



CIVIC UPDATE

A Publication of the Citizen Participation Team

NDI's Work with Marginalized Populations

Helping citizens take their rightful place as active, organized participants in political life is an NDI priority. Citizens are essential to the development and maintenance of a vibrant democracy; they give life and meaning to democratic principles and institutions. Without the active involvement of citizens in political life, government power can be abused and the basic rights and freedoms of democracy can go unrealized. Because democracy requires informed participation, citizens must understand ideas about citizenship, politics and government. They need knowledge to make decisions about policy choices and the proper use of authority, along with the skills to voice their concerns, act collectively and hold public officials accountable.

This edition of the *Civic Update* features NDI's work with marginalized citizen groups – specifically women, youth and indigenous populations. Over the years, NDI has found itself assisting many different types of marginalized and often impoverished populations with political organizing and activism. These groups have included women, ethnic minorities and young people. The stories found in this Update suggest that NDI has effectively helped these groups take political action and bring about change. In most of the places that NDI works, marginalized populations are often excluded from participation in many aspects of public life, including elections. At the same time, however, these sectors of society are just as often already organized through different types of support groups and networks. NDI has found that moving these existing groups and networks to action is not only possible, but also serves the two-fold purpose of creating important precedents for collective citizen participation, and of helping marginalized groups advance issues related to equal opportunity and access.

NDI has learned that citizen centered activism that is driven by inherent desires and self-determined

strategies for making change happen is a powerful transformative force. When there is already something that citizens care deeply about and they desire to see some type of change, it becomes much easier to help them move purposefully toward action. For example, poor and marginalized citizens have immediate concerns, including security, health, education and equality for women. In a number of NDI's *Civic Forum* projects, impoverished citizens used their first organized interactions with elected representatives to discuss basic needs—such as access to health care, clean water, education, and transportation and communications infrastructure—in terms of their broader community development visions and strategies. This often represents a first step in making state institutions work and behalf of citizens, with the ultimate goals being citizens exerting sustained influence over the policy process, improved governance and enhanced policy effectiveness.

A citizen-centered approach for deepening democracy and making it deliver in many different contexts draws on the instrumental potential of citizens organizing and acting together. Specifically, it involves reaching out to marginalized groups and building their power and influence. The approach also recognizes that making democracy deliver will mean changing the nature of relationships between citizens and public officials, so that the balance of power shifts in favor of citizens. This shift will only occur if citizens are pressing for change in strategic and well-organized ways.

As always, comments on this *Civic Update* are encouraged.

- Aaron Azelton,
Director of Citizen
Participation Programs

Increasing Women's Political Participation in Mauritania

Political changes following the August 2005 coup d'état provided Mauritania with an opportunity to move from a closed and highly controlled political system to one that provides for multiparty politics and an engaged citizenry. This transitional process offered Mauritania the prospect of demonstrating how a Muslim society divided among Arab and African communities and facing poverty can move forward democratic principles collaboratively and peacefully. The political changes have also created new opportunities for Mauritanian women to gain greater political power and secure a stronger voice in their country's political processes.

Although women's rights had been fairly well developed in Mauritania compared to other countries in the region, their political participation remained limited. Taking advantage of these dramatic developments, NDI launched a program in 2006 to enhance women's involvement in the political process. NDI's program sought to assist women determine and address the obstacles that have impeded women's access to elected offices and to leadership positions within political parties. The program also sought to identify strategies that would facilitate women's participation in the legislative and municipal elections scheduled for 2006.

NDI brought together political parties and civil society organizations to discuss key issues facing women in Mauritania, offer possible recommendations for solution and provide next steps. The Forum on Women's Political Participation provided a rare opportunity for more than a hundred participants representing 13 political parties, three party coalitions, and 20 civil society groups, all working to promote women's political participations. Although the majority of participants were women political and civic activists, male party leaders also took part in the forum and had the opportunity to deliberate with their female colleagues.

The forum concluded with participants drafting a joint declaration and offering a series of recommendations to strengthen women's participation in democratic institutions and to promote women candidatures in the 2006 legislative and municipal elections. A Steering Committee comprised of representatives from political parties and civil society groups was formed to implement recommendations proposed during the forum. The committee identified lobbying for the implementation of a 20 percent quota on women's candidatures as the most urgent priority. Led by three former ministers, a former member of parliament and several high-ranking political party officials, the committee provided a good example of how parties and civil society groups can work together to devise non-partisan solutions on transition issues. As a result of pressure from the Steering Committee, the government passed a law requiring a 20 percent quota for women on all electoral lists (failure to comply rendered the list invalid).

The Steering Committee also worked in partnership with NDI to produce a targeted media campaign with Télévision de Mauritanie (TVM). The campaign also created a documentary, as well as a series of TV and radio spots in support of women candidate quotas. The campaign also produced ads in the print media, including a

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massive billboard that said "Vote for Her as Well." The billboard was strategically placed in a busy traffic intersection in Nouakchott in order to raise awareness of women candidates for the upcoming elections.

Thanks to the work of the Steering Committee and other activists from political parties and civil society, Mauritania proudly emerged from its recent elections with the second-highest proportion of women representatives in the entire Middle East and North Africa region. After municipal and legislative elections in 2006 and senate elections in 2007, women make up approximately 19 percent of Mauritania's National Assembly, more than 25 percent of the Senate and 30 percent of municipal seats.

Azeri Women Take a Stand on Pressing Issues

In Azerbaijan, the under-representation of women in political life remains a significant challenge to the country's democratic development. Women continue to be largely excluded from leadership and decision-making positions both in political parties and civic institutions, with Azeri political and governmental leaders continuing to ignore the need to include more women in the political life of the country. With little social and institutional support for women's participation in politics, those who become politically active must do so with very limited guidance or resources. Consequently, many women who enter politics or civic society lack basic political and leadership skills.

To address these barriers, NDI initiated a regional women's training program in 2006 to increase women's political participation by expanding their political knowledge and helping them identify opportunities to be leaders and shape public policy.

NDI worked with women in eight regions of the country: Jalilabad, Ganja, Tovuz, Ali-Bayramli, Sumgayit, Yevlakh, Goychay and Khachmaz. In each case the women identified local community concerns and selected a single problem to address. The issues selected included: internet access in socially acceptable places for women, improving a road on a high-traffic bus route, increasing blood supplies, clothing for poor children, marriage registrations for many couples, and preventing waste disposal in inappropriate places. As part of NDI's assistance, women also met with community leaders and government officials to discuss the necessity of women's involvement in political decision-making, obstacles that prevent their participation and how it may be addressed.

NDI worked with the participants in problem identification and analysis, public decision-making processes, community organizing and advocacy. NDI also helped facilitate the interaction between women activists and their elected officials, as well as strengthen their skills to organize other community residents toward action, improve their problem-solving skills as they try different strategies, and raise their profile as leaders in their communities. In each region participants formed a working group that began meeting weekly to organize and lead women's advocacy efforts.

NDI helped women interact with local officials, NGOs and media to outline joint strategies to address the identified problems. Participants reconvened with the women groups to monitor and sup-

port the implementation of the joint strategies they defined. This interaction strengthened the relationship and accountability between these groups and it helped facilitate a sustained cooperation.

Participants' work throughout the program succeeded in drawing media attention which helped build women's profiles not only as leaders in their community, but also as role models to women and potential activists in other regions.

Each of the eight groups achieved tangible success in solving the problem in their communities, and continue to use the relationships they made with officials and NGOs to work toward addressing additional community concerns. In *Sumgayit*, for example, responding to participant's requests, the city repaired the entire length of a deteriorated road (eight kilometers) on a high-traffic bus route, and installed street lights in previously unlit building yards that sheltered drug activity.

In *Goychay* women collected over 600 residents' signatures and received a grant from the Swedish foundation Kvinna til Kvinna to open an internet center in a socially acceptable place for women. They established computer courses at the center and thus have trained over 450 youth.

In *Jalilabad* women held a community clothing drive and provided winter clothes and shoes to 50 school-children and four hospital staff families in need. The women group has committed to hold clothing drives for needy families each fall.

As a result of women group's efforts the city of *Tovuz* rehabilitated two public areas that had become de facto trash dumps and implemented regular trash pick-up times for residents in these areas. The city has also partially renovated (80 percent complete) the local market vendor stalls to provide more space for customers and vendors.

The successes achieved by the program participants encouraged women to continue to participate in the political processes. For example, since the end of the program two of the women trainees have been elected to their neighborhood councils. NDI anticipates that the program has helped lay the groundwork for women to participate more thoroughly in municipal elections in 2009, as well as parliamentary elections in 2010, either as activists, observers, or candidates.

Strengthening Collaboration Among Youth Civic Groups in Togo

Following the February 2005 death of longstanding dictator Gnassingbé Eyadema, Togo seemed poised for a democratic transition. Eyadéma's death created an unprecedented opportunity for Togolese institutions, political parties and civil society organizations to expand political space and strengthen electoral processes, despite Togo's history of repression and flawed elections. However, tensions between Togolese pro-democracy civic groups, military and the ruling party threatened elections with the potential to establish democratic rule.

Although civil society and political parties in Togo continue to advocate for genuine democracy and good governance they are inexperienced and lack the skills to implement effective programs. Eyadema's regime perceived civil society and human right groups as political organizations opposed to his regime. As a result, activists and leaders of civic groups were routinely subject to harassment, unjustified arrests and imprisonment. This hostile environment prevented Togolese civic groups from developing and strengthening their institutional and organizational capacity.

In advance of the 2005 polls which would elect Eyadema's successor, NDI launched a program to assist the Togolese civic groups to advocate for and prepare citizens to participate in a democratic transition process. NDI designed the program to provide Togolese pro-democracy activists with the necessary technical skills and organizational support to engage in the emerging democratic system created following Eyadema's rule. NDI helped coordinate the efforts of more than 45 youth groups to organize joint civic and voter education activities, monitoring the revision of the electoral lists, and observing the presidential election.

Never in Togo's history has such a large number of civic groups (45) worked together to plan, strategize and implement joint activities.

At the start of the program, NDI invited Togolese civic and political party activists to Cotonou, Benin, to learn about West African experiences with democratic transitions from authoritarian or dominant-party regimes, and to apply those lessons to the situation in Togo. In addition, NDI helped participants consider the value of working together to achieve their goals. As a result, forty-five civic groups and labor unions adopted the documents and agreed to work together within the framework of the an informal coalition known as the *Collectif*.

During the workshop activists created an action plan, an activities outline for promoting transparent elections, and a communication strategy.

NDI assisted members of the *Collectif* to build strategic relationships with key actors in the electoral process, as well as plan and implement activities around the country. The *Collectif* deployed several teams of activists to Lomé, Bé, Zio, Avé, and Vogan to monitor the revision of the electoral list and assess the preparedness of local election administration units. Before the deployment, NDI's met with the teams and provided them with useful tips and insights for successfully conducting the assessment, including ways to avoid confrontation with hostile local government, election administration officials, and armed militants linked to the *Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais* (RPT), Togo's ruling party; indicators of fraud; techniques for making a reluctant or scared person comfortable to talk; and types of questions to ask to get the right information.

Despite the government's refusal to grant the *Collectif* official accreditation to monitor the April 2005 presidential election, a significant number of individuals from the *Collectif* unofficially monitored the voting process on election day, and shared their findings with their colleagues across the country. The *Collectif* was able to uncover and document, with credible evidence, flaws and alleged fraud that occurred during the revision of the electoral list and the presidential elections, and made them available to the public through press releases, communiqués, and distribution of hard copies of reports to citizens, and representatives of national and international organizations and institutions.

Member organizations of the *Collectif* have joined a formal coalition of civic groups named Civil Society National Dialogue or *Concertation Nationale de la Société Civile* (CNSC). CNSC-Togo has developed a nationwide network of civic activists by establishing decentralized structures known as Local Citizen Action Cells (*Cellules Locale d'Action Citoyenne*) and are recruiting and training "peace volunteers" in charge of monitoring political developments at the grassroots level, identifying potential conflicts and working with local communities to resolve them before they grow into bigger problems. Additionally, with NDI assistance CNSC-Togo has established a resource center where civic activists can access and share information, conduct and receive training, and develop training and public information materials.

Lebanese Youth Step Forward

Lebanon's political system has a distinctive exclusionary nature which is partly a product of sectarian identities and the wider regional conflict. In the current political environment, Lebanese youth tend to engage in politics either through street protests or traditional confessional groupings and political parties, making it critical to empower youth from diverse backgrounds with the skills necessary to independently and effectively engage in public life and forge a new political future for Lebanon. There is also a pervasive apathy among the country's marginalized groups, including youth, which contributes to the maintenance of this status quo. Youth have little access to the decision-making process and they lack the skills necessary to actively participate in political life.

In partnership with the Development for People and Nature Association (DPNA), NDI launched an intensive nine-month pilot youth and local politics training program targeting seven villages to prepare young activists to run for and serve on municipal councils and to create a solid cadre of young people that are interested in politics. The program, *Youth and Municipalities ...Step Forward!*, began in November 2005 and aimed to train interested youth on how to enter into municipal office and work effectively with local government.

NDI selected 49 youth, with experience in community involvement, through a competitive application process. The seven municipalities chosen to take part in the project represented a mix of confessions and varied in terms of their proximity and willingness to work with youth. Program coordinators selected youth-friendly, youth-neutral, and youth-averse municipal councils to work with, in order to best evaluate the success of their program. In addition, all seven municipalities were specifically selected to increase the reach of the program by influencing smaller, neighboring communities.

With NDI assistance, DPNA conducted a series of technical trainings on strategic thinking, community organizing, fund raising, coalition building, Lebanese municipal code, advocacy campaigns, and assessment. NDI delivered the assistance using interactive workshops to promote team-building among participants.

The program paused temporarily in July and August 2006 due to the 33-day war between Israel and Hezbollah, and NDI revised the calendar of activities to reflect the new realities in Lebanon. *Step Forward*

resumed training in September with a weekend retreat outside of Beirut aimed at rebuilding confidence between participants through team-building exercises and sessions on post-war reconciliation.



Team building exercises among Step Forward participants

Considering the significant impact of the war on participants' lives and the tension that emerged between differing political views, Step Forward coordinators prepared a special discussion sessions about the July war to allow participants to freely share their thoughts and impressions. The discussion encouraged participants to actively listen to one another despite their differences in their opinions.

After this session, participants partnered with the person they felt they had the most differences with and each group was asked to come up with the points on which they both agree. This exercise pointed out that despite their differences they agree on many fundamental points and strive for common goals, including: peace; building a strong sovereign state; demanding transparency, accountability, and democracy; and working towards national unity between different Lebanese parties.

In November, program leaders agreed to work together to implement a common advocacy campaign that would lobby each municipality to establish a shadow youth municipal council for participants between ages 18 and 25. Participants started the campaign in villages of Abra, Adloun, Baakleen, Daroun/Harissa, Jezzine, Saida, and Harissa, and plan on branching out in the future. NDI continues to support Lebanese youth who serve on municipal councils. In 2007, the Insititute worked with DPNA to expand the second iteration of *Step Forward!* From seven to ten villages throughout the country. The latest phase of programming aims to strengthen and increase the number of youth interested in participating and running in the 2010 elections.

Enhancing Leadership Skills of Roma Activists

Despite 17 years of democratic transition, the Roma minority in Central and Eastern Europe continues to be politically marginalized and suffers disproportionately from discrimination, social segregation, and economic impoverishment. Their plight contrasts with the relatively steady political and material gains seen by mainstream populations in the region since 1989, particularly in new European Union member states such as Romania and Bulgaria.

Roma have been unable to solve the social and economic problems afflicting their communities in part due to their under-representation in elected bodies, political parties and government institutions. To expand the skills of Roma to successfully address the needs of their communities through political participation, NDI began a program in 2004 in Slovakia and Bulgaria, and expanded to Romania in 2006, to increase the capacity of young Romani activists to contest elections, serve as effective government representatives, and wage effective issue-based advocacy campaigns. Through an annual political leadership training series in each country, NDI seeks to develop a cadre of trained Romani activists who will in turn use their skills to assist fellow Roma throughout the region; to date the Institute has trained more than 175 Roma political and civic activists.

In 2005 nine countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia) initiated the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015. This is an unprecedented political commitment by governments in Central and Southeastern Europe to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma within a regional framework. The Decade focuses on accelerating social inclusion and improving the economic and social status of Roma. It also commits governments to consider other core issues such as poverty, discrimination, and gender mainstreaming.

In Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Romania, participants have engaged in a diverse array of advocacy initiatives with impressive results. NDI participants have routinely used advanced skills in communication, media outreach, crowd building, fundraising, and strategic planning gained through NDI training to implement a multitude of campaigns which won national media attention and support. Highlights have included:

- In the run up to Slovakia's 2006 parliamentary elections, the Roma NGO New Roma Generation (formed by NDI participants) advocated for the inclusion of Roma-related policies in mainstream party platforms; ultimately every major political party referenced Roma in their platforms compared to the 2002 elections, in

which only two parties mentioned the word Roma in their platforms;

- In Bulgaria, former participants and members of the NGO *Amalipe*, led by two NDI program graduates, initiated a large-scale campaign for education reform. Among their activities, activists sought to amend the draft national education strategy. Their efforts won the backing of the president, the minister of education, and a number of district and local officials; and
- NDI graduate Florin Manole conducted an awareness-raising campaign on the Holocaust against Roma in Romania. As a result of the campaign, which won the support of numerous NGOs, Romanian Prime Minister



Following the training series, advanced participants engaged in a ToT seminar to build their capacity to assist others in developing similar skills.

Calin Popescu Tariceanu set up a governmental commission to study Romani slavery and to draft a set of recommendations for education on Romani culture. Manole was appointed general secretary of the commission.

In addition to these high-profile national campaigns, many program graduates have commenced their own local initiatives. These campaigns have targeted an array of issues from providing resources to Romania activists, assessing education legislation, and increasing Roma employment in public administration, to stimulating discussion on Roma outreach in local party branches and promoting Roma and non-Roma integration. Other Roma participants have decided to run in future local and parliamentary elections in all three countries and many are working to provide assistance to elected Roma in developing effective policy solutions for their communities. As a result, in all three countries, sustained, issue-based outreach by mainstream parties and elected officials has increased significantly.

"I never really considered politics before, and now I am a member of a political party."

-Silvia Constantin, a new member of the PNL branch in district 5 of Bucharest

Bolivian Constructive Citizen Dialogue

Bolivia continues to be plagued by a history of ethnic and socioeconomic divisions that past governments have been unable to successfully address. Relations between citizens and institutions are most tenuous in Bolivia's ethnic indigenous populations that constitute the majority of modern Bolivia's population. The government's capacity to guarantee citizens' rights and to meet their basic needs and policy demands is questioned and often insufficient. Nowhere is the relationship between citizens and institutions more tenuous than with Bolivia's overlapping indigenous and rural populations. The success of future political leaders in channeling citizens' demands from protest into politics depends on their ability to create new bridges between marginalized populations and representatives of Bolivia's political institutions.

With NED funding, NDI implemented a pilot community dialogue initiative from 2005 to 2007 called *Constructive Citizen Dialogue*, which created a space for discussions between citizens' political representatives and organized civil society groups – especially indigenous populations – to focus on consensus-building around community priorities.

The community dialogue series offered participants objective information regarding the 2005 and 2006 elections and the constituent assembly processes. Following an information sharing workshop, NDI



Santa Cruz citizens take part in thematic working groups.

facilitated community forums which provided participants with space to practice constructive dialogue and helped them to formulate realistic expectations of their political representatives by: working in thematic groups; generating lists of their principal concerns; and identifying government representatives with whom to address those concerns. Over three dis-

tinct programmatic phases, NDI conducted a total of 15 community dialogue events in the target departments of Cochabamba, La Paz and Santa Cruz. At the end of each phase, NDI compiled a bulletin that summarized the participants' conclusions. These bulletins were distributed to relevant political actors, such as participating organizations, constituent assembly delegates and staff as well as to political party and civil society leaders. The bulletins were also handed-out to program participants in subsequent dialogue phases as a discussion resource.

Through the dialogue events, NDI sought to incorporate inclusive participation practices. NDI achieved broad participation of organized citizen groups and local leadership, including 117 organizations in phase one, 184 organizations in phase two, and 203 organizations in phase three. Participants at the community dialogue forums included local leaders from political parties, departmental and municipal government offices, municipal citizen oversight bodies, universities and private sector associations, the national police, and the chamber of commerce as well as special interest leaders from women, youth, Afro-Bolivian and indigenous peoples' organizations. This broad participation ensured that diverse views were conveyed throughout the workshops and provided marginalized and minority groups the opportunity to learn about different perspectives in an environment of tolerance and mutual respect.

Building on the practices of constructive dialogue, tolerance for different opinions and inclusive participation, NDI also sponsored public *Democratic Ideals Fairs* in the three target cities. Complementing the community dialogues series, social and political organizations were invited to set up booths to engage the public on their respective views on democracy. Many organizations that contributed to the community dialogue forums participated in the fairs, which granted them a platform for conveying the discussed priorities.

NDI encouraged participating organizations to display information on their activities to support democracy in Bolivia as well as practice direct constituent outreach. In each fair, approximately 100

youth, women, indigenous people and local leaders engaged 2,000 La Paz, 500 Santa Cruz, and 1,200 Cochabamba fair visitors.

NDI concluded the program with a series of activities to encourage dialogue be-

Through the community dialogue events, participants constructively discussed, and even peacefully disagreed on, politically charged topics. During a community dialogue event, NDI facilitators observed participants self-enforce tolerance for difference in opinions. At the June 3, 2006 El Alto event, some participants expressed their disagreement with a participant's comments by whistling while that person spoke. More than half of the other participants stood to quiet the whistlers, reminding them that all perspectives were welcome at the event. This simple gesture reinforced participants' willingness to overcome traditional barriers to dialogue and set an important precedent for respecting other opinions and consensus building during subsequent workshops.

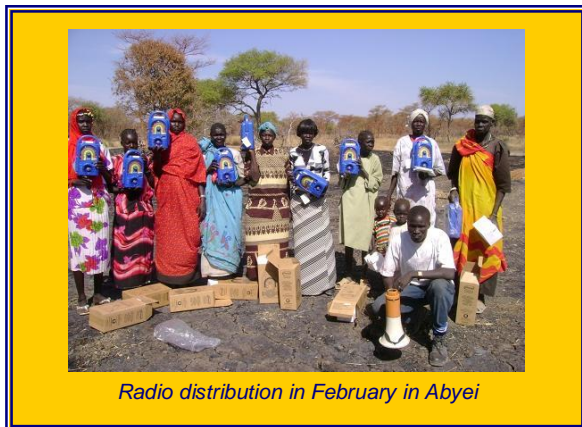
tween rural and urban youth organizations and constituent assembly members regarding youth concerns and reactions to the proposed lowering of the voting age from 18 to 16 years. Through these activities, 486 participants representing youth organizations in Cochabamba, La Paz and Santa Cruz honed their communication and basic advocacy skills by articulating their reform proposals to constituent assembly members and other youth organizations through six events regarding youth participation in the constituent assembly process.

Confrontation continues to be a widely accepted mechanism to express political opinions or dissent in Bolivia. NDI's *Constructive Citizen Dialogue* program activities helped to reinforce among participants the basic practices of constructive dialogue, including building bridges through ongoing communication, and accepting differences in opinions. The processes of communication and consensus building will be extremely valuable in strengthening relations among the Bolivian citizenry and between citizens and democratic institutions. NDI continues to work in the target departments, assisting civil society to connect with political party members and their elected representatives through the ongoing constituent assembly process.

Let's Talk!

Radio Civic Education in Sudan

As Southern Sudan transitions from war, it is essential that citizens understand their country's new governing framework and their role as citizens in the transition process. However, because of extremely limited access to information, Sudanese citizens and government officials cannot effectively engage in the political process. The lack of information extends beyond basic current events to updates on the implementation of the peace agreement and the drafting and development of the Interim Constitution for Southern Sudan. Additionally, without a simple means to communicate with citizens, it is difficult to engage a population that is generally unfamiliar with democracy in a peaceful transition. Bridging this information gap between the citizens and the decision makers is a vital to ensure a sustainable peace in Sudan.



NDI has found that an effective way to conduct widespread civic education in a country as large and difficult to traverse as Sudan is through radio, especially in areas with low literacy levels. In October 2006 NDI initiated a multi-faceted weekly radio civic education program aimed at helping raise awareness among the citizens of Southern Sudan about their role in a democracy and to prepare them for organized participation in the political process. Created in partnership with the Sudan Radio Service, the *Let's Talk!* radio program intends to raise awareness about constitutional development and democracy principles. Episodes introduce listeners to a wide array of civic topics, ranging from Sudan's transitional legal framework to strategies for combating corruption. As the country turns toward its historic parliamentary elections – scheduled for early 2009 – *Let's Talk!* will focus increasingly on voter education and the electoral process itself.

By following “Taban” and “Salama” through the transition, citizens are increasing their understanding about democracy and the constitutional framework, and are encouraged to talk about issues, either through formal listening groups and dialogues or informal discussions.

Radio-based outreach is only effective if citizens have means to access it. In Sudan radio ownership is very limited, particularly in the interior areas, smaller towns and villages. To increase the availability and access to public information NDI has begun a large-scale program to distribute manual and solar-powered radios, and train recipients in their use. NDI will supply a larger radio model for classrooms and community use, and a smaller radio model for individual use. From January to May 2007, NDI distributed 40,000 radios in Sudan's historically marginalized ‘Three Areas’ of Southern Kordofan, Abyei, and Blue Nile State, as well as to targeted recipients in the South. From October 2007 through 2008, NDI intends to distribute 223,000 radios throughout all ten Southern Sudan states.

In each area of distribution NDI ensures that at least 50 percent of recipients are women. NDI also targets other marginalized groups, including youth, internally displaced persons and rural residents. Additionally, NDI distributes radios to community leaders, teachers, civil society members, and local government officials. With current population statistics, NDI believes that one in every forty persons in Southern Sudan will be able to listen to radio programs.

Reports from NDI field coordinators indicate strong listenership and that the programming is encouraging dialogue within communities and promoting better-informed discourse on Sudan's transitional political environment.

“Let's Talk is an entertaining way to present complex information”

The program addressed some of the social aspects of the transition through the eyes of a hypothetical Sudanese family. The County Commissioner, Taban, his wife, Salamah, their children and friends learn from and educate each other about the Comprehensive Peace Agreement as it affects their daily lives. It talks about old friends returning; communities concerned about their land and businesses; returnees worried about rearing their children in areas where the education system is not yet established. The program closes with a discussion segment, which features views from Sudanese men and women on the topics featured in the program.



**NATIONAL
DEMOCRATIC
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FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

QUOTE

There can be no daily democracy without daily citizenship

Ralph Nader

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THANK YOU

The Citizen Participation Team would like to thank all the DC and local staff members who provided assistance with compiling this Civic Update.



The Citizen Participation blog was re-launched with new features and design in January. In addition to the main discussion forum among NDI Civic Program staff, the blog regularly updates contacts, resources and partner profiles. If you have any question or suggestion, please email civicblogmoderator@ndi.org.

**NEW TO THE
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION TEAM**

Amanda Beck is in her final year at Georgetown University studying International Politics and International Development. Amanda is interested in political development and government capacity, including the role that civil society plays in promoting good governance. She spent the summer in Ecuador studying Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in the Andean region.

Laura Kim recently joined the Civic Participation Team after finishing her Masters degree in Anthropology & Development Studies at the London School of Economics. While in the London, she also worked for the Crisis States Research Centre and taught high school classes in her spare time. Born in Buenos Aires, and raised in New York City, Laura attended Amherst College, where she has a Bachelors degree in Anthropology. Her interests includes international development, education reform and global civil society.