

Policy recommendations: Women, Power and Politics

The Hague, 29th of March 2018

Recent years have seen a growing recognition among the international development community of the importance of supporting women's political participation and influence in fragile and conflict affected settings (FCAS). Despite improvements in policy and funding, the international community is still failing to effectively support women's political participation and influence. Women continue to be excluded from formal political processes, because of deep rooted discriminatory gender norms, and the unbalanced interplay of formal and informal rules and power.

To further the role of women in peace processes and in decision making positions, CARE Nederland, WO=MEN Dutch Gender Network and NIMD organized a debate with the Dutch politicians Anne Kuik (CDA), Stieneke van der Graaf (CU), Marit Maij (PvdA), the Dutch ambassador in Yemen, Irma van Dueren, and Jamila Aanzi, the UN Women's Representative, Tam O'Neil (CARE UK), Laila Ait Baali (WO=MEN) and Simone Filippini (NIMD) on ways to improve the role of women in politics in fragile and conflict affected states.

On the basis of the literature study and this debate, CARE Nederland, WO=MEN and NIMD would like to highlight the following conclusions and recommendations to further women's political participation in fragile and conflict affected settings :

1. Change **norms and culture** that undermine women's political participation – both within political institutions and parties and in broader society.
2. Support **quotas** because they increase women's presence in formal politics, while being aware of their limitations in increasing women's substantive influence.
3. **Support women's Civil Society organisations** as an alternative pathway for women to influence politics as opposed to working their way through the ranks of political parties.
4. **Connect women to decision-making spaces** and help them **be influential once there**. This includes the foundational moments such as peace negotiations and constitutional reform.
5. Work in a **multi-sectoral way** – because women's political rights are linked to their social and economic rights and therefore cannot be achieved without programmes that also connect them.
6. Work with a **range of stakeholders**. Women activists and reformers need to be connected to each other, and to gatekeepers and decision-makers. Gender equality also cannot be achieved without working with men and male leaders to change attitudes and behaviour.
7. Work **politically** to advance women's participation and influence. This means being aware of how local politics interact with gender relations. It also means designing programmes so that they can adapt to changing circumstances.

8. There is a need for **long-term funding** on women's political participation which is flexible and which can be used to support pathways of change determined by local actors.

Sincerely,

CARE Nederland

WO=MEN

NIMD

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