



CIVIC UPDATE

January 2011



A Publication of the Citizen Participation Team

GOTV, Voter Information & Voter Education

Elections are a fundamental democratic process that provide citizens with an opportunity to choose representatives and create a measure of government accountability. From a development perspective, elections offer an entry point for citizen organizing and political participation. NDI's programs supporting Get Out the Vote (GOTV), voter information and voter education campaigns help give citizens an informed voice and help them occupy the political space provided by an election. Also, electoral participation can be used as a stepping stone for continued citizen activism and government oversight. Elections are what set the stage for more accountable and responsive government.

Active and informed participation in elections cannot be taken for granted, however. Citizens often lack basic knowledge about the process and their electoral choices. They may also encounter barriers to voting, because they do not have proper identification or their name was left off the voter list. Voter information, voter education and GOTV campaigns can help address these and other issues, so that widespread enfranchisement and participation results.

Different types of campaigns will deal with the different issues facing potential voters. For example, GOTV is aimed at mobilizing eligible citizens to register and turn out to vote on Election Day. Voter information refers to the provision of the basic procedural information voters require, including the date, time and place of voting; the type of electoral system; registration requirements; and the mechanics of voting. Whereas, voter education typically addresses voter motivations and ability to make informed choices. This includes relatively more complex types of information about voting and the electoral process, and is concerned with concepts such as the link between basic human rights and voting rights; the role, responsibilities and rights of voters; the relationship between elections and representative government; secrecy of the ballot; why each vote is important and its impact on public accountability; and how votes translate into seats. While there are important distinctions between the three types of initiatives, one can

re-enforce another and all of them support increased citizen participation and government accountability.

This Update outlines the types of support that NDI provides local groups conducting GOTV, voter education or voter information campaigns; partner motivations for engaging in these types of initiatives; partner activities; and NDI program results.

For more information please contact the Citizen Participation team at Civic_DC@ndi.org.



Inside This Issue

An Introduction	1
NDI's Assistance	2
Building Voter Awareness and Acumen	3
Encouraging Participation: Getting Out the Vote	6
Suggested Reading	9
CP Team Update	10

NDI's Assistance

NDI works with a range of groups to carry out GOTV, voter information and voter education activities, including community-based organizations, issue-based groups, membership organizations and NGOs. The Institute's approach to partnerships with these local civil society organizations (CSOs) is to help them develop the capabilities needed to undertake organized political actions. NDI does not carry out voter information, voter education or GOTV campaigns. Rather, the Institute provides partners with the technical assistance, guidance and financial support that they require to implement such initiatives effectively.

As this Update illustrates, NDI's partners have approached election-related activism from several perspectives. In some cases, partners have worked to increase participation in terms of a particular issue or cause, such as housing or disability rights. In other cases, campaigns have sought to raise the participation of marginalized populations, while still others have worked to increase widespread awareness of the electoral process. No matter what the objectives may be, GOTV, voter information and voter education campaigns should be viewed as specific components of a broader strategy aimed at mobilizing citizens to demand government accountability. As NDI has learned, elections may bring very little long-term change, if citizens do not remain politically engaged.

NDI's assistance to its CSO partners working on voter information, voter education and GOTV has included:

Initial Preparation

- Assessing local partner capacity and signing a memorandum of understanding.
- Signing a subgrant agreement when applicable.
- Helping partners assess barriers to voting.
- Compiling and distilling election laws for partners in the form of legal guides, which gives straightforward explanations of the laws that affect partner efforts.
- Providing contact information and facilitating networking meetings between local CSO groups to enable collaboration.
- Disseminating NDI best practices, gleaned from similar campaigns, among local partners.
- Helping to organize focus groups and other activities to assess citizen attitudes, and their knowledge and skills deficits.

Implementation

- Facilitating trainings for partners on various components of a GOTV, voter information or

voter education campaign. These may include: creating a campaign plan; message development; volunteer recruitment, management and retention; coalition building; new media tools; community organizing; and building support within an organization.

- Providing information and examples used by other local partners to assist current partners in determining the most appropriate dissemination methods for their campaign.
- Troubleshooting problems as they arise.
- Providing ongoing coaching.
- Assisting partners with holding meetings and other voter education or voter information campaign events.



Evaluation

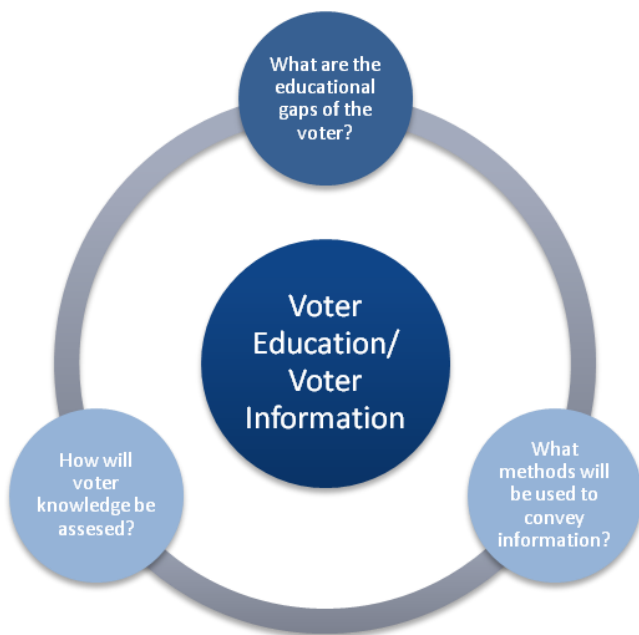
- Assessing local partners' capacity, including whether they are better able to collaborate and share information.
- Examining the literature, materials, training modules, awareness-raising methods and tools that local partners have created.
- Monitoring voter turnout.
- Assisting local partners with conducting assessments of citizen knowledge levels based upon campaign objectives.
- Measuring the extent to which the program affected citizen voice — such as changes in citizens' ability to participate in the electoral process.
- Analyzing the extent to which the program affected political space — such as introducing new mechanisms like debates.
- Analyzing the extent to which the program may have an effect on government accountability — such as increasing issue-based campaign promises.

Building Voter Awareness and Acumen

Why Voter Education and Voter Information?

Voter information concerns basic facts about the voting process, while voter education concerns more complex information about why voting matters. Although they can be stand-alone initiatives, NDI's programs often support both. Partner organizations' objectives for voter education and voter information campaigns can include the following:

- To create a more informed voting population;
- To increase the voter turnout rate;
- To improve the quality and efficiency of the process;
- To increase the ability of citizens to vote; and
- To reduce barriers to voting.



This figure illustrates the relationships between the initial assessment, implementation and evaluation phases.

NDI Partners' Activities

Voter education and voter information initiatives can be broken up into three phases: initial assessment, implementation and evaluation. During the initial assessment phase of a voter education or voter information campaign, the focus should be on assessing voter knowledge, barriers to voting and learning preferences. The implementation phase involves developing the voter education or information campaign content, determining the appropriate dissemination methods and then disseminating the information. The evaluation phase of a voter education or voter information

campaign focuses on determining how well the campaign worked in terms of the activities and results.

Initial Assessment

Assessing the knowledge of a campaign's target population and how they absorb information is a key element of a successful initiative. This enables groups to design a curriculum that more adequately addresses citizens' needs and helps to determine the most appropriate methods for delivering that curriculum. While NDI's partners have undertaken initial assessments using a variety of methods, however, some groups with strong connections to a community initially have not seen the need for this. They feel that their day-to-day interactions with community members enable them to know what citizens want and need. Even when this is the case, it never hurts to double check assumptions and the conventional wisdom. More often than not, groups are surprised by what they find when they begin to hold informal interviews or look at existing data, such as political and marketing polls, voter lists or donor and government reports.

Although there are many assessment tools, each having a particular value, some common tools include focus groups, surveys and questionnaires that take into account the culture, literacy and socio-economic status of the campaign's target population. These tools are tailored to specific audiences and structured to elicit relevant responses. Questions and discussions have addressed the following:

- What citizens remember about previous elections;
- Knowledge of election procedures;
- Why voting is important;
- Why one's vote is secret;
- Voting rights;
- What one would hope to learn from a voter education or voter information campaign;
- Verbal or written communication preferences;
- Literacy;
- Understanding of the expected roles and responsibilities of citizens and elected leaders;
- Citizens' educational backgrounds; and
- The cultural context.

Implementation

Once the assessment is complete, the information collected is used to develop the campaign's content and appropriate dissemination methods. Although time, budget and security can be limiting factors, there are a variety of methods ranging from passive to interactive that NDI partners have employed during a campaign.

(Continued on page 4)

Voter Education in Sudan

In the period leading up to the April 2010 elections in Sudan, NDI's local partner organizations conducted a voter education and voter information campaign. One particularly well-designed and useful adult learning tool developed for the campaign was a voter information flip chart. The flip charts consisted of drawings explaining the voting process for the upcoming election, which partners used during voter information classes to spark dialogue amongst participating citizens. These interactive classes required participants to be actively engaged in the learning process and gave them the opportunity to ask the facilitators questions in order to maximize comprehension. In order to ensure clarity and appropriateness, the flip chart drawings and vocabulary used during instruction were vetted by a cross-section of the local population representing various demographics.

Voter information flip chart



While NDI partners would ideally implement voter information and voter education campaigns that incorporate a variety of communication methods, the emphasis should be placed on more interactive, participatory activities. It has been increasingly recognized that people, especially adults, learn best when actively engaged in the learning process. Therefore, interactive methods that encourage participants to think, ask questions and discuss issues usually lead to a deeper understanding of the content presented. However, workshops, classes, public meetings and other more interactive activities do not reach as many people as more passive forms of communication – such as billboards, posters and radio announcements. For this reason, partner organizations most often employ mixed-method strategies that can reach a wide breadth of people and, at the same time, ensure some depth. For instance, voter education workshops and public forums may be reinforced by radio programming and billboards.

Evaluation

A consistent challenge faced by NDI and its partners is that there is often limited time or funding available for evaluation after a campaign has ended. Nonetheless, evaluating the success not only of the campaign but also of individual activities is extremely valuable for

organizational learning. Collecting information on changes in program participants' knowledge levels, attitudes and behavior can also help validate program activities and ensure funding for future programming.

When evaluating a voter education or voter information campaign, NDI and its partners have conducted focus groups, distributed surveys or questionnaires, measured voter turnout and examined materials produced and distributed during the campaign period. The following are the types of questions that have been addressed when evaluating voter education and voter information campaigns:

- Did citizens understand the information conveyed?
- Was the information appropriate to the context of the election?
- Did citizens gain a better understanding of the political process and actors?
- Did citizens gain unanticipated knowledge from the campaign?

Voter Education and Information Activities

Interactive

Workshops
Voter Education Classes
School Meetings/Assemblies
Community Gatherings
Rallies / Concerts
Petitions
Canvassing
Phone Banking
Information Center
Websites
Press Conference
Street Theater
Soap Operas
Radio Dialogues
Music and Songs
SMS Messages
E-mails
Posters
T-Shirts
Leaflets
Commercials
Billboards

Passive

(continued on page 5)

(Building Knowledge, continued from page 4)

- What methods of communication did citizens find particularly effective?
- What learning methods did citizens find the most helpful?
- What issues would citizens have liked to learn more about?
- How would citizens describe a given issue to a peer?

Measuring impacts – such as higher voter turnout - and then attributing those impacts to a single program is extremely difficult. Make sure that evaluation expectations are realistic and that the value of examining the strengths and weaknesses of the voter information or voter education campaign itself is not overlooked.

Results

Some of the results that have been attributed to voter education and information campaigns supported by NDI programming are as follows:

- As a result of voter education programs in the lead up to Liberia's 2005 general election, citizens

were more critical of the conduct of political candidates during the campaign. For example, citizens in Grand Cape Mount turned away several candidates who tried to distribute bags of rice and money while campaigning.

- Partly due to extensive voter education programs in Grand Cape Mount County, Liberia, higher than anticipated voter registration numbers increased the county's representation in the House of Representatives from two to three seats.
- As a result of technical and financial assistance provided by NDI, six northern Ugandan CSOs successfully conducted voter education and voter information projects that raised awareness about the importance of participating in electoral processes and enhanced the participation of citizens from five historically marginalized districts during the 2006 Ugandan elections.

Using Theater and Debates for Voter Education in Egypt

As part of Egypt's November 2010 parliamentary elections, a coalition of 27 grassroots organizations conducted a voter education campaign that included candidate debates and street theater performances across the country.

The coalition used methods similar to those used for its previous voter education campaign around the June elections for the Shoura Council, Parliament's Upper House, which drew national attention. The activities included Egypt's first-ever candidate debate, as well as a voter education initiative that reached 6,000 voters through town-hall meetings.

Building on the success of the previous campaign, the coalition added an interactive theater component to its voter education activities for the parliamentary elections. The theater pieces, performed for audiences free of charge around the country, focused on identifying electoral irregularities, suggested ways in which citizens could increase their safety on Election Day and showed how to report incidents to authorities. The theater performances, which drew large crowds, were followed by debates that included candidates from the ruling National Democratic Party, opposition parties and independents. To complement the debates and performances, the coalition developed a comic book that explained the importance of voting, procedures for obtaining a voting card and how to vote. The comic books were distributed during the street theater performances and debates.

The coalition plans to continue the voter education campaign to help voters stay prepared and educated in the lead up to Egypt's presidential election, scheduled for September 2011.



Coalition actors perform an interactive voter education theater piece in Egypt

Encouraging Participation: Getting Out the Vote

Why GOTV?

NDI partner organizations' objectives for GOTV campaigns may include the following:

- To encourage citizens — often a target population — to participate in the electoral process;
- To highlight important issues and get them on the public agenda; and
- To increase the organization's profile.

NDI Partners' Activities

NDI works with a range of groups to carry out GOTV activities, most of which are issue-based CSOs working individually or in a coalition.

Initial Preparation

The first step in preparing for a GOTV campaign is researching voter knowledge deficits and what population group(s) to target with the campaign. The following are some questions that can help identify the target group(s):

- Which population groups are most supportive of the organization's mission?
- Which population groups are underrepresented at the polls?
- With which population group(s) can the campaign have the greatest impact?

How the partners collect this information depends, in large part, on the strength of the organization's connections with the target group(s). For instance, a

grassroots organization deeply embedded in a community may be able to make these distinctions based on observations, informal interactions or a few informal interviews. Conversely, an urban NGO more removed from its constituency would probably need to employ more rigorous methods, such as focus groups, key informant interviews or analysis of past voting records.

Roma Future Association A Targeted GOTV Campaign in Rakovski, Bulgaria

The Roma Future Association conducted a campaign targeted at young Roma voters. Message delivery research showed that the Roma community in Rakovski suffered from high illiteracy rates and represented a primarily verbal culture. In addition, much of the community could not afford to buy newspapers or magazines, or pay the local cable TV fee. As a result, distribution of print materials or use of electronic media would not have been an effective method of message delivery. Therefore the organization decided to carry out a person-to-person campaign.

After identifying their GOTV campaign's audience, NDI partners then focus on messaging. Within a GOTV initiative, a message is the value-oriented foundation that supports the position of a campaign and illustrates what is at stake in the election; it is the public rationale for the GOTV campaign. NDI's partner groups work to create strong messages that are concise, truthful, consistent, relate to the attitudes and concerns of the audience and "speak to the heart."

The messaging process usually begins with defining a core message. The foundation of the message already exists – the targeted population is less likely to vote, and a specific issue will persuade them to vote. This is expanded into a few brief, straightforward statements that reflect:

- The analysis of the problem;
- The problem's cause;
- The proposed solution; and
- The desired actions that the audience should take.

In most cases, NDI partners engage in broad GOTV campaigns that have mass appeal. However, some partners have chosen to conduct targeted campaigns that

(Continued on page 7)

Haiti A Mass-Appeal GOTV Campaign Activities & Tactics

Partner's Activities: Approximately 1,700 members of the nationwide activist network delivered voter education and GOTV messages within their own communities, primarily through face-to-face contact. The day prior to Election Day, members of the network drove trucks around their areas, broadcasting GOTV messages over loudspeakers.

NDI's Activities: NDI developed a training guide and held training-of-trainers workshops to provide some of the network's members with the skills and tools to carry out their outreach efforts and train others do the same. Additionally, NDI helped the network's leaders produce radio ads that were broadcast throughout Haiti encouraging citizens to vote. Finally, the Institute helped select partners send out a series of reminder SMS text messages.

(Increasing Enfranchisement: Getting Out the Vote, continued from page 6)

focus on getting specific populations to the polls. For these organizations, the next step of preparing for a GOTV campaign is to create a message tailored for their target population. This is done by analyzing what approach would be most persuasive for that population and what would be the desired action for that population to take. Then, before disseminating the message to a wide audience, NDI's partners test it to ensure that it will resonate with the audience. If it does not, then a new message should be developed and re-tested.

Implementation

The target population's needs, the country context, NDI's partner capacities, donor interests and resources all factor into the decision as to which tactics will be used in a GOTV campaign.



Home page of vote4egypt.com

Using the Internet to Get Out the Vote

As Egypt prepared for legislative elections in November 2010, the nonpartisan Bridge Center for Dialogue and Development carried out the "Have a Voice" campaign, which focused on the importance of voting and voter registration. The month-long GOTV component began with the launch of www.vote4egypt.com.

The website featured promotional GOTV videos, posters and message boards where users could discuss topics, such as how to get voter identification cards and where to vote on Election Day. The website also told citizens how they could participate in the GOTV campaign.

"Have a Voice" targeted young voters who had not participated at high levels in past elections. Although young people are automatically registered to vote on their 18th birthday, newly registered voters must get their voter cards from the local police station, which many are afraid to do. The campaign sought to dispel those fears and encouraged young voters to take the necessary steps to participate.

The effort used the Internet as an outreach tool because it is relatively free of restrictions in Egypt, and young people are particularly active online. The "Have a Voice" campaign continues, focusing on voter registration in advance of Egypt's 2011 presidential elections.

In recent years, NDI partners have increasingly focused on technology-based GOTV tools. Outreach and awareness-raising through SMS text messaging, e-mails, websites and social media have been particularly valuable tools for reaching youth populations. Radio ads and public service announcements have been used to reach people in rural communities who may not have access to the Internet or TV. When disseminating their messages, NDI partners have used the types of media that would be most accessible and appropriate to their target audiences.

Tactics that NDI partners employ to get out the vote include:

- SMS/text message reminders
- Websites and social media
- Rallies, concerts or discos
- TV and radio commercials
- Newspaper ads
- TV and radio public service announcements
- Mobile trucks with loudspeakers broadcasting GOTV messages in neighborhoods
- Posters
- E-mail reminders
- Waving signs in high-traffic areas
- Phone banking
- Tabling in community centers or market areas and distributing voting information
- Door-to-door canvassing
- Driving voters to the polls

(Continued on page 8)

(Encouraging Participation, continued from page 7)

Results

Through its GOTV programs, NDI has helped its partners achieve some of the following results:

- In Bulgaria, partners contacted over 50,000 voters and engaged nearly 700 volunteers in 18 communities.
- In Sevlievo, Bulgaria, a group of youth activists targeted first-time voters. The campaign was the first GOTV effort in the town and included a “meet the candidates” disco. First-time voter participation reached 44 percent, a 5 percent increase from the previous election. The GOTV campaign positioned the organization to form an informal municipal youth council after the elections, which advised the local government on youth issues.
- In Karlovo, Bulgaria, the “Vasil Levski” Human Rights Center used its GOTV campaign to target people with disabilities. The organization provided transportation to the polls on Election Day and at

the same time documented how much time it took to take one person to vote. The organization determined that at an average of one hour per person, the single van the municipality provides would never be enough to help the more than 400 people who needed assistance. The organization used this information to increase opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in the political process.

- The GOTV concerts held by a Ugandan CSO were attended by approximately 75,000 citizens, primarily from historically marginalized areas.



Youth encouraging others to vote as part of the 2003 GOTV campaign in Bulgaria.



An Iraqi woman casting her ballot on Election Day.



Suggested Reading

An Organizer's Guide: Organizing and Leading a Voter Contact Event, from the New Organizing Institute (NOI), guides users through the process of planning and executing a GOTV phone bank or door-to-door canvass, and provides templates of tools that can be used in various stages of organizing an event. It is a tool that would be most useful for NDI's CSO partners conducting a GOTV campaign and their volunteers. While originally written for and used by organizers in the United States preparing for the 2010 congressional elections, much of the material could be applied to an NDI partner's GOTV effort in most country contexts.

The guide takes the reader through a three-step process of (1) setting up an event, (2) recruiting attendees and (3) leading the event. For step one, it outlines what the organizer should consider when deciding the type of event to host, where the event should be located and when the event should be held. Additionally, there is a checklist to help the organizer remember the event's essentials, such as a sign-in sheet, packets of materials for volunteers and securing an adequate number of phones if conducting a phone bank.

When the organizer is ready to recruit attendees, the guide provides suggestions and a worksheet to use when asking friends and other community members to come to the event. The materials include a recommended script

that provides event planners with a starting point for structuring their own recruitment conversations.

Additional GOTV and voter contact event-planning tools included in the guide are:

- An event attendance tracker;
- A sample agenda and timeline for an event;
- An event sign-in sheet template;
- A dos and don'ts of canvassing handout;
- A sample canvassing or phone banking script; and
- A GOTV volunteer tracker template.

NDI and its partners can use the guide's three steps to plan and carry out a GOTV event, or use the tools individually on an ad-hoc basis. However it is used, the guide presents the information in an accessible and straightforward manner that would be helpful for both GOTV veterans and those new to this type of work.

You may access this resource through the following links:
http://portal2009.ndi.org/c/document_library/get_file?p_l_id=10127&folderId=108999&name=DLFE-11824.pdf
 or <http://neworganizing.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Organizing-and-Leading-a-Voter-Contact-Event.pdf>

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO CREATE A GREAT EVENT!

- ☒ PEOPLE! Don't forget to recruit and confirm people to join you in action!
- ☒ Door-to-Door or Phone Bank Packets (one for each volunteer)
 - ✓ List of voters to talk with who probably would not vote if no one talks with them
 - ✓ Map (if you're going door to door)
 - ✓ Script: Motivating Voters and Getting Commitments
 - ✓ Volunteer Sign-up Sheet
 - ✓ Tally sheet to add up # of voters you tried to contact, # of voters you talked with, # of voters who committed to vote.
 - ✓ Clipboard (a piece of cardboard and binder clip will suffice!)
 - ✓ Pens
 - ✓ Literature from your Organization (optional)
 - ✓ Post-it note or card with your cell phone in case of emergency
 - ✓ Volunteer recruitment sheet (in this packet)
- ☒ Leading a Motivational GOTV Event Agenda (in this packet)
- ☒ GOTV Event Sign-In (in this packet)
- ☒ Phones (and ask everyone to bring theirs with them)
- ☒ Food and Water (Optional, but a lot more fun!)



Civic Update

is a production of
NDI's Citizen Participation
Team.

Please send comments
or suggestions to
Lacey Kohlmoos at
lkohlmoos@ndi.org

Editors

Lacey Kohlmoos
Koebel Price
Aaron Azelton

Writers

Aaron Azelton
Rose Clouston
Leilani Greene
Lacey Kohlmoos

Layout and Design

Rose Clouston

The Citizen Participation
Team thanks all
the DC and field
staff members who
provided assistance
in compiling this issue
of *Civic Update*.

CP Team Update

As a component of the 2010-2011 NDI-Iraq "Civil Society Promoting Accountability & Transparency" (PAT) program, the Citizen Participation team was invited to conduct a three-part training series on political-process monitoring for groups of local CSO representatives. Political-process monitoring includes a broad range of citizen- or CSO-driven initiatives that seek to enhance government accountability by monitoring and reporting on their actions. The five types of political-process monitoring are:

- Legislative Monitoring;
- Budget Monitoring/Expenditure Tracking/Budget Advocacy;
- Shadow Reports;
- Monitoring Government Follow-Through; and
- Campaign-Related Monitoring.

The invitation to conduct the Iraq trainings came as a result of the Citizen Participation team's recent focus on examining NDI's political-process monitoring programs and what their implications are for increasing citizen voice, political space and government

accountability. In the last year, the team has developed frameworks for designing and implementing these programs, created case studies and compiled tools that are currently used by NDI partners during political-process monitoring campaigns. From the citizen participation perspective, these types of programs have the potential to create avenues through which citizens and governments can work together to make democracy deliver. Groups can build off of monitoring efforts by going public with their findings in order to raise awareness of issues and rally support from a variety of stakeholders. Once they have activated a support base, groups can advocate for change and demand greater accountability.

The team sees the Iraq training series as an opportunity not only to share its expertise on monitoring initiatives, but also as a chance to develop political-process monitoring training modules that could be tailored to fit other regional team needs as well. The training modules were designed based on the team's research of NDI's monitoring programs and revolve around three core ideas:

1. What is political-process monitoring?
2. Methods and tools needed to perform political-process monitoring
3. How to convert political-process monitoring efforts into actions

From late October through early November 2010, Kourtney Pompei, NDI's program manager of citizen participation programs, conducted the first of the three-part series of trainings in Erbil, Iraq. A total of 59 representatives from 30 CSOs attended the introductory training sessions. In early 2011, Kourtney will return to Iraq to conduct the second and third sets of trainings.

Voice, Space and Accountability

Voice refers to citizens' abilities to express their preferences, aggregate interests, act individually and collectively, and influence public officials and other decisionmakers.

Political space refers to the avenues and opportunities that exist for citizens to organize, voice their preferences, act individually and collectively, and engage government.

Government accountability refers to a situation where those with the power to make and enforce rules are answerable to