



# The Labour Party's International Democracy Programme ANNUAL REVIEW | 2015-2016



## Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Introduction.....	3
How we're funded .....	3
Section 1: Yearly Overview.....	5
Political Update .....	5
Outcomes.....	7
Resources.....	10
Section 2: In depth analysis .....	11
Objective 1 – Party organisation and policy development .....	11
Objective 2 – Social democratic women .....	14
Objective 3 – Social democratic youth .....	16
Annex 1: Full list of regional projects supported in 2015-16.....	18
Annex 2: List of acronyms.....	20
Annex 3: List of figures.....	21

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**Figure 1:** Cover images (left to right from top) – New Social Democratic Platform (February 2016); LGBTI Rights Conference in South Eastern Europe (October 2015); Eastern Europe Summer Academy (August 2015); Participant at Women's Mentoring Platform: South Eastern Region (October 2015); Women's Mentoring Platform: South Eastern Region (October 2015); Women's Academy for Africa (WAFA) National Workshop (January 2016)



# Introduction



Figure 2: Participants at the Eastern Europe Summer Academy (August 2015)

## THE LABOUR PARTY SUPPORTS POLITICAL PARTIES AND NETWORKS IN NEW AND EMERGING DEMOCRACIES ABROAD THROUGH ITS INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRACY PROGRAMME

**We work together to ensure the values of fairness, equality of opportunity, justice, international solidarity and human rights are shared across the world**

As one of the oldest and most established social democratic parties in the world, Labour has long sought to share experiences and build alliances with like-minded parties.

We do this by delivering a rolling programme of activities that develop the political positions and the institutional capacity of like-minded parties and regional networks.

Throughout, we focus on working with women and young people; two groups that are often overlooked and marginalised in the political process and yet who are essential to the future of any democracy.

We work in countries all over the world; but predominantly in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Middle

East and North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.

### How we're funded

Labour receives funds from the **Westminster Foundation for Democracy** (WFD) - a public body sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with additional funding from the Department for International Development.

WFD builds the capacity of parliaments and political parties; delivering parliamentary work itself whilst providing resources to the Westminster based parties to work directly with their counterparts.

The funding from WFD enables Labour to run projects with political parties and regional networks designed around their specific needs and in line with our international strategy.

## **THE LABOUR PARTY'S INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS IN 2015- 16 FOCUSED ON THREE KEY AREAS**

These were:

- 1) Strengthening sister and like-minded parties' organisation and policy development so that they could offer their citizens a choice and an opportunity to engage with the democratic process
- 2) Supporting and developing the skills set of social democratic women to play an active role in party politics and public life
- 3) Supporting and developing the capacity and skills of social democratic youth to participate in political processes and democratic practices at local, national and international levels

In all regions, we worked with both established and nascent parties, always tailoring our support according to the local party's needs and the political context in which they operate.

We also arranged study visits to the UK and overseas to share best practice and to complement the support provided through the bilateral and regional programmes.

**This document gives a summary of the projects we completed in the financial year 2015-16 and focuses primarily on what changes came about as a result of this support.**

*For more information please contact the International Projects Manager*

## Section 1: Yearly Overview

### Political Update

The past year has brought both challenges and opportunities for our sister parties across different regions. Our partners have faced challenges including a national political environment increasingly hostile and negative towards them (particularly in the MENA region), a lack of activist base and a limited profile through which to promote their agenda to the public. Some of them have dealt with the challenges of being a junior coalition partner in government, the importance of differentiation, and their identity towards the electorate in the period that followed. Our activities have been designed with the particular context at the centre of considerations, and tailored to meet a particular need or develop a particular capacity.

In the Western Balkans, the migration crisis and continuing economic difficulties proved a challenging context for social democratic parties. Both the Democratic Party and Social Democratic Union in Serbia sought to gather support ahead of planned local elections in spring 2016, when the centre-right government called an early national election. The Democratic Party-led coalition gained around 6% of the popular vote and won 16 seats in the National Assembly. Despite strong mobilisation efforts, the Social Democratic Union again fell short of the 5% threshold needed to obtain representation in the National Assembly. They were however able to

establish new local branches and develop stronger links with wider stakeholders ahead of future electoral challenges.



**Figure 3:** Young activists in Niš, Serbia

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, our partners have gone through a period of consolidation after going into opposition in 2014 and now look ahead to municipal elections later in 2016. They have developed structures and internal capacities to a position where they have strong consultative policy-making processes.

In Macedonia, the Social Democratic Union (SDSM) continued its on-and-off boycott of Parliament since 2014 as the only leverage in compelling its political opponents to resolve the political impasse. The situation has developed into a fully-fledged crisis after the SDSM published evidence on large-scale illegal interception of communication of over 20,000 Macedonian citizens, with the centre-right Prime Minister resigning and EU mediation talks seeking to find a way forward ahead of fresh elections. The elections originally

planned first for April and then for June 2016 were postponed because basic conditions for a free fair and credible vote (audit of the Voters' List and reforms in the media) were not met. At the time of writing it appears that elections would take place in December 2016.

Our partners in Montenegro faced internal challenges, but now look forward to parliamentary elections later in 2016, when for the first time in 18 years they will run entirely independently from the governing Democratic Party of Socialists. They have strengthened the capacity of their local boards to have an effective presence across the country, ready for this electoral challenge.

In Eastern Europe, the Democratic Party of Moldova (DPM) has formed part of the governing pro-European coalition since 2009. The subsequent period has witnessed a number of changes including a corruption scandal involving senior members of the government focused around the Liberal Democratic Party. Protests have affected the country, organised and supported by the pro-Russian opposition parties. The governing coalition has changed its leading figures and our sister party now holds the position of Prime Minister.

In Ukraine, President Poroshenko has consolidated his power after his supporters won majorities at the 2014 parliamentary elections and the most seats in 2015 local elections. The New Social Democratic Platform has

strengthened its capacity promoting social democratic values across the country. This has also been possible through the members and activists of the SD platform who were elected to local councils in the local elections of 2015, particularly in the Kharkiv and Rivne regions. It has since broadened its base of support across the country and its links with other key stakeholders in Ukrainian society.

In the Middle East region, instability and insecurity has continued to challenge our work with regional networks. Following the 2014 elections, progressives in Tunisia have continued to work on their party structures and organisation. They are working on building their own training team to develop the skills and capacities of their local campaign teams and candidates ahead of municipal elections initially planned later this year. In Egypt the restrictions on political activity and protest, amidst an ongoing threat of terrorism has proved extremely difficult for our partners. The parliamentary elections in the autumn of 2015, boycotted by a number of opposition parties, proved another step in the consolidation of power by President Sisi and his supporters.

The Women's Academy for Africa has developed its organisational structures, bringing women together across the continent, involved in parties facing challenges in general and local elections.

## Outcomes

The overall goal of the Labour Party's international democracy programme is to provide choice to citizens in developing democracies through well-functioning and accountable social democratic parties. This is a long-term goal that can take many years, if not decades, to achieve. The scope in which we operate is limited and a number of other factors determine whether a political party or network is able to flourish. Nevertheless, we were pleased to see the following outcomes from our work over the past year:

The **Tha'era network** provided an essential platform through which to organise an international mobilisation campaign after the fatal shooting of Shaimaa el-Sabbagh in January 2015. The campaign led to the arrest of the officer responsible, the first time a member of the police force has been indicted for their actions. The network has supported the development of a feminist journal named in memory of Shaimaa, and a regional workshop in Beirut on best practice in fighting for women's equality in politics including through electoral quotas.

The **Social Democratic Women's Mentoring Programme** established links across regions and encouraged young women to engage in politics. The development of one young woman

from Egypt in particular through the mentoring programme was recognised when she was selected as one of the young members of the Global Thinkers Forum 2016 and another was invited as a speaker to a conference in Brussels marking International Women's Day.



**Figure 4:** Women's Mentoring Platform – MENA Regional Conference (June 2015)

Through the training and capacity-building programme we facilitated, some of our partners in the **Western Balkans** have developed a consultative policy-making process, enshrined into their party statute, and moved to a democratic process of leadership selection through one-member one-vote.



**Figure 5:** Conference in the Western Balkans to implement new consultative policy-making process (February 2016)



In **Serbia** our support enabled our partners to continue to develop a successful weekend youth academy, as well as provide training to strengthen its campaign team ahead of elections in April 2016.

Some of our partners have developed strong cooperation with a number of trade union branches, a link that is not well established in the region. Following the strengthening of its youth academy, one of its members was elected Secretary General of the Young European Socialists, the autonomous youth wing of the Party of European Socialists (PES). This was the first time an individual from the Western Balkans has been elected to the board of any European political organisation.

Our continued support for the **Women's Academy for Africa (WAF)** facilitated the holding of four regional workshops to help develop an action plan for the network as well as a pool of trainers in each country. An evaluation meeting was held in September 2015, and following that, a number of national workshops have taken place to disseminate the benefits of the network. Women have received valuable training in women's empowerment, leadership, campaign and media skills and a training manual was produced.



**Figure 6:** WAF Executive members at evaluation meeting in Ghana (September 2015)

A number of the participants involved in WAF have taken up leadership positions in their respective parties and countries, including Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, 2<sup>nd</sup> National Chair of the party, and Treasurer General of the party. The latter said on her election that she “wouldn't have done it” without the empowerment programmes provided by WAF and the Labour Party.

Following our sustained support, the **New Social Democratic Platform** in Ukraine has strengthened its organisation and its communication and outreach, enabling it to recruit new members and reach more citizens. It held training sessions across the country on the key topics of employment and women's rights.

#### *LGBTI Rights in the Western Balkans*

We supported the holding of a conference on Protecting and Strengthening LGBTI Rights in South East Europe in November 2015 in Belgrade, Serbia, gathering together LGBTI activists from the region, social democratic political foundations and



parties and experts. As a result, participants will now work together to look at further support work from the social democratic parties in the region, including helping them to establish networks for their LGBT members.



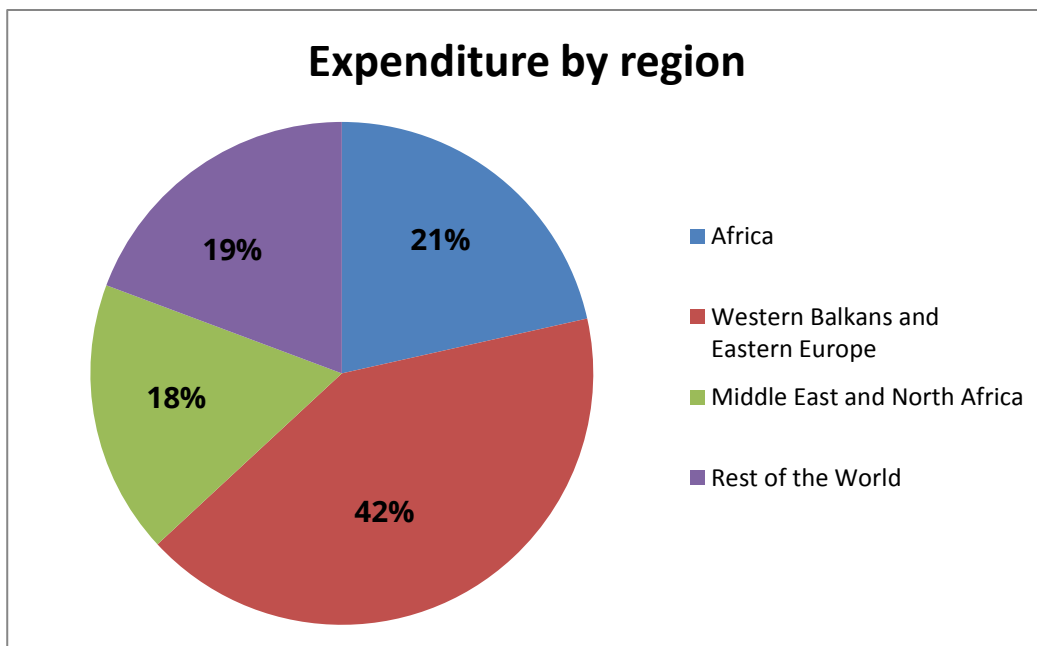
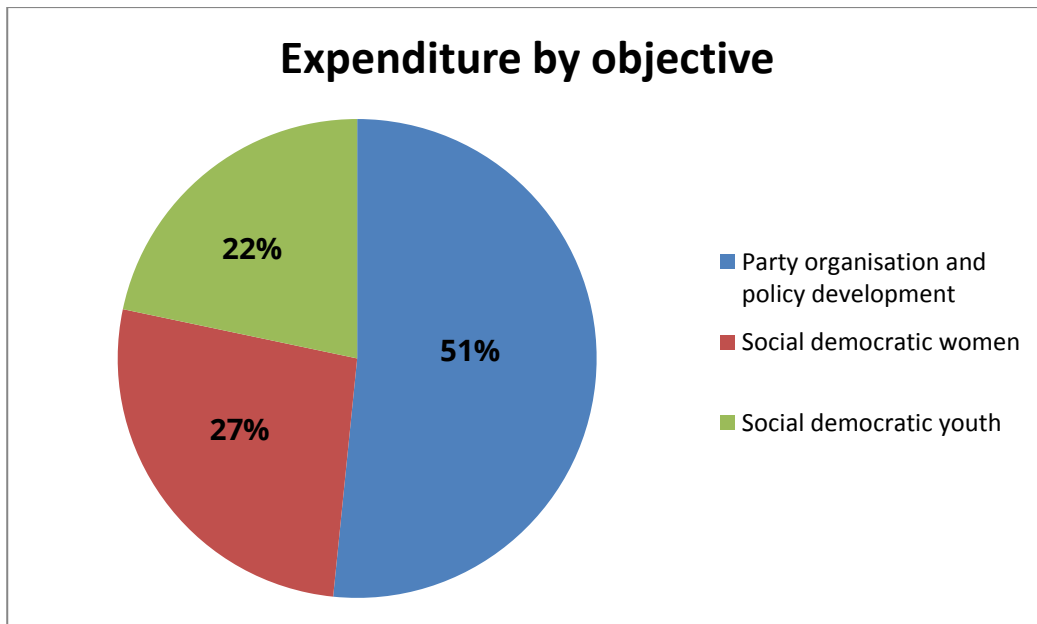
**Figure 7:** Protecting and Strengthening LGBTI Rights in South East Europe Conference (November 2015)

### *Best Practice*

Building on previous years, a number of visits have taken place bringing participants from across different regions to gain best practice on issues of local government and elections. Participants looked at how to enhance their skills in areas ranging from policy messaging, press and digital communications to on-the-ground campaigning. In some instances they developed new skills and ideas such as pushing for legislation to better support local councils in their home country, and implementing voter identification techniques based on their experience in the UK.

**OUR PROJECTS ARE FUNDED THROUGH AN ANNUAL GRANT FROM THE WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY**

The charts below show the breakdown of expenditure in 2015-16 according to three key areas and then by region.



## Section 2: In depth analysis

### Objective 1 - Party organisation and policy development

Our bilateral work with sister parties has focused on a number of areas of party strengthening, including around policy development, organisation, campaigning and communications and media strategies.

#### **Western Balkans**

Our support enabled our partners in Macedonia to organise leadership development and member motivation training sessions, helping to improve the connection and exchange between the leadership and the municipal branches of the party in both directions. Strong steps have been demonstrated towards a more consultative and open process of the party and its policy development. Team leaders were trained ahead of the next elections, and will play an essential role in carrying out field checks in the process of auditing the electoral roll.

In Montenegro, our partners organised regional party development workshops with our support, familiarising grassroots activists and party members with policy formation. Concrete steps were made towards developing consultative structures. As a result, the municipal boards represented agreed to replicate the training at the local level.



**Figure 8:** Participants at party development workshop in Montenegro (March 2016)

Some of our partners in Serbia have enhanced its internal party systems through its programme of local campaign workshops. It has also been able to strengthen its links with trade unions through ongoing meetings and collaboration, a practice that is little developed in the region. Other partners developed a Train the Trainers manual focusing on election processes. As a direct result of the project, a sufficient number of



trained activists were able to cover all polling stations during the elections, including for opposition parties who had no capacity to have their own observers.

Following policy forums supported by this project, our partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) passed amendments to its Statute to commit to a 2-year policy-making cycle. In addition, the Youth Forum developed a policy document on the legislative changes needed to implement a work experience programme for young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The document was developed along with the amendments needed to the existing legal framework. This was followed by a street campaign and petition signed by young people in the majority of cities and municipalities.



**Figure 9:** Public policy-making training in Bosnia and Herzegovina

## Eastern Europe

The New Social Democratic Platform in Ukraine has strengthened its organisation and its communication and outreach, enabling it to recruit new members and reach more citizens. It held training sessions across the country on the key topics of employment and women’s rights, and presented its leadership through a press conference at one of the most recognisable press points in Ukraine the “Gorshenin Institute”.



**Figure 10:** Young activists from the New Social Democratic Platform mobilising for the decent work campaign

## **Middle East and North Africa**

In Tunisia, we have continued our work to support policy-making and communications strategies, ahead of local elections in 2017. The training has helped candidates and organisers with voter targeting, rebutting criticisms from other parties and crystallising their message to citizens.



**Figure 11:** Participants at a workshop for local candidates and organisers (March 2016)

## Objective 2 - Social democratic women

### **Women's Academy for Africa**

The Women's Academy for Africa (WAFA) has been an excellent example of women working together to enhance their political skills and confidence and make use of these skills to engage in political processes and apply for leadership or candidate positions. In recent months, the national workshops have enabled the network to spread its reach to women activists at the grassroots level across a range of countries on the continent. Participants learned about women's empowerment, leadership, campaign and media skills. More generally, participants involved in the Women's Academy for Africa have taken up leadership positions in their respective parties and countries, with one women leader saying she "wouldn't have done it" without the empowerment programmes provided by WAFA and the Labour Party.



**Figure 12:** Participants at a WAFA national workshop (February 2016)

### **Arab Women's Network**

The Tha'era Arab Women's Network has given skills and confidence to its members against the background of an increasingly restrictive political climate. Following the fatal shooting of one of its members Shaimaa el-Sabbagh, the network rallied together and organised a coordinated national, regional and international campaign calling for the police officer responsible to be held accountable. Evaluation sessions led to a strategy plan formulated around registration, communication and expansion. The network has since supported the development of a feminist journal named in memory of Shaimaa, and a regional workshop in Beirut on best practice in fighting for women's equality in politics including through electoral quotas.



**Figure 13:** Tha'era members holding an evaluation meeting to discuss next steps (June 2015)

### **Women's Mentoring Platform**

The Social Democratic Women's Mentoring Platform established links between women activists across three regions, a truly valuable cross-border



and cross-cultural exchange. As a result of the workshops, participants agreed action plans to continue work between mentoring pairs in the different countries and engage their party leadership in the need to promote better women's involvement.



**Figure 14:** Mentoring pairs at the women's platform meeting in Slovenia (October 2015)

### Objective 3 - Social democratic youth

#### **Future Leaders**

Within our MENA region programme we developed a Future Leaders' project where participants received training on public speaking, campaigning, press strategy and leadership skills. The participants are now looking to take ownership of a more formalised regional youth network, and as result of the training colleagues from Lebanon used the skills gained to organise local campaign seminars.



**Figure 15:** Interview practice at the Future Leaders training in the MENA region (October 2015)

#### **Summer Academy**

Our Summer Academy for young activists across Eastern Europe continued this year, where it focused on equipping participants with the knowledge, confidence, and ability to repeat the training as a trainer. Detailed sessions covered developing social democratic policies on issues such as youth unemployment, improving infrastructure, and education, developing campaign

messages and interview techniques. Participants were galvanised to mobilise supporters in their organisations and utilise the skills learned to full effect.



**Figure 16:** Workshop at the Summer Academy 2015 in Ukraine (August 2015)

#### **SD9**

The network of young social democrats in the Western Balkans, known as SD9, successfully relaunched towards the end of the year. The network held a conference on the topic of migration in March, bringing together participants across 6 countries of the region. The participants resolved to work together on the issue to improve the quality of narrative of refugees in social media, and put greater pressure on political leadership in their countries to demand greater solidarity from heads of European governments.



**Figure 17:** SD9 study visit to Šentilj refugee centre, Slovenia (March 2016)

The SD9 coordinators have held regular discussions, including on closer cooperation with the wider movement including the Young European

Socialists. These will continue in the coming months.



**Figure 18:** Participants at SD9 conference on migration (March 2016)



## Annex 1: Full list of regional projects supported in 2015-16

Region	Network	Project Title
Africa	WAFA	Training the Trainers
Africa	WAFA	National Workshops
Africa	Youth Academy for Africa	Youth Academy for Africa
Eastern Europe	Various	Summer Academy
Europe	SD9 Network	Strengthening the Social Democratic Left
Europe	Various	LGBTI Rights in the Western Balkans
Europe	Various	Strengthening progressive representation and policy-making in the Western Balkans
MENA	Tha'era	Empowering Arab Women
MENA	Future Leaders Network	Strengthening the Social Democratic Left
Worldwide	Various	Local Government Study Visits
Worldwide	Various	Women's Political Day
Worldwide	Various	Annual Conference Best Practice Programme
Worldwide	Various	Fact Finding Visits
Worldwide	Various	Elections Best Practice Study Visits
Worldwide	Various	Social Democratic Women's Mentoring Platform

## Annex 2: List of acronyms

DPM	Democratic Party of Moldova
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
MENA	Middle East and North Africa region
PES	Party of European Socialists
SDSM	Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
SDU	Social Democratic Union, Serbia
SD9	Social Democratic 9 (regional network)
WAFA	Women's Academy for Africa

## Annex 3: List of figures

Figure 1: Cover images (left to right from top) – New Social Democratic Platform (February 2016); LGBTI Rights Conference in South Eastern Europe (October 2015); Eastern Europe Summer Academy (August 2015); Participant at Women’s Mentoring Platform: South Eastern Region (October 2015); Women’s Mentoring Platform: South Eastern Region (October 2015); Women’s Academy for Africa (WAFA) National Workshop (January 2016) .....	2
Figure 2: Participants at the Eastern Europe Summer Academy (August 2015).....	3
Figure 3: Young activists in Niš, Serbia.....	5
Figure 4: Women’s Mentoring Platform – MENA Regional Conference (June 2015).....	7
Figure 5: Conference in the Western Balkans to implement new consultative policy-making process (February 2016) .....	8
Figure 6: WAFA Executive members at evaluation meeting in Ghana (Sep 2015).....	8
Figure 7: Protecting and Strengthening LGBTI Rights in South East Europe Conference (November 2015).....	9
Figure 8: Participants at party development workshop, Montenegro (March 2016).....	11
Figure 9: Public policy-making training in Bosnia and Herzegovina.....	12
Figure 10: Young activists from the New Social Democratic Platform mobilising for the decent work campaign.....	12
Figure 11: Participants at a workshop for local candidates and organisers (March 2016).....	13
Figure 12: Participants at a WAFA national workshop (February 2016).....	14
Figure 13: Tha’era members holding an evaluation meeting to discuss next steps (June 2015).....	14
Figure 14: Mentoring pairs at the women’s platform meeting in Slovenia (October 2015).....	15
Figure 15: Interview practice at the Future Leaders training in the MENA region (October 2015).....	16
Figure 16: Workshop at the Summer Academy 2015 in Ukraine (August 2015).....	16
Figure 17: SD9 study visit to Šentilj refugee centre, Slovenia (March 2016).....	17
Figure 18: Participants at SD9 conference on migration (March 2016).....	17

