



Civic Update

a newsletter of NDI citizen participation programs worldwide

Issue III

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This issue of the Civic Update focuses on a recurrent citizen participation subject at NDI: coalition building. Coalition building is an aspect of many of NDI's programs from domestic election monitoring, voter education and GOTV, to public policy advocacy and government monitoring. NDI program staff members routinely request information about the why, when, what and how of coalition building.

To help answer some of these questions, this Update includes an introduction to coalition building, case studies and program vignettes that provide comparative lessons and suggestions. One case study is drawn from NDI's work in Kazakhstan and another is drawn from the experiences of Youth Vote, an education and action coalition in the United States. The vignettes focus on aspects of NDI's work in Russia and Bulgaria.

A discussion of tools and tactics for increasing citizen participation electronically is also found in the Update, along with a list of instructive materials and websites.

We hope it all proves useful!

What's All This About Coalitions?

Well, they sound great and donors certainly seem to like them. Who wouldn't, considering that they represent organizations and individuals that come together, pooling their resources and expertise, to magnify their power in the pursuit of a shared goal? When successful, a coalition is able to achieve something more than the member organizations can by acting alone. By their very nature, coalitions can help mobilize larger numbers of citizens, promote diversity and solidarity among like-minded groups, encourage the sharing of limited resources, create models for democratic decisionmaking and foster a transfer of organizational skills among groups. Moreover, donors sometimes seem to view the economies of scale associated with funding a coalition entity (rather than several disparate groups) to be reason enough to encourage coalitions. Sounds great!

On the other hand, although it might go without saying, working in coalition is not always a sensible option for prospective member groups. Coalitions are a challenging form of organization because they require a common

sense of purpose and a shared process of leadership and decisionmaking among multiple groups. In most cases, different groups will have different organizational goals, structures and practices. It can be hard for disparate groups to find the necessary common ground in these areas that then allows them to act collectively.

Typically, organizations choose to coalesce in pursuit of a common objective (e.g., changing a public policy) when the objective is deemed mutually important and cannot be achieved by groups independently. When making such a choice, potential coalition partners need to determine just how important the objective is to their organizations and whether the time and resources invested in the coalition are worthwhile compared to other organizational pursuits. Groups also need to consider if a coalition, rather than an informal network for instance, is the best means of working. The difference being that coalitions require more formal organizational structures and processes than a network, which can remain a rather informal vehicle for sharing information and intelligence.

An organization's decision to form or join a coalition is not one

to be taken lightly or to be arrived at solely because of funding possibilities. These decisions are difficult for groups under the best of circumstances. A group joining a coalition must be prepared to give up some degree of autonomy and be willing to contribute resources to a common cause.

NDI staff members working with coalitions should remember that they often require assistance developing appropriate structures and processes for organizing interactions between the participating groups. At the same time, the groups generally need help developing their program skills in areas such as monitoring or advocacy so that they are also capable of implementing their joint project. In places where NDI works, the difficulty groups face when coalescing is often compounded by a lack of planning and organizing experience. Under these circumstances, it is important not to overlook the organizational health and welfare of the coalition for the sake of getting a project implemented. Time must be spent helping the partners develop working relationships based on a mutual understanding of each other's interests, organizational strengths and resources, and modes of operation.

There are some general steps that groups can follow when building coalitions:

ì Assess all organizations in the community to identify potential partners interested in or already working on your issue.

í Choose members and reaffirm campaign goal. As a group, discuss what success will look like and the impact it will have on the citizens each group represents.

î Adopt a system of shared leadership. A popularly vetted group of leaders should guide a coalition. Although one person may be capable of assuming many leadership responsibilities it is unhealthy for one individual to exercise complete authority.

ï Create a process for democratic decisionmaking. For key issues, decisionmaking should be broad as possible to ensure buy-in. With the prior consent of the majority and for the sake of saving time, however, certain types of decisions are best delegated to the leadership (e.g., signing checks).

õ Establish a structure for regular communications.

ñ Define the roles and tasks of different members according to their skills and resources.

ò Monitor and assess the work and learn from the experience.

Practice Makes Perfect in Kazakhstan

Context

Many of NDI's experiences working with coalitions have initially revolved around building ad-hoc coalitions. These types of short-term coalitions comprise organizations that work together on a campaign surrounding a particular issue of mutual concern (e.g., freedom of information legislation, election law reform, voter education, promoting free and fair elections through election monitoring, etc.). After the campaign, coalitions often dissolve as the members turn to their individual work. Nevertheless, members generally stay in contact via an informal

network and may work together again if another issue arises that potentially impacts their respective missions and citizen-base. In other cases, coalition members decide to continue working together (hopefully after some thoughtful discussion with each other and their constituents) on additional issues that crosscut their individual interests. This type of decision poses additional challenges that require the coalition to focus not just on short-term campaign organizing, but also on long-term organizational development.

Case Study

In Kazakhstan, NDI is providing advocacy training and technical assistance to a coalition of 13 civic groups known as the NGO Network. Operating as a coalition, the NGO Network conducts issue-based advocacy campaigns around local citizen concerns. To date, the Network has conducted three national campaigns with the underlying goals of promoting the accountability of elected representatives and the inclusion of citizens in the policy-making process. The three campaigns include: the local self-government legislation campaign spanning from the end of 1999 to January 2001; the campaign on proposed amendments to the Mass Media Law, from the end of January to March 2001; and, the most recent campaign on the Elections Law, formally beginning in June 2001 with a parliamentary vote expected next month. Although the efforts have not significantly altered the entrenched political power structures, the campaigns have mobilized citizens and caused elected officials to be more responsive.

Over the course of conducting its three advocacy campaigns, the

NGO Network has developed a process of bottom-up decisionmaking and an improved ability to work collectively. The campaigns have also afforded the member groups an opportunity to experiment with and modify a structure for internal communication.

The Network, which works in 12 of 15 oblasts, is one of the only organized avenues for citizen participation in Kazakh politics beyond voting. The Network's model of citizen participation, reinforced by each of its three campaigns, encourages people to think about issues that affect them and the steps they can take to influence change. The involvement of citizens also plays a vital part in how coalition partners select an advocacy issue.

Initially, the Network's member organizations survey their constituencies and solicit feedback in order to identify potential initiatives. To broaden citizens' thoughts on issues that impact them locally, the NGO leaders may also share information on issues of popular concern at the national level, ideas based on discussions with other Network partners or, on rare occasions, they may raise an issue introduced by an outside interest (such as USAID in the case of the Mass Media Law campaign). Next, the partners meet to report the responses from their constituencies. Although the survey process is not scientifically rigorous, the initiatives of interest are expressed in terms of percentage figures and broken down demographically. The partners then have the opportunity to present a case for the issue considered the most important in their localities. Presentations focus on the potential for winning, how the campaign

would alter relations of power and the question of whether it is worth doing. Partners provide an initial overview of potential campaign strategy with regard to the issue; anticipated goals in the short-, medium- and long-term; proposed tactics for achieving those goals; and, likely opponents and allies. After this step, the members have an opportunity to debate pros and cons before voting. The topic of their advocacy campaign is usually determined by a second round run-off vote and requires at least two-thirds' support from the entire group. In spite of having an established decisionmaking procedure, the members may not always get it right the first time. (In one instance, the Network voted on a topic, discussed it over dinner and then came back the following day with a consensus on a different topic.) This emphasizes the importance of allowing flexibility in the process in order to ensure that ultimately, there is an adequate level of buy-in on the issue.

Another key element in a well-organized coalition is the ability to communicate internally. The communications structure of the Network is noteworthy in that partner organizations are located in 12 oblasts spread across a country the size of Argentina. In a place like Kazakhstan, where telephones are not always reliable and site visits from NDI's headquarters in Almaty routinely involve 40-hour journeys, a formal system of communication is vital in keeping each organization up to date on activities and new developments. General meetings are held with all Network partners an average of four times a year and usually take place in Almaty where NDI's office is located, or in the capitol of Astana. (Members of the Network also meet other times

during the year at regionally conducted training sessions or events.) Outside of meeting person-to-person, internal communication consists of contacting each partner on a weekly basis by telephone, fax or e-mail for an update and discussion of activities. Then, on a bi-weekly basis, a letter is sent to all partners summarizing the work of each, providing tactical suggestions, soliciting thoughts regarding current ideas or concepts for future campaign work and asking for questions. (Currently, using NDI's office facilities and equipment, an Almaty-based partner and a member of NDI's staff share the responsibility for day-to-day management of the coalition and its internal communications on a 50-50 basis. However, Resident Senior Program Officer, Allan Oliver, is currently working with the partners on a restructuring effort that will include shifting this responsibility over entirely to the Network.)

Stay tuned to future developments in NDI-Kazakhstan's work as the coalition enters a new phase of internal assessment and structural development.

Allan began working with NDI in Kazakhstan in 2001. His prior experience includes work as an NGO program director in Seattle (special project focus: coffee), a stint as a Peace Corps Volunteer and then as a Municipal Development trainer for Peace Corps/Guatemala. Before his departure for the field, Allan proved his moxie and commitment to NDI when he suffered from a broken foot during a soccer match with DC colleagues.

Tim Fairbank joined the Eurasia Team in 1999 and moved to Central Asia in January 2000. For the past two years, Tim has

worked predominantly in Kazakhstan, but has also spent several months in Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Below, Tim is captured as a contestant in the highly competitive, “Mr. Kazakhstan” competition.



Coalitions and Growth à la Youth Vote

Context

When should an ad-hoc or periodic coalition become a permanent organization of organizations? This is a question that NDI programs and partners often encounter, particularly after elections when NDI has helped civic groups coalesce, often for the first time, with the purpose of educating voters, increasing turnout or monitoring the campaign and balloting processes. The success of many such efforts has often led NDI and different civic partners to consider keeping coalitions together after the election programs have concluded. However, as many NDI resident representatives know, past success should not be the only factor determining if coalition members continue working together. Going from a temporary, project-specific coalition to a permanent organization requires member groups to review their individual goals and think strategically about whether there is enough overlap between those goals to merit continued collective action.

Case Study

In November 2001, the Citizen Participation Team interviewed three members of the Youth Vote Coalition: Executive Director Rebecca Evans, In-house Consultant Carolyn Darrow and Program Director Adrienne King McCorkle. “The Youth Vote Coalition is the largest, most diverse, non-partisan NGO coalition dedicated to engaging youth between the ages of 18-30 in the American political process.” Based on the interview and information gathered from the coalition’s website, this case study examines some aspects of Youth Vote’s evolution from a periodic, election-focused coalition to a larger, permanent entity conducting regular political participation programs.

‘The first Youth Vote coalition campaign took place in 1994 and consisted of 17 national NGOs. During the 1996 campaign, the coalition increased to 29 groups, established a shared message and adopted a formal campaign strategy. The Youth Vote 2000 Coalition was by far the most comprehensive campaign. It consisted of 78 national nonprofit members, 25 partners (corporations, associations, and government agencies), working relationships with all major parties and presidential campaigns and, over 1,500 state and local organizations.’

Who wasn’t part of the Youth Vote 2000 Coalition’s campaign?

A review of Youth Vote 2000 Coalition’s membership and partners provides an excellent example of a campaign driven by broad-based membership and the possibilities revealed by forming collaborative partnerships.

‘The Youth Vote 2000 Coalition’s membership was as diverse as it was large. Consisting of over 100 national members and partners, the Coalition crossed lines of race, ideology, gender, ability, sexual orientation, ethnicity and religion. The 2000 campaign also bridged the age barrier by working with senior citizen organizations like the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). The diversity of missions and citizens represented by the Coalition allowed it to form alliances and reach people that it may not have engaged in previous campaigns. Membership in the Coalition also increased the efficiency and capacity of the youth civic engagement community as a whole, in that it helped national and local NGOs share information, reducing duplication of efforts and fostering new partnerships. Additionally, it enabled the diverse body of organizations constituting the Coalition to share a sense of belonging in a larger movement with a common purpose. The key factor in drawing these groups together and developing this feeling of community was the more than one year of work that went into convening the groups, distributing the membership’s materials, fostering communication on-line and directly, as well as making presentations at hundreds of conferences and events.’

‘In an effort to reach as many young people as possible, the Coalition successfully tapped into the popular culture market by forging major partnerships with corporations. This unconventional approach allowed the Coalition to reach millions of 18-30 year-olds on a weekly basis. The most significant of these partnerships included those with MTV: Music Television and

the World Wrestling Federation Entertainment, Inc (WWF). MTV's "Choose or Lose 2000" campaign consisted of the "Campus Invasion" tour, whereby musical groups visited college campuses to help register voters. The WWF partnership offers a great example of an unlikely alliance that dramatically expanded the Coalition's reach. WWF's "Smackdown Your Vote!" campaign helped register 150,000 new voters in little more than two months just prior to the November elections. WWF conducted registration drives at their events and through their website, while also providing voting and election information to millions of young wrestling fans through television and on-line.'

'By forming working relationships with the youth branches of every major party and presidential campaign, the Coalition developed new allies and united young partisan leaders with their nonpartisan counterparts in a common effort to demand that parties and candidates devote resources and time to recognizing the concerns of young voters.'

Youth Vote Coalition matures.

In response to the Florida-inspired, national concentration on voters and voting procedures that followed the 2000 elections cycle and, as Rebecca phrased it, the need to "keep the momentum going [and] keep the message out there," Youth Vote Coalition members recently formed a permanent organization. The purpose was to secure funds for expanded program activities and establish a full-time office to house the Executive Director and a small advising/management core. This team oversees daily financial and technical issues,

while the office serves as a national hub to:

- U Provide support and matching funding for 19 current program field sites. (The number and location of field sites is flexible and depends on shifting geographic priorities determined by where there are hot elections and where there is a concentration of local activists with the potential to impact a large number of youth.)
- U Pursue coalition-building efforts, especially in select areas in anticipation of '02 elections.
- U Function as a clearinghouse for information on election reform, new state-specific regulations and procedures for student voters, youth perspectives and other pertinent issues to benefit members as well as the general public.

Since becoming a permanent organization, the founding coalition members have spent the past several months undergoing a strategic planning process to formalize the Coalition's structure and operating procedures, as well as otherwise lay the groundwork for year-round efforts to educate and encourage youth participation in democracy.

Staying connected.

The communications system between the executive office and program field sites provides a good example of an internal process that crucially affects the Coalition's ability to conduct activities. Currently, each of the 19 field sites conducts Coalition activities monitored by the head office and managed locally by a coordinator, usually assigned by

the member organization that proposed the project and hosts the site. Activities range from public roundtables to fora and debates on locally determined issues with candidates and elected officials. Other work includes voter registration and follow-up mobilization of youth by youth or students by students. Youth Vote's head office follows the work of each individual site coordinator through weekly e-mail updates including statistics on voters registered, debates held, local media hits, etc. On a bi-weekly basis, Youth Vote facilitates discussion between site coordinators and responds to questions and concerns through conference calls. Youth Vote also hosts a chat room to include those who may have missed a conference call. By maintaining these forms of communication on a regular basis, Youth Vote stays informed and keeps its coordinators abreast of all current activities and any shared concerns or challenges.

What it all means to NDI.

The experience and practice of participating in several stand-alone campaigns allowed Youth Vote Coalition members time to gain experience working collectively toward a mutual goal. This shared background will prove extremely beneficial to the group as it continues its work in the form of a permanent organization. Likewise, before committing themselves to a permanent coalition structure, NDI partners could benefit from a similar investment of time to learn by doing and develop coalition essentials such as a basic structure, agreed upon leadership, trusting relationships, clear communication and, an understanding of mutual commitment to an overarching goal.

To learn more about Youth Vote Coalition and their work, visit them on-line at www.youthvote.org.

What are the disincentives for joining a coalition?

- ; Diminishes the autonomy and flexibility of individual member organizations.
- ; Short-term losses in time, energy and resources available for other projects.
- ; “Free riders” syndrome may cause tension if some members fail to follow through on tasks.
- ; Leadership may overtake entire group decision-making.
- ; Coalition’s goal may replace the missions and goals of individual members.
- ; Slower decision-making process.
- ; Possible inequality in the distribution of power.
- ; Each group comes with its own agenda.
- ; Too many compromises may weaken the resolve of individual members.
- ; Clear political target.

NDI’s Coaching and Strong Local Commitment Deepens Russia’s VOICE

NDI’s citizen participation work in Russia is carried out largely through support of the national coalition of civic groups and activists called VOICE (Association of Nonprofit Organizations in Defense of the Rights of Voters). This article examines the Coalition’s structure and illustrates the role that NDI’s resident representative plays in coaching the Coalition’s national staff members in day-to-day

aspects of coalition building.

In that many organizations and political parties observe Russian elections but subsequently fail to analyze the results and publicize their findings, four domestic NGOs formed the VOICE coalition two years ago to coordinate and expand more effective election-monitoring efforts across the country. The coalition also works to educate and guide partners in using the results of monitoring activities as tools to help improve the quality of election processes.

Over time and with the assistance of NDI–Moscow’s Co-Director, Alina Inayeh, and her civic team, VOICE has broadened its agenda to “building democracy”. To this end, branch offices conduct advocacy projects to encourage accountability in government decision-making. Currently, VOICE is expanding across Russia with branch offices in 15 regions. In most cases, the branches are comprised of smaller coalitions of local organizations. The size of individual branches and the types of member organizations that form the local coalitions differ widely and reflect the diversity in population, ethnicity and community concerns that characterize the different cities and oblasts they represent. For example, in Samara 11 groups formally comprise the local branch. The members range from an association of consumers and one of national minorities to a center that is a combined legal assistance bureau and political consulting firm. Regardless of their different missions and projects, in deciding to join VOICE each organization agrees to support the underlying goal of building democracy by promoting transparency in elections and accountability in government. As

a symbol of commitment, organizations at the local level must sign a formal agreement of cooperation with each other and one with the national VOICE board of directors. After a new branch is established, the groups work cooperatively to prepare for monitoring an up-coming election or they may concentrate on developing advocacy projects focused on pressing issues in the communities. Individual branch projects are reviewed and approved for financial support by the VOICE Board on a case-by-case basis.

NDI representatives train the VOICE Board and staff of all 15 branches to work on monitoring and advocacy campaigns alike. Representatives also provide regular coaching for VOICE’s Executive Director and national staff. For example, Alina sometimes accompanies VOICE staff members when they conduct assessments of potential branch sites. The initial assessment process is a vital step in VOICE’s selection of viable partners dedicated to political development issues. The time spent up front holding meetings with civic activists and organizations to learn about their work enables VOICE to identify the right people with a commitment to the issues. Additionally, meeting with community or regional actors such as election commissioners, city/oblast Duma officials and other public officers gives VOICE a perspective of the political context in which a new branch would conduct its projects. Through all this, Alina is constantly acting as a sounding board for VOICE’s ideas, giving feedback on the overall process and helping its staff members develop and refine specific tools for political assessment and organizing.

Alina joined NDI-Moscow to direct its citizen participation programs in the summer of 2000. Previously, she served as the Director of the Pro Democracy Association in her home country of Romania, twice as a participant in NDI's international election observation missions and as a trainer for NDI throughout Central and Eastern Europe. In addition to her talent as a civic organizer, Alina is reported to be a member of the Romanian Ping-Pong Hall of Fame.

Bulgarian NGOs Choose Collaboration over Coalition

In preparation for the June 2001 Bulgarian Parliamentary elections, NDI supported six domestic NGOs in the implementation of voter education and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) campaigns. These partnerships represented a concerted effort to renew citizen interest in the electoral process and increase their participation at the polls.

With only a three-month lead-up to organize partners and conduct the campaigns, it was not possible (and not necessary) for NDI to try to foster a formal coalition when informal collaboration could achieve the same result. In this situation, instead of investing the time required to establish a coalition guided by shared leadership and based on formal structures and operating processes, NDI worked with groups to help them coordinate individual (and separately funded) campaigns.

During the program period, NDI representatives helped guide the partners by facilitating planning activities and materials

development. NDI worked with the partners, first as a group and then individually, to design activities that would complement rather than double the efforts of their counterparts. Most of the campaign initiatives were undertaken separately with each group utilizing its own organizational expertise and targeting a specific audience (i.e., women, youth, ethnic minorities and other underrepresented constituencies). Only a few groups conducted collaborative activities.

In addition to helping coordinate the partners' projects, NDI also provided support through training on specific campaign tactics and skills, again for the group as a whole and on an individual basis. Activities included the following: phone banks, radio ads, candidate fora and debates, roundtable discussions, direct mailings, door-to-door canvassing, targeting messages for specific audiences, conducting focus groups and surveys, organizing Rock the Vote concerts and, producing radio and television spots.

The choice to collaborate loosely rather than as a formal coalition gave the groups autonomy in decisionmaking and flexibility in designing and implementing their individual projects.

***TECH* *COLUMN* Advocacy On-line in the United States**

In November 2001, the National Civic League (NCL) hosted a conference on "Digital Democracy: Civic Engagement in the 21st Century." The event focused on the possibility of "e-advocacy" and on how civic activists and organizers are currently using computer-based tools to organize citizens' political participation in the United States.

Although many of NDI's citizen participation programs are conducted in less technologically advanced environments, there may still be some instances now (and certainly in the future) when Internet-based organizing tools and tactics can be introduced to local partners. For this reason, some of the examples and conclusions from the NCL conference seem worth sharing among NDI colleagues.

For starters, conference panelists suggested that the Internet and e-mail have expanded the notion of community. "Cyber communities" are unrestrained by geography. In this sense, electronic communications can actually strengthen the foundations for advocacy by promoting a broader base of support for an issue or idea. The Internet and e-mail can also provide a quick means of sharing information, either in a targeted way (e.g., e-mail lists) or in a broader, undirected way (e.g., website-based bulletin boards).

Panelists also reminded participants that before integrating electronic tactics into

an advocacy campaign, it is important to realize that they are simply that: tactics. As with any advocacy campaign, the selection of tactics is determined by the overarching strategy and objectives. There are advantages and disadvantages to all tactics depending on the situation. For example, it may be impressive to send 50 e-mail petitions of 250 signatures each to an elected representative's office. However, it is probably much easier for that same official not to respond to an e-mail rather than not to comment on a hand-delivered petition of 1000 signatures.

Presently in the United States and elsewhere, there are many available electronic tools and tactics for groups with limited financial and technical resources. The following provides some examples:

@ The e-mail tree petition is sent out to members who sign and send it on to five people, who in turn sign and send it on to five more until the number of signatures reaches a given amount (e.g. 250). At that point, whoever is in possession is instructed to send it to the address indicated and then forward a fresh copy to five friends, etc.

@ The action alert is often located on an organization's web page but can also be sent to members by e-mail. It generally includes information about an upcoming vote on a piece of legislation and provides a pre-written letter to be signed and sent to the appropriate elected official.

@ E-mail surveys can be used to allow groups to establish agendas or prioritize issues based on members' interests.

@ On-line surveys (found on a website) offer non-members the opportunity to express their opinions and, in that participants are asked to provide their name and e-mail address, offer the organization a means of recruiting new members.

@ www.SaveHarry.com offers a creative model of an entirely cyber-based advocacy campaign. The Center for Science in the Public Interest is currently running an intriguing campaign against author J.K. Rowling's sale to Coca-Cola of the rights to use her children's literature character, Harry Potter, in advertising. SaveHarry.com targets child activists (children represent those most likely to discover the site through an Internet search) and offers them a variety of means by which to engage, e.g., sending a letter to the author or to the editor of a local paper, sending e-mail alerts to friends and downloading web banners. The site also encourages children to undertake their own "Save Harry" campaign by printing out logos and leaflets to distribute at school or in the neighborhood and providing them with talking points on good nutrition versus junk food consumption. The site appeals not only to English-speaking activist, but offers information in Hungarian, French, Spanish and Japanese.

E-advocacy tools and tactics will continue to evolve and offer increased options for citizen participation in policy decisions. This may be especially true in the United States where the Anthrax scare has caused politicians and

government offices alike to place greater emphasis upon the value of Internet communication. Likewise, the Internet offers promise as a tool for targeting and engaging young people in community life and political issues.

As new NDI programs begin that involve organizations with on-line capacity, consider the use of electronic tactics. To help expand the number of tools in NDI's belt, the Citizen Participation Team will follow developments and keep you "in the loop".

For further information concerning the National Civic League's conference on "Digital Democracy", contact Ashley at Aorton@ndi.org and visit NCL's website at www.ncl.org.

Sites with Information on Candidates and Elected Officials:

www.congress.org

This site allows the user to type in their zip code to identify and contact their federal and state elected officials. The user can also sign up to receive weekly e-mails with a scorecard of their representatives' votes.

www.dnet.org

Democracy Network, a nonpartisan project funded by the League of Women Voters Education Fund, is a public interest site for election information. The site allows you to enter your zip code to find out who's running for office in the corresponding district and where the candidates stand on various issues.

www.dnet.org/upload/participate.htm

On the same site, this allows candidates to post unedited information about themselves, their positions and their campaigns, which gives them access to the millions of

voters using DNet to make their election decisions.

www.vote-smart.org

Project Vote Smart's site is geared toward young voters and political activists. Student interns support a continual update of information tracking candidates and elected officials, accessible through an on-line tool.

E-tools and Businesses:

www.actionize.com

Actionize.com provides software for free on-line petitions and sells the ability to create a website for the user's organization including automatic newsletters by email.

www.advocacyguru.com

This site contains all the information, tips, and advice on running an advocacy campaign.

www.capitoladvantage.com

(Run CapWiz QuickTour and Demo.)

Capitol Advantage helps organizations get connected to Congress by selling services like CapWiz, a grassroots legislative action tool in use on hundreds of corporation, association, and media organization websites.

www.netaction.org

NetAction is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting use of the Internet for effective grassroots citizen action campaigns and educating the public, policy makers and the media about technology issues. This site contains information on cyber rights, tools, cyber action issues and security.

Organization Sites as Examples:

www.e-democracy.org

This community action page provides a good example of an organization using the Internet to improve citizen participation and

governance. It also hosts online political and community discussions.

www.HarlemLive.org

HarlemLive.org is an Internet publication, created to increase youth involvement in community affairs and foster reflection on those events and their lives through journalism and artistic expression.

www.moveon.org

MoveOn.org's goal is to "help busy people be effective citizens". They do this by allowing the user to join their nationwide network of 300,000 online activists and receive action updates by email. The user can also support online advocacy campaigns listed on the site.

Super Cyber Sites

"How To" Guide to Coalition Building

www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/outreach/safesobr/12qp/coalition.html

NAICU Your Vote Your Voice: Coalition Building

www.naicu.edu/campusvote/coalition.html

Offers advice on building a coalition to register voters. Provides instructions on how to set up an organizing meeting and get it off the ground. Also contains links that offer advice on voter education and registration, getting out the vote and working with the media.

The Civic Update is a quarterly production of NDI's Citizen Participation Team. Please send any comments or suggestions you may have to Citizen Participation

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Also, we are always on the lookout for insightful articles to include in the newsletter, so please do not hesitate to send us ideas or submissions for future issues.

Thanks and we hope you found this newsletter of interest.

For back issues of the Civic Update refer to:

<http://www.ndi.org/globalp/citpart/citpart.asp>

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General

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