

# #NOT THE COST

STOPPING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS ♀

Program Guidance



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*"I am Susana Villarán, from Lima, Perú. A teacher of social studies and journalist, I have been involved in politics since I was 17 years old. I am here living a paradox: a powerful woman, well-known and recognized all around Perú, and at the same time I am here to speak my testimony as a victim[...]The harassment against me started with my campaign for mayor [of Lima] itself, and lasted for five years. Five years of attacks, five years of brutal and permanent attacks and threats."*

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## ABOUT THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization that responds to the aspirations of people around the world to live in democratic societies that recognize and promote basic human rights. Since its founding in 1983, NDI and its local partners have worked to support and strengthen democratic institutions and practices by strengthening political parties, civic organizations and parliaments; safeguarding elections; and promoting citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

NDI is a leading organization working to advance women's political participation around the world. The Institute empowers women to participate, compete and lead as equal and active partners in democratic change. Mobilizing its global networks and drawing on three decades of experience in 132 countries, NDI supports women's aspirations for gender equality, and for inclusive and responsive government. NDI's multinational approach reinforces the message that while there is no single democratic model, certain core principles are shared by all democracies.

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## PREFACE

Historically, violence against women in politics (VAW-P) has been a largely hidden phenomenon, but it is a real and grave concern for all those dedicated to strengthening democracies around the world. This violence cannot be allowed to continue. Violence against politically active women makes it more difficult to build sustainable, resilient democracies that would benefit from politics built on inclusion and equality. It cuts across all political sectors, and targets women—both in person and online—regardless of their political role, age, background or station in life. As a general phenomenon, violence in politics can of course affect men and women alike, regardless of their country or position. However, this publication focuses on VAW-P as a *specific* issue: a serious problem that disincentivizes women from participating in the political process, undermines democracy, is a fundamental breach of a woman's dignity and presents a serious barrier to gender equality. Traditional definitions of violence in politics have not captured violent acts and threats against women because of their gender. Gender norms play a significant role in shaping *how* and *why* women experience violence in politics, as well as the types of acts that are used to prevent or control their participation—often, women are subjected to particular types of violence and intimidation that would rarely, if ever, affect men. In addition, in many cases even non-gender-motivated violence can still have a disproportionately higher impact on women, because they occupy a subordinate status in society and are more vulnerable to attacks.

There is a need to raise awareness about this issue, create new norms and standards against this violence, construct processes to register and respond to complaints, provide services for women who are victims and punish the perpetrators of violence. To do so, *all* relevant stakeholders must commit to act together to confront VAW-P, which will contribute to strengthening democratic culture and practice, and achieving prosperous and resilient societies. This document aims to provide guidance on how to achieve this goal, addressing democracy practitioners in particular as a well-positioned group to develop and conduct programs to eradicate violence against politically active women.

Much of the work that must be done now centers on data collection and research: to improve existing efforts, or to begin collecting information on the phenomenon in the first place. For an issue like VAW-P that has been consistently overlooked and underreported, collecting data at any level, from local to global, can be a programmatic goal for practitioners in and of itself: it is an essential part of beginning to raise awareness and identifying solutions. As knowledge and understanding of VAW-P grows, other methodologies and activities can be used more effectively, and new, innovative strategies may emerge. Ultimately, NDI's goal is to make it easier for practitioners to understand and address the issue in programs and contexts around the world, raising awareness about the realities and impact of VAW-P and engaging a wide range of partners from every sector to address and end it.



## INTRODUCTION

As women have advanced toward equality, they have made historic gains in political life. In the last 20 years, the percentage of women in parliaments globally has nearly doubled, and women are increasingly taking on positions of power as civil society activists, political party leaders, local councilors and mayors, cabinet ministers, prime ministers and presidents. These are significant accomplishments. It is their right to do so—and their full and equal political participation benefits their communities, resulting in real gains for democracy and improved outcomes for their countries. These include greater responsiveness to citizen needs, increased cooperation across party and ethnic lines, and more sustainable peace.<sup>1 2 3</sup>

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Yet a growing number of reports from around the world<sup>4</sup>—from activists, politicians, journalists and academics—indicate that as women step forward to

claim their right to participate in politics, they are met by acts of psychological abuse and even physical or sexual assault. Consistent with the definition in a growing body of national laws and international conventions governing violence against women, this form of violence happens in public, private and in protected public spaces, and is not restricted to acts of physical harm. In fact, it encompasses a spectrum of acts committed in person and, increasingly, online, that are designed to control, limit or prevent women's full and equal political participation. Perpetrators of such violence can range from a member of one's own family or community to the media or a political party leader.

## What is 'violence against women in politics'?

Political violence can be experienced by anyone, involved at any level of the political process, from first-time voters to seasoned heads of state. It affects and is directed at people of all genders, around the world. However, the specific issue of violence against *women* in politics has three distinct characteristics:

- It targets women *because of* their gender;
- Its very *form* can be gendered, as exemplified by sexist threats and sexual violence; and
- Its impact is to discourage *women in particular* from being or becoming politically active.

It encompasses all forms of aggression, harassment, coercion and intimidation against women as political actors simply because they are women. These acts—whether directed at women as voters, civic leaders, political party members, candidates, elected representatives or appointed officials—are designed to restrict the political participation of women as a group. This violence reinforces traditional stereotypes and roles given to women, using domination and control to dissuade and exclude women from politics. It is uniquely concerning as a barrier to women's ability to participate equally in political life, and thus as a serious hurdle for inclusive and sustainable democracy.

While acts of violence against women in politics are directed at individual women, they have an intent beyond their specific target: to frighten other women who are already politically active, to deter women who might consider engaging in politics, and to communicate to society that women should not participate in public life in any capacity. Therefore, the motive behind the violence is as important as the intended target.



It is important to recognize that VAW-P extends far beyond bodily harm—generally the most clearly recognizable form of violence. In some cases, attacks on politically active women are in fact couched as specifically “nonviolent” acts, relying on a narrative that reaffirms conservative ideas of women’s “place” in society. Opponents may focus on women’s bodies and their traditional social roles—primarily as mothers and wives—to deny or undercut their suitability or competence in the political sphere. But because motive is a defining element, using gendered imagery or stereotypes to attack female opponents can be described as a case of violence against women in politics, as the message communicated through these tropes is that women do not belong in the political realm. These portrayals undermine women’s competence, which stymies equal access to positions of power and reinforces the status quo.

At the same time, experiences that both men and women have that are often dismissed as “the cost of doing politics” can qualify as forms of violence against women in politics. For example, the exchange of material goods for positions of power within parties or elected bodies is often commonly accepted even though it is corrupt behavior. But for women, unlike men, the predominant demands are for sex or sexual favors instead of money, so this extortion can fall into the category of violence against women.<sup>5</sup> This type of extortion further pollutes a system’s democratic culture: women learn that only by providing such “favors” can they move up the political ladder, and citizens’ perceptions of women in politics are colored by the belief that any woman who advances must have performed such favors.

When women do not feel they can voice their opinion without fear of threat or reprisal, this inhibits the robust discourse that is an essential part of politics. Certainly, an attack on a woman's political views alone does not necessarily signify gender-based violence. It may fit well within the scope of healthy criticism or political debate, in some instances protected by guarantees of free speech or parliamentary privilege. But there is often a repetitive or persistent pattern to the attacks that women face, which intensifies acts that might go unnoticed or be dismissed as unimportant. One sexist insult might be discounted as bad behavior; however, when women attempting to engage in political discourse face a constant stream of harassment and abuse, this becomes violence. Significantly, when this forms part of the backdrop of women's experience in political engagement, it undermines their sense of safety when they attempt to exercise their political rights.

Digital technology and online platforms can reinforce this sense of anonymous and lurking threats. Increasingly, research shows that cyberbullying and online harassment disproportionately target and impact women.<sup>6 7</sup> By silencing and excluding the voices of women and other marginalized groups, online harassment fundamentally challenges both women's political engagement and the integrity of the information space, and in doing so, can undermine democratic culture and practices around the world. In addition, beyond the direct impact of a particular act of violence on an individual, online abuse and threats can have a "gateway effect," paving the way to increased violence in other spaces. In these circumstances, women judge that the costs and danger of participation outweigh the benefits, and withdraw from or choose not to enter the political arena at all.

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### *Whom Does it Affect?*

Women are a hugely diverse group, with backgrounds, access to resources, and national, cultural or religious contexts that run the full spectrum of human experience. Their ability to withstand attacks can differ not only from one country to another, but also based on their own intersecting identities and their position within their country, due to differences in class, race and ethnicity,

age, educational attainment, disability, etc. Women in politics around the world report the same range of experiences, but the nature, intensity and impact of the violence they encounter differs depending on the political and socio-cultural contexts in which they are politically engaged. For example, there have been notable attacks on politically active women in environments with consolidated democratic systems and well-established norms for including women in the political process. However, when directed at women with fewer resources or who lack support systems or coping strategies, this violence has a greater impact on stifling their voice and participation. Those in even more disadvantaged circumstances—for example, due to extreme marginalization, or physical or geographic isolation—are vulnerable to every kind of abuse and harm discussed above, as well as to actions that may not seem, to an outside perspective, to be violent.

Acknowledgment of the problem of violence against women in politics has been hampered by three things:

- The conventional wisdom that, unless there is a physical manifestation, it is not violence;
- The perception that there are no specific gender dimensions to violence in politics; and
- The fact that the vast majority of women who have experienced sexualized attacks are likely to remain silent about them.

All three have contributed to the hidden nature of the problem.

Victims of VAW-P may not even recognize what has happened to them as a specific form of violence, and women seeking to participate or who are already engaged in politics may even deny the problem altogether in an effort to deflect charges that they are “hysterical” or “not coping” with the demands of the job. Many are afraid of being viewed as victims or being accused of “playing the victim” for fear of justifying claims that women do not belong in political life. Yet evidence suggests in unambiguous terms that women in politics around the world have indeed experienced such violence—whether or not they speak out directly about these issues—and that their experiences have implications for their ability and willingness to participate actively in public life.<sup>8</sup>

During the 2010 elections in Afghanistan, for example, nearly all female candidates received threatening phone calls.<sup>9</sup> In Tanzania’s 2015 elections, women voters reported that their husbands had divorced them and left them to support their children alone because they had not voted for their husbands’

favored candidates.<sup>10</sup> In Peru, 39 percent of women leaders in regional and local governments reported that they suffered acts of political harassment related to their political positions.<sup>11</sup> Women politicians from Hungary to India have endured persistent sexist insults focused on their appearance.<sup>12</sup> Incidents of violence have left female politicians in Asia and Latin America demoralized, making them less likely to stand for reelection and to leave after fewer terms served.<sup>13</sup> One third of female local politicians in Sweden said they considered giving up their positions as a result of these incidents,<sup>14</sup> while 48 percent of the women leaving office in Bolivia in 2010 reported being victims of such violence.<sup>15</sup>



The impact of violence, moreover, reaches beyond the women directly affected.

In Australia, 60 percent of women aged 18 to 21 and 80 percent of women over 31 said they were less likely to run for office after seeing how negatively female politicians were treated by the media.<sup>16</sup> Nearly all participants in a British program for aspiring women leaders had witnessed sexist abuse of female politicians online, leading more than 75 percent of them to say it was a point of concern when considering whether to pursue a role in public life.<sup>17</sup> As these examples show, the scope of violence that targets politically active women extends beyond formal political spaces such as parliaments and political parties: it affects not only candidates and officials but also any woman attempting to exercise her political rights or participate in any aspect of the political arena, from elections to policy-making to activism at the local, national and regional levels.

**As activists**, women may face negative or outright hostility from their families, communities or governments, especially if they are in isolated communities and challenging established networks of patronage or resource allocation. Many women report that their causes are ignored or dismissed as “women’s issues” and that they may face gendered insults—for example, that they are “too loud” or “too shrill”—intended to silence them.

**As voters**, women may be the targets of violence in efforts to prevent them from voting or to coerce them to vote in a particular way. Women electoral officials or party poll agents are also vulnerable to threats, coercion or assaults.

**As candidates**, women may confront negative reactions from their families and spouses, including the threat of ostracism or divorce. They may also face vandalism of their campaign materials, character assassination from opponents both outside and inside their political parties, and rape threats—all with the aim of curbing their political ambition. As elected and appointed officials, they may be pressured by party leaders or their own family members to give up their seats in favor of male substitutes; face hostile working conditions within legislatures or council chambers, including sexual harassment, sexualized or unequal media coverage; and sexist abuse on social media intended to marginalize them and render them less effective.

**Once elected**, women who become parliamentarians also continue to be under threat of violence. In 1976, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) established a Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to investigate cases where the human rights of elected officials have been violated. Over the years, the committee has examined complaints in more than 100 states; in 2015, the cases of 320 parliamentarians from 42 countries were examined, of which 37 were women.<sup>18</sup> Cases included undue exclusion from political office, arbitrary arrest, restriction of speech, murder, torture and kidnapping. Each of these acts is consistent with the experience of women around the world to prevent their political participation and, in the case of elected officials, to deny voters the effective representation of the candidate they chose. In a recent study, also by the IPU, nearly 82 percent of female parliamentarians surveyed reported that they had experienced psychological violence of some form; 32 percent reported that they had been subjected to one or more acts of economic violence; 25 percent reported the same for acts of physical violence; and 21 percent reported that they had been subjected to acts of sexual violence.<sup>19</sup>

### *What Forms Does Violence Take?*

Violence intended to control or stop women's participation in politics takes a variety of forms and is present in both private and public spaces, including "protected" public spaces, such as political parties and parliament.<sup>20</sup> Through these acts, women as individuals and as a group are prevented from exercising their voice and agency in a free and unfettered manner. Unlike other forms of electoral or political violence usually carried out by political opponents, in these cases perpetrators may include a woman's family and friends, members

of her political party, community and religious leaders, state security forces and the police, among others. Media outlets can also play an influential role in perpetrating violence, either through their own reports or by disseminating violent messages about politically active women from other sources.

Different contexts and cultures give rise to a range of methods to intimidate, delegitimize or exclude women from political life. However, politically active women have complained of violence that falls into several common categories: **psychological, physical, sexual and economic.**

**Psychological violence** involves hostile behavior and abuse intended to cause fear and/or emotional damage. In politics, this may include threats of physical violence, coercion and acts intended to harm a woman's social status. For example, the limited research on violence against women in elections indicates that psychological violence may be particularly directed at female voters, candidates and party workers<sup>21</sup> Husbands may threaten divorce as a way to force their wives to vote for a particular candidate or avoid any political activity at all. Death and rape threats, character assassination, social boycotts and stalking are all examples of this type of violence—which increasingly occurs online and through social media.

Patterns of abuse and harassment that become psychological violence can seek to delegitimize women as political actors by undermining their confidence, competence and visibility in the political sphere, negatively affecting the way they are portrayed and, therefore, how they are perceived. Women may have their microphones cut off so they are silenced in parliaments or party meetings. They may be constantly interrupted by sexist heckling. During elections, the male family members of women voters may seek to cast votes on their behalf. All of these acts are intended to demonstrate that women are not competent enough to participate in democratic processes in their own voice and conscience. This disempowerment seeks to put women “in their place,” caricaturing them in the symbolic or traditional roles they are expected to fill because of their gender.

**Physical violence** involves injuries inflicted on women directly as well as acts of bodily harm carried out against their family members. Examples include assassination, kidnapping, beating and domestic abuse to prevent women's political participation.

**Sexual violence** entails sexual acts and attempts at sexual acts by coercion, including unwelcome sexual comments or advances. Examples include sexual harassment, rape and sexual exploitation, such as forcing women to perform

sexual favors in order to win a party nomination, receive funding or garner support for legislation. Women have reported being groped while waiting in line to vote—leading them to avoid voting altogether, or spurring their husbands or family members forbidding them to do so. Women’s sexuality is often a potent symbol, with rape threats and questions about a woman’s morality or sexual identity being very common. Sexually explicit or graphic representations of women online are a growing manifestation of this type of coercion or threat, which reduces women to their gender, denying their basic human dignity.

**Economic violence** involves coercive behavior to control a person’s access to economic resources. Women voters may be denied funds or other support from their families in order to coerce their vote or prevent them from voting altogether. Women politicians may be systematically denied access to financial and economic resources that they are entitled to by law or that are otherwise available to politically active male counterparts—resources that are necessary, for example, for campaigning, professional development or routine political organizing. The aim is to frustrate women so they withdraw or to reduce the chances that they can do their jobs effectively, which affects their standing in the eyes of citizens and voters and has the potential to damage their political careers.

While campaigns in several parts of the world have felt compelled to introduce alternate terms like “political harassment” and “discrimination” to describe non-physical attacks, all of these cases describe violence against politically active women. The characteristics, outlined above, that define violence against women in politics still apply. The case for considering these various acts as part of the same phenomenon is strengthened by the fact that many cases of violence against women in politics fall into several categories, or that multiple acts may be perpetrated simultaneously or in an escalating fashion.

### *Digital Platforms for Violence*

Digital media outlets and digital technology, in particular the huge reach of social media platforms, magnify the effects of psychological abuse and other forms of violence. While online platforms are an increasing space for citizens to gather information and voice their opinions—and can be particularly important in helping women overcome barriers to becoming politically active—they can also be a forum for misinformation, hate speech, abuse and harassment. This activity can be generated by individuals and organizations working transnationally, and is often at least informed by patriarchal and ethnically- or racially-exclusive ideologies associated with authoritarian regimes. Some



of these are politically-motivated creations designed by states or ideologically driven individuals or groups to control the political space. But much of it is rooted in discrimination and intolerance with the devastating impact of driving women, and especially young women, away from online political discourse and activity - ultimately undermining the integrity of democratic culture and practice.

Emerging research reveals that women are more frequently attacked with abusive and dismissive trolling online; that women and men experience online harassment differently; and that violence online can result in women choosing not to participate in leadership or political debates in online mediums, and ultimately, not to express their opinion.<sup>22</sup> Overall, the tools and platforms available online make it much easier to attack someone, as it can be done anonymously, at a distance and, in many cases, “crowdsourced” to amplify the number of violent messages and their effects. These attacks are difficult to stop or divert, and can have profound effects on victims’ whole lives, not just their political activism. Online privacy violations, such as the nonconsensual sharing of private photos, videos or information, have a traumatic impact on the individual woman victimized. Digital attacks are also often linked to secondary violence; in many of these cases, an initial attack is followed with ever-increasing physical violence to the point of assault and murder. In addition, by their very public nature, online attacks have a dramatic impact, beyond their initial victims, on other women who are in or considering public life, especially young women. Further, women are blamed for their own victimization instead

of their attacker or attackers being held culpable. Digital media outlets and digital technology, in particular the expansive reach of social media platforms, also magnify the effects of psychological abuse by making them anonymous, borderless, sustained and permanent. The perception of impunity emboldens perpetrators and raises women’s sense of insecurity and violation, driving many away from political participation altogether.

## **Why Does VAW-P Matter?**

All violence against women is unacceptable. It should be a concern for everyone dedicated to promoting strong, inclusive democratic societies—and it must be stopped. Violence impacting politically active women poses particularly grave challenges for the global community and for governments and societies. It is not limited to one country, region or political system, but appears in all parts of the world. Depending on their contexts and backgrounds, women are affected differently by this violence.

### *It Is a Form of Violence Against Women*

The 1993 United Nations International Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women notes that the ability of women to achieve political equality, among other things, is limited by violence. The declaration goes on to define “violence against women” explicitly as a range of gender-based harm that can occur in private or public spaces and is “one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.”<sup>23</sup> Violent acts against politically active women encompass all the aspects of these gendered power relations and should be included in discussions and strategies to eliminate violence against women more broadly. Violence against women in politics has played a prominent role in raising awareness and promoting action on the issue of violence against women on the global stage. The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (November 25), for example, was created to commemorate the day in 1960 that three Mirabal sisters were assassinated for their political activism against the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic.

### *It Violates Human Rights*

Violence against women in politics presents a fundamental challenge to the idea of “equal rights of men and women” as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Individual civil and political rights are enshrined in international commitments and national legislation. Article 21 of the declaration, for

example, states that (1) everyone has the right to take part in the government of his or her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives; (2) everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his or her country; and (3) the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government... expressed in periodic and genuine elections that shall be by universal and equal suffrage.<sup>24</sup> Attacks on women who actively pursue their right to participate in the political sphere are therefore in direct contradiction to the human rights of women as individuals.

Women's individual rights are also protected under the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which has been signed by 189 states. Article 1 defines discrimination as "any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing

or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women...on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."<sup>25</sup> Article 7, meanwhile, states that countries should ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right (a) to vote in elections and be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; (b) to participate in the formulation of government policy and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; and (c) to participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.<sup>26</sup>

### *It Undermines Democracy*

Democracy without the equal and active participation of half the population is impossible—and violence poses a direct threat to women's ability to participate in politics freely and without fear. A growing body of evidence shows that women's political participation results in real gains for democracy and society, including greater responsiveness to citizen needs, increased cooperation across party and ethnic lines, and more sustainable peace.<sup>27 28 29</sup> On the other hand, the exclusion of women undermines every democratic process. The



integrity of elections is called into question when women voters are prevented from accessing polling stations whether by family-based coercion, deliberate targeting by political opponents or terrorist threats. The same is true when women are pressured to resign after they have been legitimately elected or when others make it difficult or impossible for them to do the job for which they were elected. Further, these constitute a violation of the people's right to be represented by the candidate of their choice.

Too often women are told that abuse, harassment and even assault are part of the political arena, but it should not be so. They are cautioned against speaking out in case they are seen as liabilities rather than assets; they stay silent rather than risk being labelled unreliable colleagues. Such acts would not be tolerated in other contexts and are explicitly prohibited under many legal frameworks and workplace codes of conduct.<sup>30</sup> The same scrutiny should be applied to women's engagement in the political sector, which should lead by example in defending democracy, gender equality and the human rights of all citizens.

## How Can VAW-P Be Stopped?

VAW-P is a serious issue that affects the development of strong, inclusive and democratic societies, and global progress toward gender equality. As the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals make clear, achieving both these outcomes is fundamentally connected and requires action to ensure that women and girls can claim full and equal opportunities and rights—including their right to participate meaningfully in all aspects of political life free from the threat of violence. Violence applied to politically active women should not be “the cost of politics.” In fact it *costs* politics the benefits of the sustainable and responsive democratic governance that an inclusive political space can create. The problem of violence against women in politics needs to be exposed in all its forms. It must be acknowledged globally, validating the realities that many women face and empowering them to speak frankly about their experiences. Action must be taken to define, mitigate and prevent this violence, to record and count it when it does occur, and to increase accountability for perpetrators.

In some countries, grassroots activists, legislators and media watchers have begun to develop strategies to address and prevent violence against women in politics. There are also emerging initiatives from a growing number of international organizations—including International IDEA, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Liberal International, the Organization of American States and the United Nations—focused on addressing the issue on a global scale.

In 2016, NDI launched *#NotTheCost: Stopping Violence Against Women in Politics*, which included a global **Call to Action** that brings together the strategies and best practices being developed and implemented by change-makers working at every level around the world, so that everyone working on this issue can learn from and build on each other's efforts. This Call to Action reflects the need for all stakeholders to take steps today to make violence against politically active women as unacceptable as any other form of violence against women.

The Call to Action identified three key areas where change is necessary:

- To educate and raise awareness among stakeholders and citizens to create new norms and standards against this behavior;
- To create processes at the institutional and national level for registering and responding to complaints; and
- To provide services for assisting women who are victims, as well as to punish the perpetrators of such violence.

If all of the relevant stakeholders commit to taking effective action together, democratic culture and practice will be strengthened, and more inclusive, prosperous and resilient societies will be achieved. The full list of opportunities for action that are included in the Call to Action can be found in the appendix.

**Democracy practitioners** are a key group of stakeholders and are positioned strategically to combat this phenomenon by conducting programs addressing violence against women in politics. Building on the broad “opportunities for action” contained in the Call to Action, this **Program Guidance Document** outlines targeted information for both NDI staff and other democracy practitioners on how to design and implement programs that address such violence. In doing so, NDI hopes to make it easier for practitioners to develop and implement local, national or regional programming that would help beneficiaries raise awareness about violence against women in politics, educate key players (for example, civil society organizations, political parties, police, the judiciary or security forces, and election management bodies), develop mitigating strategies or increase accountability for perpetrators.



## CROSS CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROGRAMS

There are key cross-cutting issues that should be considered when developing any program addressing VAW-P. These are discussed below and should be reviewed as part of the initial program design process.

- I. Mainstream Versus Standalone Programming
- II. Country, Regional and/or Global Focus
- III. Sector of Political Participation Being Addressed
- IV. Program Entry Point
- V. Core VAW-P Program Actions

### I. Mainstream Versus Standalone or Targeted Programming

Democracy without the equal and active participation of women is impossible, and women's political participation results in real gains for democracy and society. It is therefore critical that consideration of gender differences inform the formulation, implementation and evaluation of programs and activities so

women and men benefit equally and so women can achieve the political equity necessary to create strong and sustainable democracies.

**Mainstreaming VAW-P:** Violence poses a direct threat to women’s ability to participate in politics freely and without fear in all sectors, including civil society, political parties, elections and governance. It should be considered in *all* programs and not only when there is a dedicated focus on the issue. Some key questions to consider when developing a non-dedicated VAW-P program are listed below to assist practitioners in mainstreaming VAW-P into all programs.

### *Key Questions When Developing a Program*

- What information about VAW-P is available locally, nationally or regionally? Has any data been collected that could be used to inform program design? If there is no formal data, do organizations (for example, women’s rights or anti-violence groups) have anecdotal evidence that could be useful?
- How might VAW-P impact the ability of women to participate in this program? For example, if the program is focused on increasing youth participation in parties, how would VAW-P affect *young women’s* ability to participate and, if so, in what ways? What factors might amplify the challenges or potential for violence faced by women participants? Does this require a deeper examination to address intersectional factors such as women’s class, race, disability, etc? What are the implications for program design?
- Could this program unintentionally increase or contribute to violence against politically active women? For example, if the program is focused on increasing candidates’ interaction with media, how might that also increase abuse and harassment of female candidates by the media, unless complemented by awareness raising and education on the issue? What can the program do to mitigate a potentially negative impact on women? Are there particular activities, such as training for media and candidates, that should be included to ensure no harm is done?
- What steps should the program take, including training content, location, timing, etc., to mitigate unintended violent consequences? This should include how violent push-back against women’s participation by their family members or communities can be mitigated or addressed.
- Is violence against women a key factor in the problem or challenge the program is addressing? For example, if the problem focuses on corruption

in political parties, how might women experience this corruption? Are women being extorted for sexual favors in exchange for positions of power or nominations? If so, this type of extortion is an example of VAW-P.

- Are men in the program perpetrating violence against politically active women? Are they aware of the phenomenon? If they are not, how can this be incorporated into the program design and thinking?

**Standalone** or dedicated programs responding to women’s specific VAW-P needs are necessary to ensure that women understand the issue’s impact on their ability to participate in politics, how it should be addressed and how they can advocate for necessary changes. Often, violence against politically active women goes undiscussed and unacknowledged, effectively hidden from sight. As a result, many women do not recognize violence, when they experience it, for what it is. Rather, victims of abuse, harassment and even assault believe this is a “normal” part of the political arena. In addition, victims often are cautioned against speaking so they will not be seen as a liability. Therefore, programs addressing this issue need to educate politically active women to raise their awareness that it is not the cost of doing politics and to help them identify solutions. Detailed guidance for how to do this is included below.

However, practitioners should keep in mind that while standalone programs addressing VAW-P are needed to combat the phenomenon, these alone will likely be insufficient. There is a limit to the impact they can have on the overall political and cultural environment. A host of different actors should be engaged to stop violence against women in politics. Because different forms of violence are often overlapping, single strategies are likely to have only a partial impact. Instead, multidimensional approaches, applied and monitored over time, will be necessary to address and reverse resistance to women’s equal political inclusion. *Data collection* will be an important part of the process. Because the issue of VAW-P has been such little attention historically, the mere collection and dissemination of information and evidence can be a programmatic goal in and of itself. While it is not the only answer to addressing the problem, it is an important one. Used effectively, it can be a powerful tool to convince skeptics of the gravity of the issue; support and validate the lived realities of women who may otherwise have felt isolated in their experiences; and illuminate potential new paths and strategies to address and eliminate this violence altogether.

Because different forms of violence are often overlapping, single strategies are likely to have only a partial impact.

## II. Country, Regional and/or Global Focus

It is important to determine whether the program will engage on the issue at a country, regional and/or global level. Each level is important, but each has different goals, activities and outcomes to consider when developing a program. Key points on the opportunities for action at each level are listed below and can be used to guide program design.

### *Global Level*

Intergovernmental organizations, international associations and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can aid efforts to combat violence against women in politics by establishing new international standards and leveraging their global reach to raise awareness and provide technical assistance on this issue across world regions. Although some institutions have begun taking steps to raise the visibility of the problem at a global level, a lot of work remains. Democracy programs can be designed to promote or support these actions if such programs have a global focus.

One way for global institutions to take action is to integrate concerns about violence against women in politics into existing international instruments on violence against women, human rights, peace and conflict, and women's rights, among other possibilities. The issue could be incorporated into various articles in CEDAW, as well as the International Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. Indeed, an implicit precedent for recognizing violence against women in politics within these frameworks is the fact that the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (November 25), as mentioned above, commemorates the 1960 anniversary when the Mirabal sisters were assassinated in the Dominican Republic for their political activism against the Trujillo dictatorship.

Global institutions are also well placed to facilitate data sharing and strategies for combating violence against women in politics among governments and/or region-based civil society groups, in particular those that are members of the institution or association. Global gatherings and requests for technical assistance—including electoral observation missions—provide an opportunity to place this issue on the agenda and encourage the exchange of good practices, as well as to continue improving and expanding data collection. Global and regional institutions can magnify the impact of this collective work.

Often, global institutions hold international meetings to address topics such as

citizen participation, elections, governance or violence against women. When these meetings occur, the topic of VAW-P can be integrated into the agenda. Such gatherings provide an opportunity to sensitize experts and stakeholders on the need to address this problem.

## **ACTION AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL: OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE UNITED NATIONS**

Global institutions can engage each other, their partners and members to incorporate a focus on violence against women in politics into their work, especially when the organization's remit deals with questions related to democratic governance, civil society, political parties, electoral integrity or the human rights of parliamentarians. For example, the Special Rapporteurs designated by the United Nations to report on violence against women and girls have worked for decades to bring strong evidence-based reporting and normative progression on critical aspects of women's experience of violence into the UN system, thereby prompting action on it. Violence against women and girls has become a key policy issue, and the accepted scope of the issue has widened to include, for example, domestic violence as well as sexual violence during conflict and war. This scope could be expanded to include violence against politically active women through an expansion of the topics covered by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women in its thematic annual reports. Following the #NotTheCost conference convened by NDI in March 2016 and subsequent engagement with NDI, the Special Rapporteur began exploring exactly how existing mechanisms could be more effective and current.

### *Regional Level*

Regional organizations and NGOs can supplement, complement or extend the efforts of global organizations by bringing attention to the issue at the regional level and sharing regional solutions and experiences. Some regions have advanced more than others in developing a regional conversation, but regardless of their progress, actors at this level can add important value to these debates, given commonalities and historical connections among countries. Regional mechanisms and initiatives can thus play a crucial role in supporting local and national efforts to prevent, respond to and sanction violence against women in politics. Programs with a country or global focus may also benefit from including regional institutions.

Regional institutions may have the opportunity to incorporate violence against women in politics into regional frameworks such as conventions and declarations on violence against women, human rights, peace and conflict, or women’s rights. At the same time, regional institutions and their members can advocate for regional bodies and offices—such as commissions on women and human rights courts—to recognize and commit to tackling the problem of violence against women in politics, including holding perpetrators to account whenever possible.

### **ACTION AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL: WORKING WITHIN EXISTING FRAMEWORKS**

Several regional institutions have taken action to call violence against women in politics to light and condemn it. Often, these institutions find it easiest to work within existing frameworks that call for action to end violence against women. For example, the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1994 adopted its Belém do Pará Convention calling for mechanisms to protect women from violence. In October 2015, the OAS adopted a follow-on declaration that specifically condemned political harassment and violence against women. The declaration urges member states to protect women in politics from violence, raising awareness about the issue in the region.

Alternatively, it may be more effective for regional institutions to draft a separate regional declaration, rather than modify existing accords, to define violence against women in politics and declare it unacceptable. In doing so, regional institutions can support activists on the ground seeking to insert the issue into national and regional agendas. Or, short of drafting full accords, procedures can be created for registering complaints and issuing punishments through existing regional mechanisms. In many cases, regional courts—especially human rights courts—offer a mechanism for lodging complaints and securing justice for victims of violence against women in politics.

Regional institutions also have the opportunity to establish regional protocols or model guidelines for political parties and/or national parliaments tackling the problem. For example, institutions might develop a sample “code of conduct” or model legislation to codify offenses and specify punishments for perpetrators. Based on these models, local institutions can design their own



codes or legislation following the best practices put forth in the template but tailored to their own needs. The OAS, for example, has convened experts to develop a model law condemning and criminalizing VAW-P. Once this document is approved, member states can use it as a model to take legislative action against VAW-P themselves.

Like global institutions, regional institutions can facilitate information sharing on strategies for combating violence against women in politics among regional governments and/or civil society groups. Regional meetings and requests for technical assistance—including election observation missions—are an opportunity to place the issue on the agenda, as well as enable and encourage the exchange of good practices. Such gatherings provide an opportunity to sensitize experts and stakeholders in the region on the need to address the problem.

More broadly, regional institutions can engage with each other to focus on violence against women in politics, especially when an organization's remit deals with questions related to democratic governance, civil society, political parties, electoral integrity or the human rights of parliamentarians. In the course of this collaboration, they can bring together experts and exchange data, documents, experiences and challenges with the goal of building on and learning from the work of other organizations, thus magnifying the impact of this collective work. In particular, engaging with actors based in other regions may be especially fruitful for thinking in new ways about the problem and potential solutions.

## *Country Level*

Country-level programming also offers a diverse set of options. Programming could focus on addressing VAW-P through engendering change within national or local governments, or it could aim to create change within a specific political institution or process, such as political parties or elections.

National and local governments, as agents of the state, have a responsibility to promote and protect the human and democratic rights of all citizens, as well as ensure fair treatment and justice for victims of violence. Governments can address this problem by taking a public stand against violence against women in politics and developing mechanisms to support victims and hold perpetrators to account. Thus far, governments around the world have been slow to take up the issue of violence against women in politics, although some countries have considered legislation on the issue,<sup>31</sup> and some former heads of government and cabinet ministers have been vocal about problems with sexism and misogyny directed toward women as political actors.<sup>32</sup>

### **ACTION AT A COUNTRY LEVEL: LEGISLATIVE ACTION**

In 2012, the Bolivian parliament passed Law 243: Law Against Harassment and Political Violence Against Women. This landmark law is one of the first and only laws aimed specifically at criminalizing violence against politically active women, and followed over a decade of dedicated advocacy from civil society activists and women politicians, including the Association of Bolivian Women Counselors (ACOBOL). The law penalizes individuals who pressure, persecute, harass or threaten elected women, women candidates or women exercising public functions; it prescribes sanctions, including prison sentences and other penal consequences, for those found guilty of VAW-P. Discussions on the law continue, in particular regarding the difficulties of implementation, and further defining the processes and responsible stakeholders.

National and local governments can be mobilized to prevent, treat and punish violence against women in politics, and democracy practitioners can support such mobilization. Country-level programs may support civil society to push for change within political or government institutions or programming may directly engage the government or political institutions themselves. In either case, national institutions and organizations are well-placed to pursue improving or

expanding—or, in many cases, simply beginning—data collection on this issue, which can then be leveraged as an important and influential tool for change. Additional guidance on approaches is included later in this document.

### **Determining Which Type of Intervention is Relevant**

- What impact does the program aim to achieve? Is it focused on making global, regional or country level reforms?
- Is the program trying to change global norms by raising awareness of the issue and educating people on the phenomenon? Or is it aiming to change laws or institutions to address VAW-P?
- If the program is aiming to make legal or institutional changes, is it focused on country, region or global institutions?
- Does the program country or region have existing mechanisms to counter VAW-P? For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean there are regional and country-specific mechanisms, which can be built upon or otherwise taken

## **III. Sector of Political Participation Being Addressed**

VAW-P cuts across all political sectors—*civil society, political parties, elections and parliaments*—and affects politically active women regardless of their roles, whether as activists, civil society leaders, voters, political party leaders, candidates for local or national office, or elected or appointed officials. Likewise, many types of violence cut across sectors. For example, politically-active women can be targets of psychological abuse whatever their roles. However, given the range of organizational and contextual issues in each of the four political sectors, each requires a focused approach to address the problem of violence and the barriers it creates to women’s full and equal participation. The way violence manifests can vary significantly between sectors, including who the perpetrators are, what type of violence is used, what the aim and impact of such violence is and, most importantly, what the particular solutions are to address that violence. Therefore, when developing a program, it is critical to be clear on which sector or sectors the program aims to address. This can be impacted by external factors, including donor preferences and available funding, as well as by the country context and what is viable and relevant at the time. These concerns will be addressed later in this document.

In some cases, it may be strategic and relevant to focus on all sectors of political participation, while in others it may be better to focus on two to three sectors, or to develop a robust sector-specific program.<sup>33</sup> This choice will have a direct impact on the program design, as multi-sector programs require a different approach from single sector programs. However, because VAW-P is a critical barrier for women's full and equal participation across all sectors, there should be an effort to build awareness among all stakeholders at the start of any program, even if it has a sector focus. This can be done through a #NotTheCost event. Additional guidance for these types of events is included later in this document.

### Key Questions When Developing a VAW-P Program that Will Influence Program Design

- Are there visible signs of women experiencing violence in a particular sector, such as governance or advocacy, indicating a need for targeted programming?
- Are women participating in higher or lower numbers in a particular sector, and therefore does this sector reflect a greater need for focus because of the perceived violent backlash because of women's increased participation?
- Is there a political *moment* occurring, such as a sudden increase in the number of elected women due to a gender quota being implemented for the first time, that could increase the need to monitor and address violence against women in a specific sector?
- Is there a political *event* occurring, such as an election or a constitutional referendum, that would necessitate a focus on addressing the impact of violence on women's ability to participate equally and in their own conscience in that event?
- Is the donor or source of funding interested in a particular sector, such as elections and electoral processes? Or is the donor more interested in a broad understanding of how this type of violence impacts women's participation at all levels and across all sectors?
- Based on these considerations, would a sector-specific program make most sense; i.e., a program focused on violence against women in political parties or elections? Or would it make more sense to focus more generally on the issue across all political sectors?

## IV. Program Entry Points

Program approaches should reflect the level of understanding of the problem and efforts to address it in a particular country or region. Even though it is not a new phenomenon, the issue of violence against politically active women is a relatively new concept for most country, regional and global institutions and actors. There are wide variations across the globe in awareness of the issue and actions taken to combat it. In some countries or regions, knowledge of VAW-P as a serious challenge to women's rights and strong democracies is nonexistent. But in other locations, such as Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), there is significant awareness and even regional and national legislation to address the phenomenon.<sup>34</sup> Before developing a program to address VAW-P, practitioners should assess this context and determine the right entry-point for programming.

- Are there any civil society organizations, coalitions within civil society, or coalitions joining civil society to other sectors that address violence against politically active women?<sup>35</sup>
- Is there a law or legal mechanism addressing violence against women in politics in the region where the country is located?
- Is there a law addressing gender based violence in the country that mentions/includes VAW-P?
- Is there a law or legal mechanism addressing gender based violence in the region that mentions/includes VAW-P?
- Do any political institutions, such as election management bodies or parliaments, address the issue of VAW-P through rules or processes?
- Are there any domestic election observation groups collecting data on violence against women?
- Has any data been collected on the issue of VAW-P generally or within a particular political sector by a country, regional or global body?<sup>36</sup>
- Is there any reporting from the media on the issue of VAW-P?
- Have there been any legal proceedings related to the issue?

## V. Core VAW-P Program Actions

There are three key actions that should be taken in programs attempting to address VAW-P, whether they have a regional or global focus, whether they are single- or multi-sector or whether VAW-P is the sole focus or integrated into a larger program. These include:

- A commitment to the goals of *#NotTheCost: Stopping Violence Against Women in Politics Call to Action* (available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish);
- Supporting victims to access an online form for reporting violence against women in politics, launched by NDI and available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish; and
- Ensuring robust research on the phenomenon and a strong monitoring and evaluation component to better understand what works to combat it.

## REPORTING INCIDENTS OF VAW-P

NDI's form for reporting violence against women in politics, launched in November 2016, allows women and men worldwide to submit electronic reports of violence against politically active women safely and securely. Information and testimonies submitted through this form are passed by NDI to the office of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls. These submissions are then examined by the Special Rapporteur to identify trends and patterns of violence against women in politics for a possible thematic report, and analyzed with a view toward building a case that could be taken up by the Special Rapporteur directly. This was the ask that former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made of the global community at NDI's #NotTheCost conference in March 2016. It aims to address the critical lack of data on the phenomenon as well as raise global awareness of the seriousness of the problem. More information is available at [www.ndi.org/incident-report](http://www.ndi.org/incident-report).

There are several additional actions that can be incorporated into any program approach. These should be included to varying degrees and in different ways depending on program funding, program entry-point and other factors, but are critical to addressing the issue.

First, programs can **define and disseminate the concept** of “violence against women in politics” to give a name to these acts and raise awareness at the global, national and local levels. Programs should emphasize that these behaviors should not be seen as “the cost of doing politics;” rather they actively seek to prevent women’s political participation as women and constitute a serious violation of international norms and national laws regarding democracy, human rights and gender equality. Program approaches can also **raise awareness of the global nature** of the problem, emphasizing that violence against women in politics is not a phenomenon restricted to one area of the world. Although

specific acts of violence may differ across countries and world regions, they have a common intention: to restrict and control women’s political participation. Additional guidance on key activities to include in programs is listed in the section on Education and Awareness Raising.

Along with awareness-raising, programs can **develop indicators and collect data** on the prevalence, form and impact of violence against women in politics. The lack of data contributes to denial of this problem, but statistics and qualitative case studies can support efforts to combat this phenomenon—as well as illustrate its broader meanings for women, politics and society. One approach would be to incorporate data on political violence within existing international studies and databases of violence against women. Those working at a regional, national or local level may add indicators on the issue to existing regional surveys and studies. Measured over time, these data will permit evaluation of strategies to see where progress has been made and what further interventions may be needed.

## RESEARCH IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE

Research and data collection is critically important for making progress on this issue. Following the 2010-11 post-election violence in Côte d’Ivoire, few groups had substantive research on the effects of that violence—much less its effects on women and their political participation. But one local women’s rights group, the *Organisation des Femmes Actives de Côte d’Ivoire* (OFACI), did conduct research that focused on how women had been targeted and affected by the post-election violence. It launched an investigation about women in 16 localities, using surveys to determine the extent and consequences of violence against women after the elections.

OFACI identified the main types of violence that women experienced and the numbers of victims in some locations that had been most affected. After compiling and publishing the data, OFACI pursued advocacy strategies to bring justice to the perpetrators of violence and protect women from future violence, including making recommendations to Ivorian authorities and organizing training sessions for women, communities, law enforcement and—importantly—election observation groups prior to the next election. They were also able to aid some of the women victims who sought assistance after the violence, helping them secure medical treatment or accompanying them to court.

Programs can play an important role in **supporting networking** among female politicians and civil society organizations interested in tackling this issue, whether on a formal or informal basis, by providing opportunities to connect during organizational or regional gatherings—or to connect virtually through organization platforms. Regardless of the forum, care must be taken to ensure that the women participating are protected from any backlash or breach of confidentiality. Additionally, programs can consider **providing training** for women on how to respond to and mitigate acts of violence against women in politics, including how to decrease vulnerability and respond effectively to both in-person and online attacks. In a similar vein, it can also be useful to provide training for men to raise awareness about the roles they can play in stopping or responding to violence. Overall, programs addressing violence against women in politics should include efforts to prevent it, protect victims from it and punish perpetrators for doing it. For example, programs can connect with victim services or support organizations during the development phase and raise awareness about services they provide for victims of violence or refer victims directly to services as needed.

# **PROGRAM GUIDANCE**



## PROGRAM GUIDANCE

Awareness of violence against women in politics is growing around the world as more organizations and researchers turn their attention to the under-reported problem and as more politically active women have spoken publicly about their experiences. The effort to uncover the full scope and impact of VAW-P must reflect its global nature. However, it may differ from place to place in its specific type, victims, perpetrators and impact. Programs that address VAW-P may draw heavily on global understanding of the problem but ultimately must reflect local knowledge.

In any effort to address VAW-P, it is critical to fully understand the problem before deciding on a solution. This helps activists and practitioners determine a specific, achievable goal that will address the underlying problem. In turn, this established goal will guide them in making decisions about strategy and the steps needed for success. For VAW-P programs, this process should start with an **assessment** of the local, country or regional context that will guide the rest of the program by identifying the key factors at play, including what kind of violence occurs, where it occurs most often, its perpetrators and victims, and its impact, as well as attitudes and perceptions that may exist around it. The assessment can also take into account which organizations or individuals are already working on the issue locally, identifying whether they might be potential allies or partners.

The base of knowledge established through a comprehensive assessment will not only help programs make the case that VAW-P is a problem that must be addressed, but will also allow practitioners to map the most promising strategies and entry points, as well as identify potential allies or opponents more effectively. It will also help programs make the case to skeptics and potential partners that VAW-P is a current and relevant problem that must be addressed. On a larger scale, each assessment, even if it appears small in scope, is an important addition to the process of building a global understanding of the issue. Ultimately, an assessment will not only make programs stronger and more effective in the short-term, but also support their long-term impact and sustainability.

Once an assessment has been completed and used to map the current landscape the program will operate in, there are many advocacy strategies that can be adapted to confront VAW-P. The choice that any program makes between them should be determined by the initial investigation of the problem and an identification of the resources that might be available or of use. The following program guidance will take practitioners through each of the steps described above to determine and implement the strategy or strategies that will be most effective. From the process of assessment and research, to using that research to craft an action plan and advocate for change, to engaging key allies in the efforts, this section provides more detailed guidance on the steps and information that should be considered for any program that aims to address VAW-P.



# UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE AGAINST POLITICALLY ACTIVE WOMEN

## Introduction

Violence against politically active women remains a largely under-documented and misunderstood phenomenon despite growing awareness of the issue among regional actors, such as the Organization of American States through the Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM), and international organizations, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Liberal International.<sup>37</sup> There is very little data on the prevalence, content, perpetrators and victims of this violence, which is a critical barrier to proving that VAW-P exists and examining the forms it takes. The lack of data, and the persistent ‘invisibility’ of the issue that lack perpetuates, also impedes the development of strategies to prevent, treat and sanction such violence.

There are several efforts underway to better document and understand the phenomenon. These include efforts by the CIM to survey women in local politics in LAC to understand how violence impacts their ability to participate; an IPU initiative<sup>38</sup> to study and build awareness around the violence against women in parliaments, and efforts by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems,<sup>39</sup> UN Women and NDI to better document and combat violence

impacting women’s participation throughout the electoral cycle.<sup>40</sup> However, information about VAW-P has not been adequately or comprehensively collected for all sectors and across all countries. Therefore, a critical part of any VAW-P program will be to create a deeper understanding of the issue so solutions can be developed.

A first step must be an **assessment** of violence against women in politics within the country or countries the program will encompass. Although some of the information gathered through the assessment can be used to develop a program baseline, a true baseline as a monitoring and evaluation tool, based on a specific program design, will also be important for measuring the success of a particular program aimed at addressing VAW-P. The information gathered through an assessment can help to inform advocacy initiatives that address the issue, including clearly defining the problem and developing the solutions.

A **VAW-P Assessment** can be conducted as the very first activity practitioners should undertake, in collaboration with program partners and beneficiaries, to better understand the causes, perpetrators, aim, content, victims and impact of VAW-P.<sup>41</sup> The guidance below outlines the methodology for conducting such an assessment. However, the final methodology will depend on various factors, including the program budget, the political sector or sectors of focus, and whether the program is country, regional or global in scale. Certain sections of the assessment can be taken directly or adapted from existing tools created to assess the phenomenon within a particular sector, such as IPU’s study on violence against women in parliament and NDI’s Votes Without Violence Toolkit.<sup>42</sup>

## Methodology

Women experience violence in all sectors of political participation—as advocates on policy concerns within civil society, as political party leaders or candidates, as elected officials and beyond. However, the particular way violence manifests can vary significantly between sectors, including who the perpetrators are, what type of violence is used, what the aim and impact of the violence is and, importantly, what the solutions are to address it.

Therefore, a **VAW-P Assessment** should include four sections of questions related to each of the key political sectors in which citizens participate: elections and electoral processes, political parties, parliaments/governance<sup>43</sup> and citizen participation.<sup>44</sup> Each of these sections, in turn, is composed of a set of questions aimed at assessing how violence impacts women’s ability to participate in that

sector's institutions and processes. The overall assessment can be used together with other questions as part of a broader democracy assessment framework or as a stand-alone tool focused on VAW-P. Additionally, when combined with questions regarding the gender sensitivity of a process or institution overall, the results can be more useful in determining recommendations and actions—including those aimed at individuals, institutions and social norms—to combat it.<sup>45</sup>

This guidance document contains tools to help practitioners develop the right questions for each sector. These tools were not originally developed to be part of a formal VAW-P assessment as described here. However, they can be directly applied by practitioners to inform their questions and the overall direction of that assessment. Where these tools already exist and are available for public use, this is clearly indicated in the text below. In many cases, however, because the field of study around VAW-P is still quite new, helpful tools are still being developed or tested around the world. Where these tools are not yet public, but will be made so soon, they are indicated with a note. In electronic versions of this document, these tools will be linked within the text as soon as they are made available.

## Assessment Objectives

A Violence Against Women in Politics Assessment must collect a range of information on a set of core variables necessary to better understand the issue, including: root causes, early warning signs/indicators, perpetrators, victims, types/content, aim/objective, location and impact. Additionally, it must include questions assessing the ways in which the policies and practices of relevant institutions may sanction or encourage such violence.

While in some cases it will be possible to utilize established sets of questions (for example, the questions that may be found in the Votes Without Violence Toolkit), these should be refined through a participatory process with key stakeholders to ensure the assessment is country specific. Additionally, if there is a clear program design with defined objectives that do not necessarily address all sectors included in the tool, then the components for sectors that are not relevant can be removed. However, it should be noted that to understand the full impact of VAW-P on women's political participation and democracy, all sectors should eventually be assessed. The overall aims of an assessment tool are to identify the following information for each political sector:

## What are the root causes for VAW-P?

- » **Institutional causes** can include the lack of institutional mechanisms, laws or policies that prevent discrimination or limitations on women's ability to participate in public life. Institutional root causes for VAW-P might also include the lack of laws or policies that defend victims of violence; the absence of rules or structures addressing violence against women within political institutions; or the level of women's leadership in the country.
  - » **Socio-cultural causes** develop out of discriminatory gender norms, including those that relegate women to the private sphere and privilege men as naturally political; they can also relate to the "normalization" of violence in general, and of violence against women in particular. This can include the general level of understanding about VAW-P, and whether there is social recognition that VAW-P is a form of violence or whether it is socially acceptable.
  - » **Individual causes** can include the understanding or recognition of VAW-P by individuals; as well as the lack of opportunities, knowledge or resources that are available to women in politics.
- What are the indicators or early warning signs that this violence will occur?
  - Who are the perpetrators of such violence?
  - Who are the victims of such violence?
  - What are the types of violent acts used? What is the content of violence?
  - Is violence occurring in private, public and/or "protected" public spaces?
  - What opportunities and barriers exist within political institutions and processes to sanction or reward such violence?
  - What is the impact of violence on women's ability to participate in the processes and institutions within and across political sectors?
  - What is the level of understanding and recognition of VAW-P as a form of gender-based violence/human rights violation?
  - This could involve identifying existing attitudes about VAW-P: for example, is it seen as normal behavior in politics or political space? Is it widely accepted?

In exploring these questions through the assessment, and deepening the understanding of VAW-P, practitioners, advocates and activists should keep the following definitions and key concepts in mind:

## Definitions of Key Variables of VAW-P

<p><b>Victim</b></p>	<p>A person who is suffering from an act of violence and who is harmed directly by the perpetrator. Specific groups of possible victims will vary by sector and are listed in each section of the tool.</p>
<p><b>Perpetrator</b></p>	<p>A person who is committing any act of violence against another person or group of people. Specific groups of possible perpetrators will vary by sector and are listed in each section of the tool.</p>
<p><b>Impact</b></p>	<p>The direct impact of violence varies depending on the type of violence being perpetrated, but the intent of it is to discourage, intimidate or otherwise prevent women from exercising their right to participate fully and equally in the processes and institutions of politics. Types of possible impacts of violence will vary by sector and are listed in each section of the tool.</p>
<p><b>Categories of Violence</b></p>	<p>Violence against women in politics can take many forms and can be difficult to identify. There are five major categories of violence, which can be found below. Questions in the assessment tool will connect to one of these categories. Within each category there will be differing content/types that may vary significantly by country and region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Physical:</b> Physical violence includes any violent act that results in bodily harm. It is the intentional use of physical force with the potential to cause physical harm.</li> <li>• <b>Sexual:</b> Sexual violence includes any sexual act or attempt to carry out or obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or attempts to sexually exploit a person by force or coercion.</li> <li>• <b>Psychological:</b> Psychological violence includes any kind of pressure or discrimination that puts mental pressure or stress on a person, making them feel fear, self-loathing, incapable, guilty or helpless. This can include online attacks, such as cyber-bullying.</li> <li>• <b>Threats and Coercion:</b> Threats can be verbal or physical indications of the intent to cause harm or commit violence. Coercion is the practice of persuading or forcing a person to do something through the use of threats or violence.</li> </ul>

- **Economic Violence:** Economic violence includes the systematic denial of resources to women for election activities, or restricting women's access to resources that are available to men

Any of these types of violence can occur in private, public or “protected public” spaces. Often, the perpetrators and victims reflect the particular “space” where violence is occurring. In private spaces, for example, it is often a male family member perpetrating such violence against a female member of the family.

**Public sphere:** This is the most visible kind of violence. It refers to violence that occurs in public life or through a platform open to a public audience. This includes public political activities such as campaign events, protests, debates or speeches/statements; traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio or online news; social media such as Facebook or Twitter; or other spaces open to the public.

**Protected Public Spaces** are political institutions—such as political parties and associations, and parliaments—that in a democratic society should be transparent and accountable to the public. However, because of their traditionally elite male power structure and women's lower status within them (which can be compounded by the fact that they are deemed to be private associations or have certain privileges attached to them that exempt them from laws and scrutiny faced by other public institutions), such spaces often allow and enable violence against women within their memberships to take place. Perpetrators and victims of such violence are often members of the same institution. For example, female members of political parties will be victims of violence perpetrated against them by leaders or members of their own party.



## Answering the Assessment Questions

Each of the four sections of the assessment should examine the questions and categories outlined above within the four sectors of politics. To create this assessment framework, several research tools and resources are presented in this guidance document to help practitioners determine how best to investigate and respond to these questions in order to deepen their understanding of the issue of VAW-P. Readers of this guide will find the tools linked throughout the text below, as well as listed at the end of this section. The specific field of study focusing on VAW-P is still quite new. At the time this program guidance was written, not all tools are publicly available, as many are still in the process of being developed and tested by NDI and other organizations. As they do become available, this guidance will be updated to include them accordingly.

The following is a brief guide to the *existing* and *forthcoming* tools that are included and referenced in this document as useful for the different sectors of politics covered in a VAW-P assessment:

### CIVIL SOCIETY

- An exploration and assessment of civil society, social movements and women activists by NDI
  - » Tools forthcoming

### POLITICAL PARTIES

- Win With Women Assessment for women's participation in political parties, developed by NDI
- Tools currently available
  - » Update forthcoming in 2017
- Win With Women "2.0" to measuring violence against women within political parties, developed by NDI
  - » Tools forthcoming in 2017

## ELECTIONS

- Framework for assessing violence against women in elections, developed by IFES
  - » Tools currently available
- Votes Without Violence toolkit for citizen observers and accompanying website, developed by NDI
  - » Tools currently available

## PARLIAMENT

- Research on women's experiences in parliament released by the IPU, developed for its issues brief on violence against women parliamentarians.
  - » Report currently available
- Win With Women Parliamentary Assessment, developed by NDI
  - » Tools currently available

## Creating a Research Design

When creating the research design for the assessment, programs should use appropriate methods for collecting data to answer the questions. Ideally, any assessment will combine three types of data collection:

- Secondary data collection to review procedures and protocols for the sector's relevant institutions;
- Separate surveys for male and female actors within the relevant sector(s); and
- Interviews and/or focus groups with female and male political leaders.

The approaches and their goals are summarized below in a text box and described in greater detail in this section. Questions and other resources to guide the development of these components, including complete survey and interview forms, can be found within many of the current and forthcoming tools referenced for each section of the assessment. While in many cases these tools may not match the format recommended below, or target these types of data collection specifically, they can easily be used and adapted to create these components. The final method used will vary depending on the particularities of the country and practitioners' access to institutions and other key stakeholders.

A complete VAW-P Assessment would ideally include the following components to draw out information regarding each of the four sectors of politics (civil society, political parties, elections, and parliaments):

### Components of a VAW-P Assessment:

Target Group	Tool	Goal
Political institutions and legislators	Secondary data collection desk review	To review existing laws/rules, protocols, guidelines and codes of conduct for the respective sector(s)
Women political actors	Survey	To gather initial information about women's views on violence within political institutions and processes and whether they have identified incidents or risk factors for violence
	Focus groups	To gather information about women's experiences and how they perceive violence
	Key informant interviews	To gain perspective and detailed information on women's personal experiences with violence in politics
Men political actors	Survey	To gauge and measure male political actors' perceptions of the existence or types of violence within politics
Men political leaders	Interviews	To 1) inform political leaders and raise awareness of VAW-P and 2) gather information on their perspective of any violence or lack thereof occurring within their respective institutions or processes

It will be important to create templates and identify a strategy for recording information received during interviews and group discussions, including note-taking during interviews or recording the conversations. But in some instances, a written record of responses may not be allowed due to confidentiality concerns.

## Protecting Confidentiality

Any assessment—indeed, any program overall—must be clearly committed to maintaining the confidentiality of participants, both to protect them from potential retribution as well as to avoid “socially desirable” answers that are given out of loyalty or fear. To avoid doing harm, intentionally or unintentionally, practitioners and partners must make a clear commitment from the early stages of any program addressing violence to protect the confidentiality of participants throughout the program and to nationally or internationally accepted principles and standards of research and outreach on violence. However, neither should these concerns paralyze the process of data collection, or prevent organizations from undertaking programs to address VAW-P altogether. Proper care can be taken to maintain confidentiality and the safety of participants and victims of violence.

In the context of an assessment, this includes taking care not to unintentionally betray the identity of participants; for example, by sharing information that would specifically indicate an individual’s experience. For all materials related to the assessment, analysis and any reports that are developed, at no point should a participant be referred to by name or other personally identifiable information. Protocols for recording the responses from participants, as well as clearly addressing confidentiality concerns, should be developed before the assessment is conducted in close collaboration with local partners, and should follow established best practices and national and international guidelines for



research on violence against women and gender-based violence. In *no* case should raw data from a VAW-P Assessment ever be shared, including survey responses, interview or focus group notes and participant lists.



**For examples of international guidelines and best practices for research on gender-based violence, see:**

- » [Ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies](#) (World Health Organization)
- » [Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists](#) (World Health Organization, PATH)
- » [Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women](#) (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

## Data Collection Methods<sup>46</sup>

### *Secondary Data Collection*

This method should be used whenever possible to gather information about the rules and procedures of political institutions, the status of women in politics, and the social-cultural barriers and norms of a particular country. If this is completed at the beginning, the information can be incorporated into the final assessment and used to help finalize the survey questions, which can help avoid inclusion of unnecessary questions.

Civil society organizations or activists may be especially useful sources of information for a desk review or secondary data collection. Practitioners can use the assessment as an opportunity to identify and reach out to organizations or individuals that may already have records or other relevant information that is not collected or stored elsewhere, including the levels of violence against women in the country, past incidents of VAW-P and the general levels of women's political participation. They may also be able to shed light for practitioners about the general environment for politically active women and the types of violence they may face, either because of past research they have done, or through anecdotal evidence they have collected from the women they work with.



**For examples of a guide to secondary data collection and context analysis, see:**

- » [Assessment Framework](#), Votes Without Violence (NDI)
- » [Context Analysis](#), Votes Without Violence (NDI)
- » [Violence Against Women in Elections: A Framework for Assessment, Monitoring and Response](#) (IFES)

## Surveys

Surveys will be a key part of collecting initial data on VAW-P as they offer a way for victims, witnesses and perpetrators, to report their experience without fear of reprisal. As with other forms of gender-based violence (GBV), VAW-P often takes place in the private sphere (for example, inside a home), or in protected spaces such as political parties, which means that much of the violence against women will not be within sight of an external observer or witness; often the victim is the only source of information about it. Because this type of violence is often the result of gender discrimination and unequal power relations between the victim and perpetrator or between men and women,<sup>47</sup> there are significant barriers to and repercussions for reporting it. Thus, a confidential survey is an important method for securely collecting information.

Below are some reasons why incidents of violence occurring in private or protected spaces are likely to go unreported and are therefore better recorded through secure and private means, such as surveys:

- Such violence is viewed as a normal aspect of political participation and not something women should complain about; rather, it is viewed as something they have to endure.
- Victims fear retaliation from the perpetrator of such violence if they or anyone else report it, whether it is a male family member or a member of a political party.
- Victims don't think authorities will do anything about it if they do report it.
- The negative repercussions outweigh any benefits victims might get from reporting it.
- Victims may fear reprisal by their family, or harm to their own or their family's reputation if the form of violence they experienced holds a stigma, such as rape or other forms of sexual violence.

- When this violence is committed within the private sphere, the victim or witness may view it as simply another incident of GBV that women experience regularly and as unrelated to the political process even if it is aimed at controlling or stopping the victim's political participation. (This is why education and awareness raising is a key step in addressing VAW-P.)
- The victim may blame herself for the incident of violence and therefore not see any reason to report it.
- The victim may be embarrassed by the incident of violence, either because of the stigma attached to a particular form of violence (i.e. rape), or because she thinks it will cause her to appear even weaker and unable to withstand the difficulties of political participation.

Bearing these constraints in mind, an assessment must include methods for gathering information that protect the privacy of the victim as well as the perpetrator. This will ideally be a combination of survey, focus group and stakeholder interviews. In each case, practitioners and researchers should always follow the pre-established confidentiality protocols, and should also ensure that participants are aware of these protocols and of the purpose of the research.

Surveys can be conducted in different ways depending on what is the most

likely method to complete them without undue influence on an individual's response.<sup>48</sup> Ideally, a survey would be given to all participants who can be gathered at the same time in the same location with adequate time to complete it. A moderator familiar with the survey should be in the room to explain questions when needed. The surveys can then be collected at the same time. This could be a part of a larger training program so there is an additional reason for participants to attend. It is often necessary to give political actors an incentive to give up large amounts of their time and capacity building can serve that purpose.

The surveys should never be given out in a mixed-sex room. The male survey should be given only within a group of men, and the



same guidance should be followed for the women’s survey. This is due to the nature of the violence being assessed; women will feel more comfortable and willing to be honest about their answers than they would in front of male peers. Because women participating in the survey will be asked to share information that is often sensitive and personal, ensuring a single-sex environment for filling out the survey will help them feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and opinions.

If it is not possible to give the survey to a large group of respondents at one time, then survey participants should be asked to complete the survey on their own. There are several options for how to do this. One option is to leave a survey at their offices, party headquarters or other location, ask them to fill it out within an agreed timeframe, and then go back to retrieve it. However other stakeholders, such as party leadership or members of their family, could influence individuals’ responses. Alternatively, participants may be brought together for the specific purpose of responding to the survey; the surveys may be given out at a different event to take advantage of the participants there as a “captive audience”; or the survey may be administered individually as an “interview” by the researcher, rather than given as a written questionnaire.



**For examples of surveys and guidance, see:**

- » Methodology, Assessing Violence Against Women in Political Parties (NDI)<sup>49</sup>
- » [Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice](#) (IPU)
- » [Guide](#), Win With Women Political Party Assessment Tool (NDI)

**Practitioners may also find it useful to refer to the sample form questions for election observers contained in:**

- » [Chapter 6: Developing Forms](#), Votes Without Violence (NDI)

### *Key Informant Interviews*

Interviews should be conducted with relevant key informants, such as party or election management body (EMB) leaders, local or national elected officials, members of relevant government institutions (in some cases, practitioners may wish to include members of the police or security forces, or officials from the judiciary) and women’s civil society groups. It is often easier to secure an

interview with male MPs or party leaders than to convince them to fill in a long survey, so information from leaders will likely need to be obtained during these targeted interviews, rather than by including them in a general survey.

By using targeted interviews, practitioners or partners can probe for detailed information and solicit specific examples on the established questions in a guided conversation. The information collected in interviews can be cross-referenced with data collected through other tools during analysis, allowing for a deeper investigation and more useful and interesting analysis and recommendations. In this light, the interviewer(s) should prepare questions ahead of time in order to guide the discussion as closely as possible—but interviewees should never be compelled to answer questions if they feel uncomfortable or do not wish to do so.



**For examples of interviews and guidance, see:**

» Interview Guide, Assessing Violence Against Women in Political Parties (NDI)<sup>50</sup>

### *Focus Groups*

Once survey data is collected and reviewed, focus groups with politically active women should be conducted to analyze and better understand the results. Survey responses do not always provide extensive information about the root causes of violence or the details and nuances of violent acts. So while survey data is important for gathering detailed information on perpetrators, types of violence and victims, focus groups are key to analyzing how violence impacts women's desire and ability to participate, as well as identifying potential strategies for addressing such violence. Usually small in size, about 7-12 people, focus groups are a moderator-lead discussion about the participants' experiences, feelings and preferences about a topic. They provide an important opportunity to capture more detailed experiences of a diverse group of politically active women, and can allow for a greater depth in the analysis. If only survey data is collected, recommendations will be more general and may not include detailed strategies for addressing each challenge. Conducting focus groups and interviews to deconstruct the responses and identify the causes of VAW-P is optimal and can lead to much more context-specific strategies for change.



Focus groups should be conducted in single-sex groups *only*, for the same reasons outlined in the survey guidance above. Because the focus group participants may be asked to share information, experiences and opinions that are often sensitive, personal or painful, this is a critical point for focus group moderators to bear in mind. Wherever possible, moderators themselves should also be of the same gender as the participants. This will help women participating in the discussion to feel more comfortable and willing to share their thoughts; there is significant evidence that women speak much less in group settings when men are present.<sup>51</sup> In addition, because of the often personal or sensitive nature of the topics discussed in a focus group on VAW-P, particular care must be taken to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.



**For examples of focus groups and guidance, see:**

- » Focus Group Guide, Assessing Violence Against Women in Political Parties (NDI)<sup>52</sup>
- » [Chapter 11: Additional Data Collection Methods to Complement Long-Term Observation Early Warning Systems](#), Votes Without Violence

## Review: Creating Your Country-specific Research Agenda

In developing the assessment research agenda, consider the context and resources (time, people and money) available for collecting and analyzing data. Then decide upon the most effective and efficient collection method, using all three methods if possible.

### **A Full VAW-P Assessment Would Include:**

#### » **Part 1: Secondary Data Collection**

A gender expert should gather information about the rules and procedures for relevant political institutions and processes, the status of women in politics, and the socio-cultural barriers and norms of a particular country before conducting the assessment. This information is used to refine the tool so it fits the particular country and program context.

#### » **Part 2: Surveys**

Surveys are completed by relevant male and female political actors.

#### » **Part 3: Key Informant Interviews**

Interviews are conducted with relevant key informants, such as party or EMB leaders, national and local elected officials, members of relevant government institutions (including police and the judicial system) and women's civil society groups. It is often easier to secure an interview with a member of parliament or political party leader than to convince him or her to take the time to fill in a long survey, so information from leaders will likely need to be obtained during targeted interviews.

#### » **Part 4: Focus Group and Small Group Discussions**

Once survey data is collected and reviewed, focus group discussions can be conducted to analyze and ground truth the survey responses, as well as complement survey data with detailed information from other groups.

## *Organizing the Data*

Once research is complete, survey responses should be compiled with data gathered through focus groups, interviews and secondary data collection—qualitative and quantitative—to complete an analysis and make recommendations. To record survey responses, whether collected through interviews or completed by individuals, a spreadsheet to cross-reference answers and information with the assessment’s major themes or research questions can be created to facilitate analysis.

## *Data Analysis and Recommendations*

Once information is compiled, it should be reviewed and analyzed by a gender specialist with an understanding of the political institutions involved. Regional- or country-level expertise is also desirable and necessary. A civil society partner organization may be invited to assist with research, do analysis or craft solutions. This will depend on the country context, but where possible it will help programs determine the best way to conduct assessments that will help institutions develop internal strategies and action plans for reform, including anti-violence measures, and help position civil society organizations so they can advocate for and monitor these commitments.

### **REMEMBER:**

Throughout the entire process of analysis, and in any final materials produced, participants’ confidentiality must be protected and all personally identifiable information should be kept separately, as a reference only. This can be done in a number of ways without presenting a burden for practitioners or researchers: for example, in the Win With Women 2.0 Assessment for political parties, the anonymity of focus group participants is assured by assigning participants individual numbers and recording or referring to their comments with their number only, rather than by name or initials.

## *Final Report*

Once the assessment is complete, a report should be compiled and shared with relevant stakeholders detailing the baseline data on the nature, scope and impact of VAW-P. This report will form the basis of the next phase of work, which entails identifying actions to prevent, treat and punish VAW-P. The

structure and tone of the report may vary, but key components should include:

- Assessment objectives
- Assessment methodology
- Assessment findings and analysis

Initial recommendations based on assessment findings and opportunities for action listed in the global Call to Action to address the problem



### **TOOLS FOR UNDERSTANDING VAW-P:**

- » [VAW-P Primer: Training Presentation](#)
- » [Not The Cost: Violence Against Women in Politics](#)



### **TOOLS FOR ASSESSING VAW-P:**

#### **CIVIL SOCIETY:**

- » Forthcoming

#### **ELECTIONS:**

- » [Votes Without Violence: A Citizen Election Observer's Guide to Addressing Violence Against Women in Elections](#) (NDI)
- » [Violence Against Women in Elections: A Framework for Assessment, Monitoring, and Response](#) (IFES)

#### **POLITICAL PARTIES:**

- » [Win With Women: Political Party Assessment Tool](#) (NDI)
- » Win With Women 2.0: Assessing Women's Participation and Violence Against Women Within Political Parties (NDI)
  - » Forthcoming

#### **PARLIAMENT:**

- » [Issues Brief: Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament](#) (IPU)



## ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

A VAW-P Assessment should provide information to clearly define the VAW-P problem within a country context, which is essential to developing an advocacy strategy to address it and build more inclusive organizations to focus on the violence. The assessment will reveal information about the problem that can be used to develop consensus among stakeholders on key solutions.

### **VAW-P Action Plan: Identifying Actions to Address VAW-P in a Country, Region or Sector**

In addition to developing recommendations for building more inclusive organizations and institutions to address the violence, the assessment will reveal information about VAW-P that can be used to develop consensus among stakeholders on the problem and potential solutions. Once the initial goal is established, an action plan is a way to set out a clear vision for change and the steps necessary to achieve it.

#### *Developing a Clear Definition of the Problem.<sup>53 54</sup>*

Before crafting an action plan, stakeholders must first clearly define the specific problem they wish to address. Strategies for advocacy and change often run into significant challenges when problems perceived as priorities are not clearly defined at the outset or when a problem is too broad to develop realistic strategies to address it. A clear definition of VAW-P in its specific country context can be developed out of an assessment. This problem statement will

provide a concrete base to understand how VAW-P is experienced, and it can be used to seek buy-in from key actors and broaden support for action. Most importantly, it will provide a starting point and direction for the creation of effective strategies to address and eliminate VAW-P.

### *Crafting Action Plans*



Action plans are a “blueprint for action” for civil society, governments, international partners, political institutions and other relevant stakeholders to address VAW-P. The plans can be crafted within a single political sector, such as political parties, or across sectors. They can include country, regional or global actions. This will depend on the target audience for the actions and may be determined ahead of the consensus building activities. The action plan provides proposals that can be used to develop legislation and/or regulations within political institutions. Actions may be geared toward data collection or norm changes. For each action, the platform should set forth concrete steps for accomplishing the desired change.

It is important to engage relevant stakeholders in creating action plans so they take ownership of the strategies and changes that are proposed and the implementation that follows. Once clear and relevant actions to address a problem are identified,

a significant amount of advocacy will be needed to ensure they are adopted.

Action plans are often created when stakeholders come together from different segments of society and different parts of a country to agree on a concise number of key priorities. To begin this process, practitioners may facilitate one or a series of large consensus-building meetings of leaders and representatives of all participating political institutions and civil society organizations to establish an action plan specifically to mitigate violence against politically active women within relevant political institutions and in the country as a whole. This collaborative process should engage the participants as co-creators, and allow for the development of and commitment to a country- or regional-level action plan.

By bringing men and women together from diverse backgrounds, an action

plan helps to create a “common voice” for stakeholders working to stop VAW-P, helps to consolidate their influence in policy-making and increases their ability to shape the policy agenda. A VAW-P action plan enables democratic governments to be more responsive to the needs of the entire population, particularly women.

It is often necessary to first provide training or briefings for participants on what solutions are available. The global [Call to Action](#)<sup>55</sup> is a good starting document for this information. However, as the international community endeavors to address VAW-P, more examples of best practices will follow; programs should draw on all existing initiatives to counter the phenomenon and invite presentations on those efforts.

Technical assistance may be needed to help institutions craft and implement the necessary mechanisms and changes to rules, processes or institutional culture to address the issue. This may include bringing in a technical expert to craft legislation, an expert with experience implementing organizational changes, or a GBV expert on how to set up coordinated service referral pathways for victims of violence. Programs should keep in mind the need to draw from multiple disciplines, including experts on GBV/VAW, democracy, gender, information and communication technology (ICT) and other specific sectors such as parliaments, elections or peace and security to craft and implement viable solutions.



**For more resources on developing action plans, see:**

- » [Call to Action: Stopping Violence Against Women in Politics](#) (NDI)
- » [A New Weave of Power, People & Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation](#) (JASS)

### *Engaging Key Allies: Education and Awareness Raising*

Because VAW-P and its impact on women’s rights and democracy are relatively unknown, any program addressing the phenomenon should include an education and awareness-raising component. Relevant stakeholders, including victims of such violence, may not understand or be convinced of the need to direct attention and resources to stopping VAW-P. Likewise, organizations that work on GBV prevention, treatment and rehabilitation may also not see the link between politics and their work on violence; whereas traditional political actors may not recognize violence as an issue for politically active

women. Thus, programs will need to develop and disseminate the concept of “violence against women in politics” to give a name to these acts and raise awareness. Messages should emphasize that these behaviors should not be attributed to “the cost of doing politics;” rather they actively seek to prevent women’s political participation as women and constitute a serious violation of international norms and national laws regarding democracy, human rights and gender equality.

## Activities

### *Country #NotTheCost Conference:*

The activities used to create awareness of the issue will depend on available funding, country context, program sector(s) and level of focus, as well as other factors. However, it is recommended that every program should begin with a **#NotTheCost** event that brings together key stakeholders from across the political spectrum to educate them on the phenomenon and build an understanding that it is an important issue for everyone dedicated to promoting strong, inclusive and democratic societies.

The gathering should provide a platform to introduce existing actions underway to address the issue within the program country and region. Such an event can contribute to this by gathering stakeholders for an initial discussion on the opportunities for action within a particular context. This event should also be used to introduce the relevant actors and institutions to the global **#NotTheCost** initiative, including the **Call to Action**, which includes best practices and strategies that can be used effectively by activists, politicians and policy-makers in their own countries to raise awareness, mitigate violence and increase accountability for perpetrators. The **#NotTheCost** initiative also enables those working on the issue to connect with others who are a part of the global campaign, becoming the foundation for a growing network of global change-makers.

### » **Who Should be There?**

Participants should include key actors and institutions needed to understand and address the issue.

A wide spectrum of actors should be gathered, including activists and reformers involved in or impacted by violence against women in politics, grassroots activists, key stakeholders in political parties, parliaments and electoral processes, and representatives from the women’s rights, GBV, security, justice

and digital technology sectors. The event should feature speakers chosen for their involvement in and passion for this issue, as well as audience members who are change-makers in their communities and/or their countries. Such an event should include a balance of men and women and individuals of different ages and backgrounds. Organized citizen participation can be instrumental in encouraging political institutions, such as political parties and parliaments, to fulfill their democratic roles and responsibilities. Therefore, it is critical that representatives of key civil society groups be invited to participate alongside stakeholders within the political institutions.

### » **What Should be Covered?**

Such an event should include speakers and discussions aimed at accomplishing the following:

#### *Defining Violence Against Women in Politics Within a Particular Context:*

- **Overview of VAW-P:** The conference should start with a general overview of the issue, including how it is defined and examples of ways it has manifested in different parts of the world, as well as any existing data on the phenomenon in different sectors of political participation. This can be done by using or adapting the VAW-P presentation found in the tools for this program guidance.
- **Testimonies from victims of violence within the program country from different political sectors.** It is important to illustrate the comprehensive nature of this problem by including testimonies that show how it manifests within different political processes and institutions. For example, one testimony could be delivered from a woman who experienced violence as a way to control or prevent her from voting; another victim could speak about her experience with such violence to prevent or control her advocacy efforts. It will also be important to show the range of acts constituting violence against women in politics by having testimonies exemplifying different forms of violence.
- **Regional or international perspectives on the manifestation of VAW-P (Optional):** Testimonies or discussions from women leaders from other countries on how this violence is manifested in their lives and in their country should also be considered. Or researchers or academics could present a paper or data set from other regions or countries to illustrate the global nature of the problem<sup>56</sup>.

## A NOTE ON TESTIMONIES: #NOTTHECOST LAUNCH EVENT

#NotTheCost was launched officially by NDI at the annual United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women conference in New York City in March 2016. It was designed not just to provide information and raise awareness about VAW-P, but also to be grounded fundamentally in the true experiences of women around the world. Balanced with panels and keynote speakers who presented the issue as experts from a wide range of sectors, the conference featured a series of testimonies from women in politics around the world, including civil society advocates and activists, current and former women mayors, parliamentarians and members of security forces. These testimonies served an important purpose: to make the issue "real" by bringing the impact of violence out of the theoretical realm into a current and immediate problem that has deep effects on women around the world.

Since the initial conference, this format has been replicated in several ways for different groups of stakeholders, including through collaboration between NDI and Liberal International on #NotTheCost events for parliamentarians and party members. In each case, where these testimonies have been included, participants commented after the event on how powerful it was to hear from women about their experiences and that it gave the problem of VAW-P an immediacy that was otherwise missing. Programs with launch events should include testimonies as primary features, but should keep in mind:

- Never oblige women to deliver testimonies they do not wish to give in public, or in front of a certain audience
- If the event will be recorded, or there will be media present, women should be informed ahead of time, and given the option to present their testimony without being recorded
- If confidentiality or safety is a concern, but women would like to share their experiences, programs can consider supplementing live testimonies in creative ways, for example:
  - » Presentations of anonymous testimonies by third parties
  - » Short acted scenarios
  - » A printed packet including anonymous testimonies

## *Presenting Solutions to Violence Against Women in Politics*

- **Testimonies or a panel illustrating solutions in the country that have been developed and implemented:** These could be individuals who are well-placed to discuss implementation challenges and lessons learned.
- **Regional or international perspectives on solutions to address VAW-P:** This could be testimonies or a panel of international actors who have taken action to stop VAW-P in one or more sectors of their country, region or globally. It could also be a researcher, practitioner or academic presenting information on a particular type of action, such as a party code of conduct or set of actions that have been taken.
- **Guidance on the role of external and internal institutional actors** on action to address VAW-P. This could be presented by an expert in advocacy or a stakeholder who has carried out an advocacy campaign to change political norms, rules and processes that included both external and internal drivers for change, such as civil society and institutional members and/or leaders.

### *Introducing the Call to Action*

- Compilation of existing opportunities for action, as well as ideas that are still in development that can be taken by a range of actors and institutions at the country, regional and global level.
- Because the types of violence that are prioritized will differ from place to place, the opportunities for action contained in the document are a menu of options, not a prescription. Not every strategy will work in all circumstances. The document is organized into clearly defined sections so that actors can combine opportunities as they present themselves.
- One organization, institution or individual may choose to pursue legal opportunities and remedies, conducting or advocating for legislative action and reform, in an effort to defend victims as well as pursue perpetrators and bring them to account. Others may choose



to develop procedures to provide care and treatment for victims, raising awareness of and responding to their needs. Still others may mobilize to monitor and report on data about the problem, pursuing technological advances to address violence.

## *Educating and Engaging Key Allies*

### » **Creating a Message**

Initially, education and awareness raising messages do not need to be country specific. They may be developed based on information from the #NotTheCost global initiative and accompanying resources and other research done across the world.<sup>57</sup> However, once an action plan is established based on information gathered through the VAW-P assessment and the #NotTheCost event, this information can be used to craft more targeted messages that illustrate how the issue manifests in a particular country and what change is sought. Additionally, as programs may not have a cross-sector focus, messages should be developed to reflect the particular sector and the institutions, processes and actors that are targeted within it. For example, if a program is focused on stopping violence against women in parliament, then messages should target the relevant actors and institutions of this sector and how violence manifests within it.

Messages can leverage language and actions included in the global Call to Action (for example, in the section focused on parliamentary action,) but will need to be tailored for the country context. In that light, practitioners, partners and allies should consider developing their message systematically, to ensure it is appropriate for the identified audience and accurately conveys the desired information. Some activities and themes to consider include:

#### **Program Activities to Support Message Development:<sup>58</sup>**

- Workshop on strategies for developing and delivering advocacy messages:
  - » Know your audience
  - » Know your political environment and moment
  - » Craft your message
  - » Deliver your message

- **Workshop on developing a communication plan:**

- » Why do you want to communicate with the community? — What's your purpose?
- » To whom do you want to communicate? — Who's your audience?
- » What do you want to communicate? — What's your message?
- » How do you want to communicate it? — What communication channels will you use?
- » Who should you contact and what should you do to use those channels? — How will you actually distribute your message?

- **Post Workshop:** Implement your action plan.

- » Design your message and distribute it to your intended audience
- » Evaluate your communication efforts, and adjust your plan accordingly
- » Keep at it



**For more resources on creating a message and engaging allies, see:**

- » [Community Tool Box: Communications to Promote Interest](#) (Work Group for Community Health and Development)
- » [Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence Against Women and Girls](#) (UN Women)

- » **Key VAW-P Stakeholders:**

To develop a targeted message, it is important to identify the key actors and institutions that are most critical for creating lasting reforms to prevent, treat and punish VAW-P and thus for whom the message will be tailored. Some of these will be relevant across all political sectors, such as lawmakers and civil society organizations (CSOs) focused on GBV, and some will be more relevant for a specific sector, such as election management bodies or political party leaders. Externally-driven incentives are key to institutional reform, and advocacy from civil society plays a critical role in ensuring that institutions, such as political parties, EMBs, parliaments and other government institutions,



are held accountable for the promises they make to citizens. That being said, institution members and their leaders can have a significant impact on the levels of violence against women taking place within the “protected” walls of those institutions.

Through awareness raising efforts, programs can educate stakeholders that these behaviors are not normal and actively seek to prevent the political participation of women because they are women and that this constitutes a serious violation of international norms and national laws regarding democracy, human rights and gender equality. Through education and drawing in stakeholders from within and outside political institutions, change can be promoted.

#### » **Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Stakeholders:**

It must be recognized that VAW-P is a type of gender-based violence as well as a type of political violence. Therefore, in addition to including stakeholders working with political violence, it is necessary to engage actors who have an understanding of violence against women, including violence against politically active women, which in most countries has not been systematically assessed. These often include individuals, organizations or government entities working on issues of violence against women and are more likely to have information on the potential causes and perpetrators of violence, as well as mechanisms for treatment and prevention. These non-traditional stakeholders are not only invaluable because of their understanding of the issue but they are key to creating and implementing sustainable methods for change to address the phenomenon.

Although GBV actors will recognize that violence against women is a problem, they may not see a link between violence targeting women in politics and other forms of GBV. It may be necessary to build an understanding of their role in responding to this type of violence and coordinate the linkage to existing services for victims and the reports that come in from political actors. Programs should aim to ensure that both traditional and nontraditional stakeholders will address this issue adequately, in a timely manner and correctly.

### **GBV Stakeholders to engage include:**

- NGOs or bilateral organizations with a focus on gender
- Domestic women's rights NGOs with a focus on women's political participation
- Domestic women's rights NGOs with a focus on GBV, including those providing services or running shelters and hotlines
- Government ombudsman or ministries of gender

### » **Political Stakeholders:**

Similarly, relevant political stakeholders may not understand or be convinced of the need to direct attention and resources to VAW-P. Often, stopping gender-based violence such as rape or domestic abuse is not considered relevant for promoting the integrity of democratic institutions and processes. Initial outreach will require targeted education and awareness-raising on what VAW-P is and why it is relevant for democracy. This outreach should include discussions on the appropriate response by individuals and institutions to prevent violence, sanction perpetrators and treat victims. Women reporting violence often face significant barriers to receiving fair, safe and accurate responses from security forces, political institutions or governing officials.

### **Political Stakeholders to engage include:**

- Political party leadership and female party members
- Election management bodies
- Security forces and the peace and security community
- Groups within an election observer coalition that are focused on women's rights specifically or human rights generally
- Current or former elected women, including at the local, regional and national levels
- Parliamentary staff, male and female members of parliament
- CSOs/NGOs with a focus on women's political participation, good governance, parliamentary monitoring and holding governing bodies accountable

» **Illustrative Activities for Outreach and Communication to Engage Stakeholders:**<sup>60</sup>

- **Conduct awareness-raising campaigns directed at political parties and voters** to highlight the problem through posters, websites, tweets, on-line videos and television spots. Raise citizen awareness of the issue through speeches and campaigns highlighting and condemning this behavior. Content should focus on illustrating what violence against women in politics is and explaining why it is unacceptable in light of laws and societal values regarding democracy, human rights, inclusion and equality.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF A CAMPAIGN: NIGERIA & THE STOP-VAWIE CAMPAIGN**

During Nigeria's 2015 elections, with the support of NDI, the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), a civic education group in the country, launched a "Stop Violence Against Women in Elections"(Stop-VAWIE) campaign to identify, document and report data on violence against women. This campaign included an important outreach component in addition to its focus on general awareness-raising and prevention. In addition to radio and video campaigns, and extensive use of social media, the Stop-VAWIE campaign coordinated targeted outreach, including a high-profile launch event, to generate awareness of and interest in its message among specific stakeholders.

These stakeholders included the election management body, national police and political parties, and civil society groups. As a result of the outreach, including the launch event, the Stop-VAWIE campaign generated support for prevention and mitigation efforts among key stakeholders. These efforts included rapid response efforts that drew on the expertise, abilities and resources of a wide spectrum of stakeholders. At the formal launch of the campaign in Kogi state, for example, the commissioner of police announced that all electoral violence targeting women would be given high priority by the police force, and directed a police officer assigned to support the campaign to ensure that all VAW-E incidents were reported to the police for resolution.

- **Work with service providers that respond to victims of violence against women to ensure they are trained to recognize this type of violence** as well as its perpetrators, and are equipped to support its victims.
- **Provide training to law enforcement officials** to enable them to recognize acts of violence against women in politics and to take these acts seriously as violations of core human and democratic rights. Encourage them to report and prosecute these crimes to the fullest extent of the law, and to create mechanisms for such reporting.
- **Raise the awareness of party members** regarding this issue through distribution of materials, including posters, websites, tweets and online videos. Content should focus on illustrating what violence against women in politics is, especially as it relates to parties or party members, and explaining why it is unacceptable. Materials should stress that acts of violence against women in politics reflect negatively upon the party, sending a message about the party that might alienate voters and the public at large.
- **Provide training for parliamentarians** to raise awareness about their own conduct, which they may not realize is discriminatory toward women. Such training could involve enhancing the gender sensitivity and awareness of parliamentarians, as well as providing information about the resources available for responding to acts of violence against women in politics.
- **Provide training and mentoring programs for women candidates** to share insights and coping strategies on how to respond to and mitigate acts of violence against women in politics, including how to decrease vulnerability and respond effectively to both in-person and online attacks. Programs may choose to provide training programs for men as well to raise awareness about how they can stop violence and to engage them in further efforts to address VAW-P.
- **Raise awareness across the justice and security sectors regarding the existence of legislation** on violence against women where it exists, as well as other legal tools that could be mobilized to tackle violence in the political realm. These could include resources that describe how to handle legal cases concerning VAW-P and tools to help those involved. These legislative resources might be included in a protocol or be published in hard copy or online as a guide for justice and security personnel.



**For additional resources on outreach and awareness raising, see:**

- » [Community Tool Box: Communications to Promote Interest](#) (Work Group for Community Health and Development)
- » [Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence Against Women and Girls](#) (UN Women)

## » **Advocacy to Achieve Action**<sup>61</sup>

Once a set of solutions has been selected for a VAW-P action plan and advocacy messages have been developed, technical assistance should be provided to program participants to establish and conduct a successful advocacy campaign. They need to be able to promote, implement and track policy over time. A program focused on providing participants with the skills and knowledge to do each of these steps can have many phases, including the following:

- Technical assistance to support a coalition or group of actors promoting the action plan to develop and execute an advocacy strategy
- Capacity building to help program beneficiaries develop the necessary skills to conduct a successful advocacy campaign, including building and managing effective coalitions

Coalitions that participate and carry forward action plans can be either *formal* or *informal*:

### *Formal Coalitions*

Action plans can be created and promoted by already existing groups, such as a women's parliamentary caucus, that may come together to create a VAW-P action plan to focus their advocacy. Alternatively, bringing stakeholders together to create a common agenda can lead to establishment of a formal network or coalition. For example, men and women in different political party wings may come together to identify a list of common actions to address VAW-P and then create a formal coalition to promote their platform across party lines.

## NETWORKS IN ACTION: ALBANIA AND EQUALITY IN DECISION-MAKING

In 2009, NDI hosted a political skills development program for Albanian women. At the time, women held only 10 of the 140 seats in Albania's parliament. Over the course of the program, the women formed strong bonds across often polarized party lines. After the program, the women came together to form Equality in Decision Making, a formal, multi-partisan women's network, to raise public awareness of the need for greater political participation by women, push for a stronger women's presence in political parties and elected office, and support economic, social and educational projects that benefit women at the community level. By creating such a network, women in Albania coalesced around important issues and advocated for change by asserting the voice of women in the policy debate. Through group discussion and debate, Women in Equality and Decision Making identified women's health as a priority among members and launched an advocacy campaign to address breast and cervical cancer.

### *Informal Coalitions*

Informal coalitions, by comparison, usually involve bringing stakeholders together from different parties and sectors for a limited period for the sole purpose of creating and promoting a common agenda. In this case, a group would come together to identify common priorities and then potentially form working groups that would create an action plan for advocacy in relevant sectors, such as parties or the national government, to promote their proposed policies. Such a coalition would have no objective other than to promote their VAW-P action plan. Informal groups still need to have regular meetings to monitor the success of their advocacy work and can exist for as long as needed to meet their objectives.

## NETWORKS IN ACTION: MEXICO AND THE 2% Y MÁS CAMPAIGN<sup>62</sup>

In 2011, a group of stakeholders from various sectors developed a strategy, with the support of NDI, to advocate for enforcement of a regulation that mandated that political parties spend two percent of the public funding they were allocated on the training and political development of women. Soon, the informal group had become formalized into the 2% y + Mujeres en Política (“2% and More Women in Politics”) coalition. The coalition successfully lobbied for new regulations to increase transparency and strengthen auditing of party finance in general, and “specifically of the use of the two percent earmarked for women’s training, promotion and leadership development.” From there, the coalition continued to engage with government stakeholders to develop indicators for compliance and produced an advocacy guide that was distributed in states throughout Mexico.

In implementing action plans and tracking commitments, program participants may receive or request additional capacity building. This assistance should be informed by the needs of the coalition or groups involved, and importantly, by the strategies for action they have identified and the steps needed to achieve their goals.

### **Additional capacity building may also include:**

- Community mobilization
- Engaging the target audience
- Effective communication
- Resource management and fundraising
- Negotiation

### *Civil Society Advocacy*

Programs may also conduct workshops with civil society members and activists who participated in the formation of the action plan. Workshops can provide a space for civil society actors to discuss the advocacy steps they will take to support development of inclusive political organizations, addressing violence within these institutions and including ways to hold institutions and other actors accountable for implementing the action plans. The goal of these

discussions would be for civil society members to develop advocacy strategies and action plans of their own to sustain pressure on institutions to implement their commitments to stop violence against politically active women.

Civil society members and activists can base their commitments and strategies on the original assessment results, using that platform to ensure they develop reachable and logical strategies to stop VAW-P and hold other actors accountable to their commitments. They can choose to raise awareness; target decision-makers, processes or policies; mobilize support; or design new or combination interventions to push for and sustain change. With multiple sectors of the political space in a country discussing and addressing VAW-P, from civil society to parties and parliaments to government institutions, a coordinated and mutually reinforcing approach to VAW-P can have a stronger chance of addressing it effectively.

# CONCLUSION

Violence against politically active women is a problem that cuts across regions, sectors and political contexts, and ultimately undermines democracy. While it has historically gone undocumented, a growing body of research shows its impact and cost, not only for women who are targeted by violence, but also for inclusive, sustainable and resilient democracies as a whole. Much more work must be done to address the issue of VAW-P. It must be undertaken on many fronts, from global action by international institutions to the important in-country work by activists and democracy practitioners. This document, and the tools it presents, will help practitioners determine how best to direct their efforts, the concrete steps and information they must consider, and the decisions they must make to create and implement programs that address violence against women in politics—and foster a more inclusive, sustainable democratic culture and practice.

# APPENDICES:

## I. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

*Found in #NotTheCost: A Call to Action to Stop Violence Against Women in Politics*

- » Opportunities for Action to stop VAW-P (NDI)

## II. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS ASSESSMENT TOOLS

### A. CIVIL SOCIETY<sup>63</sup>

### B. POLITICAL PARTIES:

- » Win With Women: Political Party Assessment Tool (NDI)
- » Win With Women 2.0: Assessing Women's Participation and Violence Against Women Within Political Parties (NDI)<sup>64</sup>

### C. ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL PROCESSES:

- » Votes Without Violence: A Citizen Election Observer's Guide to Addressing Violence Against Women in Elections (NDI)
- » Violence Against Women in Elections: A Framework for Assessment, Monitoring, and Response (IFES)

### D. PARLIAMENT:

- » Issues Brief: Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament (IPU)

# ENDNOTES

1 Volden, Craig, Alan E. Wiseman and Dana E. Wittmer (2010) "The Legislative Effectiveness of Women in Congress," <http://polisci.osu.edu/faculty/cvolden/VWWWomenLEP.pdf>.

2 O'Connor, K. (Undated) "Do Women in Local, State, and National Legislative Bodies Matter?" The Women and Politics Institute, American University. [<http://www.oklahomawomensnetwork.com/doc/Why%20Women%20Matter%20paper.doc>].

3 The Institute for Inclusive Security. 2009. Strategies for Policymakers: Bringing Women into Government. [http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/1648-bringing\\_women\\_into\\_government\\_mar\\_09\\_final.pdf](http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/1648-bringing_women_into_government_mar_09_final.pdf)

4 Bardall, Gabrielle. 2011. "Breaking the Mold: Understanding Gender and Electoral Violence." IFES: Washington, D.C.; Inter Parliamentary Union. "Sexism, Harassment, and Violence against Women Parliamentarians," Issues Brief, October 2016. <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/issuesbrief-e.pdf>; Krook, Mona Lena. 2017. "Violence Against Women in Politics." Journal of Democracy, Volume 28, Number 1: 74-88.

5 Even in cases where women may be asked for money, rather than sex, this can be a form of economic violence. Often, women are not allowed or able to access the same networks and resources as their male colleagues, and this can be used to prevent their participation: for example, when the monetary cost of a nomination or campaign for individual candidates is set at a very high level, women are disproportionately impacted, because they disproportionately occupy a lower status than men or have additional barriers to credit and financing (such as banks requiring their husbands' signatures on a loan) that men do not face.

6 "New report shows the reach of online harassment, digital abuse, and cyberstalking." 2016. Data & Society. Available at <https://datasociety.net/blog/2016/11/21/online-harassment/>.

7 "Online Harassment." 2014. Pew Research Center. Available at <http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/10/22/online-harassment/>.

8 Krook, Mona Lena. 2017. "Violence Against Women in Politics." Journal of Democracy, Volume 28, Number 1: 74-88.

9 NDI. 2010. "The 2009 Presidential and Provincial Council Elections in Afghanistan." Washington, DC. p. 32. [https://www.ndi.org/files/Elections\\_in\\_Afghanistan\\_2009.pdf](https://www.ndi.org/files/Elections_in_Afghanistan_2009.pdf)

10 The Guardian. "Scores of women 'divorced or abandoned' for voting in Tanzanian elections." <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/08/scores-of-women-divorced-orabandoned-for-voting-in-tanzanian-elections>

11 Quintanilla, Tammy. 2012. "Propuesta de Iniciativa Legislativa Sobre Acoso Político a Mujeres Autoridades." Lima: European Union.

12 <http://budapestsentinel.com/interviews/meet-bernadett-szel-co-chair-mp-hungarys-green-party-lmp/>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-in-dia-33341631>.

13 Herrera, Morena, Mitzy Arias, and Sara García. 2011. "Hostilidad y violencia política: develando realidades de mujeres autoridades municipales." Santo Domingo: ONU Mujeres. South Asia Partnership International. 2006. "Violence Against Women in Politics." Lalitpur: SAP-Nepal Publishing House.

14 Krantz, Joakim, Lisa Wallin, and Sanna Wallin. 2012. "Politikernas trygghetsundersökning." Stockholm: Brottsförebyggande rådet.

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16 Shepherd, Tory. 2014. "More Women Turning Off Politics after Julia Gillard Was Badly Treated." Advertiser, January 14.

17 Campbell, Rosie & Joni Lovenduski. 2016. "Footprints in the sand: FIVE Years of the Fabian Women's Network Mentoring and Political Education Programme." Fabian Society. [http://www.fabians.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/FootstepsInTheSand\\_lo.pdf](http://www.fabians.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/FootstepsInTheSand_lo.pdf)

18 IPU. "IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians: Overview." <http://www.ipu.org/hr-e/committee.htm>

19 IPU. 2016. "Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians." <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/issuesbrief-e.pdf>.

20 Protected Public Spaces are political institutions that in a democratic society should be transparent and accountable to the public. However, because of their traditionally elite male power structure and women's lower status within them

(which can in some cases be compounded by the fact that they are deemed to be private associations or have certain privileges attached to them which exempt them from laws and scrutiny faced by other public institutions in the same national jurisdictions), such spaces often allow and enable violence against women within their memberships to take place. Perpetrators and victims of such violence are often members of the same institution. For example, female members of political parties can be victims of violence perpetrated against them by leaders or members of their own party.

21 Bardall, Gabrielle. 2011. "Breaking the Mold: Understanding Gender and Electoral Violence." IFES: Washington, D.C.

22 Becky Gardiner, et al. "The dark side of Guardian comments." The Guardian. 12 April 2016; Anita Bernstein, "Abuse and Harassment Diminish Free Speech," Brooklyn School of Law, Volume 35, Issue 1 Fall 2014.

23 UN. 1993. General Assembly Address. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

24 UN. 1948. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

25 UN. Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#article1>

26 UN. Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#article7>

27 Beaman, L. et al. 2007. Women Politicians, Gender Bias, and Policy-making in Rural India. Background Paper for the UNICEF's The State of the World's Children Report 2007: p. 11, 15 and 16. [[http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/docs/beaman\\_duflo\\_pande\\_topalova.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/docs/beaman_duflo_pande_topalova.pdf)].

28 Camissa, A. and B. Reingold. 2004. Women in State Legislators and State Legislative Research: Beyond Sameness and Difference in State Politics and Policy Quarterly. Vol. 4, No. 2: 181-210.

29 O'Reilly, Marie, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin, and Thania Paffenholz. 2015. Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes. <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/IPI-E-pub-Reimagining-Peacemaking.pdf>

30 Including, but not limited to: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa ("Maputo Protocol"), the First Protocol to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women ("Convention of Belem Do Para").

31 Bolivia is the only country to pass a law specifically addressing VAW-P; legislation against this type of violence was passed in 2012. However, Mexico, Peru, Ecuador and Costa Rica have all considered or are currently considering similar legislation.

32 Murphy, Jessica. "Trudeau gives Canada first cabinet with equal number of men and women." *The Guardian*. November 4th, 2015. Accessed:12/22/2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/04/canada-cabinet-gender-diversity-justin-trudeau>

33 NDI has been working to raise awareness, collect information and build capacity among its partners on the issue of VAW-P through its #NotTheCost global Call To Action and program (launched March 2016). Currently, NDI is undertaking research in the area of violence against women in civil society, as individual women activists are among the most vulnerable to violence because of their political activism. In the specific sector of political parties, NDI is in the process of updating its "Win With Women" party assessment tool to examine VAW-P within party organizations. In the sector of elections, NDI has already developed resources and guidance to build the capacity of election observers gathering and analyzing data on violence against women in elections, illustrated in our Votes Without Violence toolkit and website. Regarding parliaments, the IPU—a partner on NDI's #NotTheCost initiative—conducted a study (released October 2016), shedding light on the seriousness and scope of violence against women in parliament. These all serve as examples of what a sector specific focus can be. However, when undertaking a cross-sector approach, democracy practitioners and partners can develop a program using components from each sector.

34 For a more detailed look at developments in Latin America, see Mona Lena Krook and Juliana Restrepo Sanín, "Gender and Political Violence in Latin America," *Politica y Gobierno* 23 (January 2016): 125-157.

35 In Côte D'Ivoire, for example, the civil society group Organisation des Femmes Actives de Côte d'Ivoire (OFACI) has engaged in research and victim advocacy for women targeted or affected by post-election violence; in Tanzania, a collection of civil society actors has formed the Sextortion Coalition to push for an end to the sexual extortion and harassment of women in politics and the workplace.

36 A useful reference may be the IPU's Issues brief on sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians, released in October 2016, which details the research undertaken by the organization in a study of women parliamentarians' experiences of violence in politics.

37 Efforts to address the phenomenon are also being taken by other international organizations, including by UN Women, International IDEA, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

38 Inter Parliamentary Union. "Sexism, Harassment, and Violence against Women Parliamentarians," Issues Brief, October 2016. <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/issuesbrief-e.pdf>

39 Huber, Jessica and Kammerud, Lisa. "Violence Against Women in Elections, an Excerpt from IFES' Framework" Produced by IFES for the United States Agency for International Development, August 2016.

40 NDI will be doing work to assess and better address this phenomenon within political parties throughout 2017.

41 Although the outcomes of the assessment may also be leveraged to establish a program baseline, the tool shared in this program guidance document is not a baseline assessment itself.

42 UN Women is currently undertaking an effort to create a comprehensive assessment framework for VAW-P. However, current tools are a compilation of resources developed by the IPU, NDI and OAS in their respective efforts to address and measure the issue.

43 The elected office assessment tools linked in this document are currently focused on violence against women in parliament, as that is where the majority of work has been conducted. They also include some questions from a recent survey from the OAS on women in local elected office.

44 These questions may guide programs to focus on one sector in particular;

in this case, programs will find further guidance in the sector-specific tools referred to and linked from this document. This sector-specific guidance may include further assessments, in order to investigate VAW-P more fully in that particular sector.

45 Assessment tools such as IPU's Gender Sensitive Parliament or NDI's WWW Political Party Assessment are examples of such gender focused resources that can be used along with this focused tool for VAW-P.

46 Research method options informed by NDI Monitoring Evaluating & Learning internal publication, How to Design a Community Baseline.

47 UNFPW and WAVE. 2014. "Strengthening Health System Responses to Gender-based Violence in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: A Resource Package." <http://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/WAVE-UNFPA>

48 An additional resource that may be helpful to practitioners is the Partners For Prevention survey tool, used in a UN multi-country study on men's use of violence against women. Although it is not focused on violence against women in politics, it can serve as an example of how to ask questions about sensitive issues: <http://www.partners4prevention.org/how-to/research>.

49 Forthcoming in 2017.

50 Forthcoming in 2017.

51 Stewart, D. W., Shamdasani, P. N, and Rook, D. W. (2002) Focus Groups: Theory and Practice. Sage Publications: Thousand Oak, CA, pp 42-43.

52 Forthcoming in 2017.

53 VeneKlasen, Lisa and Miller, Valerie. 2007. "Section 8: Planning Moment #3: Identifying & Defining Problems," A New Weave of Power, People, & Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation, Stylus Publishing. [http://www.justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/13chap8\\_identifying\\_prob.pdf](http://www.justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/13chap8_identifying_prob.pdf)

54 Ibid. "Section 9: Planning Moment #4: Analyzing Problems and Selecting Priority Issues," A New Weave of Power, People, & Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation, Stylus Publishing. [http://www.justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/14chap9\\_analyzing\\_prob.pdf](http://www.justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/14chap9_analyzing_prob.pdf)

55 #NotTheCost: Stopping Violence Against Women In Politics. (2016). NDI.

56 For example, past NDI activities have benefited from the expertise of Dr. Mona Lena Krook and Juliana Restrepo Sanín, Rutgers University; Maria Eugenia Rojas Valverde, former president of Asociación de Concejalas de Bolivia (ACOBOL); Dr. Ave Maria Semakafu, national coordinator for the Tanzania Women Cross Party Platform (TWCP); and many more experts, academics and politicians from every region of the world.

57 For example:

Krook, Mona Lena and Juliana Restrepo Sanín. "Gender and political violence in Latin America: Concepts, debates and solutions." *Política y Gobierno*: Vo. XXI II, pp. 125-157. [http://mlkrook.org/pdf/pyg\\_2016.pdf](http://mlkrook.org/pdf/pyg_2016.pdf)

IPU. "Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians." <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/issuesbrief-e.pdf>

UNWOMEN. "Violence Against Women in Politics." 2014. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2014/6/violence-against-women-in-politics>

IFES. "Violence Against Women in Elections." 2016. <http://www.ifes.org/publications/violence-against-women-elections-excerpt-ifes-framework>

58 NDI's Gender, Women and Democracy team (GWD) recommends practitioners engage with experts in advocacy and awareness raising campaigns to determine the specific program components and approach. Other resources also include:

Adult learning techniques: primarily geared toward training, but could be applied in an education context

Adult learning principles: guidance and concepts to keep in mind if the program features information that is more focused on an education curriculum rather than a media/messaging outreach campaign

59 Community Toolbox, Chapter 6. Communications to Promote Interest, Section 1 Developing a Plan for Communication. Retrieved from <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/participation/promoting-interest/communication-plan/main>

60 These are generic illustrative actions that could be taken and are based on the guidance included in the Not The Cost Global Action Plan, which can be found at: <https://www.ndi.org/not-the-cost>.

61 O'Connell, Shannon. "Policy Development and Policy Advocacy" [https://www.ndi.org/files/Policy%20Development%20and%20Advocacy%20Workbook\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ndi.org/files/Policy%20Development%20and%20Advocacy%20Workbook_EN.pdf)

62 Krook, Mona Lena; Denham, Julie; and Gurrolla Bonilla, Silvia. "Women's Leadership as a Route to Greater Empowerment: Mexico Case Study." USAID. 2014. Available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/WiP%20-%20Mexico%20Case%20Study.pdf>

63 Forthcoming.

64 Forthcoming in 2017.

