

FY 2003

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LATIN AMERICA: Political Leadership Program—Bolivia Party Reform Projects

Summary

Often lauded as one of the most stable democracies in the Andean Region, Bolivia is experiencing a period of dramatic political transformation. Bolivian President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada resigned in October amid protests over the administration's plan to export natural gas through Chile. Sanchez de Lozada was succeeded by his Vice President, Carlos Mesa. In response to popular demands, Mesa has agreed to hold a state-by-state referendum on the export of Bolivia's natural gas, to convene a constitutional assembly, and to possibly hold presidential elections before the end of his predecessor's term. Economic stagnation, high levels of poverty, and slow progress toward political inclusion have created an anti-party and anti-political sentiment that threatens to weaken Bolivian democracy. The present conditions highlight the need for rebuilding healthy and responsive political parties that can effectively channel citizen demands, offer policy alternatives, and provide avenues for constructive political participation.

In response, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is conducting party strengthening activities in Bolivia through its Political Leadership Program (LP), a regional program that seeks to strengthen the leadership skills and ability of emerging political leaders to promote the modernization and renewal of political parties. The one-year program begins with an intensive seminar in Washington, D.C., and continues in-country with participants implementing concrete party-strengthening projects. The 2003 Leadership Program includes six participants from Bolivia.

Due to the political instability in Bolivia this quarter, participants were unable to conduct many activities. In October, NDI received USAID funds to implement a one-year, political party development program based in La Paz. As a result, 2003 LP participants will have greater access to NDI technical assistance through NDI's field office in Bolivia which opened in January 2004.

Background

In 1999, NDI launched the regional Political Leadership Program to promote the modernization and renewal of political parties by strengthening the democratic leadership skills of young political leaders and party activists. Following a rigorous selection process, the 2003 Leadership Program began with an intensive, ten-day leadership development seminar in



Washington, DC and continues in-country as participants implement concrete party-strengthening projects. The follow-on projects help NDI reach a broader audience within the parties and build consensus about initiatives to strengthen and modernize parties.

The overall objective of the Political Leadership Program is to foster long-term changes in party structures and practices in Latin America and the Caribbean by providing young, reform-minded political party leaders with leadership skills and practical strategies for advancing reform and modernization efforts.

After assuming the presidency in June 2002, the administration of President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada was challenged by opposition in Congress, a February mutiny by the police force, and ultimately popular protests that led to his resignation in October. In the wake of his resignation, and the succession of Vice President Carlos Mesa to the presidency, parties across the spectrum are struggling to meet the conditions established by the 1999 Political Party Law to increase transparency, inclusion of women, youth and indigenous members, and to establish internal democratic practices. The present conditions highlight the need for rebuilding healthy and responsive political parties that can effectively channel citizen demands, offer policy alternatives, and provide avenues for constructive political participation.

Program Activities

During this quarter, NDI brought 2003 participant Cynthia Prado to Washington to take part in a global forum, "Win with Women: Strengthen Political Parties." Forty women from 29 countries participated in the December 9 and 10 event to discuss strategies to strengthen political parties through women's leadership.¹ Prado participated in the "candidates" working group where she provided examples of techniques used to increase women's participation in her party (the New Republican Force – NFR). Specifically, Prado shared the successes of her LP project and her role in creating a quota for women candidates in the NFR's statutes.



Six young leaders from four of Bolivia's major political parties are participating in the 2003 Leadership Program. Descriptions of their projects are presented below.

¹ For more information on the event please see the following web page:
<http://www.ndi.org/globalp/women/forum/winwithwomen.asp>

Free Bolivian Movement (MBL)

Tomasa Yarhui, a member of the MBL National Directorate and a council member of the Sucre Municipal Government, Yarhui proposed to increase new leadership within the party through training with under represented sectors, particularly women and indigenous. A long term illness has prevented Yarhui from conducting project activities. NDI hopes to conduct activities with her and her party through its field office.

Leftist Revolutionary Movement (MIR)

Elsa Guevara, National Deputy for the Chuquisaca Department and President of the MIR Parliamentary Group in the Bolivian Chamber of Deputies, Guevara proposed to promote the political participation of women and indigenous in the MIR through training activities. Project activities have included workshops with 205 indigenous and women leaders from Chuquisaca and Tarija on strategic planning, leadership and oratory skills, political negotiation, and internal party communication. Guevara has collaborated with MIR LP participant Virginio Lema in conducting these activities.

Virginio Lema Trigo, Former General Advisor to the Tarija Departmental Governor, Lema proposed to help modernize and institutionalize the MIR party in Tarija by conducting seminars, workshops and a media campaign to educate members of both the MIR and civil society on the themes of party reform. As part of his project, Lema has conducted a televised debate on democracy and seminars on party/civil society relations, internal democracy reform, leadership and team-building skills, political negotiation, and outreach to underrepresented sectors, reaching up to 925 MIR activists.

Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR)

Alex Douglas Ardiles, Delegate to the La Paz MNR command, Ardiles proposed to incorporate new sectors into the MNR party structure. Project activities have included workshops on civil society outreach, political negotiation, party renewal and leadership skills reaching 140 MNR and civil society leaders from 20 districts of La Paz.

Veronica Lema Ramos, Spokesperson and Secretary of MNR Youth, Lema proposed to create a training program for young party members with the objective of forming proactive leaders. Project activities have included two workshops on team building and outreach to civil society for 50 MNR youth leaders.

New Republican Force (NFR)

Cynthia Ximena Prado Quiroga, the NFR Gender and Training Secretary, Prado proposed to implement a "pilot" project with the primary objective of increasing female political participation by at least 30% in departmental secretariats. In the long term, these efforts would translate into a greater number of women NFR candidates in Cochabamba for the 2004 municipal elections. Project activities will focus on the training women leaders on the essential

themes of public speaking, negotiation, lobbying, and consensus building. Project activities have included workshops on outreach to underrepresented sectors, strategic communication, and message development specifically designed for women candidates. These workshops reached 200 women and civil society leaders.

To strengthen Prado's project and provide her access to women leaders and strategies to increase the political participation of women from around the world, NDI invited Prado to participate in the "Win with Women: Strengthen Political Parties" forum that took place from December 9 to 10.

The Forum convened 40 high-level women political party leaders from 29 countries to promote political party reforms that advance women's leadership. NDI Board Chairman Madeleine Albright chaired the Forum, which was moderated by NDI Board Member Geraldine Ferraro. The Forum had as its premise the belief that the surest way to promote women's full participation in a country's political process is through political party reform. Political parties must do more than establish women's wings or place women at the bottom end of party lists; they must develop real avenues for women's leadership roles.

The Forum was unique in that it convened political party practitioners and provided them with the opportunity to develop policy prescriptions specifically on the issue of women's participation in parties. Through a series of working groups and plenary sessions, the participants developed a "global action plan" to increase women's political leadership opportunities. The global action plan includes a statement by the participants and a series of action steps that political parties can take to enhance women's role in political parties. The global action plan can now be used as a tool by party leaders to reform, modernize and renew political parties by increasing women's participation. As a result of the Forum, participants also emerged with a strong network committed to increasing women's participation in political parties both in their home countries and globally. NDI will also sponsor a "listserv" (an automatic computer-based mailing list) to promote continued communication by the participants and will use the newly created "Win with Women" website as a basis for an enhanced resource site on women's political participation.

During the workshop, Prado participated in the "candidates" working group with former Peruvian Prime Minister, Beatriz Merino and former Democratic Party Vice Presidential Candidate Geraldine Ferraro. Prado provided examples of techniques used to increase women's participation in the NFR. Specifically, Prado shared the successes of her LP project and her role in creating a quota for women candidates in the NFR's statutes. She hopes to implement elements of the "Win with Women" action plans within the NFR.

Results and Accomplishments

Objective: Provide Bolivian parties with skills and materials to advance reform and modernization efforts.

- Through her participation in the "Win with Women: Strengthen Political Parties" conference, 2003 LP participant, Cynthia Prado was exposed to best practices and successful strategies to increase the political participation of women from around the world and helped develop practical action plans to further enhance the leadership of women in political parties.

Future Activities

With USAID funding, NDI has opened a field office in Bolivia dedicated to political party development initiatives. NDI hopes to take advantage of these initiatives to provide further technical assistance to the party strengthening projects of the 2003 LP participants. NDI also hopes to conduct a technical assistance visit to Bolivia during the next quarter to conduct additional activities with the LP participants.

Authorized Budget:	\$60,730.00
Prior Expenditures:	\$33,996.37
Expenditures this Quarter:	\$ 8,322.50
Total Expenditures:	\$42,318.87