

Fourth Annual Report Web Update

GTF394 Westminster Foundation for Democracy

The purpose of the Westminster Consortium for Parliaments and Democracy GTF programme is to equip parliaments with stronger and more sustainable structures, systems and human resources to be more capable, accountable, responsive, and more open to media and CSOs. The programme works with the Parliaments of six countries (Georgia, Lebanon, Uganda, Ukraine, Morocco and Mozambique) working with numerous local partners and CSOs to support legislative development. The outputs of the programme include:

1. Improving Parliaments' institutional planning and capacity to determine and address its development needs effectively.

The programme successfully assisted the Mozambican and Lebanese parliaments launch Parliamentary Study Centres (PSC). The Mozambican PSC extended its reach to CSOs and provincial legislatures, whilst the Lebanese PSC acts as a regional training centre for Arab parliaments. Both PSC's are also used by donors such as USAID, AWEPA and UNDP, making them key vehicles for parliamentary development in both countries.

2. Equipping of parliaments with localised learning and develop curricula, materials and trainers to support human resource development.

The programme launched several materials including; a Guide for Parliamentary Staff on Improving Financial Oversight to assist TWC countries conduct expenditure and budgetary oversight; a localised Handbook on Human Rights and Parliament to scrutinise Human Rights Legislation; media handbooks for journalist covering parliament; and a guide on research methods for Civil Society Organisations and NGOs.

3. Increasing parliamentarian and staff skills to make effective laws, produce better oversight reports and engage in informed debates.

The quality of briefings and reports produced right across TWC countries have vastly improved, with examples including improved annual committee reports in Georgia, shorter and concise reports in Ukraine, better committee briefs in Uganda and Mozambique. The programme has also seen greater coverage of parliamentary issues by journalist accredited to parliaments on corruption, financial and economic reporting, extractive industries and election cover.

4. Establishing strong regional and global networks to facilitate exchange of experience and best practice.

TWC facilitated exchanges of best practices on issues such as oral questions, Human Rights, Local Government, the Environment, Freedom of Information, budget management, financial oversight and the role of members. A conference on improving financial oversight in TWC countries was held in Lebanon to share experience and develop action plans.

5. Packaging and replication of TWC's Innovative approaches

Learning papers on member's development and Induction was presented at 125th IPU Assembly in Bern, Switzerland and shared learning at a CPA conference on Financial Oversight in London. Finally, Mozambique facilitated a learning workshop with seven countries in Africa to discuss the different approaches and models for parliamentary strengthening using PSCs.

The ongoing work has seen impact in changes to parliamentary structures, debates on prisoner health, legislation on human trafficking and greater scrutiny of extractive industry bills. We have also seen the development of three journalist networks to improve coverage of parliamentary activities in Uganda, Georgia and Mozambique.

Read more about the programme at: www.thewestminsterconsortium.org/articles/

Our Annual Report is available at: <http://www.wfd.org/where-we-work/westminster-consortium.aspx>

