



Issue 1, 2/14/97

Welcome to the first Civic Update!!! This news bulletin, which will be distributed every six weeks, is designed to exchange information among NDI staff on civic participation programs and to raise issues confronted in our civic programs. Below you will find a brief explanation of a number of programs followed by a “Civic Note.” The “Civic Notes” are used to highlight specific issues with which a program dealt, provide ideas or suggestions for programs, or raise awareness of materials available. We hope that it will be helpful. Please send us your comments and suggestions by E-mail at lisam@NDI.org or kelsch@NDI.org; mail or fax. Thanks! (This is an internal news update. Please do



not distribute it to non-NDI colleagues.)

ASIA: Indonesia — A Domestic Monitoring Organization

In 1996, the Indonesian Independent Election Monitoring Committee (KIPP) was established in preparation for the May 1997 parliamentary elections. In response to KIPP's request for training and technical assistance, NDI conducted a program last year on domestic election monitoring in Bangkok, Thailand for KIPP leadership.

Following this workshop, NDI staff traveled to Indonesia and worked collaboratively with KIPP to develop the workplan and timeline for its activities. NDI and KIPP worked well together and the group appeared to grow from NDI's close collaboration. Upon returning to Washington, NDI staff maintained regular communication with KIPP. However, activities did not seem to be moving forward as they had when an NDI staff member was on the ground. While the Institute did not originally plan to have a field presence because of the restrictive political environment, NDI re-visited this question. NDI later decided that it could better assist the group, as well as better understand the challenges to meeting its timelines, by placing a short-term field representative in Indonesia.

Civic Note: In response to this question, an in-house discussion was held at NDI-Washington to discuss “partnership” with civic organizations. What is NDI's responsibility in ensuring that a partner civic organization carries out its activities in a timely manner? How much hand-holding is appropriate? When do we take a more active role with an organization? Some of the suggestions and opinions raised during the meeting included:

- *discuss a civic group's and NDI's relationship at the start of a project (a memorandum of understanding was mentioned as one way to define roles and responsibilities);*
- *a field representative should advise a group, not be an implementor;*

valuable assistance can be provided as a group establishes, but, concern was raised as to whether the presence of a field representative over an extended period of time could create a situation of dependency; and

- *fundraising should be a component of all of NDI's programs with civic organizations without regard to the program's stage.*

(A memorandum on this discussion will be available soon.)

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: The Second Annual European Civic Summit

In an effort to help ensure the sustainability of civic organizations in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, NDI brought together seven civic organizations in a Civic Summit. Funded by the Westminster Foundation, the second annual "Civic Summit" brought together 16 citizen activists. The civic activists discussed issues related to their organizational development and sustainability issues such as mission statements and strategic planning. Moreover, "choosing an issue" was addressed to assist groups to move from a monitoring and education role to one in which they participate in the decision-making process. After the first civic summit in 1995, several groups commented that they could successfully organize around an issue; however, they had difficulty choosing an issue and developing appropriate strategies to address the issue. Ultimately, NDI hoped to help establish a network among the groups for future cooperation. Participants expressed interest in maintaining contact and drawing on each other's experiences throughout the year as well as reconvening at a possible Civic Summit III.

Civic Note: Organizational sustainability --

how can NDI best assist our partner groups? Addressing organizational development issues and facilitating collaboration among similar groups will surely help. The Political and Civic Organization Team has a number of institutional development (mission, strategic planning, fundraising, etc.) materials available to help you address these issues. (See attached list of materials available on institutional development.)

FORMER SOVIET UNION: The Committee of Voters of Ukraine

NDI works in collaboration with the Committee of Voters (CVU), a domestic organization formed in 1994, which now promotes civic education and civic participation initiatives. At a January Board meeting, CVU addressed its policy on nonpartisanship. In preparation for the Board meeting, CVU's executive director drafted a nonpartisan policy that was based on materials provided by NDI's field representative on nonpartisan policies from other international and U.S. civic groups. Although CVU did not pass a policy, through discussion it clarified and reconfirmed its nonpartisan position. The Board agreed that CVU Board members, coordinators, and staff cannot be active in a political party and should not be a member of a party. In addition, CVU election monitors will sign a pledge of nonpartisanship as they have done in past elections. Finally, all political parties will be invited to CVU roundtables and other events.

Civic Note: Nonpartisanship is a challenging issue for many of the groups that NDI works with around the world. Many groups have adopted informal or formal mechanisms to ensure that their members are indeed nonpartisan. In a number of cases, nonpartisanship language

has been included in an organization's bylaws, or volunteers have been asked to sign a pledge of nonpartisanship before participating in activities. Bylaws from more than 30 civic organizations with whom NDI has worked over the past years, as well as bylaw guidelines are available through the Political and Civic Organization Team.

LATIN AMERICA: The Civic Network

In response to requests for an increased exchange of information and materials among Latin American civic groups, the NDI Latin America Team has taken the initiative to create a civic network of more than 30 civic organizations in the region. The groups receive monthly mailings on civic themes and communications via Internet. NDI has also made available more than 1,000 documents that it has compiled in a Latin American Civic Network "library." The library draws on the Institute's archive of Latin American program materials, as well as materials from dozens of civic groups around the globe. Documents include: training manuals, civic and voter education leaflets, domestic monitoring forms, organizational statutes and electoral laws, among other materials. Civic groups in the region have commented that access to this information helps them learn from the successes and failures of other democratic development efforts.

Civic Note: Although the majority of the information is in Spanish, there are materials that could be helpful across regions. (See attached copy of the Civic Network library subject areas.) Let the Political and Civic Organization Team know if you would like further information or contact the Latin America Team directly.

SOUTHERN AFRICA: Mozambique — Civic Education

NDI Mozambique conducts an extensive,

rural-based civic education program on multiparty democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Unique training mechanisms have been used throughout the program including story boards, songs, video and theater. Recently, focus groups were used as an evaluation tool to help determine the impact of NDI's program. Eight focus groups, including a total of 114 participants, were held. By conducting focus groups with program participants and control groups of non-program participants, NDI was able to determine that our program improved the level of understanding of multiparty democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the Mozambicans who attended NDI's program. *Civic Note: While formal focus groups may not be feasible options for many programs, informal discussion groups with a group of program participants and with a group of non-program participants may be one tool that could be used to assess the progress of a program. If you would like to learn more about the Mozambique experience, copies of the focus group report will be available in the weeks to come.*



YOUR CIVIC NOTE CORNER

Comments received from NDI staff (that especially means YOU field staff) will be included in each issue of the Civic Update. E-mail, fax or mail your comments to us (lisam@ndi.org, kelsch@ndi.org) by **March 14. YOU ARE THE EXPERTS**, so let us hear from you!!



strengthen their organizations and

CIVIC UPDATE - ISSUE II:

theme of the next issue will be **advocacy**.

Please help us understand advocacy and define the term. The attached memo will give you a sense of what NDI categorizes as advocacy programs and what characteristics differentiate this program area from others. Again, e-mail, fax or mail in your thoughts on: **what is advocacy?**

advocate for issues of interest.

WE NEED YOUR MATERIALS!! If the Washington office does not have a copy of the materials that you currently use in your program or materials that you produced, please,

please send it in and explicitly mark a copy for us.

JOB OPENINGS:

Looking for a new position or know a civic organizer who is.....

West Bank and Gaza Strip:

Organizational Development

Work with NDI's Civic Forum staff to continue the ongoing civic education program and to assist its transition to a wholly independent Palestinian NGO specializing in civic education.

Baltic States:

Organizational Development and Advocacy

Train NGOs throughout Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on how to

Attached Materials:

- List of available materials on institutional development.
- List of the Latin America Civic Network library subject areas.



- Advocacy: Are we speaking the same language?

**HAPPY
DAY!!**

VALENTINE'S

February 14, 1997

