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Making a Difference

Citizen's and their organisations and networks contributing to change
OWA PPA 2008-9: Case study 35

Title of Case Study:	**Building Citizenship and Democratic Governance with women in Central America: Monitoring the Presidential Primary Elections** **Centro de Estudios de la Mujer - Honduras (CEM-H)**

1. PPA partner name	**One World Action**
2. Countries highlighted in case study	**Honduras**

Building Citizenship and Democratic Governance with women in Central America: Monitoring the Presidential Primary Elections
Centro de Estudios de la Mujer - Honduras (CEM-H)

The Centre for Women's Study in Honduras (CEM-H) carried out a monitoring of the presidential primary elections in November 2008 in the cities of Tegucigalpa and Comayaguela. The exercise was part of the "Building Citizenship and Democratic Governance with women in Central America"

Programme, supported by One World Action through a Programme Partnership Agreement with DFID.

The objective of the project was to observe the primary elections in Honduras from a feminist perspective, studying voters' perceptions and behaviours through interviewing women and men on the day of the elections, after they have expressed their vote.

The Honduran electoral process for primary elections only involves the participation of the two major parties, namely the Liberal and National (also liberal).

The main findings from the interviews were:

- 283 people were interviewed outside the voting stations, 175 of whom were women, representing 68% of the total interviewees, and 108 men, representing 38%.
- The average age of the voters was 43 years old for women, and 41 years old for men.
- 80% of the women said they have voted for general and internal elections in the past; the figure for men was 76%.
- 83% of the women who voted, expressed confidence in the electoral system, whereas 17% said they did not have any.
- 78% of the women said they gave their vote based on the candidate, not the party she/he belongs to; the figure was 71% for men voters.
- 69% of the women admitted they were influenced in their vote by a woman candidate, whereas men influenced by a woman candidate were 62%.
- 90% of women voters voted for a woman candidate, 89% of men did.
- The elections most women confirmed they have voted in were those to elect deputies at the National Congress (61% women, 60% men).
- 60% of the women voters said they gave their vote to a woman based on her political programme; the percentage for men was 59%.

Facts and Stats

- Honduras is a lower middle-income country in Central America. The population in 2008 is estimated at 7.5 million and per capita income stands at US$ 1,700.
- Honduras has one of the highest incidences of poverty and inequality in the western hemisphere. 59% of Hondurans remain below the poverty line and 36.2% below the extreme poverty line.
- Military rule, corruption, a huge wealth gap, crime and natural disasters have made Honduras one of the least developed and least secure countries in Central America.
- The country has a young population; 50% of Hondurans are under the age of 19. But endemic poverty, chronic unemployment t and the prospects offered by drug trafficking have contributed to a high levels of violent crime conducted mainly by youth gangs known as "maras".
- Honduras was devastated by Hurricane Mitch in 1998. At least 5,000 people were killed and 70% of the country's crops were destroyed. The damage was estimated at $3bn, setting development back by decades.
- Thousands of Hondurans leave the country each year, most of them for the US.
- Increased public spending on health and education has shown significant results over the past decade: vaccination programs reached virtually the entire population; maternal mortality fell from 182 per 100,000 live births to 108 per 100,000, a 38 percent reduction; chronic malnutrition in children aged 1-5 fell from 33% in 2001 to less than 24.7% in 2006; and primary school attendance rose from 85% in 2002 to 89.4% in 2005.