
The Labour Party's Westminster Foundation for Democracy Programme

ANNUAL REVIEW 2020-21



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For more information on Labour's WFD programme, please visit
www.labourwfd.org.uk/

Date of publication: October 2021

Figure 1: Cover images (clockwise from top left): Tha'era Empowering Arab Women roundtable, Egypt; SD Forum 2020, Ukraine; WAFA National Election Capacity Building Training, Mozambique



Figure 2: Mayoral elections best practice visit, UK (March 2020)

Introduction

The Labour Party supports political parties in new and emerging democracies around the world through its Westminster Foundation for Democracy Programme – a key component of Labour’s international strategy.

We work together to ensure the values of democracy, freedom, justice and human rights are shared across the world.

As one of the oldest and most established social democratic parties in the world, Labour has long sought to share experiences and build alliances with like-minded parties across regions.

We do this by supporting bilateral projects with other parties and by building regional and thematic networks. Throughout, we focus on working with women and young people; two groups that are often overlooked and marginalised in the political process.

This document gives a summary of the projects we completed in the financial year 2020-21 and focuses on the changes brought about through this support.

How we're funded

The Labour Party receives funds from the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) – an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

WFD builds the capacity of parliaments and political parties; delivering parliamentary work itself whilst resources are provided to Westminster based parties to work directly with partners overseas.

The funding from WFD enables the Labour Party to deliver projects with political parties and regional networks designed around their specific needs and in line with our international strategy.

For more information on WFD's work, please visit
www.wfd.org.uk





Figure 3: Hybrid conference on LGBTI rights, Serbia (March 2021)

Section 1: Yearly overview

Our projects are designed in accordance with the relevant political context and tailored to meet specific needs of political parties, particularly our sister parties across the regions experiencing both challenges and opportunities within their respective political environments.

This year, the world crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic was a test for democracies everywhere. Workplaces adjusted to working from home, elections held in unprecedented circumstances, the rise in domestic violence, and sweeping restrictions on personal liberty.

Although our programmes experienced delays and alterations to activities due to the pandemic, most of our partners were able to continue to plan activities whilst using a different timeline and delivered activities via Zoom.



Figure 4: Panel discussion on LGBTI rights, Serbia (March 2021)

Section 2: Outcomes and highlights

The overall goal of the Labour Party's WFD Programme is to create stronger social democratic parties and actors to enable them to function and participate in a multi-party political system and provide a choice to the electorate.

The programme also aims to build strong regional networks through the sharing of best practice and skills training. For example, we have supported political actors on human rights and equalities through our work on women, youth and LGBTI rights.

Despite the challenges this year of COVID-19, we were pleased to be able to proceed with activities and are able to report the following outcomes and achievements for the 2020-2021 financial year:

Africa

This year, the Women's Academy for Africa (WAF) supported social democratic women to address financial barriers to political participation with a specific focus on the selection process. WAF is a regional network with aims to change the face of politics and policy by identifying, educating and empowering women in Africa.

I was elected a member of WAF Youth Coordination in Maputo, this position projected me into limelight in our party to become Vice President of my party's Youth Wing.

Mary Yeboah Asantewaa
WAF Programme

Factors such as patriarchy, gender stereotyping, and socio-economic barriers are among the reasons why women struggle to enter into the political arena. The programme has been integral in identifying women candidates whom seek elected positions and express an interest in standing for public office, and providing them with access to resources and best practice for competing. Participant survey responses submitted after the training included being enthusiastic about forthcoming elections to apply their newly acquired skills.

On behalf of WAFA, I would like to thank the Labour Party and WFD for your support.

[...] the work on political leadership of women through WAFA has contributed a lot [towards] this achievement. I thank you for all this support. We are proud to be part of WAFA.

Alice Banze
Chair of WAFA

Following programme activities this year, our partners in Cameroon proposed discussions on increasing the women's quota for representation in their party. Furthermore, they drafted recommendations to their National Executive Committee (NEC) on changes that should be implemented in order to improve the party. The suggested changes include encouraging more women and young people to join the party, ending discrimination against women, and promoting the work of women in the party.

This programme has been successful in bringing women together to share their political experiences, work together to be better prepared to face electoral challenges in difficult circumstances, and develop resilience.

Middle East and North Africa

Although our annual Future Leaders programme for young activists in the Middle East and North Africa was cancelled this year due to Covid-19, we were able to continue other aspects of our work in the region.

In Jordan, we continued working with partners to foster relationships between political parties and trade unions. In light of the restrictions around Covid, we were able to extend the programme and work with partners to support a series of workshops that introduced participants to discussions around trade union structures, the development of labour legislation and mechanisms to raise worker's awareness of the benefits of union membership. By promoting political participation in the trade union sector, our partners are playing a key role in strengthening civil society and protecting the rights of workers across the country.



Figure 5: Women's political participation seminar, Morocco (March 2021)

As soon as restrictions allowed, our partners in Morocco were also able to proceed with activities around women's political empowerment. Over 70 women from academia, politics and civil society organisations met for a seminar on women's representation at municipal level. Training on electoral campaigns and political messaging was provided by local experts, helping to ensure political parties communicate effectively with the population in changing political circumstances.

In response to imposition of lockdowns by governments in the region, we supported Tha'era as they undertook an important regional study that addressed the responses of Arab countries to gender-based violence during the Covid-19 pandemic. Their work included the creation of a new website as a key feature of their regional campaign and the collection of a wide range of data that has shed light on the role of the civil society and women's organisations throughout various stages of the response. For participating parties, this will be vital in supporting the development of further policy responses to gender based violence in the MENA region.

Eastern Europe

In South East Europe (SEE), we worked with the Foundation Max van der Stoel (FMS) to facilitate further cooperation and dialogue on LGBTI rights among progressive parties in the region. Our programme of activities included a training session to enable members of four social democratic parties in the region to lead their own workshops on human rights and LGBTI issues, as well as a series of national capacity building

events that successfully helped more than 60 participants improve their knowledge and understanding of LGBTI issues in their countries and across the region.

Through support from our programme, our regional partners successfully drafted and signed a new 'Declaration of the Social Democratic Parties from the Western Balkans', which pledged to work on the fight against all forms of discrimination and hate speech. Importantly, it will also aim to improve party structures to encourage better representation for members of the LGBTI community.

In March 2021, we were pleased to work with FMS to deliver a virtual conference with a wide range of civil society organisations that met to discuss how to ensure LGBTI rights were higher on the agenda of political parties in the region. This will prove essential as partners look to build on the success of this programme and continue to campaign on LGBTI and human rights issues.

Due to the travel restrictions imposed during the pandemic, the annual political Summer Academy for young social democrats from Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus was cancelled this year. However, partners in Ukraine were able to proceed with capacity building activities and communications training ahead of elections in October 2020, and it was positive to see an increased number of women and youth candidates standing for elected office.

Despite the impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of several events, our partners successfully managed to boost their institutional capacity and begin operating in new regions of Ukraine. In July 2020, the Women's Lobby received official status as a public organisation, while recognition of its work increased through its involvement in the March of Equality in March 2020. Meanwhile, our partners' innovative use of online platforms helped them attract more than 1,000 registrations to their annual forum, building their reputation as one of the most recognisable social and political movements on the left.



Figure 6: National capacity building event branding, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Aug 2020)



Figure 7: Virtual SD Forum, Ukraine (Dec 2020)

Western Balkans

Alongside our regional activities, we continued to provide bilateral support to partners in the Western Balkans. In Montenegro, we supported the Social Democratic Party as it established a dedicated political academy for activists, members and supporters. Based on similar examples in the region, this predominantly aims to increase youth participation in politics. The first academy took place ahead of parliamentary elections in August 2020, where ten of the twenty-four participants were selected by the SDP to run as candidates. After the elections, twelve participants stood as candidates for membership of the SDP Main Committee and Statutory Commission at the SDP Congress and ten were elected, highlighting their continued commitment to remain active in politics. Such results are a strong endorsement for the future of the academy.

In July 2020, elections also took place in North Macedonia, despite delays caused by COVID-19. In preparation, we worked again with local partners to deliver skills-based training to women and youth wings of the Social Democratic Union (SSDM) on social democratic values and policies, political management, communications and campaign management. With additional health measures in place, four training sessions were delivered in the run up to the elections, with over ninety representatives of women and youth forum members in attendance. Participants were able to engage with senior party officials, including a Special Advisor to the Prime Minister on Digital



Figure 8: Political Academy, North Macedonia (June 2020)

Communications. At the election, the alliance led by the SSDM won the largest share of the vote and will hold the most seats in the new parliament.

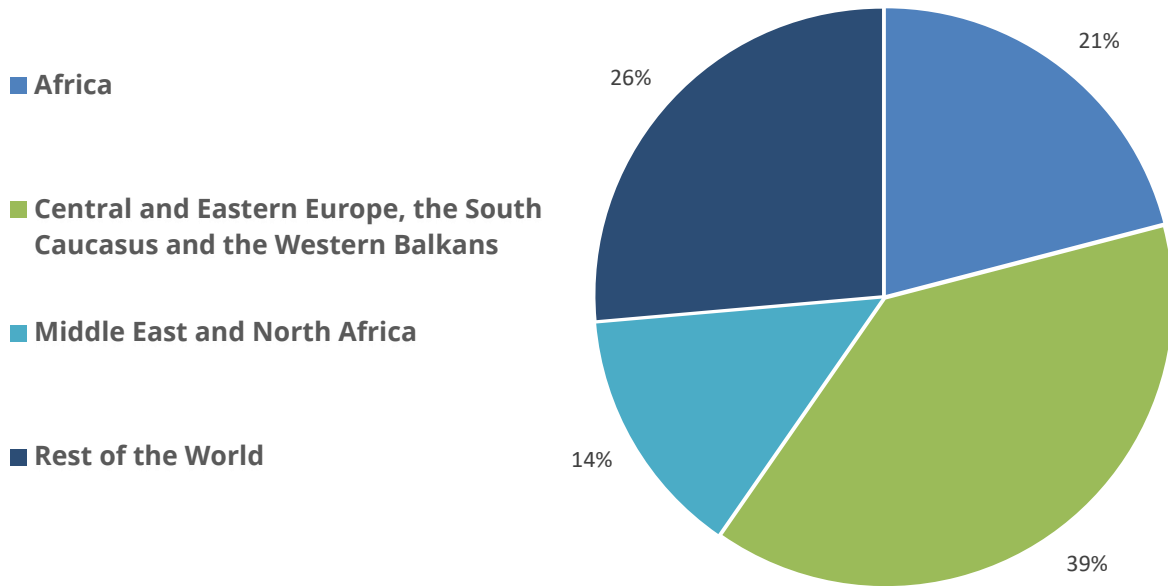
Through the pandemic, our support for the Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SDP) also took on a new role around policy development and capacity building. The work with MPs, councillors, experts and researchers continued online during the pandemic, with public engagement activities focussing on the emergency legislation introduced in response to the Covid-19 crisis.

Our partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina were also keen to highlight some of the issues affecting women in business during this time and successfully arranged an online roundtable event attended by senior women in both politics and business. Analysis showed that measures taken to mitigate the effects of the crisis were overdue, inadequate and often gender insensitive, and participants agreed a series of conclusions on adapting SDP policies to support those most affected by the crisis. These activities have helped to promote transparency and increase public scrutiny of government policy throughout the crisis, helping to ensure they remain held to account.

Section 3: Resources

Our projects are funded through an annual grant from the Westminster Foundation for Democracy. The charts below show the breakdown of expenditure in 2020-21 according to region and then by three key areas.

Expenditure by region



Expenditure by objective

