2011 Annual Report

PARTNERS for Democratic Change
Dear Friends of Partners for Democratic Change—

This past year, we have seen movements for democratic change arise in every corner of the globe, from Tunisia to Wall Street. And everywhere we see the same questions being asked of activists and movement leaders: “What do you mean by democratic change, and how will you achieve it?” Here at Partners for Democratic Change, we and the global network of Partners affiliate Centers work on answering that question every day. In this Annual Report, we highlight stories that exemplify how Partners is building local capacity and leadership to enable democratic change around the world. From training young people in Yemen to resolve tribal conflicts peacefully, to facilitating the integration of women into the Senegalese armed forces, we create democratic change by enabling all people to have a real voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

Greater participation is not the easiest solution to the challenges facing 2011’s activists and revolutionaries. Bringing in diverse people and varied opinions to the democratic process comes with the potential for greater conflict, delay, frustration, and even violence. Partners continues to invest in strong local organizations that provide a platform of tools, processes, services and resources to enable many kinds of change and participation. Some of these tools relate to elections, government institutions and policies in the traditional sense of “democracy-building.” Others enable participation in more localized ways, for example, training new community mediators in conflict zones in Colombia. The common thread to all of these initiatives is that Partners is contributing to a broader culture of inclusion and participation.

In 2011, with the support of the General Electric Foundation and members of the Partners for Democratic Change International network, we embarked on an ambitious multi-year evaluation that will document and measure the impact of Partners and Partners Centers’ work. One of the key questions we are asking is “What have we contributed to democratic change over the past 22 years?” Partners is committed to capturing and sharing evidence-based strategies that truly work, and we look forward to sharing the findings with our network and supporters in the coming months.

Finally, in the early weeks of 2012 when this report was being prepared, Partners’ founder Raymond Shonholtz passed away unexpectedly. His dedication to human dignity through participation and dialogue animates the work of the Partners family across the globe. We are deeply saddened by the loss of our friend, mentor and visionary.

Best wishes,

Julia Roig
President
2011

At a Glance

Partners for Democratic Change (Partners) is a not-for-profit international organization committed to building sustainable local capacity to advance civil society, democratic institutions and a culture of change and conflict management worldwide. Partners accomplishes its mission directly and in partnership with the other members of Partners for Democratic Change International, located in Albania, Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Jordan, Kosovo, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, and Yemen.

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<th>$12 million</th>
<th>86</th>
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<td>Total amount of funding raised by the six newest Centers established from 2008 to 2011 under Partners’ first Sustainable Leadership Program in Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, Senegal, Serbia and Yemen. The original General Electric (GE) Foundation investment was $975,000.</td>
<td>Number of questions in the evaluation survey sent to all Partners affiliate Centers as part of the 3-year participatory evaluation of the impact of Partners’ work, under the follow-on Sustainable Leadership Program grant.</td>
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<td>Additional square feet in Partners’ new office space at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington D.C.</td>
<td>Number of new Partners staff hired and retained in 2011, for a total of 11 staff in Washington D.C.</td>
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<td>Number of working days that Partners-Yemen’s 19 staff members worked from home in 2011 because ongoing political violence and turbulence made it too dangerous to go to the office.</td>
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$4.7 million Partners total revenue during FY 2011

48% increase over FY 2010

2011 Donors and Clients
Creative Associates International Inc.
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Chemonics International Inc.
Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands – Yemen
Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia
FHI Development 360, LLC
Ford Foundation
General Electric Foundation
Management Sciences for Development Inc.
Management Systems International
Partners for Democratic Change International
Partners-Jordan Center for Civic Collaboration
Tetra Tech DPK
United States Africa Command
United States Institute of Peace
U.S. Department of State
U.S. Agency for International Development
U.S. Embassy, Sana’a, Yemen

This figure does not include programs and contracts directly implemented by Partners for Democratic Change International member Centers.
COLOMBIA
Partners Supports Legal Pluralism

SERBIA
Partners Supports Private Sector Mediation

SENEGAL
Partners Supports Inclusive Institutions
What is *democratic change*?

These stories show four unique ways that the Partners network is supporting democratic change around the world.
The Wayúu have lived in the harsh desert of La Guajira peninsula in northern Colombia for over 500 years.
In Colombia, democratic change means that the unique, traditional justice system of the Wayúu indigenous people is strengthened and linked with services provided by the formal justice system.

The Wayúu have lived in the harsh desert of La Guajira peninsula in northern Colombia for over 500 years. Their vibrant culture includes a normative system based on peaceful coexistence of matriarchal clans. Justice is dispensed by elders called Palaberos or Putchipûu (the ones who carry the word), who are respected in the community for their knowledge of peaceful conflict resolution.

Colombia’s armed conflict has taken a toll on the Wayúu. Drug trafficking and paramilitary groups have moved into Wayúu territory, displacing and terrorizing the population. Scarce resources and the need to find jobs has forced many Wayúu youth to travel great distances in search of jobs, causing a breakdown in Wayúu culture and traditions. Recognizing the need to protect their basic rights and their unique cultural heritage, Akuaipa Waimakat, a Wayúu organization, initiated an inclusive and open discussion about the obstacles to justice and security in La Guajira with the Colombian Ministry of Interior and Justice and the La Guajira Office of Indigenous Affairs. Partners-Colombia is facilitating this inter-institutional dialogue and supporting Wayúu leaders’ participation.

Based on this discussion, Partners-Colombia is now working with the Wayúu and Colombian officials to educate court personnel and other formal justice system institutions about the Wayúu traditional legal system. In addition, Partners is establishing an indigenous rights school that will help the Wayúu to preserve their culture, establish connections between different organizations and clans, and develop strong local leaders.

With support from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Partners is helping the Wayúu gain greater control over their own safety and security. This includes improving access to the customary normative system to resolve conflicts within the Wayúu community, as well as greater protection and services from the Colombian justice system. The project complements the Colombian government’s strategy for safeguarding indigenous groups that are in danger of being culturally or physically exterminated. Though Colombia’s struggles with drug trafficking and paramilitary groups will continue to impact the Wayúu in La Guajira, Partners is supporting local leaders to preserve their culture and community while confronting crime and violence.

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In Yemen, democratic change means providing young people in marginalized areas with the skills necessary to resolve tribal conflicts peacefully. While exact numbers are hard to determine, hundreds, even thousands, of Yemenis die each year due to violent social conflicts, many of which are inter or intra-tribal conflicts. Wardah Mujawwar, a 26 year old woman from Al-Jawf, one of the tribal governorates of Yemen, was trained as a community facilitator through Partners-Yemens’ Community-based Conflict Mitigation (Y-CCM) initiative. She was able to use conflict resolution skills gained in the training to prevent a series of revenge killings in her local community.

Recently, Wardah’s brother was stabbed by a man from a neighboring tribe. Young and proud, he intended to seek revenge. “I feared for my brother’s life and also for the life of that other man who stabbed him. I feared most that this would spark a cycle of revenge killings between the two tribes,” said Wardah. “My brother was stubborn; he wouldn’t listen to my uncles or the men from the village.”

Wardah and her sister (who had also been trained through the Y-CCM program) sat together and brainstormed ways to stop their brother from sparking an inter-tribal conflict. First, they tried to convince their brother that it would be honorable to forgive the perpetrator and to seek compensation for his wound without resorting to violence.

Together, they approached their mother and influential figures from both tribes, hoping they might pressure their brother to accept compensation. Their mother had initially encouraged her son to seek revenge, so Wardah and her sister tried to help her see the negative effects that any act of revenge would have on their brother, the entire family, and the tribe.

Due to the sisters’ determination, representatives from their tribe eventually met with the perpetrator and a representative from his tribe. They signed an agreement in which the brother forgave the perpetrator and received monetary compensation, resolving the conflict peacefully. “The process took about two months, but eventually we solved the problem ourselves. We did a better job than the men in the family,” says Wardah. Their courageous deeds show that even in a culture where women’s activities in the public sphere are limited, women can play an important role in preventing violent conflict.
“We did a better job than the men in the family.”
—Wardah Mujawwar.

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September 2010, Dakar

CONFERENCE ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SENEGAL’S MILITARY

Madame Ndioro Ndiaye
President of the Alliance for Migration Leadership and Development (AMLD), with a participant

Photo by Birame Diop
In Senegal, **democratic change** means bringing more women into every branch and level of the armed forces, which is a highly respected national institution. “We need all the forces of the nation to meet the challenges we face in terms of education, health, food security, development, access to water, energy, and security,” explains Major Khadidiatou M Bâ Fall, a medical doctor at Dakar’s military hospital. “Women have an important role to play in this context and should not be left behind. Their integration into the security forces is necessary to complement men in addressing the challenges facing us all.”

Until 2008, Senegalese women in the military, like Major Fall, were restricted to service in the medical branch. In Senegal, despite 50 years of democratic stability and development, gender inequality persists. Men are dominant in almost every sphere. Property and familial rights are often denied to women, and gender-based violence remains widespread despite efforts to raise awareness and improve the legal framework for reporting and punishing offenders.

In 2008, President Abdoulaye Wade called on the military to allow women to participate equally in all branches of the military. With the founding of Partners Senegal in 2010, the Ministry of Armed Forces requested that the Center help improve their implementation of gender mainstreaming by facilitating the involvement of civil society and other stakeholders. In cooperation with the National Defense University’s Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS), and Senegal’s Ministry for Women, Families, and Gender, Partners Senegal facilitated a participatory process including civil society, lawyers, military officials, female members of the armed forces, and experts on women’s empowerment to jointly identify weaknesses in the current rules and opportunities for improvement. They produced a comprehensive list of over 60 pages of recommendations for the Ministry of Gender and the Ministry of Armed Forces, which is being implemented.

As a result, the Senegalese military has “turned a complete 180 with regards to women’s integration in the army,” says Joni Pentifallo, US Military advisor to the initiative. “I’m impressed with how many women they have in the military across the board.” Every branch of the uniformed security services, from the army to customs agents, is now open to women. Over the next two years, a large number of female officers will return from training in the US, France and Morocco. Women now make up nearly 15 percent of Senegal’s military. By improving the quality of women’s participation in the Senegalese military, initiatives like this build more legitimate institutions and provide an example of the power of inclusion for Senegal and the region.

“Women have an important role to play...and should not be left behind. Their integration into the security forces is necessary...”

— Major Khadidiatou M Bâ Fall
In Serbia, democratic change means expanding the use of mediation in the business sector to resolve conflicts that discourage investment and growth. On average enforcing a business contract in Serbia requires an estimated 36 different procedures over 635 days, at a cost of 28.9% of the claim. Small and medium enterprises are disproportionately impacted by the high costs of litigation and long delays for court decisions. The backlog discourages investment and undermines the trust of Serbian citizens in the justice system.

Mediation is an alternative dispute resolution method in which a third party facilitates a voluntary negotiation between parties to identify the sources of the conflict, brainstorm possible solutions, and craft an agreement they both approve. Mediation is proven to resolve disputes more quickly than litigation, and with a greater chance of maintaining and improving working relationships. In a recent case in Serbia, an investor and a contractor needed two days of mediation to resolve a two-year dispute that threatened to block a 14 million EUR international construction project. Despite these benefits, mediation is still relatively new and not widely used within the Serbian business sector.

Partners-Serbia’s “Commercial Mediation Capacity Building” (CMCB) initiative offered awareness-building seminars and in-depth trainings for corporate counsels and HR managers who deal with disputes as part of their daily work. After one of the seminars, a corporate lawyer said, “It is crucial to raise awareness on mediation among businesses and other potential parties to disputes. As lawyers, we are ourselves responsible for promotion of this useful dispute resolution method which can make businesses more successful and our lives better.” CMCB activities had immediate results:

- A mid-sized company with approximately 1000 employees is now training 10 in-house mediators to address claims of workplace harassment.
- The Serbian Chamber of Commerce established an internal “Center for Services and Mediation,” which will provide mediation and facilitation services to its members in the area of financial restructuring of commercial debts.

The program is helping create more demand for mediation services, as well as a supply of professional mediators who are eager to use their skills to resolve business disputes and even disputes in other areas. This was confirmed by a program participant who said: “If you help us to learn more about mediation we will be ready and capable of helping others in peaceful resolution of their disputes.”

“If you help us to learn more about mediation we will be ready and capable of helping others in peaceful resolution of their disputes.”
— program participant
Partners and our affiliate Centers build the capacity of individuals, organizations, companies and governments to use mediation techniques to resolve conflicts.

Photo by Amanda Slater

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