

Global Elections and Political Transitions (GEPT) Technical Leadership Project: *Learning from Emerging Approaches to Party Programming*

Why is this project needed?

Traditionally, political party programs have focused on providing various forms of technical assistance to party activists and leaders. However, without strong incentives for change, greater organizational capacity alone rarely leads to more inclusive, responsive, and accountable political parties. As a result, assistance providers have started to supplement technical assistance to parties with interventions to incentivize more responsive, inclusive, and accountable parties. For instance, through issue-based voter education, debates, citizen platforms, and political process monitoring efforts, civic groups have tried to push political parties to: increase their focus on policies; involve citizens in policy processes; and improve service delivery. Although the theoretical foundations for these approaches appear strong, comparative lessons learned and best practices from practical experiences are limited. A deeper understanding of the efficacy of these approaches is needed to strengthen the effectiveness of political party programming.

Issue-based parties need issue-based voters.

“It is important that there is a constituency within a country that is demanding a policy-based approach to politics.”

Nic Cheeseman & Don Paget
Politics Meets Policies: The Emergence of
Programmatic Parties

What are the core research questions?

- ✓ Under what conditions have civic interventions incentivized more issue-based parties?
- ✓ Are these approaches more relevant/effective in some contexts than others?
- ✓ What skills, strategies, and assets do civic groups need in order to be able to engage and influence political parties effectively?
- ✓ What strategies can be used to ensure that policy processes include marginalized groups and reflect their interests?

What is the research approach?

To address these research questions, CEPPS/NDI will:

- ✓ Conduct a literature review outlining the different types of civic interventions that have been used to incentivize more issue-based parties; existing knowledge of the strengths and limitations of each; and priorities for further research;
- ✓ Through desk and field research, develop case studies examining selected experiences with these approaches, best practices, and lessons learned; and
- ✓ Develop recommendations to strengthen future programming.

How will the deliverables be used?

Based on the research, CEPPS/NDI will develop a guidance note that outlines issues to consider, best practices, and lessons learned. The note will inform the design and implementation of programs that seek to use civic organizing to incentivize more issue-based parties.

How can I get more information?

Contact Sef Ashiagbor (sefakor@ndi.org)