

Timor-Leste Program Summary

The International Republican Institute (IRI) was the first nongovernmental organization to work directly with political parties in Timor-Leste, and the only organization to do so continuously since 2000. IRI's programming in Timor-Leste has focused on strengthening political parties, initially helping prepare them for the 2001 constituent assembly and the 2002 presidential elections. IRI has also worked with political parties on institutional and organizational party strengthening and leadership. IRI's current initiative focuses on fostering meaningful and responsive representation through comprehensive participation in the election process by helping political parties generate and communicate issue-based party platforms that respond to pressing citizen concerns.

Political Party Strengthening

Through developing long-term relationships with the parties, IRI has become a trusted resource for political party assistance across the country. IRI provides training and support to political parties at the district and national levels. Trainings focus on strengthening the grassroots structures and internal communications capacity of political parties in addition to developing the leadership skills of party officials. IRI also provides training on enhancing constituent outreach. In December 2010, IRI conducted a round of political party trainings in Timor-Leste, encouraging political parties to take advantage of the increased political activity and awareness surrounding the 2012 presidential and parliamentary elections to build and strengthen their party. As these pivotal elections approach, IRI will work with these entities to become more effective, transparent and responsive political parties dedicated to engaging peacefully and fairly in the new electoral framework.

Youth Participation in the Political Process

IRI views enhancing youth participation in the political process as a necessary measure toward advancing Timor's political development. In January 2011, IRI trained 30 provincial youth activists focusing on leadership, conflict resolution, and community activism. IRI also conducted a series of leadership trainings for numerous youth leaders from many of Timor-Leste's political parties. These trainings focused on messaging, organization, recruitment and get-out-the-vote activities.