

Peru Program Summary

For the past two decades, The International Republican Institute (IRI) has worked to foster more representative and transparent and policy-focused practices by political parties and a more informed and active citizenry. IRI's partners in this effort include parties from across the political spectrum and from the national to the local level. This approach helps ensure an inclusive and sustainable party development process.

Peru is a diverse, multiethnic country encompassing a variety of semi-autonomous regional governments within a federal model of government. While national political parties have deep roots in Peruvian history, the recent growth of regional movements evidenced the backlash against these traditional parties' inability to act on constituent concerns at the local level. To help address this, in December 2007 the Institute launched a program entitled *Todos Hacemos Política* (We All Make Politics), which focuses on strengthening the capacities of all Peruvian political parties. Under this multifaceted program, IRI helps to educate parties on complying with Peru's political party law and to encourage parties to open their representative and decision-making functions to all Peruvians. By helping parties find the value in more effective outreach, IRI believes more inclusive parties will be developed. Stronger channels of communication between leaders and their constituents will serve as the base for party platforms that incorporate regional interests--and ultimately a legislative agenda that does the same.

Political Party Law Reform

Peru's 2003 Political Party Law was a significant step toward improving the representative structure of political parties in Peru. The legislation governs the formation and registration of political parties as well as the internal democracy and financing of parties. To further the positive impact of these changes, IRI works with the National Electoral Jury, the National Office of Electoral Processes and local partners to help members of congress, party officials and their constituents understand the details of the law. To incorporate the regions' voices in the discussion, IRI hosted members of the congressional committee responsible for drafting the law in a series of town hall meetings across Peru. These events have offered constituents and leaders of regional movements the chance to voice their concerns while gaining an understanding of the challenges political parties face. Members of congress interested in strengthening the current law also gain valuable input from their constituents.

Strengthening Political Parties

Since beginning *Todos Hacemos Política* IRI has signed cooperative agreements with nearly every political party represented in Peru's Congress. Under these agreements, IRI works to improve the capacities of members, help bring party leadership to the regions and encourage political party officials to actively engage their constituents. For example, a key component of many of the political party work plans is outreach to marginalized groups such as youth, women and ethnic minorities. Under this rubric, the political party *Perú Posible* (Possible Peru) has implemented an online training program emphasizing political communication strategies for involving women and youth. In this way, *Perú Posible* has taken advantage of its collaboration with IRI to advance equal representation within their party in a way that is sustainable and replicable. Similarly, *Restauración Nacional's* (National Restoration) work plan emphasizes the inclusion of youth and women in political party organization. However, *Restauración Nacional* took the initiative a step further to include trainings concerning capacity building and improving the political party management and communication with constituents. These are just two of the many different approaches parties take to become more representative and responsive with IRI's help.

Party Outreach and Representation

Traditionally, outreach to the regions by party leaders and Members of Congress has been inconsistent and ineffective. When political parties lack the internal structure to identify and respond to the needs of constituents, this task falls directly on elected officials. To meet this demand, IRI initiated a Pilot District Office program. Through the program, IRI is working with members of congress from Piura, Arequipa, Cajamarca and Loreto, each from a different political party. With the assistance of local partners, each office has developed a constituent outreach strategy and trained local staff. Together, these pilot programs serve to demonstrate the value of effective outreach to both representatives and other party officials.

One early example of this programs' success is with Congressman Juan Carlos Eguren from Arequipa. The Congressman is the first member to have a website that operates in Quechua, a prevalent indigenous language, as well as Spanish. His staff has an open-door policy for constituents and operates a toll free hotline to address the public's concerns. This strengthened level of communication with constituents represents the types of advances that IRI intends to promote throughout the country.

