

# VOTES WITHOUT VIOLENCE

## QUESTIONS ON DATA MANAGEMENT



This tool was developed by Caroline Hubbard and Claire DeSoi for NDI's Votes Without Violence program and toolkit.

# QUESTIONS ON DATA MANAGEMENT<sup>1</sup>

## Guidance

This tool provides questions for observer groups to consider when determining their data collection and management system. Proper data collection, documentation and storage is critical to an observation's success, and the ability of a citizen observer group to report whether there is transparency, accountability and integrity in electoral processes. These questions are not intended to be exhaustive, but indicate a few of the most important factors that should be taken into consideration when designing the data management protocols for an observation that includes a focus on violence against women in elections.

## Observation Priorities: Categories and Framing

- » What key variables for measuring VAW-E are priorities for the observation? In what ways can data collection (e.g. through the structure of the observation forms or database itself) be constructed to facilitate analysis according to these variables?
- » Are the categories for analysis mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive to ensure that all data is captured in analysis without being double-counted? Categories for analysis should be broad enough to be inclusive, but narrow enough to allow for nuanced analysis.

## Data Collection and Verification

- » What kind of information needs to be reported during the observation?
- » What resources are available for data collection? (e.g. mobile phone, Internet, etc.) What is the strongest or most reliable communication method that could be used?
- » What are the possible challenges that could disrupt data collection through these methods? Will observers be able to understand and access the data collection method?
- » How quickly will the observation group need to receive and analyze the data from observers? A long-term observation, for example, may allow groups more time to process data and require observers to report at longer intervals, but a parallel vote tabulation on election day will require quick reporting and analysis.
- » What mechanisms are in place to ensure observer accountability and the submission of timely reports?
- » What mechanisms are in place to ensure observer accountability and accuracy of the data? Can limits or logical checks be built into the observation forms or database to minimize inconsistencies?
- » What process will the group use for data verification and cleaning? Is there someone who will be responsible for data verification and following up with observers to verify or correct information as needed?
- » What resources will be required to verify and analyze the data? How many staff will be needed for each process at the observation's data center?

## Data Management Protocols

- » What will the data flow look like? That is, what are the roles of different staff? How will reports from observers be received and analyzed?
- » What protocols will be established if incoming data indicates that incidents of violence are occurring? Will the data be communicated to a response team or other stakeholders? How, and by whom?
- » Who will have access to the observation data internally? What information will be provided to external stakeholders? How will the findings be shared?

- » What protections will be put in place to protect the security and confidentiality of the data?
- » What back-up plans or systems will be put in place if issues arise: e.g., if data is being collected through an online system such as Google Forms, is there a back-up plan that observation groups can prepare in case the observers cannot access the Internet?

## NOTES

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1. Adapted in part from Systematic Methods for Advancing Election Observation, WAEON; please refer to this guide for more detailed information.