

# **Honduran Electoral Census Audit 2012**



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**National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)**

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# Table of Contents

<b>Prologue</b> . . . . .	<b>5</b>
<b>Presentation</b> . . . . .	<b>9</b>
<b>Introduction</b> . . . . .	<b>11</b>
<b>01. Objectives</b> . . . . .	<b>13</b>
<b>02. Methodology</b> . . . . .	<b>15</b>
• The first way . . . . .	<b>15</b>
• The second way. . . . .	<b>16</b>
<b>03. Results of first way interviews</b> . . . . .	<b>19</b>
<b>04. Results of the second way interviews.</b> . . . . .	<b>23</b>
<b>05. Computerized Statistical Analysis</b> . . . . .	<b>29</b>
• Statistical Analysis. . . . .	<b>29</b>
<b>06. Conclusions and recommendations</b> . . . . .	<b>31</b>
<b>Annexes</b> . . . . .	<b>39</b>
• Annex 1. Sample Structure . . . . .	<b>40</b>
• Annex 2. First Way Form . . . . .	<b>42</b>
• Annex 3. Second Way Form. . . . .	<b>45</b>



# Prologue

## **The electoral census diagnosis: a need to strengthen elections and democracy in Honduras**

### **The National Democratic Institute in Honduras**

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is a nongovernmental, nonprofit, and nonpartisan organization, seeking to respond to the aspirations of people living in democratic societies that recognize and promote human rights. Since 1984, NDI and its local partners have worked to strengthen democratic institutions and practices by supporting the strengthening of political parties, civic organizations and legislatures, promoting free and credible elections, and supporting citizen participation, transparency and accountability of governments. With staff and volunteers in over one hundred countries, NDI brings together individuals and groups to share ideas, knowledge, experiences and skills that strengthen democracy. NDI believes that there is no single model of democratic functioning, but rather fundamental principles shared by all democracies.

In April 2011, NDI opened headquarters in Tegucigalpa, expanding its global presence to nearly seventy countries. The guiding principles of NDI's work in Honduras are to create a space for open and pluralistic dialogue among political actors, which had deteriorated after the 2009 political crisis, in order to foster conditions for wider and better political and electoral participation, strengthen youth leadership and social policy, support the ability of parties to include historically neglected sectors and strengthen their internal training mechanisms, promote a participatory approach to meet the challenges of public safety, and contribute to the vigorous presence of civil society in supporting and monitoring electoral processes.

## The rationale for the electoral census diagnosis

Confidence in the electoral process depends on a number of factors, which are not limited to peacefully run elections, and scrupulously counting votes cast by citizens. Among the key components that ensure an ideal election is the quality of the electoral census, considered “the cornerstone on which the whole electoral structure rests”<sup>1</sup>. In an ideal scenario, an electoral census would include all citizens of voting age who are authorized to do so, with up-to-date home addresses, and exclude those who should not be included on the lists, especially the deceased. That perfect standard does not exist, even in the oldest and most established democracies: there are always imperfections, either because some who should be enrolled are not or because those who should not still remain in the census.

The lack of that perfect census does not imply that all electoral censuses are good: censuses differ in quality. Some are mediocre, some good, and all censuses can be perfected. To improve an electoral census requires, first, an accurate diagnosis of its strengths and weaknesses. That is the purpose of this research, made possible by the generous and timely disbursement of funds by the United States Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. This research also benefited from the willingness of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) of Honduras to provide all databases on the electoral census, allowing for easy implementation of the different phases of this diagnostic with the Two-Way Methodology.

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<sup>1</sup> Carlos Urruty, “The electoral Census” in Dieter Nohlen et al, *Treatises of comparative electoral law in Latin America*. México: Fund for Economic Culture, 2007, p. 463.

This work has again brought together NDI and the Let's Do Democracy Consortium (Hagamos Democracia, or HD), following joint efforts for the successful observation of national elections in 2009<sup>2</sup> and developing a research study on Hondurans' attitudes and feelings toward democracy in 2011<sup>3</sup>. The research laid the technical groundwork and confirmed HD's solid credentials as observers going into the electoral processes of 2012 - 2013. This is the first research study of this nature that takes place in Honduras, hence its importance and its value: it certainly helps to put numbers to a field in which speculation and rumors were and have been the dominant trend.

The conceptual issues and research were carried out by international experts: Neil Nevitte, political science professor at the University of Toronto - Canada, José Cruz, Guatemalan specialist in electoral census, and the statistical contribution of Michelle Brown, senior political and electoral program manager of NDI. The fieldwork was possible thanks to the significant and arduous work of hundreds of volunteers from the Hagamos Democracia network who covered rural areas and cities between May and June 2012.

The results, as the authors of this research indicate, are satisfactory for Honduras, showing strengths in comparison to electoral exercises undertaken in neighboring countries (Guatemala 2003, Nicaragua 2006)<sup>4</sup>. The results also show weaknesses; hence, this report includes recommendations and suggestions for addressing and improving the quality of electoral lists. The experience of nations where similar research is conducted demonstrates that

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- 2 National Democratic Institute – Hagamos Democracia, Democracy in Honduras: values and political participation in 2011. Tegucigalpa: NDI – HD, 2011. [www.ndi.org/files/Democracia-en-Honduras-2011.pdf](http://www.ndi.org/files/Democracia-en-Honduras-2011.pdf)
  - 3 National Democratic Institute, 2009 General Elections of Honduras: final report. Washington: NDI, 2010. [www.ndi.org/node/16060](http://www.ndi.org/node/16060)
  - 4 Cf. <http://ndi.org/node/19001> ; <http://www.ndi.org/node/13661> ; José Cruz, Diagnosis of electoral census 2007. Guatemala: Mirador electoral – FLACSO, 2008.

dependable census lists may be obtained through sustained, progressive measures. In fact, the improvement of census lists is a continuous process, whose results can be seen in the medium and long term, but action needs to be taken quickly, once the problems are detected and quantified.

This report is delivered to civil society, political actors and the authorities, as further evidence of NDI's commitment to strengthening democracy in Honduras. The text offers a portrait of the electoral census and indicates ways to support it. It is now up to state institutions, non-governmental organizations, the media, political parties and the public at large, eventually with international support, to take the lead and manage, with mutually agreed-upon measures, the mechanisms by which a more accurate census may be achieved, thereby laying a firm foundation for more participatory and accurate electoral processes and thus, a broader basis for democracy.

Tegucigalpa, August 2012

***Salvador Romero Ballivián***

*NDI Honduras Resident Director*

# Presentation

**T**he Hagamos Democracia Consortium (HD) is a civil society platform comprised of four Honduran networks: Evangelical Fellowship of Honduras (CEH), Federation of NGOs for Development of Honduras (FOPRIDEH), Metropolitan University of Honduras (UMH) and Caritas Social Pastoral of Honduras, which have presence in the eighteen departments in the country and have made substantial efforts in the field of social development, environmental protection, education, decentralization, citizen oversight and electoral political action.

The Hagamos Democracia Consortium (HD), in collaboration and with support from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), played an important role in the last election; the implementation of a quick count and election observation helped maintain faith in the electoral system, one of the pillars of representative democracy. This activity allowed thousands of Hondurans from different social and economic strata to be part of the volunteer corps of citizens contributing to the transparency of the electoral processes, and the legal and absolute respect for the wishes of the citizens.

The evaluation of the previous electoral process permitted the detection of weaknesses in the electoral census, not only by easily-observed irregularities but also by the excessive politicization of this government entity. The Consortium aims to increase the degree of reliability of the electoral census as a tool to further consolidate the democratic process. Therefore, it is urgent that the national voting census be analyzed, to point out its weaknesses and institute the necessary corrections.

Today, confident that we are contributing to the strengthening of state institutions and democracy, we deliver this report to the honorable Supreme Electoral Tribunal on the national voter census diagnosis. This will undoubtedly be of great use in legitimizing the electoral process.

Tegucigalpa MDC, August 2012.

*Hagamos Democracia Consortium*

# Introduction

The Hagamos Democracia Consortium presents the results of the Honduran electorate national voting census diagnosis to State institutions, the public, media and external cooperation agencies. This study was conducted between May and July 2012, four months before the primary election in Honduras to be held on November 18, 2012 and a year before the general elections scheduled for November 2013. Due to legal restrictions governing the time for making changes to the electoral census, the impact of this report and its findings before the primary election may be limited<sup>5</sup>. However, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) has a particular interest in updating the electoral census before the general election in November 2013, in order to reduce the likelihood of accusations of electoral fraud or manipulation and to ensure the transparency of the process.

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5 Republic of Honduras, “Electoral and Political Organizations Law and its Reforms” Articles 49, 50, 52, 54.



# 01. Objectives

**S**ince the right to vote is universal and essential to ensuring the exercise of electoral democracy, the electoral census is a basic and essential document for the effective functioning of a democracy. However, to exercise this right, citizens must have confidence that the electoral census accurately reflects the country's registered voting population.

This study was conducted with the goal of improving the quality of the electoral census, in hopes of providing a wide margin of confidence in the census by ensuring it accurately reflects the current voting population of the country.

It is important to establish, from the beginning, two basic premises:

**First, no voter census is perfect.** Allegations of electoral fraud most often focus on flaws in the voter rolls, calling them incomplete, manipulated and plagued with errors. We can say unequivocally that no country in the world has an electoral roll that is 100 percent accurate. Populations are dynamic; every day people move to different locations, reach voting age, or die. It is impossible for a census to reflect these changes immediately, but it is also worth stating that too many inconsistencies undermine the credibility of the elections and cast a shadow over any candidate's victory.

Second, all auditing processes have limits. This is why we forcefully affirm that this project is intended only to support the electoral process, promoting transparency and efficiency. From its results will emerge concrete recommendations and suggestions for improving the electoral census.

To achieve these goals, Hagamos Democracia worked with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and assessment experts Dr. Neil Nevitte and José Cruz, using a two-pronged approach that enables a highly accurate listing of the Honduran population in the electoral census<sup>6</sup>.

Assessments carried out recently in other countries in the region using the same methodology allow comparative examples within the Central American context. This method provides a set of useful points of reference for the interpretation of the results. In addition, an expert from NDI conducted a computerized statistical analysis of the structural components of voter registration to assess its strengths and weaknesses, entering current voter data found in the registry.

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<sup>6</sup> The methodology of two-way voter registry audits is described in detail in Richard L. Klein and Patrick Merloe, *Building Confidence in the Voter Registration Process – An NDI Monitoring Guide for Political Parties and Civic Organizations* National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), 2001. Available online at: <http://www.ndi.org/node/12886>

# 02. Methodology

**T**he methodology used in this research is known as the two-way audit:

## ► The first way

Hagamos Democracia, with the assistance of NDI, selected people to be interviewed in first instance.

**Stage 1:** Select a random sample of ten percent of all municipalities in the country, including the two major cities, Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. 32 of the 298 municipalities were chosen. (See Annex 1)

**Stage 2:** 494 individuals were chosen from the electoral census of the same 32 municipalities.

**Stage 3:** The interview teams trained by HD were tasked with locating and interviewing these 494 people.

Unlike voter registration in other countries in the region, the electoral census of Honduras is the only one that does not include home addresses of registered citizens<sup>7</sup>. This fundamental difference presents a host of challenges for researchers because citizens are more difficult to locate.

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**7** This is due to legal reasons. The National Registry of Persons (RNP) has people's addresses on the registry, but these addresses are not public information.

However, the electoral census in Honduras has three sources of information on each citizen: the name of the city, the town where he/she lives, and the electoral address, which is the polling place where people can vote. The HD team of interviewers used this information in order to contact and interview 296 of the 494 cases originally selected.

Once people were located, they were interviewed to accurately compare the information in the register and that obtained during the interviews. If a randomly selected citizen is located in the place indicated by voter registration roster, and his/her information exactly matches the one on the electoral roll, the listing is recorded as accurate. One of the first findings relates to the number of names on the register that do not correspond to a real citizen.

The interview form used for this methodology is included in Annex 2.

### ► **The second way**

In theory, all Honduran citizens over the age of 18 are registered on the electoral census, but nothing guarantees that they are actually enrolled. To corroborate this premise, the HD team randomly selected and interviewed eligible Hondurans “on the street” to determine if those people are registered in the electoral register and verify general data: names, dates of birth, electoral addresses and identity card number. This second way examined, in the same municipalities selected for the first way, the accuracy of the voter registration. It also indicates what percentage of eligible citizens are not registered on the electoral roll, and therefore can not vote, and seeks to determine the specific reasons which are not on the register. The interview form used for this methodology is included in Annex 3.

In order to conduct this investigation, Hagamos Democracia deployed, between May 28 and July 5, 2012, 52 survey teams, each consisting of a man and a woman. The interviewers were recruited locally. Male interviewers spoke only to male respondents and female interviewers interviewed only women so as to minimize the influence of gender and region.



## 03. Results of first way interviews

**T**he results of the analysis of the interviews in the first way, aimed at determining the accuracy of the census, are summarized in Table 1, along with the results of similar studies using the same methodology in Nicaragua in 2006 and Guatemala in 2003.

A first observation that arises from the statistical analysis shows that a relatively high percentage of the census data are correct (63.9%), but in order to have a reliable voter registry that will more accurately reflect the number and percentage of actual voters, the need to overcome difficulties in registration is urgent.

The percentage of accurate cases reflects consistency between the registry and the information provided by the interviewee. This percentage is higher in Honduras than in other Central American country where similar studies have been conducted, namely Guatemala and Nicaragua. The Honduran census data was correct in 63.9 percent of cases, compared with 50.6 percent in Nicaragua and 54.9 percent in Guatemala<sup>8</sup>.

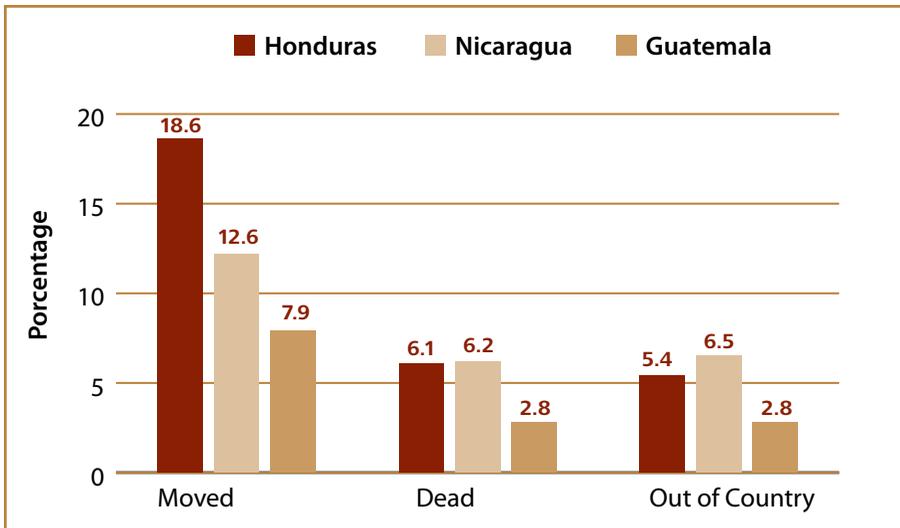
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**8** The complete results for the Guatemala (2003) and Nicaragua (2006) projects can be found at <http://www.ndi.org/node/19001> and <http://www.ndi.org/node/13661>, respectively.

**Table 1:** First way, basic results of the census

	Honduras 2012	Nicaragua 2006	Guatemala 2003
Accurate Data	63.9%	50.6%	54.9%
Inaccurate Data	36.1%	49.4%	45.1%
Sample Size	496	500	492

Honduras shows good results in comparison to the rest of the region. However, the results also show that somewhat more than a third of the data (36.1 percent) in the Honduran registry records is inaccurate. Given the complexity of the next election, there is just over a year to increase the credibility of the electoral census.

**Figure 1:** Distribution of “inaccurate” data

In Figure 1, contrary to the suspicions that this kind of data always elicits, we present some of the causes that yield incorrect data on the electoral census: 18% due to change of residence, 6.1% having died, and 5% for being out the country. This fact has profound implications for explaining voter abstention due to migration. Comparing this table with the other countries where similar studies have been conducted demonstrated that the figures are higher in Honduras. In Honduras, one of the reasons for the inaccuracies in the census is because the person “had moved” (18.6%). This percentage is significantly higher than those found in Nicaragua (12.6%) or Guatemala (7.9%). The 5.4% of Hondurans registered who were “outside the country” is similar to the results of Nicaragua (6.5%) but higher than in Guatemala (2.8%).

One item worth noting is the 6.1 percent of cases of dead people whose names still appear on the electoral census. This result is similar to the percentage of dead voters appearing on the rolls in Nicaragua (6.2%)<sup>9</sup> although both are significantly higher than the percentage of deceased people in the Guatemalan census of (2.8%). This discrepancy is associated with the limitations of the sources that feed information to the National Registry of Persons (RNP).

An evaluation was conducted in order to determine whether some exclusionary trends in the registry are systematic, and whether those limitations present a significant barrier to groups of citizens who want to vote.

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<sup>9</sup> These results allowed the Electoral Commission in Nicaragua to examine the problem and present reforms. The Nicaraguan reforms produced significant improvements in this area.

On this subject the study shows the following information: when asked whether their identity numbers correspond to the number recorded on the census, 89.5 percent of the voters said their identification numbers are accurate, demonstrating that the lack of identification or misidentification is not a problem in Honduras.

In another question on whether people knew their voting site, only 83.4% of respondents knew where to vote. Regarding participation in the upcoming elections, the data shows that about 10 percent said they did not intend to vote in the next general election in 2013. Of that 10 percent, almost no one said the reason was the lack of documentation. Most (59.6%, equivalent to 6% of the general population of voting age), said they would not vote because they were “not interested.” Approximately another 10 percent did not plan to vote out of concern for their “personal security”, and some complained about the distance from the polling place.

From the information gathered in this study we can conclude that the lack of adequate documentation is not the main obstacle to political participation in Honduras. General apathy is the largest barrier to voting<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> The percentage of voters participating in the 2009 presidential elections was 49.8, a low rate by international standards.

## 04. Results of the second way interviews

**T**he methodology of the second way provides a systematic way to calculate the percentage of citizens who are eligible to vote but do not appear on the electoral census. The basic strategy to generate data for the analysis of the second way is clear and concise:

- ▶ The locations at which interviews were conducted in the first way were generated by a random sample, so that the interviews for the second way could produce equally reliable and comparable information using the same strategy. Consequently, the second interviews focus on the same municipalities using the same methodology for the first way.
- ▶ The locations for the interviews conducted in the second way were determined using standard procedures of “random walk”. The starting points for random walks for interviews were tied to the locations of the respondents from the first way so the interview data from both methods were directly comparable. They are based on the same random samples.
- ▶ As with the first way, interviewers followed the same precautions to minimize regional and gender discrimination.

The application of this second instrument allowed for comparison of responses with data from on the electoral census. The data are not limited “correct” or “incorrect,” however, as this way includes variables not present in the first way.

One of the key results reported in Table 2 indicates that 8.4 percent of the names of citizens eligible to vote who were interviewed do not appear on the electoral census. This means that if there were an election tomorrow and the electoral census was not updated, 8.4 percent of the population could not vote<sup>11</sup>. The 91.6 percent of citizens included on the census in Honduras is higher than that found in both Guatemala and Nicaragua.

**Table 2:** Results of the second way (Door to Door)

	Honduras 2012	Nicaragua 2006	Guatemala 2003
People found on the census	91.6%	83.4%	87.4%
People not found on the census	8.4%	16.6%	12.6%
Sample Size	496	926	492

The information can be analyzed to determine if there is systematic discrimination that affects different groups' representation in the electoral census. From past experiences, there are reasons to pay particular attention to gender, age, and the rural/urban split within the population. Young people, women, and people living in rural areas are often under-represented in the electoral census, unless the voter registration is continuously updated to include, for example, young people as they reach voting age.

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<sup>11</sup> Unless they were working as electoral officials of a political party.

The basic results of this further analysis are summarized in Tables 3 to 5. These results are somewhat surprising. As Table 3 shows, there is no statistically significant difference between the sexes, so that men and women are equally likely to be included in the electorate.

**Table 3:** Results of the second way by gender

	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
People found on the census	235	91.8%	204	91.5%	439	91.6%
People not found on the census	21	8.2%	19	8.5%	40	8.4%
Sample Size	256	100.0%	223	100.0%	479	100.0%

Table 4 considers the differences between three groups: those living in the two largest urban centers (Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula), in other urban centers and in rural areas. As the data show, the difference between these areas is of little importance. Residents of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula are slightly more likely to be left out of the electoral roll (8.9 percent) than those living in other urban centers (6.1 percent) and those living in rural areas (7.5 percent.) Interestingly, there is not a clear difference between rural and urban areas.

**Table 4:** Results of the second way by rural / urban location

	2 Main Cities		Urban		Rural		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
People found on the census	319	91.1%	46	93.9%	74	92.5%	439	91.6%
People not found on the census	31	8.9%	3	6.1%	6	7.5%	40	8.4%
Sample Size	350	100.0%	49	100.0%	80	100.0%	479	100.0%

Moreover, the hypothesis that young people are less likely to be registered in the electoral roll was not supported. In fact, the more contradictory result from Table 5 is that people over 65 are twice as likely (17.7 percent) to be left out of the electoral roll than those in the younger group (8.8 percent.)

**Table 5:** Results of the second way by Age

	Less than 25		25 – 64		65 or more		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
People found on the census	124	91.2%	264	94.6%	51	82.3%	439	91.6%
People not found on the census	12	8.8%	15	5.4%	11	17.7%	40	8.4%
Sample Size	136	100.0%	279	100.0%	62	100.0%	479	100.0%

The absence of gender differences or significant variations between rural and urban areas is an unusual result. It may, however, be the result of administrative procedures through which citizens acquire Honduran identification number and are then registered in the electoral census. Since 1983 all Honduran citizens automatically receive an identification number at birth, and the procedures for obtaining an identification card, though slow, are not particularly burdensome.

One possible explanation for the variations between age groups may be that the transition from the old manual system for acquiring the national identification number to the new, automated system is incomplete. Data may have been lost in changing from one system to the other. This hypothesis, however, is not supported by Table 6, which shows no significant differences between the two groups. Regardless of the specific explanation why people over 65 are significantly less likely to be on the electoral census, this issue deserves attention and further analysis.

The information generated by the second way of the review provides an opportunity to assess the scope and scale of the discrepancies in citizens' identification data. For example, in 33.8 percent of cases, the date of birth on the electoral census does not correspond to the date declared by individual respondents. In 9 percent of cases, the gender of the person was also wrong.

**Table 6:** Results of the second way by birthdates before and after the system was automated.

	Born on or before 1983		Born after 1983		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
People found on the census	287	92.0%	152	91.0%	439	91.6%
People not found on the census	25	8.0%	15	9.0%	40	8.4%
Sample Size	312	100.0%	167	100.0%	479	100.0%

Other discrepancies emerged between respondents' identification numbers and the numbers recorded on the electoral census. In 88.2% of cases, the numbers were completely correct. In 5.6% of all respondents in the second way, the name and date of birth were correctly registered on the electoral census but the identification numbers were not.

# 05. Computerized Statistical Analysis

**I**n addition to the two-way diagnosis conducted by Hagos Democrazia, Nevitte and Cruz in Honduras, Michelle Brown, NDI's Senior Program Manager of Political and Electoral Processes, conducted a statistical analysis independent of the electoral census. This statistical analysis used the electoral census to analyze its data in search of contradictions, errors and missing data.

## ► Statistical Analysis

NDI's analysis allowed for an examination of the registry's voter registration format and its possible implications for the effectiveness and accuracy of the census. The analysis found that the database includes blank spaces or inconsistent formats. For example, 41,800 entries did not include date of birth. As demonstrated in the two-way analysis, missing data makes it impossible to distinguish between a father and son who have the same name but different dates of birth. There were also 964 cases of missing gender data, although these cases were all ineligible to vote.

NDI found that the data was recorded in conflicting formats; for example, birth dates were recorded as 20/9/1989, 9/20/1989, or even 1989/9/20. The lack of standardization in recording dates makes it impossible to determine if, for example, 1989/1/3 means that the voter was born on 3 January or March 1st. Generally, the use of open-input fields, unlike the use of numeric data fields, increases the possibility of error in the data record. There are entries in the registry with birthdates in the Sixteenth Century or the year

2988, and there are 60 entries with birth years that indicate that citizens will be less than 18 years of age in 2014. Storing data in a numeric field would decrease the possibility of these errors by restricting the data recorded to the permitted values.

In addition to errors in the date of birth fields, the fields intended to register the name also had contradictions and incomplete entries. In more than 4,000 cases, instead of a name the research found dots or dashes, and in more than 11,000 cases names were recorded as having one or two letters. Such abbreviations and formatting differences make it difficult to correctly identify voters on election day, potentially resulting in voter disenfranchisement.

Equally important is the finding that 55,836 citizens who appear on the electoral roll are actually dead. Their inclusion on the voter census, despite having died, offers opportunities for irregularities and artificially reduces the voter turnout percentage on election day.

The basic administrative errors identified in the NDI's analysis have the potential to disenfranchise thousands of voters. Contradictions in date of birth format or abbreviations of names can lead to discrepancies between the voter's identity card and the data in the census, thereby preventing the citizen from voting on election day. While it is possible to detect, and therefore correct, specific errors in these entries on election day, these types of inaccuracies can lead citizens whose information in the register is wrong to question the veracity of the electoral census, undermining public confidence in the electoral process.

## 06. Conclusions and 14 recommendations to strengthen the Honduran electoral census

**T**his project would not have been possible without the cooperation and openness of the TSE; its findings are an invitation to electoral registration authorities to implement innovative solutions.

This report presents the findings of the first two-way evaluations and computer analysis of the Honduran Electoral Census. The results present Honduran society with the strengths and weaknesses of the electoral census.

When comparing these findings with the results of similar studies in other countries in the region, the Honduran electoral authorities have no reason to be particularly concerned. At the same time, there is no reason to be fully satisfied: there is still room for improvement in several areas and, in concluding, this study suggests some areas that require particular attention.

The conclusions and recommendations presented in the first edition are furthered detailed. We collected the main proposals from the presentations that political actors, civil society leaders, state officials, especially senior and technical officials of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) and the National Registry of Persons (RNP), provided. In addition, information was also collected from media representatives and the international community, in workshops organized to discuss in detail the findings of the first edition of the Honduran electoral census diagnosis. The activities took place in Tegucigalpa (four different events, including the public presentation of

the results and work tables), San Pedro Sula, La Ceiba, Tela and Siguatepeque, during the months of August, September and October 2012. They were developed under the guidance and coordination of Ballivián Salvador Romero, director of NDI in Honduras, in cooperation with the Hagamos Democracia Consortium.

The observations, conclusions, and recommendations are presented first for the “Entrance” to the Census—the inclusiveness of the Census—and then to the “Exit”, which deals primarily with updating its Information.

## ► “Entrance ” Recommendations for the Census

### **Recommendation 1: Boost mobile registration brigades**

Registration of persons is a joint effort involving state institutions, political parties, civil society organizations, and international aid agencies. Being registered to vote is a basic right of people and goes beyond the electoral process itself. According to information from the authorities, there are chains of underreporting (i.e. unregistered generations of families), especially in the more remote areas and scattered hamlets, among which Mosquitia and the northeastern region (municipalities of Yoro and Olancho) are particularly vulnerable. The goal of the Honduran state is to reach, by 2015, less than 3% under-registration

We recommend reaching the most vulnerable populations by continuing to employ mobile registration units. Outstanding efforts funded by OAS, UNICEF and Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation have already been made in this direction. To improve the impact of the mobile brigades and overcome problems identified in previous campaigns, there must be an effective mechanism to reduce the time between registration and delivery of documents, and avoid the situation of individuals who may be registered, but have not received their IDs.

It is equally important to continue registration campaigns among Hondurans living abroad. Initiatives in U.S. cities have shown great impact but have had limited follow-up.

### **Recommendation 2: Re-launch timely network registration**

Prompt and effective action is recommended to re-launch the timely enrollment network (*Red de Inscripción Oportuna*, RIO) for births and deaths. It is essential to ensure that these records are updated continually with the participation of all the institutions involved in this area, which means that they must be supported by existing resources. Registration promoters, who are usually active and engaged community leaders, should also be supported. Finally, we need to build alliances between RIO and non-governmental organizations.

### **Recommendation 3: Delivery of ID from 12 years of age**

To facilitate the entry of young people into the electoral census, we recommend delivery of identification to minors upon reaching age 12. This system would relieve the election-period bottlenecks, as hundreds of thousands of young people have reached, or are approaching, voting age. There are many experiences in countries in the region where identity documents are issued to citizens under the age of 18.

### **Recommendation 4: Widely disseminate the value and importance of exhibiting the Census**

The TSE reported fewer than a hundred reports of errors nationwide between May and July 2012, after the exhibition of the Census at polling places. Citizens also had the opportunity to consult the Census online. This low figure can be attributed to a weak public information campaign concerning the opportunity for citizens to observe or check lists. More vigorous public information campaigns would allow for a more effective Census update through direct citizen participation.

**Recommendation 5: Improving the ability of timely delivery of identity documents by the RNP**

One of the most pressing problems facing the RNP is holding between 800,000 to 1,000,000 cards in storage that have not been collected by those who requested. Part of this problem stems from the excessive delay between the time a citizen requests the document for the first time or requests a replacement, and delivery of the card. Updating the RNP's equipment should be a State priority, as this would facilitate the reduction of time between request and receipt of voter ID cards. Meanwhile, RNP should continue organizing the cards to facilitate delivery to citizens and avoid unnecessary printing of new ones. It is also useful for citizens to be able to monitor the progress of their document request online. These measures should only be temporary in nature, until delivery becomes possible on the day of application, a goal that has been achieved by several countries in Latin America.

**Recommendation 6: Institutional strengthening of the RNP**

In recent years, with international support, the RNP has made efforts to establish uniform procedures and standards set forth in manuals. These measures are aimed at creating a modern and professional organizational culture and management. However, these developments coexist with procedures controlled by political parties, creating suspicion and mistrust among citizens. This relationship with political parties, often not transparent, is one of the weak points of the institution. Clearly limiting which decisions can be made based on partisan criteria will strengthen the RNP's position.

Furthermore, it is essential to strengthen the primary point of registration at the municipal level. This requires better technical equipment, a stronger infrastructure, and a staff with more training.

### **Recommendation 7: Strengthening the culture of registration**

While all the above actions to expand registration levels are useful and necessary, in the middle to long run both the state and civil society must make sustained efforts to strengthen the culture of registering both births and deaths. These campaigns will not bear fruit immediately, but will be decisive in the long term. The campaigns should target the population through childhood and youth.

In this regard, although it is important to work on the issue of obtaining identification documents as an indispensable part of participating in elections, the fundamental moment of democracy, their implications transcend elections, as they enable the full enjoyment of civil rights and socio-economic opportunities (access to financial services, etc.).

Honduras should capitalize on its advantages in citizen registration. Among these are the existence of a unique identification number issued to citizens at birth, and automatic enrollment on the electoral census.

## **► “Exit” Recommendations for the Census**

### **Recommendation 8: Improvement of the purging of deceased persons from the Census**

There is broad consensus that there are serious difficulties with death registration. There is little popular awareness of the importance of registration in the country (according to estimates by the authorities, about 1 in 3 deaths are not reported). Broad sectors of the population, especially grassroots groups, do not see the need, utility or benefit of registering deaths to the appropriate institutions. Given the haphazard access to information concerning deaths, automatic purging of the voter rolls is impossible. This has a high cost in terms of electoral legitimacy, especially when voters and election day

personnel find that relatives, neighbors or acquaintances who died recently or long ago remain on the rolls. Therefore, the recommendations aim to create a culture of registration, which involves a long-term effort, shared by civil society and the State (see Recommendation 7). We also recommend simplifying the registration process.

**Recommendation 9: Establish partnerships between the RNP and public and private institutions for better registration of citizens**

Partnerships between the RNP, the TSE, public and private institutions should be strengthened for better registration of citizens. Increasing use of the RNP's databases by other public institutions helps improve the quality of the information handled by the state. Even so, it requires an emphasis on the registration of deaths, not through the expenditure of additional resources, but by means of a coordinated effort. The mechanisms for hospitals, clinics, and coroners must be refined to facilitate accurate reporting of deaths, and the number of burials of unidentified persons (estimated at about a thousand a year between San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa) must be reduced.

**Recommendation 10: Accompany registration amnesty periods with public education**

At the time of the diagnostic, there was a registration amnesty law in effect for a semester, until January 2013, which allows citizens to register any birth or death without any penalty. However, the results of the amnesty were modest. Therefore, we recommend that such amnesties should always be accompanied by public information campaigns, including adequate dissemination and education components.

**Recommendation 11: Use the flexibility of the law for the registration of deaths**

Honduran law allows great flexibility in death registration. Indeed, it is not only a family matter, as civil, military, church, among others, may apply to register the event. This provision is very rarely used, with significant loss of information. The establishment of public and private networks could be effective, especially for vulnerable segments of the population.

**Recommendation 12: Strengthen the RNP to address the renewal of IDs**

The state has shown little concern for updating citizens' identity documents, and it has been customary to extend the validity of identification cards through legislation. This is linked to the RNP's limited operational and technological infrastructure for handling a massive issuance of new identity cards. Therefore, RNP requires capacity building, including equipment and telecommunications networks, in order to be able to undertake the renewal of documents that will help update the electoral census.

**Recommendation 13: Standardize registration information**

Census information processing and data entry fields require further examination, establishing a single format for entering dates, excluding characters in fields that require names, restricting validation if fields are left blank, and so on. Internal data reviews can serve as an important check on the validity of Census data.

**Recommendation 14: Begin the debate over the expeditious route: purging nonvoters**

During the discussions on electoral reform, the TSE opened a debate by proposing to purge from the rolls all citizens who did not vote in the last two or three elections. This is a controversial provision that should, if im-

plemented, be accompanied by measures to facilitate a new entry for not restricting the right to citizen participation.

Though it is controversial, this practice would not be unique in Latin America: several countries have adopted it as an effective way to keep the rolls up to date, while achieving significant savings (for example, preparing material for hundreds of thousands of citizens who, although listed in the Census, cannot vote: deceased, permanent emigrants, etc.) and enabling more accurate information on voter turnout. A measured and serene political and social debate on the advantages and disadvantages of this measure would be helpful.

# Annexes

## ► Annex 1. Sample Structure

Department	Municipality	Total Interviews 1st way	Total Interviews 2nd way	%
Choluteca	El Triunfo	8	8	1.6%
	Morolica	3	3	0.6%
Colón	Sonaguera	9	9	1.8%
Comayagua	La Libertad	5	5	1.0%
Cortés	San francisco de Yojoa	4	4	0.8%
	San Pedro Sula	143	143	28.6%
	Villanueva	24	24	4.8%
El Paraíso	Oropolí	1	1	0.2%
	Texiguat	2	2	0.4%
Francisco Morazán	Cedros	4	4	0.8%
	Distrito Central	238	238	47.6%
	Vallecillo	2	2	0.4%
Intibucá	San Antonio	1	1	0.2%
	San Juan	1	1	0.2%
Islas de la Bahía	Roatán	7	7	1.4%
La Paz	Chinacla	2	2	0.4%
Lempira	Virginia	1	1	0.2%
Ocotepeque	Ocotepeque	5	5	1.0%
	Sensenti	2	2	0.4%
Olancho	Mangulile	1	1	0.2%
	Manto	2	2	0.4%
	Patuca	5	5	1.0%
	San Francisco de Becerra	3	3	0.6%

Department	Municipality	Total Interviews 1st way	Total Interviews 2nd way	%
Santa Bárbara	Ceguaca	1	1	0.2%
	Gualala	1	1	0.2%
	San Marcos	3	3	0.6%
	Santa Rita	1	1	0.2%
Valle	Caridad	1	1	0.2%
	San Francisco de Coray	3	3	0.6%
Yoro	Yorito	3	3	0.6%
	Yoro	14	14	2.8%
<b>Total</b>		<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## ► Annex 2. First Way Form



HONDURAN ELECTORAL CENSUS AUDIT 2012

FIRST WAY



Good morning, I am (SAY YOUR NAME), interviewing for Hagamos Democracia. We are conducting a study to find out the situation of the Honduras electoral census of that will be used in the next elections. A group of people from this municipality were chosen and we are making visits to verify if your information coincides with the data from the census.

Interviewer code:	<input type="text"/>	Correlative number:	A <input type="text"/>	Begin time	<input type="text"/>	:	<input type="text"/>	:	<input type="text"/>	AM	<input type="text"/>	PM	<input type="text"/>	Date:	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	2012	
				Hours			Min							Day		Month					
Person to identify:	<input type="text"/>																				
Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	Date of Birth:	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Honduran by:	<input type="text"/>						
					Day		Month		Year												
ID number:	<input type="text"/>													Issued in:	<input type="text"/>						
Department of birth:	<input type="text"/>										Municipality of birth:	<input type="text"/>									
Department of residence:	<input type="text"/>										Muni. Dom.:	<input type="text"/>									

--- FIND THE PERSON and explain the objective of the interview you are about to conduct---

P1. Do you live here? \_\_\_\_\_

1. ( ) YES (Continue with interview)
2. ( ) Person not home (Verify the time the time the person can be found to reschedule interview)
3. ( ) It was not possible to find the person in the area (Write down the name of the informant at the end of this form and end the interview)
4. ( ) The person no longer lives here, he/she moved to: \_\_\_\_\_  
telephone: \_\_\_\_\_
5. ( ) Deceased (Write down the name of the informant at the end of this form and end the interview)
6. ( ) Unable to vote (enlisted in security forces or in jail) (Write the name of the informant at the end of the form and end the interview)
7. ( ) Out of the country (Write the name of the informant at the end of the form and end the interview)
8. ( ) Too sick or disabled to respond (Write the name of the informant at the end of the form and end the interview)
9. ( ) No one is home (Verify with neighbors what time the person will be home and reschedule the interview)
99. ( ) NS/NR

P2. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

P3. Do you belong to an ethnic group?

1. ( ) yes
2. ( ) No, (Go to question 4)

P3.1 To which ethnic group do you belong to?

- |                |                 |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. ( ) Lenca   | 4. ( ) Chorti   | 7. ( ) Garifuna |
| 2. ( ) Tolupan | 5. ( ) Misquito | 8. ( ) Isleño   |
| 3. ( ) Pech    | 6. ( ) Tawahka  | 99. ( ) NS/NR   |

P4. Area where you live

1. ( ) Urban
2. ( ) Rural

P5. What is your educational level?

- |                           |                              |               |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. ( ) None               | 4. ( ) Secondary             | 99. ( ) NA/NR |
| 2. ( ) Primary incomplete | 5. ( ) High school/Technical |               |
| 3. ( ) Primary            | 6. ( ) University/ higher    |               |

Honduran Electoral Census audit, 2012 by Hagamos Democracia Consortium



4. ( ) There were problems in the voting center  
 5. ( ) Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 6. ( ) NS/NR

**P18. Do you plan to vote in the next general elections of 2013?**

1. ( ) Yes, (GO TO QUESTION 20)      2. ( ) No

**P19. Why will not you vote?**

1. ( ) I did not have an ID card      5. ( ) Did not update change of address  
 2. ( ) Not interested in voting      6. ( ) Because of insecurity  
 3. ( ) Because of the distance/ lack of transportation      7. ( ) Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. ( ) Illness/ Disabled      8. ( ) NS/NR

--- GO TO QUESTION 22 ---

**P20. Do you know where you have to vote?**

1. ( ) Yes  
 2. ( ) No (GO TO QUESTION 22)  
 99. ( ) NS/NR, (GO TO QUESTION 22)

**P21. Where do you have to vote?**

P21.1 Polling Center \_\_\_\_\_

P21.2 Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

P21.3 Department \_\_\_\_\_

**P22. Could you give me an estimate of the family's monthly income? In other words, the amount of the earnings of all working family members, plus the remittances (if any). At what level would you approximately locate your family?**

1. ( ) No income  
 2. ( ) Less than L2,500  
 3. ( ) From L2,501 to 6,500  
 4. ( ) From L6,501 to 17,500  
 5. ( ) From L17,501 to 20,500  
 6. ( ) More that L20,501  
 99. ( ) NS/NR

**P23. Could you give me your phone number in case we have further questions? (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_**

Ending time of the interview

:  AM  PM   
 Hour Minutes

Name and signature of the interviewee

\_\_\_\_\_

Informants / write down name and telephone number

1	Tel. to verify:
2	Tel. to verify:

*Thank you for your participation*

*Honduran Electoral Census audit, 2012 by Hagamos Democracia Consortium*

## ► Annex 3. Second Way Form



### HONDURAN ELECTORAL CENSUS AUDIT 2012 SECOND WAY



Good morning, I am (*SAY YOUR NAME*), an interviewer with Hagamos Democracia. We are conducting a study to find out the situation of the Honduras electoral census that will be used in the next elections. A group of people from this municipality were chosen and we are making visits to verify if your information coincides with the data from the census.

Interviewer code:  Correlative Number: **B**  Beginning time:  :  AM  PM  Date:  -  - 2012  
Hours Min Day Month

1. Department:  2. Municipality:

3. Neighborhood, hamlet or community:

4. Home address/ Write down

5. Identification

5.1 First Name  5.2 Second Name

5.3 First Last Name  5.4 Second Last Name

6.ID Number:

7. Gender:  Female  Male 8. Age

9. Date of Birth: Day  Month  Year

--- FIND THE PERSON and explain the objective of the interview ---

**P10. Do you belong to an ethnic group?**

1. ( ) Yes 2. ( ) No, (Go to Question 11)

**P10.1 To which ethnic group do you belong to?**

1. ( ) Lenca 4. ( ) Chortí 7. ( ) Garifuna  
2. ( ) Tolupan 5. ( ) Misquito 8. ( ) Isleño  
3. ( ) Pech 6. ( ) Tawahka 99. ( ) NS/NR

**P11. Area where you live**

1. ( ) Urban 2. ( ) Rural

**P12. What is your educational level?**

1. ( ) None 4. ( ) Secondary 99. ( ) NA/NR  
2. ( ) Primary incomplete 5. ( ) High school/Technical  
3. ( ) Primary 6. ( ) University/ higher

**P13. Could you please show me your ID card**

1. ( ) Yes (Go to question 17) 2. ( ) No, (Go to question 14)

**P14. Do you have an ID Card?**

1. ( ) Yes (Go to question 17)  
2. ( ) No (Go to question 15)  
3. ( ) NS/NR (Go to question 17)

**P15. Why don't you have an ID card?**

1. ( ) Lack of a birth certificate
2. ( ) Does not need it
3. ( ) Due to distance/ Transportation, Difficult to get to processing place
4. ( ) Does not know how or where to get it
5. ( ) Requested it but did not get it (Go to question 16)
6. ( ) Lost it
7. ( ) Did not complete the procedures
8. ( ) Has not requested it
9. ( ) Other \_\_\_\_\_
99. ( ) NS/NR

--- Continue with question 17 ---

**P16. When did you request your ID card?**

16.1 Date:

Day                      Month                      Year

**P17. Did you vote in the last elections?**

1. ( ) Yes (Go to question 19)
2. ( ) No (Go to question 18)
99. ( ) NS/NR (Go to question 22)

**P18. Why did not you vote?**

1. ( ) Did not have ID card
2. ( ) I was underage
3. ( ) I was not interested
4. ( ) Due to distance / Lack of transportation
5. ( ) Due to illness / Disabled
6. ( ) No Did not update change of address
7. ( ) I was out of the country
8. ( ) Due to insecurity and violence
9. ( ) There were problems in the voting center
10. ( ) Other \_\_\_\_\_
99. ( ) NS/NR

--- CONTINUE TO QUESTION 22 ---

**P19. Where did you vote in the last elections?**

- 19.1 Municipality \_\_\_\_\_
- 19.2 Department \_\_\_\_\_

**P20. Did you have any problems with voting ?**

1. ( ) Yes (Go to question 21)
2. ( ) No (Go to question 22)

**P21. What problems did you have voting?**

1. ( ) My name did not appear in the polling center roster
2. ( ) My picture did not appear in the census
3. ( ) They gave me the wrong polling center address
4. ( ) There were problems in the voting center
5. ( ) Other \_\_\_\_\_

99. ( ) NS/NR

**P22. Do you plan to vote in the next general elections of 2013**

1. ( ) Yes (Go to question 24)
2. ( ) No (Go to question 23)
3. ( ) NS/NR (Go to question 27)

**P23. Why not?**

1. ( ) Lost ID Card
2. ( ) Not registered in the electoral census
3. ( ) Not interested
4. ( ) Due to distance / Lack of transport
5. ( ) Due to illness / Disabled
6. ( ) Did not update change of address
7. ( ) Due to insecurity
8. ( ) Other \_\_\_\_\_

99. ( ) NS/NR

--- CONTINUE TO QUESTION 27 ---

**P24. Where is your voting center?**

P24.1Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

P24.2Department \_\_\_\_\_

**P25. Which is your electoral area? (neighborhood or village)?**

99. ( ) NS/NR

**P26. Which is your voting center?**

99. ( ) NS/N R

**P27. Could you give me an estimate of the family's monthly income? In other words, the amount of the earnings of all working family members, plus the remittances (if any). At what level would you approximately locate your family?**

- 1. ( ) No income
- 2. ( ) Less than L2,500
- 3. ( ) From L2,501 to 6,500
- 4. ( ) From L6,501 to 17,500
- 5. ( ) From L17,501 to 20,500
- 6. ( ) More that L20,501
- 99. ( ) NS/NR

**P28. Could you give me your phone number in case we have further questions?**  
(Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Ending time of the interview :

:   AM  PM   
Hour Minutes

Name and signature of interviewee

\_\_\_\_\_

INFORMANTS/ Write down names and phone numbers

1 \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. To verify: \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. To verify: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your participation*

This report is delivered to civil society, political actors and the authorities, as further evidence of NDI's commitment to strengthening democracy in Honduras. The text offers a portrait of the electoral census and indicates ways to support it. It is now up to state institutions, non-governmental organizations, the media, political parties and the public at large, eventually with international support, to take the lead and manage, with mutually agreed-upon measures, the mechanisms by which a more accurate census may be achieved, thereby laying a firm foundation for more participatory and accurate electoral processes and thus, a broader basis for democracy.

