



ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS FOR WOMEN INTO POLITICS

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A HOLISTIC APPROACH

- ▶ Includes both traditional and alternative pathways women in Asia have taken to become successful, influential political leaders
- ▶ Recognizes the importance of quotas, other temporary special measures (TSMs), electoral reforms, political parties -
TRADITIONAL PATHWAYS for women becoming leaders
- ▶ Support for ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS will increase leadership opportunities for more women

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS TO WOMEN LEADERS

- ▶ Community engagement
- ▶ Peace building and nation building
- ▶ Exposure to democratic principles
- ▶ Decentralization
- ▶ Social movement and student activism
- ▶ Male role models

CATALYSTS IN A WOMAN'S JOURNEY TO POLITICS

A catalyst is a critical factor that causes change.

- ▶ Financial empowerment
- ▶ Family support
- ▶ Moral capital
- ▶ Leadership training

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

- ▶ Provides independence
- ▶ Funds registration fees and campaign costs - *Women must spend more to compete with male candidates*
- ▶ Helps meet other costs like childcare



SUPPORTIVE FAMILY

- ▶ A husband's support is essential.
- ▶ Extended family support is helpful.
- ▶ The woman is relieved of some household responsibilities.
- ▶ The woman feels peace of mind.

I faced many problems before I reached the position of commune chief, because I am a housewife, and I always had to leave my family behind... Our husbands sometimes give us a chance, but sometimes they do not. However, we must be determined in our actions... We should try to be calm and behave normally with [our husbands] in order to reach our goal. Now my husband supports me, he can take care of many tasks at home, and he is proud of my role and my work.

– Commune Chief in Cambodia

MORAL CAPITAL

- ▶ Women's model of leadership is inclusive, based on group decisions, discussion, and listening.
- ▶ Women are perceived to be more honest leaders, community caretakers.

When Pacific women fight for justice, it's not because it's something that comes from outside. It's for our families. Lots of our strategies are about improving and strengthening families, we use a family oriented approach.

– Fijian activist

LEADERSHIP TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL FOR ELECTION AND SUCCESS IN OFFICE

Training through:

- ▶ NGO workshops
- ▶ Public speaking
- ▶ Student group leadership positions
- ▶ Status as head of household
- ▶ Village development projects




I think the issue is sometimes not the numbers, but the effectiveness. To be effective, we need to build people's capacity.


– Member of Parliament, Timor-Leste

CATALYSTS-- WAY FORWARD


Financial Empowerment

- ▶ Reduce or waive candidate's fees
 - ▶ Fairly distribute state funding to political parties
 - ▶ Subsidize airtime and other media outreach
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CATALYSTS— WAY FORWARD

- ▶ Hold meetings at the local or regional level instead of in the capital.
 - ▶ Provide childcare services.
 - ▶ Promote women's moral capital through images, messages, and civic education materials.
 - ▶ Address links between election and actual governance through training programs.
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ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

- ▶ Community Engagement
 - ▶ Peace Building and Nation Building
 - ▶ Social Movement and Student Activism
 - ▶ Exposure to Democratic Principles
 - ▶ Decentralization
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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- ▶ Gives women skills for running and succeeding in office
 - Leadership
 - Communication
 - Advocacy
 - Lobbying
 - Decision making
 - Accountability
 - Administrative skills

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Provides credibility and a track record



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – WAY FORWARD

- Recruit community activists, business women, religious leaders to train for political office
- Build relationships between community activists and elected officials
- Build women's confidence through training to apply the same skills from the advocacy arena to a formal political career
- Train journalists on gender-sensitive coverage
- Increase media coverage of community development activities

PEACE BUILDING AND NATION BUILDING

- ▶ Women take on new responsibilities during conflict - space for women to gain important skills.
- ▶ Women are often instrumental in negotiating peace and bringing home combatants – builds moral capital.
- ▶ Traditional leadership structures are shaken, opening a new space for women to get involved in nation building.

PEACE BUILDING AND NATION BUILDING – WAY FORWARD

- ▶ Ensure women's *early* participation in constitutional reform bodies.
- ▶ Ensure women's participation in the establishment of political parties' internal structures, policies, procedures and platforms.
- ▶ Ensure political party structure is transparent.
- ▶ Utilize UN Security Council Resolution 1325 framework.

EXPOSURE TO DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

- ▶ International education and training
 - ▶ Builds self-confidence
 - ▶ Helps women network
 - ▶ Offers broader perspective




EXPOSURE TO DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES – CATALYST

- ▶ Provide opportunities for women to participate in delegations, study tours, fact-finding missions
- ▶ Encourage mentoring
- ▶ Facilitate training for women party members abroad



DECENTRALIZATION

- ▶ A greater number of citizens can be involved in decision-making at a local level.
 - ▶ Lower education requirements can help women qualify.
 - ▶ Local communities give people a chance to create new policies that reflect current values.
 - ▶ Community leaders are poised with skills when local political positions become available.
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DECENTRALIZATION – WAY FORWARD

- ▶ Train women before decentralization
- ▶ Create and maintain more data on women's participation in local government
- ▶ Promote women's participation in public administration
- ▶ Create linkages among women in elected office and administrators to enhance policy-making and implementing opportunities.




SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Leadership opportunities
- ▶ Access to public spaces
- ▶ Student group elections and debates
- ▶ Network building

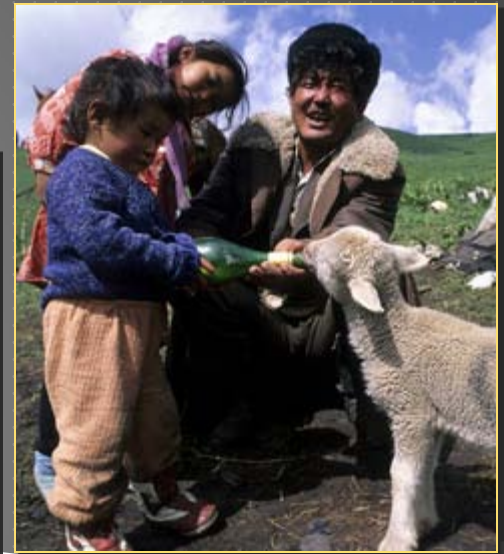


SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES – CATALYSTS

- ▶ Invite students from activist groups to participate in political training programs.
 - ▶ Support young female activists to focus on confidence-building, leadership skills, interacting with the media.
 - ▶ Provide mentoring programs.
 - ▶ Ensure youth involvement in training programs through quotas.
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MALE ROLE MODELS

- ▶ Endorsement, encouragement and mentoring from men provides confidence, validation and access for women.
 - ▶ Supportive fathers
 - ▶ Political husbands
 - ▶ Brothers' legacies



MALE ROLE MODELS – WAY FORWARD

▶ ENGAGE MEN!!!!!!

- ▶ Include gender equality messaging in all community engagement
- ▶ Identify male champions in political parties
- ▶ Involve men in program design



CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- ▶ Political paths are not clearly defined--women need a combination of catalysts and pathways.
- ▶ Communities need to normalize catalysts and identify new ones.



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