



CIVIC UPDATE

A Publication of the Citizen Participation Team

10 Year Anniversary Edition

For the last 20 years, NDI has made continual advancements in its ability to design and deliver programs that increase the organized political participation of citizens. At the same time, NDI's Citizen Participation team has worked to encourage, track and propagate these advancements so that they become part of NDI's program practice. The *Civic Update* has chronicled many of these changes, and this issue will outline some of the most notable practices.



Local residents and community leaders in the Philippines take active part in the identification of their municipality's most pressing public safety concerns

NDI's citizen participation programs are informed by some important conclusions reached over the years. The first conclusion is that citizen participation is as much a means of helping establish and institutionalize democratic structures and processes, as it is an end result of democracy.

NDI's civic programs have always strived to increase informed and active citizenship, because participation is viewed widely as an intrinsic element of a strong and vibrant democracy. However, well-organized, strategic citizen participation can help initiate political changes, which also makes citizen participation an instrumental element in strengthening and maintaining democracy.

NDI has also concluded that the best way to empower citizens and increase their sustained political participation is to help them organize and actually take action. Helping existing groups take political action on self-selected issues that are relevant to their mission is an effective means of increasing political participation.

NDI's learning by doing approach to program delivery has proven to be an effective tool in delivering assistance to partner groups. NDI has found that it is much easier to help groups organize and take political action when they already have a stake in a particular issue area.

NDI has also found that, when working with local groups, it is helpful to have clearly-structured, developmental partnerships, where roles, responsibilities and expectations are explicit. Partnership agreements are now commonplace and are being used to structure the relationship and as a management tool over the life of the partnership.

Another emerging development is that NDI has begun working with a much broader range of civic groups interested in social and political change. These groups extend well beyond the "usual NGO suspects" found in and around a nation's capital. NDI is now partnering with service providing organizations, associations, youth and sports clubs, agricultural cooperatives, and many others. This outreach to new groups has accompanied efforts to enter into new areas of programming, such as work around budget processes and political process monitoring.

Taken together, these conclusions and developments define a citizen participation program approach that is grounded by NDI's first-hand understanding of what works.

- Aaron Azelton,
Director of Citizen

A. Developing Partnerships

NDI's citizen participation programs usually involve assistance to local nongovernmental or community-based organizations, including those that organize themselves around poor or marginalized communities, such as women, young people, ethnic minorities, or people with disabilities. NDI programs also help groups that organize themselves around issues, such as good



Meeting with local partners in Romania

governance, agriculture, health, education, or public safety. In every region where NDI operates, there are numerous examples of programs that help local groups mobilize citizens, monitor political processes, increase public awareness and advocate for policy changes. NDI strives to build "intimate" developmental partnerships with local organizations. During a 2005 evaluation of NDI's relationships with eight local Romanian partners, the groups characterized their relationship with NDI as "friendship."

To these groups, friendship meant that NDI responded to their needs and concerns, provided honest advice and thoughtful guidance on both their organizing and organizational development, allowed them to make their own decisions, but helped them understand when they made mistakes, and championed them to other institutions. This reflects NDI's preferred partnership dynamic and helps to ensure that NDI's assistance is desired, appreciated, and applied.

Developmental partnerships are built on the understanding that NDI is providing assistance so that the local partner is better able to carry out its mission. Success is measured by higher levels of performance, professionalism, and independence on the part of the local group; all of which are central to sustainability.

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*** More information on partnership development can be found in the Citizen Participation Team's Resource Library as well as in the team's newest publication *Citizen Participation at NDI: A User's Guide*. ***

Improving the Capacity of Liberian Civic Groups

In 2003, NDI launched a program to support several civil society groups in Liberia to participate in an emerging political transition process. NDI encouraged cooperation and assisted civil society organizations in building linkages and reaching consensus on their role in the political transition process in Liberia.



NDI's country director reviews NAYMOTE's cartoon posters

NDI sought out several local organizations that had the potential to bridge the gap between citizens and the government caused by many years of political instability. However, these organizations lacked the skills and experiences to do so. NDI partnered with the Women's NGO Secretariat (WONGOSOL); the Center for Democratic Empowerment (CEDE); the Center for Transparency and Accountability (CENTAL); the Liberia Democracy Institute (LDI); the National Youth Movement for Transparent Elections (NAYMOTE); and the Liberia Democracy Resource Center (LDRC).

Through the developmental partnership model, organizations received technical and financial assistance to implement self-identified activities such as civic/voter education, government oversight, advocacy, and election monitoring.

In order to establish mutual accountability between NDI and the partners, the Institute developed Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with each group. MOUs clarified the roles and responsibilities of NDI and local groups, and outlined areas of support.

At the outset of the program, NDI provided groups

with the skills necessary to better facilitate interaction between citizens and government on key issue areas.

NDI's advanced skills trainings included topics such as strategic planning, meeting facilitation, and message development. Additional knowledge and skills were transferred through collaboration between NDI and civic groups on implementing the activities identified by the partner groups. The activities included focus groups research, advocacy and election awareness campaigns. The program also created a multiplier effect, as both NAYMOTE and CENTAL organized workshops and trainings of trainers with other local groups at the village level.

Following the series of trainings, NDI worked one on one with the Liberian partners to identify projects that the groups wanted to conduct that would fall within the scope of NDI's area of interest. NDI held individual consultations with each partner to identify program objectives, activities and expected results, as well as specific skills that they would like to improve upon in order to implement the program.

The financial assistance that NDI provided, through small grants, complemented the technical assistance. For example, in July 2004, NDI provided a small grant of \$4,995 to NAYMOTE for a four-month program to increase political and civic participation of rural women in the districts of Suakoko and Salala in Bong County and Kakata and Firestone in Margibi County. Through managing small grants, groups enhanced their financial management skills and accountability, which helped improve their credibility with future donors.

NDI also funded roundtable discussions between civil society groups on emerging issues and strategies, which became a space for organizations to network with each other.

Gradually, local partners required less programmatic assistance and became increasingly comfortable implementing their own activities such as advocacy campaigns, town hall meetings, and civic education roundtables. At this stage, NDI was able to take on more of an advisory role - working with groups to develop work plans for each program and providing feedbacks on the education materials that they distributed to citizens. Groups became more independent and could determine for themselves

Delivering Legal Rights for Working Mothers in Bosnia

In 2004, as part of a NED-funded program to bring together women in political parties, civic groups and elected office to design, coordinate and launch advocacy initiatives on the local level in seven municipalities, NDI convened women who later became a group called the Mostar Women's Citizen Initiative.

"I think that our biggest achievement is that we learned how they work in the government and how they make their decisions. On the other hand, they learned and heard what the citizens need."

NDI brought together women activists from different ethnic backgrounds in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina to participate in a series of meetings to discuss community issues which affected them all. Mostar is a city still deeply divided along ethnic and religious lines even 10 years after the war has ended. Though initially deeply distrustful of one another, the women continued to meet in NDI-facilitated sessions and over time identified a common legislative priority: maternity leave.

In Mostar, salaries are low, job opportunities are scarce, and domestic violence and drug abuse are on the rise. Unlike most of the other *cantons*, or county governments, in Bosnia - Herzegovina, Mostar's *canton* offered no legal protection for working women who take time off from their jobs for maternity leave.

Through NDI's mobilization and facilitation, this group of women came together to address the lack of protection for working mothers against unfair job termination and employment discrimination. The group agreed to work together to draft and lobby for passage of new legislation protecting the right to maternity leave.

The newly formed Mostar Women's Citizen Initiative drew together women—political activists, civic leaders, ordinary citizens—to address a common issue that transcended ethnic boundaries. NDI worked closely with the Initiative to build their capacity and train them on campaigning, strategic planning, advocacy and media skills to help the women get involved in the political process. As a result, they have developed the tools to solve complex problems, to work collectively and to become leaders in their own right.

Through the success of their development, coordination and implementation of coordinated advocacy initiatives at the local level, legislation was introduced and passed in the *canton* council to legally protect the right to maternity leave, better protecting female workers and families.

Hussein, a local journalist who helped the women with their media strategy, describes the impact that the campaign had on the community. "The media was tracking how we all managed to sit together and have conversations at the same table...I think that our biggest achievement is that we learned how they work in the government and how they make their decisions. On the other hand, they learned and heard what the citizens need."

In an unprecedented effort of multi-ethnic cooperation and citizen participation in the political process, the work of the Mostar Women's Citizen Initiative highlights the potential of using the tools and the values of democracy to bridge seemingly insurmountable divisions and to make democracy deliver by solving pressing community-wide problems. In May 2006, the Mostar Women's Citizen Initiative won the Madeleine K. Albright Award from NDI for their advocacy efforts.

Entering into its third year, Mostar Women's Citizen Initiative continues to grow and is widely recognized in the city. New parties have joined the group and started to contribute and work together.

The newly formed Mostar Women's Citizen Initiative drew together women — political activists, civic leaders, ordinary citizens — to address a common issue that transcended ethnic boundaries.

With strong momentum from their initial success, the Mostar women have started a campaign to address the significant challenge of drug abuse in Mostar by raising awareness on the issue and by providing support to drug users and their families. Their efforts include educating children about drug abuse, providing counseling and working to secure legislation that would bring greater assistance from the government to this growing problem.

B. Assistance-delivering Techniques

NDI has concluded that the best way to empower citizens and increase their sustained political participation is to help them organize and actually take action. Although this is a rather obvious conclusion, it has important implications when it comes to delivering assistance and determining which citizens to support. First, it de-emphasizes training as NDI's primary intervention and instead focuses on a set of assistance techniques that place a premium on "learning-by-doing."

NDI has labeled this set of techniques *guided practice*, which includes coaching, facilitation and structured feedback. Secondly, because of the action oriented approach, NDI has realized greater success when identifying citizens and civic groups with some existing leadership "raw material" and with existing issues and collective interests around which substantive action can be taken.

From Get-out-the-Vote Campaigns to Sustained Political Organizing - Bulgaria

Having engaged with civil society groups in Bulgaria since the parliamentary elections in 2001, NDI learned that providing guidance for groups in a real life campaign is effective in improving their efforts to enhance civic participation. Throughout the complete election cycle from July 2001 to June 2005 NDI partnered with various networks of civil society organizations to implement voter education and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) campaigns. After the campaigns, groups not only were better able to organize programs and inform citizens about the electoral process, but also expanded their base of technical skills and management capacities necessary to be active in political organizing in the long term.

At the start of the program, NDI assessed the capacity and the experience of interested organizations, and selected partners through interviews. NDI built broad coalitions of over 70 local NGOs including women's, youth, disabled, minority, labor, and media organizations.

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Rules of Thumb for Building the Capacity of Local Partners

Sustained change on the part of local partners cannot be driven by NDI. Local groups must have a desire to become more active and more capable.

They also require a certain amount of leadership "raw material" that is able to absorb and apply NDI's assistance.

Training alone does not typically create sustainable capacities in local partners. Instead, sustained capacity is most often developed through practice. In other words, groups learn best and build sustained capacity by actually doing things, not just learning about how or why to do things.

Training can provide a foundation, but groups then need to apply what they learned in order to increase capacity.

Providing only money also does not create sustainable capacities in local partners. Since NDI is not a donor, financial support is given primarily as a way to help local groups become better able to carry out work through "practice."

However, for groups to really benefit from financial support, they often need other forms of assistance so that they truly understand what they are doing, why they are doing it and learn from each activity.

It is easy for groups to spend money without much guidance; it is harder for them to learn how to do it responsibly, accountably and effectively.

*** More information about working with local partners can be found in the "Citizen Participation at NDI: A User's Guide" on our team's section of the NDI Dialogue site ***

From Get-out-the-Vote Campaigns to Sustained Political Organizing - Bulgaria

(continued from page 5)

During the course of the four election campaigns, NDI trained the partners on a diverse array of grassroots organizing methods such as targeting, door-to-door canvassing, phone banking or direct mail. Virtually an entire generation of Bulgaria's NGO leaders were trained, which helped increase participation of NGOs and bridge electoral democracy with good governance.

Az Cam Mlad i Glasuvam!
(I Am Young and I Vote)

An important aspect of the partnership was the NDI-partner relationship.

The networks took the lead and NDI provided guidance as necessary to ensure that activities were substantive and successful. The Institute solicited proposals from partners and worked with each to refine and coordinate proposed activities. The small grants that NDI issued corresponded with each partner's proposal in order to help the networks conduct activities in their respective regions. During the campaigns, NDI monitored partners' activities frequently to ensure program objectives were met.

By developing more responsibility to the partners, NDI helped them recognize and address the challenges that may arise. Partners took an active part in developing the national campaign theme, the logo for the GOTV campaign, and the media strategy. The partners tested different solutions and implemented successful campaigns. Examples include the Women's Alliance for Development and the Bulgarian Association for Free Elections and Civil Rights using NDI guidelines and training materials extensively to operate phone banks and motivate volunteer in the 2001 campaign.

In both the 2001 and 2003 "*Ti Izbirash (I Choose)*" campaigns, network partners used NDI's training on media communications to generate tremendous amounts of media coverage for their regional events. In the 2005 campaign "*Az cam mlad i glasuvam! (I am young and I vote)*" focused on youth participation. National partners collaborated

with NDI to produce 250,000 voter education brochures and posters for universities, and took the responsibility to distribute them.

Some groups such as the National Association of Municipalities of the Republic of Bulgaria and the National Network for Equal Opportunities kept collaborating with NDI. Each subsequent program has seen important improvements of the networks. Partners used their experience from previous elections to conduct targeted activities on limited budgets.

Not surprisingly, the knowledge that the partners gained through hands-on experience during these campaigns were retained and successfully applied to their future projects. Fifty percent of the organizations reported that they had developed ideas for future initiatives.



A volunteer distributes voter education leaflets as part of the I am Young and Vote campaign around this year's parliamentary elections. (2005)

For example, they realized that it was effective to target a specific group, which led to their creation of a municipal fund to assist disabled citizens, working for child protection rights, or introduction of a local ombudsman. In many of these cases, the groups were approached by a donor agency impressed with their campaign activities.

In 2006, a nationwide Bulgarian GOTV campaign was initiated, organized, and implemented completely independent of international assistance.

Sustained Activism and Community Development

Since 1998, NDI has helped more than 200,000 Haitian citizens organize themselves to improve life in their communities through the Civic Forum program. The program provides Haitian citizens the knowledge, tools, and confidence to bring about change from the grass-roots level and has proven to be effective despite the immense political, social, and economic challenges found in Haiti.

The program is implemented in two stages. In the first phase, skilled, community-based Haitian trainers guide citizens through discussions of basic democratic institutions and values using the Institute's *Citizen's Guide: From Civic Education to Civic Action*, a 12-part civic education manual in Haitian Creole.

The discussion groups are structured to enable citizens to practice democratic values, including political tolerance and inclusion, as they learn about the branches of government, the constitution and their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

In the second phase, the majority of groups participating in the

Civic Forum go on to form community action groups or "Initiative Committees."

Since 1998, NDI has helped more than 200,000 Haitian citizens organize themselves to improve life in their communities through the Civic Forum program.

After receiving NDI training in community organizing strategies and project management, the Initiative Committees identify local priorities and develop projects that respond to those needs. The projects are funded through in-kind donations of labor and materials or small amounts of funding from citizens, Haitian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and international donors.

Hundreds of projects have been organized to date, including: construction of health clinics, schools, and roads; reforestation and soil conservation to protect watersheds; the provision of potable water; and the development of self-sustaining community gardens.

With modest NDI technical support, 36 Initiative Committees in the three northern departments have come together of their own accord to go beyond the original Civic Forum prescribed organizing efforts focused at the communal level to form the *Initiative Committee of the North*.

This regional coalition is organizing to address larger community problems on the departmental and regional level. The group has already showed an impressive capacity to organize when they collectively recruited more than 600 nonpartisan volunteer observers for the 2006 elections.

Because of Initiative Committee activities, the program has changed the way politics is being played in many Haitian communities. Elected officials now recognize they need to engage citizens when making decisions.

For example, during the communal forum in Cap Haitien, the mayor's representative invited Initiative Committees to a meeting with the mayor where they discussed how they can work together on local policy issues.



Initiative Committees engaged in road improvement between Hinche and Thomassique.

C. Diversified Partners and Beneficiaries

Civic organizations have always been an integral component of NDI citizen participation programs. They are, in most cases, intermediary organizations already committed to the essence of democracy. Their members are somewhat aware of the rights and abilities of citizens to participate in politics.

NDI programs actively involve women, youth, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and citizens in remote and rural areas.

NDI partners with these organizations with the belief that they will advocate for citizens' access to politics and a stronger civic culture in society. However, they are only a small populace of the society and do not necessarily connect with the direct concerns of citizens, especially those politically marginalized and socially excluded.

With the goal of making democracy a useful tool that average citizens can use, NDI is now making

an effort to increase support to citizen groups that are organized around specific policy issues. These **sectoral organizations** are unified bodies that express certain significant concerns, whether it is the lack of housing provision or unequal treatment to a segment of the population. Their goal to resolve citizens' concerns represent an attempt to seize more resources and power at the grassroots level. As a result, our partners and recipients of assistance have not only expanded but also diversified over the years.

Reaching beyond traditional groups of political activists, urban elites, and well-founded NGOs, NDI has engaged different types of **politically marginalized and socially excluded populations**. Specifically, our programs actively involve women, youth, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and citizens in remote and rural areas. In many cases, these populations have already organized themselves through networks, communities, or support groups. NDI therefore can utilize the pre-existing coalitions and support their political activism for specific issues.

Engaging Disabled Person Organizations – Sierra Leone

One of NDI's current initiatives in Sierra Leone demonstrates that groups with little experience in advocacy, such as organizations comprising people with disabilities, can actually play an important role in mobilizing citizens to participate in the political process. In August 2006, NDI launched a program aimed at enfranchising people with disabilities (PWD) in the electoral and political process.

Following a decade-long civil war during which rebels deliberately maimed thousands of civilians, Sierra Leone today has neither the resources nor the expertise to deal with this segment of its population. Consequently, PWD are largely excluded from the political and electoral process.

In this context, working with disabled person organizations (DPOs) is vital, as the organizations have access to these marginalized populations and are familiar with their special needs.

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DAAG representative Patrick James Taylor addresses the audience at the opening ceremony for the Enfranchising People with Disabilities in Electoral and Political Processes program.

From left to right, Patrick James Taylor, NDI Country Director Nick Demeter, and Ambassador Thomas Hull.

Engaging Disabled Person Organizations – Sierra Leone

(continued from page 5)

Under the program, NDI partners with the Disabilities Awareness Action Group (DAAG) – an umbrella organization of five DPOs: the Sierra Leonean Associations for the Deaf, the Sierra Leonean Associations of the Blind, the National Leprosy Organization, the Sierra Leonean Union of Polio Persons, and the Sierra Leonean Amputees Association. DAAG was selected because of its wide network and commitment to capacity strengthening.

The goal is not only to ensure that people with disabilities participate fully in the electoral process but also to improve the capacities of civil society organizations to advocate for the interests of citizens.

NDI provides technical assistance to DAAG to conduct voter education and election observation in the run up to the national elections in July 2007. The goal is not only to ensure that the PWD participate fully in the electoral process but also to improve the capacities of civil society organizations to advocate for the interests of citizens. Through a series of trainings and consultations, NDI seeks to enhance DAAG's capacity to effectively, communicate, develop its message, increase reporting techniques, and improve organizational management.

NDI's capacity building efforts have resulted in considerable progress of DAAG. Following consultations with the Institute, DAAG was awarded a \$25,000 subgrant from NDI to conduct a voter education and election observation program in seven of the 14 districts in Sierra Leone. Regular consultations with DAAG established clear channels of communication and built a strong and beneficial partnership with the civil society group. The consultations were also two-way dialogues where NDI solicited input from DAAG leadership on the specifics of the Institute's programming.

In addition, NDI assisted DAAG with networking, training the coalition to build relationships with other organizations and the government. NDI leveraged relationships with the National Elections Commission (NEC) and other Sierra Leonean organizations to connect DAAG with potential

sources of support and assistance. These NDI-facilitated meetings have helped DAAG advocate for people with disabilities' access to the electoral process. These connections increased the NEC's awareness of the disabled peoples' issues. The NEC is now providing DAAG with updates on the election to support their voter education activities. The capacities and relationships that DAAG gained through its partnership with NDI are helpful for its work even after the election period.

NDI is using its relationship with DAAG and the National Elections Commission to bring the two groups together for consultations. This has helped DAAG advocate for PWD access to the electoral process; it encourages the NEC to hire PWD staff members and has requested the Commonwealth to provide Braille ballots. As a result, the NEC is seeking funding to establish a staff position to address issues concerning the participation of PWD, and has identified a representative to serve on the DAAG Advisory Committee.



Representatives of the Civil Society Organizations at the opening ceremony for the Enfranchising People with Disabilities in Electoral and Political Processes program.

In addition, the NEC provides DAAG with updates on the election, which are then used as part of its voter education activities. Given the historically low registration rates of PWD, this increased awareness by the Commission on disabled people's issues is significant and the regular consultations between DAAG and the National Elections Commission are critical to increase the access of people with disabilities to the electoral process.

Community Policing in Philippines

In 2003, NDI initiated a project to enhance community-police relations in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and to help promote democratic administration of peace and order and public safety. NDI worked with ARMM regional and local leaders and police officers to increase local capacities to implement community policing, and to increase citizens' participation in the administration of peace and order and public safety. NDI collaborated with the municipal peace and order councils (MPOCs) - local government bodies consisting of local officials, police and community civic leaders mandated to address public safety issues.

In most villages or *barangays* in the ARMM decision-making is heavily centralized, with the government opposing community involvement in public safety administration. Despite the government resistance which leaves little space for bodies like the MPOCs to function, NDI realized that the democratic structure and membership base of the MPOCs gave them potential to play a more active role.



Community leaders and police chiefs join during a community policing development workshop. Led by trainer Ron West

After engaging the local governments to pursue community policing in their villages, NDI helped form and partnered with several Core Teams, composed of citizen leaders and police from the municipal peace and order councils. The goal of the partnership was to assist the teams to be key players in community policing efforts at the grassroots level.

Throughout the first year, NDI conducted capacity trainings for the Core Teams of the MPOCs which included providing them with tools for problem-solving, conflict management, resource mobilization and result-based planning. The training was combined with hands-on experience of executing the techniques taught. In Cotabato City, for example, training involved monitoring the public market and

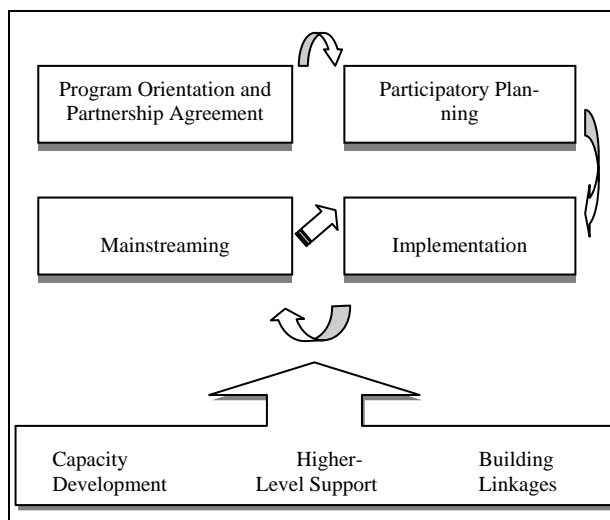
certain local areas during evening hours when drug pushing was known to be most rampant. As the role of the MPOCs to address local public safety issues was confirmed in the second year, NDI furthered the assistance to the Core Teams and the MPOCs to strengthen their competencies in facilitating community processes and responding to public safety issues. NDI conducted workshops to help MPOCs appreciate the importance of systematically monitoring and evaluating their performance in public safety.

Community policing facilitates citizen input to local police authorities, encourages professionalism and community involvement in public safety

In all the pilot sites the MPOCs consolidated Public Safety Plans to submit for legislative and budgetary action. To prepare the Plans, the MPOCs organized *barangay*-level workshops as an opportunity for leaders and representatives from various sectors to collaborate in assessing public safety threats and designing appropriate responses. Through the public safety assessments, the Core Teams generated significant community input – over 1,000 citizens, representing different sectors of 100 *barangays*, participated in the assessments.

This process was a significant step in the model-building process because in the past, Public Safety Plans were drafted solely by the local police chief

Community Policing Modeling Process



D. Going Forward

Social accountability

Civic participation is not an end in itself but a mechanism to ensure that public officials serve the interests of the people.

Social accountability is an approach that relies on civic engagement to ensure this end. It affirms and operationalizes direct accountability relationships between citizens and the state.

“Social accountability mechanisms refer to a broad range of actions (beyond voting) that citizens, communities and civil society organizations can use to hold government officials and bureaucrats accountable. These include citizen participation in public policy making, participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, citizen monitoring of public service delivery, citizen advisory boards, lobbying and advocacy campaigns.” (World Bank)

The obligation of government officials to be accountable to citizens derives from notions of citizens’ rights, often enshrined in constitutions, and the broader set of human rights. Social accountability initiatives help citizens understand their civic rights and play a proactive and responsible role in exercising those rights.

At the same time, social accountability helps make democracy deliver for the average citizens. The government is obligated to fulfill its responsibility to act in the interests of the citizens and deliver the services that address their concerns. These policies and government actions will then help to improve the living standards of the people. Through this democratic mechanism, citizens get to see tangible results of their participatory actions.

While social accountability encompasses a broad array of diverse practices, there are several core elements or building blocks that are common to most social accountability approaches. These include:

- i. accessing information,
- ii. making the voice of citizens heard, and
- iii. engaging in a process of negotiation for change.

Use of Subawards as Capacity Development Tool

Although technical assistance is the core element of NDI’s collaboration with local partners, financial assistance, or **subawards**, can be an important component of NDI’s programs. The scope of subawards affects how the groups relate with NDI and how they use the money. Therefore, it is essential that NDI clarifies the level of commitment associated with different subawards.

Subawards are the means through which financial assistance is delivered to local partner organizations. In principle, subawards, combined with training activities and consultations, are used as a technical assistance tool that help partners improve their ability to run programs, interact with funders, report programmatic results and manage money, to name a few capacity areas.

Subawards can also help partners develop democratic organizational cultures built around the fundamental principles of ethics, accountability and responsibility that provide the underpinnings of successful, sustainable organizations.

For many organizations, these principles are first introduced and put into practice when it comes to financial management. Therefore, instilling these principles should be an explicit objective when assisting the development of local groups.

NDI issues two types of subawards to partners: *small grants* and *subgrants*.

Small grants (under \$10,000) are generally administered in the field and carry fewer restrictions on the types of CSOs that receive them.

If NDI is giving less than \$10,000 to a single organization, but the aggregate giving to multiple organizations totals more than \$10,000, this is a **small grants program**.

Subgrants are used for agreements with CSOs for \$10,000 and above and must be administered through the Subgrants Unit in Washington, DC.

Primer Launching

In June 2007 the Citizen Participation team distributed “Citizen Participation at NDI: A User’s Guide”, a short handbook intended to be a resource in both DC and the field that we hope it brings greater clarity to programmatic options, nomenclature and concepts.

The Primer can be found in the resources section of Citizen’s Participation Team’s page on the Dialog.

We welcome any and all feedback.

Citizen Participation at NDI

A User’s Guide

National Democratic Institute
for
International Affairs

May 2007

Youth in Conflict Contexts

The Citizen Participation team has been working on a new project in an effort to fill the void in the international community on resources for engaging young people in the political process in conflict and post conflict societies.

More information can be found on our team’s section of the NDI Dialogue site.f

The project has three intended products:

- case studies on NDI’s programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kenya, and Liberia;
- a seminar Youth and Politics in Conflict Contexts in Washington, DC;
- and a toolkit for practitioners seeking to engage youth in politics in conflict contexts.

Meet the Project Assistants

Welcome to Aurica Blamus, the Citizen Participation’s Project Assistant for Summer 2007.

Aurica Blamus has joined the Citizen Participation team in June 2007. She is a graduate student at University of Pittsburgh pursuing a master in international development, concentrating on civil society and NGO management.

Originally from Moldova, Aurica worked with local non-governmental organizations focusing on promoting youth leadership. She is interested in youth development and the advancement of civil society in emerging democracies.

We would also like to send a note of thanks to our Spring 2007 project assistants Eleeza Agopian and Tu Chi Nguyen.

Eleeza departed at the end of May on an IREX fellowship in Armenia examining the use of communication and democracy programs.

Tu Chi departed in early June to travel to her home country of Vietnam, and a month-long volunteer posting at NDI’s Indonesia office – all before embarking on graduate school at the Kennedy School in the fall. Thanks to both.



Citizen Participation Team Motto

"Those who help create
openings of democracy
must inhabit them."

- Wangari Maathai -

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THANK YOU

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

Visit CP team's re-
vised blog at [http://
dialogue.ndi.org](http://dialogue.ndi.org)



The Citizen Participation blog was re-launched with new features and design in January. In addition to the main discussion forum among NDI Civic Program staff, the blog regularly updates contacts, resources and partner profiles. If you have any question or suggestion, please email civicblogmoderator@ndi.org.

Upcoming Civic Update — Call for contributions

Our next Civic Update will discuss
NDI's civic participation programs in-
volving **marginalized groups**, such as
women, young people, ethnic minori-
ties, people with disabilities, communi-
ties in remote and rural areas etc.

Your ideas and stories are welcome!