Preparations that went into getting women into Parlilt

By MEREDITH TUTUMANG

THE road towards getting women in Parliament was not easy.

In early 2011, Soroptimist International Lae (SIL) was nominated as the MAMOSE Regional Coordinating Agency for Women Candidate Training Strategy (WCTS) by women in leadership at a meeting conducted by the Office of the Development of Women, Department of Community Development and Centre for Democratic Institute, Australian National University-Canberra.

At this workshop ODW and CDI explained the importance of the WCTS and on how best to select potential women candidates across the country that were going into National Elections in mid year 2012 to attend these trainings.

Discussions were conducted also on the need for selecting Regional Trainer of Trainers for the Women Candidate Training Strategy to assist the core CDI facilitating team roll out trainings in the region.

Women leaders were excited and already started planning key activities and budgets on how to mobilise their potential women candidates as per the regions of the country.

SIL accepted the role of being the MAMOSE Regional Coordinating Agency based on the objectives of the organisation and as an organisation involved in empowering young girls and women. Taking up the challenge was an easy task.

As the Regional Coordinating Agency SIL nominated Nellie McIay as the coordinator to mobilise all potential women candidates being MAMOSE, Ms McIay then facilitated the selection of an elite committee who nominated four Trainer of Trainers for the Women Candidate Training Strategy who had community development background from the MAMOSE Region.

On August 15-18, 2011, four trainers as per the regions of the country attended the Women Candidate Training Strategy.

To increase representation of women in parliament was the huge networking efforts that were put into advocating for the 22 Women Electorates and hoped former MPs supported the call.

These statements were a challenge to trainer of trainers to ensure they trained potential women to develop winning strategies to win in the National Elections 2012.

In this training very highly qualified and experienced CDI team facilitated the trainings.

- Dr Norm Kelly, an Associate with CDI, a member of the Democratic Audit of Australia who presented a two-week CDI’s Political Party Development Course for senior party administrators, held annually in Canberra.
- Dr Ormura Sepo, formerly senior lecturer at UPNG on social science research, she worked on issues of politics, governance, elections, gender and development.
- Linda Reynolds CSC with 40 years campaign experience she was President of NSW Legislative Council from 1999-2007, the longest serving woman presiding officer in Australia. Grant Harrison, who worked as a policy analyst and advisor for more than 20 years, specialising in systems of governance and accountability.

The final member of the team was Luke Hamby who had a background in Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development. This team in their wealth of experience facilitated a truly very informative candidate winning training strategy for trainer of trainers.

When the MAMOSE Regional trainer of trainers returned, they conducted a planning workshop in Madang.

Upon their return to their respective provinces, the coordinator Ms McIay sent out application forms to all potential candidates across the region and worked tirelessly to ensure all potential women candidates applied for the WCTS training.

In total for MAMOSE Region, about 20 women candidates and their 30 campaign managers were selected and participated in these trainings.

As a result, in Morobe Province alone six women candidates with their managers who participated in the trainings contested in the National Election with one candidate winning for Lae Open, now MP Loujaya Toni. Contestant for Markham Open Jennifer Bating also did extremely well. For Madang Province, Mary Kamang was also outstanding — some positive results of the WCTS winning strategies.

Challenges for SIL included lack of funds for the organisation to carry out its task as the MAMOSE Regional Coordinating Agency.

However, the organisation was 100 percent committed to help in the facilitation of ensuring MAMOSE region had one or more women win in the 2012 National Election. Soroptimist International Lae had to work hard with the support from its members to finance the regional coordination process as SIL truly believed in empowering women candidates and their campaign managers across the region.

In conclusion, we are all filled in applications to work hard with the support from our partners and networks to increase the number of women in Parliament.

Country is vital if we are to have healthy families and harmonious communities.

From one woman in Parliament in 2007 to three women in Parliament in 2012 is a positive improvement and an indicator that our brothers, husbands, families and friends and advocates are increasing.

Trying to attract male advocates for women and girls in this country is a hard task. But we have to keep trying and value our international partners, those leaders, men and boys that support our cause everyday.

To our current three women MPs, you are our hope for growth and improvement in the lives of women and girls in PNG. We appeal for wise and diplomatic voice when it comes to women and girls’ issues. “We all had that one (combined) voice before mid 2012” please, let us hear that voice again, the voice for the growth of women and girls in PNG.

International and national networks have invested great resources (finance/experience) to see the status of women and girls improve at all levels and we...
potential women candidates across the country that were going into National Elections in mid year 2012 to attend these trainings.

Discussions were conducted also on the need for selecting Regional Trainer of Trainers for the Women Candidate Training Strategy to assist the core CDI facilitating team roll out trainings in the region.

Women leaders were excited and already started planning key activities and budgets on how to mobilise their potential women candidates as per the region’s needs.

SIL accepted the role of being the MAMOSE Regional Coordinating Agency based on the objectives of the organisation to empower women and mobilise all potential women candidates in MAMOSE. Ms McLay then facilitated the selection of an expert committee who nominated four Trainers of Trainers for the Women Candidate Training Strategy who had community development background from the MAMOSE Region.

On 15 August 2011, four trainers per the region attended the Women Candidate Training Strategy Training of Trainers Workshop in NCD. One of the highlights in this workshop was the opening speech by the former MP Dame Carol Kidu who expressed that there were 0.00 percent women representation in Parliament and that when she left there would be 50.00 percent representation of women “a no equal ground for women and girls, a total contrast to the country’s constitution”. She also expressed that one strategy to increase representation of women in parliament was the huge networking efforts that were put into advocating for the 22 Women Electorates and hoped former MPs supported the call.

These statements were a challenge to trainee trainers to ensure they trained potential women to develop winning strategies to win in the National Elections 2012.

In this training very highly qualified and experienced CDI team facilitated the trainings. They were:
- Dr Norm Kelly, an Associate with CDI, a member of the Democratic Audit of Australia who presented a two-week CDI’s Political Party Development Course, for senior party administrators, held annually in Canberra.
- Ms Sepe, formerly senior lecturer at UPNG on social science research, she worked on issues of politics, governance, elections, gender and development.
- Linda Reynolds CSC with over 20 years campaign experience, developed and delivered a campaign and communication training for candidates and campaign managers, 15 years of those for the Liberal Party of Australia Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann who was involved in the early women’s movement and worked as an academic for over 20 years.

Elected to Parliament in 1991 she was President of NSW Legislative Council from 1999-2007, the longest serving woman presiding officer in Australia. Grant Harrison, who worked as a policy analyst and advisor for more than 20 years, specialising in systems of governance and accountability.

The final member of the team was Luke Hambly who had a background in Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development. This team in their wealth of experience facilitated a truly very informative candidate winning training strategy for trainer of trainers.

When the MAMOSE Regional trainer of trainers returned, they conducted a planning workshop in Madang.

On return from their respective provinces, the coordinator Ms McLay sent out application forms to all potential candidates across the region and worked tirelessly to ensure all potential women candidates applied for the WCTS training.

As soon as all filled-in applications were received, the elite committee working with SIL sent all applications to ODW where they were checked and selections of persons to be trained were selected to attend the Regional Candidate training in Madang on March 5-9, 2012.

Other selected candidates attended a similar training in NCD three to four months before the National Election 2012 took place.