



WIT Professional Development Networks in Iraq Paving the Way for Civil Society

Iraq's Professional Development Networks (PDNs) provide WIT graduates with opportunities to contribute to their country's civil society development. Recently, WIT PDNs led a candidate empowerment campaign to prepare women candidates to fully participate in Iraq's Provincial Elections held on January 31, 2009.

PDN members volunteered with staff from WIT's lead partner, Iraqi Al Amal Association (IAA), to promote 4,000 female candidates on provincial election lists in 10 provinces using a combination of voter education, TV, radio and Internet advertising. As part of the effort, female candidates received training on public speaking, presentation and leadership skills using WIT's Professional Development curriculum. Due, in part, to the involvement of the PDNs and volunteers, the 25% quota for female representation was met nationwide—a major achievement for the campaign.

Based on the success of the WIT PDN female candidate empowerment campaign, IAA plans to launch another candidate training program—this time in preparation for Iraq's general elections scheduled for December 2009. Using WIT's training centers and networks, IAA plans to train 1,000 women candidates over the next 8 months. As WIT Iraq Program Manager, Basma Al Khateeb remarked, "We're paving the grounds for future democracy in Iraq. One that is genuine and true."

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