

**Increasing Citizen Participation
through Advocacy Efforts**

A Guidebook for Program Development

**National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
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The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. This guidebook was made possible by a grant from the United States Agency for International Development.

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Preface

This publication is one of the products resulting from a three-day meeting convened by NDI in Cape Town, South Africa and from subsequent sessions in Washington D.C. The conclusions of those meetings are reflected in this guidebook on how to improve the organization, implementation and evaluation of advocacy programs, as a means of increasing citizens' political participation.

The Cape Town meeting brought together 36 civil society development practitioners, including NDI resident representatives working in 19 countries, five executive directors from local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that NDI has partnered with, and seven NDI senior regional program managers working in Washington (**See Appendix 1** for participant list). This diverse group worked to improve NDI's ability to organize, conduct and assess citizen participation programs by identifying lessons learned to date and best practices. The seminar principally focused on public policy advocacy programs as a means of increasing sustained citizen participation (**See Appendix 1** for seminar agenda). NDI selected advocacy programs because they often include elements of civic education, minority participation and coalition building.

When organizing the meetings on what does and does not work, NDI assumed that the path to democratic development is a shared one and – although cultural, historical, and political differences do have an impact on program design – there are commonalities between individuals and organizations working in different countries. NDI's experience demonstrates that increasing organized and sustained citizen participation in political processes often involves similar steps and considerations. Citizens invariably need knowledge of democratic principles and practices, shared aspirations about change, skills to solve problems and make decisions collectively and effectively, and the willingness to express their interests and hold public officials accountable. At the same time, civil society organizations, that act as intermediaries between citizens and the state, require a clear sense of mission, democratic structures and procedures, the ability to raise and manage funds, and the capacity for ongoing program development and assessment.

Some of the larger conclusions expressed in this guidebook include: acknowledgment that sustainable advocacy work must have an organizational development component for civic groups; recognition that instilling societies with a culture of advocacy is long-term in nature and requires a guided, learning-by-doing approach; recognition that civic groups and citizens learn advocacy best through programs that build in action steps and include concerted follow-up; and a determination that ongoing assessment is programmatically necessary and requires up-front planning and realistic benchmarks.

This guidebook is not intended as the only word on how to promote sustained citizen participation in political processes. It is one of many vehicles that help explain how to increase citizen participation. Other NDI documents include *Democracy Education Civic Forum Style, How Domestic Organizations Monitor Elections*, assessment reports from Kenya, Slovakia, and West Bank and Gaza, and advocacy training manuals from Latvia, Romania, Slovakia, and West

Bank and Gaza. NDI will continue to monitor its programs to identify and disseminate lessons learned through these and other means.

This document was prepared principally by Aaron Azelton and Keith Jennings with the assistance of several other NDI staff members and volunteers. Your comments and suggestions can be directed to Aaron Azelton and Ashley Orton in Washington, DC.

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Introduction

This guidebook offers suggestions to NDI staff members and practitioners in donor agencies and implementing organizations responsible for designing, implementing and evaluating programs to strengthen citizen advocacy practices. The guidebook is intended for use after a decision has been made to encourage and support advocacy as a means of increasing citizens' political participation. For instances, in cases where an assessment has determined that there is a need to strengthen civil society's advocacy capacities, this guidebook will be useful in organizing programs to address such needs.

This introductory section describes briefly why there is a need to promote and strengthen citizen participation. The remaining five sections of the guidebook focus on conducting preliminary assessments of civil society groups, managing partnerships and developing citizen-centered advocacy programs, working cross culturally, increasing women's participation, and conducting ongoing program evaluation. Each section includes a list of objectives and a description of suggested approaches and practices. Some sections also contain short case studies from NDI programs. The guidebook's appendices also provide examples drawn from NDI experiences and select programming tools.

Why Embark on Citizen Participation Programs?

NDI conducts programs to increase informed citizen participation in political processes and to establish strong civic cultures, because the citizen is the heart of a functioning and meaningful democracy. Citizens give life and meaning to principles and institutions. For democracy to develop and endure, citizens need to exercise their rights and responsibilities. Without the active involvement of citizens in political life, government power can be abused and the basic rights and freedoms of democracy can go unrealized. Because a successful democracy requires informed participation, citizens must first understand ideas about citizenship, politics and government. They need knowledge to make decisions about policy preferences and the proper use of authority, along with the skills to voice their concerns and to hold government officials accountable. And then, they need to want to exercise their rights, and they need the political space to do so without unreasonable resistance or harassment from authorities or others.

Advocacy is defined as a political process through which citizens and citizen groups take collective action to bring desired changes to public policies or processes. Advocacy initiatives shift political power into the hands of citizens, demystify political processes, establish precedents for government responsiveness, transparency and accountability, and can lead to social betterment.

Promoting citizen advocacy is one approach used by NDI to help increase citizen participation.

However, even as democratic development proceeds and opportunities for citizen participation expand, citizens may still feel more and more disconnected because trends like globalization and economic restructuring can take decisionmaking away from the hands of citizens. For these reasons, empowering citizens must mean more than encouraging participation or providing opportunities for participation. It also must mean helping citizens develop the tools to solve complex problems, to work collectively, and to become leaders in their own right.

NDI's Approach

In most cases, programs to strengthen local advocacy efforts involve an in-country NDI presence. Trained representatives are then able to provide the consistent support that is often necessary when citizens and citizen groups begin organizing and participating in political processes. Although knowledge and skills could be conveyed to citizens through periodic visits to a country, or through seminars and publications, NDI has found that the envisioned citizen participation is often best facilitated by consistent, engaged coaching and assistance.

To help develop sustainable local practices, NDI often partners with local civil society groups. NDI also looks for unconventional opportunities to enlarge existing citizen organizing and participation initiatives. For instance, NDI may initiate work with student democratic movements, or with NGOs that previously worked actively on human rights issues. In so doing, NDI often is able to build on existing political will among groups, as well as build on pre-existing organizing experiences. Each of these reasons makes it easier for NDI to help groups take on broader, more sophisticated initiatives sooner rather than later. In other words, it is not always necessary to start at ground zero when helping citizens and citizens groups organize advocacy efforts. With NDI's assistance, civil society partners have made important contributions to initiating and managing political change. For example, the Coalition of NGO's in Kyrgyzstan successfully advocated to the parliament for "friendlier" NGO legislation. The Croatian group GONG lobbied successfully for the passage of the "Orange Amendment" to the Election Law, which allowed for nonpartisan domestic monitors to Croatia's elections. The Women's Manifesto Network in Namibia has consistently raised government awareness about gender issues and has become a recognized nationwide voice for these issues. The Union of the Disabled in West Bank and Gaza worked to win legislative approval of a law providing access to public places for the handicapped.

NDI endeavors to increase the direct connections between citizens and public officials, in order to establish an appropriate balance of power between citizens and the institutions of government. Since civil society organizations are comprised of citizens, NDI works to increase the political participation of citizens, not just of organizational leaders. In other words, NDI works to help broaden the level and quality of citizen involvement. As essential ingredients for successful democratic development, broader citizen participation and empowerment necessarily undergirds all NDI civil society programs.

Building advocacy capacity involves empowering people at all levels, and often outside the capital cities. When possible, developing links between NGOs in the capital city and community

based groups in regional areas, and building community-based networks between these areas, can be an effective way to broaden impact and involve citizens at the grassroots. However, there often is a tremendous lack of advocacy capacity among organizations at all levels. Citizens and citizen groups in new democracies require a range of skills to engage effectively in policy advocacy. These skills may include learning how to communicate with constituencies, reach out to other groups and form coalitions, evaluate policy documents, draft laws, or policies and propose alternatives, educate fellow citizens on issues and ideas, raise funds, develop strategic campaign plans, make participatory decisions, and recruit and mobilize allies and volunteers. The development of these types of skills can itself constitute movement toward a more democratic political culture within groups and communities, even when specific policy goals may not be realized. In the past, NDI has also produced nuts-and-bolts advocacy campaign organizing manuals that assist training in these areas and help groups plan advocacy campaigns from start to finish.¹

NDI does not, however, view civil society development or citizen-centered advocacy programs as an alternative to political party development. Political parties are a necessary element of a strong and vibrant democracy. Parties are unique organizations that fulfill a number of different, yet

Working Definition of Civil Society

A **Civil society** includes a multitude of associations representing a wide range of interests and ties around which citizens voluntarily organizes themselves to achieve a common objective. These organizations can include: national umbrella federations, religious institutions, cultural associations, women's organizations, business or trade associations, fraternal orders, professional associations, rural grassroots community based organizations, environmental groups and labor unions. A strong and vibrant civil society also is seen to nourish vast quantities of **social capital**. In general, social capital is the added value to society that is brought about when linkages and democratic values (e.g., tolerance, inclusion, reciprocity, participation and trust) among individuals and groups helps facilitate cooperation for mutual benefit.

related, functions that are central to the democratic process. Parties vet political leaders and contest elections, form accountable and representative government, and consolidate public interests. Since most citizens and civil society groups have more specific parochial interests, parties are necessary intermediary institution capable of balancing and aggregating competing interests in a broader political arena. NDI works to inform citizens and civil society organizations about the importance of strong democratically organized parties, and likewise works to inform

¹ These manuals and additional materials are available through NDI's on-line (www.ndi.org) **Access Democracy** library : "Getting Things Done in the West Bank and Gaza," West Bank and Gaza, 1998; "Policy Project Proposal Development Workshops," Romania, 1997; "Organizing and Advocacy in Slovakia," Slovakia, 1998; "Making Your Voices Heard," Latvia, 1997.

parties about the complementary roles of civil society organizations.

Conclusion

When working with citizens and CSOs, NDI's comparative advantage lies in helping increase their participation in political processes. Advocacy is one of the primary political tools that citizens in a democracy can use to influence public policies and processes. This guidebook offers advice to NDI staff members and other practitioners organizing programs to strengthen the practice of citizen-centered advocacy in new democracies.

SECTION 1

Assessing Civil Society: Identifying Opportunities and Building Relationships

Section Objectives

- 1) Provide reasons why assessments should be conducted.
- 2) Outline a process of assessment.
- 3) Introduce the process of building strategic partnerships.

Reasons for an Assessment

Developing citizen participation programs begins with a thorough understanding of the political landscape, and the organization and capacity of civil society. This includes understanding basic citizen attitudes toward government and political change, how power is used and understood by individuals and institutions, how the government is selected, and the extent of political participation opportunities. Although NDI may perceive from the outset that advocacy practices are weak or non-existent in a country, this does not immediately suggest a pre-packaged program. Systematic baseline assessments are essential for meaningful program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Specifically, baseline assessments help:

- Focus plans and resources by identifying needs and opportunities.
- Determine program starting points (baseline) and appropriate approaches.
- Provide information on potential partners and existing citizen participation initiatives.
- Help build relationships with citizens, citizens groups, political parties, and government officials.

The Process of Assessment

The process of assessment amounts to information gathering (what is presently the scope and quality of citizens' political participation? Why?), problem-solving (what needs to be changed or strengthened to increase participation, e.g. knowledge of democracy, organizing skills, legal environment?), and decision-making (who should NDI work with and how?). NDI assessments generally involve discussions and consultations with a wide range of actors. Information can be obtained through participatory means, such as interviews and focus group discussions. Information can also be obtained by reviewing news articles, NGO reports, conference proceedings, or studies conducted by other institutions. The time this process takes cannot be underestimated. To be effective, the process should be participatory. In other words, NDI representatives should develop an assessment process that substantively involves local actors in

the information gathering, problem-solving, and decisionmaking. However, this level of involvement is often a function of the relationships that the implementing organization has and is able to develop. Newly arrived expatriate representatives should not expect to sit down with local civic or political leaders and have candid conversations on day one. Often, more than one meeting or discussion will be necessary to ensure that enough trust exists for accurate and useful assessment information to emerge.

Take the time to develop relationships built on mutual respect and trust. Potential civil society partners should understand that NDI is itself a non-governmental organization and there are often opportunities for learning from each others' experiences. Demonstrate to potential partners that NDI wants and needs to learn from them as well as that NDI can bring them useful ideas, techniques, and people. Visit branches of the organizations if they exist, or observe some of the organization's program activities, or participants. The baseline assessment process provides an opportunity to sit down with leaders and activists at various levels and collect their perspectives on the current political situation and development needs of their community. From these activities, the relationship can then advance toward shared decisionmaking and program planning with partners. The tone of these early interactions will affect the nature of the relationship for a long time afterwards.

A baseline assessment will often focus on both the **political landscape** (e.g., the political and economic environment surrounding an activity, or those factors that may facilitate the political participation of civil society like supportive laws and regulations, adequate resources and skills, broad understanding of the differing roles of the state, private sector and civil society in a democracy, as well as the relationship between the local conditions and the global environment) and on the missions, vision, and overall **organizational development** of civil society groups.

Political Landscape

The following list offers suggestions for learning about the climate for citizens' political participation initiatives.

- Identify and talk with the different forms of existing leadership (formal, informal, and traditional) about the local political/economic situation and needs.
- Consult with citizens, including members of minority groups, about perceptions and expectations related to democracy.
- Determine how decisionmaking takes place at different government levels and whether citizens have meaningful access to the selection of government officials.
- Talk with government representatives about their plans, policies and perceptions of civil society.

- Find out how the dominant population treats minorities and how minorities treat outsiders to their community.
- Review structures and statutory instruments, rules and regulations, practices, and procedures that potentially could help to create a better enabling environment if enforced (should they already exist) or that may need to be repealed or further developed .
- Determine what social, political and economic roles women and minorities play.
- Talk with political party leaders about their perceptions of civil society’s role.
- Discover whether any examples of citizen advocacy exist at the different levels of government. It may be more appropriate to broaden existing initiatives, rather than introducing something completely new.
- Determine if a trade union movement exist and if it is supportive of broader civil society development and activism.
- Figure out what role religious communities play and who they may represent.
- Talk with other international development organizations and donors about their programs and priorities. It may be possible to complement existing programs or draw resources from some level of collaboration.
- Figure out how security may affect program activities. If the government does not allow freedom of assembly, then program participants could be at risk.
- Determine if the press operates without interference from the government. If the press is a tool of the government or other particular interests, then they are probably an unlikely ally in many citizen initiatives.

NDI has a tradition of conducting “focus groups” as a means of collecting information about citizens attitudes toward and understanding of democracy and development.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are semi-structured discussions conducted by a trained moderator with groups of six to 15 participants with certain characteristics. Groups are generally homogeneous, in order to obtain information about that particular segment of the population (e.g. women, union employees, youth, pensioners, disabled, business professionals). Focus groups are not scientific surveys and cannot constitute a “random sample.” However, results from focus groups can reveal underlying values and orientations, thought processes, emotions, reactions and understanding.

Focus groups have not only helped NDI design appropriate programs from the outset, but they have also helped NDI periodically monitor changes in citizen attitudes, understanding, and behavior over the course of a program. Often NDI works with local NGOs to help organize and moderate the focus group sessions. NDI has conducted focus groups as a program planning and evaluation activity in Bosnia, Cambodia, Croatia, Guatemala, Kenya, Kosovo, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Panama, Russia, South Africa, West Bank and Gaza and Yemen.

Organizational Development

Assessing the organizational development of civil society groups can serve two interrelated purposes. On the one hand, the process can help assess the function, form and efficacy of individual organizations, which would constitute a baseline measurement. On the other hand, if done in a participatory manner, the process can help organizations develop the important ability of assessing periodically their own strengths and weaknesses.

The following activities will help determine the organizational development of civil society groups.

- Determine the purpose and background of the organization.
 - 1) Where is the organization located? Does it have offices in other parts of the country?
 - 2) Why and when was the organization formed?
 - 3) What is the organization's mission/mandate? What is it trying to achieve?
 - 4) How does the organization perceive its role? Is it as change agent, service provider, social club?
 - 5) Is the organization local, regional or national?
 - 6) How does the organization describe its relationship with government?

- Examine the leadership structure.
 - 1) Who are the original leaders/founders of the organization and what is their background?
 - 2) How is the organization structured to carry out its work? Do they have an organizational chart or other ways for everyone in the organization to understand their relationships to one another?
 - 3) Is the leadership democratically selected and accountable to a board or to a membership?
 - 4) To what extent does the organization promote participatory decision making at all levels?
 - 5) Is there a board of directors (or other governing body)? How often do they meet? How active are they in leading the organization?

 - 6) Does organization have regular staff meetings, or other devices for sharing information or building consensus?

- Determine who the organization represents.
 - 1) Who is the constituency (e.g., does it include women, minority groups, people from the rural areas)?
 - 2) Does the staff reflect their constituency? Does the board reflect their constituency?
 - 3) If the organization is membership based, how many members do they have?
 - 4) Is there a process (annual meetings, etc.) of soliciting feedback from primary constituencies on a regular basis?
 - 5) Does organization assess constituency needs in a participatory manner?
 - 6) Does the organization maintain a regular mailing list for its publications? What is the scope of this distribution?
 - 7) Are there media articles done on the organization's work?
 - 8) How many press statements or public documents has the organization released?

- Examine the organization's program development and implementation processes.
 - 1) Has the organization assessed the needs of its constituency and are programs developed accordingly?
 - 2) Does the organization have a strategic plan?
 - 3) Who participates in program planning and implementation?
 - 4) Are the organization's scope of program or other activities appropriate to its financial and management capabilities?
 - 5) What is the nature and extent of collaboration with other NGOs? How well are the functions of key organizations defined and separated?
 - 6) What are the main communication channels among organizations?
 - 5) Does the organization produce an annual report, newsletter, or periodic reports that explain programs to the public and the organization's members?
 - 6) Does the organization systematically evaluate programs? Who does evaluation? How is that information utilized by the organization?

- Consider how the organization manages and maintains human resources.
 - 1) How many staff are full-time, part-time, or volunteer?
 - 2) Does the organization have personnel policies and procedures in writing? Is staff knowledgeable about these policies and procedures? Are there written job descriptions?
 - 3) Does the organization employ professionally trained staff with the necessary expertise to conduct the work of the organization?
 - 4) How is staff morale characterized? Is it ever evaluated?

 - 5) What training opportunities are available to staff?.
 - 6) What are the organization's staff recruitment procedures?

- Examine the organization's infrastructure.

- 1) Does the organization have permanent office space?
 - 2) Does the organization have computers, fax machines, or copiers?
 - 3) Does organization use the internet? Have an e-mail address? Have a website?
- Investigate the financial capabilities of the organization.
 - 1) Does the group have budgeting, accounting and auditing systems?
 - 2) Are there systems and procedures to protect against mismanagement? Does the organization produce financial statements on a regular basis?
 - 3) Does the organization have a fundraising plan? What are the primary source of funding?
 - 5) Have the sources of support changed over the last few years?
 - 6) What plans do they have to diversify their funding base? What percent of funding is self-generated or from local sources?
 - 7) Does the organization have both operating and program budgets?
 - 8) Have all reports to donors or regulatory agencies been filed in a timely manner?
 - 9) Does the organization have a bank account that can handle both local and foreign currency?
 - 10) How do donors describe the organization's financial capacities?
 - 11) Are regular financial audits conducted?

See Appendix 2 for a NDI Assessment Report for Russia that lays out the civil society landscape, possible program options, and recommendations. The report was drafted by NDI representative Alina Inayeh, a Romanian national, who previously served as the Executive Director of the Romanian NGO Pro-Democracy Association (PDA).

See Appendix 3 for a “Guide to Conducting Focus Groups” that was used to organize focus groups when planning and assessing a civic education program in South Africa.

See Appendix 4 for a “Sample Workplan and Timeline” that lays out NDI work in Albania during 2001.

SECTION 2

Working Cross Culturally to Build a Culture of Participation

Section Objectives

- 1) Explain the need for cultural sensitivity.
- 2) Describe ways to minimize cultural misunderstandings and increase program effectiveness.

Introduction

An acknowledgment and appreciation of cultural differences is necessary when organizations conduct development programs, since these programs are often conducted in a variety of cultural settings, each with distinct historical and political traditions. Effectively working cross culturally entails knowing how to interact with others that may have different belief systems, traditions of participation and power, languages, perceptions of time, and learning styles. It is important that NDI staff members and other practitioners gain a local perspective on how a program will be perceived, and what cultural factors may need to be taken into account before program activity begins. It is also important to understand how local culture can be leveraged to promote democratic values. Most cultures contain some beliefs and practices that can help underscore democratic principles like tolerance, accountability, consensus and participation.

Tips for Being “Culturally Prepared”

- To help with acclimation and to avoid cultural misunderstanding, hire local people as members of the NDI team. Hiring and consistently consulting local team members can significantly facilitate on-the-ground, cross-cultural work. The knowledge and first-hand experience of local team members from the culture(s) in question can help an expatriate resident representatives better interpret program participant needs, questions, and comments. In addition, consulting local team members can also help resident representatives determine when changes in the political environment may necessitate programmatic adjustments.
- Often, regional and country specialists

Hiring and Developing Local Staff Members

Local staff members play important substantive roles in NDI’s programs, and their ongoing development is also an important program component. When hiring local staff, attempt to balance race, ethnicity, gender, etc. A diverse local staff, representing different groups, can contribute significantly to implementing the program in a culturally sensitive way. It also helps model equity and inclusiveness. Importantly, attempt to create regular opportunities for local staff members to develop new skills and broaden their experience with programming and democratic practices.

can complement the knowledge of program staff members and resident staff members by presenting different or more elaborate perspectives on how cultural factors can affect the design and implementation of a program. In many cases, these folks may be found working in-country as journalists, academics, researchers, embassy staff members, donor representatives, business advisors, or development aid workers. Lunch or dinner with some of these people early in a program may be helpful. Be careful, however, to obtain a couple points of view, so as not to buy into anyone's particular bias or circle of friends, and to avoid raising suspicions about partisanship or other form of exclusivity.

Communicating Across Cultures

- Always attempt to understand what a person may be trying to relay to you, in light of their cultural background (i.e., values, beliefs, customs). Given the culture and the topic of discussion, some people may be more direct and open or even appear confrontational, whereas others may be indirect and subtle. Likewise, it is important to consider how what you say may be understood by someone from a different culture. Remember that mannerisms, appearance, tone of voice, and choice of words also influence how people understand and react.
- When professional translation is necessary, work with the translator in advance of an activity or meeting to help ensure that words and concepts are clearly understood and can be translated correctly. This will also help ensure that word choice is culturally acceptable. When possible, try supplementing the verbal delivery of complex information with visual aids, or printed materials.
- At the same time, help reduce possible tension by attempting to learn local language basics. For instance, learn general salutations. These can act as an ice-breaker when meeting and interacting with local people. Communicating in the host language, even to a small extent, can enhance the receptivity of host citizens toward you because it shows an initiative to learn more about their culture. It also demonstrates, to a certain degree, familiarity with their culture, and suggests an openness to learn more.
- Create materials in the local languages and, when possible, test the materials to ensure the meaning is properly conveyed. Informal focus groups, for instance, can be used to get feedback on materials. Also, pilot activities might be conducted, during which time materials are continuously refined.

A Word on Translation

Before entering meetings or delivering training activities that are to be translated, make sure the translator understands that s/he is not expected to interpret, paraphrase, or respond on your behalf; unless otherwise instructed. In many cases, it will be very important that all information is delivered and received. For this reason, a translator should not determine what is and is not useful information.

Planning and Organizing Participatory Program Activities

- Remember that the messenger may be more influential than the message. Local sensibilities, for example, may advise using a trainer of a particular age, or from a specific ethnic, racial or gender perspective. For instance, some cases may require an older trainer to add credibility to what is being said, and increase participants' appreciation for what the trainer is trying to get across. In other cases, such as in the training of women, it may be necessary to have a women trainer so that participants are not intimidated by a male trainer. And yet, in some cases, a man conducting training for an all-female audience may help increase women's empowerment by demonstrating that they merit the same attention as men.
- Make sure that you place all local holidays on your calendar and plan events accordingly. In some cases, just as in the United States, some holidays are particularly good for some activities but not for others. It is important to consider local holidays, as well as typical work schedules, when planning events for a couple of reasons. First, it shows that you recognize and respect the local customs that affect the lives of local team members and local program participants. Secondly, it helps ensure an adequate turnout for an activity.
- Use traditional settings and forms of communication to deliver training activities. For example, in Liberia "tea shops" are the traditional setting for small group discussions on politics. In Yemen, afternoon Qat chews are traditional venues for men to discuss community issues.
- Make sure that balances, such as gender, race, and ethnicity are taken into account when planning and organizing activities. Involving participants from different groups allows for greater representation and understanding of different perspectives, increased dialogue among different groups, and demonstrates, through example, that inclusiveness is important. In some situations, however, this may not be not possible, given the political context or other cultural sensitivities that may make homogenous groups more appropriate. Nonetheless, it is important that activities reach all groups when possible, particularly those politically marginalized, even though this may sometimes mean conducting separate activities.

General Rules of Thumb

- There is no such thing as being off the job when in the field and in the company of partners.
- Try to eat what is on offer (local cuisine) and use the local modus operandi (e.g. fingers, chopsticks).
- Alcohol may be offensive to some. Unless there is certainty that it will not cause offense, it should be avoided publicly.
- Take care not to appear overly negative about conditions in the country (e.g. roads, water, electricity etc.) or about the impediments of doing business (e.g., public bureaucracies, corruption, changing regulations).

Conclusion

Open-mindedness, respect, and an interest in the local culture will help staff members overcome many cross-cultural challenges. Drawing on local team members for advice and regularly considering cultural implications of ideas and activities will also help minimize cross-cultural difficulties.

SECTION 3

Managing Partnerships and Developing Citizen-Centered Advocacy Programs

Section Objectives

- 1) Explain the nature of mutually respectful partnerships.
- 2) Describe the relationship between baseline assessment information and work plan development.
- 3) Outline some considerations when planning and implementing programs.
- 4) Describe how partnerships develop and endure.

Introduction

Advocacy initiatives help shift political power into the hands of citizens and can establish precedents for government responsiveness, transparency and accountability. These initiatives also help citizens and citizen groups take collective action to bring desired changes to public policies or processes.

NDI's advocacy programs provide citizens with training and guidance on the use of advocacy techniques, such as framing issues, determining appropriate strategies and tactics, building coalitions, recruiting volunteers, fostering community deliberations, working with the media, and educating others. NDI advocacy programs are also concerned with strengthening the organizational capacities of civil society organizations. Better structured and better managed organizations operate more effectively, helping citizens identify and articulate their priorities and participate in political decision-making.

NDI is committed to working in partnership with local civil society organizations as a means of increasing citizen participation through public policy advocacy. Although creating a new group to conduct advocacy may be nonsensical if many groups already exist, NDI might work to foster a coalition of existing groups around a cross-cutting issue (e.g. NGO law, freedom of information act, election law, constitutional reform). In every instance, however, partnerships ought to be based on mutual respect and trust, with an emphasis on solidarity, rather than paternalism.

Program Design Considerations

NDI does not have a one-size-fits-all approach to promoting citizen-centered advocacy. Instead, the baseline information is used to determine the appropriate path along which NDI can help citizens and citizen groups move to action under the given circumstances. As indicated earlier,

baseline assessments generally provide information on the political context, organization and scope of civil society, as well as on the organizational development of select groups.

Depending on the baseline assessment information, several different program paths may be chosen in consultation and cooperation with those organizations NDI is seeking to assist. In some instances, there may be a preliminary need for educating communities in a comparative way about citizen roles and responsibilities and those of democratically elected officials. There may also be a need to help citizens and citizen groups understand that they can necessarily act as change agents and can affect policy decisions through collective actions like advocacy. In these cases, initial program activities may have to focus on providing basic knowledge and skills as a prerequisite for future collective action. On the other hand, a situation may exist where citizens already understand their roles and the possibility of action (there may even exist some good local examples), but they still need to develop more advanced skills that would enable them to form coalitions and be more influential advocates.

The baseline information gathered is used to determine starting points and provide a level against which future developments can be gauged. Generally, annual workplans are developed which provide detailed explanations of how the program will work. This process also includes creating benchmarks (intermediate objectives) denoting what will be achieved at different points of the program. Essentially, a workplan is a management tool that breaks a program down into a sequence of “bite-size” pieces, reflecting a programmatic beginning, middle and end. As such, the workplan can help throughout a program in determining whether the program is progressing, if it has stalled, or if it is moving off course. Workplans can also help with delineating roles and responsibilities, and with anticipating when and how resources (e.g. human, financial, material) will be used.

Sustaining Advocacy and Other Citizen Actions

Moving citizens to advocacy generally requires a concerted effort and strong collaborative relationships. Hit and run training sessions on advocacy do not work as well as programs that assist citizens and citizen groups with moving systematically and knowingly through all phases of an advocacy effort. In most cases, citizen-centered advocacy initiatives are a new form of political participation. This often necessitates a “guided” approach that helps citizens develop a range of skills deliberately – and a sense of their own power – through learning-by-doing. Only through practice, does advocacy become an institutionalized behavior.

Partnership Considerations

The term partnership basically refers here to relationships where NDI works collaboratively with local group(s) to fulfill some mutually agreed upon program objectives. At the same time, NDI attempts to transfer a variety of programmatic and organizational skills to local partners (this differentiates NDI from donors that simply provide financial assistance). True, mutually respectful

partnerships exist when local organizations are involved with NDI in setting the priorities, making decisions about program design and implementation, and take equal responsibility for the success of an initiative.

As a partnership begins to develop, make certain that organizations understand that NDI's mission relates to politics and political participation. In other words, potential partners need to be aware that NDI is about increasing citizen involvement in politics. Likewise, NDI staff members need to be respectful of the mission of a partner group. Groups should not feel pressured to redirect their organizational focus or to place their reason for existing second to NDI's agenda. When groups redirect their focus to suit a donor-driven agenda, these groups often grow dependent and become less inclined to represent the interests and concerns of actual citizens. Ideally, groups should feel compelled to work with NDI because they acknowledge that NDI is willing and able to support *their* agenda. In the case of coalitions, for instance, NDI has been more successful when groups have begun to coalesce naturally and NDI then steps in to provide targeted assistance. In these situations, the political will already exists and NDI can help enhance its expression. A good example of this situation is found in NDI work with the VOICE coalition in Russia.

It is essential that local partners are involved in program planning. If citizens and citizen groups are expected to conduct advocacy campaigns (i.e. taking unprecedented political action with NDI assistance), it is rather important that they are involved in these decisions and understand the implications. The collective development of specific objectives and a description of what constitutes success need to be determined jointly. NDI should not drive planning decisions and override the missions of partner organizations with an NDI or donor program agenda. Ideally, workplans, or at least the germane portions, are developed with the participation of local partners. This participation helps NDI and the partner clarify expectations and responsibilities, and also helps to empower the partner and ensures that the program is being responsive to local needs.

As part of this process, NDI should help partner groups assess their own capacities and set some organizational developmental objectives, as well as the shorter term program objectives. For some organizations, this may mean a full-fledged strategic planning process to determine how the organization envisions the future, what role the organization wants to play in helping create that future, how advocacy fits into the organization's broader thinking, and what skills, resources, and time the organization needs to fulfill its vision.

All programs with civil society organizations should be viewed as an opportunity for strengthening those organizations, as well as for institutionalizing the practice of citizen advocacy. Supporting the capacity needs of emerging civil society organizations is a must to assure real programmatic ownership and sustainability of advocacy practices. Capacities range from the operational (e.g., the know-how and systems needed to conduct an advocacy campaign) to the organizational (e.g., the ability to plan, manage programs and people, raise and account for funds, hold a board meeting, etc.). If the objective of an NDI program is to increase organizational capacities and create sustainable advocacy practices, steps must be taken to build an organization's leadership,

management, fundraising, and human resource development abilities from the outset.

Some partnerships may be formalized through cooperative agreements, which provide financial assistance to groups. This assistance corresponds to and complements NDI's technical assistance activities. Since NDI does not exist principally to be a donor, most sub-grants are used by NDI as a means to provide funds while helping groups develop their organizational and operational capacities. For example, a grant might be given to help a group with their advocacy activities, and at the same time to help the group learn how to budget, and better manage and account for funds. NDI should not, however, unilaterally dictate what ought to occur programmatically simply because NDI controls access to certain funds.

Some Basic Considerations for Managing Partnerships

- Send a consistent message about NDI's intentions and expectations. Also, be explicit about NDI's relationship to its funders (e.g., NED, USAID) and notify local partners when changes in those relationships occur.
- Be clear about what NDI can and cannot do so that groups will not be surprised when NDI says no to some request. Even under the best circumstance, some give and take will be required.
- Leave space for groups to make some mistakes from which they can learn, especially if they expect to continue the work independently in the future. At the same time, build in opportunities to evaluate experiences with the partner, and to help them learn lessons for the future.
- Recognize local expertise and the existing capacities of a partner organization. This "appreciative" approach makes it easier for partners to build upon recognized strengths.
- A good partnership requires developed relationships. For this reason, try to make sure that any succession of staff members is well-managed, in terms of sufficient overlap between old and new, etc.
- Maintain a clear time frame. How is NDI going to leave this project without causing ripples in its relationship with its partner?
- When sub-grants are involved, general accounting training and coaching at the front end can help the group develop financial management capacities and make them more accountable. Also, NDI must be cognizant of how partners view the money and NDI's role. NDI should not be viewed necessarily as "the decisionmaker" or as just a donor.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) are also used to clarify and confirm the obligations and expectations between NDI and partner groups. An MOU reflects a partner group's political will to engage in specified types of organizational development and programmatic activities (e.g., a partner commits to developing a strategic plan, improving organizational management and

decisionmaking, recruiting more volunteers, and organizing an advocacy effort). For a partner, a MOU also articulates the level and type of support NDI will provide them in their organizational development and program effort (e.g., NDI will assign a full-time representative with organizing and non-profit management experience to provide advice and a series of regular training sessions on certain topics for 12 months).

See Appendix 5 for “Training Agendas” that have been used to provide a comparative introduction to advocacy practices.

See Appendix 6 for a sample “Memorandum of Understanding” used between NDI and the Center for Civic Initiatives in Bosnia.

See Appendix 7 for “Sub-Grant Management Information” from NDI’s accounting department.

CASE STUDY

Mobilizing Service Providing Organizations as Public Policy Advocates: Access for the Disabled in West Bank and Gaza

In 1996, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip exercised their political will by electing a Palestinian executive and the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). These institutions provided a basis for representative and accountable government in the Palestinian territories for the first time. To reinforce this important first step, NDI conducted a program during 1997 and 1998 to help civil society organizations conduct advocacy campaigns. More specifically, the Civic Activities Project (CAP) was designed to move existing civil society organizations to policy advocacy at the PLC level.

To implement the CAP program, NDI placed a veteran resident representative in West Bank and Gaza Strip for the nine-month period of the program. The representative had prior NDI experience working with citizen advocacy groups in Malawi, Russia, Slovakia and elsewhere. Based on this experience and the results of consultations with civic and political leaders in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the representative and other team members made a variety of decisions about how to organize the program to achieve the desired result of policy advocacy.

Identifying Potential Partners

- Potential partners had to have a membership base and a potential volunteer base.
- Potential partners needed a variety of leaders at different levels of the organization, because groups with national, provincial, and local leadership and volunteers generally provide more training opportunities.
- Potential partners needed an existing capacity to manage people, money and time.
- Potential partners needed a long-term issue agenda, or a multi-issue agenda.
- Potential partners needed to have a strong interest in achieving a concrete result. It could not be about just raising awareness, with no end-game in mind.

Finding an Issue

- The policy issue had to affect a broad number of people.
- It had to be something that the government would likely take up with enough pressure.
- It had to be something with no identifiable or organized opponents.
- It could not be an issue that would necessarily require a protracted multi-year battle.

With the criteria in mind, NDI began an assessment process to identify viable partners. In the end, NDI chose to work with General Union of the Disabled (GUD). The GUD is a territory-wide group of more than 5,000 members, organized into local chapters which focus on local issues. Traditionally, GUD chapters dealt mainly with casework – assisting disabled Palestinians to gain access to medical care, education and employment opportunities on an individual basis.

Recognizing that these issues are part of the civil rights afforded all Palestinians, whether disabled or not, the GUD became interested in organizing a national effort to address disability access. Rather than continuing to work with separate schools, hospitals or places of employment, the GUD sought to lobby government officials – in the PLC and in various ministries – to mandate access and opportunities for disabled Palestinians. With NDI assistance, the GUD decided to begin this advocacy campaign with the issue of access to buildings.

NDI training with the GUD was conducted at the national and regional leadership level and included: prioritizing goals; planning meetings; promoting national legislation or resolutions; utilizing the media; and developing an ongoing relationship with the Palestinian Legislative Council, the various ministries, and elected officials on issues of concern to disabled Palestinians.

NDI initially began training members of the GUD in preparation for Disability Week in December 1997. The training began with an initial meeting with the GUD two months beforehand in which 22 members attended. This meeting was followed by a two-day policy and message development workshop in November, which brought together members of the Union's central and branch offices to discuss the development of a national policy and message, and methods for bringing the message to decision makers in the PLC. NDI recruited PLC member Azmi Shu'abi to meet with the group to counsel them on how to define their needs, outline problems and solutions, and identify supporters. The outcome of these meetings was a week-long advocacy effort in which extensive media outreach and public demonstrations occurred, which was hailed as a major success by the media and other observers.

Following Disability Week, NDI sponsored a "Lobby Day" with the GUD that focused on the lack of legal rights for disabled people. Using a locally-produced advocacy manual "Lobbying the Council," the Institute trained 30 members of the GUD on lobbying skills and provided them with a form they could use to keep records of their interaction with PLC members. The Union prepared talking points and drafted a brochure entitled "What is Access?" to be handed out to PLC members. GUD members then spent a day attending a plenary session at the PLC, lobbying members about the issues of the disability rights and access.

As a follow-up to Lobby Day, NDI sponsored a GUD National Rights Leadership Retreat in December, which focused on the pros and cons of focusing on major rights versus the issue of disability access. At the retreat, the group determined the specific pieces of access (rights in employment, education, and non-discrimination), and defined the nature of access in terms of making buildings - both old and new - accessible to the handicapped. With assistance from NDI, the group then developed an action plan for passage of access legislation, focusing on how to influence decision makers, mobilize allies, neutralize opponents, and how to effectively use the media in their access campaign. Following the retreat, volunteer forms and petitions on access issues were created and circulated to collect names of potential members and to influence government.

With NDI guidance, the GUD began working with a lawyer to draft access legislation. In March,

1998, a GUD conference was convened to present the legislation to GUD members from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Copies of the law were then distributed to all GUD members for review. NDI trainers worked with the GUD on strategies for building allies, both within the PLC and in their communities; relations with the media; and how to write press releases and petitions in preparation for the legislation's public unveiling in May.

In the weeks leading up to the conference, NDI worked intensively with GUD membership to provide assistance in drafting invitations, speeches and press releases; logistical support; provision of the draft law in Arabic, braille, and audio; and training GUD leaders in conference organization and preparation.

On May 22, 1998, NDI and the GUD convened a conference in which the disability access legislation was formally unveiled. The law and the conference alike represented the first time the disability community asked for their rights to have access to public places like government buildings, hospitals, schools, and businesses. In attendance were over 300 people, including officials of the Palestinian Authority, Fathi Arafat (president of the Red Crescent Society and brother of Yasser Arafat), and Azmi Shu'abi, chairman of the newly established disability caucus in the PLC. At the conference, Council Member Shu'abi commended the work of the GUD, pointing out that the GUD's work represented the first time that an outside group had drafted legislation for consideration by the Council, as well as the first time a caucus was created in the Council. He noted that the legislation would be the first of its kind in the Middle East, and commended the GUD for setting an example by using the legislature as a vehicle for their advocacy issues, representing a foundation of democracy.

One week after the conference, the PLC passed the "zero" reading of the access legislation. It was then referred to the Social Affairs Committee for review.

SECTION 4

Increasing Women's Participation

Section Objectives

- 1) Explain some basic tactics for involving women into all aspects of a program.

Introduction

To broaden women's political participation, NDI and other implementing organizations should look for every opportunity to enhance the organizing and leadership skills and experiences of women.

Women are citizens. Yet, women in every political system in the world are under-represented at all levels. Moreover, when there is involvement, it is often at the level of elites. Even in places where women's groups have flourished, many — community-based groups in particular — do not realize their political potential. Oftentimes, women are forced to operate in cultural, socio-economic, legal and political environments unfavorable to their political participation as citizens with equal rights and responsibilities. A lack of collaboration among women and women's groups, combined with a lack of awareness among men, diminishes the potential of women to be capable advocates, political players, leaders and active citizens.

Steps to Involve Women in Programs

- As part of the baseline assessment process, form an understanding of women's roles and responsibilities in different contexts (i.e., social, economic, political). Also become informed of the relevant laws, conventions and practices that may provide incentives and disincentives for women's participation.
- Examine the gender relationships, or those standard cultural conceptions that may prescribe separate roles and behavioral norms for men and women within society. At the same time, other issues to focus upon, in terms of understanding women's potential for participation, include the type of power women already may have as decision-makers in the home and community leaders (e.g, healers, midwives, instructors, merchants, creditors). This information will help determine points of entry and ways to leverage existing practices.
- Talk with representatives of existing groups, including political parties, women's

parliamentary caucuses or labor unions, that have an interest in promoting women's political participation and consider possible ways to collaborate (e.g., inclusion of women from other groups in training programs in exchange for access to their networks to expand outreach capacity).

- Encourage and recruit women as participants in all programs activities. When working with local partners, try to stipulate a certain number of women participants when initial program planning and decisionmaking occurs.
- Sensitize both men and women to the issue of women's political participation, in order to increase wider social acceptance of politically active women. Since men often expect women to remain marginalized and under-represented in leadership positions, men and women both must be challenged to consider democratic alternatives and the meaning of *citizen* participation.
- Involve opinion leaders in the design and implementation of programs that are geared toward increasing women's political participation. Obtaining their buy-in can facilitate the program's implementation and increase receptivity toward the program.
- Use both female and male trainers whenever possible to reinforce the role of women as activists and potential leaders. This can help condition men to accept women in these types of roles. Moreover, attempt an equal mix of men and women trainers all NDI activities, not only those which target women as participants.
- Develop a criteria for the types of women to involve in a program, and then extend invitations directly to the targeted women. Also, make sure that program activities are held at accessible locations for women and at a time that fits their work and home schedules.
- Help women develop an awareness of the power they already exercise in their daily lives (e.g., caring for children, running a home and making related household decisions, working in partnership with other women to produce and sell goods). By raising women's awareness that they already have and practice power and are involved in power relationships everyday, self-confidence in their individual capabilities will increase.
- Leave legacies in the form of case studies that can help motivate additional women and provide other practitioners with information describing best practices and lessons learned. Documenting and disseminating lessons learned should be viewed as a critical part of the

program process.

CASE STUDY
Women Taking Action: One Step at a Time in Namibia

Background

During the ten years since independence, Namibia has generally enjoyed stability as a multi-party democracy based on the rule of law and regular elections at national, regional and local levels. The Namibian Parliament has made significant strides towards becoming the independent and deliberative branch of government that was envisioned in the nation's constitution and civil society is beginning to engage in many important public policy issues facing the country. However, women's participation in the political process remains low. Despite the fact that they constitute fifty-one percent of the population, only fifteen percent of the national leadership is female, while four percent of regional councilors are women and only one of thirteen governors.

As part of NDI's effort to foster the development and practice of citizen advocacy and broaden the political participation of women, in August 1999, NDI's resident representative began working as technical advisor to one of the country's best-known women's organizations, Sister Namibia. The campaign activities described below illustrate the evolution of a nation-wide grassroots movement, characterized by a progressive advancement in the quality of organizational skills and advocacy tools.

Finding an Opening

As a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action and the Southern Africa Development Community Declaration on Gender and Development, the Namibian government committed itself to increasing women's participation at all levels of politics and decision making. Though largely symbolic, this move by the government created an environment conducive to increasing women's participation and provided a centric point around which advocates began to coalesce.

Writing a Manifesto

Working from this national commitment, Sister Namibia and its partners borrowed the structure of the Declaration on Gender and Development and wrote a manifesto clearly outlining their demands and vision of the future. The *Manifesto* was developed through an extensive process of consultation. This involved the distribution of three consecutive drafts to over 200 women activists and representatives of NGOs, political parties, parliament and all levels of government. The final document reflected subsequent comments and resulted in a comprehensive, straightforward and accessible tool built upon a broad base of ownership. Additionally, the involvement of many women in the development of the *Manifesto* served to educate and mobilize them on gender issues from the very inception of the campaign.

Creating a Coalition

Initially, the coalition behind the movement consisted of participants from a workshop on “Women in Politics and Decision Making”. At this event, participants agreed that Sister Namibia would lead NGOs, women’s wings of political parties and other organizations in a campaign to promote the participation of women in the 1999 general election and beyond. This group and those that joined in response to the *Manifesto*, constituted a coalition of more than 30 civil society organizations and parties spread throughout the country. This group became known as the Women’s Manifesto Network (WMN).

Picking Your Time and Target

The WMN kicked off a nation-wide, pre-election advocacy campaign with the publication of the document in six indigenous languages and its distribution in all thirteen Namibian regions. In preparation for the release of the document, regional and town facilitators participated in a national training-of-trainers workshop which provided for a transfer of skills in media advocacy, organization of workshops, information dissemination and political mobilization as experienced in countries such as Botswana and South Africa. The regional and town facilitators subsequently organized workshops and launching events where they distributed the *Manifesto* to local inhabitants. This raised visibility and awareness to a national level and set the scene for lobbying political parties and conducting voter education in preparation for the elections.

Win Support and Neutralize

WMN invited all political parties contesting the 1999 elections to the *Manifesto’s* national launch event. Representatives of three parties attended and expressed unanimous support for the aims and contents of the document which addressed the following universal issues:

- Women’s political participation;
- Women’s human rights;
- Education and training;
- Women’s health and reproductive rights;
- Women and the economy;
- Women and poverty;
- Women and the environment;
- Women and the media; and
- Women and peace.

Representatives of the ruling party were conspicuously absent from the launch, which followed a

public denouncement of the *Manifesto* by their own Women's League. The Women's League spokesperson claimed that the *Manifesto* confused Namibian women by including a call for the recognition of the human rights of gay and lesbian people. According to their logic, the human rights of these individuals were not part of the "gender issue". Despite this denunciation, WMN succeeded in winning multi-party support at the beginning of its campaign, which helped mitigate widespread political opposition.

Building Understanding

In order to build a base of common understanding around the *Manifesto*, WMN conducted a train-the-trainers workshop for women's activists from each of Namibia's thirteen regions, in addition to members of NGOs based in the capitol city, Windhoek. The workshop familiarized the participants with the goals of the *Manifesto* and equipped them with the skills necessary to organize workshops and public launch events in their home regions. This corps extended the campaign nation-wide and fostered continuity in understanding and resolve among activists, which provided greater strength to the network.

Winning Small, Winning Early, and Winning Often

Encouraged by the extensive media coverage the coalition had received around the elections, after an evaluation of their campaign, the WMN decided to organize a month-long series of advocacy activities around International Women's Day in the month of March. WMN's *Gender Awareness Month* promoted awareness at both regional and national levels and included opportunities for citizens to lobby the public officials on areas of concern to women. In the regions, many WMN facilitators organized their own events to mark International Women's Day, while in Windhoek, the following activities were held in progression:

- C Women and Poverty Forum (March 4, approximately 80 attendees);
- C International Women's Day Event (March 8, approximately 100 attendees);
- C Women and HIV/AIDS Discussion (March 11, approximately 50 attendees);
- C Girl Child March and Rally (March 16, approximately 3000 attendees); and
- C Ecumenical Worship on Violence against Women and Children (March 26, approximately 90 attendees).

The WMN followed the *Gender Awareness Month* campaign, which received broad coverage on international and Namibian radio stations and in the written press, with a campaign organized in conjunction with a parliamentary petition. The petition demanded that the Ministry of Justice finalize and table the Domestic Violence Bill and that the Parliament pass the Child Care and Protection and the Child Maintenance bills. The WMN and several other groups coordinated a march and rally at Parliament to present the petition to the Deputy Speaker of the National

Assembly. The petition was signed by nearly 1000 people, many of whom had been approached and recruited at *Gender Awareness Month* activities. The petition event was also extensively covered by the media and included a major television news piece.

The final WMN campaign initiated with direct NDI assistance sought to require, by law, women to hold fifty percent of elected decision-making positions at all levels of government. In preparation, NDI assisted WMN in delivering a workshop to launch the campaign and develop appropriate advocacy tools. NDI also trained WMN leaders in focus group moderation skills, which subsequently enabled them to conduct focus groups to pre-test posters developed as advocacy tools. Based on the information collected during 11 focus groups, they were able to refine their posters prior to publishing. The coalition then printed copies of two different posters and a pamphlet. Both posters exhorted the public to: “Demand laws that put women in 50% of all elected government positions.” The pamphlet outlined the rationale for and demands of the campaign. One section explained the current situation of women in government, another described what the Constitution and international agreements stated regarding gender equality, while a third detailed the demands of the campaign. WMN consulted approximately 45 organizations and 42 individuals on the pamphlet. Consequently, 37 organizations and political parties had their names printed on the back to signify their support for the campaign goals. Numerous regional workshops followed, as WMN held events around the country to discuss the materials and launch the campaign.

The activities culminated in a WMN-sponsored march and rally at the Parliament. There the Speaker accepted a petition that was signed by nearly 3000 persons and demanded that women occupy 50% of elected government positions. In response, the National Assembly formed a Petitions Committee and later, WMN leadership was granted an audience with the Parliamentary Government Affairs Committee. This was the first time they had ever met with a parliamentary committee. They also held numerous meetings with the leadership of different political parties and the Directorate of Elections to discuss campaign demands.

Isolating, Infiltrating, and Integrating

An effective organizational technique utilized by the WMN in the parliamentary petition march and rally was the involving the *Multi-Media Campaign on Violence Against Women and Children* and the *Khomas Steering Committee of Men Against Violence Against Women* as partners in sponsoring the event. The buy-in of men and the media not only guaranteed coverage of the event, but also bridged the gender gap, increasing support from the general public. The involvement of students and faculty from several universities augmented participation and disseminated the message to a wider audience as well.

Initial Results of WMN Activities

Within a year and a half, WMN made significant strides in the advocacy arena. WMN’s advocacy

work brought them into contact with the National Assembly, the National Council, various ministries, political parties, other civil society organizations and international bodies, such as the UN Commission on Human Rights and Amnesty International. The variety of political advocacy tools repeatedly applied, created the conditions for the expansion of skills and wider results. The techniques have included: marches to the Parliament; rallies at the Parliament; petitions presented to the Parliament; invitations to MPs of both Houses to participate and speak in WMN events; meetings with Parliamentary committees; and media work (i.e., press releases, letters to the editor, radio and TV debates and press conferences).

According to leaders of the WMN, NDI's technical and financial assistance yielded a number of important results:

- C Improved content and formatting of the *Manifesto*, posters, and pamphlet.
- C Improved distribution systems for the *Manifesto*, posters, and pamphlet.
- Better defined campaign goals.
- C Stronger time management/program planning skills.
- C Better structured training-of-trainers workshops.
- C More comprehensive reporting to donors.
- C Increased contacts with Parliament.
- C Increased contacts with the Executive.
- C Improved problem resolution skills.
- C Increased confidence in conducting advocacy programs.
- C Decreased reliance on external technical assistance.

SECTION 5

Ongoing Program Evaluation

Section Objectives

- 1) Describe the purpose of evaluation.
- 2) Outline strategies for building ongoing evaluation into programs.

Introduction

Regular evaluation – by both NDI and local partners – is a critical element of well-functioning and effective programs. By illuminating strengths and weaknesses, evaluation activities help promote continual programmatic improvement. Evaluation also assists program planners and implementers with decision-making. The evaluation results help determine if the program is working (i.e., reaching objectives), if it is still practical and pertinent, if adjustments should be made, and if it merits future resources.

At the conclusion of an advocacy program, citizens and citizen groups should be better able to participate in political processes as a direct result of the program intervention. Therefore, evaluation is a process of determining exactly what changed and what is the evidence for the changes. An ongoing evaluation process provides a record of program developments that can be used to illustrate actual impact at the end of the program. In order to provide this type of information, an evaluation process needs to be in place from the program's outset. This requires program managers and implementers to design clear plans for how developments will be monitored and measured. It also requires careful consideration of how evaluation results will be fed back into the program.

Building Ongoing Evaluation Into the Program

Developing an ongoing evaluation process starts as baseline information is gathered, programmatic starting points are determined, and program objectives are defined. The objectives are the end points against which a program's impact is evaluated. Hopefully, every activity moves a program closer to the stated objectives. The question then becomes: How will we know this is happening effectively.

Do not wait until the end of a program to determine if the sum of all activities adds up to programmatic success. For example, if a program consists of five-step activities sequence intended to move citizens from inaction to sustained action, then the achievement of each step needs to be assessed before proceeding to the next step. An ongoing evaluation process will allow the program's pulse to be taken regularly from start to finish. This requires asking constantly: Which activities are working? Why? Why not? What changed as a result? The actual monitoring process can be as simple as observing the implementation of activities, talking with

program participants, and collecting anecdotes for use in periodic reports.

For an evaluation process to work, it is necessary to determine what information is needed, how it will be gathered, who will gather it, when it will be gathered, and how it will be used. This first requires a commitment to an ongoing process of evaluation and program improvement.

Suggestions for building an evaluation process into a program include:

C Involve program partners in determining what constitutes success and in the process of monitoring and measuring progress.

C Start with clear, realistic, and measurable program objectives. From the objectives, it should be possible to describe what will change as a result of the program. Will participants be more knowledgeable about advocacy, will they be able to plan a campaign or build a coalition, will they be able to manage funds, or will they actually organize themselves and change a public policy. Different objectives, require different levels of time and effort to achieve. Getting groups to organize an advocacy campaign and successfully change a public policy, for instance, does not generally happen in just a couple months.

• Define a programmatic beginning, middle and end, and define benchmarks that denote progress. (e.g., issue defined, recruitment of women members, coalition formed, campaign plan drafted, first action taken, volunteers recruited, allies identified, etc.). Larger program objectives can be broken down in the workplan, so that the program is a step-by-step process.

C Based on the objectives, benchmarks and activities, determine the specific types of qualitative and quantitative information that need to be gathered. For example, if the objective is strengthening an organizations capacity to organize an advocacy campaign, it

Select Monitoring Methods

- Track the number of training sessions conducted, participants attending, consultations held, materials distributed, etc.
- Collect participants testimonials using focus groups or informant interviews and compare to past information.
- Discuss the direction and usefulness of the program with citizens and partner organizations.
- Discuss the program’s impact with other local and international organizations.
- Systematically collect anecdotes about how participants are applying what they learn.
- Gather media reports related to program activities and results.
- Collect any materials (e.g., newsletters, citizen questionnaires, volunteer recruitment forms) created by citizens or citizen groups as a result of NDI activities.
- Review financial reports from sub-grantees.

may be necessary to monitor whether a plan was created, allies were identified, volunteers recruited, etc.

- C Formalize the system of analyzing and distributing information about program developments. For example, will there be weekly meetings with partners to discuss progress and make adjustments? When will reports be drafted and who should receive them? Will there be any type of periodic external evaluation? Perhaps NDI colleagues from other countries should visit occasionally and give feedback on the program.

Monitoring and Measuring Progress and Feeding Information Back Into the Program

Evaluation is easiest and most effective when designed as an integral day-to-day component of a program. Several methods can be used to monitor program developments regularly. Of course, the best mix of methods will depend on what needs to be monitored and measured.

The information generated through the monitoring process should then be reviewed in light of objectives, benchmarks, activities and underlying assumptions. The analysis and conclusion should then be disseminated through regular field reports and should also be used as a basis for periodic program development discussions.

When analyzing assessment information, be mindful of changes in the operating environment and program assumptions. Occasionally, external factors impinge upon a program's ability to function properly. This may require a rethinking of objectives, prompting consequent changes in the program approach.

NDI staff members ought not to take total responsibility for evaluating a program. Program partners and participants can be directly involved in program assessment and development. Work with partners to help them establish a system to assess themselves and their accomplishments periodically. The system could comprise monthly roundtable discussions with organizational leaders and primary program participants, followed by written reports of select accomplishments to be published in a newsletter, or on a website. Any information generated during these evaluation activities can then be fed back into the program and can also be used to measure impact.

Through mechanisms, such as Memoranda

Assessing Training Activities

Since most programs are built upon a series of consultations and training sessions, it is necessary to assess the effectiveness of these activities. Formal evaluations should be administered at the end of training activities to determine if the participants actually learned anything and if they intend to use their new knowledge or skills. These evaluations may include questionnaires that gauge participants' *reaction* to the training and also activities that oblige participants to *demonstrate* what they learned (e.g., role plays, simulations, discussions, or actual practice where they write a plan or develop a press release).

of Understanding (MOU), NDI and its partners define specific developmental objectives and activities, and delineate implementation responsibilities. These types of mechanisms place ownership of the program in the hands of the local partners and foster their commitment to learn and apply new practices. This participation and commitment should be carried over into the process of evaluating what is and is not working programmatically. It should also encompass the area of sub-grant management on the part of NDI and the partner group. NDI should be prepared to provide groups with constructive feedback on their accounting and reporting procedures. Likewise, partner groups should be encouraged to discuss partnership issues with NDI. NDI's partners should feel empowered to discuss financial relations in an open, honest and professional manner, as this will help both groups manage and sustain future partnerships.

Conclusion

Since program evaluation is not an exact science, there are many ways to go about it. Every program will require a slightly different approach. Be creative and flexible when designing a process in the beginning. Over the course of the program, an effective evaluation process will help promote improvement and will provide a step-by-step account of developments.²

See Appendix 8 for a “Program Evaluation Framework” that offers a way to consider the different levels of program evaluation.

See Appendix 9 for “Program Reporting Guidelines and Example”

See Appendix 10 for “Sample Program Review/Exit Memo”

² For more information on evaluation techniques, see the following websites:
<http://www.arts.gov/pub/Lessons/index.html>; <http://www.mapnp.org/library/>; <http://www.mncn.org/>

APPENDICES