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Your Guide To A Successful Electoral Campaign

Many women are gearing up to contest the People's Assembly elections. For a woman to win the electoral battle, good planning coupled with commitment, transparency, and honesty are essential to communicate with voters and media outlets.

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All of this is elaborated in the guide provided by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) in Lebanon for Arab women under the initiative of "Win With Women – Partners in Participation." The guide, which comes in three editions, includes important information for women interested in public work and in developing their communities.



First, the guide states that a woman candidate ought to be well-aware of her legislative duties and responsibilities during small-scale meetings and gatherings. She should also explain her program, and inform the public of their rights as voters and how to get registered and vote, clarifying what she can do to improve and develop her community.

A candidate should be well-organized and have good planning and time management skills. Given that everybody has their own priorities, a candidate must know how to deal with competing obligations.

The guide also discusses team building as an important skill for candidates, as no candidate can do everything on their own. In addition, when planning a campaign, a candidate must communicate with voters, identify their needs, and have a brief, coherent message.

The guide provides candidates with some advice: design your electoral program according to the position that you are competing for; choose a short campaign slogan that represents your objectives; be calm, rational, honest, and friendly while presenting your program; avoid hostile making responses to hostile people; do not make electoral promises that are difficult to fulfill; and, practice with your team.

Moreover, a candidate should: stay in contact with the media; contact media outlets instead for waiting for them to do this; prepare promotional materials to give to reporters; when you meet with reporters be honest, do not say more than you know, do not say anything that you do not want to be quoted, and be yourself. Your campaign manager should be somebody whom you trust, because "the candidate is the heart of the campaign, and the campaign manager is its brain." Each member of the campaign staff should have defined responsibilities.

Therefore, it is necessary for the candidate, campaign manager, and key campaign advisors to design a plan. This plan should only be accessible to key campaign officers because it contains the points of

strength and weakness of the campaign. For a plan to be worthwhile, it should be well-implemented and flexible, and should not ignore the abilities of opponents. Therefore, a candidate must know her opponents, how they answer the same questions addressed to her, and predict the strategies and type of campaigns her opponents will use. Given that opponents would never volunteer information about themselves or their experiences, a candidate must have an open eye for any contrasts and contradictions between herself and opponents. She should also develop a message that convinces voters that it is in their best interest to vote for her on Election Day, because it is not worth it for a candidate to persuade voters that she is the best, if they will not head to the polls on Election Day.

The most effective method of persuasion is for a candidate to visit voters, and tour neighborhoods to verbally communicate her message. As for written messages, they can be delivered through slogans and materials.

This guide is being distributed as part of a program titled “Know Your Right” that is implemented by the Appropriate Communications Techniques for Development Center (ACT). For those interested in the guide and want to learn in detail the steps of preparing an electoral campaign, the guide is available at the NDI office in 1 Midan Vinni, Dokki, Cairo.

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