NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE

Civic Update

Social Movements

Social movements are broad-based combinations of groups and individuals acting purposefully, collectively and with continuity to promote change. Social movements tend to emerge from discontent resulting from inequality, inequity and injustice. NDI has provided support to an array of social movements over the years, recognizing their transformative potential.

The spike in social movements since the second half of the 2000s has become an international phenomenon seen in every region and every type of political context. These movements have not only arisen in authoritarian regimes, but in semi authoritarian states and democracies as well. Some recent social movements include the Arab Spring, the Umbrella

Citizens march peacefully to protest corruption and call for electoral reform in Guatemala.

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Movement in Hong Kong and Black Lives Matter in the United States. This rise can be attributed to factors including new information and communication technologies, particularly the widespread use of social media, which allows citizens to easily and independently distribute content and to reach followers at unprecedented speed. This has coincided with a prevalence of troubled democratic transitions and concern over state corruption, leading citizens to protest power holders who act with impunity, abuse citizens' rights and misuse or centralize state power. Politics professor John Keane calls this a new form of "monitory democracy" in which citizens' major participatory function is continuous evaluative oversight of state action.[1] CIVICUS predicts that this phenomenon is likely to continue, and that we are experiencing a "second wave" of civic energy after an earlier concentration from 2010-2012.[2]

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WORKING FOR DEMOCRACY AND MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

NDI has supported the work of social movements throughout the world, providing a combination of financial and technical assistance designed to help movements coalesce, and design and implement strategic actions.

NDI's assistance helps local partners:

♦ Develop a vision and articulate values that create a compelling narrative
♦ Build organizing skills through action
♦ Diversify participation over time
♦ Engage in political processes
♦ Promote public policy solutions
♦ Organize a base constituency
♦ Research, frame and communicate issues
♦ Assess power dynamics
♦ Manage organizations
♦ Network
♦ Develop leadership

A Look Inside Social Movements

Social movements are often equated with mass protests. However, there are big differences between spontaneous street protests and calculated efforts to oppose power structures and demand reform. The latter requires substantive participation, leadership and a strategic approach that can move large numbers of disengaged citizens from passive detachment to collective action. For example, Egypt's Tahrir Square protests grew out of efforts that civic groups had been engaged in for years. Kifaya, also known as the Egyptian Movement for Change, was one of several citizen organizations which had been developing the foundation for a Tahrir Square-like movement since 2004.[3] The group had been dedicated to replacing the Egyptian government's emergency rule with constitutional, pluralist politics. Leaders of Kifaya developed some of the most popular slogans used at Tahrir Square, and the organization was the first to call for former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to step down.

Tactics and Strategy

A social movement's success depends upon the selection and execution of appropriate strategies and tactics, including a commitment to principles of nonviolence. As outlined in the research of Erica Cheno-

weth and Maria Stephan, nonviolent movements are in fact more successful relative to violent resistance.[4] Nonviolent campaigns' comparative advantage is that they are able to attract a larger, more diverse participant base than those which advocate for violent action. This broader participation strengthens a movement in terms of size while also enhancing its resilience, mobilization and tactical innovation.

A movement is most likely to be successful if it is based on widely held values. Movement leaders must convince the majority of the population that they, and not the power holders, stand for society's true ethics and ideals. The social movement can also increase its chances of success by gaining a nuanced understanding of power dynamics and using this understanding to influence diverse institutions - including the police, civil servants, organized religion, media, labor and the business community - around common objectives. These strategies can advance a movement's cause and raise the costs to those trying to maintain the status quo.

Challenges

There are also a number of challenges inherent to social movements. The same traits that can make up a movement's strengths can also become a destabilizing weakness. The loose, fluid organization of groups and individuals may create collective identity challenges. Movement leaders must try to stay consistent with their message and vision without triggering potential fragmentation from groups who no longer feel their interests are represented.

The global crackdown on civil society further exacerbates such difficulties. The potential for failure in-

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Characteristics of social movements:

♦ A means for citizens to create positive social change
♦ Use collective or joint action
♦ Have change-oriented goals
♦ Employ extra-institutional methods
♦ Consist of shifting clusters of organizations, networks, communities and individuals
♦ Link together different issue-based networks

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creases if a movement is portrayed as representing fringe ideas or standing in opposition to deeply held social principles. To counter this, movement organizers can use strategic messaging and outreach to demonstrate that the movement does indeed share common values and vision with the general population. They may also use this tactic to highlight the gap between power holders' rhetoric - which claims them to be the true representatives of social values - and their policies and actions that violate shared norms of justice, equality and dignity.

Donor assistance presents another challenge. Unlike well-established NGOs, social movements may have shifting organization, membership and capacity that makes it difficult for them to receive funding from more traditional donor mechanisms. The international media pays close attention to protests because of their photogenic appeal. As a result, it may not be obvious to donors that social movements are a process that involves much more than protests. Social movements require a long-term focus on organization and outreach that needs to be at the center of funding strategy.

Such challenges aside, social movements have unique power to bring about democratic change. However, the best way for NDI to help such movements devise solutions to political problems or build up democratic institutions is not always straightforward. NDI may face program design challenges in supporting such a diverse group of partners whose activities and membership can shift unexpectedly. Social movements can also have very different focuses or origins from one another. Struggles against communist dictatorships in eastern Europe, the anti-apartheid experience in South Africa, the U.S. civil rights movement and the Arab Spring all used different tactics and had distinct aims. How can NDI most effectively support social movements with democratic ambitions? The following examples provide instances where NDI has supported local partners participating in social movements.

Guatemala: Taking Action Against Corruption

For decades, Guatemalans have expressed low public confidence and a lack of trust in a political elite seen as deeply corrupt. This came to a tipping point in April 2015 when senior officials were implicated in kickback schemes, clientelistic contracts and other

Representatives from Congress and civil society discuss electoral reform during a LEPP working group meeting.

practices that allegedly defrauded the state from millions in taxes and enriched some of the most powerful people in the country.

In response, from April to August 2015, thousands of citizens gathered in central plazas and in front of government offices to protest against corruption and impunity. Through the use of social media, a movement emerged calling for the president, as well as other officials involved in corrupt state practices, to resign. To prevent these events from happening in the future, citizens also sought reforms to the electoral and justice system in reaction to their discovery of tax evasion, money laundering and influence peddling among high government officials. The vice-president of the country resigned in May 2015 and the president, along with the majority of his cabinet, resigned in September 2015. This represented the first time in the country's history that a president was forced to step down through nonviolent action, as Guatemalans from diverse backgrounds found a common space to come together to stand against corruption.

Following the protests, the Guatemalan Congress responded to citizen demands for reforms by creating four joint congressional-civil society working groups to work on four priority reform measures: Law on Elections and Political Parties (LEPP); Law on Government Procurement; Civil Service Law; and justice sector reforms. More than 170 organizations - including business lobbies, evangelical churches, indigenous

peoples' groups and women's organizations - attended the different working groups. NDI supported the LEPP working group by creating space for discussion, facilitating consensus on proposals, sharing different methods to guide interaction between civil society and government, and contracting experts to review draft reforms.

The LEPP working group gained widespread support amongst Guatemalan citizens to take action against corruption and impunity, drafting a joint reform proposal with over 85 proposed amendments to existing laws. These included limits on the re-election of mayors and deputies, use of a null vote that would allow citizens to register discontent with candidates in elections, reform of the party finance system, measures to advance equal representation for women and indigenous people, the right to vote from abroad, and steps to strengthen the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (*Tribunal Supremo Electoral).*
The protests have triggered the highest level of civil society activity since Guatemala signed the 1996 Peace Accords to end the country's civil war. Moving forward, civic organizations and citizens will need to continue working together to advocate for the implementation and enforcement of these reforms in order to prevent impunity and abuse of government power. This will be the real challenge: to move from one strategic achievement to an entire political system less tolerant of corruption. But through an organized, engaged movement, Guatemalan citizens can continue to transform specific areas of dissatisfaction into broad policy reform.

Burkina Faso: Long-term Youth Engagement

With more than 50 percent of Burkina Faso's population being younger than 24, youth may make up the majority, but they face many barriers when it comes to participating in public life. Understanding the potential that young people have when engaged in meaningful and peaceful activities, NDI has supported the political participation of Burkinabe youth for over 12 years. NDI activities in Burkina Faso have helped increase the capacity of youth to organize and take on leadership roles. As a result, when Blaise

Voices from the Field
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Program Officer, NDI Guatemala

1. Are there differences in assisting NGOs or formal civil society groups versus the groups you have worked with who are part of a social movement?

Yes, organized civil society groups have clearly defined objectives, while emerging groups do not. There were two types of groups that formed during the development of the working groups. For the first group, it was not clear what they wanted, only that they wanted change. They had not even begun discussing what kinds of change they wished to see, and those who participated were people who did not have a thorough understanding of what exactly were the issues requiring reform. The second kind of group had been working on issues relating to LEPP reform for some time. With organized groups, the issues are well-known, and while on occasion it is difficult to reach any compromise between the different actors' positions, it is possible to deepen and advance their existing knowledge. With emerging actors, it is sometimes easy to advise them and reach agreements, but they are not well-versed in the issue of when and where reform is needed.

2. What unique challenges have you or your team faced in assisting a social movement?

The social movement was amorphous. They did not have any concrete demands regarding amendments to the LEPP. Rather, their efforts were directed towards transparency and the resignation of officials accused of corruption. Various groups were not always in agreement on what specific changes should be made to the political system.

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Compaoré attempted to rewrite the constitution after 27 years in power so as to stand for another term, NDI's local partners were prepared to play a part in the widespread popular movement against this attempt and mobilize fellow citizens to peaceful action as democratic space opened.

In response to a widespread feeling amongst Burkinabe youth that their country was heading in the wrong direction, NDI initiated consultations in early 2012. With the country's Ministry of Youth and the National Council on Youth, NDI identified groups and individuals working on topics including citizen participation, strengthening local government and community development.

Later that year, a network of 12 political parties and 20 CSOs that represented the majority of youth groups in Burkina Faso came together to produce the *Agenda of the Youth*. This document listed the priorities that would guide the youth network's advocacy campaign toward various levels of government between 2012-2013. The agenda highlighted recommendations to improve Burkinabe youth's socio-economic situation and focused on reducing youth unemployment through job creation, company hiring practices that would favor youth and education reform.

Civil society youth participate in a leadership workshop organized by NDI in Ouagadougou in 2012.

Following on from their experience articulating and drafting the *Agenda of the Youth*, several participants wrote a new advocacy plan aimed at presidential candidates that prioritized reducing youth unemployment, specifically through promoting youth entrepreneurship. Some former members of the *Agen-*

da of the Youth advocacy network later partnered with leaders of the influential social movement Civic Broom *(Le Balai Citoyen)* to mobilize Burkinabe citizens when Compaoré and his parliamentary allies attempted to amend the constitution to remove term limits. Protests organized by Civic Broom and a number of smaller groups helped bring about an end to the Compaoré regime and usher in an interim transitional government to govern until elections. Less than a year later, in September 2015, military forces loyal to Compaoré staged a coup in an attempt to derail the 2015 presidential and legislative elections. Burkina Faso's extended civic networks undertook immediate action to protest against this seizure of power, express support for the transitional government and advocate for holding free, fair and transparent elections. When the elite military unit agreed to lay down its weapons and its leaders were arrested, indicating the military's withdrawal from politics, Burkinabe citizens participated in a peaceful, democratic presidential and legislative election on November 29, 2015 and welcomed into office President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré on December 29, marking the first civilian transition of power in the country's history since independence from France in 1960.

NDI's long-term presence in Burkina Faso has provided the space and skills, through trainings and knowledge-sharing, that enabled Burkinabe youth to build political know-how, put into practice democratic values and engage productively in the emerging democratic movement.

Ukraine: Sustaining Citizen Action

Ukraine currently stands at a crossroads on the road to becoming a more democratic state. The country's political landscape has become more transparent and accountable as a result of the 2013-2014 EuroMaidan protests. Public opinion research conducted by NDI in 2015 found that there is untapped potential for citizen engagement and that Ukrainians continue to want a more representative and responsive government.

In response to these enduring citizen priorities, NDI supports CSOs in mobilizing grassroots support to hold elected officials accountable. This support simultaneously taps into citizens' desire to participate in national reform issues and promotes transparency

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Voices from the Field
Dany Ayida
Former Program Director, NDI Burkina Faso

1. Are there differences in assisting NGOs or formal civil society groups versus the groups you have worked with who are part of a social movement?

Yes, there are big differences. Many NGOs and CSOs need grants to implement activities. Some of them leave the community or stop activities when the funding ends. Social movements that we work with have their roots within the community and they keep working even without grants. Social movements come to us to learn how to fish, and not how to have fish. Our social movement partners, including women's organizations, democratic activists organizations and youth associations, have values and are committed to a specific cause.

2. What lessons have you learned that you think are useful to NDI's approach to working with social movements?

Many lessons can be learned from NDI working for over ten years in a country where resources are limited but where people are committed to change:

- Strategic planning with social movements must be flexible, because the number one criteria of success is not money but people;
- It is important to offer the opportunity to the group to measure its own performances on a regular basis;
- Sustainability is key to success.

and accountability in government. In the lead up to the October 2015 local elections NDI partnered with Ukrainian CSOs Center UA and Institute Respublika (IR) to initiate the Follow the Money campaign in 26 communities throughout Ukraine.

The campaign's goal is to raise citizen awareness and improve government accountability on campaign finance reform. Through this campaign, coordinators organized forums in their communities to bring together citizens and public officials, followed by trainings for citizens who wanted to be more active in the initiatives. As a result of the campaign, coordinators collected more than 9,000 citizen signatures on a petition to increase the transparency of campaign financing, and over 1,200 political party candidates and 143 mayoral candidates signed a pledge to make their campaign funding transparent.

Campaign activists use creative methods to engage citizens in advocacy on campaign and party finance reform. For example, in September 2015, the Follow the Money campaign released "Ad Busters," a mobile application that allows citizens to track and monitor where candidates and political parties spend money on political advertising. In Ternopil, a city in western Ukraine, activists collected 700 signatures from students at local universities by organizing a flash mob. The activists then took pictures of the students with signs reading "Follow the money," "Say no to political corruption" and "Say yes to transparent party finance." In November, a day before a national forum on party finance reform, activists organized another flash mob in the central squares of seven Ukrainian cities to focus attention on political parties' financial dependence on oligarchs.

To address the challenge of engaging citizens in national-level reform issues, NDI also supported IR's Active Community Project, which seeks to increase civic participation by engaging citizens in advocating for reforms in their communities. IR began the project in the spring of 2015 to harness interest in civic participation by focusing on local issues in 15 communities and then linking them to national-level reform issues. By September 2015, IR activists had convened over 200 meetings throughout the country to record citizen grievances and share them with elected officials.

During a flash mob in the city of Cherkasy, an "oligarch" holds a "dependent political party" on a leash.

Through these meetings and other activities, over 3,500 citizens mobilized to discuss local development plans with officials. In the community of Tarasivka alone, 300 citizens attended public hearings and postponed the adoption of the local government's development plan in order to allow for further citizen consultation. The success of these community programs inspired other communities to launch their own chapters. In August 2015, Oboznivka village opened its own branch and, within a month, had mobilized citizen opposition to stop the merger of their village with another one. This advocacy success illustrates how successful grassroots efforts can have a multiplier effect, empowering other communities to advocate for reforms of their own. The Ukrainian case shows how NDI can help sustain the momentum of a social movement once it achieves its immediate objectives.

Serbia– LGBTI Rights Movement

In Serbia, NDI works to support the country's growing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) rights movement through assistance that includes organizational development, coalition building, and data utilization to reinforce advocacy campaigns. The Institute embarked on LGBTI programming in light of the opening political space in Serbia, created by the European Union (EU) accession process, which stresses equality and respect for human rights.

In the lead-up to the 2012 general elections, NDI partnered with the CSOs Queeria Center and the Group for Support for Young Gay Men to develop the Pink Ballots (*Roze Listici)* project to monitor political party platforms regarding LGBTI issues. NDI recognized areas of opportunity to build LGBTI CSOs' capacity in areas such as organizational structure, strategic communication, and advocacy skills. The two groups launched the project to monitor the actions and statements of electoral candidates, parties, and public officials that affect the LGBTI community. In its first two weeks, the website ran several surveys to gauge interest on such topics as what kinds of actions would constitute a satisfactory level of support to LGBTI communities. The website also presented statements of all presidential candidates on the topic of LGBTI groups and documented political parties' positions on LGBTI issues. The groups' creative approach - the first such effort in Serbia - managed to mobilize LGBTI groups to follow the election campaign and to vote in the elections.

NDI also provided technical assistance to LGBTI activists in preparations for LGBTI Pride Parades. Following attacks on parade participants and the violence that surrounded the 2010 Pride Parade, the Serbian government canceled the 2011 parade, citing security concerns. In advance of the parade, however, NDI had helped partner organizations to build up their advocacy, communication, and message development skills to clearly relay their ideas to the media, maintain a positive presence, and avoid confrontations with opponents. Their refusal to participate in television shows alongside right-wing groups, and ability to focus on the issue at hand, without criticism or negativity, received a positive reaction from the media. In contrast to 2009 and 2010, when media provided equal coverage and airtime for LGBTI activists and their opponents, who made openly violent threats and hateful remarks, coverage of LGBTI activists in 2011 was greater than that of their opponents.

To examine citizens' attitudes towards LGBTI communities, particularly in advance of the 2012 elections, NDI provided support to the lesbian and human rights CSO Labris in conducting a public opinion poll and follow-on focus groups. Conducted by Ipsos Strategic Marketing, the research revealed an overall lack of knowledge regarding human rights

and discrimination and highlighted how poor public education on these issues can perpetuate negative stereotypes and prejudices. Respondents noted the limited amount of information regarding LGBTI issues, which mainly becomes available in advance of the Pride Parade, and failed to see the value of demonstrations and protests to gain rights or fight discrimination. Equipped with this information and taking lessons learned from previous years, the Institute worked with the Belgrade Pride coalition to move away from the one-day parade idea to a more holistic, educational approach in the form of Pride Week - a full week of events, conferences, music performances, and art exhibits. Held during the week preceding the scheduled parade, such activities offered LGBTI and human rights groups the opportunity to raise awareness of LGBTI and human rights issues, present their work, and publicly discuss the challenges they face.

During the 2014 Pride Parade, citizens march peacefully holding a sign "Pride for All" in Belgrade.

The Serbian government cancelled the parade again in 2012, but the first Pride Week was a success. They received positive media coverage, including invitations to participate in major talk shows, where the organizers successfully communicated a wider human rights message. The groups went on to incorporate Pride Week into future annual activities. In the meantime, NDI continued working with the groups

to hone their messaging and communication skills. Despite the last-minute cancellation of the 2013 parade, activists from several LGBTI organizations joined together to rally supporters to gather in a local park, defying the government's denial of their right to assemble. The quiet protest rally received support in media outlets and saw several supporters turn out. The movement persisted, gained support and conducted continued advocacy, resulting in a successful and peaceful Pride Week and Pride Parade in 2014.

To further strengthen Serbia's LGBTI movement's advocacy efforts, NDI conducted public opinion polling in 2014 and 2015 to gauge attitudes about LGBTI issues amongst both the general population and the LGBTI community. These results evolved into an LGBTI issues platform that was signed by seven Serbian LGBTI organizations in April 2015. The platform provides a framework of cooperation between LGBTI groups and other organizations to respect human rights and improve the quality of life of LGBTI citizens in Serbia. The pillars of action include greater cooperation with government bodies, monitoring of state institutions' performance concerning LGBTI citizens' rights protection and working with the general public to empower LGBTI citizens.

Currently, NDI is partnering with Benetech, a Silicon Valley NGO, to provide LGBTI groups in Serbia with access to Martus, a secure database in which to record and map incidents of violence, harassment, and discrimination against LGBTI persons. Together with Benetech, NDI is training LGBTI groups in Serbia to host the database and to develop a companion website that, among other features, displays an interactive map of recorded, verified incidents. LGBTI groups will be able to use evidence captured by Martus to investigate, prosecute and publicize anti-LGBTI crimes for advocacy campaigns and outreach to elected officials.

NDI's support and partnership with the LGBTI movement has helped unite disparate groups with a similar vision over a common social change issue. The partnership between LGBTI CSOs in Serbia, strengthened through the LGBTI platform, will allow groups to jointly initiate change for LGBTI citizens and promote tolerance in Serbian society.

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Turkey: Checks and Balances Network

Since 2010, NDI has worked with local partners to address some of the biggest challenges confronting democratization in Turkey. Politicians in Turkey have used wedge politics to exploit tensions in society. CSOs have been largely unable to overcome their own prejudices to work in common cause. A tradition of highly centralized governance lacking institutional checks and balances has stunted pluralism, openness, and responsiveness in government, while precluding meaningful political participation by CSOs and citizens. Many CSOs adopted partisan approaches, refusing to organize or advocate collectively to government on behalf of citizens. They blamed individuals or specific laws without addressing the underlying problem: the lack of institutional and constitutional checks and balances.

In light of these challenges, NDI has sought to: demonstrate that diverse interests have shared needs and can work together; promote understanding of checks and balances as vital to Turkey's democratic consolidation; and introduce constructive forms of civic organizing and advocacy. In 2010, NDI formed a partnership with the Istanbul Policy Center of Sabancı University (IPC) and conducted a public opinion survey of citizen perceptions of democracy. This revealed deep concerns about the country's democratic institutions, including political parties, parliament and the judiciary. When Parliament launched a new constitution drafting process, NDI and IPC facilitated a deliberative process that brought together 120 diverse political, civic, government, media and academic representatives to provide input. The group reached consensus on 108 recommendations to strengthen checks and balances through more open political parties, a strengthened parliament and a more independent judiciary.

The experience proved that checks and balances could serve as a unifying theme for otherwise polarized and competing interests and ideologies. A core group of 30 founding members resolved to work in collaboration with NDI and IPC to build a broad civic movement for democratization through promotion of institutional reform and fostering of a new political culture. Now consisting of more than 270 member organizations representing a range of interests, issues, and affiliations, the Checks and Balances Network (the Network) is working to strengthen democ-

racy and advance pluralism by formulating recommendations for policy changes and reform of institutions, building public and media support, and engaging public officials and holding them accountable.

Ahead of the general election, residents of the city of Mardin receive materials on checks and balances issues during community outreach by members of the Checks and Balances Network.

A 2012 NDI program assessment revealed a growing concern over the country's turn away from democratic principles and the need for institutional reform. Most compelling was the idea that reform would only be possible if the liberal/left worked in coalition with the center/right. It would require support from Turkey's diverse population representing a broad spectrum of political, ideological, ethnic, religious and civic interests. With NDI's support, the Network has consolidated its reputation as a nonpartisan civic movement. It has capitalized on multiple elections and ongoing discussions about systems of government to make checks and balances a central issue in the discussion of Turkey's future as a democracy.

As polarization, violent conflict and crackdowns on critical opposition voices have surged over the past year, a broad, inclusive and participatory social movement is key to alleviating the country's current crisis. With its comprehensive geographic and political representation, the Network is the only domestic actor capable of bringing all segments of Turkish society to the same table, from government officials and civic activists to ordinary citizens. The Network understands that its unique convening ability will be imperative in initiating a nationwide dialogue about longer-term priorities for democratic reform, including the implementation of an inclusive peace process.

Currently, NDI is supporting the Network in crowdsourcing diverse public input on reform priorities and creating more sustainable opportunities for individuals to mobilize in support of Network initiatives. NDI's guidance to Network members at both the national and provincial levels is helping to increase the Network's grassroots organizing power and channel citizen voices into credible, nationally supported reform initiatives. NDI is also working with the Network to leverage technology, particularly digital participation applications, to provide a platform for citizens to share views, deliberate and establish common goals for their country's political future.

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Civic Update is a production of NDI's Citizen Participation Team.

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