative change in leadership – one that is participatory and inclusive rather than competitive and hierarchical – that WLP is trying to achieve. In WLP’s conceptual framework, everyone can be a leader and, at various times, both a leader and a follower. Sharing power and respect for the other is essential for creating group synergy that empowers the individual and mobilizes collective action. This model of participatory leadership provides a powerful means for women to pursue their shared vision of a just world.

WLP’s leadership curriculum, available in 17 culture-specific language editions, is increasingly being used by other organizations such as Vital Voices Global Partnership and grassroots groups in Togo and Sudan to hold community-level trainings. The curriculum is also used for staff development and trainings by international organizations such as Save the Children.

Leading to Choices participatory leadership workshops organized around this concept are dialogue-based and interactive. They help women clarify her own position, understand alternative ways of looking at a given situation, accept differences in outlook and approach, learn how to work toward achieving a shared vision, and respect diversity. This method of learning has proven successful in building self-confidence, honing conflict prevention skills, and creating an atmosphere of tolerance.

Participants move gradually from concepts and methods relevant to individual leadership learning to the concepts and methods focusing on the creation of learning organizations and societies that are interactive, responsive to their constituents, flexible and evolving, and ready to accommodate change.

The impacts of increasing the number of women taking on participatory and inclusive leadership and decision-making roles are visible in the transformations that occurred at the personal, family, community, and national level. Participants advocated more effectively for women’s rights and helped build stronger national and regional networks. They engaged more frequently in political processes and improved their education and employment prospects, especially through IT Training.

WLP’s partner in **Nigeria**, BAOBAB for Women’s Human Rights, has adapted the *Leading to Choices* manual to train Sharia court judges as part of a human rights program, and they are developing a new manual to train police based on the concept and methodology of *Leading to Choices*.

The activities below demonstrate the ways in which WLP has made progress towards helping to increase the number of women taking on participatory and inclusive decision-making roles.

Leading to Choices

WLP's core curriculum is our leadership training manual, *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women*, which is designed to empower women and guide organizational change based on a concept of leadership that is participatory, dialogical, and inclusive. The curriculum is available in 17 culture-specific language editions, created in partnership with grassroots women's organizations. WLP manuals are recognized in the field as important tools for advancing women's leadership and empowerment.



In 2006, WLP published the **Portuguese** edition and prepared the **Turkish** and Bahasa **Indonesian** editions for publication by spring 2007. The manuals will be distributed widely after publication and used in *Leading to Choices* workshops in Brazil, Indonesia, and Turkey. WLP identified a potential partner organization in **Pakistan** to translate, test, and adapt the manual into Urdu, which will be used in India and Pakistan.

Multimedia Curriculum

Leading to Choices: A Multimedia Curriculum for Leadership Learning is an innovative multimedia training package designed to empower women to participate as leaders in the decision-making processes that impact their lives. The package provides interactive, scenario-based activities and illustrative examples of how to create participatory and democratic learning environments, how to implement successful advocacy campaigns, and how to develop compelling messages for target audiences. These materials are used in national and regional Training of Trainers Institutes to build capacity of human rights and democracy activists, educators, women leaders, and facilitators who seek to engage in their own leadership development and increase their constituents' agency for achieving social, economic, and legal rights.

WLP completed the final expert review of the **French** edition of the multimedia curriculum, *Montrer le Chemin: Programme Multimédia d'Entraînement au Leadership*, developed in cooperation with WLP **Morocco**, Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc. This completes the print content adaptation process. The next step involves adapting and finalizing the audiovisual material, which will be completed by summer 2007.

Twenty four women participated in a leadership training workshop in **Jordan** on February 5 – 7, 2006 conducted in cooperation with the Jordan Hashemite Fund. The workshop focused on raising awareness of women's rights and identifying the rights of women within marriage. Participants were equipped with new approaches for communicating with their spouses. They developed action plans for issues on which they could work together including stopping domestic violence and building vocational and health care centers for women. They also created a petition for the Minister of Agriculture to address the lack of pest control that was affecting their crops, the yield, and their livelihoods. They discussed their domestic situations and instances where they had taken the lead in decision-making within their households. They pointed out that leadership in the community requires certain skills and equal opportunities, which are usually available only to men.

WLP commenced final review of the **Arabic** edition of the multimedia curriculum in cooperation with WLP **Lebanon**, Collective for Research and Training on Development-Action. The review will be completed by April 2007, following which the curriculum will be published.

New Manuals

WLP is developing three new manuals designed to increase institutional and organizational capacity on the topics of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), evaluation, and political participation.

WLP completed the first full draft and commenced review of *Digital Voices: Using ICTs for Advocacy*. (See Appendix C for the introductory pages to the manual). The **manual** emphasizes **ICT** uses for women's rights advocacy, and takes a participatory and empowering learning approach that is gender-sensitive, and focuses on fostering sustainable and ongoing self-learning. The manual will initially be tested in trainings at WLP's IT centers in **Afghanistan, Cameroon, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Zimbabwe**.

Partners expressed need for a **political participation manual** to enable women to develop skills to access elected offices at the local and national levels. In **Afghanistan**, alumni of leadership trainings requested more information on alternative governance systems. Alumni in **Cameroon** and **Nigeria** requested training to support their efforts to engage in politics. Based on partners' feedback, WLP is developing a political participation manual that focuses on practical tools and strategies for conducting a campaign, choosing leaders responsibly, and holding leaders accountable, among other topics.



WLP created an **evaluation system and manual**, *Measuring Change: Evaluating the Leading to Choices Leadership Program* (See Appendix D for excerpts from the manual), to measure short-term, medium-term, and long-term impact and leadership transformations taking place at the individual, family, workplace, and

community levels. WLP translated the prototype English manual into Arabic and Persian, and tested the English and Arabic editions in **Jordan, Morocco, and Nigeria**. WLP's partners reported that the manual is an excellent tool to build their capacity for program assessment and emphasized the importance of developing a strong culture of evaluation in their organizations. The manual deepened understanding among workshop facilitators and program coordinators of the short-term and long-term goals of the leadership program. The next steps include

modifying case studies to reflect the partners' test experience, simplifying the terminology and data analysis sections, retesting the manuals, and conducting a Training of Trainers Institute to aid partners in strengthening their evaluation capacity.

Leadership Training Workshops

WLP holds participatory leadership and skills-building trainings in cooperation with 18 partner organizations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, reaching thousands of women each year at the local, national, and regional levels. Participants gain communication, facilitation, advocacy, negotiation, and networking skills in the workshops. They engage in creating a shared vision and develop joint action plans for working cooperatively on projects to advance women's economic, political, social, and legal rights. The trainings include grassroots leadership and ICT workshops, online distance learning courses, and National and Regional Training of Trainers Institutes for women NGO leaders.

In 2006, WLP conducted over 40 leadership training workshops in which nearly 1,500 women and men participated including activists, academics, journalists, students, civil servants, politicians, and rural women. Many of the participants were trained as trainers so they could return to their communities and conduct local trainings. The focus on creating a replicable model through ensuring skills transfer and building local capacity enables WLP to reach more people with limited resources.

Participants in **Turkey** created new initiatives to empower themselves economically. Networks of like-minded activists in **Jordan, Morocco, and Nigeria** were established to mobilize women's rights, human rights, and democracy-building movements. Political participation was encouraged as participants in **Cameroon** and **Mauritania** worked to elect more women leaders who shared their ideals of a just, participatory, and inclusive society. Participants in **Zimbabwe** developed new skills in IT advocacy and nonprofit management. On a personal level, many participants reported an increase in self-confidence, which has led them to make improvements in their personal and professional lives. Others expressed changing views of women's roles in society, indicating that gender norms are slowly shifting. (See Appendix E for a schedule of 2006 trainings and Appendix F for photos from workshops).

Highlights of the Trainings:

- **Increased Self-Confidence**
 - Rawyah,* a 22 year old woman who participated in a workshop in **Palestine** expressed how the workshop benefited her: "I had always felt like a failure. But during the workshop I learned new skills for communicating as well as how to mobilize and network. I found myself becoming more successful. For example, I am a volunteer at a local television station. I never got along with the manager and she

**Names changed to protect participants' identities.*

refused to broadcast my work. But during the workshop I gained self-confidence and improved my ability to communicate. Now I talk to my manager about my ideas without fear. I can hardly believe that she told me she wants to air the last interview I did on the station. I feel so proud of myself.”



- In **Malaysia**, male and female university students participated in a leadership workshop aimed at building a culture of equality between students of different sexes. The students were active members in various organizations on campus. The workshop explored the links between leadership, gender equality, and democracy, to enable young leaders to strengthen their organizations. One female student said, “I now understand how to make the case that women are excluded from many areas of life...this workshop has given me the ideas and the courage to create change.”

- **New Skills**

- **WLP Jordan**, Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan, formed a coalition of twenty civil society organizations and initiated a multi-part workshop to impart skills training in human rights, democracy and civic education, gender mainstreaming, and management. Participants of an IT training workshop learned how to create websites, brochures, and posters, and electronically share pictures in order to mobilize support for women’s rights. They are using these skills in a campaign to combat violence against women.
- At a workshop in Shymkent, **Kazakhstan**, one participant said, “I got an opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge, and to establish new relations. The most interesting topics for me were ‘The creation of a learning organization’ and ‘Developing a plan of action.’ The combination of theory and practice was used skillfully and I liked the role-plays. After this training I shall be more attentive to events that affect



**Names changed to protect participants’ identities.*

me and undoubtedly I shall not be indifferent. I want to apply the acquired knowledge and skills in my work.”

- Students, government officials, and nonprofit organization staff participated in an IT workshop in Herat, **Afghanistan** in which the youngest participant was a 16 year old female student and the oldest was a 57 year old male government official. Such mixed and intergenerational trainings are rare in the western province and in the country in general. The trainees learned basic computer skills such as Windows, Word, Excel, and the Internet. Participants reported that they will use these skills at work and will share with their peers and colleagues the new skills they have gained.

- **Greater Political Participation**

- Workshops were held in Nouadhibou, **Mauritania** to strengthen women’s capacity to take advantage of the 20% quota for women in the November municipal and parliamentary elections. In the last election in 2001, women’s political participation in the region had been almost zero. The workshops therefore opened with discussions



on why women should participate in politics. Participants came to the conclusion that “Islam was favorable to women’s participation [in politics] because men and women are equal.” On the last day of the workshop, participants discussed problems specific to the region such as slavery, and the absence of infrastructure such as roads and hospitals. The women decided on the steps towards solving these problems, including building roads and founding a school of pharmacy. They also described the perfect female candidate for political office: “a courageous woman who can champion issues specific to women, and whose strong spirit is tolerant, intelligent and competent.” (Mauritanian women surpassed the quota and gained 21% of the contested seats.)



- A housewife from Jericho City, Palestine, said, “The training
**Names changed to protect participants’ identities.*”

enabled me to participate in the elections with confidence and conviction. I convinced other women to have a role in Palestinian elections, that their votes are valuable, and that each citizen has a right to vote.”

- **WLP Lebanon**, Collective for Research and Training on Development-Action, conducted a series of workshops on the implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the reservations placed on full implementation of the Convention. Using the methodology and case studies, participants engaged in small group discussions and role-plays to explore how women are empowered to work together towards legislative reforms that lead to full implementation of CEDAW.

- **Creation of New Initiatives**

- Participants of a leadership training workshop in **Turkey** drafted plans to establish a women’s cooperative. Four of the participants were already employed by a bag production cooperative founded by alumni of a WLP leadership training. The founders had encouraged their co-



workers to participate in the WLP training in order to develop the leadership skills they had gained, such as shared decision-making, responsibility, and open communication.

- A participant from **Iran** who attended a Training of Trainers Institute held several leadership and empowerment workshops with indigent women from Pamenar, a poor neighborhood in southern Tehran. She has also held gender sensitivity workshops for students of Allameh University.
- Community members in **Cameroon** developed a plan to start a Women’s Cooperative Association to process vegetables for marketing nationwide and for consumption during seasons of scarcity.
- Women’s rights leaders in **Nicaragua** developed an action plan to launch the Women’s Autonomous Movement, a social movement that supported women candidates in the November elections.

**Names changed to protect participants’ identities.*

Young Women's Learning Partnership

WLP launched the Young Women's Learning Partnership (YWLP) initiative to be coordinated in cooperation with Asma Khader of WLP **Jordan**, Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan. One third of the world's population is below the age of fifteen. In some WLP partner countries, youth comprise as much as 45% of the nation's population. While WLP's programs reach young women between the ages of 18-25, WLP partners expressed the importance and necessity of reaching girls at an earlier age and strengthening their agency to participate in effective decision-making to improve their lives, futures, and societies. The program will be initially implemented in Jordan and Bahrain.

IV. Improving the effectiveness of civil society by enhancing our partners' ability to fortify women's movements

Around the world, women are active in unprecedented numbers, conscious of the need to advance women's rights in their respective countries through solidarity with women in other countries. A spirit of respect and understanding is building up across diverse cultures. WLP engages in a wide range of activities in order to fortify the women's movement. We play a leading role in bringing together women at the grassroots and



grasstops, from activists to heads of state from the Global South and North to formulate ideas, develop frameworks, and shape future-oriented agendas for women's empowerment. We engage in and support multi-year, research-intensive, grassroots-driven advocacy campaigns such as the international campaign on women's citizenship rights in Arab countries.

The outcome of helping to fortify the women's movement is manifest in the coalitions and networks built by the Partnership to engage in collective action. Outcomes are also evident in the growth of South-South and South-North strategies and information exchange facilitated by WLP including through the publication and publicizing of translated books developed by women's groups in the Global South. WLP amplifies the voices of marginalized women by integrating women's rights activists from Muslim-majority countries into international networks. WLP's leadership in networks such as the Global Women's Action Network for Children, Gender at Work, International Women's Democracy Network, Women Leaders Intercultural Forum, and the World Movement for Democracy helps build connections between women's rights activists and other social justice movements.

The activities below highlight the ways in which WLP has made progress toward fortifying the effectiveness of the women's movement.

WLP's partner in **Jordan**, Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan, integrated WLP publications *Leading to Choices*, *Safe and Secure*, and *Claiming Our Rights* into a **Human Rights Education** program targeting school administrators, counselors, and parents. The program aims to integrate human rights issues and participatory leadership into school curriculum.

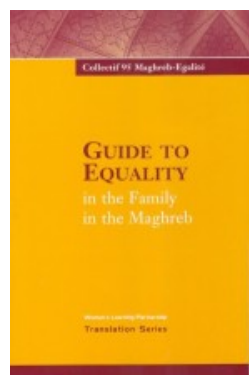
National and Regional Institutes

WLP connects partners from all over the world to build stronger national and regional networks of women's rights activists. In 2006, WLP connected women's groups in neighboring **Morocco** and **Mauritania** that came together to train twenty-

five women leaders from grassroots organizations in a **National Institute** for Women's Leadership and Training of Trainers in Nouakchott from July 8 – 11. Participants learned new skills in decision-making, consensus-building, negotiation, and communicating their shared vision. They expressed feeling more confident to take hold of opportunities accessible to them because of the newly initiated 20% quota for women in the parliamentary and municipal elections. They felt better able to develop and articulate their vision, objective, and strategies. Joint cooperation between Morocco and Mauritania was mutually beneficial. The head of WLP Mauritania, Association des Femmes Chefs de Famille, stated that they learned a great deal from the professionalism and meticulous planning of the Moroccan partners, as well as from hearing about the experiences of the more advanced Moroccan women's rights. WLP Morocco, Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM), in turn noted that there are huge cultural differences between the two neighboring countries and that in their first visit to Mauritania the ADFM facilitators learned much from their strong-willed, spontaneous, and daring neighbors. They expressed the importance of continuing to maintain communication and exchange of experiences.

Translation Series

WLP disseminated and promoted the *Guide to Equality in the Family in the Maghreb* among academia and activists in the Global South and North through WLP's network and distribution channels such as Syracuse University Press and Women, Ink. The first volume in WLP's translation series, the *Guide* outlines a



process that relates meaningful social change to women's capability to make deliberate and thoughtful choices. Family law in Muslim-majority societies governs every aspect of a woman's life - from minimum age and conditions of marriage, to divorce, child custody, and the right to work, travel, or decide on a place of residence. The reform of family law is therefore crucial to women's ability to participate on equal terms in both family life and public life. In each thematic module, the *Guide* presents the current state of the law, then proposes religious, human rights, sociological, and domestic legal arguments for reform, well-supported by relevant data.

WLP brought together partners from Morocco and Malaysia to discuss legislative reform and the strategies outlined in the *Guide*. Zainah Anwar, Executive Director of Sisters in Islam commented that, “The *Guide* has been instrumental in helping us shape a similar document for a new model Muslim Family law in Malaysia, based on the principles of justice, equality and non-discrimination... like the Maghreb Initiative, we intend to turn this into a regional initiative [with Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines].”

Regional Hub

In order to increase WLP's reach beyond countries that compose the Partnership, WLP established a prototype regional hub. WLP Nigeria, BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights became the WLP Africa Regional Hub, through which we will

expand project activities, concepts, strategies, and materials in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. BAOBAB will provide logistical and resource support to new women's organizations that need assistance with capacity building and training and will mentor nascent civic groups. Liberia and Sierra Leone have been identified as initial countries for program expansion.

Claiming Equal Citizenship: The Campaign for Arab Women's Right to Nationality

In September 2006, WLP launched the international component of the campaign, *Claiming Equal Citizenship: The Campaign for Arab Women's Right to Nationality*. The campaign supports a six-country regional campaign to raise awareness of discriminatory laws that deny women equal nationality rights and undermine women's status as equal citizens in their home countries. In almost every country in the Middle East, North Africa, and Gulf regions, women who marry men of other nationalities cannot pass on their original nationality to their husbands or children. Only fathers, not mothers, can confer their nationality to their children. Denial of women's nationality rights means that children and spouses face immigration restrictions, are excluded from social services, have limited access to higher education and employment opportunities, and face barriers to property ownership. The campaign seeks to bring about legal reform enabling women to confer their nationality to their husbands and children without condition, full implementation of reformed nationality laws and equal access to these laws for all women, and recognition of women as equal citizens in all areas of life. WLP created an interactive weblog for the campaign that features personal testimonies of women and their families affected by the discriminatory laws and updates on current campaign activities, among other materials. (See Appendix G for excerpts from the campaign blog.)



Highlights of the campaign:

- **WLP Morocco**, Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc, staged a sit-in to protest the country's nationality laws in December 2006 which helped put pressure on the government to amend the legislation. The following month the government proposed a bill to reform its nationality code to allow Moroccan women married to Muslim non-Moroccan men to pass on their nationality to their children.
- **Kuwait, Oman, and Saudi Arabia** pledged to launch national campaigns after a regional campaign in Bahrain organized by partners in December 2006. The conference helped connect women in the region who strategized about points of collaboration in advocating for their rights to equality.

- WLP **Mauritania**, Association des Femmes Chefs de Familles, launched a nationality campaign in November 2006.
- WLP **Lebanon**, Collective for Research and Training on Development-Action, re-launched their nationality campaign following a brief suspension of campaign activities as a result of the July-August conflict. They kicked off the re-launch of the campaign with a Marathon in Beirut during the last weekend in November.
- WLP **Palestine**, Women's Affairs Technical Committee, integrated the nationality campaign into all aspects of their programs.
- Over three hundred individuals signed the petition, from noted women leaders to women and men at the grassroots level.

Documentary on Strategies for Overcoming Challenges to the Advancement of Women's Rights

WLP produced a 28-minute **documentary**, *Against All Odds: Women Partnering for Change in a Time of Crisis*, which documents WLP partner experiences and strategies for overcoming challenges to their work resulting from war, conflict, and growth of fundamentalism, among other obstacles. They discuss the means to strengthen women's movements and democracy efforts by building alliances, sharing inter-generational experience and expertise, and devising contextual, culture-specific, grassroots-based approaches to empowering women and girls. The video features WLP partners from **Afghanistan, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, and Nigeria**. The video was shown at a series of events including the Association of Middle East Women's Studies professors at their annual meeting during the Middle East Studies Association November 18th meeting. The video was distributed to policy makers and civil society leaders in the US and internationally and given to over fifty civil society groups and universities.



Awards and Recognitions

A number of WLP partners and board members were recognized over the year for their contributions to the advancement of women's rights. Among them are the following:

- ❖ Asma Khader of WLP **Jordan**, Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan, was appointed Secretary General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW). JNCW works to promote women's issues and increase their full participation in public life. Ms. Khader is a well-know advocate of women's rights and has headed voluntary councils and women's committees at the national and regional levels. She is a member of the executive committee of the National Council for Family Affairs, and has contributed to programs and activities of the JNCW as a member of its legal team.

- ❖ WLP Board Chair, Jacqueline Pitanguy, who was named President of the **Brazil Human Rights Fund**. Established with support from the Ford Foundation, the fund will support human rights work in local communities throughout the country.
- ❖ WLP **Mauritania**, Association des Femmes Chefs de Famille (AFCF), won the French Republic's Human Rights Prize, awarded to organizations that contribute to the social and civic empowerment of women. Aminetou mint El Mokhtar, AFCF Director, accepted the award in Paris on December 14th.
- ❖ Sakena Yacoobi, Executive Director of WLP **Afghanistan**, Afghan Institute of Learning, was inducted into the Ashoka Global Fellowship program, a global association of over 2,000 leading social entrepreneurs. Ms. Yacoobi is the first Afghan to become an Ashoka Fellow.

Networks

WLP raises awareness of the work of women's rights activists from the Global South by taking part in networks, meetings, conferences, panels, and international debates on women's human rights. (See Appendix H for more information on networks co-convened by WLP.)

In 2006, WLP co-convened the launch of the **Women Leaders Intercultural Forum** (WLIF) in New York from September 24 – 26. WLIF aims to achieve a paradigm shift in policy discussions on global and national security by building an integrated approach that treats human security and state security as interactive and reinforcing components. This initiative provides a forum in which to bring the concerns of grassroots women organizations to the attention of prominent women leaders. Among those in attendance were Kim Campbell, the former Prime Minister of Canada; H.E. Sheikha Haya Rasheed Al Khalifa, the President of the UN General Assembly; and well-known activist and playwright, Eve Ensler.

WLP also co-convened the **Global Women's Action Network for Children** (GWANC). In June 2006, women leaders from around the world, including Nobel laureates, heads of state, philanthropic leaders, and advocates for women and girls, joined together to address the crucial issues of girls' education and maternal mortality. The three-day conference by the Dead Sea in Jordan marked the launch of the GWANC, an alliance of high-profile women leaders committed to supporting programs for women and girls and to building a powerful global voice for women and children that will impact national and international policy arenas.

WLP President, Mahnaz Afkhami, participated in a series of consultations with fellow members of the board of



Gender at Work, a knowledge and capacity-building network working on gender and institutional development. Afkhami advised on the creation of a global advisory committee of prominent individuals to support the organization's promotion, fundraising, and networking needs. As one of the founders of Gender at Work, WLP will continue to help strengthen Gender at Work's institutional capacity and networking capabilities.

WLP convened the second general meeting of the **International Women's Democracy Network (IWDN)**, housed at WLP. The IWDN supports and enhances women's roles and agency in the development of democratic practices and institutions at the community, national, and international levels. The Network met at the Fourth Assembly of the World Movement for Democracy in April to identify existing international or regional networks that could be brought into the network and to exchange ideas about future directions, potential resources, and activities. In 2006, WLP helped to formulate IWDN's vision, objectives, and structure as well as a work plan of activities for the following year. We established the secretariat, appointed a program coordinator, and set up a web page of information as a first step in building an online resource center.

WLP organized the women and governance plenary session, "Empowering Women to Fulfill their Roles in a Democratic Society" at the **Fourth Assembly of the World Movement for Democracy**, the first time a panel on women's issues was held at the plenary level. In addition to organizing the plenary, WLP Executive Director, Rakhee Goyal, Sakena Yacoobi of WLP **Afghanistan**, Afghan Institute of Learning, Lina Quora of WLP **Jordan**, Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan, Amina Lemrini of WLP **Morocco**, Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc, and Sindi Medar-Gould of WLP **Nigeria**, BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, participated in "Barriers and Breakthroughs Using Technology to Empower Women's Participation." Malena de Montis of WLP **Nicaragua**, Center for Democratic Participation, presented at the session, "Political Parties and Women's Political Participation." WLP **India**, Center for Organization Research and Education, organized and facilitated a workshop on "How to Incorporate Minorities in Multi-Ethnic, Religiously Diverse Societies?"



Panel Discussions and Speaking Events

Some highlights include:

- WLP President, Mahnaz Afkhami, joined fellow democracy experts to present a panel discussion entitled "Women and Democracy" at a Tufts University conference entitled

Democratizing the Middle East? from January 26 – 27. Panelists compared the political rights held by women around the world, gave historical explanations for the variation in levels of women’s political participation, and examined how women’s political rights affect the development of their societies. The conference, convened by the Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, provided an opportunity for students, faculty, and policy makers to explore current US policies and the dilemma it presents in the struggle to bolster freedom and democracy in the Middle East.

- On February 23rd, WLP President, Mahnaz Afkhami attended Oxfam-Novib's expert meeting on transformational leadership, one of a series of special events held for Novib's 50th anniversary in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Director General of Novib Sylvia Borren called the meeting to discuss how transformational leadership can contribute to the building of deeper democracies. Borren interviewed WLP President, Mahnaz Afkhami, about her experience as a transformative woman leader.
- Lina Quora, Executive Director of WLP **Jordan**, Sisterhood is Global Institute/Jordan, participated in a week long Strategic Leadership Conversation, culminating in a panel discussion at the Center for Women’s Global Leadership event entitled “Women’s Human Rights in a Globalized World of States” on October 26th. The panel provided an international perspective on the history and future of women’s human rights, leadership, and activism. Rutgers University professors, students, and women’s rights activists were in attendance. WLP’s manual, *Leading to Choices*, was cited as a unique resource on women’s leadership.
- WLP **Egypt**, Forum for Women in Development, WLP **Lebanon**, Collective for Research and Training on Development-Action (CRTD-A), and WLP **International** participated in an international conference, “Money and Movements,” convened by the Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID) from November 8 – 11 in Queretaro, Mexico. Lina Abou-Habib, Executive Director of CRTD-A, spoke at the opening plenary session and Rakhee Goyal, Executive Director of WLP International, spoke at the closing plenary session. Lina Abou-Habib discussed recent trends and opportunities and key challenges faced by the women’s movements to build collective power, with a focus on Lebanon. Rakhee Goyal discussed WLP’s evaluation methodologies and best practices to measure the impact of women’s rights

programs, focusing on the Partnership's evaluation system for the leadership training program.

- WLP President, Mahnaz Afkhami, participated with a select group of women's human rights experts in a brainstorming session for Salzburg Seminar, an organization working to pioneer means to bring about social justice. Held on December 13th in Washington, DC, the meeting participants advised Salzburg Seminar on the framing of a women's initiative that will help advance a global agenda for women's gender equality.

In July and August, WLP sent out several human rights alerts concerning the effects of the conflict in Lebanon on women and children and the response of our partner, WLP Lebanon, Collective for Research and Training on Development-Action (CRTD-A), to the tragedy. CRTD-A mobilized their strong network of past participants in leadership and IT trainings to prepare women to take on leadership roles during the relief and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. In order to aid their efforts, WLP launched a joint appeal with CRTD-A to assist women and children by providing emergency relief kits. CRTD-A was successful in raising \$62,500 for 1,000 women-headed households that were internally displaced during the conflict.

Media and Alerts

The media is an important outreach tool for WLP to raise public awareness about women's rights and contribute to the public's understanding of gender discrimination and women's empowerment. In 2006, WLP published three editions of its enewsletter, which reached 10,000 NGO leaders and grassroots activists around the world. WLP sent out several human rights alerts regarding the violent crackdown on women's rights protests in Iran on March 8 and June 12 and the humanitarian emergency in Lebanon. (See Appendix I for alerts). WLP was featured or interviewed for six radio stations, one live web cast, television programs and online magazines, and over forty articles were printed in newspapers such as *International Herald Tribune*, *Toronto Star*, *The Washington Times*, *Jordan Times*, *Morocco Times*, and Lebanon's *Daily Star*, among others. (See Appendix J for articles).

V. Sustaining and Strengthening WLP

In order to sustain the work of the Partnership in the future, WLP needs to develop a strong foundation for itself and its partners. This foundation must be built through a comprehensive evaluation process that helps us learn and better adapt our programs, a lean and effective organization, and secure funding. WLP spent significant time and resources developing and strengthening its evaluation and planning system. We also developed and managed our Board and staff to create a structure bolstered by experience and expertise to make work manageable and our goals achievable. We developed a multi-year sustainability plan with benchmarks in order to measure our performance and organizational capacity. We are in the process of securing and solidifying our funds and fundraising capacity.

The activities below demonstrate the ways in which WLP has made progress toward sustaining and strengthening WLP and the Partnership.

Five-Year Sustainability Plan and Three-Year Operational Plan

WLP developed a Five-Year Sustainability Plan as well as a Three-Year Operational Plan after extensive consultation with board members, partners, external experts, and staff. The Sustainability Plan outlines WLP's goals and objectives for its four activity areas – Curriculum, Training, Capacity Building, Advocacy and Networking – as well as goals and objectives for fundraising and development, and administration and management of the organization from 2006 – 2010. The Board's April 2006 approval of the plan and the presentation to partners at the September Partners Meeting is the culmination of a two-year consultation process begun at the 2004 Board and Partners meetings. The plans will be evaluated and reviewed annually by members of the Board and Partnership to assess progress against outlined goals. Additionally, the plans and process are being shared with partner organizations as they begin devising their individual organization's sustainability plans.

Organization

In 2006, WLP made changes to its staff, developed its Board, improved its administrative and management systems, and streamlined its marketing and communication plan.

Board:

- Jacqueline Pitanguy, a sociologist, political scientist, and Founder and Director of Brazilian human rights organization, Cidadania, Estudo, Pesquisa, Informação e Ação (Cepia), was elected Chair of the Board.
- Leila Ahmed, Professor of Women's Studies in Religion at Harvard Divinity School joined the WLP Board and long-time board member, Khadija Haq was rotated to the International Advisory Council.
- Fine tuned the selection criteria for new board membership to accommodate the areas of expertise and influence necessary for advancement of WLP's mission.

Staff:

- Initiated new staff training in program management, technology systems, partner relationship development, and financial capacity building.
- Developed new training materials for staff.
- Created and utilized a consultant database of writers, translators, and editors, among others.
- Program Associates, Anne Bwomezi and Anna Workman were replaced by Program Associates Christina Halstead, Siobhan Hayes, and Jill Salmon. Christina Halstead has an MA in International Peace and Conflict Resolution from American University. She has research experience on trauma and psychosocial support for children in armed conflict in East Africa, specifically in Northern Uganda. Siobhan Hayes received her MA in International Education at The George Washington University, where her research focused on gender, intercultural conflict, and multicultural education. She has teaching experience in Thailand and the U.S. Jill Salmon received her MA in International Affairs from Columbia University, where she focused on economic and political development in Africa. Jill was a Fulbright Student Scholar in Senegal where she spent a year creating an adult basic education program for illiterate domestic workers in coordination with a local NGO.

Financial Systems and Management:

- Developed an investment plan to ensure the security and a minimum 5% rate of return on WLP's reserve funds and unrestricted funds.
- Implemented budgeting and expense monitoring processes utilizing software which automates fiscal management processes.
- Hired a part-time bookkeeper.
- Began to train program staff to produce budgets, financial reports, and fundraising documents.

Internal Systems:

- Selected and implemented a technology platform that integrates WLP's email database, online donation processing, and outreach communication messages.
- Developed an intranet for staff for resource and information sharing towards improving organizational efficiency and documenting institutional memory.

Marketing and Communication:

- Implemented measures to raise WLP's presence on cyber-highways through cutting edge tools such as YouTube for video, Odeo for audio, MySpace and TakingITGlobal for youth, Upcoming.org for social change events, and WordPress for blogging.
- Held a series of consultations on marketing, communications, and online fundraising among staff and with an outside expert consultant, and began developing a written Marketing and Communications Plan for 2007.

Evaluation

During 2004-2006, WLP invested considerable resources in strengthening its planning and evaluation systems, both at the organizational and programmatic levels. These processes involved extensive reflection, discussion, and learning about WLP's successes and challenges to date.

Program evaluation

WLP defines success by measuring the impact of our program on the lives of program participants, the work of partner organizations, and the change they effect within their families, workplaces, communities, and societies.

To date, we have evaluated our programs using a variety of strategies:

- Written questionnaires delivered to program participants immediately after leadership or ICT trainings.
- Focus group discussions with groups of former program participants.
- Documentation of ongoing email and phone communication and in-person meetings with partners on the effects of training and capacity building work.
- Consultative analysis of our curriculum by experts in the field, who provide suggestions for amending and adapting our curriculum and training strategies.

Since 2004, WLP has been working to further strengthen and systematize program evaluation systems and to build the evaluation capacity of partner organizations.

WLP supported a two-year pilot evaluation project in cooperation with independent evaluator and Boston College scholar-activist Alexandra Pittman and our Moroccan partner Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc. The goal of the pilot evaluation project was to use the Moroccan experience as a case study to inform our efforts to strengthen evaluation of the impact of participatory leadership training. Ms. Pittman trained a six-member evaluation team and worked with them to complete a two-year evaluation of leadership training in Morocco.

The evaluation followed a quasi-experimental model, in which survey and interview responses of new participants, former participants, and non-participants in *Leading to Choices* leadership workshops were compared. New participants were interviewed and surveyed immediately before and surveyed again immediately after a *Leading to Choices* workshop, in order to assess the workshop's immediate impact. The first stage of surveys and interviews were carried out in April-May 2005 and the second in March-April 2006.

Ms. Pittman's first-year report (see Appendix K) focuses on the immediate impact of participation in a *Leading to Choices* workshop and establishes baseline results for longer-term impact analysis. Highlights of her findings on immediate impact include an increase in participants' identification as a leader from 23% to 80% and a qualitative change in participants' view of leadership towards a participatory

model more attentive to social change goals. Baseline results for longer-term impact also identified a noticeable qualitative difference in past participants' and non-participants' views of leadership. 25.5% of non-participants described leadership in ways consistent with a participatory approach, compared to 59.1% of past participants. While non-participants expressed leadership as having power and responsibility *over* others, past participants focused on working *with* others, emphasizing participation, management, and group action for social change. In addition, past participants used the female pronoun rather than the male or gender neutral pronoun 25% of the time when talking about leadership, compared to 3% for non-participants, indicating a shift towards a more gender inclusive view of leadership. Analysis of data gathered in the second year of the evaluation project is underway, and will focus on the longer-term impact of WLP-ADFM's training program in Morocco.

On the basis of the learning from this project, WLP developed an evaluation manual outlining a common evaluation system for the *Leading to Choices* participatory leadership program. The manual is based on a Theory of Change developed collaboratively by the Partnership (see Appendix L). We plan to measure the short-term impact of *Leading to Choices* training, evaluating anticipated outcomes such as transformation in participants' view of leadership and sense of agency; development of participatory leadership skills; and plans for applying these skills at the family, community, and national levels. We also plan to measure the intermediate impact of *Leading to Choices*, evaluating anticipated outcomes such as the deepening of participants' understanding of the participatory leadership model; more active involvement in decision-making at the family, community, or national levels; mobilizing others to create change; and successful realization of social change goals. In the long-term, we will look at broader changes, such as improving quality of life in participants' communities and the shifting of gender norms.

WLP partners in Jordan and Nigeria have completed pilot tests of the manual and their feedback is being incorporated as we work together to adapt and finalize the evaluation manual for the Partnership. Partners in Afghanistan, Cameroon, Lebanon, Mauritania, and Palestine are in the process of testing the manual and providing their feedback. After testing is completed and the manual finalized, we will convene a Training of Trainers Institute to strengthen the Partnership's capacity to implement evaluation systems appropriate to the institutional and social contexts of each partner organization.

Organizational evaluation

At the organizational level, WLP has worked with partners, board members, advisors, and organizational development consultants over a two-year period to reflect on the future structure and strategic direction of the organization.

In April 2004, WLP presented a Three-Year Institutional Plan (2005-7) to WLP's Board of Directors, who suggested we undertake a full study of the organization's

capacity and sustainability. After discussions at the Transnational Partners Meeting in Beirut, September 2004, partner organizations committed their full support for such a study, including consideration of the Partnership's structure and identity, and WLP established plans to prioritize a review of organizational capacity and sustainability in 2005.

In early 2005, WLP engaged an external consultant from Stratenomics, a consultancy specializing in organizational capacity building, to undertake an organizational review, focusing on WLP's capacity to realize the Three-Year Institutional Plan (2005-7); the sufficiency of WLP's resources for program expansion; and areas of organizational need which had not been fully addressed. Drawing on the findings and recommendations submitted by Stratenomics in April 2005 (see Appendix M), WLP decided to invest in a more in-depth consideration of the future strategic direction of the organization, with the goal of producing a comprehensive sustainability plan.

In August 2005, independent organizational consultant Ellen Sprenger, former Executive Director of Mama Cash, and program evaluation consultant Alexandra Pittman, PhD scholar at Boston College, facilitated a two-day workshop with WLP staff clarifying organizational objectives and exploring models of organizational growth. Sprenger and Pittman produced an Assessment Report and a Reflection Memo (see Appendix N), which was used to stimulate discussion at the October 2005 Transnational Partners Meeting. Partner feedback on their priorities for growth of the Partnership as a whole guided the next steps.

From November 2005-March 2006, WLP worked with Ms. Sprenger to develop a Five-Year Sustainability Plan (2006-2010) (see Appendix O) and a Three-Year Operational Plan (2006-2008) (see Appendix P), establishing program activities under each five-year objective, with SMART indicators. WLP discussed and finalized the Five-Year Sustainability Plan in consultation with partners, board members, and our international advisory council. Both the Five-Year Sustainability Plan and the Three-Year Operational Plan were approved by WLP's Board in April 2006, and it was agreed that organizational evaluation would be carried out by annual review of these plans by staff, partners and the board.

A commitment to building the capacity of partners forms an integral part of the Five-Year Sustainability Plan. WLP will use the learning from our own organizational evaluation and sustainability planning process to support partners in similar efforts over the next five years. Immediate plans include carrying out organizational assessments of selected partners and supporting partners to develop sustainability plans. We plan to produce organizational capacity building curricula from this experience and process to support partners to build strong, democratic organizations.

VI. Challenges

During this year, several of our partners experienced new challenges as a result of war and conflict, growth of extremism, and government clampdown on civic activism that challenged the advancement of women's rights. WLP's work continued in the face of these challenges. Our partnership model that involves ongoing intense communication with partners, reliance on partner assessment of evolving conditions, and flexibility and responsiveness made it possible to meet each of these crises in a timely and efficient manner. In each case, WLP worked with the specific partner organization to gather information, analyze the situation, assess needs, and adapt existing resources such as networks, staff, national and regional contacts to immediate needs. The liaison function of the partnership made it possible to bring the collective wisdom and support of all partners to assist in each crisis situation.

Increasing insecurity due to wars and conflict

In July and August the war in **Lebanon** resulted in the death of hundreds of civilians, widespread infrastructure damage, and the displacement of numerous people. Women and children were disproportionately affected. Grassroots women's organizations were among the first to reach out to displaced families, assessing the needs of women and children and ensuring that women take an active role in relief coordination efforts. WLP Lebanon, Collective for Research and Training on Development-Action (CRTD-A), had to divert significant resources from their core work on women's empowerment and rights advocacy to make sure women's needs during the conflict were met and women's groups were engaged in coordinated activities. They mobilized their strong network of past participants in leadership and IT trainings to prepare women to take on leadership roles during the relief and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Insecurity and instability continued in the months following, causing disruptions or slowing progress on planned activities. Despite these disruptions, CRTD-A resumed its grassroots trainings in early 2007 and regular activities have been scheduled throughout the year.

In **Palestine**, Hamas's victory in the January 2006 elections resulted in a protracted conflict and escalating levels of violence both internally between opposition groups, and externally with Israel. A weakened economy, damaged infrastructure such as power grids, rising poverty, and increasing crime are disrupting civilian life. Violence against women, including incidents of honor killings, is rising. WLP Palestine, Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), is unable to operate in many parts of the country. Nevertheless, WATC continued its work organizing trainings and workshops. In addition, they are making advancements on the nationality campaign and in economic empowerment projects. Participants often experienced delays at checkpoints but continued to participate actively in the trainings.

Expanding fundamentalism and extremism

Five years after the removal of the Taliban, there has been a resurgence of practices restricting women's rights in **Afghanistan**. Girls over the age of ten are forbidden

from going to school and women are increasingly afraid to venture out of their homes. In the southern province of Helmand, women are being pushed out of the workforce and back into their homes. As security conditions become increasingly volatile and the insurgency gains momentum across the country, women are targeted with disturbing regularity. In neighboring **Pakistan** in November, the Northwest Frontier Province passed a bill setting up a Department for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, with the stated aim to enforce Islamic morality, and used primarily to repress women's rights. WLP Afghanistan, Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL), has to very careful in its selection and implementation of activities in the provinces and in refugee camps in Pakistan to ensure staff and participants are free of reprisals by extremists.

In **Iran**, the human rights situation has worsened steadily under the rule of conservative president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. There has been an increase in harassment of rights activists, intimidation of journalists, and persecution of religious and ethnic minorities. Moderate and liberal professors were pressured to retire and numerous politically active students were threatened with expulsion. Ahmadinejad's regime has targeted the most prominent women's and human rights activists, including Nobel Prize winner Shirin Ebadi's organization, the Defender of Human Rights Center, which was banned on August 2nd. Women's human rights activists have remained active despite increased restrictions and fear of retribution, holding two public protests over discrimination against women on March 8th and June 12, 2006. Both protests were broken up violently by security forces and during the June protest a number of leading women's rights activists were arrested. Undaunted, women activists organized an innovative "One Million Signatures" campaign, which demands an end to discriminatory laws against women while raising widespread grassroots awareness among women of the impact of unequal laws. 30,000 women have already signed. WLP is helping raise international awareness of the campaign, a number of whose leaders are alumni of our Leadership Institute.

WLP sent out several human rights alerts to protest the crack down by the government of Iran on peaceful protests organized by women's rights activists on June 12. Many of the activists at the center of the struggle are alumnae of WLP's leadership trainings.

WLP Jordan, Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan (SIGI/J)'s website was hacked three times by extremists in July. The website, which is one of the leading websites in the region, receives about 12,000 visitors a day and provides information in Arabic about women's rights and combating violence against women. On July 13th, the third and most severe attack succeeded in bringing down SIGI/J's website. The fundamentalist group posted on the homepage, "In the name of God we destroy and hack this website." WLP supported our partner by providing advice and information on cost-effective and secure web hosting options. In order to avoid such problems in the future, they are now using more secure web servers outside the region. They have overcome the delays resulting from the website breach and all programs are back on schedule.

In **Morocco**, the government continues to be supportive of reforms and initiatives that promote women's rights, causing a backlash from fundamentalists. In June, the Prime Minister pledged to reconsider reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and in January 2007, the Cabinet passed a bill to reform the country's Nationality Code to enable women to pass on their nationality to their children. WLP Morocco, Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM), played an important advocacy role in the government's decision to consider lifting reservations to CEDAW and to introduce the nationality reform bill. On June 10th, a criminal fire at ADFM's office raised suspicions that they were targets of fundamentalists. The fire destroyed institutional history and records and damaged equipment. The fire is under investigation. WLP is supporting ADFM to reestablish the infrastructure needed to carry on their work.

Restrictive NGO legislation

WLP **Egypt**, Forum for Women in Development (FWID), is facing challenges brought on by legal and extralegal measures introduced by the government to limit the work and influence of NGOs. Measures range from administrative constraints to coercion and closure of organizations. Independent NGOs representing autonomous civil society are incapacitated by threats of arbitrary interference or dissolution of the organization. While permitting NGOs some space for their activities, these measures seek to undermine independent or assertive groups, in particular women's rights NGOs that embrace a rights approach in their work. For instance, implementation of leadership training workshops by FWID was delayed for over six months as it sought written permission from the Ministry of Social Solidarity to implement each workshop. FWID finally received permission in early September and trainings started after Ramadan in October.

The government of **Uzbekistan** instituted a crackdown on human rights activists and journalists after they protested the violent suppression of a revolt in the eastern city of Andijan in 2005. Since the violence, several human rights activists have been sentenced to long prison terms and dozens of international human rights organizations and media outlets have been closed down by the government. WLP **Uzbekistan**, Tashkent Women's Resource Center (TWRC), was forced to shut down in January 2006. They have had to suspend all activities relating to the promotion of women's leadership and instead once again have to go through a cumbersome NGO registration process with the Ministry of Justice, which is approving service-based rather than advocacy-oriented organizations. In the meantime, WLP is strengthening relationships with women's rights groups in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan that will carry on the work in the region. These organizations will also strive to include Uzbeks in their trainings.

In **Zimbabwe**, women's organizations are dealing with a complex humanitarian situation and a devastated economy. Hyperinflation has been above 1,000% since last April, leaving 8 in 10 citizens destitute. WLP Zimbabwe, Women's Self-Promotion Movement (WSPM), is focusing their work on helping constituents,

including women in the informal sector and in refugee camps, find solutions to more immediate problems such as loss of livelihoods and income.

Institutional capacity of women's organizations

WLP's partners consist of grassroots organizations that carry out their work with limited human and financial resources. Many of them have a largely volunteer staff or experience high staff turnover, requiring them to invest considerable resources in training new staff and passing on institutional history and culture. Recruitment and retention of staff is also challenging in an environment where activism is viewed as enriched by a spirit of voluntarism, yet requires the skills, time commitment, and financial resources of a professional staff.

In order to strengthen institutional capacity, WLP works with partners to develop new leadership in preparation for generational shifts in management responsibilities within their organizations. This requires integrating youth as active members and ensuring their full understanding of and commitment to participatory leadership styles. In some WLP partner countries, youth comprise as much as 45% of the nation's population. In order to develop the capacity of young leaders, WLP launched a Young Women's Learning Partnership (YWLP) initiative to be coordinated in cooperation with WLP **Jordan**, Sisterhood Is Global Institute/Jordan. The initiative will focus on integrating young girls into the women's movement and engaging them in a leadership learning process that is participatory, inclusive, and that respects diversity. Many partners have already begun integrating young women into their organizations. WLP **Morocco** is using leadership workshops as a means to integrate young women into the organization and enable them to develop participatory leadership skills. WLP **Jordan** and **Nigeria** have invested in active mentorship processes to foster the next generation of leaders. At WLP International, we are documenting our experiences of mentoring and leadership building to share with partners.

VII. Appendix

Appendix A, Excerpts from WLP's new website

Appendix B, WLP Palestine and WLP Turkey's Sustainability Plans

Appendix C, Introductory pages to the new ICT manual, *Digital Voices: Using ICTs for Advocacy*

Appendix D, Excerpt from the English prototype evaluation manual, *Measuring Change: Evaluating the Leading to Choices Leadership Program*

Appendix E, Schedule of 2006 Trainings

Appendix F, Photos from 2006 workshops in 12 countries

Appendix G, Excerpts from the campaign blog, *Claiming Equal Citizenship: The Campaign for Arab Women's Right to Nationality*

Appendix H, International networks co-convened by WLP

Appendix I, Human Rights Alerts from Iran and Lebanon

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Appendix K, Report of Phase 1 of the 2-year *Leading to Choices* Evaluation Project in Morocco

Appendix L, WLP's Theory of Change for the *Leading to Choices* Leadership Program

Appendix M, Evaluation of WLP International by Stratenomics

Appendix N, Evaluation of WLP International by Ellen Sprenger

Appendix O, Five-Year Sustainability Plan

Appendix P, Three-Year Operational Plan

Appendix Q, Publications:

- *Fomentando a Tomada de Decisões Manual de Treinamento para a Liderança da Mulheres* (Portuguese edition of *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women*)
- WLP's 2006 documentary, *Against All Odds: Women Partnering for Change in a Time of Crisis* (VHS and DVD copies)
- *Guide to Equality in the Family in the Maghreb* (English edition)

- WLP poster honoring partners, staff, board members, grassroots workshop and institute participants and facilitators, event speakers, and advisors