

Training of trainers for implementing partners in mentorship and monitoring of women aspirants vying in 2017 general elections: An Executive Summary

This is a report of the Training of Trainers (TOT) in mentorship and monitoring of women aspirants vying in 2017 general elections, conducted for four Uraia Trust programmes staff and three staff from each of the project implementing partners (CIFODE, SYWP, TEAM, CPDA, CREAM and PWHE). The training was conducted within the context of addressing the social, cultural and structural barriers that hinder women's participation and representation in elective political leadership. The objectives of the workshop were to increase an understanding of elections and the electoral process in Kenya, explain fundamentals of a campaign /the campaign process, explain the requisite skills for women's participation in politics. The 3-day residential training workshop was attended by Uraia Trust Executive Director, Grace Maingi, who gave opening remarks and officially opened the training event as well as took the lead in training on the legal aspects of the electoral process; Karen Fueg from UN Women Global and Rosaline Idele (Senior Programme Manager) from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) provided an overview of requirements for vying for political office. Uraia Head of Programmes, Nancy Wamwea and Gender Programmes Manager, Mabel Isolio, gave insights on various aspects of gender and political participation while the Institutional Transformation Manager, Timothy Kilimo, trained the mentors on how to monitor and follow-up on women aspirants on their journey to elective political leadership in Kenya.

The main facilitator to the training was Mr Ephraim Ngure Kimotho of Timeafrica Limited who took the mentors through the broad area of preparing to vie for political office, communication including messaging and the use of social media, branding and profiling of the woman aspirant as well as facilitating a practicum on campaigning. A key lesson emerging from his presentation was the need for women aspirants to research and translate data into issues that affect the community. Hon. Sophia Abdi Noor, former nominated Member of Parliament and an unsuccessful 2013 aspirant and now preparing for 2017 general elections, shared her experiences which focused on defining one's vision and road map for political leadership, identifying one's constituency: strategic plan /priorities, preparing for nominations, how to engage with Political Parties and campaign strategies: advocacy, lobbying and networking, dealing with propaganda and resources mobilization strategies. A key partner to this project, Women in the RED, the Kenya Chapter of Women and Girls Lead Global (WGLG) strengthened the capacity of the mentors in how to use film to mobilize social and political support for the women aspirants. Various films were screened including Liberia's "Pray the Devil Back to Hell" which showed how the women of Liberia

mobilized and organized themselves, regardless of ethnicity and religion, against the tyranny of John Taylor to finally install the incumbent President Sirlif Johnson.

Some of the emerging issues from the training of trainers for the mentors include:

- The need to manage the expectations of women aspirants, which should be categorized into newcomers, those who vied but did not make it in the last general elections, those that were in parliament before, vied but did not make it in the 2013 general elections and the incumbents.
- Women aspirants are not keen to research and translate data into issues that affect the community. This poses a challenge in developing a suitable agenda for the campaign.
- Majority of the women aspirants are not conversant with requirements to vie for electoral political office, including the nomination rules - Credit Reference Bureau (CRB) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID). Currently, some women aspirants do not know that they owe taxes to the government (Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), particularly those who registered for PIN certificates to get women's funds for business ventures.
- Women aspirants are yet to take advantage of their social capital and networks in the community to drum up support to elect one of their own. Currently, majority of the women aspirants are being divided along party affiliation lines and sexist propaganda.
- Majority of women aspirants do not have a plan on how to continue engaging with the community and their political party after the nominations/elections, regardless of whether they won or lost.
- There is no resilience program for women aspirants. It would suffice to have a bouncing back program for those who do not make it to address the social, economic and psychological challenges resulting from this encounter. One such strategy should be to encourage formation of strategic coalitions that add value to their campaigns.
- There is inadequate support for women aspirants in majority of the political parties. None of the political parties proactively profiles and show cases the leadership potential of successful women at the grassroots level. Neither have they demonstrated willingness to audit the nomination process to affirm equity and levelling the ground for both women and men aspirants.
- Some mentors tend to loose- tongued. An effective mentor should maintain confidentiality and not peddle information from one mentee to another.
- Early Money Is Like Yeast (EMILY'S List) – majority of the women aspirants do not identify and plan early on what they will need for the campaigns (campaign manifesto, vehicles, posters, fuel etc) to enable them budget and fundraise. Instead,

they tend to look outward, rather than inward to start with family members, friends and their social networks.

- Most women have done little to brand themselves yet it is very important for an aspirant – such branding should be catchy.
- Majority of women aspirants are not punctual for meetings – this is one area that deprives them of votes. Time management for women candidates is critical as this is one area that the electorate easily negates them, despite women’s multi-tasking role. It is recommended that an aspirant develops weekly plans.
- Women aspirants are not keen in conducting audience analysis, which is critical during campaigns to enable them to come up with targeted messages.
- Politics is not advocacy, for instance, an anti-FGM campaign will not generate votes, and therefore an aspirant has to directly ask the community for votes.
- When dealing with propaganda, an aspirant needs to be tactful, but most importantly one should “stop and think” before responding to propaganda.