

Cross-Cultural Exposure: An Interview with Polly McKinney -Transcript

TEXT: In September 2008, 9 American women traveled to Kenya to develop empowerment networks with Maasai women.

TEXT: The State Department's Office of Citizen Exchanges sponsored the program.

TEXT: Polly McKinney, the former Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Georgia, was one of the participants.

TEXT: Like her counterparts, she was moved by her exchange experience.

POLLY MCKINNEY: I think the most important thing about this exchange is the exposure for both sides. I think that what I learned from the Kenyan women is the true power of grassroots work and the true power of women's rights and why it's important to keep fighting for that across the globe. In my generation, we've been so accustomed to having things available to us that to go to a country where there are so many smart, brilliant women that don't have the luxury of freedom and the luxury of economic independence. Then to come back and apply to my life has helped me see my world in a whole different way. And then to have the Maasai women come here has been equally rewarding because I feel like the exposure that they give to me, feeds me, and the exposure I give to them, feeds them and gives them new tools, new ideas on how to structure their lives in terms of their perspective on getting elected in government, their perspective on being independent, and remembering that it's still a man's world and they need to listen to the other side if they get anywhere. I think those tools and that information is huge in the exposure in the fact that there are so many things that are universal with women across the world, that we don't know are universal and we get to share with each other, is of vast importance, in the work I do and in my life and in the work that they're going to do and in their lives.

TEXT: exchanges.state.gov/citizens/prof

#