



A Publication of the Citizen Participation Team

www.ndi.org

## TIPS IN THIS ISSUE

Adult Learning	1
More Doing	2
Translation	2
Partnership	3
Assessment	3
MOU	4
Dependency	4
Learn By Doing	5
Boosting Morale	5
Giving Credit	6
Unexpected Paths	6
Study Missions	7

## REGULAR SECTIONS

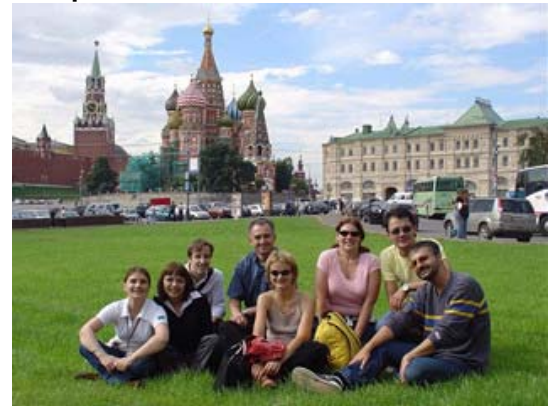
Resources	7
New to NDI	8
Stay in the Loop	8

## TIPS FROM NDI PRACTITIONERS

### The Voice of Experience

**W**elcome to *Civic Update*. For this edition, NDI staff members from around the world have provided "tips" on how to carry out NDI's citizen participation programs. The tips are based on first hand experiences and offer insightful suggestions about program design and delivery. Many of the tips are supplemented with additional information taken from existing NDI documents.

These tips, however, hardly begin to reflect the extensive knowledge and know-how of NDI staff members. When the important contributions of local staff members are also taken into account, it is no exaggeration to say that there are presently several dozen citizen participation program practitioners. What a great resource when it comes to learning about what works and what does not! There really is no substitute for the "front-line" advice and guidance that this group can



**Practitioners:** The NDI team take a quick break on the grass in Russia.

muster. Think of this *Update* as an appetizer that makes us want to learn more about what the practitioners are doing and, likewise, makes the practitioners more inclined to share best practices and lessons learned.

As always, comments on this *Update* are encouraged.

— Aaron Azelton, Senior Advisor

## HOW DO PEOPLE LEARN?

**TIP:** Work on real problems, do simulations, teach people to talk about their own experiences in ways that are helpful to others, consult, help develop plans and strategies. -- Submitted by Tom Bridle, Country Director Kosovo

**O**ver the years, NDI has discovered that adult education principles can be used to help de-

sign interventions with both individuals and small groups. Some of these principles include:

- Adults need to understand why they are learning something and believe that the learning process directly addresses their concerns and needs.
- Adults benefit from activities that allow them to relate new information and skills to realistic problems and previous experiences.

- Adults respond positively to a give-and-take learning process and the opportunity to put new information and skills into practice; they do not respond well to a process where information is just poured in by a teacher.
- Changing the established behavior of adults requires more than simply providing information through a lecture, or even delivering a training.

## LESS TRAINING, MORE DOING

**TIP:** Whenever possible, break away from the paradigm of the lecturer from overseas standing in front of a room full of people who are taking notes as he or she talks and draws diagrams on a whiteboard. NDI-Kyrgyzstan instituted two new programs to put advocacy into practice and enable participants to learn by doing. Both programs have demonstrated measurable success – plus, they’ve been a lot of fun for NDI and for the participants. Learning through doing gives the best results. The more customized the approach, the more powerful will be capacity building. Combine trainings, individual consultations and on-site visits. – *Submitted by Amy Schultz, Resident Country Director, Kyrgyzstan and Annisa Wanat, Program Officer, Bulgaria*

Over the years, NDI generally has delivered two types of advocacy programs. Of course, there are also some examples of where these approaches have been combined, or of different approaches altogether. Still, the majority of NDI’s advocacy work falls into these categories. The first approach provides a pre-determined set of training sessions to civic groups of every shape and size. It is presumed that all of the groups can benefit from an advocacy tutorial and all require the same introductory set of knowledge and skills. By most estimates, these programs have been successful in increasing awareness about the advocacy concept, but they have usually fallen short of moving groups to political action.

The exceptions have occurred when the standard training curriculum is followed by targeted assistance to individual groups. Too often, however, the follow-up has been limited or non-existent due to different program constraints.

NDI’s other approach to advocacy has been to work closely with just a few groups and to place a premium on learning-by-doing. This “guided” approach helps groups learn about advocacy by actually organizing and acting. Oftentimes the work has been carried out with groups that already have a willingness to take action, but simply lack the political know-how to do it effectively. Although more focused and time intensive, this second approach has led directly to political action from the

West Bank and Gaza to Kazakhstan to Indonesia to Ukraine.

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

## A WORD ON TRANSLATION

*“Don’t expect partners to follow your advice unconditionally—they do not always do what you advise them to do.”*

— Aleksandra Kuratko,  
Resident Program Officer, Georgia

**TIP:** Pay attention to the translation. Sometimes what the audience hears you’re saying is contrary to what you’ve said. Work with the translators so they understand the substance and get them acquainted with the terminology. Try to have a “back-up” or another person that understands until you’re confident with the translation. Especially pay attention to jokes and laughs, sometimes those do not translate (or you might even be using a word in their language that might mean something completely different!) — *Submitted by NDI-Kosovo Civic Political Participation team*

**W**hen professional translation is necessary, work with the translator in advance of an activity or meeting to help ensure that words and concepts are clearly understood and can be translated correctly. This will also help ensure that word choice is culturally acceptable. When possible, try supplementing the verbal delivery of complex information with visual aids, or printed materials.

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

## PARTNERSHIPS



**Developing Relationships:** An NDI staff member visits an office of Campaign for Good Governance, a local partner in Sierra Leone.

**TIP:** In our experience, leaders want to lead accountable and transparent organization but they don't know what a real transparent organization looks like. Your patience and skills will help earn their trust and friendship. Once they trust you and once you become friends with them they would be more eager to listen to your advice. *Submitted by Ebru Agduk, NDI-Turkey*

**T**ake the time to develop relationships built on mutual respect and trust. Potential civil society partners should understand that NDI is itself a non-governmental organization and there are often opportunities for learning from each others' experiences. Demonstrate to potential partners that NDI wants and needs to learn from them as well as that NDI can bring them useful ideas, techniques, and people. Visit branches of the organizations if they exist, or observe some of the organization's program activities, or participants. The baseline assessment process provides an opportunity to sit down with leaders and activists at various levels and collect their perspectives on the current political situation and development needs of their community. From these activities, the relationship can then advance toward shared decision-making and program planning with partners. The tone of these early interactions will affect the nature of the relationship for a long time afterwards.

## MEASURING UP FOR SIZE

**TIP:** Always assess the organization before you develop your work plan. Do figure out what your partners know first. You may not be the first person to explain a SWOT analysis or message box. -- *Submitted by Aleksandra Kuratko, Resident Program Officer, Georgia and Tom Bridle, Country Director Kosovo*

**A**n organizational assessment can be done in many ways. What is assessed and how it is assessed will be determined by expectations about what the organization **should be**, what it **should do**, and how it should **relate to the external environment**. In other words, an organization should NOT be assessed just against a set of standards. Instead, it

should also be assessed in terms of how well it is positioned to fulfill its particular mission and vision in the given context. For this reason, there is not a one-size-fits-all assessment tools that can be used for every organization and situation. In most instances, existing assessment tools need to be modified, both in terms of what is being assessed and how the information is gathered.

For some organizations, NDI might find itself helping the group assess 50 or more areas of organizational capacity, from human resource management, to proposal writing, to board behavior, to donor relations. At other times, NDI may be working with a small organization with only three full-time staff members. This type of organization probably does not have (and does not need) an

extensive set of human resource development and management procedures. Likewise, a small organization may not require board of directors, or a financial management policy covering the use of consultants. Thus, the assessment would not examine the board of directors or the use of consultants.

When done in a participatory manner, the assessment process can also help organizations begin to develop an internal capacity for self-assessment and continuous improvement, in the absence of NDI.

In all assessment processes, however, there are 8 steps that should be followed:

**1. Work the local organizations to determine the assessment's purpose and raise awareness about it.**

**2. Clarify roles between NDI and the local group.**

**3. Agree on the capacity areas to be assessed**

**4. Agree on the information that is needed, the sources, and the methods of data collection.**

**5. Gather information.**

**6. Analyze information and discuss findings.**

**7. Agree on priorities for organizational development.**

**8. Create a plan for organizational development.**

**TIP:** Assessment questionnaires are not that effective, unless they are part of a multi-faceted effort to gather information.

# PUTTING A RELATIONSHIP INTO WORDS

**TIP:** Establish the rules of cooperation as soon as possible. They can be in a form of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or some other written form. -- Submitted by Aleksandra Kuratko, Resident Program Officer, Georgia

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

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

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
Between  
**National Democratic Institute (NDI)**  
And  
**National Research Centre (CNIC)**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the National Research Centre (CNIC) of the Republic of Serbia, hereinafter referred to as the "Parties". The Parties have agreed to enter into a partnership for the purpose of providing technical assistance to the CNIC.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
The Parties have agreed to enter into a partnership for the purpose of providing technical assistance to the CNIC. The assistance will be provided in the form of training, consulting, and other services.

The Parties have agreed to enter into a partnership for the purpose of providing technical assistance to the CNIC. The assistance will be provided in the form of training, consulting, and other services.

The Parties have agreed to enter into a partnership for the purpose of providing technical assistance to the CNIC. The assistance will be provided in the form of training, consulting, and other services.

The Parties have agreed to enter into a partnership for the purpose of providing technical assistance to the CNIC. The assistance will be provided in the form of training, consulting, and other services.

The Parties have agreed to enter into a partnership for the purpose of providing technical assistance to the CNIC. The assistance will be provided in the form of training, consulting, and other services.

**MOU:** Reflect the obligations and expectations between NDI and partner groups.



**Peer learning:** Sharing knowledge and insights between NDI staff and partner groups is one way to build capacity.

# AVOIDING DEPENDENCY

**TIP:** Try to avoid turning yourself into an NGO's "slave" by ending up doing all of their writing. We're "building capacities", always remembers this. Engage the NGO as a pro-active subject and co-creator of their capacity building. Oftentimes their perspective is different than what others from the outside have planned. Peer learning is an important method for participatory capacity building. Networking also helps community and grassroots groups see that they are not alone.-- Submitted by Annisa Wanat, Program Officer, Bulgaria

**A**s a partnership begins to develop, make certain that organizations understand that NDI's mission relates to politics and political participation. In other words, potential partners need to be aware that NDI is about increasing citizen involvement in politics. Likewise, NDI staff members need to be respectful of the mission of a partner group. Groups should not feel pressured to redirect their organizational focus or to place their reason for existing second to NDI's agenda. When groups redirect their focus to suit a donor-driven agenda, these groups often grow dependent

and become less inclined to represent the interests and concerns of actual citizens.

Ideally, groups should feel compelled to work with NDI because they acknowledge that NDI is willing and able to support *their* agenda. In the case of coalitions, for instance, NDI has been more successful when groups have begun to coalesce naturally and NDI then steps in to provide targeted assistance. In these situations, the political will already exists and NDI can help enhance its expression. A good example of this situation is found in NDI work with the VOICE coalition in Russia.

*"One thing I think our experience has taught us is that you can give people the tools, encourage them to take advantage of specific opportunities, but you can't force people to use them."*

— Brionne Dawson, Senior Program Assistant NDI-SEA

## LEARNING BY DOING

**TIP:** Remember that you aren't running the organization - they are. The more you do for them, the less they know how to do for themselves. — Submitted by Lisa McLean, Country Director Montenegro

With the Croatian group GONG and the Peruvian group *Transparencia*, NDI did not make decisions for the organizations, implement their programs or take a direct hand in the management of either group. Instead, NDI assisted the organizations with developing fundamental organizational competencies through various training sessions and consultations at the outset. Much of this was based on each organization's planned monitoring activities. Topics during the early period of assistance included program planning, financial management, reporting, and communications.

In each case, NDI provided substantial training and advice at the outset



**Learning:** NDI-Haiti helping local partners conduct a training session in Croix des Bouquets.



**Assistance:** NDI Haiti helping local partners conduct a Civic Forum in Ganthier

and then backed off as the organizations became capable of putting the tools and techniques into action as part of their programming efforts.

In other words, NDI's assistance changed over time as the organizations developed and matured; early training activities that helped the groups get off the ground made way for more consultative assistance.

During this later period, NDI representatives guided the groups through such processes as strategic planning, proposal writing, developing internal policies and procedures, and annual budgeting.

*“Don't forget that “smiling” and “laughing” together (not all by yourself!) will always remain the best relationship-building techniques.*

—NDI-Kosovo Civic Participation Team

## BOOSTING MORALE

**TIP:** One of your greatest resources when in the field are your local NDI colleagues. Give them increasing responsibility as your programs grow. — Submitted by Jim Della-Giacoma, Former NDI Timor-Leste, Country Director

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

## GIVING CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

**TIP:** This year the Bulgaria program tried a new means of distributing “graduation” certificates to program participants from NGOs and parties. The graduation certificates were given to the organizations’ leaders to then pass on to the participants and this gave the participants a sense of recognition from within their organizations and from their leadership. The participants seemed to genuinely appreciate that and it contributed to the positioning of NDI program participants within their NGOs/parties.— *Catherine Messina Pajic, Deputy Director, NDI Central and Eastern Europe*



**Recognition:** Certificates are a frequent part of training around the world.

**TIP:** Make sure you give credits to individuals and NGO partners for everything that can be seen as an accomplishment or a step forward. It a good energizing tool and people like to hear good things about themselves and their work. — *NDI-Kosovo Civic Participation Team*

## THE LAW OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES



**Crossing Paths:** Protestors and police clash at a demonstration in Timor-Leste.

**TIP:** NDI Timor-Leste (formerly known as East Timor) recently facilitated a meeting between border communities participating in our security sector reform program and their local police. The meeting became emotional when participants raised several issues related to smuggling because, unknown to NDI, the perpetrators of these illegal acts were the Border Patrol Unit officers present. One officer threatened to shoot anyone who went down to the river (the border) - not really the intended outcome of this relationship-building exercise. However, a month later there is good news: some of the officers at that meeting have now been arrested and charged with smuggling, partly as a result of these issues being made public by those brave communities. — *Submitted by Karen Polglaze, Resident Senior Program Manager, Timor-Leste*

*“Include the partner organization in other NDI program activities, such as party round tables or legislative trainings, if they can benefit from it.”*

— Aleksandra Kuratko, Resident Program Officer, Georgia

**B**y the very definition of the mission statement, NDI staff often finds themselves working in transitional and post-conflict societies with weak institutions of rule of law and volatile politics. NDI cannot seek to control everything that will happen and the nature of our work will involve some risk that things will take an unexpected turn. However, often these “accidents” can have a serendipitous ending or posi-

tive while unintended outcome.

### Resources:

NDI’s experienced staff are the best resource when dealing with the Law of Unintended Consequences. There’s no need to be a “Lone Ranger” riding on the frontiers of democracy building alone. Keep your team informed and consult the Functional teams.

## IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF STUDY MISSIONS

**TIP:** Daily facilitated wrap-up sessions should could enable participants to reflect on the main issues of the day and help to ensure a more informative post-mission report. This would give NDI an opportunity to gain more feedback on the process as it unfolds and help us to reinforce key concepts discussed during the day. -- *Submitted by Tom Cormier, Resident Program Director, Indonesia*

*“NGO people might need time to themselves to “sort their own issues out”. This is normal and even healthy; it is not ultimately intended to “bad mouth” you or your work, although it’s good to continue building such relationships when they would feel confident of bringing you in for various discussions and come to you for an opinion. This might take time but when it happens it’s a good indicator that you’re on the “right path”.*

— NDI-Kosovo Civic Political Participation team

**W**hile Civic Programs typically do not involve many study missions, they have been considered recently by some civic teams recently to expose local partners and host country staff to civic and political practices in other countries. They have also been used to raise the profile of local partners with other donors.

### Resources:

Ask around for study mission reports from other teams. The Governance Team, for example, has a growing body of experience through its Institute for Representative Government (IRG) program that bring members of parliaments from around the world to the United States.



**Border visit:** Timor-Leste Defense and Security Committee survey the border.

### COMING ONLINE: THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION “BLOG”

**I**n an effort to enhance the delivery of information and encourage staff members to comment on the usefulness of resources, the Citizen Participation team plans to create a web-log. Each week, the resource mailing will be posted on the “blog” (Don’t worry, it will still be sent out too!) to allow staff discuss how useful, or not useful, the resource was and to share implementation best practices and lessons learned. Also, previous resources and mailings will be archived on the blog, allowing staff to access them from anywhere in the world. The team looks forward to bringing this new format to you and is excited to read all of your experiences. As part of this format the team will also explore creating an online forum as part of NDI’s new approach to using Information Communication Technology (ICT).



## 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

**Aaron Azelton**

*Aaron@ndi.org*

**Jim Della-Giacoma**

*jdella-giacoma@ndi.org*

Contributions Welcome!

## PRODUCTION

### Editors

Karen Luong

Aaron Azelton

Jim Della-Giacoma

### Writers

Karen Luong

Aaron Azelton

Jim Della-Giacoma

### Layout and Design

Karen Luong

### THANKS!

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

## FOR MORE RESOURCES ON THE TIPS DESCRIBED IN THIS *CIVIC UPDATE*

### Some of the Resources Available on the Citizen Participation CD

Increasing Citizen Participation through Advocacy Efforts

Organizational Development of Local Partners through Subgrants

GONG/*Transparencia* Research Report

GONG Organizational Development Toolkit

Adult Education and Training-Manual.

List of Web Sources for Organizational Development.

### Resources Available through Access Democracy

#### **An Introduction to Advocacy Training Guide**

This guide provides the tools for people to start engaging in the advocacy process:

[http://www.dec.org/pdf\\_docs/PNABZ919.pdf](http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNABZ919.pdf) (English, but also available in French)

#### **Influential Evaluations: Evaluations the Improved Performance and Impacts of Development Programs**

Eight case studies of evaluations and reviews which have had a significant impact. Provides a summary of lessons learned about how to ensure evaluations are utilized intensively: [http://www.worldbank.org/oed/influential\\_evaluations/](http://www.worldbank.org/oed/influential_evaluations/)

#### **Nonprofit Good Practice Guide**

This is a one-stop shop for widely-accepted and innovative nonprofit practices offering Preferred Practices and Pitfalls, Glossaries, Resources, Trends and Web site Profiles within ten topic areas.. These good practices can be applied quickly and directly to improving an organization's performance: <http://www.nonprofitbasics.org>

### NEW TO THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION TEAM

**Karen Luong** joined the Citizen Participation team in January 2005. She is a graduate student at American University — School of International Service, pursuing a Master's degree in International Affairs Comparative Regional Studies of Europe and North Africa. Originally from Dallas, TX, Karen graduated from Texas Christian University in 2004 with a degree in Political Science. In her spare time, she also serves as a Research and Editorial Assistant to the Immigration Counsel at the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and helped publish the 2005 *Report on Asylum Seekers in Expedited Removal*. Her research and policy interests include international migration, asylum and refugee issues, U.S. immigration policy, and the civil and political participation of minority populations.

## 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.

Also the Citizen Participation Team sends out weekly program resources.

If you do not currently receive emails from the **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**.