

Appendix 9

Program Reporting Guidelines and Sample Report (Albania 2000)

NDI FIELD REPORTING GUIDELINES

SUMMARY

A short section summarizing program accomplishments and other significant events occurring during the reporting period. When preparing this section, staff should think about how they would give a two-minute presentation to a NDI Board meeting or a Member of Congress. What are the program highlights/successes/challenges?

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

This is an opportunity to update Washington on the country's political developments and current events. This section should also give the reader a sense of the context for NDI's program in country (why is NDI in this country, what are the problems/issues NDI's work is designed to address and how does our program address those problems). Describe political, cultural or economic developments that might directly or indirectly affect the program. What events, decisions or statements shaped programming during this reporting period? (E.g. Is our work getting more difficult? Are we more welcome?)

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Discuss program activities for the period. This section should describe or summarize all program activities. Remember, this is the section that allows us to answer the question: how did you spend U.S. taxpayer's dollars this period? If there has been a substantial event like a workshop or seminar during the period, describe the methodology, program format, and agenda. If working with a number of groups or parties, write a paragraph on activities with each of the individual groups.

PROGRAM ANALYSIS

This section should provide an update on the status of our program. What is working well and what is not working well? Why? Are we "barking up the wrong tree"? Is our original program's premise -- e.g. key people in this legislature want our help -- still accurate? Identify problems or complexities that have emerged in programming and how you handled them or could avoid them in the future. Identify program strengths and assess overall outcomes and effectiveness. This section should also include a description of plans for the future, outlining any programmatic changes under consideration. Finally, this section should include any information related to progress in meeting program goals and objectives. This "tracking system" feedback may be qualitative or quantitative (e.g. interviews, surveys, press coverage, etc).

PIX, CLIPS, QUOTES AND ANECDOTES

If pictures speak a thousand words, so do news clips, participant quotations and program anecdotes. This section should include these gems captured during your daily routine—immediately record quotes or anecdotes when someone says something positive about NDI's work and the corresponding names/dates so that you can eventually weave them into quarterlies/final reports. A recent final report abounded with quotations that the author footnoted from the notes he kept from meetings/conversations, and laudatory correspondence. Testimonials/anecdotes about why NDI's work matters as related by participants/partners/officials/etc. can add life and color to NDI's general written materials. And, don't forget those photographs—they still speak volumes. Each report should include one or more picture, clip, quote or anecdote.

ADMINISTRATION Describe any administrative matters addressed during this period, new leases, accounting, local hires, staff departures, etc. Also include other significant non-program events, e.g. visits by Congressional delegations or Administration officials and AID/Embassy/USIS contacts, etc.

BACK PAGE A page for any program/administration/country/personnel items requiring separate consideration.

**ALBANIA REPORT
CIVIC FORUM PROGRAM
October 2000**

**Mary Margaret Dineen
Tirana**

Summary

October was the first month in which Civic Forum Albania (CFALB) began in earnest to prepare for the community action/advocacy phase of our work, while continuing to facilitate discussions. During this month the country experienced, by most accounts, its best elections since the democratic transition began.

Program Background

NDI has been working in Albania since 1991, mostly through its link with the local NGO, the Society for Democratic Culture, which conducts civic education and election related activities. After the evacuation in August 1998, an NDI field representative did not return to Tirana until May 1999. That autumn the Political Leadership Development program was launched to train emerging political leaders from across the party spectrum. This program continues today.

In late October 1999, NDI's Civic Forum program began with the arrival of a second field representative. After the completion of a site assessment in December 1999 to determine the best location to begin the program, the decision was made to conduct Civic Forum in the adjacent districts of Tirana and Durres in the center part of the country.

We were conscious of the possible misperceptions of working only in the north or south of the country, given the traditional "divide" that exists. Political, cultural and linguistic traditions have contributed to some animosity between the north and south halves of the territory. Other deciding factors were the lack of communication and transportation infrastructure outside of Tirana and Durres. We wanted to begin the program in an area with demonstrated need and enough functioning infrastructure and community support to build a strong foundation for the program. Recognizing that a democratic system of governance can only take hold with the active engagement of the citizenry Civic Forum seeks to increase citizen participation in the democratic process. This is achieved through engaging citizens at the grassroots level in small group discussions about democratic principles, which over time will lead to citizens becoming

involved in community problem solving and advocacy on issues of importance to them.

The program is currently being conducted in the districts of Tirana and Durres. At any given time, we are working with at least 50 different groups of 10-15 citizens, primarily in the rural areas on a bi-weekly basis, facilitating discussions and guiding participants into more actively exercising their roles in the political process.

Political Developments

Since Gillian's report is sure to contain all of the political and October 1 local election related details, I will only highlight areas related to our work. Some of our work was hampered by the increase political polarization and contentious election atmosphere. Citizens were geared up to talk only about politics and the field coordinators (FCs) had a difficult time helping them refocus and integrate their comments into the discussion topics.

After the elections, in which more left leaning candidates won, some citizen groups with more right side leanings were angry and asked the FCs why they came back, since the election was over and nothing more could be done now. So the FCs had to deal with changing dynamics and attitudes within several groups depending on the participants' political viewpoints.

Program Analysis

Friday Meetings and Continuing Training

In October, the FCs began working on learning/developing community organizing and advocacy skills. During this time they also continued facilitating group discussions. The discussion topic series had been "interrupted" with the election related discussion. We also introduced a new topic, the Role of the Albania Education System in Democratic Development and had an open review discussion of all of the topics covered thus far.

Our new FC, Elton (Toni) Islamaj, started work at the beginning of the month. I took this opportunity to engage the veteran FCs in some reflection. Since they are the authorities on much of the work we have done, I solicited feedback from them on what we are doing, how we are doing it, why and what has worked and what has not. This way they had to give some thought to both the macro and micro aspects of our work and Toni had a good forum for questions. We also reviewed the materials we have used and distributed and identified which of them are most meaningful/useful and why. Thus we are slowly beginning to

identify some best practices and tools, which will be helpful for improving the program model in Albania and elsewhere and facilitate our expansion efforts next year.

We spent a day and half working on advocacy and community organizing with the assistance of Koebel Price and Violeta Hamidi from Civic Forum Kosovo. We had already done some preliminary work evaluating the terms used in community organizing work (action, volunteer, cooperation, power etc). Many of these terms/words were also used during the communist regime. We wanted to make sure that we clearly understood the “democratic” meanings and could articulate them to citizens. We also reviewed the basic elements of a community action strategy focusing on why citizens would/should organize themselves.

The FCs did an activity that I found in reports for the Bosnia Civic Forum program. It is important that the FCs experience some of what the citizens will be doing during the community organizing process. The better they can relate their concerns to those of the participants the stronger their position to help citizens advocate.

The FCs, working individually, identified three things they liked about the community in which they live. When asked why they thought I asked them to identify what they liked, they said it was a positive start, it helped narrow down what they don't like and showed them that good things exist along with the bad. Next, they each listed three things, as citizens that they would like to see improved in their communities. Although they identified differing things they like - near the city center, calm, good neighbors, near shops/market, their desired improvements were much the same - better environment/hygiene, better roads, better electricity service, better water system and more cultural events. Finally, they were asked what they would improve if they were mayor of their community. Those listed above were mentioned, in addition to, job creation, increased tourism, improved tax system, improved urban planning and providing more assistance to poor families.

During his training session, Koebel elaborated on the approach we are going to use to work with citizens to help them improve their communities. We began with defining advocacy and all of its elements and discussed why people advocate. The training session continued with learning how to identify issues and how they are different from problems (in the model we are using). We “walked through” the strategy development process from listing goals, objectives and resources to identifying allies, opponents and target and finally tactics and methods.

This was a lot of information for the FCs to assimilate in one day, so we met again for half-day on Saturday. We reviewed what we had covered on Friday and realized there was some confusion about the issue identification process. Given that this is a key element in the development of the overall strategy, Koebel went through, what turned out to be, a rather arduous attempt to clarify issue identification.

At this particular point some acute problems with the Civic Forum group dynamic were clearly revealed. The group lost its focus and degenerated into side discussions and verbal battles of who was right and who was wrong. Koebel snapped them back to attention, but not before I realized I had some adjustments to make. Over the past month or so, I have had to stop the group and remind them of the discussion guidelines we established for our interaction. I was not surprised by the difficulties, but I was troubled that it happened in front of a guest trainer. Part of it might have been that the group feels comfortable with Koebel and that we were in a different setting. Although contributing factors, these are not excuses. Koebel was helpful in making suggestions on how to rectify to situation. We have since worked to develop a common understanding of the issue identification process and we have talked about the changes, which need to be made to have a more effective group dynamic. We will continue to work on this in future meetings.

In what seems to be the Albanian way, we went from a contentious situation to a great lunch and afternoon at the beach. It is always amazing to me how people here can be yelling and screaming at each other one minute and happily drinking raki together the next. The lunch proved to be just the kind of informal, relaxed experience I think we have needed for a long time. Everyone was present, including team drivers. People told stories, sang traditional songs and shared some good laughs. It was a good demonstration of the spirit of camaraderie in the group and the confidence they have developed in each other.

Increasingly, while FC teams are reporting on their weekly field activity their colleagues pay less and less attention. To combat this we spent some time discussing why they give verbal field reports, who/what they are for and how we can improve them. In some ways, it seemed as though they were reporting to me directly, when in fact, as I remind them, they should be sharing information and experiences with each other. They are in the field, not me.

At times there are spontaneous group analyses of one team's difficulties or successes, but not often enough. Through questions and helping make connections among different reported scenarios, I am able to help them talk more with each other. To force the issue a bit, I had the teams in each district spend some time talking in the field with their counterparts about their week and then

report on each other's activities. Depending on how this goes the next step is to have them spend a day together going to each other's meetings and discussions. Since each team needs to increase the number of groups with which it works, we decided to focus some effort on establishing groups in urban areas as well. So far all but a few discussion groups are in rural villages. Many of which seem like they are another world, although they are only a half hour drive from the capitol city. The FCs took the last Friday of the month to canvas urban areas and come back with strategies for establishing new groups.

Field Reports

The first discussion series of the month, as it was just after the October 1 local elections, was an open discussion about citizens' election/voting experience. We thought it was important for citizens to have a forum for a constructive dialog about their voting experience and to relate it to other discussion topics. We also administered a survey to see whom, among CFALB participants voted and who didn't (results in early December).

Not surprisingly, citizens had plenty to say about the elections. The overwhelming majority of CFALB participants said that they had voted. The general consensus, from field reports, seemed to be that the elections went better than ever before. Most of the negative comments were related to problems with the voters' lists and even those were limited to the groups located closer to the city. In the villages the process was reported to have gone smoothly. It wasn't clear if citizens differentiated between technical problems and manipulation.

Several groups claimed that there was no manipulation in their area but they had heard of all kinds of problems in the neighboring community. Others sited cases of men voting for women, people calling from abroad to say who they wanted elected and others voting for them and unregistered citizens who were recognizable in the community being allowed to vote.

We are waiting for things to settle down after the October 15 run-offs to see who is in office. There were several contested races and a situation where the ex-mayor of the Vore municipality is refusing to hand over the keys to city hall (for some reason he has the only set!). There are other instances where the former mayor is working with the new mayor to transfer knowledge. In general, on the local level, although the Socialist Party won most seats from the Democratic Party, there are more amicable relations among candidates and officials.

There is some concern among FCs that we could lose some participants who were disgusted and/or disillusioned by the elections. We are sure to have limited participation from some of the groups formed from the commune

administrations, since there is undoubtedly going to be some personnel changes. Needless to say, the FCs have realized that this was not the best group to target for continued participation. Initially, it seemed like a good idea, since they need as much, if not more education than citizens and they are, in theory, already committed to the community. Now we will have to reevaluate and see if the new administrations (4 year mayoral term) would be valuable to include.

During the second half of the month, for those groups that were “on schedule” (discussing the most recent topic) the FCs facilitated a review session. Most groups remembered between eight and ten of the thirteen topics introduced to that point. Those most often recited were Rule of Law, Constitution and Elements of Democracy. Citizens said they had learned many new things they weren’t even interested in before, like the decentralization process. They commented that they read the materials that are distributed and usually pass them on to other people. During these meetings, we also conducted a citizen opinion survey (results in early December) asking citizens about how democratic Albania is, how they see their role in the process and community and their views on their elected representatives.

In my September report I highlighted several rather daunting questions and challenges we are going to have to answer/over come in order to continue to make progress. I repeat them here and add another one.

Although the FCs fully understand the goal of the program is to guide citizens through the process of organizing themselves around a community problem of common concern and working to solve it, I suspect there are some groups which will either not be interested in taking the initiative or with a good faith attempt will not manage to coalesce. What do we do with these groups?

The opposite of that situation is when we find ourselves with all of the groups wanting to organize around building water systems, electrical grids and roads. The reality of our work involves working on big projects. I am not sure of the success rate of organizing citizens to build roads, but I do know that no one cares about working with their local government to have a stop sign put up when they have no roads. How do we help “guarantee” citizens that their organizing initiatives will have some success?

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, where will the money come from to support citizen/government initiatives? Even in the best case scenario, where citizens and local government work together, the government has no money. Most communes in which we work, where there have been any community problems solved/improvements, it has been with foreign money. What role do I/we play in helping citizens and government fundraise?

Is it the kind of citizen engagement we are striving for if citizens make financial contributions to their community improvement initiatives or does supporting this action send a confusing message?

Materials/Information

FCs continued to distribute materials relevant to the discussion topics. IRI completed production of a citizens' guide to the parliament and, as we requested, gave us 700 copies to distribute. It talks about the structure and functions of the parliament and legislative process and will be a good complement to the Structures and Functions of Government discussion series and as preparation for the Spring 2001 parliamentary elections.

Personnel

Our new field coordinator, by all indications, has settled well into his new position. Before going into the field he and I spent a day reviewing methods, materials and concepts. Then after a few days in the field with his teammate they both came to the office and spent several hours with me talking about the work, answering questions and doing a few activities. The following week they observed their fellow Durres team's facilitation of citizen group discussions, so Toni could see the process in action.

One Friday I had two FCs who failed to show up for work. They had called the day before, when I was out of the office at a meeting and left a message informing me that they wouldn't be coming because they had been invited to an NGO meeting and "had to go" because one of them is a former representative of the Albanian NGO Forum and the other is president of his own NGO. This was the Friday after the unprofessional behavior by the FCs during Koebel's training session in which these two FCs played a pivotal role. So I needed them to be present for the follow-up discussion. In addition, their action was in clear violation of our personnel policies. Staff needs to get off days approved by their supervisor before hand and their outside activities cannot interfere with their work.

On Monday I met with them in my office and expressed my dismay at their action and explained how it violated the personnel policies, which I have an obligation to uniformly enforce. They said they understood, even though they thought that I would have said it was okay for them not to come to work, and accepted responsibility for their actions.

Although there is nothing mentioned in the personnel policies (which I am in the process of changing) I needed to impose some kind of sanction, so since they didn't work I docked them one day's pay. I complimented them on their work in general and their professionalism in this situation. There doesn't appear to have been any negative ramifications from my action thus far.

One of the Tirana team drivers succeeded in getting a visa for himself and his wife to go visit their son in the U.S., who they haven't seen for three years. He took a leave of absence until early December, but before leaving he found a temporary replacement who is doing a good job.

Evaluation

As mentioned above we administered citizen surveys to see who voted and who didn't and to gauge citizens' views on their government, community and the democratic process. We plan to have the results compiled by early December.

Each FC team is in the process of preparing a discussion series. They have all selected topics and begun research. After consulting with me, they will have time on a given Friday to train their colleagues on the topic and introduce the series guide they wrote. This will give me an opportunity to work more closely with each team and assess them and it will give them an opportunity to practice their skills.

Meetings

Nexus

The monthly USAID Nexus meeting of all grantees and contractors was, as is often the case, not so useful. Given the fact this is the only time we are all in the same room, the time could be spent in a more meaningful way. We learned that it is no longer necessary to send travel notifications to the Embassy and that Don Priestly (sp?) USAID Assistant Regional Administrator would be in town.

USAID Dinner

I was invited to a "democracy" dinner by Howard Sumka, USAID Albania Mission Director and Don Priestly (above). Also in attendance were Juliana Hoxha, ORT, Andrea Stefani, IREX, Zef Preci, Albanian Center for Economic Research and Genc Ruli, Institute for Contemporary Studies. We briefed Mr. Priestly on our program's activities and had a lively and interesting discussion about the state of democracy in Albania. At one point or another in the discussion, all of the invitees, with out any prompting from me, highlighted the

importance of direct citizen participation in the democratic process (beyond voting) in Albania, which of course, I echoed and supported with statistics and anecdotes from Civic Forum. Mr. Priestly really seemed to be genuinely intrigued (even taking into account, my wishful thinking and his "acting") by Civic Forum, to the point where he asked when we were planning on expanding throughout the country! (He is not the first person to suggest this, only the highest placed so far)

Administration

My internal modem died and we still haven't found a shop that is willing to examine and try to repair it. In the meantime we have an external modem, which means I cannot check email when there is no power.

Power problems have started. There was one week that was particularly bad, otherwise, the outages are "scheduled" and we work around them as best we can.

I moved into a new apartment, which is a monumental improvement over my other one. This one had sealed windows and heaters. Very welcomed.

We had a visit from a representative of the tax authority asking for a copy of our office lease. She showed up while the office was full of FCs in action, so I found out what she wanted and why and asked her to come back at a different time. Partially because often times people here don't make appointments, they just show up and it drives me mad and because I needed time to research and make sure we weren't in violation of any laws. I learned that by law our landlord is to pay a ten percent tax on the monthly rent payment, which he hasn't been doing. I met with the landlord to inform him of the situation. He asked me not to give the tax woman a copy of the lease or to redo the lease to say that we pay less than we actually do. Naturally, I told him I could do neither and when she returned I was obligated to give her a copy of the actual lease. The day she came back I saw him intercept her on the sidewalk and "invite" her for a coffee. She showed up for our appointment a bit late for obvious reasons, saying how the landlord had been pressuring her. We had no power so I didn't have the copy of the lease ready for her. She said she would come back again. I have the copy ready, but haven't seen her.