

IT'S TIME TO ACT:

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL AND CIVIC LIFE A MANUAL FOR WOMEN

*“We all live under the same sky,
but we don't all have the same horizon”*

Konrad Adenauer



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It is with great pleasure that we present to you this publication on Women in Politics.

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Eduardo Frei Foundation have been training women in Armenia who are interested in politics for 7 years. There is a worldwide movement of women who are eager to have their voices heard, who want to participate in politics and have a say in how their communities are being shaped. This is not always easy and many women in Armenia struggle to gain more influence. With our training sessions and with this publication, we aim to give more women support, inspiration and especially encouragement to speak up and claim their right to power in politics. An equal balance of power between women and men means better politics, stronger democracies and thriving societies.

Our foundations are affiliated with Christian Democratic parties in Europe – the CDU in Germany and the CDA in the Netherlands. The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung is based in Germany with offices in more than 120 countries, including Armenia. The Foundation has been working since the 1960s on promoting and strengthening democracy. The Eduardo Frei Foundation shares the same mission, it was founded right after the fall of the Berlin Wall and is based in the city of peace and justice, The Hague.

The manual “Participation of women in civic and political life” is envisaged for general use, particularly for individual women and their groups that want to develop their knowledge on socio-political participation or take their first steps in this area.

The manual encourages the participation of women on local and national levels, it presents a brief background on the role and position of women in politics in the history of Armenia; it shares some experiences from other European countries on how women try to have a stronger voice in politics civic

Besides theory the manual consists of practical parts, including exercises, questions, and tasks that may be performed both individually and in teams.

We believe that this manual on “Participation of women in civic and political life” will contribute to the promotion of civic and political participation of women from various groups, settlements, educational backgrounds and professional capacities, especially young women and girls.

We believe that the greater involvement of women in the civic and political processes of our country will guarantee more secure, safer and favorable conditions, directly benefiting the citizens of the Republic of Armenia.

*On the manual for women Time to Act:
Women's Participation in Social and Political life
by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and Eduardo Frei Foundation*

In the contemporary context of European integration, women's participation in the political life in this country is a major qualitative feature of democratic representation. Obviously, the survey of women's representation in the bodies of state administration and local self-government can help to find and establish more efficient organizational models.

In the current phase, Armenia embarks on a period of systemic reforms with the strategic aim to build a democratic state with a developed civil society, and high level of economy and culture. The current reforms have an effect on women's social groups and NGOs, shaping their attitude to the processes that are underway in the Armenian society, changing their civic awareness and behavior.

Global experience shows that the efficiency of civilarchic control over social problems grows, provided the number of women in state bodies amounts, at least, to 30%. In the context of society modernization, the solution of social problems is a priority for this country. In these terms, the level of women's political activity is one of the indicators of civilarchic democracy.

The timeliness of the manual for women is determined by the fact that the present stage of international relations is characterized by reinvigoration of women's leadership in the Western Europe. This manual analyzes the place and role of women in the democratic transformation of the RA political system, as well as gender disproportion during modernization of the political system. Over the past 12 years, in a number of EU Eastern Partnership countries, dramatic changes have taken place in terms of protection of women's political rights and freedoms. It is noteworthy that the significant progress in women's civilarchic participation in EU member countries, also contributed to increased accountability in the political life of EU Eastern Partnership countries, rule of law and social justice.

The political elite, political parties and NGOs in the contemporary Armenia declare that the political system of our society will be sustainable, when all the citizens, men and women, actively participate in the social and political life of this country. Nevertheless, in the political life of our society, gender differences are manifested by low political participation and representation of women. It is evident not only in the leadership of the legislative and executive branches but also in the leadership of political parties and NGOs as manifested by absolute majority of men.

The theoretical and methodological foundation of this manual is the theory of rational choice where female political activists appear as informed players engaged in

politics including their political career pursuits. The sources used in the manual are as follows: official and working documents, legal procedures of the RA, EU and international organizations that govern the operation of RA legislative and executive bodies in the social and political domain of women's participation. The latter formulate the conceptual grounds and priorities for the solution of the problem.

Structural and functional approaches also contribute to the methodological foundations for the examination of the problem, based on which it is possible to give an insight into the main study principles of women's democratic participation and influence levels. EU integration policy features are viewed through the prism of the theories of legitimacy of authorities and social interaction, which enable the authors to discover new facets in the researched phenomenon, and, lastly, to propose new solutions to the problem.

Also important is the fact that according to the authors, in order to enter a new phase of gender equality and civilarchic democracy in this country, it is necessary to secure the support of the state, local self-government bodies, political parties and women's NGOs, as well as women's willingness to participate in political processes. In this respect, it is important that women have a great desire to achieve respect and recognition in the society not only by means of declarations, but also by concrete steps and increased activity.

Attaching great importance to the authors' approaches in this manual, I'd like to point out that it is a complete and full-fledged treatise, totally worthy of being submitted to the judgment of readers at large.

With best regards,

Ashot Aleksanyan

Doctor of Political Science,
Professor, Chair of History and Theory of Political Science



Yerevan, 03.05.2021

1. GENERAL BACKGROUND



Progress is guaranteed when you are knowledge-driven, purposeful and diligent.



Astghik Avetisyan (KAS Expert)

1.1. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA



Christina Bellmann (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung /KAS)

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The level of participation of women in the social and political sectors of Armenia has varied, just as in all the other sectors of activity, History has shown that women have effectively come together to help solve issues emerging before their communities, overcome disasters and difficult situations; in critical and hard times for the Motherland, they have initiated actions aimed at solving problems and actively participated in their implementation.

As far back as 1918-1920, women in Armenia not only have the right to vote but can also run for elections There were three women elected as members of the Parliament of the First Republic of Armenia.

It is generally believed that the first female diplomat in the world was of Armenian descent – writer and publicist, social and political figure Diana Abgar, who was the diplomatic representative of Armenia in 1919-1920 in a country of the Far East, Japan.

It goes without saying that Soviet ideology played a major role in the position of women in Armenia. however, where the participation of women very often did not primarily correspond to quality, it only sought to achieve balance in quantity. Women were proportionally represented in all sectors, but this was mostly just to show their presence. Of course, this did not include a political career, as political positions could be reached only after being “forged” in the fires of the Communist Party. Nevertheless, the establishment of women’s non-governmental organizations was promoted in the Soviet Union in the social sector, which ensured the representation and participation of women in society.

Since 1991, the participation of women in the social and political life of Armenia has been and continues to remain.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, society revisited and reinterpreted certain national, spiritual, cultural values and traditions. This led to an emphasis on female participation – the role of women was reexamined in the social, political, economic and cultural sectors. However, the level of participation of women continues to remain unsatisfactory.

Though a system of quotas was established in recent years to promote the political participation of women, the level of representation of women in the institutions of legislative and executive power remains unsatisfactory. The proportion of women in the Parliament is currently around 21%, while it is 0% in the Government. It is also obvious that there are very few advocates for women’s issues among politicians. Political parties also often fail to deal with these issues properly, despite the presence of women’s structures in political parties.

Women are greater in number in supportive and non-managerial positions of the public sector. They are not yet fully represented in the municipal and regional administrative bodies that define local priorities and are involved in the implementation of development programs.

In contrast, women are more involved in local self-governance; the number of women in local self-governance councils (Councils of Elders) has increased.

One of the reasons for this is the extensive male labor migration from rural communities, leaving women with no alternative but to participate in local self-government bodies. Another reason is that women have developed sufficient skills and have shown a readiness to contribute to solving community issues. In any case, the involvement of women in local decision-making processes of communities is an important step towards more participation in political processes at higher levels. Such involvement must be continuously encouraged, not only through corresponding legislative initiatives, but through special public projects and non-governmental initiatives that contribute to the development of women's skills on their path towards politics.

The level of participation of women is currently higher in the social sphere than politics. This manual does not cover the cultural or economic participation of women, each of which is a separate, extensive topic. We will only mention that female economic participation, which promotes entrepreneurial activity among women, primarily supports the socio-economic sustainability of women and their families as well as the improvement of their self-esteem and confidence, which in their turn increase the value of women in various sectors of life. We should also emphasize that the economic participation of women is very important for economic development and the growth of GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

In response to the question of why we need active participation of women in political, social, economic and cultural life, we can state the following: women comprise over half of the population of the Republic of Armenia (52.8%, according to the State Statistical Committee), the engagement of women in the vocational and university education sectors is relatively high. Insufficient participation of women in the process of development of various sectors of the state results in non-optimal use of human resources, which has a negative impact on both the state and families. On the other hand, it is necessary for women to be more proactive and use their potential, knowledge, professional capacity and experience for the best interest of the state.



1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

In certain social circles, unfortunately, the opinion prevails that political, social (and other) participation of women goes against family traditions, as does the view that women will have to end up choosing between a social, political (or other) career and their family. However, there are numerous examples proving that any social or political engagement does not have to hamper the national concept of a “family”, and that these sides often complement each other. The approach of our manual is also one of a combination between the “family” and “social-political participation” rather than a confrontation between them.

1.1. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Hence, this general manual aims at promoting the social and political participation of women. It is envisaged for women who want to take their first steps in that direction.



The supreme legislative document of the Republic of Armenia is the RA Constitution. The Constitution is the foundation of the legal system of the Republic of Armenia, and all the laws and regulations are based on it. The Constitution is also a document of values and ideology that defines the main principles for the organization of society, the practical implementation and enforcement of which should be pursued by the state.

The RA Constitution, adopted through a referendum on 5 July 1995, has been amended twice, once by a referendum on 27 November 2005 and again through another referendum on 6 December 2015.

CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

CHAPTER 2: BASIC RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF THE HUMAN BEING AND THE CITIZEN

Article 30: **Legal Equality of Women and Men**

Women and men shall enjoy legal equality.

Article 48: **Right of Suffrage and Right to Participate in a Referendum**

1. Citizens of the Republic of Armenia having attained the age of eighteen on the day of an election to the National Assembly or on the day of a referendum, shall have the right to elect and the right to participate in the referendum.
2. Everyone who has attained the age of twenty-five, has held citizenship of only the Republic of Armenia for the preceding four years, has been permanently residing in the Republic for the preceding four years, has the right of suffrage and has command of the Armenian language, may be elected as a Deputy of the National Assembly.
3. Citizens of the Republic of Armenia having attained the age of eighteen on the day of election or referendum shall have the right to elect and be elected during the elections of local self-government bodies, and the right to participate in a local referendum. The law may prescribe the right of persons not holding citizenship of the Republic of Armenia to take part in the elections of local self-government bodies and in local referenda.
4. Persons declared, upon civil judgment of the court having entered into legal force, as having no active legal capacity, as well as persons sentenced and those serving the sentence, upon criminal judgment having entered into legal force, for a grave criminal offence committed intentionally shall not be entitled to elect or be elected or participate in a referendum. Persons sentenced and those serving the sentence, upon criminal judgment having entered into legal force, for other criminal offences shall not be entitled to elect as well.

CHAPTER 3:
LEGISLATIVE GUARANTEES AND MAIN OBJECTIVES OF STATE POLICY IN SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL SPHERES

Article 86:

Main Objectives of State Policy

The main objectives of state policy in the economic, social and cultural spheres shall be as follows:

- (1) improving the business environment and promoting entrepreneurship;
- (2) promoting the employment of the population and improving the working conditions;
- (3) fostering housing construction;
- (4) promoting actual equality between women and men;
- (5) promoting birth and having many children;
- (6) creating favorable conditions for the full and comprehensive development of individuality in children;
- (7) implementing programs for population's health care and improvement, creating conditions for effective and affordable medical services;
- (8) implementing programs for disability prevention, treatment, rehabilitation of persons with disability, promoting the participation of persons with disability in public life;
- (9) protecting consumer rights and exercising supervision over the quality of goods, services and works;
- (10) ensuring proportional territorial development;

- (11) ensuring development of physical culture and sports;
- (12) promoting the participation of youth in political, economic and cultural life;
- (13) ensuring development of free of charge higher and other vocational education;
- (14) ensuring development of fundamental and applied sciences;
- (15) contributing to free access by everyone to national and universal values;
- (16) promoting charity for the establishment, financing of cultural, educational, scientific, health care, athletic, social and other institutions, as well as for ensuring financial independence thereof.

Since independence, the Government of the Republic of Armenia has been sustainably and consistently amending the legislation of the country with fundamental international requirements on gender equality and adopting a number of laws and policies to overcome gender inequalities. In 1998, the RA Government adopted Resolution N242 “On the fundamentals of improvement of the conditions of women in the Republic of Armenia” and Resolution 406 “On the approval of the National Program for Improvement of the Conditions of Women and Strengthening their Role in Society”. In April 2004, the RA Government adopted the first National Action Program for Improvement of the Conditions of Women, and since then it has consistently been increasing the efforts to fight gender inequalities in the country.

The main document that reflects the ongoing commitments of Armenia in the implementation of gender equality policies is the RA Gender Equality Concept Paper, approved by the Government in February 2010 (RA Gender Policy Concept Paper, 2010). The goal of the Concept Paper is to promote gender equality in all spheres of socio-political and socio-economic life and in policies adopted by all levels of public administration, which will ensure sustainable democratic development, bringing together a democratic, open and fair society as well as ensuring rule of law.

On 19 September 2019, the Government adopted the 2019-2023 Gender Policy Implementation Strategy and Action Program of the Republic of Armenia. The program defines the priorities of gender policy, the purpose of which is to establish favorable conditions for the protection of rights and creation of opportunities for equal participation of women and men in all spheres of life as well as to respect the international commitments of the Republic of Armenia.

The RA Law “On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for men and women”, adopted in 2013, plays a significant role in gender policy implementation and addressing issues of disparity in rights and opportunities. It regulates issues related to ensuring equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the sectors of politics, public administration, labor and employment, entrepreneurship, health and education.

In line with the 2010 recommendations by the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the amendments introduced to the RA Constitution in December 2015 included important provisions and requirements, e.g. “General equality before the law” (Article 28), “Elimination of discrimination” (Article 29) and “Equality of men and women” (Article 30).



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At a meeting of world leaders on gender equality and more opportunities for women, held in September 2015 within the framework of “Beijing+20” and the new Sustainable Development Goals, the Government of Armenia undertook a commitment for the effective implementation of the Law on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women.

As women are not sufficiently represented in the Government and in decision-making processes, one of the tools to mitigate this shortcoming is the implementation of interim measures.

One such tool in Armenia is the use of quotas in the lists of political parties during elections to the National Assembly, which were first applied at 5% in 1999, and then at 15% in 2007 and 20% in 2011.

The use of quotas resulted in positive, though limited and often not very effective processes of improving the representation of women in politics. The new Electoral Code, adopted on 25 May 2016 requires that at least 30% of each sex must be represented in the lists of political parties, during local and national elections.

However, there are no quotas in other sectors, e.g. Government, civil service, territorial administration and local self-governance, nor in the private sector.

The RA Electoral Code states:

***PART TWO, SECTION 4:
ELECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
CHAPTER 14.***

NOMINATION AND REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES FOR MEMBERSHIP

***Article 83:
National and district electoral lists of a political party
(alliances of political parties)***

4. In the first part of the national electoral list of a political party, alliance of political parties and each of the political parties included in the alliance, the number of representatives of each sex, starting from the 1st place on the list, must not exceed 70 per cent in each whole group of 3 (1-3, 1-6, 1-9 and subsequently up to the end of the list). The first part of the national electoral list of a political party (alliance of political parties) shall include no less than 80 and no more than 300 candidates. The first part of the national electoral list of a political party (alliance of political parties) may include persons that are not members of that political party (any of member political parties to the alliance) the number of which may not exceed 30 per cent of the total number of the candidates included in the first part of the national electoral list.



“More than half of the European population consists of women. They play a vital role in our day-to-day life. They contribute to politics by adding their specific experiences in life to the political stage. Therefore, women can change politics. With women being represented and having influence, politics reaches its full richness of democratic representation.”

**Ms Dr. h.c. Doris
PACK, President
EPP Women**

EU: 2019 European Elections

Since 2019, the percentage of women in the European Parliament (EP) constitutes 39,5%. This is the highest percentage the EP has reached since its establishment in 1979. The EPP Group in the EP has a share of 33,2%, which is lower than the average and also lower than the share of most other caucuses.

For the 2019 European Elections, eleven Member States had legally binding gender quotas that concerned the make-up of electoral lists:

- a. Several Member States’ gender quotas are *gender-neutral*, aiming to avoid the under-representation of both women and men. Among them are Slovenia and Spain that required gender-balanced electoral lists, with each gender represented by at least 40% of the candidates on the list. The gender-balanced lists in Portugal required at least 33% (1/3) of each gender. Poland’s gender quota for the European elections was first applied in the 2014 elections, with at least 35% of candidates of each gender.
- b. Three Member States required *lists in parity* (50%/50%) – Belgium, France and Luxembourg. Luxembourg, for example, required 50% for each gender on the list, with financial sanctions for non-compliant parties.
- c. Romania’s electoral rules establish that *no all-women or all-men lists* are possible.



To ensure that candidates from both sexes are placed in positions on an electoral list with a good chance of winning a seat, some Member States required the alternate ordering of men and women on the list ('zipping'). This is the case in Belgium, France, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain.

Electoral lists submitted by political parties that did not meet the requirements of the gender clause were rejected as being invalid (e.g., Romania, Slovenia and Spain), while in other countries such lists were admitted to the elections but the party submitting them was punished with a fine and/or a cut in electoral campaign subsidies (e.g., Portugal).

In those Member States without a legally binding electoral gender quota, political parties sometimes *voluntarily* introduce quotas for the nomination of candidates; this is the case in the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden, among others.

Research has pointed out that there is agreement that proportional representation systems are more favourable for female candidates than majoritarian systems.

National parliaments: The Netherlands and Germany

Women in the national parliaments of EU Member States in 2020 constituted 28,6% altogether, which is also at its highest level ever but has never equalled the level of women's representation in the EP. A notable increase in the percentage of women in national parliaments took place in the mid-2000s, which could be the consequence of the introduction of electoral gender quotas in several Member States around this time (Belgium, France, Portugal, Spain).

In the Netherlands and Germany, this increase already started in the 1990s, with the percentage of women being elected in the Dutch Lower House in 1994 growing from 32% to 42,7% in 2010. Comparable are the figures for the German Bundestag, with a growth from 26% in 1994 to 36% in 2013. However, since the years 2012/2013 in both countries, the figures tended to stabilize and recently even decrease. In 2020, the share of women in the Dutch Parliament is 33,3% and for the German Parliament, this is 31,2%.¹ In both countries, there are several political parties that voluntarily have quotas for the nomination of candidates, but not all parties have implemented such internal rules.

1. Cf. Armenia has 23,5% women in Parliament (per 12.2018). Figures IPU, <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=1&year=2020>



The above figures and different ways of dealing with the issue per country show that each country makes its own choices with regard to enacting or not enacting legally binding quota. In the latter case, political parties voluntarily can decide about internal rules regarding quotas for candidate lists as well as appointments in party boards at the national and local levels. Below, you can see an overview of legislation about women's political participation at the European level, and in Germany and the Netherlands.

Council of Europe (CoE)

Since January 2001, Armenia has been a member of the Council of Europe, the leading human rights organisation on the European continent. Besides helping its member states fight corruption and undertake necessary judicial reforms, it also promotes human and women's rights through international conventions. According to the CoE, the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making is a condition for justice and democracy. In 2003, the CoE provided standards for clear guidance on how to achieve this goal in its 'Recommendation to its member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making.'² According to the CoE recommendations, balanced participation of women and

2. 'Recommendation Rec (2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, adopted on 12 March 2003 and explanatory memorandum'

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805e0848

men is taken to mean that the representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in political or public life should not fall below 40%. Several CoE member states, like Spain and Slovenia, have implemented this recommendation since 2003 in legally binding gender-neutral quota systems, which require gender-balanced electoral lists, with each gender represented by at least 40% of the candidates on the list.

European Union

An important document with regard to women and politics is the Treaty of the European Union (the '*Treaty of Lisbon*') which is considered to be the Constitution of the EU. Article 2 of its Preamble states that: 'The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and *equality between women and men* prevail'. This article implies that the EU actively pursues the objective of promoting the participation of women in decision making. Also, the European Commission's (EC) strategic engagement for gender equality for 2016-2019 included this as a priority objective, setting out 'soft law' measures, among others, including data-collection and funding, to support the Member States and civil society. And for the 2019 European Elections, the EC urged Member States and political parties to support gender-balanced electoral lists.



Germany

In 1994, the German legislator added a second sentence to Article 3 (2) of the Constitution. Its wording is as follows: “Men and women are equal. The state shall promote the effective implementation of equal rights for women and men and shall work towards the elimination of existing disadvantages”. While equality has thus been declared a task of the state, Germany has not implemented this clause into its electoral law thus far. Meanwhile, several political parties have voluntarily implemented gender quotas for their candidate lists. However, the backlash in women’s representation since 2013 leads to growing concerns among German women (and men). Germany has a quite complicated electoral law, which is considered to limit women’s representation. Also, research has pointed out that voluntary quotas by the parties are not sufficient to achieve gender parity in German parliaments. Thus, a national discussion started recently on whether or not the state has to act now. One option for action is a parity law. Another option could be the reform of the electoral law, including binding regulations on the adequate representation of women.³

The Netherlands

The Dutch Constitution of 2008 is clear about equal rights for women and men. Article 1 reads as follows: ‘All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in

3. Weichmann, E., Politische Repräsentanz von Frauen, Analysen & Argumente Nr. 416/November 2020 (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Berlin 2020).

equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race or sex or on any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted.’ Based on the Constitution, the ‘General Law on Equal Treatment’ prohibits discrimination subject to objectively justified discrimination. The law contains anti-discrimination provisions in the areas of working conditions, appointment, dismissal and education. An Equal Treatment Commission is established to enforce and monitor the implementation of this law. However, this gender equality has not been incorporated into electoral law. It is considered to be the responsibility of the political parties to effectively put into practice women’s representation on candidate lists as well as in their internal party structures. All the major political parties spoke out in favour of proportional representation of women and several parties have voluntarily introduced quotas for candidate lists. However, others have not done so.

Conclusion

The overview of levels of political representation of women in parliaments (paragraph 1) and of the above recommendation and laws lead to a clear conclusion: well-designed electoral quota laws are essential in increasing women’s representation in politics. Moreover, research points out that they are the most effective way to incite political parties to significantly include women.



There are several ways to become politically active. You can either do this without joining a political party or by joining a political party. The latter is more effective, since political parties dominate and shape the political landscape. By joining a party, you accept the existing structures and aim to contribute to them. In case you prefer to challenge the existing political structure, a better choice would be not joining a party and use other means of political participation.

Political participation without joining a party

a. Challenging the system: in case you aim to challenge the existing political order, you might need quite revolutionary methods, starting with joining a protest movement, going out to the streets, participating in peaceful or even violent demonstrations, social network activities, starting court cases and generating media publicity. The most striking example of political participation by women in this manner at the moment is taking place in Belarus. On the internet, you can find all possible examples that are used in this country.

b. Political participation within the existing political landscape: In most countries, women take up political activities because they want to influence political decision making while not preferring to join a party.

There are several ways to do this, we have listed a few below:

- Networking: establishing a (small) group of likeminded women. This can be done at both a national and local level. Study the issue which you want to influence, find

stakeholders, network among politicians and gain media attention for the issue. Example: Local RMDSz branches of women in Romania started in this way. Women were concerned about the huge amount of garbage in the streets of their village and started a cleaning campaign, meanwhile successfully pressing the local political authorities to accept responsibility and allocate taxpayer money to set up a system of processing the rubbish. The women discovered they even were more influential through joining a political party that was concerned about local societal issues, which was the RMDSz, a member party of the EPP. Their next step was starting a local women's wing and finding support for establishing a national RMDSz women's organisation.

- Agenda setting: The above example also shows that women can put issues on the political agenda by coordinated networking and exerting pressure. However, don't get disappointed too early – you might need several years to reach your aim.

- Petitions, demonstrations, flash mob campaigns: In case of an urgent malpractice concerning women-related political issues, you might need urgent action.

Examples: Polish women used these methods last year to put pressure on their government not to enact more strict abortion legislation; so, did local Ukrainian women, when they discovered that managers of the schools in their village pocketed the money they were supposed to spend on buying meals for the pupils.

- Joining a one-issue movement or non-governmental organisation (NGO): to be politically effective, it might be helpful to join an already existing lobby organisation or women's organisation. Many of them have international branches too. Examples: there are many examples, like WILPF, Women's International League for Peace & Freedom



(www.wilpf.org); the Women Rights Centre (WRC, www.wrcorg.am), aiming to combat domestic violence in Armenia through legislative initiatives; the Armenian Young Womens' Association (AYWA, www.aywa.am) supporting women in education and employment and promoting women leadership and economic participation, etc.

- Joining a trade union or another organisation which in Armenia is a powerful informal lever for the control of political power.

Political participation by joining a political party

In most countries, political parties are the primary and most effective structure through which women become politically engaged and get elected. Therefore, you need to become a member of a political party. It depends on the political culture in Armenia how you perceive party membership. In most countries of the EU, women join a party because they want to contribute and have a say in the objectives on which politics should focus – taking care of the well-being of all citizens, justice for all by guaranteeing the rule of law, taking responsibility for the military security of your country, promoting economic growth and independence, etc.

a. Becoming a member: Whether you perceive party membership negative or positively, there is only one option to have influence and that is becoming a member. As a member, you have to find your way within the party. This mainly depends on your interests and skills. Which are the issues you consider important or relevant for you personally or for your municipality or the nation? With which skills do you think you can contribute – writing, rhetoric, media skills, campaigning, management? Last but not

least important: what are your aims? Do you aim to be a candidate? Or lobby-activist for women's issues within your party? Or to have a seat in a party management board at the local or national level?

b. Fact finding: After becoming a member, you need to get to know the party: look around, establish contact, attend meetings, study its by-laws, analyse the performance of its politicians, speak to other members etc.

c. Aims and ambitions: Also, you need to personally become aware what your aims and ambitions are within the party. This can be a simple reason like feeling acquainted with the party, with its performance or with its programme. Other reasons can be that you want to make the party more gender-sensitive, or being a candidate, etc. There are many options!

d. Mind mapping: As an exercise to discover your aim for your membership of the specific party of your choice, you can make a mind map, which helps you to think and create ideas.⁴

In general, it turns out that a women's branch in a political party is a strong incentive for women to become a member of the party. It is a place where they can gain recognition within the party, train, find empowerment and get support for their aims and ambitions.

4. A mind map is a tool for the brain that captures the thinking that goes on inside your head. Mind mapping helps you think, collect knowledge, remember and create ideas. Here you find a detailed description: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map



EPP Women

www.eppwomen.eu

EPP Women (European's People Party) is an official association of the EPP dedicated to the advancement of women in the European Union. The association consists of members of likeminded European parties and is led by its President, Ms Dr. h.c. Doris Pack, former Member of the European Parliament.

EPP Women was founded in 1981 and is composed of over 60 member organisations from EPP political parties which are members of the EPP in the European Union and non-EU countries. All member organisations are women's organisations from political parties. Two Armenian parties are observer status members of the EPP – the Republican Party of Armenia and the Heritage Party Armenia.

EPPW is legally incorporated into the EPP, as guaranteed in the EPP by-laws. This gives EPPW a say in all meetings of the EPP Political Assembly, and the right to receive EPP subventions. EPPW has also defined its legal position in its own by-laws as a judicial acknowledged association.⁵ The by-laws guarantee the organisational structure of the EPPW. It consists of an Executive Board, a General Board and a Congress with defined functions and tasks, and an obligation to meet regularly.

EPPW has a clear motto. More than half of the European population consists of women. They play a vital role in life and contribute to politics with their specific experiences in life. With women being involved, politics reaches its full richness of democratic representation.

Putting this motto into practice, EPPW is dedicated to the advancement of women's political emancipation throughout Europe. It promotes important women-related issues

5. You can find the EPPW by-laws here: <http://www.eppwomen.eu/documents/statutes/>

such as gender equality in the labour market and female entrepreneurship. Our focus also goes to the role of women fighting for liberty, justice, women's rights and democracy. The EPPW is dedicated to women and gender issues not just in Europe but also in regions experiencing tremendous change, such as the Middle East and North Africa.

EPPW aims to reach these aims in several ways, briefly outlined below:

- ✓ Networking through regular meetings with delegates of the national member organisations.
- ✓ Agenda-setting: putting women's issues on the EPP agenda by addressing them in EPP congress documents and resolutions as well as in meetings of the Political Assembly and EPP working groups.
- ✓ Studying women's issues: Each year EPPW organizes a Summer Academy in which a women-related issue of present-day interest is addressed and discussed with scientific experts and high-profile politicians.
- ✓ Drafting resolutions and putting these on the agenda: EPPW writes resolutions on several women-related topics which are brought to the attention of the EPP, the EPP Group in the European Parliaments and to our member organisations, who are requested to also set these on the national political agenda of their countries.
- ✓ Political statements, press releases, video messages and posts on social media: the President of the EPPW regularly releases political statements on immediate issues. Most recently: giving support to the female political activists in Belarus; a statement on the Istanbul Convention about gender-related violence; empowering Lebanese women in the aftermath of the Beirut port blast of 4 August 2020.
- ✓ Support to establishing women's organisations: the Executive Board members are available for giving support to initiatives within EPP member parties for establishing a women's wing.

✓ Support to training courses on female leadership, presenting speeches at meetings, etc: Executive Board members can be invited for courses or delivering speeches on demand.

National women's organisations

National women's organisations fulfil comparable roles within their respective political parties as the EPPW does at the European level. Taking a look at the EPPW member organisations, they generally have the objectives and functions outlined below:

- To constitute a forum for discussing the special problems encountered by women in carrying out their party activities.
- To organize grassroots activities that make women aware of their civil and political rights and of the importance and effect of their active participation in political life.
- To prepare women to take part in elections by informing them of the issues and explaining how elections are held in practice.
- To train women to become candidates in local, provincial and national elections; this training includes courses on various aspects of electoral campaigns and preparation for contacts with the media.
- To establish networks and lobby activities for support to women candidates at elections and for women elected to power.

The above-listed activities can be put into practice in Armenian political parties as well. However, please keep in mind the political culture and structure of your party. Feel free to customize the above to your own aims and means.



Establishing a women's wing in your party requires you to make use of different methods, the most relevant of which are outlined below. Please be aware that your context and party culture will dictate the ones that are best suited and may be the most effective way to establish a women's wing in your specific situation.

Where to begin

THERE ARE (ONLY) TWO REQUISITES FOR GETTING
STARTED: YOU NEED WOMEN AND A PLAN.

a. Starting with a likeminded group of women: It is important to gather support for your idea among women in your party. This might be at a local level as well as the national level.

Steering committee: Once you decide to realize your goal, you need a steering committee, in which you allocated the work that needs to be done to different women.

b. Plan of Action: This committee draws a Plan of Action in which you describe step by step what activities you plan to undertake to reach your goal. In this Plan, you also indicate a timetable in which you set a date by which you want to establish your organisation.

Plan of Action: Issues to be addressed

For women's participation to be effective, a party should ensure that its constitution, structure, processes, and financing are gender responsive and inclusive of all women. In many parties, these prerequisites are not fully realized. You need to take this into account and not get disappointed. Establishing a women's wing is often the right incentive for a process during which your party invests in integrating gender equality issues in its policies and programmes.

A Plan of Action sure will put you on the right track. Here you find the ingredients that you need to get going:

- Find out who your stakeholders are. Indicate party leaders and likeminded influential opinion leaders to call upon for support. In particular, involve leading men as your stakeholders and even ambassadors.
- Find out who your opponents are. Indicate these and find ways to deal with the opposition.
- Describe the culture and structure of your party. Analyse how the establishment of a women's organisation fits in the party culture and its (legal and organisational) structure. Each party has its own rules, written as well as unwritten.
- Judicial aspect: Creating a legal position within your party is important. Pay attention to the by-laws of your party. Does it have a clause about party associations? Does it say something about a youth organisation? Does it have a provision that your

party supplies subventions to its youth and women's associations? If not, you might try to change the by-laws of your party. Also, you need to draw up by-laws for the women's organisation you want to establish. You can rely on EPPW for assistance.

- Access to funding: A financial basis is relevant to start a women's organisation and initiate activities. Such a basis can be guaranteed by a provision in the party by-laws. It is also possible to arrange this bilaterally with the party president or the party board, depending on who your stakeholders are.
- Being active and visible within the party: make yourself heard and make yourself visible! This helps men realize that women are interested in politics and have the skills to contribute to the party's work.
- Raise support among female party members and likeminded women that are not (yet) members. This helps you create a larger group of women to help you realize your aim. In raising support, it helps to find political women's issues that matter to all women, as well as to men. An example from a Western Balkan country is addressing the topic of political measures to ensure breast cancer research and treatment.
- Also, local women may feel empowered to establish local women's groups within the party. In assisting these groups, you create support from the bottom up.
- Involve international support: EPPW, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (CDU, Germany), Eduardo Frei Foundation (CDA NL) and Robert Schuman Institute in Budapest are sure to endorse your project. You can invite them to organise a training course for you in Armenia or speak at a meeting to launch your project for establishing a women's

organisation, a female election campaigning event or other possible activities. Also, you can call upon them to be an ambassador for endorsing the project among your party leaders. Or invite leading women from neighbouring countries that have successfully founded a women's wing in their EPP-affiliated party. There is a lot of experience within the EPP family, and many stakeholders are eager to give a hand.

- Apply for EPPW membership as soon as you meet its criteria, e.g., having legally established your women's wing on the basis of by-laws and having a political programme.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

After you have appointed a steering committee and written a Plan of Action, you can start to put it into practice. Please be aware to restrict your ambition to realistic proportions. You need women to do the work, you need men for support, you need knowledge for the judicial and financial aspects, you need political skills to be effective and you need stakeholders within the party to achieve quick wins.

The steering committee has the task to realize the plan step by step, monitor the steps that are taken, evaluate regularly and adapt your goals, ambition or the timetable, if necessary.

Politics is unpredictable. National or local elections, internal party appointments, unexpected events – circumstances can change all at once. Be aware of sudden 'windows of opportunity' that might suit your cause. Always be flexible and prepared to adapt your aims.



This manual aims at promoting the participation of women in social and political spheres and seeks to fill the gap in educational materials related to that participation.



The manual comprehensively justifies the significance and value of participation, providing the principles to secure that process, pointing out possible sectors for its implementation and noting related ethical issues.

Studies have shown that the presence of more women in a parliament generally contributes to the focus of more attention on women-related issues. The political participation of women is a fundamental precondition for gender equality and real democracy. It supports the direct involvement of women in social and political decision making and is a tool to ensure better accountability before women.

Political accountability on women-related issues starts with increasing the number of women in decision-making positions, but it is not limited to that. It is required to carry out regular legal amendments, which in turn contribute to the implementation of more effective policies, promote the equality of men and women before the law and guarantee its implementation.

In particular, one of the pillars of UN Women is the promotion and effective coordination of the political participation of women, for the purpose of ensuring participatory, responsible, fair and inclusive criteria in the decision-making process.



Support is also provided to women within the framework of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which has already been ratified by most of the governments in the world, including the Government of the Republic of Armenia, in order to observe gender equality as a legal guarantee. Apart from combating discrimination against women, cooperation and alignment with multiple stakeholders are also part of the strategy. Such stakeholders include women organizations, governments, UN agencies, other international organizations, and private companies, in order to involve more women in politics, train women leaders, develop their skills as candidates and voters, and promote their active participation in elections.

Participation is an evolving concept and parallel to the development of social science and civil processes, the perception of participation has changed as well. Democracy and governance are the primary dimensions in which participation is viewed. Theories of political science view participation through a narrow lens as simply voting during elections or, through a broader lens, as public participation in decision making.

Later, the concept of “participatory democracy” emerged. In its World Development Report of 2002, the UN specifically emphasized that states could only ensure development “for all” if they establish democratic governance systems that are accountable before the whole of society and ensure the participation of people in discussions of issues related to them.



SUGGEST YOUR DEFINITION OF PARTICIPATION THAT BETTER REFLECTS THE ISSUES AND CHALLENGES BEFORE WOMEN IN ARMENIA.



Generally, the following forms of participation are identified: social, political, economic and cultural.

One of the forms of social participation is activity by means of civil society organizations (NGOs, unions, etc) and non-formal initiatives (networks, coalitions, initiative groups, etc.).

Taking part in local self-government and national elections and being appointed to positions of legislative or executive power are forms of political participation.

Entrepreneurial activity is a form of economic participation. The promotion of entrepreneurship among women is gaining momentum in Armenia mostly in micro, small and medium-sized companies.

Women's economic participation is being promoted from the aspect of the development of economy and from the aspect of women to be engaged in value creation too. This type of participation is important as it provides women self-confidence, economic stability and thus promotes their participation in all aspects of life.

Taking part in the activities of the cultural sphere through formal and non-formal institutions is a form of cultural participation.

Meanwhile, the levels of participation involvement can be identified as: (co-)initiation, (co-)design and (co-)implementation. The implementation can be done directly or through delegation.

There are various ways to define levels of participation, such as local and international.

One can also differentiate between active and passive types of participation, which can occur at every level, whether among individuals or in groups.

The participation of individuals, groups, or an organisation in different processes can vary at differing points of time. Nobody can be fully engaged in everything and be everywhere at the same time. You decide for yourself the events in which you will participate and the ones where you will observe without direct participation.

Active participation can also be referred to as conscious participation. This happens when each person acknowledges the steps that they are taking to achieve an expected result, the plans and activities that they are organising or how they are participating in the steps organised by someone else. When you participate actively or consciously, you bear a certain part of responsibility for the actions you have initiated, or in which you are participating, and the outcome that follows.

In case of active participation, you also have the possibility to present your opinion and proposals, you develop a dialogue or debate. You are also ready to listen to the opinions of others.

Passive participation occurs when you are not actively involved or even without your direct participation. However, any actions you take in this case may still influence events and their outcomes. In case of passive participation, your support may be indirect but could be very significant.



RECALL EXAMPLES FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE OF PASSIVE PARTICIPATION BY YOU OR YOUR ORGANISATION. MENTION THE SOLUTION THAT WAS MADE POSSIBLE AS A RESULT.

RECALL EXAMPLES FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE OF ACTIVE PARTICIPATION BY YOU OR YOUR ORGANISATION. MENTION THE SOLUTION THAT WAS MADE POSSIBLE AS A RESULT.

Let's look at some examples.

If you participate in a demonstration or discussion around an important change, if you organise a signature drive for a petition or make speeches, if you take other clear actions like these, then you are participating actively in the given process.

If your family member has your encouragement to participate in a public event like a demonstration, then this is an example of passive participation on your behalf, because you are not participating personally. However, even passive participation of this kind is important because if there are elections after that demonstration then you will express yourself through the ballot box. Or, during a conversation with your co-workers, neighbours, or friends, if you express an opinion for or against a regulation recently adopted by your local authorities, then this is also an example of passive participation. In either case, you are expressing your opinion, which will later lead to matching behaviour on your part.

If you are not yet demonstrating active participation, then participating passively is still very important, perhaps even necessary. Why is this so? Because nobody can demonstrate exclusively active participation everywhere. Passive participation is also important. After all, that passive participation shows that you have taken a decision, and that can then be expressed in another way, like voting. So, the citizens that demonstrate their participation simply as voters during an election, fulfilling their duties as citizens, carry out a very important function and, as a result, they facilitate the adoption of decisions and allow the situation to improve or, on the contrary, to worsen. So, you can see how important it is to participate in elections.



From left to right
Ashkhen Beglaryan (KAS Expert)
Lilit Mkrtychyan (KAS Expert)
Christina Bellmann (KAS)

Hasmik Ghazaryan (Workshop participant)
Wim Eilering (EFF Expert)
Esther Keizer (EFF Expert)



Here's another example. If you seek training in a particular profession, you might see this as an action that is exclusively focused on the future. But this is also an example of your passive participation because you will then use that profession to develop or make changes and improve that particular area.

Very often, there are opinions and justifications about why women (and others as well) do not participate in the voting process – they say that one vote cannot influence the results. We believe that now you have a much better appreciation for the importance of your one vote and you are certain that it can change a lot and improve the situation not just for you, but for your surroundings as well.

Based on these approaches of active and passive participation, the following other approaches to participation also exist from the point of view of an individual, group, or organisation, particularly when it comes to the political process.

- A response to the situation (positive or negative), which follows a certain action. For example, a bill is put into circulation and you—whether as an individual or a group—express your opinion on that draft law and take relevant action, such as recruiting those that agree with you, giving press conferences, giving speeches supporting or criticising the proposed changes.

- Taking action by giving some degree of authority to others. For example, through elections or a referendum, you express your opinion by voting in favour or against.

- Working with political organisations. For example, by joining a political party, trade union, or political initiative group, you lobby (advocate) for the causes that concern you or your group.

- Participation in the activities of civil society organisations, social initiative groups and mass media. This is what we call forth power in Armenia.

DISCUSS THE TYPE OF PARTICIPATION THAT YOU FIND ACCEPTABLE AND APPLY MOST OFTEN. EXPLAIN WHY.

Let us now come back to the levels of participation.

If the basic or lowest level of participation is that of the individual, then the highest can be considered to be global participation.

- Individual participation – this is participation that is limited to yourself. For example, a learning process you undertake, or your professional activities. At this level, you are accountable to yourself for the plans you make, how you implement them, and what you achieve.

- Community participation – at this level, you work with other representatives of your community. You can consider this community to consist of your city, village, educational institution, workplace, circle of friends, a group of like-minded people, and so on.



- Provincial participation – this level of participation is very common to Armenia and is caused by the specific features of each province. For example, participation in provincial elections or an annual festival specific to a particular province, the initiation and organisation of a discussion on the environmental issues of a province, and so on.

- National participation – this level of participation covers the whole country. For example, participation in nationwide elections, campaigning across the country, organising a state-level conference, and so on.

- Regional participation – this level of participation takes place with the involvement of regional partners. For example, the Eastern Partnership programme, which has the participation of the European Union member states as well as the six Eastern neighbours of the European Union, including the Republic of Armenia, provides the opportunity for all those countries to develop and implement joint programmes.

- European-level participation – an example of such participation can be seen in the collaboration between political parties from the Republic of Armenia as well as their women's organisations with the EPP women's organisations.

- Global/international participation – this is the highest level of participation, as a result of which there can be changes at a global level while also securing change at a local or national level. For example, on Earth Day, you can demonstrate your global participation and take action at home, in your community in Armenia, by switching off all electric appliances and lights at home for half an hour in the evening, thus joining more than one billion people in 190 countries that are taking the same symbolic act of limiting the use of the planet's resources. Here's another example. On November 19,

which has been recognised as Women's Entrepreneurship Day by the United Nations, you can initiate a range of relevant events in your community, province, or at a national level. This would not just ensure your own global participation in this international cause, but also that of all the people that attend these events you have initiated.

TRY TO RECALL THE LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION AT WHICH YOU HAVE HAD THE MOST SUCCESS. ALSO MENTION THE LEVEL AT WHICH YOU HAVE DEMONSTRATED THE LEAST PARTICIPATION UNTIL NOW. WHY WAS THAT? ASSESS YOUR CURRENT POTENTIAL AND DEFINE ACTIONS THAT WOULD MAKE UP FOR ANY SHORTCOMINGS.

As you can see, you do not need to be a Member of Parliament, minister, deputy minister, or hold any office at all in order to participate and to make change possible. Anybody can participate and contribute to change, each to the extent of their own potential, preferences, areas of focus, interests, and abilities. What matters is that you make more of a conscious effort to focus on participation at various levels in different spheres. Acknowledge that each important action can mark the beginning of a very significant process and event. Understand that your participation can encourage and inspire other women to follow your lead, to support you in finding common solutions to your shared problems, including advocacy work. Your participation could influence the decisions and actions of Members of Parliament or Government representatives.

3. PARTICIPATION

3.3. LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

But don't forget that we are also encouraging you to set for yourself and achieve the objective of being one of those decision makers by getting elected to Parliament or taking on responsibility in the executive branch of Government. Thus, in all spheres where you demonstrate participation, you can play a role in engaging the great potential held by women, which we discussed at the beginning of this publication, to have a positive impact on our country's development. This can be through action in the political, economic, cultural as well as social spheres.



3.4. PARTICIPATION AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Women cannot develop without a process of continuous education. It is impossible to gain an education without being proactive, curious, diligent and purposeful. Otherwise, what will take place is simply the consumption of provided information and policies, which is usually not in line with the real needs on the ground. It is also through participation that women can gain knowledge and skills, shape their beliefs and define goals. It is also worth mentioning that participation and development have a spiral growth path; participation leads to development and the latter to more effective participation, which in turn leads to a higher standard of development (Figure 1).



Design by: "Sketch Style" LLC

Figure 1: Spiral of participation and development

It is more probable that women that stay away from social and political developments occurring around them and do not have the opportunity or desire to participate in these processes, influence them or define their progress, end up becoming part of inactive groups in society. However, the women that have the courage to express their opinions, for example by participating in public discussions and other events, or those that have beliefs, end up having more capacity to influence and change certain situations.

DISCUSS WHICH FACTORS IMPEDE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN ARMENIA.



As mentioned above, political participation occurs through, but is not limited to, membership in political parties, their activities and political processes.

4.1. INFLUENCE OR POWER?

While one can gain power mostly through the support of political parties (participation through proportional lists in elections, being nominated by a political party in local self-government elections, or to political or discretionary positions) and thus make a significant or insignificant impact in politics, influence also can be obtained without political power through activity in the social sector. That influence may manifest through the implementation of programs and initiatives aimed at the protection of people's interests, solution of certain issues, monitoring and supervision of various political and social initiatives, and other actions.

Defining a goal is one of the most important steps, as already mentioned above. Just as it is for any activity, thus also for the participation process, the most important action is defining the goal. The clearer one defines the goal and the actions that lead to it, the more visible the path to achieving the goal will be.

Before defining the goal, you must also define the issues that are making you seek participation in political processes. What needs have you seen among your possible beneficiaries? What are the shortcomings that cannot be corrected by local self-government bodies, regional or national authorities? Are you ready to take the responsibility for partly or fully solving these issues? If yes, and if you can see the path to the solutions of these existing issues, then define your goal and move towards it.

Remember, it is easier to be a part of big politics when you are the member of a political party and are within its structures, so consider joining a political power whose ideas and principles are acceptable to you. You could also consider initiating the creation of a new group, a new political power or a new party, together with the rest of your team, supporters and followers.

4. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

4.3. DEFINE AND DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGE TO THE PUBLIC

Your message, your speech before the beneficiaries (voters, followers, etc.) must be clear, targeted and simple.

Your message to the public must be based on facts, referring to existing problems and the solutions that you offer for them. Your speech must reflect your program.

4.4. CREATE YOUR PERSONAL IMAGE

It is important to correctly develop your image, based on your biography and activity, which will convey the right information about you to your supporters and create a following that not only listens to your speeches or reads your program, but appreciates your image. Your family, the people who surround you, your previous and current areas of work, implemented projects, social or charity initiatives all play a role in the development of your image.

4.5. BUILD A TEAM

Pay attention to the process of forming a team. It must consist of people with specialist knowledge, who share your ideas and believe in them, are loyal and ready to invest their experience for the implementation of those ideas .



From left to right

Christinaa Bellmann (KAS)
Lilit Mkrтчyan (KAS Expert)
Wim Eilering (EFF Expert)

Esther Keizer (EFF Expert)
Ashkhen Beglaryan (KAS Expert)
Liana Marukyan (KAS)



“NINETY PERCENT OF LEADERSHIP IS THE ABILITY TO
COMMUNICATE SOMETHING PEOPLE WANT.”

- DIANNE FEINSTEIN,
AMERICAN POLITICIAN, US SENATOR

It is necessary to reconsider the concept of community beyond the simply focus on villages, cities, regions or whole countries to social groups, the members of which share the same issues, e.g. refugees, persons with disabilities, military servicemen, members of families of persons involved in armed conflicts, young mothers, women, etc.

Organize regular meetings with your community when implementing social or political programs. Take into account the needs of the community. Analyze the process of how these needs are met, how quickly issues are resolved and what new issues arise. Be ready to respond rapidly to urgent matters.

Make sure to provide for constant feedback from your followers, beneficiaries, voters and stakeholders.

When you have developed a complete action program, follow the points mentioned above while also assessing all your capacities, advantages and shortcomings, strengths and weaknesses, and available resources. Conduct such an analysis about competitors as well, and then define your short-term and long-term strategic and tactical programs. After that, implement them together with your team and your followers.

IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO ACT!

We wish you success for your future activity in the social and political spheres of Armenia.

We hope that your actions help solve at least some of the issues that our public faces today, and that you serve as an inspiration for other women on their path to social and political activities.

5. HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR OWN PLAN FOR PARTICIPATION



The promotion of women's participation is impossible these days without a comprehensive program development process. Any event that ensures participation requires strategic programming. It is this strategic programming that ensures success in reaching our goals and implementing projects.

The four main steps that will help achieve success in the process of socio-political participation are outlined below.

5.1. HOW TO GAIN POWER IN JUST FOUR STEPS

You may not have the power to make decisions yet, but you can use your influence to get on the right path. You have probably been influential already, on many occasions in your life, starting from childhood. What strategies did you use to reach your goal, to get something you wanted?

Everybody has his or her own strategy to reach a goal.

Imagine a jar full of cookies. Children love cookies, they love to eat them all the time. If you put the jar somewhere high, that gives you power over the cookie jar. You can decide whether or not to give a cookie, or to whom. If you want a position in power, you have to find out who is holding the cookie jar. So when thinking about your strategies, think back to your childhood days. How did you get the cookie?

5.2. MAKING YOUR CASE: 12 DIFFERENT METHODS TO HAVE INFLUENCE ON PEOPLE

There are 12 different types of techniques that are often used by people, including many politicians, to influence people to give them 'a cookie'.



EXERCISE SUGGESTION: IN ORDER TO LEARN AND RECOGNIZE THE TECHNIQUES QUICKLY, MAKE A HARDCOPY OF THE TABLE BELOW. BRING THEM WITH YOU DURING MEETINGS AND TICK THE TECHNIQUES AS THEY ARE USED BY PEOPLE AROUND YOU. YOUR OWN 'BINGO-GAME'.



CONVINCING EFFECTIVELY

	RECIPROCITY If you do something for somebody else, there is a bigger chance they'll honor your request		CHARMING People like to receive compliments & appreciation
	CONSISTENCY People like to be consistent; if you adhere to something that has been done before, you increase the chance of your request being honored		THREATING Creating fear ensures that people will not do something. Or take action to reduce or avoid the danger. Be careful in using this one
	SOCIAL PRESSURE People tend to act in a way which is considered correct in their social/ professional environment		PERSONAL PREFERENCE People prefer to say yes to issues they consider important themselves
	SYMPATHY People prefer to say yes to people they know and/or like		URGENCY People will be more likely to act when they feel a sense of urgency
	AUTHORITY People often take what's been said by a figure of authority or specialist seriously. Though, who is considered as an authority differs from person to person		OBLIGATION Pointing out norms or laws to which people need to adhere
	SCARCITY People attach more value to things that are more difficult to get		SUBSTANTIVE ARGUMENTS In particular experts are interested in arguments based on real content

What you will discover is that, most often, a combination of arguments is used. Sympathy, charming and personal preference are a good combination, because people like to say yes to people they like. That is why you should be careful to use the technique of **threatening** someone. In the longer run, this could work against you. When using “**personal preference**” you try to find similarities with the person you are trying to influence, so that you are given preference over somebody else. But then, you will still have to convince the other person that you have similar interests.

The “**obligation technique**” uses the norms, values and laws that are part of your society. For instance, there might be the norm to have more equality between women and men, so a political party may feel the obligation to have more women on candidate lists.

Social pressure is used to try to push for an issue that a lot of people feel is important, social pressure might get the ones in power to act on the issue.

I hear a lot of ‘**substantive arguments**’ but they rarely work by themselves as most people act on emotions.

In the end, the best technique(s) depend on the preferences of the person you are trying to influence, so you have to learn more about this person. Also, do not forget to prepare how you want to make your argument. Be aware that you only have a short time.

Source content: Wytse Postma / Design: Annick Filot – L&D Unit OCB



With the above in mind, we can now move to the first step to assert your influence and to gain the power you need to reach your goal.

Your goal has to be precise, it's like going to a place using Google Maps – if you do not have the exact location, but only a city, it will take you a while to get to the place you need. You can change your path as you go along, as long as you know where you are going.



A goal can be to get a high spot on the candidate election list, one that would actually give you a good chance to gain a seat in Parliament. You might have a broadly defined goal, but then you have to define smaller in-between goals. In order to set your goal, you have to ask yourself what you want to achieve and when. A good goal is given in just one, active sentence. Ask yourself also what result would make you happy. You have to be able to picture the goal in front of you. It helps to talk about your goal with people you trust, to ask them if they understand what you mean. Ask them to be critical and help you figure out the important parts of your goal.

If you want to reach your goal you have to figure out when, where and by whom the decisions are being made. For example, if you want to be on a candidate list of a political party, you have to figure out the different steps in the selection process.

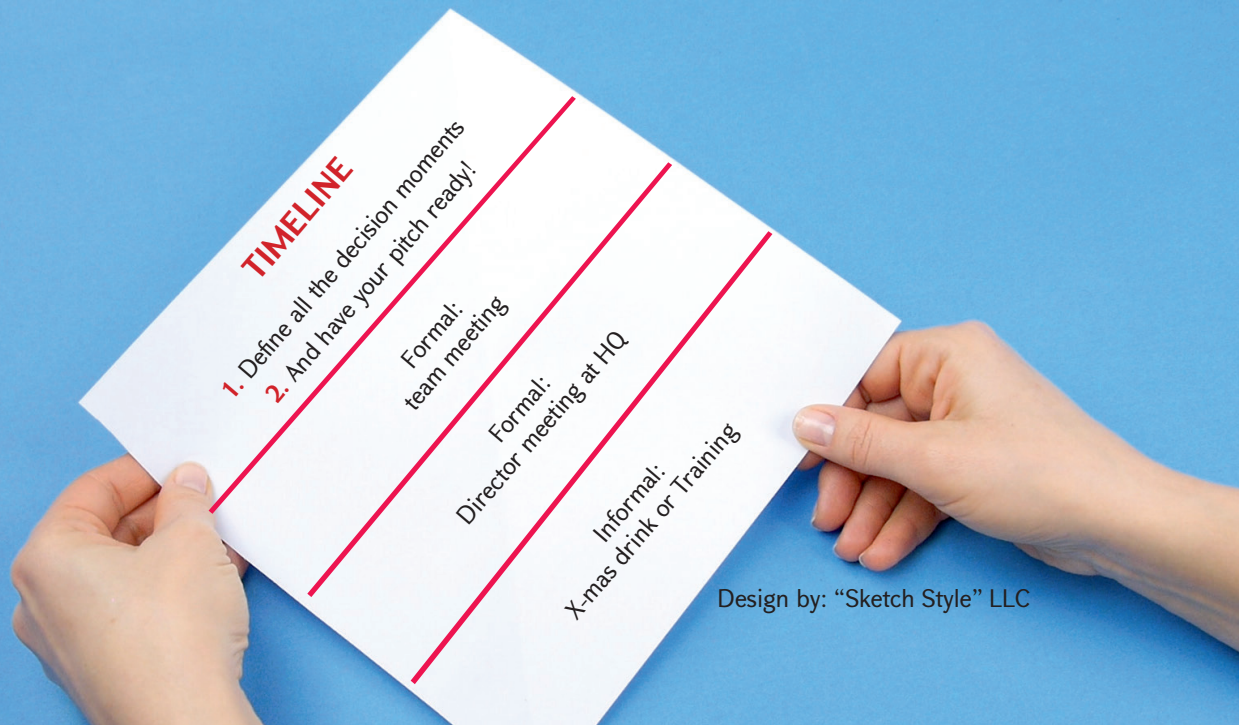
There are two different types of decisions – those that are made formally and are part of the process, and the informal ones. Find out the formal ones first, because this is where the people with power are. Every decision is always made by people, and people can be influenced. People are open for argumentation. So, grab a piece of paper and start writing the moments down that are important to reach your goal.

Formal moments can be found easily, you can simply ask what the formal decision-making procedures are pertaining to your goal, where the decisions are made and who



is in the room. Then you have the informal decision-making moments. They are actually very important, because people who need to make the decisions want to talk about them. So, you could also try to reach these people informally. For example, before I go to any networking event, I make a note of the people with whom I want to talk, and what I want to tell them. Conferences, party meetings, informal political party drinks – these are all spaces where informal decisions are made or discussed. It also helps to ask other people to endorse you to the influencers. It is actually even better to have other people promote you or talk about your good qualities.

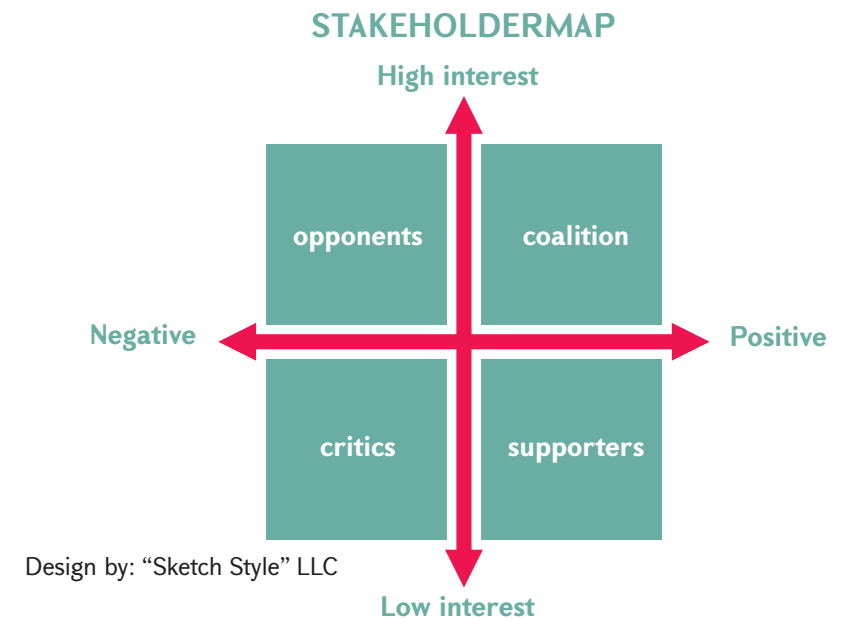
The finished product of this second step is that you actually have a chart with dates, times and, preferably, locations of places where decisions are being made or discussed.



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Find out who is making the decisions. Do not forget the people who have a big influence on decision makers. Remember, there are people who think they have the power to make decisions or who say they have that power, but they do not. It is your job to find out who actually has the power to help you reach your goal. There are others who want the cookies too! If you are trying to convince the wrong person, you are wasting your time.

The table below is a useful tool to map stakeholders. There are many tools, but I like this one because, in this table, you also list the people that have an interest in helping you.



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On the top right, you write down the people who are ‘on your side’, i.e., who want to make an effort to help you. On the other side, you have your opponents. These are the people that will work hard to make sure you will not reach your goal. Then, in the lower left corner, write down the names of your ‘critics’. These are the people that will not help you, but they will not actively be working against you either.

In reality, some people have more influence on decision making than others. You can draw big or small circles around the people – the bigger the circle, the bigger the influence.

When you draw everyone in, you will quickly notice in which square you have the most circles. Of course, you want the most circles on the top right-hand side.

A common, big mistake is that people try to convince their opponents. But it is more effective and less energy consuming to try to get supporters to come into your coalition. So when you have the supporters in, then you can see if you can convince the critics to come to you as supporters. See if you can find argumentation for your supporters to become more involved, and argumentation for your critics to become more supportive. Please realise that other people will do exactly the same thing, but from their side of the equation. So, if your critics will not become your supporters, you can try to make sure that they remain critical of your opponents, so that they will not join them. However, do not push your critics too hard, or they may end up becoming your opponents.

This map can be used for every case in your timeline when a particular decision is made. Your stakeholder map will keep changing, so don’t forget to update the map on a regular basis. In order to find out where people stand on your stakeholder map, you have to talk to them and listen carefully as well.

For this step, please look back to the beginning of this chapter. By now, you must have thought more about the different techniques available to you and have an idea about the (combination of) techniques that might work best for you. Remember, the most effective argument is the one which the recipient finds most convincing.

CONCLUSION

The text above gives an introduction on how to become politically involved as a woman in Armenia by presenting information and examples of how this is done in the EU and in European countries with parties that are EPP members and have a women’s wing. We are convinced that by taking steps, even if they are small, women can make their voices heard and contribute to politics.



SUCCESS

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PRACTICE MAKES PROGRESS



ARMENIA DESERVES IT!



ARPINE
HOVHANNISYAN



Arpine Hovhannisyán was born on 4 December 1983 in Yerevan. She graduated with excellence from School N60 named after Vahan Teryan and got her Bachelor's, Master's and post-graduate degrees in law (with honors) at Yerevan State University. Arpine teaches several subjects at the departments of law and journalism of the same university. She has worked in various agencies, but started in public administration in 2003 from the lowest position of a first category specialist at the RA Ministry of Justice. After the Ministry of Justice, she was admitted to the staff of the RA President and then elected as a member of the RA National Assembly through a proportional list in 2012. She was then appointed the RA Minister of Justice, and after the 2017 elections she became the Vice President of the RA National Assembly. After the events of April 2018, she shifted to providing legal advice, and is involved in social, scientific and educational initiatives, which were always part of her political career. She is married.

- **Why is it necessary or how important is it for women to go into politics?**

It is not that women must get involved in politics, but simply that they have the same rights to do so as men. That importance comes from the difference in the approach that women use, also due to their sex, especially in certain sectors. Additionally, the mere presence of women in politics is necessary, just as their presence is required in all other spheres of society, politics and life in general.

- **Why did you decide to become a politician?**

I decided to do so because I believed that one can change things and solve problems that are beyond reach if you are not in politics.

- **What were your first steps on that road? What barriers did you face?**

After a long journey in my professional activity, working in public administration, I started participating in political processes starting in 2012, when I first participated in parliamentary elections and became a Member of Parliament. The main impediment for women making their first steps in politics at any stage of the process is that the starting points are different and there is a lot of skepticism when compared to men who have the same opportunities, or sometimes more.

- **To what extent was your decision to become a politician based on childhood or adolescent dreams, on your activity as a youth or the actions of people around you?**

I don't think I ever had such a dream. It was an evolution, predominantly starting from my work in the state system and mostly dependent on the answer to the question of why I decided to go into politics. The answer is that I wanted to solve problems, change approaches and propose solutions.

- **What was the role of your family in your decision to become a politician? How did your family, your followers and friends help you make that decision, and in your work?**

My family respected my decision and has always supported and stood by me.

- **What is your advice to women who want to become politicians? What is your message?**

I will say the following to women that want to go into politics: if you trust your abilities, if you do not simply want to become famous, but to have a positive impact on yourself and others, then do not hesitate, do not surrender, believe and remember that there will be many barriers, unfair blows, unequal starting points and dishonesty. But you can overcome anything if you pursue a clearly defined goal.

ELINAR
VARDANYAN



Elinar Vardanyan was born on 18 November 1978 in Yerevan. She graduated from the Yerevan Institute of Forensic Examination in 2000 and did her post-graduate studies at the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law of the RA Academy of Science in 2008. Her specialization is legal expertise.

She lectured at the Yerevan Institute of Forensic Studies from 2000 to 2002, and then at Northern University from 2005 to 2007, and since 2013. From 2002 to 2008, Elinar worked as the Executive Director of the Center of Social Dialogue and Development. She is a member of the RA Chamber of Advocates since 2001. On 6 May 2012, she was elected to the RA National Assembly as a Member of Parliament and became the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and Public Issues. Since 2017, she has been a member of the Alternative Projects Group. She is non-partisan, an author of numerous articles, is married and has two children.

- **Why is it necessary or how important is it for women to go into politics?**

About half of the world's population and over 53% of the population of Armenia are women. Hence, the political potential of this social group is quite big and leaving it unused is a big mistake for our country. Many studies have shown that healthcare, economic development and social wellbeing in any country are closely related to the status of women in society.

There are misperceptions regarding the role of women in society, some people think that women cannot be effective politicians or occupy management positions. These are just stereotypes that are not related to professional capacities. Women are not a homogenous group, young or old, educated or not, with active or passive political

behavior, residing in cities or villages; they all have different abilities and experiences. Using the potential that women have will help political decision-making and increase the efficiency of management.

- **Why did you decide to become a politician?**

As a lawyer and a social activist, I have strived to make positive change in people's lives and influence their destinies. However, in practice, there turned out to be many issues connected to gaps in legislation, and filling these requires political will and political decisions. The most effective way of influencing these processes was to participate in them; becoming part of political actions, influencing political decisions. And though that requires serious efforts and perseverance, it is a very important step if you want to make your own contribution to the development of your country.

- **What were your first steps on that road? What barriers did you face?**

I took my first steps in social activism, when I tried to be actively involved in the decision-making process, influence the adoption of laws and regulations, initiate the drafting of legal acts and submitting those drafts to legislators. The shift from social to political activity ended up being a smooth one. The only barrier I can recall in the initial phase was the mild reservations I faced as a young woman politician. I easily overcame that with time through the work and results of my political activity.

- **To what extent was your decision to become a politician based on childhood or adolescent dreams, on your activity as a youth or the actions of people around you?**

The decision to go into politics was never a childhood or adolescent dream, though there were some connections to decisions that I made in my youth. These included contributing to justice in our country as well as the protection of human rights and interests. In the early years, I thought that the only path to reaching my goals were in the field of law. Then, law and politics crossed paths.

- **What was the role of your family in your decision to become a politician? How did your family, your followers and friends help you make that decision, and in your work?**

My most devoted followers and supporters are my husband, my parents and best friends. They always helped me avoid frustration or giving up, and I stay devoted to my own principles thanks to them. It was with their support that I continued fighting against injustice and intolerance.

- **What is your advice to women who want to become politicians? What is your message?**

Overcome stereotypes that keep you back from your decisions. Your success depends on you. Remember the three rules that start with "Do not" – do not be afraid, do not surrender, and do not go against your own principles and yourself.

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- [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2020/646189/EPRS_ATA\(2020\)646189_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2020/646189/EPRS_ATA(2020)646189_EN.pdf)

LILIT
ASATRYAN



Lilit Zhirayr Asatryan has international expertise in the fields of women and youth participation, political participation of women, women's entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, youth entrepreneurship, MSMEs (micro, small and medium-sized entrepreneurship), coaching and a number of other areas. Lilit Asatryan is the founder president of the Armenian Young Women's Association and the Women Entrepreneurs Network of Armenia. She is the initiator of Women's Entrepreneurship Ambassador Award in Armenia.

Lilit is an ICF (International Coaching Federation) Coach, a certified trainer in several international programmes (UN-ILO, UN-ITCILO, UN-APCICT/ESCAP, GIZ, DSIK, IFC WB Group, Council of Europe, etc.), among them - Candidate Master Trainer on Personal Initiative Methodology. She cooperates with a number of international organisations.

Lilit is the author of professional articles and manuals published in and outside Armenia.

She is a mother of two daughters.

Lilit likes to travel and to spend time in nature.



HILLIE VAN DE
STREEK

Hillie has a background in twentieth-century political history, holding positions at several universities and thinktanks. Her research topics are women's history, Christian democracy and church-politics relations.

She has been an active member of the CDA in the Netherlands for many years, in particular in the women's wing (CDAV) and its European umbrella organization within the EPP, EPP WOMEN. Currently she holds the position of secretary-general of EPP WOMEN (www.eppwomen.eu). Hillie knows what it means to advocate for women's rights and stress the importance of gender equality.

Van de Streek is married and has two daughters in their early twenties. Her hobbies are sports such as cycling and skiing, and enjoying the company of her family.

WYTSKE
POSTMA



As of 2019, Wytske Postma is a member of the Dutch Parliament for the Christian Democratic Party. She has been an active party member since 2002, working on different fields within the party as board member, policy advisor and active on political campaigns at different party levels as campaign leader or strategist.

Wytske is an experienced trainer. She had her own training company and has trained professionals from the Disney Company, Doctors Without Borders, the Technical University of Delft and politicians from the Christian Democratic Party (CDA). Wytske was also a manager at the ANWB (Dutch Automobile Association). The membership of the ANWB constitutes one-fourth of the Dutch population.

Wytske studied International Business at the University of Maastricht and is a single mother of two children.

IT'S TIME TO ACT:

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL AND CIVIC LIFE A MANUAL FOR WOMEN

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