

One Sky Giving Circle Executive Summary **Gender, Women and Democracy (GWD)**

Budget: \$1,032,900

GWD Staff: 6

HQ: Washington, DC

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, non-governmental organization that supports the development of democracy and governance globally, including promoting and strengthening inclusive political processes, state-civil society engagement, and commitment to international frameworks.

Gender, Women, and Democracy (GWD)

Within and for the Institute, the Gender, Women and Democracy (GWD) team works towards these goals by promoting the participation, inclusion and empowerment of women in national and international political institutions.

Unique Positioning

Despite our relatively small team, our global network of multinational organizations, foreign governments, and international political institutions has ensured that our impact is far-reaching, and positively contributes to women's political participation across the globe.

Contrary to many international development programs focused on simply increasing the number of women on an electoral ballot or party list, GWD's programs work to remove barriers that occur at three levels: the individual, institutional, and socio-cultural levels, and allow women to have a concrete impact on their country's policy.

Our programs build women's confidence in their ability to lead; enhance their capacity to advocate convincingly for themselves and their communities, run successful electoral campaigns and serve effectively once in office; and develop connections with women and men within political networks. We are unique because we consistently work from the ethos that we need to *disrupt* the gender-based social norms rooted in the imbalance of power between men and women. Programs designed to increase women's political participation mean nothing if they are not coupled with awareness-raising campaigns on the inherent barriers that women face when trying to be active in politics. This work is done hand-in-hand with country partners and organizations, ensuring that our programs are designed and administered by the very people whom they are benefiting.

Program Overview

Our programming covers a wide spectrum of barriers that women face when they attempt to enter politics, and these programs work in tandem with each other to ensure that women gain the ability to inform policy and become leaders within existing organizations, while strengthening women's rights organizations, women's caucuses and coalitions.

We provide leadership training and technical advice on party rules and procedures, and help these groups develop policy platforms for advocacy. As part of our awareness-raising campaigns around women's capacity as politicians and the violence they face, we run public education campaigns with journalists and media houses, political parties, and administer surveys that expose biases and discrimination against politically-active women.

Impact

All of our programs are built with large scale application in mind, and our initiatives are designed to impact the largest number of women possible.

We develop program-specific indicators with our partners. We also collate and assess women's testimonies and reports of their own experiences using incident forms, focus groups and surveys. We take a participatory approach to program monitoring and evaluation, involving stakeholders at every stage.

We have seen the impact of our work translated into increased national conversations around how to eradicate violence against women in politics and elections, including a commitment by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls to prepare a thematic report on violence against politically-active women and girls.

Violence Against Women in Politics

Women all across the globe face immense barriers when they try to enter politics, including physical and psychological violence, threats, and intimidation. Even when they are elected to office, women are often blocked by their male colleagues and the political institutions themselves from having a tangible impact on the lives of their communities. GWD's work comes from an understanding of the roots of these barriers, and a comprehensive strategy to address them, with the goal of enabling women to participate actively and effectively in their political processes.

One of GWD's programs is the #NotTheCost Call to Action to stop violence against women in politics, which was launched in March 2016. Its title reflects the fact that many women are told that harassment, threats, psychological abuse, physical and sexual assault are "the cost of doing politics." For the last two years, NDI has been working to challenge this claim by raising awareness, collecting information and building capacity among our partners in order to eradicate this phenomenon. The [Call to Action](#) and [Program Guidance](#) present "opportunities for action" that stakeholders can take in every political sector, and in the online space which is, by its nature, cross-cutting.

This violence, whether physical or psychological, effects politically active women around the globe, whether they are activists, civil society leaders, voters, candidates, or elected or appointed officials. Many types of violence cut across sectors: perpetrators can be individuals within the private or public sphere. Given the range of organizational and contextual issues, NDI has developed a sector-focused approach to address the problem of violence and the barriers it creates to women's participation. For example, NDI's [Votes Without Violence](#) toolkit, manual and [website](#) for citizen election observer groups is dedicated to ways of mitigating, reporting and responding to violence against women during election cycles.

The final step for our #NotTheCost Call to Action is the full development of our 360 Individual Risk Assessment Tool, which will be launched globally to provide women who are or who aspire to become politically active with a means to reflect on their own personal, professional and political circumstances; to take action to mitigate the identified risks through a safety plan; and to document and report any incidents to the relevant body. One study, conducted by UN Women in India, Nepal and Pakistan found that more than 60 percent of women do not participate in politics due to fear of violence.

This form of "self-assessment" is particularly critical for women because it will allow them to assess not only public forms of risk and violence, but also the risk they might face in their private and domestic lives. The risk assessment tool will be available in four versions (paper, SMS, online and app), each in four languages (Arabic, English, French and Spanish). The tool has been through two rounds of piloting in five NDI partner countries.

Potential Use of One Sky Grant

A contribution from One Sky could fund a website that will be a go-to resource for grassroots organizations and individual political aspirants who right now have nowhere to turn. The new site would house the Individual Risk Assessment Tool, including a full guide on how to use it, tutorials on how to develop and implement a safety plan and information on organizations and resources that might be useful to those wanting to operationalize the tool. A dedicated website for our tool would serve as a reference and outreach point for civil society organizations and women around the world who might otherwise feel too scared to get involved in politics. GWD's international network uniquely positions us to utilize a One Sky Grant to the absolute fullest, and we are confident that our reach would be far and hugely impactful in the lives of women across the globe.