



Women & Political Representation

Handbook on Increasing Women's Political Participation in Georgia

ადამიანის უფლებების სწავლებისა
და მონიტორინგის ცენტრი

EMC

Human Rights Education
and Monitoring Center

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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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INTRODUCTION

Democracy implies that all voices are being heard. Women constitute 50 percent of the global population but are, nevertheless, underrepresented in decision-making processes at all governance levels around the world because they are still lacking access to political leadership and resources.

“Women represent half the potential talents and skills of humanity and their under-representation in decision-making is a loss for society as a whole.” – first European Summit on Women in Decision-making (Athens, 1992)

The exceedingly low ration of women in political bodies is a phenomenon for established and new democracies alike. Universal suffrage did not lead to representative legislatures.

But the challenge in ensuring women’s participation goes beyond electing a larger number of women in parliament. It is also about changing the endemic perception that the public domain is a male domain.

Women’s representation in Georgian politics is low and should be significantly improved in order to comply with international norms and standards on gender equality. After the 2014 local elections the Public Defender of Georgia expressed his concern about the decreasing rate of women’s participation in political life, as well as about the fact that there seems to be no progress regarding this.

The election results revealed a total percentage of women’s representation at the self-government level of 11.1 percent. The Ombudsman further noted that “it is difficult to talk about [equality], when 53 percent of the country’s population are women but their share in the decision-making process does not reach 20 percent”¹

This book is the result of the project “Capacity Development of Female Candidates and Elected Officials in Georgia – 2014 Local Elections” implemented by the Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC) with the financial support of the Swiss Confederation and with the technical assistance of the Council of Europe. In the first stage of the project EMC organized two training sessions for 34 Georgian female candidates for both independent candidates and members from seven different political parties. 15 out of the 34 trained candidates were elected and hold deputy mandates at the local self-government level. Within this stage the “Handbook for Women Participating in Local Self-Government Elections” was also developed and published.

After the elections, EMC has been closely working with the elected women to identify gender sensitive social issues in their municipalities to further work on.

This second handbook serves as a tool, rather than offering clear-cut solutions to the problem of underrepresentation at the local level especially. It gives information on methods that have been used elsewhere in an attempt to increase women’s participation in the political sphere. Moreover, it focuses on what women need to do and can do themselves. It is the ones most affected who can act on a problem to bring about change.

¹ Public Defender of Georgia, Statement on the Political Participation of Women, 23/07/2014. Accessed 15/08/2014 at <http://ombudsman.ge/en/page/gancxadeba-qalta-politikuri-monawileobis-sheaxeb>.

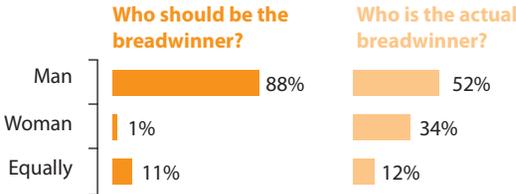
The first part briefly elaborates the theoretical framework of equal participation in decision-making. Part two provides an overview of the relevant international norms and standards in the field of women’s participation in politics. The third part is the main part of this handbook and highlights several good practices that are relevant to the Georgian context as well. This part is subdivided in measures to elect women to public office and measures to ensure women’s political participation.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY OF THE GENDER GAP

Developmental theory starts from the hypothesis that traditional societies are characterized by sharply differentiated gender roles that discourage women from working outside the home. A variety of demography, sociology, anthropology, and social psychology studies have cited the change of gender roles with the process of societal modernization.²

In pre-industrial times the emphasis was on the responsibility of women to bear and raise children. This was their most important function in life, along with housework. The paid workforce was male-dominated, but this has drastically changed in postindustrial societies. A structural revolution in the paid labor force, in educational opportunities for women, and the characteristics of modern families brought this about.³ An increase in the number of married women entering the paid labor market has created the transition from male breadwinner to dual-earning families.⁴



N=1760 - Total Sample

88% of the Georgian population believes the man should be the breadwinner in the family, while women should be largely responsible for the household. (Source: UNDP 2013)

2 United Nations (2010). The World’s Women 2010: Trends and Statistics. New York. Accessed 15/08/2014 at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/WW_full%20report_color.pdf

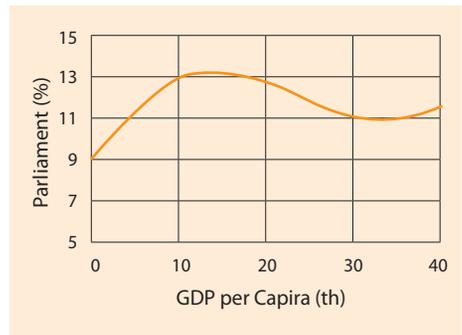
3 Bonvillain, N. (1995). Women and Men: Cultural Constructs of Gender (4th ed). Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, N.J.

4 Mason, K. and Jenson, A.M. (1995). Gender and Family Change in Industrialized Countries. Oxford: Clarendon Press

However, women are still trying to cope with professional and family demands. They also work jobs with lower status and rewards than men do. This proves that traditional values are still present in society; nevertheless, today they are being questioned and challenged more.⁵

Inglehart and Norris (2003) claim this observation leads to four major predications. In their research they found systematic differences in cultural indicators of gender equality (a) between societies based on their level of economic development; (b) within societies based on generational cohorts; (c) between men and women; and (d) within societies based on structural and cultural factors such as education.

Gender equality is a key factor in contributing the economic growth of a nation. The United Nations Population Fund believe that economic growth and social equality should go hand in hand, arguing that “gender inequality holds back growth of individuals, development of countries, and the evolution of societies, to the disadvantage of men and women.”



Female parliamentary participation and GDP⁶

Inglehart and Norris⁷ moot that the current attitudes towards female leadership are more egalitarian in post-industrial societies than in the developing or post-Communist world, and that these attitudes are related to women being elected to office. Further, they say that without cultural change the institutional mechanisms are not effective as such, but merely cultural change will not close the gender gap either. However, it does provide a more receptive environment for such policy reforms. In conclusion they claim the change in attitudes is a long-term process that is linked to the process of modernization.

The authors found that despite the role of human development, attitudes toward gender equality varied even among societies at similar levels of human development. It varied according to factors such as religious traditions, type of state and the level of democratization.

1.2 ARGUMENTS FOR WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In today's discussion of why women's representation is important four main arguments are brought forward. **The justice argument** claims that women have a right to half of the seats since they make up half of the population; the **experience argument** holds that women have different experiences, either biologically or socially constructed, that should be represented as well; the **interest argument** grants that women and men have

⁵ Inglehart, R. and Norris, P. (2003) *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World*, Cambridge University Press.

⁶ Joshua Eastin and Aseem Prakash (2013). *Economic Development and Gender Equality: Is There a Gender Kuznets Curve?*. *World Politics*, 65, pp 156186. Accessed 15/08/2014 at <http://faculty.washington.edu/aseem/gkc.pdf>

⁷ Inglehart, R. and Norris, P. (2003). *Rising Tide. Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World*. Cambridge University Press.

conflicting interests and that these interests cannot be represented by men; the **symbolic argument** says that every female politician acts a role model for all women, regardless of political views or party membership and will attract other women to the political arena; the **critical mass argument** states that women are able to achieve solidarity of purpose to represent women's interests when they achieve certain levels of representation; and the **democracy argument** asserts that the equal representation of women and men enhances the democratization of governance in both transitional and consolidated democracies.⁸

Moreover, Bari (2005) found that nine out of twelve countries where women hold more than 33 percent of the seats in parliament are ranked high in the human development category (girls are more likely to have access to education, lower illiteracy rates, etc.).⁹

1.3 BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Multiple factors contribute to the situation of today where women are underrepresented in political leadership. Women's political involvement, participation and access to formal political power structures are linked to many different structural and functional constraints which differ across countries. Several authors claim that women's absence in the political arena derives from the hindrances related to political, socio-economic, ideological and psychological barriers.¹⁰

Structural

Structural barriers include the level of socio-economic development in a society and the percentage of women in professional and managerial activities. Studies in established democracies showed that these two were related worldwide¹¹ and stressed the importance of women with professional occupations that generally lead to political careers such as journalism and law¹².

There is a direct link between the social and economic status of women in society and their participation in political institutions and elected bodies. Socio-economic obstacles include poverty and unemployment, lack of adequate financial resources, illiteracy and limited access to education, choice of professions and the "dual burden" of family and a full-time job. Women take on a disproportionate share of household tasks which makes a political career almost impossible.¹³ Moreover, household tasks, taking care of the children and elderly are not always considered as actual work.

8 Dahlerup, D. (1978). Women's Entry into Politics. The Experience of the Danish Local and General Elections 1908–20. *Scandinavian Political Studies*. Vol. 1, new series, nos.2–3, pp. 139–162.

9 Bari, F. (2005). Women's Political Participation: Issues and Challenges. Accessed 15/08/2014 at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/enabling-environment2005/docs/EGM-WPD-EE-2005-EP.12%20%20draft%20F.pdf>

10 Shvedova, N. (1998). Obstacles to Women's Participation in Parliament in Women in Parliament: beyond numbers, Ed. Karam, Azza Et Al. Handbook Series, International Idea Publication.

11 Reynolds, A. (1999). Women in the legislatures and executives of the world: Knocking at the highest glass ceiling. *World Politics* 51 (4).

12 Rule, W. (1987). Electoral systems, contextual factors and women's opportunities for parliament in 23 democracies. *Western Political Quarterly* 40, pp. 477–98.

13 Ibid. 9

Poverty is also one of the major hindrances for women to be involved in politics, namely, the disproportionate effect of poverty on women. Because of women's care giving responsibilities they often work part-time, which has a lifelong effect on women's income and women who do work full-time still earn less than their male counterparts. In addition, many women are discouraged by a lack of resources to finance their electoral campaign or undertake serious initiatives. Often poverty also prevents women from taking the time for political involvement.¹⁴

Institutional

The use of gender quotas or proportional representation electoral systems are examples of compensation to institutional barriers that prevent fair competition. Institutional barriers are considered to be the first cause in explaining systematic differences in women's representation across relatively similar types of society. They are also an important factor in changing women's political activism through public policy reforms.¹⁵ Electoral systems are an important facilitator to elect women to public office.

Many studies showed that much more women are being elected under proportional party lists, in contrast to majoritarian single-member constituencies.¹⁶ The Proportional Representation system (PR) allows voters to cast their votes by party, and in some cases by individual as well. The seats in parliament are distributed based on the votes each party receives. Such system provides an incentive for parties to broaden their appeal by adding women to their party lists. The majoritarian single-member system, in contrast, usually only allows for one candidate per district to be chosen.

HIGHER DISTRICT MAGNITUDES	CONTAGION
Has higher number of seats per district (higher district magnitude)	Party lists present greater opportunities to nominate women
Party can expect to win several seats in each district (higher party magnitude)	Greater capacity to promote women when challenged by another party (contagion)
Party more likely to balance ticket by including women (balancing)	Party does not have to pay the cost of denying a slot to an incumbent or male candidate in order to nominate a woman

Why PR systems are better for women (Source: International IDEA)

Cultural

The current political culture often exists of traditional attitudes regarding women in decision-making roles. These attitudes toward gender equality are often seen as an important factor in analyzing women's

14 Karam, A. (2000). Beijing + 5: Women's Political Participation: Review of Strategies and Trends in United Nations Development Program, Women's Political Participation and Good Governance: 21st Century Challenges. pp. 15-26

15 IDEA (1998). Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers. Stockholm. Accessed 15/08/2014 at <http://www.idea.int/publications/wip2/>.

16 Norris, P. (2000). Women's representation and electoral systems. In The International Encyclopedia of Elections, ed. Richard Rose. Washington, DC: CQ Press, pp. 348-351.

entry into elected office.¹⁷ Traditions still emphasize women's primary roles as mothers and housewives. A strong, patriarchal value system keeps these sexually segregated roles in place.¹⁸ The responsibility of women as mothers and wives as well as her domestic duties complicate their involvement and participation in the public sphere.¹⁹

Shvedova (1998) asserts that the political arena is organized according to male norms, values and lifestyles. This is otherwise known as the masculine model of politics. It is based on the idea of competition and confrontation, and often ignores systematic collaboration and consensus which is especially the case across party lines. As a result, women reject this type of male-style politics or even reject politics altogether and only a small number of women actually participate. Women that are involved in politics are more likely to focus on societal issues such as health and social security. However, unfortunately the work schedule is very inflexible and women find it hard to combine work and family within such an environment.²⁰

A female leader featuring feminine behaviour is considered to be unacceptable in politics, while on the other hand the male authoritativeness inherent to the field of politics creates additional pressure for women.²¹

According to UNDP research, the Georgian population believes politics are more appropriate for men and that women should only have a limited role in politics.²² This adheres to the perception of Georgian politics where the political processes are mainly focused on confrontation and mutual blaming, rather than on constructive cooperation. It is true that women 'do politics' differently from men because of their different experience. A shift towards this other form of politics could be enabled by women.

"It doesn't matter which party we represent, it is important for all of us to work together in resolving local problems" Female candidate local self-governing elections 2014

Other barriers include a lack of confidence to run in elections, the perception of "dirty" and corrupted politics, and the influence of the media which portrays women as "sex objects" while not paying enough attention to women's activities and issues, and ignoring the problem of female political underrepresentation.²³

17 Rule, W. (1987). Electoral systems, contextual factors and women's opportunities for parliament in 23 democracies. *Western Political Quarterly* 40, pp. 477–498.

18 SHVEDOVA, N. 1998. "Obstacles to Women's Participation" in Karam, Azza Et Al (Eds) *Parliament' in Women in Parliament: beyond numbers*, Handbook Series, International Idea Publication

19 Bari, F. (2005). *Women's Political Participation: Issues and Challenges* Accessed 15/08/2014 at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/enabling-environment2005/docs/EGM-WPD-EE-2005-EP.12%20%20draft%20F.pdf>.

20 Ibid. 17

21 Ibid. 9

22 UNDP (2013). *Public Perceptions on Gender Equality in Politics and Businesses*. Tbilisi. Accessed 15/08/2014 at http://www.ge.undp.org/content/dam/georgia/docs/publications/GE_UNDP_Gender_%20Research_ENG.pdf

23 Ibid.9

1.4 IMPACT OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The concept of 'critical mass' has a central place in women's political representation research, i.e. the significant minority of women in parliament. Gender and politics scholars argue that women will most probably not have a major

impact on legislative outcomes if they do not evolve from a few token individuals to a considerable minority. Only when this number increases will women be able to promote women-friendly policy change.²⁴

Women in power = greater opportunities for girls' education, health and equality

Another necessary discussion while speaking of women's participation in the political sphere is how they can dominate the male-dominated environment once they are elected in Parliament. Representing women is to make women's viewpoints visible in political decision-making. Therefore, an evolution needs to take place in the minds of the dominant group rather than the mere implementation of policies which establish the marginalized group in political decision-making bodies.²⁵ The actual influence women can make differs from country to country and depends on the political context, the number of female parliamentarians etc.²⁶

A first step should be to broaden the political agenda with women's issues. This can be done in various ways such as: submitting legislation that is favourable for women and introducing women's issues in parliamentary debates. Women's perspective in these debates are important while making certain topics or standpoints politically acceptable.²⁷

A strategy has been suggested in order to make a change and maximize women's impact in parliament. The strategy consists of learning rules, using rules and eventually changing rules to pave the way for the next generation of women politicians.²⁸

1.5 CONCLUSION

This first chapter gave a brief overview of the relevant theories that exist regarding women's political participation. It argued for women's participation and also discussed the main challenges women face to enter the political sphere.

We divided those hindrances into three categories: structural, institutional and cultural barriers. It seems

24 Childs, S. and Krook, M. L. (2008). Critical Mass Theory and Women's Political Representation. *Political Studies*, 56: 725–736.

25 Cramer Walsh, K. (2002). Female Legislators and the Women's Rights Agenda, in C.S. Rosenthal (ed.) *Women Transforming Congress*, Congressional Studies Series 4, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, pp. 370-396.

26 Karam, A. and Lovendski, J. (1998). Women in Parliament: Making a Difference. Participation in Karam, A. Et Al (Eds) in *Women in Parliament: beyond numbers*, Handbook Series, International Idea Publication

27 Williams, M. (1998). *Voice, Trust, and Memory. The Failings of Liberal Representation*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

28 Ibid.10

that solutions to these barriers could make a difference for women in political decision-making bodies.

The socio-cultural status of women proved to be a major obstacle. Therefore, it is important to continue to promote sex equality legislation, to encourage female candidates. Also, establishing women in important positions and improving women's opportunities within political parties could be helpful.

Relevant institutions should become more women-friendly. Here, implementing appropriate changes in electoral and campaigning laws is a first crucial step.

In response to the existing cultural barrier a discourse change needs to be achieved in order for the concept of "female politician" to become as commonplace as "male politician".

Finally, we saw that it is not enough for women to just hold public office. In order for women's representation to be substantive female politicians need to uniformly strive in ensuring gender-sensitive legislation and putting women's issues on the political agenda.

2. INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND STANDARDS

The balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making is at the heart of a functioning pluralist democracy. Several international human rights mechanisms have been established to support women's participation in the public sphere.

Equality between women and men became an obligation for all regimes that ratified these mechanisms (charters, conventions, resolutions, etc.). Moreover, it is a prior condition for the legitimacy of a democratic regime as well as its responsibility and obligation.

2.1 BINDING AGREEMENTS

The founding document of the United Nations, the **UN Charter**, upholds the basis of women's access to public and political life: the principle of the right to equality and the prohibition of discrimination. The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**²⁹ (UDHR) also enshrines the entitlement of all persons to non-discrimination, including on the basis of sex. The **International Covenant on Economic Social and Political Rights**³⁰ (ICCPR) and the **International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights**³¹

29 Art. 1 UN Charter

30 Art. 2 ICCPR

31 Art. 2 ICESCR

(ICESCR) are both instruments flowing out of the UDHR and provide more specific agreements on the right to equality between men and women in public and political life.

Georgia signed and ratified the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**³² (CEDAW) without any reservations in 1994 and, in doing so, committed itself to undertake a series of measures to not only end discrimination against women but also protect women and promote equality within the legal system, public institutions and within other organizations and among individuals.

The provisions of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1952 are restated in Article 7 of the document whereby women are guaranteed the rights to vote, to hold public office and to exercise public functions.

Article 8 of the Convention elaborates the right for women to equally represent their countries at the international level.³³

Several CEDAW General Recommendations are also very useful in interpreting women's rights and the state's obligations in this respect. The CEDAW Committee clarified a set of state obligations in **General Recommendation #23**³⁴ in order to assure women's rights to political participation. This includes the adoption of general positive measures and temporary special measures to ensure that women have the right to participate fully in public policy formulation in senior level positions.

Article 4 of CEDAW says that states should adopt temporary measures to accelerate the equal participation of women in political, economic, social, cultural, and civil spheres. In **General Recommendation #25**³⁵ on Temporary Special Measures, the Committee gives a broad definition of these measures which embody *"a wide variety of legislative, executive, administrative and other regulatory instruments, policies and practices, such as outreach or support programs; allocation and/or reallocation of resources; preferential treatment; targeted recruitment, hiring and promotion; numerical goals connected with time frames; and quota systems"*.

Georgia was one of the 189 UN Member States who adopted the **Beijing Declaration** and the **Beijing Platform for Action** (BPfA)³⁶ in 1995. The Declaration is aimed at promoting a set of principles concerning the equality between men and women, while the Action insists on women's rights as human rights and formulates specific actions to be undertaken by governments to ensure respect for those rights.

32 Art. 7 UN CEDAW

33 Art. 8 UN CEDAW

34 United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation No. 23, Political and Public Life, HRI/GEN/1/Rev.6 at 260 (1997).

35 United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation no. 25, Temporary Special Measures, UN Doc. CEDAW/C/2004/I/WP.1/Rev.1, 30 (2004).

36 United Nations, Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, 27 October 1995. Available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

“...the active participation of women, on equal terms with men, at all levels of decision-making is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy” 2011 General Assembly resolution on Women’s Political Participation

The BPfA set a target for women to hold 50 percent of managerial and decision-making positions in the UN by 2000. Strategic Objective G2 of the Action, specifically, calls for an increase in women’s capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

Georgia is also expected to fulfill the obligations related to **Millennium Development Goal #3 (MDG) on Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women** by 2015.

In 2003 the General Assembly adopted **resolution 58/142 on women and political participation**³⁷ to highlight the importance of increasing women’s participation in positions of power and decision-making. It urges governments, the UN, civil society and other actors to develop a comprehensive set of policies regarding this issue. Later, in 2011 the importance of women’s political participation in all contexts was stressed in **resolution 66/130 on women and political participation**³⁸.

2.2 INTERNATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In March 2003 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted **Recommendation Rec (2003) 3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making**³⁹ and defined balanced representation as a minimum representation of 40 percent of both sexes in all decision-making bodies in political or public life.

The eight objectives to be implemented by the governments of member states include the protection of equal civil and political rights, the revision of legislation, setting targets and encouraging women to participate in political decision-making. Furthermore, it proposes legislative, administrative and supportive measures and calls on the governments to monitor and evaluate the achieved progress in balanced participation. In the appendix of the recommendation a list of ten indicators⁴⁰ was drawn up to measure this progress.

Bearing in mind the abovementioned Recommendation Rec (2003) 3 and the objectives put forward in the Beijing Declaration, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities issued **Recommendation**

37 United Nations, Resolution A/RES/58/142, Women and Political Participation, 22 December 2003. Accessed 15/08/2014 at: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/58/142&Lang=E

38 United Nations, Resolution A/RES/66/130, Women and Political Participation, 19 December 2011. Accessed 15/08/2014 at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/130

39 Council of Europe, *Recommendation Rec (2003) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making*, 2003. Accessed 15/08/2014 at [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec\(2003\)3&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec(2003)3&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383)

40 Para. 4 Rec(2003)3

148 (2004) on gender mainstreaming at local and regional level: a strategy to promote equality between women and men in cities and regions. The Congress advocates for several actions with the member states including the collection of gender segregated statistics, the adoption of monitoring of gender equality policies, and the adoption of specific consultation methods to discover the views and needs of both women and men to improve the participation of women and men in the decision-making that concerns them.⁴¹

The Congress also adopted **Recommendation 288 on achieving sustainable gender equality in local and regional political life** in March 2010. The Congress considers governments of all governance levels to be responsible for promoting equality between women and men. Therefore, local and regional authorities should be involved in *“the process of social and cultural change that it [equality] demands”*. The Congress recommends further that these authorities should implement gender equality policies through for example enforcing legislation which allows the gender perspective to be taken into account in all activities, providing assistance to municipalities and regions in order to introduce gender mainstreaming in all of their departments, and incentives for women involved in politics.⁴²

3. GOOD PRACTICES

Political participation is broadly divided into three segments: the right to choose political leadership, the right to participate in political leadership and gender-sensitive political decision-making mechanisms.

This section gives an overview of some national good practices regarding the last two segments. How to elect more women to public office? and How to ensure the effective participation of women in office?

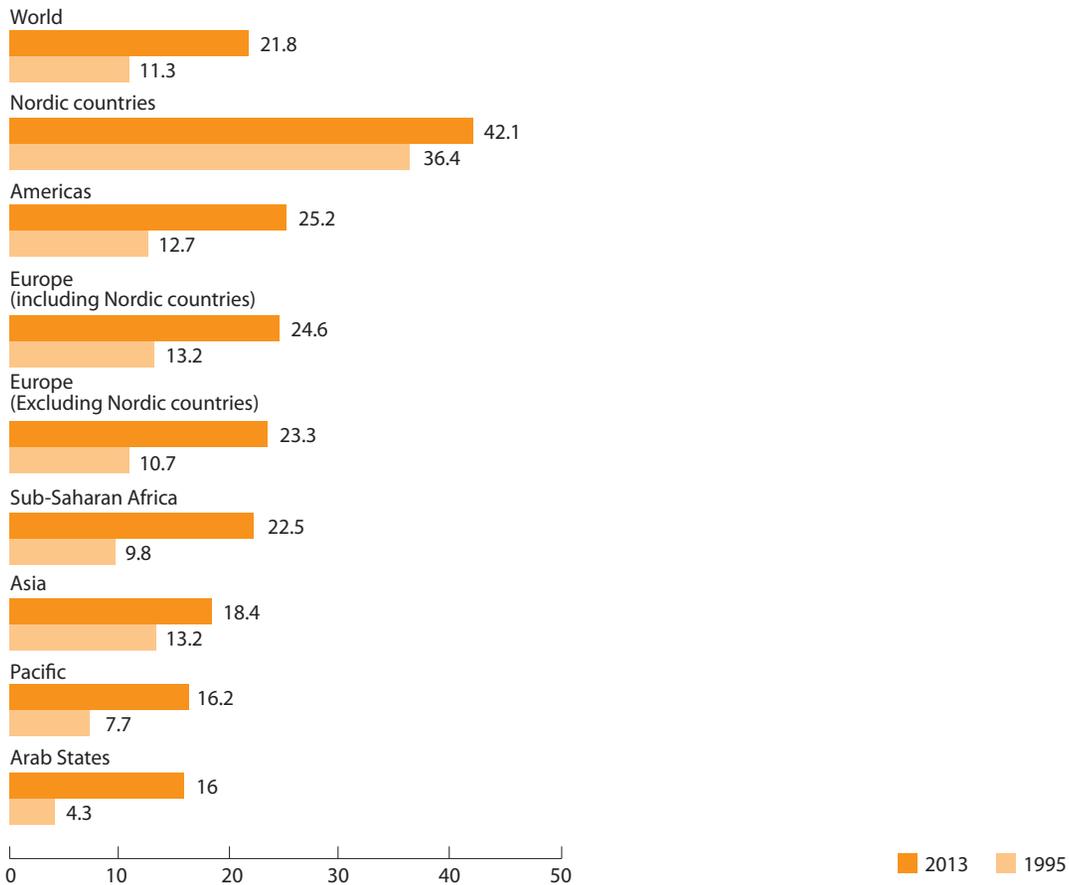
3.1 WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION AT THE NATIONAL POLITICAL LEVEL

According to the latest annual report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 2013 was a year of records for women's participation in parliaments worldwide. The percentage of parliamentary seats held by women globally rose to 21.8 percent, or an increase of 1.5 percentage points compared to the previous year.⁴³

41 Council of Europe, Recommendation 148 of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on gender mainstreaming at local and regional level a strategy to promote equality between women and men in cities and regions, 2004. Accessed 15/08/2014 at: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=815713&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679>

42 Council of Europe, Recommendation 288 of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on achieving sustainable gender equality in local and regional political life, 2010. Accessed 15/08/2014 at: <https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=1621123&SecMode=1&DocId=1556046&Usage=2>

43 IPU (2014). Women in Parliament in 2013. Geneva. Accessed 15/08/2014 at <http://ipu.org/pdf/publications/WIP2013-e.pdf>.



World and regional averages of women in parliaments, 1995 and 2013 (Source: IPU)

40 percent of women in Georgia hold party membership⁴⁴, however, their participation in governing bodies remains limited.

During the 2012 parliamentary elections women won 17 seats out of 150, or 11 percent.

Despite this progress in comparison to the 2008 elections (6.4 percent) the data show a low indicator of engaging women in decision-making. This is also reflected in the Global Gender Gap Index where Georgia ranks 97 out of 136 for female political participation.⁴⁵

44 Bagratia, T. and Badashvili, M. (2012), "Developing Intra-party democracy from a gender perspective", Intra-party Democracy and Local Governance, Tbilisi: NIMD Georgia.

45 Annual Report of the Public Defender (2013). Accessed 15/08/2014 at <http://ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/1/1506.pdf>.

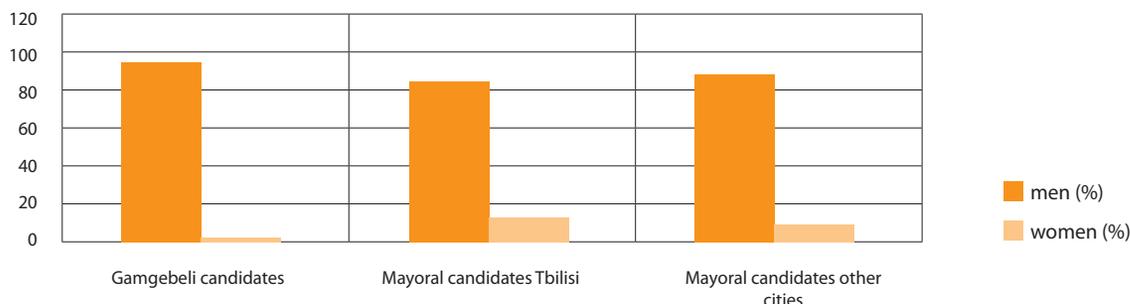
3.2 WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION AT THE LOCAL POLITICAL LEVEL

It is widely agreed upon that women's representation is crucial to creating gender-sensitive policies and services and female politicians can act as advocates of women's issues as well. This is especially the case in local governments.

Good local governance is essential for the living conditions of local communities. Unless women are also involved in policy development and decision making at this level, changes to women's political and socio-economic status will most likely remain minimal.

However, women face the same barriers that were discussed in the earlier chapters at the local level. Even more so, because according to UN Habitat most local governments are inherently patriarchal institutions and women still represent a small percentage of mayors and councilors.⁴⁶

After the 2014 local elections in Georgia the percentage of elected women was 11.1 percent. None of the self-governing cities have women as mayors and only two out of 64 chairs of Sakrebulo (local representative bodies) are women, i.e. 3 percent. The ratio of elected female politicians is especially low in the cities with a significant number of national minorities.



Male and female candidates in the 2014 local self-governance elections (Source: IRI Georgia)

Before the 2014 local self-governing elections several initiatives that aimed at empowering female leaders in the regions were implemented, but the percentage of candidacies submitted by women remained very low.

⁴⁶ UN Habitat (2008) "Gender in Local Government. A Sourcebook for Trainers". Accessed on 15/08/2014 at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/pdf/Source_BK_9-May.pdf.

3.3 ELECTING WOMEN TO PUBLIC OFFICE

Legislation

Women's rights issues and non-discrimination clauses are being incorporated more and more into new constitutions or as a part of constitutional reforms. Even though **constitutional guarantees of equality** do not necessarily assure that these rights are available in practice, it stands for a significant foundation for the realization of women's rights, as well as an important expression of political will.

Constitutional provisions can enhance the legitimacy of rights claims and act as an 'enabling framework' in facilitating legal change.⁴⁷ However, a gender-sensitive constitution must analyze the entire document from a gender perspective, rather than include a narrow set of 'women's issues'.

Rwanda has the highest number of women parliamentarians worldwide. Women there have won 63.8% of seats in the lower house.

The Preamble of a Constitution should hold specific references to equality between women and men in order to consolidate the equality priorities throughout the document. The Constitution of *Rwanda* is a model example. In its

Preamble it ensures respect for equality, human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as for international treaties. Moreover, it specifies equality between men and women and embodies the prohibition of discrimination based on gender equality.

A constitution should also pay attention to gender equality in political and public life. The *Colombian* Constitution says: "the authorities will guarantee the adequate and effective participation of women in decision-making levels of Public Administration". The Constitutions of *Uganda* and *Rwanda* both even introduced concrete thresholds for women in political bodies, the prohibition of political discrimination against women and the institutionalization of gender quotas in political bodies.

Provisions regarding international women's human rights law should be incorporated in order to make these international treaties self-executing within the constitution. Both *Germany* and *Slovenia* explicitly state in their respective constitutions that international law overrules federal and local law.

Several researches point out that the political structure can significantly affect women's access to parliament. The **proportional representation** electoral system results in three to four times more women being elected in countries with a similar political culture.

Inner party management

The way women participate in political parties and how these parties promote women's political involvement is crucial to the political empowerment of women. Parties need to undertake a series of measures

⁴⁷ Waylen, G. (2007). "Engendering Transitions: Women's Mobilization, Institutions, and Gender Outcomes", Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press (2007), pg. 538.

across the electoral cycle in order to make sure that women are fully integrated in the party structure. The organization and financing of the party also needs to be more favorable for women's participation.

It is important for parties to set up rules that guarantee women's representation. Political parties can voluntarily adopt **quotas** to make sure a certain percentage of women run for office. Several political parties throughout Europe have adopted such quotas, including the *Nordic countries* which have long had the highest number of women in parliament.⁴⁸ In *Norway*, for example, the Centre Party has had a 40 percent quota for both sexes in all elections and nominations since 1989.⁴⁹

In the end, the **incentives** and disincentives for including women need to be significant enough to impact party behavior. Therefore, incentives should not be based on the number of women on the candidate lists but on the percentage of women within a party who actually win a seat.

Internal reform initiatives are also needed to break down the resistance to women's leadership, as well as working with the political party leaders on the issue of female leadership. It is essential to involve men in the process while working on removing the barriers to women's access to leadership and gain their support to implement initiatives that will increase women's political participation.

Within political parties **transparency** is indispensable. A lack of transparency and accountability is linked to the old political party mentality that limits the participation of women, while transparency represents progress.⁵⁰

The Liberal Democrats in the *United Kingdom* wondered what it was that kept women out of politics and set up a campaign with the name "**Cash, Confidence and Culture**" which addresses the three main obstacles newcomers in politics face. First, the problem of unequal monetary resources for women candidates. They established a trust fund to help female candidates meet the personal costs of campaigning, including travel costs and costs related to child or elder care. Second, the confidence initiatives included a program where MPs at work were shadowed to find out the real aspects and demands of political culture. Based on these perceptions, specific trainings for women were developed (e.g. public speaking, hostile questions and debates). Third, an awareness raising campaign on the most local party level was set up to encourage the construction of a skills database to recruit spokeswomen and candidates.⁵¹

Electoral quotas

Gender quotes present an efficient mechanism to achieve gender balance in political institutions relatively fast. The three main quota types in use today are (a) reserved seats; (b) legal candidate quotes; and (c) political party quotes.

48 IDEA (2005) "The Implementation of Quotas: European Experiences". Accessed 15/08/2014 at <http://www.idea.int/publications/wip2/loader.cfm?csmodule=security/getfile&pageid=14128>

49 Other data available in the Global Database of Quotas for Women. Accessed on 15/08/2014 at <http://www.quotaproject.org/systemParty.cfm?region=50>

50 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. "Increasing Women's Roles in Political Parties. A Programmatic Perspective". Accessed 115/08/2014 at http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/Mem/About_Us/Programmes/Conferences/Commonwealth_Parliamentary_Conferences/56th_CPA_CWP4/Increasing_Women_s_Roles_in_Political_Parties__A_Programmatic_Perspective.aspx

51 Council of Europe Positive Action Survey 1998 (Women Liberal Democrats and Jackie Ballard, Liberal Democratic MP)

The first one regulates the number of women elected, the remaining two only set a minimum for the share of women on the candidate lists.

Electoral quotas can permanently influence political outcomes since the requirement of female leadership changes voter attitudes and the perception of female leadership.

In the 2005 parliamentary elections in *Kyrgyzstan* no women were elected, but three years later after the implementation of a quota system and a new Election Code in 2007 women made up 26.6 percent of representatives in parliament.⁵²

Rwanda is an example of the new trend to use electoral gender quotas as a fast track to gender-balanced parliaments. It recently even replaced Sweden as the number one on the world in terms of women's parliamentary representation.

Belgium and *Spain* both developed a good practice in ensuring quota compliance; candidacy lists that fail to meet the gender equality target result in a rejection of the lists. Also, *Israel* passed a law in 1992 which mandates the presence of women in the boards of directors of public companies and introduced a 1/3 quota in boards of private companies. A similar law took effect in *Belgium* in 2011 and implies financial penalties for non-compliance.

An interesting practice to encourage women's candidacy in local elections was noted in *Rwanda*. A triple ballot was used during the 2001 and 2006 elections. Voters received a general ballot, a women's ballot and a youth ballot, and had to select one candidate from each ballot. This was mainly an effort to make voters comfortable with voting for women and to increase the number of women in local government.

Even though the idea of quotas often encounters negative feedback in post-Soviet countries, *Poland* has proven that advocacy efforts can urge for the introduction of electoral quotas. The draft bill was introduced as a citizen's initiative after the women's movement had been lobbying to pass the bill for years. The movement resulted in massive activism and collected more than 150 000 signatures contributing to the public debate. The passed legislation introduced a gender quota of minimum 35 percent and has resulted in a significant increase in women candidates on the lists.⁵³

Gender-responsive budgeting

A gender-responsive budget (GRB) acknowledges the gender patterns in society and allocates money to implement policies and programs that will bring about a change in these patterns in order to move towards a more equal society.

52 UNDP (2009). Enhancing Women's Political Participation: A Policy Note for Europe and CIS, Bratislava.

53 Dersnah, M.A. (2013) Women in Political and Public Life. Global Report for the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and practice.

The goal of GRB is to promote equality between women and men through exerting influence on the budgeting process. At the same time it raises awareness about the different effects that budgets have on women and men, and it holds governments accountable for their commitments to gender equality.⁵⁴

"If you want to see which way a country is headed, look at the country's budget and how it allocates resources for women and children" Pregs Govender, MP, South Africa

A GRB initiative in *South Africa* developed a five-step approach to policy and budget analysis.⁵⁵

1. Gender analysis of the situation of men, women, girls and boys in a particular sector;
2. Analysis of how policies address the gendered nature of the situation;
3. Analysis of whether the assigned allocations are sufficient to implement gender responsive policy;
4. Monitoring of expenditures and implementation of policies (this requires assessing whether public expenditure was spent as intended); and
5. Evaluating outcomes (this involves assessing the impact of policy and expenditure and checking how it has contributed to the government gender equality commitments).

Austria introduced gender budgeting at the federal level in 2004. The practice from Austria shows that no influence on the federal budget can be achieved without the strong support and active work towards gender budgeting from the Ministry of Finance. In 2009 gender budgeting even became an objective under Article 13(3) of the Austrian Federal Constitution: "The Federation, the Länder and the Municipalities must aim at de facto equality of women and men in budget management"⁵⁶.

The Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) in *Uganda* provided training for women councilors in GRB in order for them to adequately represent women's interests at the local governance level.

Youth programmes

Another effective tool in increasing women's political participation and leadership are youth programs. They create an environment where young women see themselves as capable political leaders from the early stages of their political career on. Apart from a low ratio of female representatives, young perspective in the current political landscape is often problematic as well.

Nevertheless, it is these younger people that can bring about long-term socio-political shifts.

54 Sharp, R. (2003) Budgeting for equity: Gender budget initiatives within a framework of performance oriented budgeting. New York: UNIFEM. Accessed 15/08/2014 at <http://www.gender-budgets.org/uploads/user-S/10999456961R.Sharppaper.pdf>.

55 South African Women's Budget Initiative and Gender Education and Training Network (2000) Money matters: Workshop materials on gender and government budgets GETNET, Cape Town, South Africa

56 Art.13 Austrian Federal Constitution

3.4 ENSURING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Elected female politicians are important, but it is not enough to cause a change in policy or to promote gender equality. To this end a unified, coalition-based approach is needed to ensure that gender equality measures are sustained after changes in political leadership and/or political will.

Facilitating women's participation in political life

In order to improve the number of women in politics it is important to provide them with trainings on **campaigning skills**. A woman in *Bahrein* became the first-ever elected woman after she had participated in a campaigning skills training. Using a **training of trainers** methodology proved to be an effective and sustainable way to increase women's political knowledge, skills and capacity.

Providing **financial resources** to support women candidates is another good practice. The 1974 Elections Act of *Canada* allows childcare expenses to be included in a candidate's personal expenses during a campaign. Law 60 of the Electoral Code in *Panama* requires parties to spend at least 25 percent of public funds for capacity-building, at least 10 percent of this must go to female candidates. In *Costa Rica*, 15 percent of all contributions to the Citizen's Action Party is targeted at training women and youth.

In Sweden, parents are entitled to 480 days of parental leave.

As previously mentioned women are often struggling to maintain a good work-life balance. Making a more **family-friendly political**

life can help in this regard. *Australia* changed the hours of the House of Representatives to make sure there would be no sittings after 9pm. In addition, a childcare centre was established within the parliament building. Female politicians can also ask their whip to vote on their behalf in case of absence when they are on maternity leave.

In *Norway* both public and private daycare centers are heavily subsidized and is ranked the second best place in the world to be a mother⁵⁷. *Swedish* nurseries are available to women working in both the public and private sector and are financed by central government grants, tax revenue and parental fees. Sweden uses a maximum fee policy where parents should only have to spend maximum 3 percent of the family income on childcare, depending on the number of children.

Women's effective participation

Electing women to public office is an important first step, ensuring women have a voice once they are elected is the next necessary step.

According to studies countries experience higher standards of living and positive developments in ed-

⁵⁷ Save the Children (2014). State of the World's Mothers. Accessed 15/08/2014 at <http://www.savethechildren.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=8rKLIXMGipl4E&b=8943305&ct=13930525>

ucation, infrastructure and health when women are empowered as political leaders.⁵⁸ It also results in palpable benefits for democratic governance, including a greater responsiveness to citizens' needs⁵⁹, as well as in an increased cooperation across party and ethnic lines⁶⁰ and in more sustainable peace.⁶¹

Women's parliamentary caucuses

These women's groups should be established and strengthened to boost women's voices. Uniting women in office enables them to successfully shape parliamentary and legislative agendas.

In *South-Eastern Europe* the Stability Pact Gender Task Force initiated the Women Mayor's Link (WML)⁶². This initiative aims at building the capacity of women in local decision-making structures and has been developed in 12 countries. The network was set up to strengthen women's mayor's leadership skills; to promote cooperation between women mayors and local women's networks to design projects to improve women's quality of life in local contexts; and to facilitate the exchange of best practices.

Likewise, in *Rwanda* the multi-party and multi-ethnic Forum of Women Parliamentarians (FFRP) was created. This forum is formally recognized by Parliament and unites all female parliamentarians from both houses of parliament. All members work together across party lines on those issues that are important to women and to ensure gender-sensitivity in both Parliament and legislation.

A women's caucus in *Argentina* formally promoted the draft legislation on the elimination of sexist language in public administration. While in *Uruguay* the caucus helped set up the Gender Equity Committee which has been pushing forward some women's human rights laws. In *Brazil* the women's parliamentary caucus worked with women's advocacy groups to enact women's human rights protection laws regarding violence against women as well as sexual and reproductive health.

If legislative and political institutions are strengthened and the political-institutional culture meets women's needs women can have an even stronger voice in political life. It is important to continue enhance legislative institutions through enabling greater inclusiveness in policy-making processes.

Sweden adopted a special **gender mainstreaming** plan. The plan outlines how "under this strategy, each Minister is responsible for gender equality in his or her policy area" and the Minister for Gender Equality is responsible for ensuring that progress is made and for following up measures at an overarching level.

58 Cammisa, A. and Reingold B. (2004). Women in State Legislature and State Legislative Research: Beyond Sameness and Difference. *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 4, pp. 181-210.

59 Cammisa, A. and Reingold B (2004). Women in State Legislature and State Legislative Research: Beyond Sameness and Difference. *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 4, pp. 181-210.

60 Rosenthal, C.S. (2001). Gender Styles in Legislative Committees. *Women & Politics*, 21, pp. 21-46

61 Chinkin, C. (2003). Peace Agreements as a Means for Promoting Gender Equality and Ensuring the Participation of Women. United Nations, Division for the Advancement of Women.

62 More info on http://www.apcwomen.org/gemkit/en/practitioners/reports_495d.htm

4. CONCLUSION

Progress in women's empowerment and gender equality has proven to be most difficult in the inclusion of women's voices in politics and government.

Therefore, it is important to keep enhancing the tools that are available to women and to keep the debate on women's political participation alive. This implies not only a larger number of elected women at all governance levels, but ensuring a larger impact of women elected to those positions as well.

USEFUL INFORMATION

INGOs in Georgia (Tbilisi)	
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<p>National Democratic Institute - NDI Tabukashvili St. 3 Tbilisi 0105 Phone: (995 32) 293 58 30; (995 32) 293 44 71 Email: ndigeorgia@ndi.org Website: www.ndi.org/georgia</p>	<p>International Republican Institute – IRI Leonidze St. 1 (Freedom Square), Suite 16 Tbilisi 0105 Phone: +995 232 98 64 99 Website: http://www.iri.org/countries-and-programs/eurasia/georgia</p>
<p>International Foundation for Electoral Systems - IFES Niko Nikoladze St. 7 Tbilisi 0108 Phone: (995 32) 299 93 09 Email: info@ifes.ge Website: www.ifes.org/countries/Georgia.aspx</p>	<p>Women’s Democracy Network of Georgia – WDN (IRI initiative) Website: www.wdn.org</p>

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<p>Center of Development and Democracy – CDD Budapest St. 3 Tbilisi 0160 Phone: (995 790) 33 31 11 Email: info@CDD.ge Website: www.cdd.ge</p>	<p>Caucasus Women’s Network Asatiani St. 10 Tbilisi Phone: (995 32) 298 86 95 Email: cwn@cwn.ge Website: http://www.ginsc.net/</p>

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