

**WOMEN'S DEMOCRACY NETWORK**  
*Empowering Women to Lead*  
**Uganda Chapter**

**GUIDE FOR ENHANCING WOMEN LEAGUES OF POLITICAL  
PARTIES IN UGANDA**



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### Acknowledgments

## **Foreword**

One of the key tenets to a democracy is the ability of individuals and groups to express their opinion and compete in the political process. As guaranteed in Article 72 and Article 29 (1) (e) of the Constitution of Uganda, political parties have the right to organize and espouse the aspirations of people who share their ideology or beliefs. Strong political parties with the ability to set up structures at various levels, to recruit and retain members, to organize activities to retain their members and contribute to the development of Uganda at various levels, to participate in election processes as candidates and voters. Activities conducted by political parties provide an opportunity for them to advance issues that affect citizens and to contribute to political development of Uganda.

Most of the political parties in Uganda provide for women and youth leagues within the parties to enable the two groups to effectively organize themselves and to participate in governance processes both within and outside the party.

The Women's Democracy Network ([www.wdn.org](http://www.wdn.org)) and Women's Democracy Network-Uganda Chapter ([www.wdnuganda.org](http://www.wdnuganda.org)) share the belief that women leagues provide an opportunity for women within the political parties to organize, build their skills and to participate in governance. For women leagues to effectively perform their roles and responsibilities, WDN and WDN-Uganda Chapter are cognisant of the fact that their capacity should be built to enable them meet the expectations of women in political parties and those aspiring to join politics.

## **List of Acronyms**

CPP	Cameroon Peoples' Party
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DP	Democratic Party
FDC	Forum for Democratic Change
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PPP	Peoples Progressive Party
SACCOS	Savings and Credit Co operations
UPC	Uganda Peoples' Congress
WDN	Women's Democracy Network
WDN-U	Women's Democracy Network-Uganda

## **Chapter One: The Roles of Women Leagues in Political Parties**

Political parties are the main vehicle through which women get elected to attain positions in elected office. Therefore, the structures, policies, practices and values of political parties have a profound impact on the level of women's participation in political life of a country. Ideally, parties should be one of the most important institutions for nurturing women's participation in decision making. As part of the mainstream political parties, women leagues/desks are therefore well positioned to nurture women to fully participate in politics through their respective political parties. However, for them to do this effectively, they must possess the right knowledge and skills.

This chapter highlights the major roles that women leagues of political parties should play in order to nurture women to fully participate in politics.

### **Women leagues can play the following roles in enhancing women's participation in politics**

- ✓ Attract more women into their respective political parties. The leagues must develop strategies to attract different categories of women into their parties. It is important to note that the message and activities of women leagues to attract young women into politics may be different from those needed to attract older women.
- ✓ Lobby for more women in positions of leadership within and outside political parties;
- ✓ Advise their political parties on gender related issues and draw attention and gain support for women-issues, particularly during the development of their respective party manifestoes. For this to happen, women leagues must be informed about the women issues that should be addressed in the various communities and advocate for their inclusion in the party agenda. For example, a number of women today head households and provide for the economic well being of their families, domestic violence is still rampant particularly against women; the drop out rates of the girl child is still high in both Primary and Secondary Schools. These are some of the issues that women leagues can advance for inclusion in the party manifestoes.
- ✓ Women leagues can recommend women for elective positions in their respective political parties. This can only be possible if the women leagues develop a data base of potential candidates, train them and prepare them for elective positions. This will ease their work when political parties hold elections or seek to appoint leaders to various positions.
- ✓ Develop and organize activities to promote active participation of women in society and politics on national, regional, and local level. Leagues can do this through networking to identify partners willing to support women leagues, learning best practices from leagues elsewhere, personal development and career development. For instance the Cameroun Peoples' party in Cameroon identifies needs of the community and uses its members with the required skills to complement government efforts. For example, they work with schools to fill the gaps of teachers by using their members who have a background in education; they liaise with the local community to clean health centers and public drainages. They also educate the public about the importance of clean hygiene and educating their children. Such interventions resonate with the public and have earned the party public favor.
- ✓ Develop and organize training and educational programs for women in politics

## Chapter Two: Strategies to Recruit Women into Political Parties

In order for political parties to grow they must have the numbers to vie for positions of leadership, members to work as party agents during elections, volunteers to implement party activities prior to elections, during and after elections.

Women are of different ages, social, political and economic backgrounds. These differences must therefore be taken into consideration when a women's league designs programs to recruit women. A women's league can deploy the following strategies to recruit women:

- ✓ Approach women in their groups by sector. Women in Uganda are organized differently in various communities of Uganda. In rural areas, there are various Savings and Credit Co operations (SACCOS) to which women belong. In institutions of learning, women are organized in clubs, women are also organized in farmer groups, market women and business women among others. Women leagues must tap into the various structures through which women are organized to get their message across. Women leagues must therefore know how women are organized in order to prepare and deliver targeted messages to the women. In order to effectively do this, leagues must prepare their political education message for various groups of women including: What is politics? Why should women participate in politics? How can women become members of a political party? What are the benefits of belonging to a political party?
- ✓ Train women on leadership and on how to promote and defend women's interests within party activities and government programs.
- ✓ Develop activities that can be used to retain women in the political parties. For instance, they can do community work e.g. cleaning health centers, using skilled members to volunteer to teach in schools among others.
- ✓ Networking with women in Civil Society Organizations to identify advocacy issues and advance an agenda/ conduct advocacy that positively impacts on enhancing equal opportunities for women and men, boys and girls in Uganda. This strategy enables women leagues to attract women who share similar objectives with regard to women's issues.

Once the strategies for recruiting women into political parties are clear, the women leagues should develop a recruit plan. The plan will enable the leagues to conduct activities to give life to the strategies. The following issues should be included in the recruitment plan:

For instance, if the plan is to increase the number of young women in the league consider the following:

- Establish the number of women in the league. Of the women, how many are young women and what categories do they fall in? Are they professional young women; young women in higher institutions of learning, rural young women? How many does the league plan to recruit within a specific period of time? Who appeals to young women within the party and how can the league make use of that person? How relevant is the party and league to the issues that affect young women? Who defines and determines what is relevant to young women?

- Within the structure of the league do young women hold any positions of leadership? An affirmative answer to this question usually attracts others to join the league particularly those who may have ambitions of leadership. In addition, every age group needs a mentor that they can relate to.
- Establish the things that attract young women to join an organization. It is important to speak to young women who are already league members and those who are not on this issue. Having information from young will influence the decisions that the league makes in this regard.
- It is important to be accessible to the target group you want to recruit. Where is your office located? Does the party or league have a website which talks about the organization, its mission, past achievements, activities and responds to frequently asked questions? What projects is the league implementing and how can members get involved?
- Find out the communication methods that young women use and harness them to your advantage. Most young women in institutions of learning are on face book, twitter and email. The league must use the communication methods that young women use to exchange information. For young women in rural areas, establish how they communicate and make use of such information.
- Some young women belong to clubs. Find out the clubs they belong to and ways in which the league can infiltrate the clubs to attract them to the women's league. It is important to find ways of talking to the young women who seem influential in the club one on one. Share information on the league particularly the benefits it provides for young women.
- Women leagues should visit institutions of learning and use platforms available through various actors like CSOs to talk about the party and women's league. Build a support base and use that base to recruit more young women.
- Find out the kind of language that appeals to young women and make use of it. People usually get attracted to those who have some similarities with them or can adapt to them easily.
- Find out the issues that appeal to young women and use this to attract them into the league.
- The league's membership requirements - Are there any restrictions on who can join? What is expected of a member? Are there attendance requirements? What does it cost to be a member?
- Organization meeting details - When and where does your league meet? How long do meetings run for? What can a member expect at a league meeting?
- Organization contact details - Who should a potential member contact to become a member or get involved in a project?

Adapt the strategies to other categories of women. Remember context, age, education levels and methods of communication that each of the categories of women use as you plan your recruitment strategies for women to join the league.

Recruiting members into the women leagues and the party is one thing. Retaining them is another. As the league recruits members it's important for it to plan to retain them. Below are a few ideas that a women's league can use to retain members:

- ✓ In order to retain members, the league must remain relevant to them. For instance, what issues does the league espouse? Are the issues that the league advances relevant to its members? The league must therefore constantly undertake research to find out what issues are relevant to the members and devise strategies to address them. The league can conduct annual research to identify issues relevant to its members which require the leagues attention and action. The research can be online, filed research, SMS etc. Remember the issues the league espouses must be part of its goal.
- ✓ Be accessible to members through regular communication e.g. through, SMS, telephone calls, emails, newsletters;
- ✓ Identify opportunities for members e.g. training opportunities, networks which can provide members with the services that they need. For instance, if members are engaged in economic activities, identify partners to provide skills required by members to enhance their economic programs. According to Kah Wallah the party president of CPP in Cameroon and a trainer for WDN, it is important for leagues not to get directly involved in economic empowerment activities because such initiatives take up a lot of time which may divert the league from its core goal of politics. It is better for leagues to identify partners who can facilitate economic empowerment programs for women.
- ✓ Provide training and coaching to members in order to retain them. Remember once members are elected into political office they require assistance to perform their roles and responsibilities. Prior to any training undertake research to identify the needs of members so that training is tailored to members' needs.
- ✓ Provide literature about the party and league activities, news and any other information relevant to members of the league.



Training for women leaders and party members is important in enabling leaders to perform effectively and for members to know their roles and responsibilities to their parties and leagues

## Chapter Three: Fundraising

**Best practices in this Chapter are drawn from a paper presented by Ms. Kah Wallah, Party President of CPP in Cameroon, Founder and Director of a Consultancy firm STRATEGIES! And WDN trainer**

Most political parties raise money from:

- Membership fees;
- Individual contributions
- Donor contributions particularly from partners who share similar ideologies.

According to information from women leagues of major political parties in Uganda, women league activities are dependent on party funds. Women leagues face challenges in fundraising because of poverty among members and lack of funding for political parties by the Government of Uganda despite the passage of a law enabling government to fund political parties.

In Kah Wallah's analysis, people are not donating to parties for various reasons.

*“How much is a beer? And how much is party subscription fees?” Why are people drinking beer and not paying party subscription? .... “The way parties are putting themselves out there is not competitive enough. Poverty is not at a level where we cannot get any contribution. We must ask ourselves, what is it about the way we(parties) present themselves that is not making us attractive to attain the funding we need?”*

*“People heading political parties do not show members how their funds are being used. The lack of accountability and transparency in terms of managing party funds is a major hindrance to fundraising for parties.”-Kah Wallah, WDN trainer*

*“Parties must change the mindset of the population from expecting money for everything they do to volunteering”-Kah Wallah, WDN Trainer*

It is important to send a monthly email to update members about what the party is doing. The report should contain both programmatic highlights and the financial report. CPP will soon post its financial statements on its website. Transparency assures the donor that the party is not mis-using their funds. The party must therefore have a good system for accounting which reflects revenues and expenditures among others. It must also employ qualified and trusted people to manage its funds.

*“It's important to build the party data base in terms of donations. If someone gives you their 10,000/= they want to be recognized and their contribution acknowledged. Create a system in the party which indicated who gave, what amount they gave and when they made a donation”- Kah Wallah, WDN Trainer*

It is important for the party to acknowledge all its donors in different ways. For instance, big donors get to have direct conversations with the party president. Kah Wallah visits her big donors and has direct conversations with them. For those who may not be in the country you can skype and brief them on the activities of the party and how their money is being used. For middle level donors, the party president must write personal letters to them to thank them for the donations and send monthly emails updating them about party activities.

*“It is important to remember that some donors do not want to be known. Find out from your donor whether they want their name to be included in the list of donors that goes out together with party accountability”.* Kah Wallah, WDN Trainer

According to the women leagues from major parties in Uganda, they can do a number of things to raise funds for the leagues.

- Develop a clear objective for fundraising;
- Have a clear action plan with activities;
- Encourage all members to participate in raising funds for the league by donating to the league, encouraging members and the public to donate among others.

Prior to undertaking any fundraising activity, one should follow the following steps.

1. Determine a plan of action
2. Determine a budget
3. Develop a fundraising strategy
4. Define a system for collection and accounting
5. Build a database
6. Implement your fundraising strategy
7. Provide regular precise reports

**The fundraising strategy:**

- Should be determined for a specific:
  - Plan of Action
  - Time Period
- Should be based on some knowledge of your fundraising base
- Needs a trustworthy, skilled and determined team to implement it

**In fundraising always remember...**

- People are the most important resource you can mobilize
- Contributions in kind can be just as important as those in cash
- Everyone can contribute something

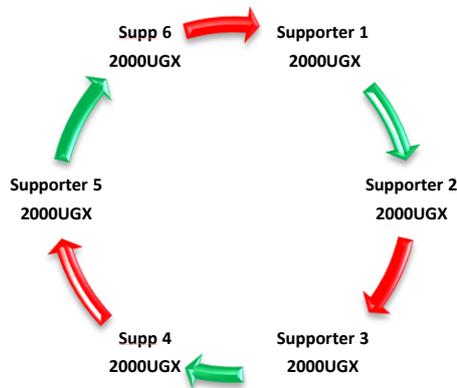
## Fundraising strategy possibilities

Party Members and Supporters at local, national and international levels can give:

<b>Regular contributions</b>
<b>Special Contributions</b>
<b>Sale of party cards-The party can raise funds through the sale of party cards to members and supporters</b>

## Circles of Support

- Getting large groups of people to give small amounts of money, once or regularly.



## Program Events

Use specific events to raise money. Identify a topic which is relevant to the target audience, lead a discussion on the issue by asking people to find solutions to it and ask for money. For instance if you have invited women for a party event, tell them what the party agenda has for women. If it is business owners you have invited for an event tell them how the party intends to address their issues through your election. Always remember to ask for money at the end of the event. For instance, if a person is congratulating your party for the work that it is doing tell them:

*“I do not only take congratulations these days but I also take cheques because I need money to get the job done”*

## People as a resource

The party must first focus on mobilizing people since they are the most important resource. If you have people who have no money but are willing to stick fliers, posters and arrange a hall for an event at no cost, this is a very important resource to the party. It is important for the party to ensure that its members fulfil their annual or subscription duties to the party. Use events to collect outstanding party subscriptions or membership fees. For instance make it a rule that for one to participate in a party event, they must have updated their membership through fulfilling their financial obligations towards the party. Sell party gadgets like T-shirts when going out for a party event for instance. It will force members who do not have the party T-shirt to buy one. Ensure that party gadgets are always available

for sale especially when a party activity is going to happen. Show members where to purchase a party t-shirt before entering the vehicle arranged to take them for the event.

Place an obligation on members to find at least 24 friends willing to give at least 3,000/= each on a weekly basis for the next six weeks (specified period of time) to the party. Candidates MUST demonstrate their ability to raise funds. If you are a candidate and cannot have 24 friends to give at least 3,000/= to the party on a weekly basis for a specified period of time, who will vote for you? Candidates need to be trained on fundraising. Give the potential candidates a flier with the party message and how it intends to fulfil its obligations once elected after providing the training they need to raise funds.

### **In-kind contributions**

Ask for donations like computers, video cameras, projectors, food, meeting space and transportation among others. There are people who may not have money but have food to feed your campaign team for instance. Look for such contributions because when converted into cash, it saves the party money. Therefore in fundraising, if you ask for money and the donor does not have it, ask for in-kind donations.

*“CPP party uses fliers alot because if people do not know where to find you, they will not be able to give you the donation of resource you need.”Kah-Wallah, WDN-Trainer.*

## Chapter Four: Attracting Young Women into the Party

Parties should understand why young people want to belong to an organization. In terms of young people aspiring for political leadership or those who want to belong to a party they are usually developing their skills in public speaking, networking, lobbying and leadership among others. Cameroon 'O Bosso is an NGO founded by Kah Wallah the President of CPP party in Cameroon. It has managed to attract young people to the party by doing the following:

- The programs of Cameroon O' Bosso address the needs of the ordinary people e.g. disease;
- The organization is transparent with young people particularly the volunteers. When it is able to provide transport refund to and fro their homes it does so. When it cannot it also ensures that they are aware of the financial situation of the organization.
- The volunteers can work from home particularly if their work requires them to work with computers and communicate via internet based technologies.
- The young people who usually join Cameroon O'Bosso do so because they are passionate about the work the organization does.
- The organization regularly keeps volunteers aware of its mission and vision. A women's league must strive to do the same.
- Cameroon O' Bosso looks for opportunities for skills development for young people. The skills the organization provides or opportunities it gives for skills development are useful for the young people if they aspire to work elsewhere in the future.
- Volunteering makes one rich with experience. It is important for the young people who have benefited from the skills training in the party to share with their peers how their experiences have helped them as they develop their careers.
- The party must maintain high professional standards so that the skills young people gain through it are recognized and attractive for employment.

Effective women leagues within political parties are pertinent to creating parties that women and girls will desire to belong to and to be associated with. In 2012, WDN-U conducted a mini-research that among others captures the voices of young Ugandan women about political parties. Those voices should be one of the reasons for women leagues to work tirelessly to get more young women interested in politics.

*“For me to join a political party, the issue of organization is key. The mechanisms the party employs to attract young women can also show whether it is interested in getting more young women into the party. Are the ideas that party is espousing new or are they the same old story? The leadership structure is also important for me as a young woman. For instance how does it relate to me as a young woman? Are young women part of the leadership structure? If yes, are they given space to shine? The wings in the party like the women and youth leagues are relevant especially if they add value to increasing the skills of young women who are interested in political leadership among other activities that I believe leagues should carry out. The activities of the party should also be gender sensitive to allow women to participate without hindrances. It is also important for the policies to engage and attract young women into the party. The policies on engaging young women should be real and not just on paper”... Isabella Akiteng – Green Light Movement*

*“It would also help if the branding of political parties also included young women. The faces of a lot of political parties are not only older people but also men. As a result, young women do not see themselves represented or reflected in the various political parties. By adopting a youth wing or starting activities that involve young women that are not limited to only election periods, I believe there would be more interest from young women in political*

*parties. It will also be easier for parties to recruit young women”... Rachael Mpiriirwe (24 years) – works as Program Assistant for a Local NGO in Uganda*

A number of actions therefore need to be taken during the pre-election period, election day and post election period by the parties and particularly women leagues to ensure that women of all ages gain interest and take pride to belong to a political party.

## **Chapter Five: Supporting Women after Elections**

*“Between elections, if a party is in opposition, it should try out things that they would want to see change in the country. For instance, if a party wants electoral reform, it should write its proposals on what it would want to see change in the electoral processes and share it with Electoral Commission, Parliament and relevant stakeholders.”-Kah Wallah, Trainer, WDN.*

The leagues can provide training to its elected members to enhance their performance and to ensure that its ideology is well understood by its members. This will ensure that when they are contributing to policies and laws they advance the party ideology.

Parties can create a political foundation to accomplish goals that they would be unable to do so through the party. Political foundations enable the party to attract funding.

### **Community work**

What is it that you can do for the community even outside government? A women’s league can work with the community to clean health centers, gutters and plant trees. These are activities which resonate with the population and can be supported by the population. Women leagues can work together to do community work.

### **Economic empowerment**

Women leagues can partner with government institutions, CSOs and private sector to enable women to benefit from economic empowerment activities. The leagues can look at policies that prevent women from benefiting from economic programs and advocate for review of such policies. It’s important for women leagues to work with partners in matters of economic empowerment because they are time consuming and if done by the league directly, they can take away the league’s focus from its political work.

### **Advocacy**

It is important for the women leagues to conduct collective advocacy with CSOs on issues that affect women’s participation in leadership and other women’s issues. The league should define its agenda for women so that it does not have trouble aligning itself and advocating with CSOs which share similar perspectives on the women’s agenda. For example advocacy on gender based violence; reproductive and maternal health issues, education for girls and women, economic issues that affect women’s rights in development; labour and land rights, advocacy for the Marriage and Divorce Bill among others. It’s important for the women leagues to get men on board on the advocacy issues that they espouse. The aim of advocacy should be to promote gender equality and equity for girls and boys; men and women. In order for the leagues to effectively advocate for women’s issues they should ensure that their party manifestoes include the issues during the formulation process. Women leagues should therefore be active the processes that lead to the development of the party manifesto. It will be easier for the party to support the league if the issues being espoused are part of the party agenda/platform.

### **Other initiatives the women leagues can undertake after elections**

- ✓ Undertake gender equality assessment and develop gender action plan within the party;

- ✓ Promote the participation of women in policy making within the party and undertake gender mainstreaming initiatives within the party;
- ✓ Sensitize party members about gender equality and track party adherence to gender mainstreaming.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

A women's specific space (e.g. League) within the parties is necessary, so long as it is used by women themselves to act strategically rather than for top-down manipulation and patronage. In the case of South Africa, we see the ANCWL acting as a powerful vehicle through which specific interests and needs of women are thrashed out to allow for more systematic engagement with the party executive. The Women's league should not be something thrown into the 'pot' as an afterthought. It should be an organ that connects directly to the party executive with clear lines of authority, roles and responsibilities. The women's league should be a broad, strong and consistent gender equity lobby, independent of the 'powers that be' because it is an essential ingredient for women to make strides within the parties. Civil society activism that tracks progress and makes timely support to women leaders is important in enhancing the activities of women in leadership in all political parties. Thus the need for women leagues of political parties to strengthen their relationships with women in CSOs.

## **Acknowledgement**

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## **About Women's Democracy Network-Uganda Chapter**

Women's Democracy Network (WDN)-Uganda Chapter is a local civil society organization affiliated to Women's Democracy Network (WDN) that seeks to empower women to pursue activism and leadership in the public sphere. WDN-Uganda Chapter has sought to ensure gender parity in political office by providing capacity building training for women leaders and leagues of political parties in leadership, advocacy, strategic planning and use of new technology since its establishment in 2011. WDN-Uganda Chapter empowers citizens and leaders with knowledge and skills to constructively engage in order to find solutions to issues that affect governance and human rights.