Campaign-Related Monitoring

Purpose

Campaign-related monitoring is a two-part process that uses electoral periods as an entry point for civil society groups to foster the accountability of public officials to the electorate. In order to address the different types of accountability deficits present at either local or national levels, monitoring groups use a variety of methods for engaging political parties and candidates in the periods leading up to and following an election. There are three main methods that NDI's local partners have used successfully: voter guides, community platforms and pledge campaigns. A voter guide is a compilation of political candidates' biographical information, policy priorities and campaign platform that is then made public in the lead up to an election. A community platform is a set of policy priorities developed by community members and usually presented to candidates and political parties during a campaign period. Citizen groups have developed these platforms in order to influence the positions of candidates so they are more representative of citizen priorities. This creates an opportunity for citizen groups to then hold newly-elected officials accountable for those campaign promises post-election. A pledge campaign is a pre-election initiative where citizen groups ask candidates to commit to upholding a set of principles or to take specific actions if they are elected to office. Groups have primarily used this tactic to reduce corruption by holding government officials accountable for good governance pledges. All three of these tactics allow citizens to inform candidates and political parties that they have expectations and that they will examine public officials' performances based on those expectations.

NDI typically supports campaign-related monitoring initiatives to achieve the following outcomes:

- The electorate is more informed of a candidate background, campaign platform and voting record;

- Citizen priorities are taken into account throughout the campaign period;

- A public record is kept of campaign promises;

- Elected officials are held accountable for their campaign promises post-election;

- Citizens and elected officials develop constructive relationships; and

- The policy priorities more accurately represent citizen interests.

This section lays out how groups can plan and implement campaign-related monitoring initiatives. While taking into account the experiences of a variety of NDI's partner organizations, it draws most heavily upon the experiences of three organizations. NDI partnered in 2007 with Newsbreak, a Filipino group founded in 2001 by investigative journalists to support monitoring of a mid-term election. During the three-month campaign period leading up to the May elections, the Institute worked with Newsbreak to produce two online voter guides. In Albania, NDI worked with community groups in 2007 to develop community platforms in the pre-election period and then conduct follow-on activities in the post-election period. During the same time, NDI worked with the Albanian Coalition Against Corruption (ACAC) to organize the "Good Governance Monitoring Campaign." This was a nationwide pledge campaign that had city, commune and municipal candidates sign a pledge stating that they would increase their accountability to citizens and improve government transparency.

The Pre-Election Monitoring Stage

Voter Guides

Groups have developed and disseminated voter guides in the pre-election period in order to provide voters with information on candidates and their positions on citizen priority issues. The guides also serve as a way to publicly record candidate positions, so that monitoring groups can use the information in the post-election period and beyond to hold public officials accountable to those campaign positions. These guides can either be produced as online resources or as print copies, which are sometimes placed as supplementals in newspapers. Groups have created voter guides by carrying out by:

- organizing public forums or dialogues in order to collect information on citizen priorities and identify the most pressing of those issues;

- creating a "voter guide information packet" that includes questions regarding candidates' positions on the issues identified as their top priorities, as well as guidelines for submitting responses;

- distributing the voter guide information packet to the candidates;

- Posting an online voter guide information packet on their website so that other stakeholders can print them for independent monitoring purposes or to raise citizen awareness of the voter guide;

- collecting candidates' responses to the voter guide information packet questions;

- posting the candidates' biographical data and their responses to the voter guide questions online or publish in a print format; and

- publicizing the voter guide through postings on websites, email listservs, social media sites, newspapers, radio and public forums.

This strategy met with great success in the Philippines where the voter guides received a substantial amount of media attention and Newsbreak's website traffic increased dramatically.

> Newsbreak used the process outlined above to produce two online voter guides that it posted on www.philvoters.net. The first voter guide focused on the positions of senatorial candidates on the three issues found to be the most important to citizens: pork-barrel allocations, employment and political reform. The second voter guide focused on both candidate and political party positions on the top three issues most important to youth voters: access to quality education, access to decent domestic jobs and reform of the Sangguiniang Kabataan (Youth Council).

Community Platforms

During pre-election periods, groups have produced community platforms and organized public forums to present the platforms in order to influence party and candidate platforms. The forums provide an opportunity for citizens to create records of candidates' campaign promises, which can be used in follow-on activities post-election. This campaign-related monitoring tactic is most appropriately carried out by citizen groups at the local level that have strong ties in the community. Groups create community platforms in order to make candidate and party platforms more representative of citizen priorities, but it is less likely that this will happen if those developing the community platforms do not have strong connections with the people they claim to represent. The grassroots nature of a community platform also makes it a more viable tactic for local level political action. Groups have created community platforms by:

- developing a questionnaire that asks citizens what they believe the most pressing issues are within their community;

- disseminating the questionnaire to as many members of the local community as possible, ensuring the inclusion of women, youth, the elderly, disabled and other traditionally marginalized populations;

- collecting the questionnaires;

- using the findings from the questionnaire responses to identify community priorities;

- compiling the priorities into a community platform in a format similar to that of a candidate's platform;

- presenting the community platform to candidates and political parties during individual meetings, public forums and debates; and

- getting the candidates or political parties to respond to the platforms.

Candidates, who are eager to respond to potential voters, have used the community platforms to develop campaign messages and policies that address the citizen priorities laid out in the platforms. During public forums and debates, some local government candidates have directly addressed the local priorities raised in the community platforms and even offered policy responses. Groups have recorded these promises and others made during debates, public forums and speeches to hold newly-elected officials accountable for their campaign promises post-election.

> In advance of the local elections in Albania, NDI helped its local partners organize 27 public meetings throughout the country so that 50 mayoral candidates could present their platforms to their constituents. In total, 1,700 citizens attended. Participants asked the candidates how they would address community priorities if elected to office and how they would make their administration more transparent.

Pledge Campaigns

Groups wanting to lay the groundwork during the pre-election period for monitoring government behavior post-election have conducted pledge campaigns. These campaigns have been conducted by national-level CSOs or a coalition of CSOs with a wide geographical reach, connections with political parties and a high capacity for managing media relations. In order to be meaningful, pledge campaigns require candidate, political party, media and citizen buy-in. Without the cooperation of the candidates and parties, no one would sign the pledge. Without citizens interested in holding public officials accountable for their pledge promises, there would be less of an incentive for the officials to follow through. By publicizing the signing of the pledge pre-election and candidates' adherence to the pledge post-election, the media can be a mechanism for raising awareness and holding government officials accountable. Pledge campaigns have included a series of steps:

- Develop a pledge document outlining the desired post-election behavior. This may be a pledge to adhere to good governance or anti-corruption standards, or it may be a pledge to agree to solving a specific priority issue if

elected;

- Meet with candidates in order to explain the pledge campaign and to encourage them to sign on;

- Organize a highly publicized (preferably televised) event where key candidates sign the pledge;

- Develop and disseminate posters, buttons and stickers with the pledge campaign logo;

- Continuously meet with political party representatives and other candidates to explain the pledge campaign, gain support for the campaign and encourage candidates to sign the pledge; and

- Continue to publicize the pledge campaign through TV, radio interviews and press conferences.

Pledge campaigns on their own are not monitoring initiatives, but they do set the stage for post-election monitoring during which citizens can hold newly-elected officials accountable for the pledges they signed. Because pledge campaigns tend to be highly publicized, and officials often feel the pressure of being in the spotlight, this is a good tactic for holding elected leaders accountable at a national-level. In Albania, ACAC's "Good Governance Monitoring Campaign" became the basis for a successful large-scale, post-election good governance monitoring initiative.

The Post-Election Monitoring Stage

Voter Guides

Voter guides create the bases for follow-on activities designed to increase the accountability between elected leaders and citizens. Groups have followed up on their pre-election voter guide activities in two ways. The first is post-election monitoring and reporting based on the information collected for the voter guide. Citizens and CSOs can use the information recorded in voter guides as benchmarks or indicators when monitoring officials' behavior post-election, advocating for change or working with newly-elected public officials to enhance their accountability to constituents. The second way that groups have followed up a voter guide is to continue producing voter guides over a series of elections in order to monitor how candidate positions and citizen priorities change over time. This has helped citizens and CSOs identify trends. The continued use of voter guides can also cause more systemic change. As voter guides become a part of the political landscape, political candidates and parties will begin to expect that groups will monitor and record their actions and promises, and that they will be held accountable. When operating under a constant spotlight, it is more likely that public officials will alter their behavior to become more accountable to citizens.

Community Platforms

Monitoring groups have used the skills, knowledge and experience gained pre-election to monitor whether newly-elected officials follow through on campaign promises. The groups have also tried to continue the dialogue between citizens and public officials as a means to build constructive relations and establish a participatory culture where issues and ideas can be openly discussed. Citizen groups have organized public forums and participated in city council, and municipal meetings in order to discuss issues raised during the campaign. Groups have also organized one-on-one meetings with mayors and municipal representatives. Informed by the community platforms and public forums from the pre-election period, these post-election initiatives sustain participation. Citizen groups have expanded the political space for civil society to engage with elected leaders so that they can discuss topics such as:

- progress on campaign promises;

- community platforms;

- ways in which the government officials can improve their performance; and

- how to incorporate citizen priorities into policy and budgeting decisions.

Though this type of engagement between citizens and public officials usually occurs at the local level, some groups have been able to discuss these issues with national-level government officials.

In Elbasan, Albania, six student representatives of an NDI civic group partner participated in city council meetings to ensure that the mayor kept a campaign promise to pave and light the sewage canals in the '5 Maji' quarter of the city. When the mayor did include the funds in the local budget, they formed a watchdog group to monitor the implementation of the project.

Citizen groups in Vlore's electoral zone 96 in Albania organized a public meeting with their MP. The event was attended by 120 people and the discussion centered around the deputy's performance based on his campaign promises and plans for future policy.

In Grabian - also in the Vlore district - citizen group representatives chose to meet privately with their MP to discuss follow-through on his campaign promise to improve the village's main road.

Pledge Campaigns

In order to create behavioral changes in individual public officials, pledge campaigns are most commonly conducted on a nationwide scale in order to attract more media attention. NDI partners have found that widespread media coverage is an intrinsic part of pledge campaigns. The principles laid out in a pledge have been used as criteria for monitoring elected leaders and recognizing those that have done a good job in following through, as well as those who have not. The possibility of receiving highly publicized positive recognition for adopting the practices or principles laid out in the pledge has provided individual officials with a good incentive for adhering to their promises. Monitoring groups that have used pledges signed during the campaign period as a foundation for activities post-election have carried out a series of steps:

- Develop a monitoring form;

- Identify communities where newly-elected officials signed the pledge;

- Establish a monitoring group of 10-15 active citizens in each of the identified communities;

- Meet with local government officials to explain the project and inform them that they are going to be monitored;

- Train the monitoring groups on how to evaluate local government officials and complete the monitoring form;

- Hold pre-assessment meetings with the local government officials and monitoring groups so that the officials can talk about their accomplishments and ongoing efforts;

- Provide any necessary support as the local monitoring groups observe and analyze local officials' performances;

- Collect the local monitoring groups' findings and regularly compile the information into performance report cards;

- Hold regular meetings with the monitored local officials in order to share the performance report cards, discuss the results and provide feedback; and

- Hold an event to recognize the achievements of the highest scoring officials.

In Albania during the post-election phase of the "Good Governance Monitoring Campaign," citizen groups participated in city council and municipal meetings to determine the extent to which newly-elected representatives were upholding their pledges. Using a monitoring form provided by ACAC, citizen groups in 45 municipalities and communes assessed the performance of the mayors and local representatives who had signed the good governance pledge pre-election. The initiative ended with a roundtable honoring the 10 mayors who scored highest on their good governance report cards.

Democracy and Governance in Albania
A Budget Monitoring and Tracking and Campaign-Related Monitoring Vignette

Program Background and Context

When NDI launched a three-year USAID-funded Democracy and Governance in Albania (DGA) program in 2004, Albania had been making significant progress since the civil unrest of the late 1990s. However, Albania's democratic development suffered from a high level of corruption, which had taken root in the divide that separated governing elites from citizens at all levels of government. While mechanisms for citizen involvement in local government existed, such as the requirement that local budgets be open to public comment, they were rarely used. Rather, private interests of political and government officials guided decisions. Much of the public believed that citizens did not have the power to fix problems in their communities.

Although Albania had a battery of anticorruption laws, they fell short due to inadequate enforcement. This was mainly due to a lack of will among political leaders who saw little advantage to changing corrupt behavior. And while legal frameworks were largely in place in 2004 and reform of the judiciary and public administration was underway, the political challenge of combating corruption remained largely unaddressed and anticorruption efforts had little impact.

Program Overview and Logic

In response to the governance challenges, NDI designed the DGA program with a consortium of international development organizations. The consortium included the Institute, Partners for Democratic Change (PDC) and the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), along with a local partner, the Albanian Coalition Against Corruption (ACAC). The DGA program sought to strengthen the democratic process and reduce corruption by increasing citizen participation in key governance issues, fostering more responsive local and national governments, and developing a more engaged citizenry. NDI's strategy for meeting these objectives involved supporting a variety of community-based initiatives, including budget monitoring, budget advocacy, expenditure tracking, community platforms and a pledge campaign.

Budget Monitoring and Tracking Activities

Citizen Group Initiatives

Through the DGA program, citizen groups across Albania began engaging in budget processes by monitoring the extent to which local government budgets reflected citizen priorities. Groups first used questionnaires developed with advice by NDI to collect community budget priorities. They then observed local budget meetings using budget monitoring worksheets to track the extent to which the government addressed the priorities. Based upon the monitoring findings, the groups developed proposals outlining citizen budget priorities. Some citizen groups used the proposals as the basis for working with local officials to shape draft budgets, while others used the findings to shape budget advocacy campaigns. In many of the communities where local

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Domestic Election Monitoring

Although campaign-related monitoring activities can be linked to domestic election monitoring and other initiatives to support the freedom and fairness of electoral systems and processes, this toolkit does not examine that relationship.

Domestic election monitoring is based on the right of citizens to participate in government, the very precept from which electoral rights derive. Literally hundreds of organizations and coalitions have engaged in the nonpartisan monitoring of elections in their countries, and the number of domestic organizations working to strengthen democratic electoral processes continues to grow. Domestic election monitoring activities range from conducting parallel vote tabulations, or "quick counts," monitoring voter registration, media monitoring, analyzing legal frameworks for democratic elections and monitoring electronic electoral technologies. Election monitoring by nonpartisan domestic organizations helps to raise public confidence in the election process. It deters irregularities and electoral manipulation and exposes them if they occur, provides an important avenue for citizens to take part in electoral processes, and furnishes the domestic and international communities with important information concerning the integrity of elections, as well as recommendations for improving the process.

governments responded to citizen group efforts by shaping draft budgets to reflect community priorities, the groups followed-up by tracking expenditures and evaluating public service delivery.

Sunshine Budget Initiative

In an effort to support citizen group budget monitoring, advocacy and tracking initiatives, NDI and its partners worked together to shape the Sunshine Budget Criteria. These 12 criteria were developed and distributed to local government officials in order to help them create transparent and accountable budgets, and to citizens for use when monitoring and analyzing budget processes. To foster local government buy-in, NDI and the Albanian Association of Communes conducted trainings on the criteria for all 208 commune mayors and local council chairs in Albania. The criteria was widely distributed to citizens so that they could use it to monitor budget processes in their communities.

Campaign-Related Activities

Because Albania held legislative elections in 2005 and local elections in 2007, the DGA program complemented support for budget-related monitoring with assistance for campaign-related initiatives. The program supported constituent platform initiatives around the 2005 legislative elections, and the Good Governance Initiative around the 2007 mayoral elections.

Constituent Platform Initiatives

In 2005, NDI assisted citizen groups in five electoral zones across Albania as they developed constituent platforms outlining citizen priorities on local issues. The groups then delivered the platforms to political parties and parliamentary candidates during the campaign period leading up to the election. This allowed citizen groups to increase candidate awareness of citizen priorities on local issues and help candidates incorporate the priorities into campaign platforms. In some electoral zones, citizens used the constituent platforms as bases for organizing debates.

After the elections, citizen groups compared the newly-elected officials' campaign promises and post-election activities, using the constituent platforms as benchmarks for determining the extent to which the officials were addressing citizen priorities. In some of the electoral zones, NDI helped citizens organize public meetings with MPs to discuss the achievements of their first six months in office and their priorities for the future. The minutes from these meetings were distributed to the public so that community members unable to attend would still be kept informed. The minutes also served as a record to help citizens determine the extent of the MPs' progress in meeting citizen priorities throughout their term in office.

Good Governance Initiative

In advance of the 2007 local elections, ACAC conducted a good governance initiative in which the organization persuaded 712 mayoral candidates to sign a pre-election pledge to govern according to basic standards of good governance. Following the elections, NDI collaborated with ACAC to organize the second phase of the initiative in which citizens used good governance report cards to monitor newly-elected mayors' follow-through on the pre-election pledge. The Good Governance Initiative concluded with a roundtable that recognized the accomplishments of those mayors that followed through on their good governance pledge.

Results

Budget Monitoring and Tracking Activities

- In 2007, residents of Dajc successfully advocated for the reconstruction of a road from Dajc to Pentar. Having met with the mayor and his staff three separate times and monitored the bidding process, the citizens oversaw the successful completion of the project.

Campaign-Related Activities

- In advance of the 2007 local elections, citizen groups organized 27 public events that were attended by more than 1,700 citizens and 50 candidates. The citizen groups' community platforms provided the main topics of discussion at these events, which helped focus campaign debates on more substantive issues than in the past.

Recommendations

- Citizens are more likely to remain engaged and encourage others to become involved if they are able to see nearly immediate, direct benefits from their work. Before engaging in political-process monitoring, ensure that the political space exists to affect at least some amount of concrete change.

- Adapt programming to the evolving capacities, needs and interests of the local participants instead of relying solely on program models.

- Creating a network of citizen groups is important for creating a more powerful voice at the national level, but NDI needs to foster communication among citizen groups in order to do this.

- Partnerships should be made with local organizations that have the capacity to absorb assistance and are interested and open to receiving it.

- MoUs should be used to clarify the roles, responsibilities and expectations of each organization entering into a partnership.