

NDI VESTI

THE NEWSLETTER OF NDI SERBIA, MAY-JUNE 2001, NUMBER 01



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first issue of **NDI VESTI**, NDI Serbia's newsletter! We hope you enjoy it and find the information here useful.

We have included news on upcoming events plus a review of training highlights of the first half of 2001. You'll find a description of NDI's history here in Serbia, including how we've grown and our new program plans with municipal, federal and republic governments.

In these pages you'll also find notes about some materials available in our library about communication skills, media relations and public speaking; there's more in the library related to political and civic organizing. We'll feature different topics with each issue.

These pages also include materials that you can use as a resource in your work developing Serbia's democracy. Look for the article on the role of councilors and the example of Jim Doyle from Canada.

Our hope is that a regular newsletter from NDI will let you know what we're doing so that if you want to get involved, you can give us a call. You can visit us at our office on Kneza Miloša; we've settled in after our move this spring.

Also check out our website at www.ndisrbija.org for additional resources and updates.

It's a busy time of year for all of us. We look forward to our continued work together.

Best wishes,

Stephanie Lynn
Program Director

Paul Rowland
Program Director

NDI IN SERBIA: 1997 TO 2001

NDI opened its office in Belgrade in July of 1997 and at that time we concentrated most of our efforts on working with democratically oriented opposition parties and the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID). Prior to opening the office in Belgrade, NDI held initial rounds of trainings in the towns of Valjevo, Kragujevac, Jagodina, Kraljevo, Leskovac and Čačak. In the period prior to March 1999, NDI representatives worked continually with local branches in Valjevo, Užice, Kraljevo, Kragujevac, Niš, Vranje and Belgrade helping political activists to improve their research, voter communication and voter identification skills and introducing the concept of campaigning with a political message.

In addition to the work in Serbia, NDI representatives had regular contacts with political parties in Montenegro. In 1998, NDI decided to open a separate program in Montenegro, now based in Podgorica with its own resident representatives, Lisa McLean and Niamh O'Connor.

In March of 1999, NDI's work in Serbia was temporarily interrupted, as NDI representatives were evacuated to Budapest, Hungary. After confirming with past participants a need to continue NDI's Serbia program, we established a secondary office in Budapest in July. The Belgrade office reopened again that same summer. NDI trainings continued both in Hungary and across Serbia through the rest of that year and throughout 2000. After the events of democratic change in the fall of 2000, NDI moved its full operations back to Belgrade.

In 2001, NDI Serbia continues its work with democratic political parties, with specific programs working with youth and women. New programs added to NDI's training schedule include those with many elected officials of Serbia's new, democratic governments.

NDI has also worked continuously with the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID). Through study missions, consultations, various trainings and efforts at regional cooperation, NDI has assisted their domestic monitoring partner to grow in its success.

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WHAT NDI'S BEEN DOING...

February

Training of City Councilors
Training of Belarussian political party activists
Training of Montenegrin political party activists



At a training for Belarussian party activists in Poland, (left to right) Andrew Young, translator Alexei Znatkevich and NDI's Regional Trainer Slobodan Milić.

March

Training of City Councilors
Move into new premises at Kneza Miloša
Assessment of training needs in municipal governments
Training of Bulgarian political party leaders
Training of Belarussian political party activists
Training of Montenegrin political party activists

April

Assessment of Regional Offices for Government Outreach to Citizens
Fundraising Training for Regional Trainers
Training of City Councilors
Civic Alliance of Serbia Convention
Sandžak Democratic Party Convention
Celebration of Women in Parliament
Communications Training with CeSID's Regional Coordinators
Communications Training with Young MPs
Communications Training for Women City Councilors
Training of Belarussian political party activists

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT NDI...



Mark Webster, who came to train for NDI in February 2000 for the first time, also worked with young MPs and CeSID's regional coordinators in April 2001. (This picture shows him training at a public speaking workshop at the Women, Politics, Action! seminar.)

The first training gave me in-depth insight into the issue of public relations and communication basics. Not only did it strengthen my communication skills, but also I gained much confidence,

which particularly helped me coping with journalists on a daily basis. Regardless of such a short time, we succeeded to create some media strategies by focusing on the main issues such as: advantages and disadvantages of press conferences, press release and photo release. Furthermore, exercises and the methods of speechmaking provided me with the opportunity to acquire practical tools and make me look more professional. I have to point out that such a rich diversity of experiences and frameworks of communication building helped me attracting the would-be volunteers and raising public awareness in the pre election campaign. The whole communication plan that we built during the first training I applied through many interviews and press conferences. Although the overall political situation was very difficult, I made it possible to conduct outreach to the whole province of Vojvodina. The training in Budapest and its follow-up in Belgrade broadened my horizons in the building of communication skills and strategies especially in view of taking advantage of local and national media.

Soraja Soković, CeSID
Novi Sad Regional Coordinator

Send us your story about what NDI's trainings have meant to you, how you've used what you learned or a funny anecdote about an NDI session or what happened when you put new skills into action. We just might print it in an upcoming issue of *NDI Vesti!* All the people whose stories are printed in the newsletter will be sent an NDI gift pack.

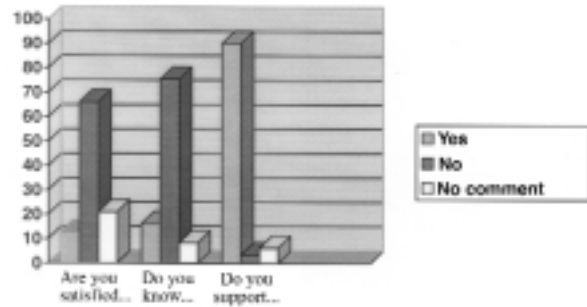
NDI TRAINS CITY COUNCILORS IN EFFECTIVE OUTREACH TO CITIZENS

BOBAN ALEKSIĆ, GSS KRUŠEVAC: "This training reminded me I shouldn't forget about my voters."

In February, March and April, NDI's twelve Regional Trainers fanned out across Serbia to work with over 600 city councilors. Topics covered in the initial training focused on the roles and obligations of city councilors, some of the issues faced during transition and citizen survey as an outreach tool. The follow-up training in April focused on evaluating the survey task, time-planning, and how to continue to communicate effectively with the public through leaflets, press releases and newsletters.

GORDANA ČEROVIĆ, INDEPENDENT, ČAČAK: "I'm thankful for the new knowledge in political marketing, for exchange of experience and for the interactive approach in your trainings."

Milojković. Together with her son, she spent 10 days talking to the citizens in her constituency and distributing surveys. All of them, 1271, were returned to her with answers.



Some results of Ljiljana Mandić's survey

"Are you satisfied with the work of the employees in the office of the Neighborhood Community of Kačarevo?" Lj. Mandić asked her fellow citizens, and two thirds of them replied negatively. Furthermore, three quarters of the citizens did not know that the councilors of the NC Kačarevo refused to let them participate in the decision-making process and allow them to help solve local problems of their own community. Finally, more than 90 percent of the citizens welcomed the initiative to have a public meeting of the community, so that the most pressing problems of Kačarevo can be solved.



Sample of a survey done by a councilor from Zrenjanin, a town in Vojvodina.



Ljiljana with her son Nikola and daughter Marina, after 10 days of door-to-door canvassing, with the surveys.

LJILJANA MANDIĆ, A COUNCILOR FROM KAČAREVO (PANČEVO) SUCCESSFULLY DOES THE SURVEY

In Pančevo, Ljiljana Mandić, a woman councilor from the Democratic Party, and a resident of Kačarevo, a village near Pančevo, decided to go through with the citizen survey after the training with Miljan Medenica and Aleksandra Knez-

With the help of Aleksandra, NDI's trainer, Ljiljana prepared for her public appearance on TV Pančevo, where she spoke about the results of the survey. This survey did not only make the opinion of the citizens heard, but it also made it possible for their opinion to matter, and be acted upon. Ljiljana was very glad to have done the survey, as were the people in her constituency whose opinion she cared about hearing. As their councilor, she was only doing her job.

NDI trained city councilors in:

Bela Crkva, Čačak, Čuprija, Grocka, Indija, Jagodina, Kikinda, Kraljevo, Lazarevac, Mladenovac, Niš, Nova Varoš, Novi Sad, Obrenovac, Pančevo, Paraćin, Piroć, Požarevac, Prijepolje, Ruma, Šabac, Šid, Smederevo, Sombor, Sremska Mitrovica, Subotica, Vrnjačka Banja, Užice, Valjevo, Vršac, Zaječar, Zemun, Zrenjanin, Zvezdara.

NDI'S WOMEN'S PROGRAM PICKS UP IN APRIL

NDI has in the past encouraged women's participation in its programs, and since February 2000 has had a Women's Program as a component of its work in Serbia. The program is focused on bringing more women into politics and making those already committed to it more ready to take on the challenges of organizing, campaigning, fighting for and holding public office.



Gordana Lončar (DHSS, serving her second term as a councilor in Pančevo) presents the work of her group in a workshop at the Women, Politics, Action! seminar held in February 2000.

After the February 2000 seminar which gathered almost 80 women from all then opposition parties in Serbia, and the two seminars held in summer 2000 on Campaigning to Women Voters and Communication Skills, NDI will continue to engage and train women from all levels of government, across the political spectrum, and with different levels of skill, through activities especially designed for them in our Women's Program.

TRAINING OF BELGRADE WOMEN COUNCILORS

One aspect of our work with women is training in Communication Skills (including written and oral communication with voters, leaflet-making, public speaking, developing a message, etc). Every month, beginning in April, and stretch-

ing into the next year, we will be offering these sessions and the first to have this opportunity are women councilors from all municipalities in Serbia.

In April, 44 women councilors came to our office for the trainings. Women joined us from 12 of Belgrade's 16 municipalities and from 10 different parties in DOS. Zorana Smiljanić, Aleksandra Savić, Snežana Poledica, Mirjana Barbulović, and Aleksandra Knez-Milojković, the trainers who worked with them, were very satisfied with the groups. "Women are more connected to reality...and not afraid of talking to voters," one of them said. The women councilors enjoyed this wonderful opportunity to meet, learn and practice. They describe the seminar as both "professional and fun." One of them, Katarina Mihaljčić from Novi Beograd (DS) — the youngest participant in the training — added that the most useful thing was "the experience of gaining confidence and believing in ourselves."

In the words of Mila Pajić from Batajnica, (ASNS) "the participants were active in the training, together with the trainers, and the atmosphere was very nice and relaxed.



Mirjana and Snežana train. "A very interesting training program and great trainers," said Marija Drašković (DC), a councilor from Zemun.

A PORTRAIT OF A SUCCESSFUL POLITICIAN - JIM DOYLE

This story, reprinted with the kind permission of The Democrat, is an inspiring piece about a man who worked his way up from city councilor to Mayor to MP. He did it by going house to house and looking after his voters. Since the article was originally published, he has been promoted to the post of Minister of Municipal Affairs for the Province of British Columbia.

During the 21 years of Jim Doyle's childhood in Northern Ireland, his father spoke of politics at the dinner table twice, perhaps.

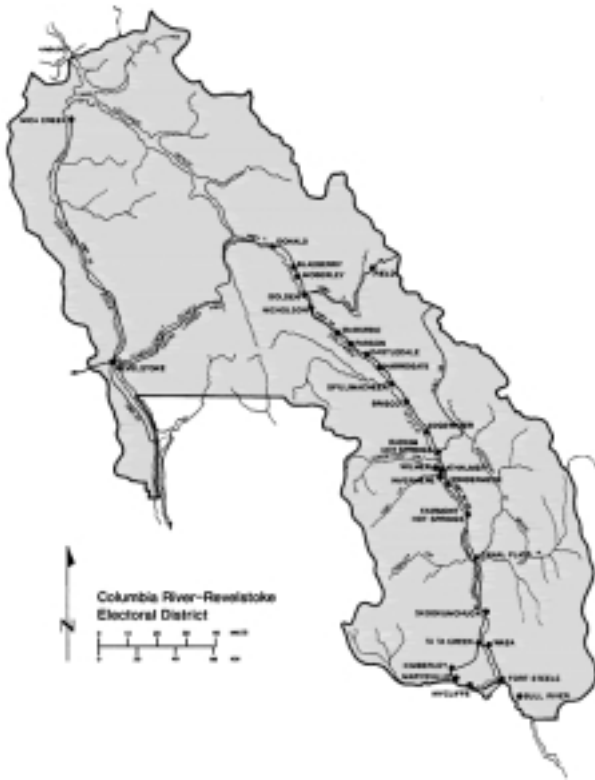
"My family and I were not at all political," he insists, "believe it or not."

This sounds suspect, coming from an individual who has held positions of elected representation for the past 24 years,

an individual who has served two terms as an alderman, four terms as mayor of Golden and now two terms as the MLA for Columbia River-Revelstoke, one of the largest constituencies in British Columbia. An individual who describes himself as "a fellow with a political bug."

According to Doyle, his political bones were first discovered in Brisbane, Australia. Having chosen to emigrate at the age of 21, and having never been more than 30 miles from home until then, Doyle says that he learned a number of lessons in the two and a half years he spent there working as an electrical assistant. Many of them, it seems, were learned at Speaker's Corner.

"I'd go there on a Sunday afternoon, just for something to do," says Doyle. "I just enjoyed listening to the people, talk-



Columbia River-Revelstoke, Jim Doyle's constituency, is roughly the size of Serbia.

ing from all sorts of perspectives on religion or politics. There was even a guy there extolling the wonders of British Columbia and Social Credit. I think his name was Paul, and it always seemed that he'd been drinking, but suddenly I couldn't wait for the next Sunday afternoon. I didn't go on a soapbox myself, but I enjoyed listening."

Doyle came to Canada in 1967, thinking that he'd work for a year or two before returning home. Instead, after living travelling around the province installing signal systems and living out of box cars for Canadian Pacific, he got a job in Golden and found himself part of the community there.

"The political bug I'd picked up in Australia was still there," says Doyle. "I was quite active in the 1972 election, and I considered running for the school board, but I decided against it as I had no children of my own, nor thought I ever would at that time."

Eventually, Doyle decided to run for alderman in 1976. Five years later, he ran for mayor.

"As an alderman, you can come in second place and still get elected, but you can't finish second when you're running for mayor," reflects Doyle. "I worked hard on that campaign. There were 3500 people living in Golden at that time, and I committed to knocking on every door. I met that goal, and no one ran against me in the next two elections after that. I don't know what that means, but I like to think it's because people thought I was doing a pretty good job."

In 1991, Doyle ran successfully for the provincial legislature. Since his election, Doyle has faced a number of unique challenges in representing his constituency. In order to get to his office in Victoria, he often has to fly out of Calgary, and because of the sheer size of his constituency and the far-flung communities that comprise it, he must maintain three different constituency offices and spend a lot of his time on the road.

"There are about five separate communities, and each one is distinct. They have their own issues, their own newspaper systems, and their own needs. It's a challenge to balance them all."

"It's important for me to know that I've worked with some individual or group, and that I've been able to resolve some issue that's important to their lives or the community. That's what keeps me going, and I hope to continue my work as an MLA for many years to come."

Doyle admits that there's something deeper than motivates him, and it has a lot to do with his "apolitical" childhood in Northern Ireland.

"The thing I enjoy most about Canada is the clear separation of church and state. If I were to run for an office back in Northern Ireland, I would almost certainly win or lose because of my religion, not because of my political philosophy. You and I can meet and agree or disagree, but there's no harm at the end of the day. But where I grew up, if you and I were to have a discussion over a beer and got a little too loud, it could hurt your family physically. That doesn't happen here, and I think that's the reason that a lot of people there back off from political involvement."

Doyle laments that this is still the case in Northern Ireland, but he has hopes for the peace plan now being considered.

"When I visit my brothers, about 30 miles south of Belfast, it's hard for me to avoid talking politics at the pub. But you never know who else might be there. After I head back to Canada, my family is still there."

I have great hopes for the peace plan; it's the best hope for peace in Northern Ireland that I can remember in the last 30 years."

Highlights of NDI's work in May and June include:

- Workshops on Strategic Planning, Fundraising and Project Proposals with CeSID
- Communication Workshops for Women Councilors
- Parliamentary Assessment
- Communication Consultations with Women in Higher Elected Office
- Regional Trainer Workshops with Local Branches across Serbia
- Fundraising with central party offices

FROM AN NDI WORKSHOP

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A LOCAL COUNCILOR?

A councilor has a number of roles, some of which may seem to conflict with others. It is a constant balancing act which, if well-managed, will allow a councilor to be re-elected again and again.

ROLES:

- > Represent the interests of her or his constituents on the local council.
- > Represent the interests of his or her party on the local council.
- > Represent the interests of her or his constituents to the party.
- > Represent the party to constituents.
- > Represent the city to constituents.
- > Build the party structure within his or her constituency.

A COUNCILOR SHOULD ALWAYS:

- > Listen to constituents.
- > Consider what is best for the town/municipality.
- > Act with the highest integrity.
- > Treat constituents with respect.
- > Avoid conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest.

A COUNCILOR SHOULD NEVER:

- > Forget the people who voted for her or him.
- > Forget that he or she is also a party activist who has responsibilities to the party.
- > Profit personally from his or her position.

RESOURCES

From the library

In its library of materials for activists of political parties, NDI has a number of texts on various subjects. A complete list of materials will soon be posted on our site, but we still wanted to present you some materials we have on communication skills, media relations and public speaking. Materials that you may find in our library include: *Manual for Media and Public Presentation* (by Diane Cromer), chapter 9 from the *Campaigning to Win* manual "Media," *Press Secretary Manual* of the Democratic National Committee, an article on direct mail from *Campaigns & Elections*, "Smart voter contact: putting the personal touch back into campaigns," a manual on putting a good press release together, and "Public speaking tips: How to Speak Better," tips from Mark Webster. If you are interested in these materials, write to us or visit our web site at www.ndisrbija.org for further information.

The NDI Serbia web site (www.ndisrbija.org)

Our Internet site is divided into the following sections: **Resources**, **News** and **About Us**. Among **Resources** you can find most of the materials we hand out at our trainings, and we'll try to post all materials from our library in the near future. The texts are posted in PDF and DOC formats. Please note that NDI deems original only the documents in PDF format. In the **News** section we will keep you informed about our trainings and other activities, thus we encourage you to visit this section as often as possible and keep yourself updated. **About Us** contains basic information about our Institute and our Serbia program. We also offer you an extensive choice of links to political parties, media and other organizations.



WHAT IS NDI?

The National Democratic Institute, based in Washington, DC, works with courageous democrats who are struggling to promote peaceful political reform. It establishes partnerships with political leaders who have begun the difficult task of building stable pluralistic institutions and creating better lives for their citizens.

Democracy depends on:

- > legislatures that represent citizens and oversee the executive;
- > independent judiciaries that safeguard the rule of law;
- > political parties that are open and accountable; and
- > elections in which voters freely choose their representatives in government.

Acting as a catalyst for democratic development, NDI bolsters the institutions and processes that allow democracy to flourish.

The National Democratic Institute is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Based in Washington, DC and calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions in over seventy countries.

NDI programs provide citizens and their elected representatives with resource materials, consultations and training on the practical tools of participatory democracy. Strictly non-partisan, the Institute supports the efforts of democrats in every region of the world.

Build Political and Civic Organizations

NDI helps build stable, broad-based and well-organized institutions that form the foundation of a pluralistic society and a strong civic culture. Democracy depends on these mediating institutions — the voice of an informed citizenry, linking citizens to their government and to one another by providing avenues for participation in public policy.

Political parties must expand their organizational capacity to combat apathy and to inspire participation. Parties that effectively debate public policy issues and that are representative and accountable will contribute to a democratic society. NDI exposes members of parties from across the democratic political spectrum to methods of organization, communication and constituent relations.

In many countries undergoing democratic transitions, large sections of the population are unfamiliar with their rights

and responsibilities in an open political environment. NDI works with civic groups as a means to provide citizens greater access to the political process, and to enhance transparency and accountability in government.

Safeguard Elections

NDI promotes open and democratic elections. An election is a dynamic process during which members of political parties, civic organizations and other institutions systematically acquire the skills necessary to participate in the political life of a country.

Political parties and governments have asked NDI to study electoral codes and to recommend improvements. The Institute also provides technical assistance for political parties and civic groups to conduct voter education campaigns and to organize election monitoring programs such as poll-watching and independent vote counts. NDI is a world leader in election monitoring, having organized international delegations to observe elections in dozens of countries, helping to ensure that poll results reflect the will of the people. Perhaps more importantly, NDI has helped numerous indigenous citizens' organizations around the world to monitor elections in their own countries.

Promote Openness and Accountability

NDI has assisted leaders of government, parliament and political parties seeking advice on matters ranging from legislative procedures to the balance of civil-military relations in a democracy.



Jabulani Mbambo (center) inspects ballot boxes and seals with presiding officer in Sofala province, Mozambique during general elections in December 1999. Mbambo was a chief elections officer for a province in Zimbabwe and a member of an NDI delegation observing electoral advances in the region.

(From the NDI Report, Winter 2000.)

NDI programs respond to legislators who request information on how to make their parliamentary operations more professional, open and responsive, to the organizations that need help promoting accountability by elected officials, city councils that seek advice on ways to solicit public input into decision making, political parties that require guidance on mechanisms to ensure internal democratic practices and enhance communication with potential supporters, and election commissions that want to establish a more transparent electoral process.

The National Democratic Institute is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Based in Washington, DC and calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions in over seventy countries. NDI has been working with democratic political parties and the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID) in Serbia since 1997.



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