

Turkey Program Summary

The International Republican Institute (IRI) focuses on strengthening local political party competition and also encouraging youth political participation at the party level.

Political Party Strengthening

IRI's political party strengthening program is focused on the needs of political parties at the local or sub-national level – to energize the grassroots party organization, to expand public outreach and to increase political competitiveness. IRI trainings concentrate on strengthening parties' responsiveness to Turks' priorities. By offering training sessions throughout Anatolia, IRI includes participants who would otherwise have little access to training opportunities.

Participants – including campaign staff, party officials and candidates – are trained in the basics of political campaigns, including demographic research and vote goals, voter targeting, research, political communication, voter contact and recruiting and retaining volunteers. Using data from IRI's public opinion polls and focus groups, trainings also concentrate on strengthening participants' ability to identify and address the needs of Turkish citizens.

Public Opinion Research

Survey research and issue-based programs and policies are an integral tool of IRI's Turkey program. As such, IRI conducts a series of public opinion polls and focus groups in Turkey on a wide range of local, national, and international issues. Polling data is essential in demonstrating to government and party officials at both the national and local level the importance of incorporating sound public opinion research into public policy development. Over the past four years IRI has used polling data to help Turkey's major political parties develop their platforms and provide them a better sense of their campaigns' effectiveness.

Youth Participation

Another component of IRI's Turkey program is geared toward political participation by young people at the party level. IRI's interaction with party youth branches in Anatolia has revealed an eagerness for greater political involvement but also frustration with their access to the party leadership. IRI works to bridge the gap between parties and their respective youth branches. IRI also provides party branches assistance in developing their youth wings and youth recruitment strategies.