

Broadening Support Base and Recruiting Women Party Members

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Key Areas:

1. Party Constitution, Party Platform and the Women's agenda/manifesto.
2. Membership Database.
3. Recruitment, Development & retention of members.
4. Identifying and preparing the right candidates.

Why should political parties recruit?

Why Parties should recruit women members:

- To increase on the party's **numerical strength**;
- To provide alternative leadership and candidates;
- A party becomes more successful in promoting its policy agenda and electing candidates if it can increase women or membership;
- Women can bring new ideas, energy and vibrancy into the party;
- Women are committed, devoted, loyal and determined; in most cases women are result oriented;
- Today more **women are educated, skilled and to a good degree economically empowered; they can fund and contribute money to the party religiously**;
- To make the party look one with diverse and welcoming values and attitudes

Where can parties recruit their members from?

- **Community:**

Family, Village, Market, Funeral, Well, shrines etc

- **Institutions:**

Church, Hospital, Schools, Colleges, Universities etc

- **Recreational Activities/festivals:**

Football Match, Concerts, Cinemas, Musical entertainments, wedding etc

What should a women's wing/league do in order to retain members

- 1. After a recruitment drive, the party should prepare and maintain a list (database) of all the recruited members for purposes of follow-up, fundraising, volunteer recruitment, candidate identification and campaigning.**
- 2. Secondly, the party should organise an event to bring/welcome members to their new party and to meet the leadership (especially women in top leadership positions) of the party: this will encourage them to feel they made the right decision.**

- 3. Identify their abilities and involve them in party activities such as party/election campaign agents; Volunteers, office assistants**

- 4. Communicate with them at all levels and time to keep them up-dated with what is happening in their party.**

Database Management in a women's wing

A database is simply a collection of information about your members.

The most important fields your membership database should include:

- Date
- Name
- Gender

- Age
- District
- Constituency
- Sub-county
- Parish
- Village
- Address/Telephone No.
- Reason for joining the party
- Profession
- Candidacy aspiration

Barriers to involvement of women in Political Party Leadership

- Historical beliefs created by culture, religion and colonialism that women are supposed to stay at home and take care of the children;
- Women are sometimes their own enemies: they believe they have to fight each other to stay on top;
- Lack of Education makes women feel they cannot contribute to the party;
- Fear of criticism by the Public;
- Women's domestic responsibilities limit women's time to engage in political issues;
- Most women are not economically empowered and thus they cannot afford to spend so much time in politics when they have households to take care of.

What should be done?

1. **Women should know their fundamental Human Rights in Leadership and Politics:** How:
 - Close reference should be paid to the Constitutional provisions of their about their rights and freedoms; Interpretation of the law should be made very clear to the women;
 - Civil society organizations and other NGOs advocating for the rights and freedoms of women should be engaged by the Women Political wings(Women Leaders) to educate women about their entitlements.
 - Examples of prominent women leaders at National and even internal level should be cited as examples to encourage/convince the women that they can also make it;
 - A source of funding can be made available to those potential women leaders/candidate but who do not have enough funding for their political processes;
 - The women wing leaders should design a scheme of how they can promote younger women who show their aptitude to enroll for formal, further education and training; this is done to promote their self confidence in any elective position.

What women should know about their participation in Leadership and politics

QSN:

How can we encourage women to be supporters and activists in an environment where they fear the political process?

Note:

The participation of women in politics and electoral process varies from one country to another. However in Uganda, the women political movement since 1958 has made big strides in promoting the rights of women, the women's agenda and their participation in all platforms of leadership.

Women In Politics In Uganda:

Uganda just like other international players has advocated on the issues of women's rights and their participation in all spheres of development especially since the first Women's conference held in Mexico in 1975 through to Beijing 1995.

Uganda is often cited as a success story when it comes to the issue of women in Leadership – specifically political leadership. The 1995 Constitution has various articles that address women's (political) leaders as follows:

What does the Constitution of Uganda say about women's political rights?

- ❑ Article 32 – addresses the need for **affirmative action**;
- ❑ Article 33 – spells out rights specific to women especially stating that: **“Without prejudice to Article 32 ... women shall have a right to affirmative action for the purpose of redressing the imbalance created by history tradition or custom”**.
- ❑ Article 78 states that **every district shall have one woman representative to parliament, and**;
- ❑ Article 180(2)9b) ensures that **one third of members of each local council shall be women.**

The Women's Agenda

Note: Although many national and international players have advocated on the issues of women's rights and their participation in all spheres of development especially since the first Women's conference held in Mexico in 1975 through to Beijing 1995 and, to which Uganda has subscribed, the process of bringing women into mainstream political decision making is still very challenging. Women still continue to battle domestic demands, illiteracy, poverty, patriarchy and negative cultural, religious and traditional practices.

To avert this situation, the government, development partners and civil society to address the strategic and practical needs of women with a more clear perspective for leaders to commit themselves to. These include:

Women's Agenda Contd.

- ❑ Real and Meaningful Democracy – where every citizen(man or woman) has rights to fully participate at all levels;
- ❑ Good Governance, integrity and transparency – where there is transparency, zero tolerance to corruption and respect for institutional mechanisms put in place such as, the IGG, UHRC etc.
- ❑ Affirmative Action – in all social, cultural, political and economic spheres

- Commitments to International obligations that guarantee Human Rights;
- Peace, security and Conflict Resolutions;
- People Centered Development;
- Sustainable environmental management and equitable resource allocation;
- Law, Order and Access to Justice by Women and Poor people,
- Poverty and Economic Empowerment of Women;
- Fundamental Rights of Women;
- Education of Women

Is this Agenda Realistic?

The outstanding observation worth noting is that, although women agitate for these issues, **they have remained the same for a number of years and no visible progress has been seen in the achievement of their aspirations.**

What should we do as Concerned women?

Because the bulk of women in other sectors are not aware about this agenda and yet they feel that these are the priorities, we should set a minimum agenda in which we should re-prioritize the demands for maximum achievement and for effectiveness.