



# CIVIC UPDATE

July 2004

A PUBLICATION OF THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION TEAM OF NDI

WWW.NDI.ORG

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## CIVIC SNAPSHOT



**UP IN ARMS:** Students in Haiti discover the power of knowledge.

## YOUNG PEOPLE: NOT THE PROBLEM, PART OF THE SOLUTION

**NDI has led many efforts to help young people enter political life — as active participants in civil society, as political party leaders, as elected officials and as voters.**

Although young people between 15 and 30 years old comprise nearly a quarter of the world's population, they are often inactive participants in democratization. NDI, however, recognizes that young people can be a key part of the solution to the difficulties developing democracies face (not merely another problem to be resolved by others) and that their contributions are crucial to building a strong and vibrant society. For this reason, youth participation should be an essential consideration in the design and implementation of NDI programming. With this issue of Civic Update, we show that NDI is already leading many efforts to help young people enter political life.

The involvement of young people is already an intrinsic component in many NDI programs. In recent years, NDI has been involved in activities in more than 50 countries to increase the role of young people as civic activists, voters, candidates, political party representatives and elected leaders. The types of NDI programs and activities with a youth participation focus or component currently underway include: election monitoring, issue advocacy, leadership development, youth parliaments, party youth wings, parliamentary internships,



**IF THE HAT FITS:** Bulgarian youth activists.

debate clubs, civic forums, voter education and GOTV.

NDI should take pride in this body of work. Not many organizations can match the Institute's political expertise, contacts, experience and relationships. For these reasons, The Institute seems well positioned to increase the level of work and become a leader in helping young people participate in and transform political processes.

This Civic Update spotlights NDI programs with young people in Bulgaria, Indonesia, Iraq, Haiti, and Sudan; provides links to youth focused materials; introduces our new team members; and describes what's happening to further a focus on programs with young people, which is just the beginning of the process.

## ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL: BRINGING BULGARIAN YOUTH TO THE POLLS

Creativity is one thing that is often associated with the youth, and the *Ti Izbirash* (“You Choose”) campaign in Bulgaria definitely used new ways to educate and involve young people and first-time voters. The campaign included activities ranging from public debates to dances in local discos in six different localities, in an effort to raise awareness and encourage voter turnout on election day.

The disconnect between Bulgarian politicians and citizens has been a stumbling block since 1992, when the country began its democratization process. While Bulgarian NGOs have the potential to act as a bridge between the government and the public, they have often found this difficult to do. The October 2003 municipal elections, however, gave NGOs another opportunity to rally citizens to their causes and to encourage public participation in the political processes.

To aid NGOs in their efforts, NDI lent its support to the third *Ti Izbirash* campaign; a local-led Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) and voter-education effort. NDI worked with local NGOs to motivate citizens to participate in the election process and to convince local officials to pay attention to public concerns prior to elections. This work included inviting about 100 NGOs to submit grant proposals for local campaigns. A five-person panel reviewed the grants, assigning points based on a specific criteria.

NDI awarded grants to 25 NGOs, eight of which were working primarily with young people and first-time voters. In addition to receiving funds of up to \$1,500, NDI also provided the groups with training in



**DOOR-TO-DOOR:** *Ti Izbirash* volunteers actively sought out young voters in an effort to get them involved

conducting GOTV and voter education activities, as well as with guidance on working with local officials in the post-election period. Moreover, NDI’s insistence on volunteer recruitment and direct voter contact methods motivated these NGOs to directly interact with their target constituencies, a rare phenomenon in Bulgarian civil society.

The NGOs came up with unique ways of targeting the youth. The National Alliance for Volunteer Action (NAVA) in Plovdiv; Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections (BAFE) in Pleven; PROXEN Women’s Union in Kazanlak; Future for Silistra Youth Organization in Silistra; an informal group of young people in Sevlievo Municipality; the PODKREPA Labor Confederation; Balkan Assist; and UNA-Sofia, all sought to reach out to young people by bringing them together and providing them with facts they needed for informed participation. Rallies, concerts and discotheque events were organized alongside school-based efforts, such as information centers and first-time voter classes.

In contrast to two previous *Ti Izbirash* programs, which focused on general voter education themes and took place nationally, the third *Ti Izbirash* was an issues-based program, designed for local implementation and

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### NDI Criteria for Evaluating NGO proposals:

1. Realistic and achievable objectives;
2. Tested campaign messages;
3. Realistic schedules and delegated responsibilities;
4. Targeting underrepresented populations; and
5. Cost-effectiveness.

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made distinct by its targeted approach. While past Bulgarian efforts relied more heavily on advertising through posters and the distribution of leaflets and other informational material, this program made a targeted effort to go door-to-door to places where young people are and present them with the campaign's messages.

For example, the Youth Union PROXEN organized a march through the streets of Kazanlak led by two rock groups to spread the GOTV message. The march ended in Rozarium Park with a Rock-the-Vote concert that brought together some 250 young people. Likewise, the youth *Ti Izbirish* campaign in Sevlievo organized the first all-candidate debate ever to be held in the municipality. Candidates discussed specific youth priorities identified through more than 1000 questionnaires distributed among the youth. The youth campaign was so powerful that all six mayoral candidates were easily convinced to participate in the debate.



**FINDING A VOICE:** The campaign's messages were spoken by young people to young people.

parliament. The contact database of participants and volunteers in pre-election activities was used to organize and hold elections for a youth municipal council.

Throughout this entire process, NDI played a guiding role to the local NGOs, often helping them to learn by doing. Among other things, NDI helped the NGOs refine their original campaign plans for the local campaigns. As a result, the organizations developed the abilities to organize and run targeted programs.

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While voter turnout did not improve overall, the importance of working with young people is highlighted by the considerable increases in youth voting in the October 2003 since the 1999 elections. These gains are largely attributed to the efforts of the *Ti Izbirish* NGOs. In Sevlievo, where first-time voter participation increased by five percent from 1999, 89 percent of the people who voted said they knew of the campaign, and 45 percent said that the campaign was among the factors that motivated them to vote.

More than getting the youth to come out and cast an informed vote on election day, the campaign laid the groundwork for continued participation by young people in the ongoing local political processes. In Sevlievo, the *Ti Izbirish* campaign — a first in local GOTV efforts and in youth organizing — also provided the foundation for the municipality's first youth

## ***YOUTH PARTICIPATION LINK***

The Youth Vote Coalition is a diverse nonpartisan coalition of more than 100 organizations across the United States, that, in turn, represent millions of young people. The coalition is increasing political and civic participation and public awareness about the value of participation in the electoral process among young people.

**YouthVote**  
COALITION

[www.youthvote.org](http://www.youthvote.org)

## TAKING MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS: INDONESIAN STUDENTS JOIN MODEL PARLIAMENT

There is an old saying that in order to understand a person, you must walk a mile in his shoes. In Indonesia, 45 students from 20 different high schools embarked on a mission to school themselves in democracy by doing just that. By taking part in the first-ever youth model parliament in the country, these students learned the basics of civic participation and legislative processes as they proposed, debated and passed legislation on issues of concern to the Indonesian youth.

Bambang Budi Setiawan of the *Yayasan Kesejahteraan Anak Indonesia* (YKAI), a Jakarta-based youth organization, says that in Indonesia, teenagers tend to be very cynical about politicians and political parties. Whatever flickering interest the youth may have had in engaging the government has been doused by their exclusion in youth-related policy-making, the perceived poor performance of the National Indonesian Parliament (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat – Republik Indonesia* or DPR-RI), and general confusion with regard to the country's democratic processes. "We would like to be involved in politics, but how? Our representatives in parliament... have not served the country or the people, as they should have... Students like us are never included in the political process," says Pepy Alvita Afifaf, a secondary student in Jakarta.

In an effort to combat this pervasive apathy and negative view of political participation among young Indonesians, YKAI and NDI organized the Indonesian Youth Parliament for secondary students in Jakarta. Requirements for student selection for the seven-week program included being in their second year of study; a minimum average GPA of 7; knowledge of social, political and cultural issues; and some organizational skills. The program kicked off in September 2002, and comprised of two parts: a preparation stage and a simulation of the DPR.

The preparation, conducted over a seven-week period, included presentations by NDI staff and members of NDI's parliamentary and civic networks, discus-



**BUILDING CONSENSUS:** In the role-playing sessions, students learned about teamwork and how to arrive at a compromise when necessary.

sions, and role-playing exercises. In the sessions, students talked about the new electoral system that was being debated in the national legislature and learned about different political systems, such as those of the United Kingdom, Thailand, Pakistan and the Philippines. The role-playing sessions that followed allowed the students the opportunity to practice their coalition building, discussion and analysis skills which they would later put to use in the simulation.

After this extensive orientation, students acted as members of parliament in a simulated legislature, taking part in debates and other activities. Students spent three days working to pass a budget and three laws, all of which were presented to the real DPR as inputs from the youth. On the last day, students visited the parliament building and interacted with some MPs and other political leaders. Two of the leading students also had the opportunity to meet President Megawati Soekarnoputri.

Experiential learning exercises like this can help instill basic knowledge, skills, and democratic values, such as compromising recognizing group over individual interest; lessons that are somewhat difficult to grasp fully

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in a classroom setting. Many “older” democracies such as the United States and Canada have established “mock parliament” programs at the secondary scholastic level as a method of civic education. In this particular exercise, the students developed a basic understanding of their legislative system, learned about contemporary issues and delved into group decision-making processes and dynamics.



**LET ME HAVE MY SAY:** In the mock parliament, students practiced their skills in group debating and negotiation.

Moreover, because the project enjoyed the support of the Indonesian Parliament’s leadership, it opened the door towards improved access to the institution by other NGOs and the general public.

*For more information on NDI’s programs in Indonesia, please contact Raissa Tatad at [raissa\\_tatad@ndi.org](mailto:raissa_tatad@ndi.org)*

With the Indonesian Youth Parliament, NDI and YKAI hope to demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of experiential civic education programs in the hope that the Ministry of National Education (DepDikNas) will adopt the concept as an ongoing feature of high school education.

Aside from being a pioneering move into the field of experiential learning, the Youth Parliament also became a vehicle of cooperation for all of NDI’s program components. The Civil Society, Transitions, Politi

cal Party and Legislative Strengthening programs all provided resource persons for the training and simulation sessions.

## ***YOUTH PARTICIPATION LINK***

This UN Toolkit is meant to be used by organizations working with young people to assess their country’s progress in reaching the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY) Goals, prioritize their organization’s work based on their findings and initiate actions at the national level.



[www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/wyr/documents/Toolkit.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/wyr/documents/Toolkit.pdf)

## **IRAQI YOUTH GET INVOLVED IN YOUNG ADULTS CONFERENCE**

Over a hundred representatives of youth organizations from all over Iraq participated in the first Young Adult Conference held in Baghdad on March 15, 2004. The event was co-hosted by NDI and the Just Read Human Rights Group in an effort to encourage greater youth participation in human rights advocacy activities. The conference sought to engage young Iraqis by delving into youth-specific issues and the role of youth in

the new Iraq, and served as an exploratory venture for NDI to examine the possibility of targeting young people as it defines its programs in the country.

*For more information on NDI’s programs in Iraq, please contact Susan Kupperstein at [skupperstein@ndi.org](mailto:skupperstein@ndi.org)*

## DEVELOPING A NEW GENERATION WITH DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN HAITI

Many young people around the world are struggling to make a difference today. In Haiti, where 40 percent of the population is under the age of 15, young people are becoming a force to reckon with. With the help of NDI, secondary students in Haiti are learning how to harness their untapped potential for political participation.

Following the recent political turmoil that led to the departure of President Jean Bertrand-Aristide, Haitians are faced with the task of restoring legitimacy to a democratic system severely eroded by corruption, violence and self-interested leadership. The need for citizens to take part in this effort is now more urgent than ever. However, knowledge of democracy and citizens' central role in it has been inadequate among a majority of Haitians. High levels of illiteracy, the lack of democratic traditions and a poor communications infrastructure have prevented them from having any practical understanding of democracy – what it means, how it can be practiced on a day-to-day basis and what the essential components for a democratic society are. At the local level, this has produced neglected constituents and an absence of grassroots action. Beyond elections, many Haitians do not know how to exercise their rights of citizenship or participate in political processes.

As part of its commitment to long-term democratic development, NDI initiated a civic education program for young Haitians, that parallels its regular Civic Forum activities. Called “Democracy for All,” the program began in eight schools in the Cul-de-Sac region of Haiti’s West department last year. “Democracy for All” continued to be implemented in spite of the recent unrest that characterized the country’s political landscape, and has even expanded to twelve new schools in the country’s North and Northeast departments, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to more than 1400 secondary students.

Initially developed by the NGO Street Law for use in South Africa, “Democracy for All” is a yearlong extra-curricular program adapted by NDI and Street Law for use in Haiti. It covers basic topics such as the



**SELF-MOTIVATED:** The driving force of this program has been its dedicated students, who spend their extra time in school to learn about democracy.

definition of democracy, checking the abuse of power, how citizens can change public policy and responsibility towards other citizens. While NDI provides curriculum materials (i.e. illustrated versions of the 1987 Constitution) and training for the instructors, the teachers that conduct the “Democracy for All” after-school program do so on a purely voluntary basis. Over the course of the year, however, NDI staff members conduct on-site visits and spot checks while responding to requests for follow-up training and materials.

Results from the pilot run in the Cul-de-Sac region revealed that the best target group is made up of students between the ages of 13 and 17 years. The program originally targeted graduating secondary students, but upon finding that these students were usually too busy preparing for graduation and post-graduation activities to participate in an after-school program, NDI shifted its focus to students in the Haitian equivalent of 10th grade.

The majority of the students’ parents are illiterate and their children are their only source of reliable information. Students are often asked to act as interpreters for their parents and neighbors and even to mediate conflicts within their communities.

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To sustain the interest and involvement of the program's beneficiaries, some of the best students from the 2003-2004 "Democracy for All" program have been asked to be teaching assistants for this year's program. Aside from helping the regular teachers conduct and moderate the classes, these students will also be asked to speak about their experiences and what they have learned in other schools all over Haiti.

So far, the program's first year has seen some initial success. A group of students from the cultural center *Divin Roi*, for instance, put their new skills into action by organizing a conference on democracy to share their newly acquired knowledge with other schools that were not able to take part in the pilot program. During the conference, which also attracted adults residing in the area, participants learned different democratic values through performances and the sharing of experiences by "Democracy for All" alumni.

At the heart of this success is the motivation of young students who spend extra hours each day in the classroom learning about the fundamentals of democ-



**SLOWLY BUT SURELY: Democracy for All is teaching new values to Haitian youth, one school at a time.**

racy, and their dedicated teachers, who have volunteered to guide these young people in this endeavor.

*For more information on NDI's programs in Haiti, please contact Sandy Quimbaya at [squimbaya@ndi.org](mailto:squimbaya@ndi.org)*

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## SUDANESE YOUTH ON THE ROAD TO PEACE

**In an effort to rally support behind the implementation of a future peace agreement, the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) recently established nationwide youth and women's unions, open to all Sudanese, and with the objective of increasing the participation of youth and women in the reconstruction and reconciliation process. While targeting these groups to increase participation is a positive move, many observers are skeptical about the significance of the role that these unions will actually play in facilitating participation from these groups during the transitional period.**

Against this backdrop, NDI's approach has been to help young people develop the skills for active participation in a post-conflict society. NDI has developed a program to bring together youth from northern and southern Sudan in an effort to establish dialogue between individuals who come from different ethnic, tribal, religious and cultural groups who share the ex-

perience of having lived their entire lives in a country in conflict. This program, which also seeks to help youth groups identify issues of common concern, is unique in that it is one of NDI's first country programs that started out with a deliberate focus on young people.

NDI conducted a three-day workshop for young people from southern Sudan in Kampala, Uganda between March 5 - 7 this year. The workshop aimed to increase their ability to develop action plans for increased youth participation in the implementation of the peace agreement between the government and the SPLA/M. This was the first of three workshops planned to help facilitate the process of civic organizing among the Sudanese youth. It also hoped to help the youth develop skills needed to further implement their respective action plans.

In May, NDI conducted the second workshop in the series with young people from both the north and

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the south in Nairobi. This workshop built on the Kampala workshop and served as an opportunity for youth from all over Sudan to begin to develop strategies to increase their participation in the implementation of the peace agreement. These two workshops have been seen as successful, because they brought together diverse

groups of young people in a post-conflict society who are beginning the process of rebuilding their country. NDI is planning a third youth workshop in Khartoum in the near future.

*For more information on NDI's programs in Sudan, please contact Joe Andrews at [jandrews@ndi.org](mailto:jandrews@ndi.org)*

## AFTER WORKING WITH YOUTH IN UKRAINE, DAVID JOINS NDI'S CITIZEN PARTICIPATION TEAM



David (right) with Youth CAN volunteers in Ukraine.

After three years of working with youth groups in Ukraine, David Larson has joined NDI's Citizen Participation team as a senior program assistant. David came on board in April 2004 and will initially focus his time on a one-year cross-regional program to help some of NDI's local civic partners develop the capacity to share their expertise and know-how with counterpart organizations. David brings to the Institute more than three years of development experience in Ukraine where as a Peace Corps Volunteer he directed one of the country's leading youth NGOs — Youth CAN (Community Action Network).

Youth CAN started nine years ago as the American Culture and Language Retreat (ACLR), an English language and American culture retreat for Ukrainian university students in the Lughansk Oblast. Directed largely by Peace Corps Volunteers with help from a handful of Ukrainian youth volunteers, its activities previously consisted of Camp Rah-Rah, a leadership

focused on community action, team-building, civics and current issues. Along the way, they also produced a training manual and held a small follow-up conference.

During David's time working with Youth CAN, it became formally registered as an NGO in 2001. It has since evolved into one of Ukraine's largest and most active youth organizations, helping young people create change in their communities all over Ukraine. Now under Ukrainian leadership, Youth CAN supports community-based action through: a network of project assistants; workshops on project design and management; training manuals; a newsletter and list serve; a Youth Advocacy Council (YAC), which holds nationwide advocacy campaigns; and Camp Rah-Rah, which has become the organization's flagship project.

Aside from his work with Youth CAN, David also taught English, was a consultant at the Kyiv Alumni Resource Center and helped organize various community development projects, including a seminar on democracy, the election process and policy analysis and citywide civics classes.

*David Larson may be reached at [dlarson@ndi.org](mailto:dlarson@ndi.org) and ext. 6313.*

### YOUTH PARTICIPATION LINK

IDEA is an intergovernmental organization, with members states from all continents, supporting sustainable democracy worldwide. This website features research projects on the political activity of young people in established democracies.

[www.idea.int/99df/youthintro.html](http://www.idea.int/99df/youthintro.html)








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## ABOUT US

*The Civic Update is a quarterly production of the Citizen Participation Team of NDI. Please send any comments or suggestions to Senior Advisors*

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*The Citizen Participation team would like to thank all the regional staff members who provided assistance with compiling this Update*

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## EXPLORING YOUTH PROGRAMMING AT NDI

Last month former Kazakhstan Civic Program Manager Julia Cohen conducted an initial exploration of NDI's programs targeting young people in order to begin the process of demonstrating the positive impact of NDI's programming that specifically target young people and to determine the best practices and most effective strategies for improving those programs. The initial research demonstrated that in a majority of countries where NDI works, activities have already been and continue to be conducted targeting young people. Over the next three months, Julia, who has much experience in youth activism in the United States, will continue to lead the efforts to strengthen internal resources for youth programs and increase the institute's visibility on this issue with outside audiences. She will act as the strategic resource for youth programming within the Institute. Such a focus will increase information sharing among program staff by highlighting best practices, and institutionalizing the ability to conceive and implement programs that include activities to strengthen youth participation.

*Julia Cohen may be reached at [jcohen@ndi.org](mailto:jcohen@ndi.org) or ext. 5641.*

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## MORE NEW FACES ON THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION TEAM

**In June, the Citizen Participation team welcomed Natalia Moustafina and Julia Abad as summer interns.**

Natalia is an Edmund S. Muskie/Freedom Support Act Fellow studying for a Master's in Public Administration (MPA) at American University in Washington, D.C.. She has worked for a local non-governmental organization in Belarus and has served as a representative of a British non-profit foundation. Natalia is working on the Technical Leadership program with Dave Larson and looks forward to a career in international development and democratic institution-building.

Julia is a Fulbright Scholar completing a Master's in Public Policy (MPP) at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She served as an assistant to the Secretary of Social Welfare and Development and a corporate foundation in the Philippines. She is working on several assignments with the Citizen Participation team, including producing Civic Update. After her time at NDI, she looks forward to a career in strengthening relations between civil society and government.

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## STAY IN THE LOOP WITH **Civic@ndi.org**

**Just a reminder that staff members can use the Civic Group List Serve as a means of sharing information, raising questions, and discussing program developments with colleagues around the world.**

The list serve currently connects around 100 people working on, or with an interest in, citizen participation programs. The combined experience of these folks makes the list serve a truly versatile and powerful resources.

If you do not currently receive emails from the [civic@ndi.org](mailto:civic@ndi.org) list serve and would like to be included in this list, please contact Aaron Azelton by E-mail at [aaron@ndi.org](mailto:aaron@ndi.org).