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# STRENGTHENING POLITICAL ENTITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY (SPECS)

JULY 2013 – JULY 2016

\$18 MILLION

## OVERVIEW

The Strengthening Political Entities and Civil Society project was designed to further democratic practices that lead to inclusive and transparent political processes. The success of Afghanistan's democracy depends on institutions and processes that advance political stability, promote peaceful transitions of power, and reinforce government legitimacy through the informed participation of Afghan citizens in free and fair elections. The Strengthening Political Entities and Civil Society project promoted citizen engagement with political parties, coalitions, and candidates, while also assisting civil society to

advocate for policy positions by government institutions. USAID support to political actors and civil society fostered more opportunities for women to participate and serve as elected leaders in Afghanistan.

## **ACTIVITIES**

- Supported political parties and coalitions to develop platforms and policies, as well as increase voter outreach and engagement
- Trained elected officials on their roles and responsibilities
- Improved women's access and ability to run for office and serve as elected leaders
- Supported watchdog civil society organizations to monitor presidential, provincial, and parliamentary election cycles, including on Election Day
- Supported civil society networks to engage elected leaders on advocacy issues

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Hosted female campaign training for over 280 provincial council candidates from 34 provinces
- Trained 50,000 candidate agents across 28 provinces for Election Day oversight
- Fielded domestic observers at over 4,000 polling stations during the 2014 presidential and provincial council elections
- Trained 470 newly-elected provincial councilors (84 of them women) from all 34 provincial councils on their roles and responsibilities
- Organized 93 political discussions to increase cross-party dialogue; 3,429 people from local civil society organizations, political parties, and other election stakeholders participated
- Organized 114 meetings of provincial women's policy advocacy groups, which generated 110 issue-based follow-up meetings for 3,311 individuals (278 of them male) from civil society organizations, universities, political parties, Departments of Women's Affairs and independent female activists
- Trained 67 trainers from 16 political parties and coalitions on campaign skills to help parties prepare candidate campaign staff and supporters for parliamentary elections
- Advanced 18 advocacy initiatives in six regions by 37 partner CSOs, bringing together civil society and elected leaders to address issues of importance in their communities

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