Strategic Planning for Political Parties: Comparative and Gender Perspectives

Workshop: 13-14 February 2016

Individual Party meetings: 15-17 February 2016

REPORT
February 2016
This activity report is produced by International IDEA-Tunisia project “Respect for Women’s Political Rights: Fostering Political Environments for Equal Participation and Leadership of Women in Political Parties”. The project is designed by Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, funded by Human Rights Fund of the Netherlands and implemented in Tunisia by International IDEA.

The project in Tunisia assist several relevant stakeholders in reviewing the legal framework from a gender perspective and identifying gaps and opportunities to further strengthen women’s political participation by looking at the legal framework and the work of the political parties, as well as the broader electoral environment.

This report documents the activities organized from 13 to 17 february 2016 in Tunis, where several political leaders participated in two days workshop on strategic planning in addition to the individual meetings held with four political parties. The report incorporates the main issues shared and discussed.
Context

On 31 October 2015, IDEA project in Tunisia organized a conference on political parties’ internal regulations from a gender perspective. The conference revealed that most of the parties were either in the process of reviewing their internal rules or in the drafting process of the rules. The conference revealed also that Tunisian parties are poorly structured and the constant pressure of the three elections held between 2011 and 2014 made them focus on the short-term planning to respond to the electorate and elections needs and challenges.

Moreover, the focus of the parties in Tunisia during the transition was also about managing internal and external crises to the detriment of the long-term development of their strategies and organization. Therefore, the level of public trust in political parties as mean of good governance and democracy is reduced. A recent survey conducted by SIGMA in December 2015 revealed that 58%\(^1\) of Tunisian population do not trust political parties.

It is worth to mention that after the fall of the one-party state in 2011, dozens of new political parties were licensed. Rapidly, the parties were involved in three successive elections, two parliamentary and one presidential election without having necessarily the time to structure themselves in terms of parties’ organization, platforms, internal rules and strategies.

In this context, IDEA project in Tunisia organized two days’ workshop on Strategic Planning with comparative and gender perspectives to unable the parties’ representatives to anticipate political, social and economic developments and allow them prepare themselves effectively for new societal demands and democratic changes. The two days’ workshop concentrated on comparative and gender perspectives in the long term planning to promote gender dimensions within their strategies as an effective mean in ensuring women’s participation.

The workshop was monitored by a series of follow up meetings. IDEA consultants provided technical assistance to the parties individually after the workshop and further discussed with the parties’ representatives their strategies and long term needs and priorities.

The two days’ workshop and the individual meetings were envisioned to reinforce the knowledge on the strategic planning and support the development of gender sensitive approach and plans.

Objectives

The objectives of the workshop and the party meetings were:

a) Understand the importance of long term strategic planning for political parties
b) Understand the Strategic planning design and steps to enhance their performance and respond more effectively to changes and developments
c) Understand what is gender and what is gender sensitive strategic planning

d) Develop gender sensitive strategic plans based on the available resources

e) Encourage communication and discussions on strategic plans

Methodology

**Multiparty approach:** The two days’ workshop held on 13 and 14 February was a sequence of short presentations and working groups’ sessions and exercises. Gender and comparative experiences and perspectives were presented to understand the importance of developing gender sensitive long term strategic plans. Multiparty approach helps experiences sharing and identify possible joint challenges to both party capacity building and the democratic transition in Tunisia.

**Single party approach:** IDEA consultants were available after the workshop from 15 to 17 February to meet the parties’ representatives by party and provide additional technical support in further developing their gender sensitive strategic plans and discuss new issues. The single party approach was also an opportunity to identify priority issues of parties and determine the future focus of each party in more specific context.

**IDEA Consultants**

The lead consultant of the workshop was Marc Lavigne. He works in politics since thirty years. He held important positions in the organization of several electoral campaigns and referendums of the Liberal Party of Canada. He is also political adviser in the area of strategies elaboration in Canada and abroad. He was also among the Prime Minister of Quebec team. Since 2012, he moved from federal politics to local politics and he is currently member of the local council of the municipality of Saint-Charles-sur-Richelieu.

The Gender and political parties consultant was Ms. Soulef Guessoum. She has ten years of experience in managing political development programs with international organizations. She has been recruited by IDEA project to provide capacity building for political parties in Tunisia with regard to gender. Soulef has previously worked as a parliamentary and gender expert with UNDP in several countries including Libya, Iraq, Somalia, Egypt and Tunisia. Before joining UNDP, Soulef worked with the National Democratic Institute as a Senior Program Officer in charge of political parties and women in politics programme.
Opening session

During the opening session, Ms. Shana Kaiser, IDEA representative in Tunis spook of the importance of long term planning. She stated that according to IDEA reports and researches, the short term planning tends to weaken political parties’ prospects for survival in rapidly changing political landscapes such as Tunisia case. It also tends to weaken public trust in political parties as a vehicle for representation and governance.

Therefore, only by having the capacity to look ahead and anticipate developments can political parties prepare themselves adequately for new societal demands and democratic change.

In this context, she highlighted that the workshop provides an opportunity to present and discuss practical tools and methods to help political parties developing strategic planning for this long term planning process with gender perspectives. If political parties want to prepare adequately for tomorrow’s political developments, they have to invest in their organization and its foundations taking into account gender issues.

Doing so is only possible if the political party’s organizational structure and processes adequately reflect male and female needs and priorities. Political parties do need to adapt and change to meet the needs of all citizens without any discrimination or exclusion.

She added that around the world, we see that it is possible for political parties to be sustainable. The practice of strategic planning aims at systematically strengthening parties’ organizational capacities and address electoral campaigning strategy as one aspect of a party’s organizational functioning, and not the core issue in organizational strategic planning of political parties.

This workshop encourages the development of gender-sensitive strategic plans and will certainly constitute a privileged space to exchange and to reflect on this issue.

Political parties are essential institutions in democracy. The policies, management and vision of political parties can strongly influence gender issues and it is imperative that the parties take gender into account internally and externally.

Main issued shared during the two days’ workshop: 13 and 14 February 216

Importance of the strategic plans for parties: the participants agreed that the strategic planning is the overall planning that facilitates the good management. It provides with the big picture of what parties are doing and where you they are going. Strategic planning gives parties clarity about what they actually want to achieve and how to achieve it. They also agreed that strategic plan is not rigid. It does, however, give parties parameters within which to work. That is why it is important to base the strategic planning on a real understanding of the external and internal environment through SWOT methodology and by taking into account male and female differences and needs.
Understanding the strategic plan components: it was clarified that setting the objective should be done after the SWOT analysis has been completed to allow achievable and realistic goals or objectives to be set for the political parties. It was mentioned that the strategic framework includes:

- A clearly stated vision;
- Clearly articulated values;
- A mission, articulated in a mission statement;
- The overall goal of the party’s plan;
- The key result areas on which the party intends to focus.

The vision was defined as something about how the party could or should be in the future. It is something that guides the party work. The mission describes what the party does, with whom or for whom, and, in broad terms, how it does it. So, a mission statement could include some of the following components:

- What the party is;
- What the party aims to do or achieve;
- With and for (the target groups);
- How the work is done.

The mission of the African National Congress of South Africa for example: “The African National Congress exists in order to unite all the people of South Africa to transform our country as rapidly as possible into a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous country, based on the principles of the Freedom Charter.”

The parties’ values were defined as the shared principles that reinforce the party’s work and its relationships with the people and other stakeholders. It is what the parties believe is the right way to do things and to deal with people or with other parties or the government.

It was also clarified and explained that the overall goal is directly related to the significant problem identified in the analysis. It was emphasised that the overall goal is related to the vision mainly as well as all the components of the strategic plan.

Gender mainstreaming in strategic planning: political parties develop strategic plans as a mean for analyzing their current situation and strengthening their organizing structure and capacity to respond to
changing circumstances and electoral challenges. The strategic plans are often for long terms period varying from 2 to 5 years, and offers an opportunity to include gender dimensions through all the phases of the strategic planning as described by IDEA manual on strategic plans for political parties:

Phase I- Initiating and designing the planning process
Phase II- Internal and external analysis
Phase III- Drafting the plan
Phase IV- Implementation

Each phase of the strategic plan should address gender issues. The evaluation of the strategic plan should look also into the changes attained in the direction of greater gender equality within the party.

Indicators and evaluation: indicators are used to measure and monitor the achievement of expected results and establish the success of the activities designed to reach each key result of the strategic plan. Quantitative indicators refer to the numbers and percentages of women and men involved in or participated in any particular activity. Qualitative indicators are vitally important. It is not enough to know that women and men are participating in an activity: the quality of their participation and their experience is also central.

Also, the strategic planning process may result in some things in the party’ changing, either in terms of the work done or in the internal structuring of the party. Make sure everyone understands the change and why it is necessary and make sure to respond to people’s ideas and feelings.

Group exercises for each section were designed based on IDEA publication and were shared and discussed with the consultants in plenary session.

Main issued discussed during the individual meetings: 15, 16 and 17 February 2016

Upcoming local election: the local election was at the heat of the discussions during the four meetings held (see annex II). The considerable number of candidates needed for the election (more than 3000) and the zipper quota system suggested (horizontal and vertical) in the draft elections law seem fearing the political parties representatives met. Political parties requested support in campaign strategies and in planning and preparing for a successful campaign at the local level. Political parties requested also special support to the candidates once elected as mayors.

Parties’ Congress: Most of the parties in Tunisia were established rapidly after the revolution in 2011 and were involved in successive elections without having necessarily the time to organize their congress and get the structures of the parties adopted and the members elected internally. Comparative experience from Canada was provided by IDEA consultant. The challenges around the elections of the the delegates were also raised. The congress of the parties are formally the supreme decision making

2 Available on the following link: http://www.idea.int/publications/strategic-planning-for-political-parties/index.cfm
bodies of each level of party organization and should be accompanied with gender perspectives. The board members elect from among themselves an Executive Board, the Bureau, which is the major power centre of the party organisation. In this context, the question of the organization of the parties was also raised as many parties tend to prefer a decentralised form based on the Canadian experience shared.

**Sex-disaggregated data for strategic planning is a must**: Sex-disaggregated data are collected and analyzed separately on the basis of males and females. This typically involves asking the “who” questions: who are our volunteers? Who makes the decisions in the party? Who have access to resources of the party? Who attend the trainings and the meetings of the party? This type of data should be collected as part of common practice by the party to analyze the inclusiveness of the party in terms of gender and age. However, analyses should not be based on numbers only and should take into consideration the existing disparities that cannot necessarily be attributed to the sex.

**Communicating with the party’s local branches and the challenges around making them active and attractive to women**: The local branches are the grounds of party and politicians from the upper party levels should communicate regularly with the local party representatives. Nevertheless, the parties are facing serious difficulties in ensuring proper communication. The establishment of clear communication mechanism and the participation of the leaders of the party in the activities of the local branch was discussed and encouraged. The presence and the recruitment of women was also raised as main challenge of all parties especially in the south of the country.

**Women and youth sections within the parties**: the structures of the parties differ and most of them in Tunisia adopted non-formal women and youth sections. All the structures of the parties perform important tasks including policy formulation and general decision-making process. Therefore, it is important that women are represented at all levels of the structures. Organizational structures in a party may include women sections that aim to strengthen women’s representation within the party. These bodies or structures were seen by some parties as against the interest of women, by marginalizing or sidelining them within the party. Nevertheless, IDEA consultant clarified that the creation of such bodies has generally proved positive results in ensuring women’s and youth equal participation and knowledge of gender equality issues.

**Establishing the party’s training unit**: Developing a coherent and continuous programme of political educative programme and monitor its implementation was a major common concern for all parties. These sorts of activities provide important impulses for the commitment in and for a party. The party leaders should therefore invest time and effort for their participation in such programmes. In many countries, political parties have created special institutes for the political education of its members that regularly offers training activities for party members (including courses, seminars, special training workshops, analysis and publications). The experience of the University of the Liberal Party of Canada was shared and discussed.

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3 Afek Tounes is the party who is conducting sex-desegregated data systematically
Annex I: Agenda of the two days workshop

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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| 9.00-10.00   | **Official Opening**  
|              | Ms. Shana Kaiser, IDEA Representative in Tunisia  
|              | Presentations and expectations of the participants  
|              | Soulef Guessoum, IDEA Consultant |
| 10.00-11:00  | - What is strategic planning  
|              | - Why parties need strategic planning  
|              | Marc Lavigne, IDEA Expert |
| 11:00-11.30  | **Pause café** |
| 11.30-1.00   | - Analyzing environnement  
|              | Marc Lavigne, IDEA Expert |
| 1.00-2.00    | **Dejeuner** |
| 2.00-15.00   | - Strategic plan development  
|              | Vision, values and mission  
|              | Soulef Guessoum, IDEA Consultant |
|              | **Café disponible à l’intérieur de la salle** |
| 15.00-16.30  | Goal and key results  
|              | Marc Lavigne, IDEA Expert |
| 16.30-17.00  | Q and A |

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| 9.00-9.30    | -Summary of the first day  
|              | Marc Lavigne, IDEA Consultant |
| 9.30-10.30   | - Gender mainstreaming in strategic plans: what is gender?  
|              | -Indicators (qualitative and quantitative)  
|              | Soulef Guessoum, Consultante d’IDEA |
| 10.00-10.30  | **Coffee break** |
| 10:30-1:00   | Monitoring and evaluation  
|              | Marc Lavigne, IDEA Expert |
| 1:00-2:00    | **Lunch and closing** |
Annex II.

Party meetings schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Location of the meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday 15 Feb at 3pm</td>
<td>Nidaa Tounes</td>
<td>Les Berges du Lac</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 16 Feb at 8am</td>
<td>Congrès Pour La République</td>
<td>IDEA office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 16 Feb at 3pm</td>
<td>Afek Tounes</td>
<td>Menzah 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 16 Feb at 6pm</td>
<td>Ennahdha</td>
<td>Montplaisir</td>
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