

CEPPS
Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening



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NEPAL: Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes
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This cover memorandum accompanies the detailed reports submitted by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) of the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the “Nepal: Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes” program:

I. POLITICAL CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

Nepal is undergoing a critical and historic period of political transition. The completion of the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections in April 2008 marked the beginning of the country’s course in drafting a new constitution and solidifying peace after a decade-long civil war. Major political stakeholders anticipate that the drafting process will lay out a new federal government structure more representative than the current centralized system.

However, the country’s political environment has become increasingly unstable and the constitution drafting process has been slow. The poor performance of political parties and the lack of consensus within parliament have fed the loss of public confidence in multi-party politics. Nepalis have characterized parties as being disconnected from citizen concerns outside of Kathmandu, unable to deliver on electoral campaign promises, and beset with corruption and opaque internal processes. In the CA, which acts as an interim parliament, negotiations of political arrangements have been difficult both in the aftermath of a socially and politically destabilizing civil war. In addition, nearly a third of all members are new to elected office and lack the knowledge, skills and resources to fulfill their mandates. Civic engagement within the political process is uneven, and the culture of monitoring and holding political leaders accountable is underdeveloped.

The politics of this reporting period have been dominated by the failure to promulgate a draft constitution by the May 27 deadline. The remaining differences on the federalist structure appeared to be resolvable within a relatively short period of time, even though whatever agreement had emerged from party leaderships was almost certain to be unacceptable to one or other of the activist groups promoting incompatible forms of federalism and protesting in different ways and lengths of time since early April to May 27. Shortly before midnight on May 27, PM Bhattarai unilaterally dissolved the CA and called for fresh CA elections for November 22 2012, surprising the entire country. Effective public participation in the election will be critical in determining the government that is formed in its wake and the future of country's political stability.

The CEPPS partners have identified the following challenges, organized by program component that will be addressed through this program:

Promote and Strengthen Broader Political Processes

- Organizational weaknesses and the poor governance record of Nepali political parties have led to a loss of public confidence in a multiparty system of democracy.
- Political parties lack internal democratic practices that encourage local party branches and members, including women youth and marginalized groups, to participate in the development of positions on policy issues.
- Political parties lack organized and transparent resource mobilization, and have difficulties in membership recruitment and retention.
- Political parties lack the institutional ability to formulate policy solutions and engage constituents and non-governmental stakeholders in public policy discussions.
- Organizational weaknesses have contributed to the parties' poor electoral preparation and performance. The lack of understanding of citizen concerns and priorities have resulted in party platforms and campaign strategies that were neither relevant nor compelling.
- In preparing for previous elections, candidate selection processes were not transparent, and candidates were not fully aware of their respective parties' policy positions.
- Political parties lack the capacity to plan and organize effective electoral campaigns, and are short on technical and practical resources to conduct campaigns in a competitive political environment.
- There is an underdeveloped culture within civil society and the media of monitoring the activities of political parties.

Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants

- While the CA election of 2008 was praised a credible electoral process and well managed by the ECN, as expected in the first post-conflict election in a country with as many challenges as Nepal, there were shortcomings and irregularities in the electoral process (voter registration process, limitations of the voter education program, lack of a clear election disputes resolution mechanism).
- In an ongoing spirit of collaboration and transparency, in the post-election period, the ECN undertook a series of post-election evaluations with stakeholders at a national and local level. During the coming years, it will be crucial to maintain the ECN's credibility and build on its institutional capacity to remain a strong pillar in Nepal's ongoing march from war to peace and from a monarchy to a Federal Democratic Republic.
- Although the 2008 general elections were mostly free of violence and administered without widespread problems, shortcomings in Nepal's election process persist, including: problems

with the voter list and registration process; interference from some election and government officials; abuse of state resources for campaign purposes; and an inadequate process to resolve election complaints.

- Given the performance of civil society during previous elections, domestic monitoring groups and the media could play a stronger role in observing the elections and fostering greater transparency and fairness in the electoral process.

Improve the democratic functioning of the Constituent Assembly (CA)/Parliament

- Previous parliaments and the current Constituent Assembly have not been effective in their outreach and representation functions.
- There is a shortage of CA members that with the technical expertise to draft and review proposed legislation.
- With the promulgation of the new constitution and the anticipated shift to a federal system of government, it is likely that many newly elected members will have little or no experience in serving as elected representatives.
- Key bodies within parliament institutions are understaffed and under-resourced. The Parliament Secretariat lacks adequate technical knowledge and material resources to effectively support the legislative process.
- The CA/Parliament conducts few committee hearings and does not have a formalized public consultation process. Little interaction exists between members of the CA/Parliament and their constituents, and this lack of interface breeds gaps in government responsiveness to citizen needs, citizen inclusion in public policy development and the accountability of officials and their use of public resources.
- There is little public information on the latest developments in the constitutional development process and the work of the legislature.

II. OBJECTIVES

The program aims to strengthen political parties, electoral and legislative processes in Nepal. To this end, IFES and NDI would be working to achieve the following specific objectives:

IFES

- Ensure that Nepal develops a body of legislation on the electoral process that is comprehensive, coherent and consistent; which conforms to international standards and suits the socio-economic context and new political realities of Nepal.
- Improve the capacity of the ECN to manage future elections and consolidate its mandate and performance through the provision of high level technical assistance in the legal, management and technical aspects of elections and long-term professional development capacity building
- Expand and improve the delivery of voter education by working with the ECN and selected non-governmental organizations to plan, develop, and implement effective voter education programs, with a focus on capacity building, in order to enhance the electorate's understanding of democratic practices and rights, and increase participation in the electoral process.
- Closely monitor, analyze and report on the overall electoral process with a focus on the Election Commission's internal activities and external interaction with other electoral stakeholders.
- Provide a facility that can address unforeseen windows of opportunity that may arise in Nepal's unpredictable post-conflict political and electoral environment, in order to achieve immediate beneficial results in line with the program objectives.

NDI

- Promote and strengthen democratic political processes through political party development assistance.
Sub-Objective 1.A: Improve democratic political party organizational structures and operations
Sub-Objective 1.B: Enhance the electoral competitiveness of political parties
- Strengthen the capacity of citizen oversight of the electoral process.
Sub-Objective 2.A: Enhance the capacity of civil society to monitor elections
Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthen the capacity of media to report on the electoral process
- Support the institutional strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/ Parliament and improve its capacity to address constituent needs.
Sub-Objective 3.A: Strengthen the legislative drafting capacity of the legislature
Sub-Objective 3.B: Increase communication between representatives and their constituents

III. ACTIVITIES

A. Promote and Strengthen Democratic Political Processes through Political Party Development Assistance

Effective Political Party Organizing and Outreach

On April 17, NDI conducted an workshop for the Inter-Party Alliance (IPA) on internal political party reform, specifically internal democratization, communication, party leadership, internal candidate selection and platform development.

On April 19 and 20, the Institute organized multi-party workshops on messaging, targeting and delivery for activists from nine political parties. The workshop's objective was to help parties develop concise and coherent messages that respond to peoples' needs and motivate individuals to vote. The participants learned various methods of contacting voters and effective ways for parties to deliver their message. NDI led multi-party workshops May 3-4 on organizing party branches for district-level leaders of nine political parties in Nepalgunj and Kavrepalanchowk.

NDI launched a five-day residential workshop, Future Leadership Academy – Phase I, for emerging political leaders, June 4-8 in Katmandu. The workshop was chiefly designed to improve the leadership skills of young political activists, ages 18-35.

On June 27, NDI conducted a workshop on social media for Inter Party Alliance members and the communications directors of their respective parties in Kathmandu. A total of 21 individuals participated in the training. Topics included the definition of social media, differences between it and traditional media and the importance and benefits of the new technology.

Building the Investigative Skills of Journalists to Monitor and Report on Party Activities

NDI and Internews partner Federation of Nepalese Journalist (FNJ) created a digital database of FNJ's membership base and conducted a survey from members in 71 districts. Internews and its local partner Freedom Forum continued to prepare monthly reports on Nepali media and political and electoral

developments to collect information about the incidents of violation of media freedom, activities (meetings, decisions) of the CA and activities of the Election Commission.

B. Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants

Technical Assistance to the ECN in the Legal, Management and Technical Aspects of Elections

This reporting period provided further opportunities for the integration of the two law reform programs implemented by IFES in Nepal, one funded under CEPPS III and the other funded by the Norwegian government. During this quarter the IFES Country Director and IFES' sub-contractor under the Norwegian-funded program, Quality AS, have worked very closely in assisting the ECN to provide advice to the government on the constitutional and legal changes required for an election to be held following the dissolution of the CA, the development of a new legal framework for voter registration, and providing advice on various representation formulae for a new parliament.

Strengthen ECN's Electoral Management Capacity

IFES' support has been crucial for the operational effectiveness of: the voter registration activities including voter roll display, claims and objections and re-opening of voter registration program for missed voters, voter roll data re-verification; and planning and preparing for the forthcoming election.

IFES assisted the ECN with preparing and conducting the April 17 to May 28 program of display of voter rolls at and registration of 'missed' voters at VDCs/municipal wards, and the lodging of claims and objections by voters. IFES provided technical assistance for producing public outreach messages; preparing training materials for 6,000 DEO and VDC staff; and conducting interaction programs for stakeholders. The ECN estimates that 300,000 new voters registered during this period, bringing the total registered to 10.6 million.

Capacity Building

IFES continued to use day-to-day discussions with ECN staff and meetings with political party and civil society stakeholders to enhance understanding of international good practice in electoral law; to increase stakeholders' knowledge of the effects of systems of representation for minority groups and remote areas; and to engage them in discussion on options available for holding an election following the dissolution of the CA.

The two major emphases during this period were on representation systems, where IFES provided stakeholders with information on how ethnic and geographic based affirmative action systems had operated in other contexts, and on how to construct a valid and politically agreed framework for the next election, either on November 22 or some later date.

Expand and Improve Delivery of Voter Education

The IFES team has quickly developed an excellent working relationship with the ECN's new EEIC team. IFES continues to provide ongoing and daily capacity building support to the EEIC. IFES' work on voter education this quarter has ensured the involvement of the ECN in the design and implementation of new and revised outreach products. Capacity development for the ECN website has

progressed slowly, due to delays in ECN decision making. At the end of the quarter IFES was working with the ECN to finalize the materials for training of 250 trainers/electoral educators from DEOs and Department of Education staff.

IFES has continued to work with the ECN's voter education team to improve its capacity to plan for and produce outreach programs. IFES supported the ECN team in developing concepts and broadcasting plans for information on the reopening of registration centers in 75 Chief District Administration offices (CDO) and 26 Area Administration Offices (AAO) since June 7, 2012, and on general outreach materials. ECN has been receptive to this capacity-building support.

Strengthen the capacity of citizen oversight of the electoral process.

This quarter, NDI conducted an assessment of domestic election monitoring organizations to explore options for partnership. NDI met with domestic election monitoring groups to evaluate their understanding of the process and their capacity and with international NGOs, donors, political parties, the media and civil society to further ascertain their ability to conduct domestic monitoring. Internews conducted the first ever investigative journalism training in Nepal on electoral processes for roughly 100 print, radio and TV journalists and broadcast 26 radio programs on electoral and political party issues.

C. Support the Institutional Strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/Parliament and Improve its Capacity to Address Constituent Needs

Strengthening the Capacity of the Parliamentary Secretariat

On April 15 and 16, NDI, in collaboration with the Journalists Society for Parliamentary Affairs (JSPA), conducted a workshop on the parliament and effective media relations. Participants included five staff from the CA and 30 others, mostly young journalists. Discussion focused on methods to make the relationships more professional and productive.

Resulting from last quarter's engagement with the Parliament Secretariat, including the Parliament Secretariat Library Improvement Plan, NDI subgrantee, The Asia Foundation (TAF), has been discussing plans for the purchase of books, equipping the library with archiving equipment, and training and staffing.

Promoting Dialogue between Elected Members and Their Constituencies

On April 26, NDI conducted a workshop on effective constituent relations with women MPs from the three Constituency Service Offices (CSOs) of Arghakhanchi, Dhanusha, and Lalitpur. Unfortunately, the CSOs in Arghakhanchi, Dhanusha and Lalitpur Districts have been closed as a result of dissolution of the CA. The Institute has informed the district MPs and coordinators accordingly.

Following the dissolutions of the CA, the Institute organized meetings throughout June with former MPs to discuss the future of the community dialogues program. Most MPs expressed their desire to continue the dialogues.

On June 25 and 26, NDI conducted a workshop on political leadership with members of the Next Generation Parliamentarians Group (NGPG) and former MPs in Gokarna. A total of 25 people,

representing seven political parties, took part in the two-day event. The workshop aimed to build the former MPs capacity and to create an opportunity for them to network and partnership with each other.

Supporting Greater Public Awareness and Engagement in the Work of Parliament

TAF continued to partner with the Nepal Constitution Foundation (NCF) to convene a broad coalition of five specific interest groups, which include Dalit, Madheshi, women, youth and *Janajati*, to conduct legislative audits. The bills audited this quarter include: Bill on Amendment of Nepal Health Services Act; Bill for Revision and Integration of the Act on Children; Bill to Amend Civil Services Act 2049; Nepal Electricity Regulatory Commission Bill; Gender Perspective on Draft Criminal Statutes; Proposed Provisions of *mens rea* in Penal Code 2067. TAF also continued working with its three partners – Samudayak Sarathi (SS), Rural Community Development Service Council (RCDS), and WomenAct (WA) – to conduct the sixth wave of town hall meetings.

IV. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE INDICATORS

Foreign Assistance Indicators	IFES	NDI	Quarter Total	FY12 Total
Number of individuals who received USG-assisted political party training.	N/A	275	275	
Number of domestic election observers trained with USG assistance.	N/A	0	0	
Number of laws or amendments to ensure credible elections drafted with USG technical assistance	0 ¹	N/A	0	
Number of USG-assisted public sessions held regarding proposed changes to the country's legal framework	0 ²	N/A	0	
Number of local CSOs strengthened that promote electoral reform and/or improvements in the electoral system.	0 ³	N/A	18	
Number of electoral administration procedures and systems strengthened with USG assistance.	2 ⁴	N/A	2	
Number of electoral officials trained with USG assistance	150 ⁵	N/A	150	
Number of national legislators and national legislative staff attending USG sponsored training or educational events.	N/A	72	72	
Number of public forums resulting from USG assistance in which national legislators and members of the public interact.	N/A	1	1	

V. EVALUATION

Success Stories

¹ No activity this quarter.

² No activity this quarter.

³ No activity this quarter.

⁴ Technical support provided to ECN for developing policy and procedures for re-verification of vote register data and technical support provided for developing procedures/methodologies for electoral education trainers.

⁵ Participants of BRIDGE tutorial on gender & elections and training on voter's roll data verification.

IFES continues to be respected by the ECN as a provider of reliable advice on electoral issues and support for ECN needs. The inauguration of the EEIC has provided opportunities for IFES to cement a strong relationship with the new, integrated ECN education and training team. The ECN's operations department has continued to rely on the presence of IFES' in-house advisors to guide ECN staff in the development of electoral policies. The ECN's DEOs continue to support the strong role IFES' CSO partners are playing in educating and motivating disadvantaged groups to register to vote and are appreciative of the collaborative approach adopted.

The opening of the ECN's EEIC building has provided a new focus on the ECN's electoral education activities and, with IFES support, has been used to commence integration of the ECN's training and education functions. The use of the EEIC as a hub for nationwide activities will hopefully see more emphasis on electoral education at a DEO level – for which IFES is providing support, initially in training of electoral educators. IFES support has seen the EEIC take steps towards a proactive approach to promotion, and the EEIC library become a reality, with an extensive collection of materials and links being developed with other Nepali research institutions.

The local voter education program implemented by IFES sub awardees has continued to exceed its targets, even in the face of disruption through lengthy bandhs in much of the Far West and Terai. Analysis shows that the methods adopted by the CSOs continue to be effective in transferring information. The help desk program to assist DEOs and registration centers in advising voters on claims, objections and registration processes, assisting them to complete the required forms, was effective in supporting ECN staff.

NDI conducted an assessment in late 2010 of its nine political party partners. The assessment's objective was to help parties identify the types of technical assistance requested from the Institute. One of the Madhesh-based parties, the Tarai Madhesh Democratic Party (TMDP), sought help to establish an internal training department. In response, NDI introduced a training and facilitation skills module in its Training of Trainers (ToT) program. Following the completion of the national and regional ToT, TMDP successfully established the party's first training department. The group is comprised of 20 NDI-trained individuals who completed the master trainer component of the ToT program. Another example of success is the Nepali Congress' (NC) selection of six NDI master trainers to form the core group of the party's newly established Policy and Training Academy.

The Community Dialogues and Round Table Discussions have provided an effective forum for MPs to listen and respond to local citizens' concerns. Some districts displayed remarkable progress in improving communications between constituents and elected representatives. In the mid-west district of Surkhet, for example, the community wanted to create a master plan to develop tourism. The District Development Committee (DDC) successfully lobbied officials to allocate approximately \$1,300 for the development of the master plan. Another example of success is the establishment of cold storage facilities in Nepal. MPs and citizens of Syanja District pressed the government for the establishment of a cold storage facility in their community. As a result of their efforts, funds were earmarked for a facility in their district. In addition, all former MPs voiced their interest in maintaining the community dialogues despite the CA's dissolution. They continue to want to serve as advocates for their communities.

For the past two years, NDI partner and subgrantee TAF has worked to build a sustainable relationship with the Parliament Secretariat. As a result, senior Secretariat staff, including the

Secretary General Manohar Bhattarai and Spokesperson Mukunda Sharma, regularly coordinate with NDI and TAF on activities that strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat to communicate with the public. The Secretariat is utilizing the new Media Center at Singha Durbar; the Parliament Secretariat Spokesperson participates in the weekly radio show *Hamro Kanoon*, in a spot titled: *From the Spokesperson's Desk*; and Secretary General Bhattarai has already committed to some of the recommendations in a TAF report on the media communication outreach capacity of the Secretariat, including developing a media strategy and training the Secretariat staff.

Lessons Learned

The IPA was formed in early 2011 to enhance communication and coordination among political parties and provide a neutral platform to discuss contentious issues. Building on a sound NDI-IPA relationship, the Institute asked IPA members to assist them with data collection about the replicate trainings conducted by parties in the districts. While IPA members are willing to share information verbally, collecting written information – specific information related to program details (number of women, age, party, etc.) – has been fraught with challenges. The smaller parties provide information sporadically and the larger parties are consistently slow in delivering information. In general, it has been difficult to get parties to report back to NDI. Only three parties – RPP, SP and CPN-ML – from the Institute's nine political party partners⁶ under the political party development program – have returned data collection forms to NDI. Because IPA is comprised of high-level members who are primarily occupied with other priorities, NDI is in the process of asking IPA members to designate a specific point person to be responsible for collecting facts and figures. Assigning the responsibility to one individual should improve results.

Challenges

The dissolution of the CA in late May, the subsequent political disagreements over the legitimacy of the caretaker government, any budget it may determine and its decision to announce a CA election for November 22 have meant that the ECN and IFES work during the latter part of the quarter has been shrouded in uncertainty, which is likely to continue throughout at least most of the next quarter. Given the lack of any political agreement on what might be a constitutional and legal road map out of the effects of the dissolution of the CA before a Constitution had been promulgated, the ECN does not know when it may need to run an election, under what rules or for what sort of body. As a result, in general a 'business as usual' attitude has been adopted in ECN, with no real urgency about finalizing or implementing planning for an election.

The ECN is in danger of being seen as a political player in the fluid discussions about future electoral prospects. The ECN has made it clear to the government that if its conditions are not met it will not be holding an election on November 22 – noting that in 2007 it postponed the CA election similarly due to deficiencies in the legal framework. The ECN has also publicly entered into debate about political issues – such as the number of members of whatever body will be elected. It has thus not endeared itself to the caretaker government. Similarly, the ECN's public pronouncements that it is preparing for

⁶ NDI's nine political party partners in the political party development program are Nepali Congress (NC), Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M), Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), Tarai Madhesh Democratic Party (TMDP), Madheshi Janadhikar Forum Nepal-Democratic (MJFN-D), Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Communist Party of Nepal-Marxist Leninist (CPN-ML), Madheshi Janadhikar Forum-Nepal (MJF-N) and Sadhbhavana Party (SP).

November 22 elections have been treated derisively by major opposition parties who believe the announcement of these elections to be illegitimate.

The dissolution of the CA poses definite challenges for the Institute. Absent a parliament, certain legislative strengthening programs, such as “effective committee work,” have been revamped. The direction now is to focus the program on secretariat staff, rather than the former MPs. Additionally, NDI is redesigning the parliamentary internship program, exploring options with various federal ministries and constitutional bodies. Another recent challenge has been the split of the United Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M). NDI allocates seats in some of its programs based roughly on the strength of the party’s showing in the 2008 election. As such, the new party, which is not yet registered but has adopted the name Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M), is likely to ask NDI that it be allocated the same number of slots for its participants as are allocated to the mother party, UCPN-M.

With the increasing frequency of press freedom violations, Internews has witnessed that journalists have become more fearful about their physical and professional security. The result has been increased self-censorship. For example, over the course of the project, one journalist was killed and four were severely beaten. Despite, mounting attacks and threats on journalists, the government paid little attention to journalists' rights. A further challenge has been the lack of electricity. It affected the timely and regular update of the election’s website.

Amidst the tumultuous political situation, some of the TAF’s activities, particularly the town hall meetings, faced operational difficulties. From early-May to mid-June the implementing partners faced strikes in the far-west and the Terai regions of the country. Despite this, town hall moderators were able to find innovative ways to reach their destinations and bring together the community to discuss legislative bills. However, given the fixation of the nation on the constitution-drafting process, the moderators found that the discussion consistently veered toward criticism of the CA and political party leaders for their failure to produce the constitution by the deadline. To remain relevant during this period of political disarray, TAF intends to focus the next town hall meetings, starting mid-July, on the evaluation of the four-year tenure of the CA.

Analysis of Program Impact

Nepal’s current political climate continues to present a challenging environment for the CEPPS partners. The paralysis resulting from the delayed constitution drafting process, the recent dissolution of the parliament and call for new elections were key forces guiding the political developments in recent months. While these factors have presented considerable challenges, the CEPPS partners have also been able to find opportunities that have had an impact on Nepal’s democratic development. By promoting and facilitating dialogue among political parties, election authorities, government institutions and civic groups and strengthening institutional capacity of Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) over the past year the CEPPS partners contributed to stronger ECN, political parties, more transparent electoral processes, stronger mechanisms to include women and other marginalized group in the political process, and increased constructive dialogue between Kathmandu and the periphery.

Since the beginning of the five-year cooperative agreement, NDI programs have reached citizens and activists in 67 of Nepal’s 75 districts, either directly or through indirect involvement such as district

ToT events. Whether through community dialogues, political party workshops or the NGPG, NDI has played a significant role in building political and organizational capacity and promoting democratic institutions in Nepal.

The Institute's ToTs have had a significant impact on parties' work at the district level. Thus far, 1,317 party activists have been trained in replicate trainings conducted by the political parties in their communities. Shortly after completion of the ToTs, NDI-trained master trainers took the skills acquired at the NDI workshops and re-created the trainings for party colleagues in districts chosen by themselves. As parties report back to NDI, the number of members trained is expected to continue to climb.

Youth participation in NDI programs has also been significant. For example, 58 percent of those participating in Community Dialogues have been young people between the ages of 18 to 39. Additionally, 85 percent of UCPN-M participants in NDI programs are age 18 to 39. And youth from three other parties – the Madheshi Janadhikar Forum-Nepal (MJF-N), Communist Party of Nepal-Marxist Leninist (CPN-ML) and Tarai Madhesh Democratic Party (TMDP – are well represented at 57.1 percent, 50 percent and 50 percent respectively.

NDI has also helped make political involvement more representative of the country's ethnic and demographic profile. The Institute has encouraged political parties to include a greater number of individuals from marginalized communities in program activities. For example, the average participation of Janajatis in ToTs was 31 percent. Although a baseline for this figure was unavailable, the political parties are gradually shifting toward inclusion of marginalized groups.

Over the past six years, NDI has worked with the Inter Party Women's Alliance (IPWA) to build its capacity and credibility. Members learned to clarify their message, write grant proposals, improve their management and communications, and forge connections with international donors. As a result of their efforts, IPWA received substantial funding from a large international donor to carry on their work.

Internews has demonstrated a number of impactful programs under this grant. The Nepal Election Channel website attracted more than 10,000 visitors, with one article read more than 800 times; monitoring reports were circulated to over 1000 people every month, giving Nepali journalists the opportunity to sharpen their investigative journalism skills; more than 100 journalists have used IN's investigative journalism and security trainings to produce stories; production of a radio program with content produced by IN trained journalists; and the implementation of one of the largest social media use surveys in Nepal.

In the past two years, TAF has been coordinating with NDI, Chemonics, various civil society organizations and the Parliament Secretariat staff to ensure broad-based coordination. TAF increased the public's awareness of the legislative process through its weekly radio program and by facilitating multiple channels of communication between the legislators and the constituents through its social audits and town hall meetings. The discussions that took place during six rounds of town hall meetings, in more than 45 locations across Nepal, targeted at youth and women, led to specific recommendations that were handed over to members of legislative committees.

Members of parliament (MPs), some of whom attended these town hall meetings, stressed the importance of these public consultations and made commitments to engage these recommendations

during their debates in the parliament. Most of the participants in the town hall meetings, despite being from urban and semi-urban areas, had very little understanding of the legislative process of the country. Through these meetings, where each legislative bill was thoroughly discussed, the participating women and youth had a voice in the legislative process. Additionally, the involvement of these constituents in the legislative process should help them own the issue, such that when laws and regulations come into force, ordinary citizens will have a larger stake in successful implementation.

IFES' work over the past two years in providing high level capacity building, legal reform training and electoral education support to the Election Commission, Nepal (ECN) has resulted in greater access to and knowledge of their participatory rights and ECN activities amongst disadvantaged groups in 32 of Nepal's 75 districts, improved electoral knowledge amongst ECN staff and significant improvements in the intensity and quality of ECN's training and educational product and law reform proposals. In this IFES has worked very closely with UNDP's Electoral Support Program. However the continuing political impasse on determining a new constitution, and since May 2012 over forms of representative government, has provided constraints on the nature of IFES' support.

With IFES support ECN has been developing new electoral laws to be introduced following the promulgation of a new Constitution. IFES/USAID-funded ECN workshops for stakeholder leaders on the concepts for these laws, held in eight locations with a total of 265 participants (34% from CSOs, 48% from political parties, 13% from media, 5% from government agencies, 12% women. Through these interactions ECN has been able to refine the law drafts, and IFES has been able to influence political/activist groups to consider simplifying the current complex representational quotas in Nepal. In the post-Constituent Assembly dissolution period, IFES has assisted ECN to identify the changes to the interim Constitution and laws necessary to conduct an election for a new representative body, successfully advising ECN to drop its less feasible ideas for amendment, such as introducing vote thresholds for the first-past-the-post (FPTP) elections.

ECN capacity building has been a major focus of IFES' program. IFES has taken the lead amongst BRIDGE partners (UNDP, IFES IDEA, ECN) in providing materials development, session facilitation and logistics coordination support to twenty one BRIDGE workshops, for 300 ECN staff and 138 Nepali CSO, political party and civil service leaders, and regular tutorials for 71 ECN HQ staff. Workshop subjects have included electoral management, gender and elections, media and elections, election observation and election dispute resolution. Qualitative analysis indicates that 87% of ECN attendees have since always or frequently applied the techniques and lessons learned at these workshops.

IFES has also supported the ECN in the design and production of 133,000 copies of video and print training materials for the voter registration process - described by ECN staff as the best quality training materials ever available in ECN - and supported the ECN to train over 88,000 staff and stakeholder support committee member for collecting and processing data for the ECN's new biometric-based voter register, including training 341 trainers. At IFES' instigation a series of six regional and central workshops (138 attendees, 8% women) to train lower level ECN staff in administrative and electoral procedures have been held - the first ever training for these staff. IFES staff working within ECN have also gradually persuaded ECN to adopt a more planned approach to ECN activities, regularly reviewing progress against strategic objectives.

ECN's capacity to implement electoral education plans has been enhanced by IFES support in developing a voter education strategy and in the design and production of ECN education materials. Five IFES-supported TV PSAs and six radio PSAs on voter registration, in up to 17 languages, have been broadcast in high interest slots on national TV and radio and local FM radio networks, potentially reaching over 90% of the population. Observer reports have noted the significant role these radio PSAs; have played in informing people of the voter registration process. These mass media campaigns have been reinforced by IFES support for ECN's print materials for voter education, such as brochures (161,000) leaflets (1.6 million) and carry bags (88,000).

With the inauguration of the ECN's Electoral Education and Information Center (EEIC) in May 2012, IFES now has a more focused unit within ECN with which to continue to support electoral outreach programs. Recent initiatives include a nation-wide integrated program with the Department of Education at district level to provide electoral education to school and college students, for which IFES has been supporting the development of materials and training of 250 trainers. Working with the EEIC, IFES has supported the redevelopment of the ECN's website using a modern and simple interface, to go live later in 2012, and has commenced the integration into the site of intranet communication and e-learning possibilities for all 76 ECN offices. IFES has been providing technical and materials support to EEIC to develop a specialized democracy research library, which attracted over 50 researchers in its first month of operation.

Since August 2011, IFES has provided sub awards to five CSOs and their 16 local level CSO partners, who have been working closely with the Election Commission Nepal's district election offices in a total of 999 VDCs in 32 districts, largely in the far west region and the Terai, to motivate people from disadvantaged groups - such as Dalits, freed Kamaiya, women and youth - to register to vote and inform them about voter registration. The program has successfully built bonds within communities - using local community members to motivate and inform their own communities through activities such as community meetings, household/school/workplace visits, street theatre, help desks at registration centres. It has built a corps of over 700 trained voter educators and 5,000 trained voter education implementers, and a very strong relationship between these community CSOs and local election officials that will be highly useful during future elections.

The CSOs voter education and motivation activities have well exceeded their targets: over 1.6 million potential voters from disadvantaged groups (50% of whom have been women) have received face to face information on the voter registration process; of those not registered, over 90% stated that they now intended registering. Information transfer to those attending the program's community meetings has been high, with sample tests showing significant gains in knowledge of how to register to vote (from 58-66% correct answers pre meeting to over 91% afterwards). The CSOs' help desks at voter registration centres during the April/May 2012 claims and objections period, assisted over 62,000 disadvantaged people to check if they were registered correctly, and of these, assisted over 32,000 to claim their rights to register, who otherwise would not have registered. The program has attracted over 400 positive articles in prominent national and local print and electronic media. District Election Officers have commented on the impact of the program - for example in Morang district noting that the number of youth attending to register to vote each day has close to double since the sub grantee's youth focused information programs commenced.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Promote and strengthen democratic political processes through political party development assistance

- On July 1-5, NDI will conduct a five-day national FLA training, Phase II, in Kathmandu. The same 53 participants who took part in Phase I will attend.
- NDI will conduct one national and two regional three-day seminars in the central region (Kathmandu), the eastern region (Biratnagar/Chitwan) and the western region (Nepalgunj/Kaski). A total of 28 participants from nine political parties are expected to attend this seminar which is scheduled for August.
- In September, NDI plans to hold a second five-day national ToT-Phase II in Kathmandu. NDI will develop training modules and secure national and international trainers to facilitate the trainings.
- IN will upgrade its Nepali website to enable direct submission of reports by monitors, journalists and other concerned parties as well as crowd source mapping capabilities.

Strengthen Institutions Involved in Electoral Processes, Either as Actors or Participants

- Support the ECN in the drafting and providing advice to the government on changes to current constitutional provisions and electoral law required for a new election to be held, in line with whatever political agreements are concluded.
- Support the ECN to finalize review of amalgamated and synchronized draft segments of the electoral law and finalize draft political party law for discussion.
- Continue to support ECN development of strategies, processes and directives for quality assurance of all voter register data, particularly to ensure address data is correctly recorded, and monitor voter register data quality.
- Support the ECN in the design of new data capture forms for voter registration.
- Support the ECN with the assessment, development and planning of balloting facilities for the next election, whether by EVM, paper ballot or a mix of these.
- Support the ECN to develop an EVM operations manual, if EVMs are to be used.
- Continue to provide technical, capacity building and material support to the ECN's voter education for voter registration, focusing on support for continuous voter registration.
- Support a central and ten regional training of trainers workshops for electoral educators.
- Work with the ECN on support mechanisms and materials for district/regional electoral educators.
- Continue the implementation and monitoring of sub-grants with five CSOs to facilitate the delivery of voter education campaigns to support continuous voter registration.
- Support the ECN to develop a mock election program to publicize the use of EVMs, if ECN determines to implement its decision to use EVMs of the next election.
- NDI will explore partnering with a domestic election monitoring organization or network.

Support the Institutional Strengthening of the Constituent Assembly/Parliament and Improve its Capacity to Address Constituent Needs

- NDI will continue Community Dialogue follow-up meetings with former MPs of the remaining three districts: Dhankuta, Siraha and Nuwakot.
- NDI will plan and implement a series of district-level citizens' open forums. Topics might include ethnic federalism.
- TAF intends to work with Writing Workshop and the Parliament Secretariat to improve the Secretariat library, including archiving of all documents related to the CA.
- TAF will continue to work with Writing Workshop to develop the Parliament Secretariat's media outreach policy and provide trainings to Parliament Secretariat staff.
- TAF will continue to work with SS, WA, and RCDS in conducting the next wave of town hall meetings.
- TAF will continue to work closely with NCF and the interest group in identifying and auditing relevant legislation in the coming quarter. Furthermore, TAF will coordinate with New Spotlight Pvt. Ltd. to ensure a proper dissemination of the findings/recommendations of the interest group audits through print media.
- TAF will continue to work closely with Interface Nepal in identifying the relevant legislations and provide assistance in producing and broadcasting the weekly radio show

International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Quarterly Report

I. SUMMARY

The politics of this reporting period have been dominated by the failure to promulgate a draft constitution by the May 27 deadline, the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly (CA) by the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN(M)) Prime Minister on that date and the announcement by the caretaker government of a CA election on November 22, 2012. Opposition party leaders regard the caretaker government and its decisions as illegitimate and some have stated their parties will not participate in the election as currently planned. Constitutional and legal uncertainty surrounds governmental processes, and it is likely to take some time for political agreement on whether and when an election will be held, under what rules and for what type of institution. The Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) has requested a budget of NPR 8-10 billion for the election though the method of appropriating the 2012/2013 state budget is not yet agreed. The largest party in the former CA – UCPN(M) - split in June, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) (CPN-UML) is experiencing severe internal tension as a result of disagreements on the structure of federalism, and a key leader broke away from major Madhes-based party Madhesi Janadhikar Forum-Democratic (MJF-D), whilst moves for unity within the Nepali Congress (NC) are growing. While ex-combatants who chose voluntary retirement have been given their first payment and left cantonments, delays in reintegration of remaining ex-combatants are causing dissatisfaction.

IFES has continued to provide technical and capacity building support on legal reform to the ECN and other stakeholders. The major emphases of IFES' work during this quarter have been on advising on representation systems, on developing a legal framework for the ECN's voter registration system, and on constitutional and legal amendments required to construct a valid framework for the next election, either on November 22 or some later date.

For the ECN's April/May program of display of voter rolls at and registration of 'missed' voters at VDCs/municipal wards, and the lodging of claims and objections by voters, IFES supported the development of training materials and sessions, and producing and broadcasting public outreach messages. IFES monitoring of this program discovered systematic errors in the recording of addresses on the voter register. In collaboration with UNDP ESP, IFES developed processes for identifying and correcting such errors, tested them, and developed relevant training materials. IFES continues to provide technical and capacity building support to the ECN on a daily basis, on voter registration system issues and the ECN's preparations for a possible election, including training and electoral education plans and budgets, and the introduction of electronic voting machines.

In continuing to take the lead coordination role amongst BRIDGE partners, IFES provided logistics coordination, materials development and facilitation support for the IDEA funded civil society organization (CSO) Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) workshop on election observation and electoral dispute resolution (EDR) and the UNDP funded Gender and Election (G&E) BRIDGE workshop for CSO leaders. IFES also supported the implementation of a half-day BRIDGE tutorial session for ECN HQ staff. IFES is working with the ECN and its Electoral Education and Information Center (EEIC) to develop sustainable outreach programs. During the quarter, IFES provided training to develop the ECN website and library management capacities, and developed course structures, content and educational materials for training of 250 trainers of electoral educators, to commence in July.

Working with the EEIC, IFES continues to support the redevelopment of the ECN's website and the design and production of printed and audio visual information materials, this quarter including a voter education calendar, an information booklet in the ECN, a TV and a radio PSA, and leaflets, banners and posters used by IFES' five CSO sub grantees to support the ECN's current voter registration program. IFES also organized the supply of over 300 books and 25,000 electronic materials from various international organisations to the EEIC library.

All five of IFES' CSO sub-grantees completed their scheduled activities to educate their target groups - youth, women, Dalits, and Kamaiyas – on overall continuous voter registration, and specific voter roll display, claims and objection and reopening of voter registration activities. All met their targets for number of people reached, despite major hindrances caused by extensive bandhs, especially in the Mid and Far West regions. Help desks operated by the CSOs at registration centers assisted over 63,000 voters to check their registration, of which over 32,000 were assisted to register.

II. BACKGROUND

Political Updates

The politics of this reporting period have been dominated by the failure to promulgate a draft constitution by the May 27 deadline. The remaining differences on the federalist structure appeared to be resolvable within a relatively short period of time, even though whatever agreement had emerged from party leaderships was almost certain to be unacceptable to one or other of the activist groups promoting incompatible forms of federalism and protesting in different ways and lengths of time since early April to May 27, including competing bandhs in the Far West and Terai. Until late on May 27, it seemed as though some form of a draft constitution would emerge in time, or that it would emerge after an agreed short extension of the CA term, with the Supreme Court decision of “no further CA time extension” being ignored. However, shortly before midnight on May 27, PM Bhattarai unilaterally dissolved the CA and called for fresh CA elections for November 22 2012, surprising the entire country.

The constitutionality of the PM's decision has been challenged in the Supreme Court. The PM's authority to do so has been challenged by NC and CPN-UML. Since May 27, opposition parties have been demanding that PM Bhattarai step down to pave the way for formation of a consensus government; stating they will not participate in an election until this happens. The PM has stated he will not step down until a new government is formed by an elected parliament. There is currently no constitutional or legal framework for holding an election, no agreement on how this can be achieved, what type of body and with what membership would be elected, and for what purpose and what term of office. The ECN has advised the government that it is ready to run an election whenever the government wishes; however, it will not run an election on November 22 unless the legal framework is fixed by July 22.

The country has been operating under parallel political realities. On the one hand preparations are supposedly being made for a November election, while on the other most political forces (except the Maoists, some allied Madesh parties and a few small parties), and even the ECN, relatively openly state this election will not happen. Recent media reports indicate growing discussion of the possibility of reviving the current CA; but, there are fluid positions within, and no agreement between, parties on this possibility. PM Bhattarai noted he did not support this but had no objections to it, provided that it had full consensus from all parties and Supreme Court agreement.

On June 6 the ECN issued a Code of Conduct for government officials which will be in force until an election is completed. Amongst other things the Code bars transfers and promotions of government officials, and the planning, funding or implementation of any new government initiatives. If the election is not held for some time, the Code may impact on the normal business of government – over 300 violations had been reported as of end-June. Discussions on the state budget for the financial year 2012-13 beginning July 16 have been inconclusive, with opposition parties demanding that only a minimalist budget limited by the (former) constitution to one third of the past year’s expenditure can be issued by presidential ordinance, with the government instead including major new expenditures on the announced election and the peace process..

The largest party in the disbanded CA, the UCPN (M), formally split in June, with 75 of its 238 former CA members joining the new CPN-Maoist led by Mohan Baidya. CPN-UML continues to be embroiled in intra-party disputes over state restructuring, with the failure of its central committee to agree on an official position on the single or multi identity federalism issue of particular concern to its indigenous membership. MJF-D leader Bhandari broke away from MJF-D, along with 11 other members, and announced that he would launch a new party soon. On the other hand, NC seems to be heading towards unity, with leader Deuba attending a central committee meeting after an absence of nearly 10 months.

The peace process gained momentum during April, with 6,576 combatants choosing voluntary retirement and leaving the cantonments with their first payment, and 3,129 choosing integration into the Nepal Army. However, the integration process has since stalled, and dissatisfaction has led to commanders and combatants in some cantonments leaving the camps.

The ECN has sought an overall budget of NPR 8 – 10 billion for the November 22 election, 8 billion if ballots are used, and 10 billion if electronic voting machines. ECN is preparing to register over 20 new political parties, whose registration has been on hold awaiting a new party law under a new constitution. ECN initiatives this reporting period include the formation of a seven member committee to investigate the feasibility of registering Nepalese residing in other countries as voters, and regional demonstrations of the Indian electronic voting machines the ECN intends to use in future elections.

Program Objectives

Under the Consortium of Elections and Political Strengthening (CEPPS III), IFES activities will support one of the three principal objectives as detailed by USAID: 2) Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants and the following sub-objectives:

- Strengthen democratic legal framework
- Strengthen the ECN’s electoral management capacity and
- Expand and improve delivery of voter education

In support of the above, IFES will achieve the following objectives:

- To ensure that Nepal develops a body of legislation on the electoral process that is comprehensive, coherent and consistent; which conforms to international standards and suits the socio-economic context and new political realities of Nepal.

- To improve the capacity of the ECN to manage future elections and consolidate its mandate and performance through the provision of high level technical assistance in the legal, management and technical aspects of elections and long-term professional development capacity building.
- To expand and improve the delivery of voter education by working with the ECN and selected non-governmental organizations to plan, develop, and implement effective voter education programs, with a focus on capacity building, in order to enhance the electorate's understanding of democratic practices and rights, and increase participation in the electoral process.
- To closely monitor, analyze and report on the overall electoral process with a focus on the Election Commission's internal activities and external interaction with other electoral stakeholders.
- To provide a facility that can address unforeseen windows of opportunity that may arise in Nepal's unpredictable post-conflict political and electoral environment, in order to achieve immediate beneficial results in line with the program objectives.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

Summary: IFES has continued to provide technical and capacity building support on legal reform to the ECN and other stakeholders focusing this quarter systems of representation, on the amalgamation and synchronization of drafted segments of the electoral law, on constitutional and legal changes needed in order to hold an election following the dissolution of the CA, and on drafting new legal framework for voter registration and directives for claims and objections related to the voter register.

Activity 1.1 – Technical Assistance

This reporting period provided further opportunities for the integration of the two law reform programs implemented by IFES in Nepal, one funded under CEPPS III and the other funded by the Norwegian government. During this quarter the IFES Country Director and IFES' sub-contractor under the Norwegian-funded program, Quality AS, have worked very closely in assisting the ECN to provide advice to the government on the constitutional and legal changes required for an election to be held following the dissolution of the CA, the development of a new legal framework for voter registration, and providing advice on various representation formulae for a new parliament.

IFES continued to push the ECN to finalize the drafts of the new political party law and non – constitutionally dependent segments of the new electoral law. However the ECN's legal drafters were assigned different priorities during April and May, as there was some reluctance within the ECN to consider new laws further with the promulgation of the constitution seemingly imminent. Following the CA dissolution at end May, the ECN's focus shifted to amending current laws for the announced November 22 election and drafting a legal framework for the current voter registration system. However, by end May the political party law draft had been reviewed by a high level advisory groups at departmental secretary level and the review results advised to ECN.

From May 1 IFES' Norwegian funded subcontractor contracted a legal drafter for three months, primarily to draft a new legal framework for voter registration but also to work on other legal issues. IFES may continue to fund this drafter, if needed, under CEPPS funding at the end of this three month period. The IFES Country Director has worked very closely with the drafter on the draft of the legal framework for voter registration, and in consultation with UNDP ESP and the ECN's IT and

operations departments. The draft has been provided to ECN commissioners for review in July. Further work will need to be done on this draft next quarter, as the ECN has yet to finalize how some critical parts of its continuous voter registration system – for transfers and for voters on official duty away from their permanent address - will operate.

IFES Norwegian and CEPPS funded programs have also provided integrated advice to the ECN legal department and commissioners on the constitutional and legal amendments required to hold an election for a representative body following the dissolution of the CA. While IFES was able to influence significantly the advice the ECN provided to the government at end June, some amendments in addition to those recommended by the ECN - on district delimitation and candidate and representational quotas - will need to be made to enable an election to be held in a practical manner. Some amendments recommended by the ECN – on thresholds and political party finance - are not necessary for an election to be held and may lead to political debate that could further delay an election. IFES is continuing to press the ECN to provide amended advice on these issues.

IFES has continued to work on simplification of quota requirements in the Nepali electoral system. Under IFES' Norwegian funded program, regular workshops, group meetings and meetings with individual political party leaders were held on electoral systems issues. Papers were also prepared on issues such as representation of sparsely populated areas, and simplifying representational quota requirements for minority and disadvantaged groups, in conjunction with other legal reform support organisations such as UNDP.

Results: Further consideration by political parties and CSOs representing disadvantaged groups of voters. IFES advice on appropriate electoral systems and simplified electoral quotas provided. Draft of voter registration legal framework completed. IFES support significantly influenced ECN's advice to the government on constitutional/legal framework changes necessary to hold the election announce by the caretaker Prime Minister.

Activity 1.2 – Capacity Building

Summary: IFES continued to use day-to-day discussions with ECN staff and meetings with political party and civil society stakeholders to enhance understanding of international good practice in electoral law; to increase stakeholders' knowledge of the effects of systems of representation for minority groups and remote areas; and to engage them in discussion on options available for holding an election following the dissolution of the CA.

The two major emphases during this period were on representation systems, where IFES provided stakeholders with information on how ethnic and geographic based affirmative action systems had operated in other contexts, and on how to construct a valid and politically agreed framework for the next election, either on November 22 or some later date. Before May 27, IFES participated in meetings with the constitutional task force, key political leaders and at UNDP supported forums on the first issue. Post May 27, the focus was on working with ECN secretariat staff and Commissioners to enhance their understanding of some complex representation issues that require legal amendments for an election to run smoothly.

Results: Enhanced knowledge of ECN on issues in existing legal frameworks requiring resolution for an election to be held. Increase in knowledge of the ECN's legal department, civil society and

political party stakeholders of potential legal frameworks for representation of minorities and continuous voter registration systems.

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

Activity 2.1 – Technical Assistance

Summary: IFES’ support has been crucial for the operational effectiveness of: the voter registration activities including voter roll display, claims and objections and re-opening of voter registration program for missed voters, voter roll data re-verification; and planning and preparing for the forthcoming election.

IFES assisted the ECN with preparing and conducting the April 17 to May 28 program of display of voter rolls at and registration of ‘missed’ voters at VDCs/municipal wards, and the lodging of claims and objections by voters. IFES provided technical assistance for producing public outreach messages; preparing training materials for 6,000 DEO and VDC staff; and conducting interaction programs for stakeholders. The ECN estimates that 300,000 new voters registered during this period, bringing the total registered to 10.6 million.

With the assistance of the IFES Training Advisor, a comprehensive training presentation was developed for DEO staff, VDC and municipal ward secretaries responsible for determining claims and objection and computer operators. ECN, however, delayed approval of the materials until after their briefing sessions for this new phase of voter registration had commenced, causing some inconsistencies in operations and confusion in District Election Offices.

IFES’ staff and CSO sub grantees monitoring visits during the claims and objections process indicated some systematic errors in the recording of address data on the voter register. Further investigations in conjunction with UNDP ESP indicated three types of common errors in the addresses recorded for voters: wrong ward recorded in registration centers dealing with more than one ward; polling location recorded that did not match the voters’ ward address; and incorrect address recorded for out of district registration. These errors could result in voters appearing on the wrong voter list on polling day. In coordination with UNDP ESP, in late May IFES developed procedures for the ECN to use to identify and correct the apparently most common errors, – incorrectly recorded wards, and pilot tested these in three districts. These pilot tests, and others of out of district registration (ODR) and polling place location data conducted by IFES and UNDP ESP indicated that incorrect addresses had been recorded for around 1 million voters. The ECN issued a ‘re-verification’ directive based on the procedures developed by IFES and IFES supported the training of trainers on these procedures. Correction of ward addresses is expected to take until at least mid-August, and IFES will be monitoring this. As of end-June, IFES, in coordination with UNDP ESP and the ECN, was developing procedures for identifying and rectifying discrepancies in polling place location data, and errors in ODR data.

If stakeholders agree, and additional funding of NPR 2 billion (\$24 million) is available, the ECN intends using electronic voting machines (EVMs) in all voting stations for the next parliamentary election. The ECN intends using the same machines used by Election Commission of India. At end June, at ECN’s request, IFES prepared a paper on issues to be considered before a final decision on using these EVMs is made. ECN has requested that a presentation on this paper be made by IFES to members of the EVM assessment teams visiting India in July. IFES has been urging the ECN to take

action on the ballot paper printing machine repair issues identified by IFES and JEMC six months ago. The ECN is not considering these reports until the prospects for using EVMs are clearer.

Results: Identification of critical systematic errors in the ECN's recording of voters' addresses. Procedures for correction of the most numerous of these errors developed and adopted by ECN, and under development for the other error categories. ECN persuaded of the need for training on the claims and objections process and data 're-verification'. Training materials for voter roll display, claims and objections, new registrations and data 're-verification' developed and used in training and briefing sessions. Advice provided on how to assess EVM suitability. Technical guidance on preparations for the potential election provided.

Activity 2.2 – Capacity Building

a) Implementing a Program of Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) Training

Summary: IFES continued to take the lead coordination role, working with the ECN and its BRIDGE partners, UNDP and International IDEA, to plan for and implement BRIDGE activities. IFES provided logistics coordination, materials development and facilitation support for the IDEA funded civil society organization (CSO) BRIDGE workshop on election observation and electoral dispute resolution (EDR) and the UNDP funded Gender and Election (G&E) BRIDGE workshop for CSO leaders. IFES supported the implementation of a half-day BRIDGE tutorial session for ECN HQ staff. IFES continues to assess and evaluate outcomes of BRIDGE workshops in Nepal through its pre-post survey tests, and is assessing BRIDGE evaluation formats developed in South Africa for use in Nepal.

IFES provided logistics coordination, materials development and facilitation support for the IDEA-funded civil society organization (CSO) BRIDGE workshop on election observation and electoral dispute resolution held in Janakpur from April 10-12, for a total of 23 participants (15 men, 8 women). IFES provided similar support to the UNDP funded Gender and Election (G&E) BRIDGE workshop conducted in Kathmandu from June 12-14 for a total of 21 participants (7 men, 11 women). Of the attendees 10 were government department gender focal points and 11 senior CSO officials. IFES also implemented a half-day BRIDGE tutorial session for 17 (10 men, 7 women) ECN HQ staff, focused on Gender and Elections. During June IFES has been developing, in conjunction with UNDP ESP, materials for workshops on Gender and Elections for the media scheduled to be held in July in Kathmandu and the Far-West.

The BRIDGE partners decided to continue using the IFES-developed pre and post workshop test formats for workshop participants, and to share these with the BRIDGE office in Australia for consideration for use worldwide.

Results: Materials developed, logistics coordination provided and facilitation support for one BRIDGE workshop on election observation/dispute resolution. and two BRIDGE workshops on Gender and Elections. Materials developed for Gender and Elections workshops for the media. One BRIDGE tutorial for ECN HQ staff provided.

b) Organizational Capacity Building

Summary: IFES continues to provide organizational capacity building support on specific initiatives and through on-going interactions with ECN staff, on a daily basis, primarily through its ECN-based

Training Advisor, Public Information Specialist and Library Consultant. IFES is playing a significant role in shaping ECN training plans and developing the capacities of the ECN training team. IFES guidance on procedures and products is developing the capacities of the ECN's voter registration team, EEIC/voter education team, IT website team and EEIC library staff.

IFES, in conjunction with UNDP ESP, prepared procedures to rectify errors in ward allocations on the voter register, which IFES' National Training Advisor used to train master trainers at the central level and trainers from 53 DEOs at nine regional level trainings

With the announcement on May 27 of an election on November 22, IFES immediately commenced working with the ECN to convince it of the necessity of immediately developing election training and voter education plans, and costing their components. Operational plans for these activities have now been completed with IFES assistance, however IFES is yet to convince the ECN it needs overall training and education strategies to underpin such plans. At the end of the quarter, IFES has commenced working with the ECN on developing a mock election program to publicize the use of EVMs.

Through its public information specialist and library development consultant IFES has been liaising closely with the EEIC team. Working in conjunction with UNDP ESP, IFES has developed systems and procedures for a state of the art research library, open to the public and ECN staff. This will assist IFES' ECN capacity development objectives by developing institutional memory retention and knowledge management. IFES has assessed staff capacities, training needs, library collection policies and software requirements and started capacity building by providing hands-on training to EEIC library staff. IFES is training EEIC staff to catalogue the physical volumes (over 50% completed at end June) and electronic resources, and is assisting with the cataloguing.

Results: More professional approaches to developing training and education programs. Content prepared and training session conducted for central and regional trainings on voter roll re-verification. ECN EEIC staff trained and mentored to provide sustainable library services.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

Activity 3.1 Capacity Building Support to the ECN on the Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Voter Education Campaign

Summary: The IFES team has quickly developed an excellent working relationship with the ECN's new EEIC team. IFES continues to provide ongoing and daily capacity building support to the EEIC. IFES' work on voter education this quarter has ensured the involvement of the ECN in the design and implementation of new and revised outreach products. Capacity development for the ECN website has progressed slowly, due to delays in ECN decision making. At the end of the quarter IFES was working with the ECN to finalize the materials for training of 250 trainers/electoral educators from DEOs and Department of Education staff.

IFES has continued to work with the ECN's voter education team to improve its capacity to plan for and produce outreach programs. IFES supported the ECN team in developing concepts and broadcasting plans for information on the reopening of registration centers in 75 Chief District Administration offices (CDO) and 26 Area Administration Offices (AAO) since June 7, 2012, and on general outreach materials. ECN has been receptive to this capacity-building support. The assignment

of staff to the Electoral Education and Information Center (EEIC), opened on May 24, has created a larger, more focused team of ECN staff and consultants to develop and deliver public information. There is now more accountability for message development which has become more timely, though it can be difficult to wean ECN staff from lengthy, bureaucratically worded messages and apply effective standards of quality control.

IFES' Training Advisor, Training Support Assistant and Public Information Specialist are providing capacity building support to ECN in the development of the curriculum and training materials for the training of 250 ECN and Department of Education staff as electoral educators. Training sessions for these were scheduled to commence by end June, but have been postponed to allow development of more comprehensive materials.

The ECN website redevelopment, funded by IFES, has been managed to ensure that ECN is involved in all stages of the website redesign phases. Due to slow ECN decision-making, this has led to some delays in the project. In May, IFES in coordination with website contractor Yomari provided 12 ECN staff hands-on training on website content management so that they can now upload and manage content, to ensure sustainability of use, operation and management of the redesigned website.

Working closely with EEIC staff, IFES continues to support and mentor EEIC staff to seek outreach and publicity opportunities for the EEIC library, discussing collaborative efforts with major Nepali universities, and in late June preparing for an EEIC stall at the Kathmandu Book fair to be held in July. In coordination with the EEIC and UNDP ESP, IFES has designed publicity brochures and leaflets for the EEIC and library. IFES is also assisting EEIC staff with reviewing the set of six promotional TV PSAs and five-minute promotional video prepared by UNDP contractor for EEIC, providing them with guidance on video quality control standards. IFES is also working with its website contractor, Yomari, and UNDP ESP's library software developer to ensure EEIC web portal, with its content and functions, is smoothly interfaced on the redesigned ECN website, including EEIC booking forms and library search applications.

At the request of the ECN, IFES stopped preparatory works for a survey targeted at voter knowledge and planned participation planned for April/May 2012. The ECN was concerned the effect that the imminent promulgation/non-promulgation of a constitution may have on responses. IFES is continuing to consult with the ECN on the most effective timing of the survey for its voter education and election preparation purposes.

Results: Excellent working relationship developed with new EEIC team. Selected ECN HQ staff have acquired website content management skills. Specific capacity building support provided for: ECN website redesign and development; EEIC promotional materials; and designing effective ECN outreach materials. Curriculum and course content developed for training of electoral educator trainers.

Activity 3.2 Material and Broadcasting Support for Voter Education Campaigns

Summary: IFES continues to support the redevelopment of the ECN's website and the design and production of printed and audio visual information materials, including a voter education calendar, an information booklet in the ECN, a TV PSA, and leaflets, banners and posters used by IFES' five CSO sub grantees to support the ECN's claims and objections and 'missed' voter registration program. A 30 second radio PSA was produced and broadcast on two national networks for six weeks. IFES also

organized the supply of over 300 books and 25,000 electronic materials from various international organizations to the EEIC library.

IFES continues to act as an advisor and a liaison between Yomari, the website design contractor, and the ECN for the ECN website redevelopment. During this reporting period Yomari has been redesigning the ECN web pages, including a separate segment for an EEIC portal merged with EEIC systems. This includes a library interface, developing an intranet, identifying content structure and functions. In the absence of any activity by the ECN, IFES has been developing some initial content, and identifying existing materials that can be slotted into the new design. The ECN's failure to assign content provision and management responsibilities to ECN staff has hampered the progress of the project. In late June, the ECN finally assigned an officer for content provision, management and translation for the website.

Working with the ECN's EEIC staff, IFES supported the design of a promotional brochure for the EEIC, and another brochure focusing specifically on the EEIC library and research center and services. Working with its own resources, USAID, NDI, and TAF, IFES organized the provision of 300 books to the ECN's library and over 25,000 electronic resources. IFES supported ECN in printing 40,000 new calendars with voter education images and voter education messages to accompany them. IFES also supported the ECN with finalizing the 36 page promotional booklet for the ECN on which IFES was working last quarter, and provided quality control on its ECN-funded printing.

During the ECN's voter roll display, claims, objections and 'missed' voter registration in April-May 2012, IFES supported TV, radio and print outreach materials. A 30 second radio PSA was produced and broadcast at least four times daily between mid-April and end-May on Kantipur FM and Image FM networks, using a script developed by the ECN with IFES advice. IFES also funded production of a 60 second TV PSA featuring the MaHa. The five CSO sub grantees supporting the ECN's voter registration program developed, with IFES guidance, and produced 309,000 leaflets, 55,000 posters, 25 banners and 230 street drama performances. At end quarter IFES was providing further development support to the CSOs to design leaflets with messages focusing on continuous voter registration and reopening registration places in 75 CDOs and 26 AAOs

The ECN has continued to be extremely pleased with the quality of the outreach products produced with IFES' support. As it is now printing more of its own educational materials, there is a need for the ECN to take greater interest in improving its graphic design and production quality control skills.

Results: Design and printing of 40,000 copies of ECN voter education calendar. Support to five CSOs for developing and printing of 309,000 leaflets, 55,000 posters, 25 banners, for producing 230 street drama performances. Improved print quality of the ECN's 36-page promotional booklet. Support for production of a 60-second TV PSA. Support for production and radio broadcast of a 30-second PSA on two national FM stations. Books and electronic resources provided to EEIC library.

Activity 3.3 Sub grants to selected NGOs to Develop and Deliver Voter Education Efforts

Summary: All five CSO sub-grantees completed their scheduled activities to end June, mobilizing their field partners and network to educate their target groups - youth, women, Dalits, and Kamaiyas – on overall continuous voter registration, and specific voter roll display, claims and objection and reopening of voter registration activities. All five CSOs met their targets for number of people reached, despite major hindrances caused by extensive bandhs, especially in the Mid and Far West

regions, in April and May. The CSOs communicated with the DEOs regularly to provide updates on their activities and invited DEOs to their program events to provide expert advice and feedback.

During this quarter, IFES' five CSO sub grantees – Dalit National Federation (DNF), Janaki Women's Awareness Society (JWAS), Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO), Nepal National Social Welfare Association (NNSWA), and Youth Initiative (YI) implemented a cost extension for their programs from April 1 through July 31 and a subsequent no-cost extension for the months of August and September. Some readjustment of focus districts was made with reference to registration data and in consultation with DEOs. DNF started work in Jajarkot, Salyan and Kapilvastu replacing Nawalparasi, Saptari and Banke districts. Similarly, YI concentrated their activities targeting urban youth residing in six municipalities of four districts – Kathmandu (2), Bhaktapur, (2) Lalitpur (1), and Dang (1) and discontinued their work in Dhangadi, Dhanusha and Morang districts. The total number of CSO working districts was increased from 22 to 25. A summary of target and actual beneficiaries (excluding from mass media) for April through June is shown below:

CSO/Activity	# of Districts	# of VDCs/ Municipalities	Target Beneficiaries	Beneficiaries Reached Q2, FY2012	% of Target Achieved
DNF	5	50			
Information sharing through household visit			NA*	12,419	NA
Information sharing through street dramas			10,000	10,771	108%
Information dissemination through volunteers			NA	88,781	NA
Information dissemination through 'miking'			NA	44,897	NA
Orientation to self help groups			1,000	1,034	111%
Orientation at schools and groups			8,400	2,200	26%
Support provided for claim, objection and registration from Help Desk			NA	9,015	NA
JWAS	5	50			
Information sharing through household visit			NA	7,100	NA
Information sharing through street dramas			12,000	14,724	123%
Information dissemination through volunteers			NA	6,777	NA
Information dissemination through 'miking'			NA	70,606	NA
Orientation to self help groups			1,000	1,110	103%
Orientation at schools and groups			8,400	662	8%
Support provided for claim, objection and registration from Help Desk			NA	4,507	NA
NNDSWO	9	93			
Information sharing through household visit			NA	837	NA
Information sharing through street dramas			9,000	8,947	99%
Information dissemination through volunteers			NA	63,403	NA
Information dissemination through 'miking'			NA	60,225	NA
Orientation to self help groups			1,800	2,463	137%
Orientation at schools and groups			22,680	11,262	50%
Support provided for claim, objection and registration from Help Desk			NA	25,749	NA
NNSWA	5	91			
Information sharing through household visit			NA	15,596	NA
Information sharing through street dramas			15,000	25,274	168%

CSO/Activity	# of Districts	# of VDCs/ Municipalities	Target Beneficiaries	Beneficiaries Reached Q2, FY2012	% of Target Achieved
Information dissemination through volunteers			NA	36,938	NA
Information dissemination through 'miking'			NA	25,891	NA
Orientation to self help groups			600	816	136%
Orientation at schools and groups			6,500	3,163	49%
Support provided for claim, objection and registration from Help Desk			NA	17,355	NA
YI	4	40			
Orientation at Colleges			1,250	1,789	143%
Information sharing through college visits			10,000	0	0
Support provided for claim, objection and registration from Help Desk			NA	7,032	NA
Total	28**	324	NA	581,261	NA

*NA=Initial target not set for various reasons

**Programs overlap in three districts

DNF worked in close partnership with five different Dalit member organizations in selected VDCs of Rautahat, Surkhet, Kapilvastu, Salyan and Jajarkot districts. In this quarter, DNF's partner organizations reached 15,729 Dalits, through household visits, meetings of community groups such as mothers, farmers, and teachers groups, and Dalit self-help group visits. DNF disseminated relevant voter registration information to approximately 144,449 people through volunteer mobilization, miking and street dramas. DNF provided help desk support at registration places to 9,015 people, of whom 6,284 registered. DNF held 35 formal and informal meetings with their relevant DEOs.

JWAS worked with their local NGO partners in selected VDCs in Dhanusha, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Sindhuli and Bara districts to reach women and their household members. JWAS reached over 8,796 household members through household visits and CSO-facilitated community meetings. Through community level awareness raising activities such as street dramas, miking and volunteer mobilization JWAS reached approximately 92,107 people. JWAS provided help desk support at registration places to 4,507 people, of whom 3,153 registered and held 55 formal and informal meetings with DEOs in these districts.

NNDSWO worked through its district chapters in selected VDCs in nine districts in the far west region, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Dadeldhura, Doti, Baitadi, Darchula, Bajhang, Bajura, and Accham, focusing on Dalit groups in target communities. NNDSWO reached 14,562 Dalits through home visits and by educating Dalit groups at orientation sessions at the community level. NNDSWO reached an additional 132,575 people via street dramas, miking and volunteer mobilization, and supported 25,749 Dalit at registration center help desks, of whom 11,463 registered. NNDSWO held 67 formal and informal meetings with DEOs in these districts.

NNSWA worked in the districts of Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur. NNSWA used Freed Kamaiya Society (FKS) (Mukta Kamaiya Samaj) to conduct household visits in FKS camps and provide educational sessions to different groups of the FKS through which they were able to reach 19,575 freed Kamaiyas. In this quarter, NNSWA reached around 88,103 additional freed Kamaiyas through Tharu language street dramas, miking and volunteer mobilization. NNSWA supported 17,355

freed Kamaiyas at registration center help desks, of whom 9,036 registered, and maintained coordination with the DEO staff through 67 formal and informal meetings.

YI mobilized a total of 140 trained youth champions in the districts of Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Dang, to conduct voter registration orientation sessions at educational institutions, targeting youth 16 years old and above, and help desks at registration centers. This quarter, YI educated 1,789 students through 55 awareness raising events conducted at educational institutions. The late decision by ECN to not provide ODR facilities at VDC/municipal ward registration centers meant that YI had to quickly re-focus its activities planned for colleges in the Kathmandu Valley. YI also supported 7,032 youths at registration center help desks of whom 2,771 registered and held 35 formal and informal coordination meetings with DEOs.

At the community/school meetings, workshops and street drama performances, a sample of attendees was tested both before and after the education sessions, to give some indicative measure of information transfer. Data was collected for this quarter from 4,356 participants. Average scores were 66.5% for the pre-event survey and 90.7% for the post-test survey; thus indicating a significant rise (24.2 percentage points) in knowledge of voter registration directly attributable to the CSOs education program. Detailed results are as follows:

	# of Participants	% of Correct Answers		Increase in VR knowledge (in % points)
		Pre Test	Post Test	
Total	4,356	66.5%	90.7%	+24.2%
Disaggregated by CSOs:				
DNF	1012	65.4%	90.5%	25.1%
JWAS	796	42.8%	74.7%	31.9%
NNDSWO	1134	66.7%	96.7%	30.0%
NNSWA	804	82.0%	95.9%	13.9%
Youth Initiative	610	78.4%	94.3%	15.8%

IFES' planned field trips/monitoring visits to the Mid-West, Far West and Central Regions were cancelled, due to bandhs and protests disrupting travel. However, IFES received daily updates on activities and political situation from CSOs via phone and email correspondence.

Results: CSO help desks at registration centers assisted 63,658 people to check their registration, of whom 32,707 registered. 581,342 people (men 287,342 and women 294,000) educated on current voter registration activities through 1,799 events, including 230 street drama performances, 220 community level interaction sessions, 271 miking events, 342 help desk support events, and 736 college level orientation sessions. Intensive coordination with relevant DEOS through over 279 formal and informal meetings. Increase in participants' knowledge of voter registration. Two hundred and thirty two instances of media coverage of the CSO programs in newspapers, local FMs and television. Improved project management skills evident in all sub awardees. Finalizations of no-cost extensions for all 5 sub-grantees for August and September 2012 program activities.

4. Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Overall Electoral Process

Activity 4.1 – On-going Analysis and Reporting on the Evolving Electoral Environment

Summary: IFES continued monitoring, analyzing and reporting on the progress of electoral related developments with regard to the Constituent Assembly and ECN activities. Regular reports on program activity and analysis of the political and electoral environment were provided to U.S. Embassy officials, USAID, and other relevant stakeholders. Decisions made by the ECN related to ECN's preparations for the announced November 22 CA election, ECN Code of Conduct, data verification process, voter roll public display, claims and objections and missed voter registration were translated and provided to relevant stakeholders, accompanied by IFES analysis.

Results: U.S. Embassy and USAID staff and other relevant stakeholders were kept abreast of electoral developments through regular briefings. Regular updates and briefings to international stakeholders on the ECN's preparations for the announced November 22 CA election and voter registration process. Regular IFES program updates to USAID DGO for inclusion in DGO weekly newsletter.

Activity 4.2 – Provision of News Clipping Service

Summary: IFES Nepal continued to deliver its daily news clipping service throughout the reporting period. This service is a compilation of online news reports that are relevant to the evolving political and electoral situation in Nepal. News reports are taken from the major news outlets in Nepal, such as the *Republica*, *Kathmandu Post* and the *Himalayan Times* as well as other reputable online sources of news and analysis on Nepali politics.

Results: Daily news clippings service provided to interested subscribers, serving to keep all domestic and international electoral stakeholders well-informed on developments in the political and electoral environment in Nepal.

5. Provision for unforeseen windows of opportunity

Nothing to report this reporting period.

6. General Management

In June, CEPPS/IFES DC wrote to USAID Nepal requesting their assistance in obtaining Ministry of Finance to write to SWC directing that asset disposal terms in the IFES/SWC project agreement reflect the content of the relevant USAID/ Government of Nepal (GoN) assistance agreement. IFES is waiting USAID's directions and guidance before proceeding any further with SWC project agreement and visa applications.

IV. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the reporting period the IFES Nepal program has achieved the following major results:

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

Technical Assistance

- Further consideration by political parties and CSOs representing disadvantaged groups of IFES advice on appropriate electoral systems and simplified electoral quotas.
- Draft of voter registration legal framework completed.

- IFES support significantly influenced the ECN's advice to the government on constitutional/legal framework changes necessary to hold the election announce by the caretaker Prime Minister.

Organizational Capacity Building

- Enhanced knowledge of the ECN on issues in existing legal frameworks requiring resolution for an election to be held.
- Increase in knowledge of the ECN's legal department, civil society and political party stakeholders of potential legal frameworks for representation of minorities and continuous voter registration systems.

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

Technical Assistance

- Identification of critical systematic errors in the ECN's recording of voters' addresses.
- Procedures for correction of the most numerous of these errors developed and adopted by the ECN, and under development for the other error categories.
- ECN persuaded of the need for training on the claims and objections process and data 're-verification'.
- Training materials for voter roll display, claims and objections, new registrations and data 're-verification' developed and used in training and briefing sessions.
- Advice provided on how to assess EVM suitability.
- Technical guidance on preparations for the potential election provided.

Organizational Capacity Building

- Materials developed, logistics coordination provided and facilitation support for one BRIDGE workshop on election observation/dispute resolution.
- Materials developed, logistics coordination provided and facilitation support for two BRIDGE workshops on Gender and Elections.
- Materials developed for Gender and Elections workshops for the media.
- One BRIDGE tutorial for ECN HQ staff provided.
- More professional approaches to developing training and education programs.
- Content prepared and training session conducted for central and regional trainings on voter roll re-verification.
- ECN EEIC staff trained and mentored to provide sustainable library services

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

Capacity Building Support to the ECN on the Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Voter Education Campaign

- Excellent working relationship developed with new EEIC team.
- Selected ECN HQ staff have acquired website content management skills.
- Specific capacity building support provided for: ECN website redesign and development; EEIC promotional materials; and designing effective ECN outreach materials.
- Curriculum and course content developed for training of electoral educator trainers.

Material and Broadcasting Support for Voter Education Campaigns

- Design and printing of 40,000 copies of ECN’s voter education calendar.
- Support to five CSOs for developing and printing of 309,000 leaflets, 55,000 posters, 25 banners, for producing 230 street dramas performances.
- Improved print quality of ECN’s 36-page promotional booklet.
- Support for production of a 60-second TV PSA.
- Support for production and radio broadcast of a 30-second PSA on two national FM stations.
- Books and electronic resources provided to EEIC library.

Sub grants to selected NGOs to develop and Deliver Voter Education Efforts

- CSO help desks at registration centers assisted 63,658 people to check their registration, of whom 32,707 registered.
- 581,342 people (287,342 men and 294,000 women) educated on current voter registration activities through 1,799 events, including 230 street drama performances, 220 community level interaction sessions, 271 miking events, 342 help desk support events, and 736 college level orientation sessions.
- Intensive coordination with relevant DEOs through over 279 formal and informal meetings.
- Increase in participants’ knowledge of voter registration.
- Two hundred and thirty two instances of media coverage of the CSO programs in newspapers, local FMs and television.
- Improved project management skills evident in all sub awardees.
- Finalization of no-cost extensions for all 5 sub-grantees for August and September 2012 program activities.

4. Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Overall Electoral Process

On-going Analysis and Reporting on the Evolving Electoral Environment

- U.S. Embassy and USAID staff and other relevant stakeholders were kept abreast of electoral developments through regular briefings.
- Regular updates and briefings to international stakeholders on the ECN’s preparations for the announced November 22 CA election and voter registration process.
- Regular IFES program updates to USAID DGO for inclusion in DGO weekly newsletter.

Provision of News Clipping Service

- Daily news clippings service provided to interested subscribers, serving to keep all domestic and international electoral stakeholders well-informed on developments in the political and electoral environment in Nepal.

V. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

For the next quarter IFES will focus on the following activities (assuming that, as is currently likely, the election announced for November 22 does not take place on that date):

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

- Support the ECN in the drafting and providing advice to the government on changes to current constitutional provisions and electoral law required for a new election to be held, in line with whatever political agreements are concluded.

- Support the ECN to finalize review of amalgamated and synchronized draft segments of the electoral law and finalize draft political party law for discussion.
- Continue to work with stakeholders to gain acceptance and broad consensus on a simplified electoral system for Nepal.
- Support the ECN to finalize the drafting of the voter registration segment of the draft electoral law and to develop a new regulation for voter registration.
- Support the ECN in the development of a legal framework for the transparent and secure use of electronic voting machines.

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

- Continue to provide technical and capacity building support to the ECN for the implementation of the continuous voter registration program.
- Continue to support ECN development of strategies, processes and directives for quality assurance of all voter register data, particularly to ensure address data is correctly recorded, and monitor voter register data quality.
- Support the ECN in the design of new data capture forms for voter registration.
- Support the ECN with the assessment, development and planning of balloting facilities for the next election, whether by EVM, paper ballot or a mix of these.
- Support the ECN to develop an EVM operations manual, if EVMs are to be used.
- Continue to work with the ECN to improve the professionalism of training for its staff, particularly with regard to curriculum and training material development.
- Support the ECN to develop reporting and review mechanisms for its 2012 Annual Review of progress and assist the compilation and analysis of the data.
- Continue to support the development of the ECN's library, archiving, and knowledge management and training of selected ECN staff in library operations.
- Support the ECN to ensure gender inclusion is taken into account in programmatic activities.
- Support the ECN BRIDGE team to implement two, three-day BRIDGE training workshops for media on gender and elections.
- Support the ECN BRIDGE team to develop and implement two, three-day BRIDGE training workshops for media on election management.
- Work with the ECN BRIDGE team to develop content for and implement an Elections and Technology BRIDGE workshop for ECN HQ staff.
- Continue to work with the ECN to develop and implement regular tutorial programs for core ECN staff using tailored BRIDGE methodology and materials.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

- Continue to provide technical, capacity building and material support to the ECN's voter education for voter registration, focusing on support for continuous voter registration.
- Support a central and ten regional training of trainers workshops for electoral educators.
- Work with the ECN on support mechanisms and materials for district/regional electoral educators.
- Support the EEIC to design and produce publicity materials, such as brochures and bags.
- Support ECN initiatives for the development of additional voter education materials or events it identifies as essential during the continuous voter registration process.
- Support the ECN to inform the public of any politically agreed basis, legal framework and participatory rights for the next election.

- Continue to assist the ECN with the re-development of the ECN website, including the completion of phase 2, uploading of content, and further sustainability training.
- Continue to support the development of resources for the ECN's EEIC Library.
- Continue the implementation and monitoring of sub-grants with five CSOs to facilitate the delivery of voter education campaigns to support continuous voter registration.
- Support the ECN to develop a mock election program to publicize the use of EVMs, if ECN determines to implement its decision to use EVMs of the next election.

4. Monitoring, Analyzing and Reporting on the Electoral Process

- Continue to provide ongoing analysis to the U.S. Embassy, USAID and other stakeholders on the emerging electoral environment and identification of key issues.

VI. EVALUATION/CONCLUSIONS

- IFES continues to be respected by the ECN as a provider of reliable advice on electoral issues and support for ECN needs. The inauguration of the EEIC has provided opportunities for IFES to cement a strong relationship with the new, integrated ECN education and training team. The ECN's operations department has continued to rely on the presence of IFES' in-house advisors to guide ECN staff in the development of electoral policies. The ECN's DEOs continue to support the strong role IFES' CSO partners are playing in educating and motivating disadvantaged groups to register to vote and are appreciative of the collaborative approach adopted.
- The dissolution of the CA in late May, the subsequent political disagreements over the legitimacy of the caretaker government, any budget it may determine and its decision to announce a CA election for November 22 have meant that the ECN and IFES work during the latter part of the quarter has been shrouded in uncertainty, which is likely to continue throughout at least most of the next quarter. Given the lack of any political agreement on what might be a constitutional and legal road map out of the effects of the dissolution of the CA before a Constitution had been promulgated, the ECN does not know when it may need to run an election, under what rules or for what sort of body. As a result, in general a 'business as usual' attitude has been adopted in ECN, with no real urgency about finalizing or implementing planning for an election.
- The ECN is in danger of being seen as a political player in the fluid discussions about future electoral prospects. The ECN has made it clear to the government that if its conditions are not met it will not be holding an election on November 22 – noting that in 2007 it postponed the CA election similarly due to deficiencies in the legal framework. The ECN has also publicly entered into debate about political issues – such as the number of members of whatever body will be elected. It has thus not endeared itself to the caretaker government. Similarly, the ECN's public pronouncements that it is preparing for November 22 elections have been treated derisively by major opposition parties who believe the announcement of these elections to be illegitimate.
- It is not yet clear what changes to the constitutional and legal framework that existed for the 2008 CA election will be politically agreed. IFES has assisted the ECN to identify those changes necessary to hold an election – a minimalist approach. The ECN has so far been taking a more activist approach, recommending to the government that the laws be amended substantively to reflect the ECN's electoral policy views on issues such as thresholds to reduce the number of parties obtaining seats, and much more stringent regulation of campaign finance. Political debate

on these issues could prolong decision-making on when and what type of election will occur. At the same time, the ECN is currently not accepting IFES' advice that the law should be amended to clarify candidate and representation quota requirements. These are not consistently defined in the legal framework, but were agreed by political goodwill at the 2008 CA election: this goodwill may now not be present.

- In such a fluid political and electoral environment management stability at the ECN will be essential. However, the ECN secretary will be retiring in September – and the ECN will have its fourth Secretary since the beginning of 2011. The A/g CEC's term of office expires in early November, and the other two Commissioners' in December. Given the long standing difficulties in appointing members of constitutional bodies, it is not certain that existing Commissioners will be reappointed, or any decisions made on appointments in a timely manner. The ECN may enter an election period with its leadership in a state of flux.
- The April/May voter registration drive resulted in approximately 300,000 new voters being registered, of whom over 32,000 were registered directly as a result of the efforts of IFES' CSO sub grantees. The ECN has advised that registration currently stands at 10.6 million, however one month after this period closed exact data on new registrations, and the claims and objections lodged during this same period, has not been released. When new census data is available, hopefully at the end of the year, a more accurate estimate of those not yet registered can be made, but currently this is estimated at up to 4 million potential registrants, and another, pre-election, registration drive at VDC or polling location level will be required. Even so, the differences between current registration totals and the CA voter register of 17.5 million may result, as an election date approaches, in renewed pressure on the ECN to relax the qualifications for registration, especially if major Madhes-based parties remain part of a caretaker government.
- During this quarter, IFES support has been critical for the ECN to identify and commence correction of major errors in the voter register database which, if not corrected, had the potential to cause severe problems and disenfranchise large numbers of voters on voting day. While the ECN has recognized the seriousness and taken steps to correct them, IFES' role was also critical in persuading the ECN to adopt relatively comprehensive corrective procedures and provide at least some training to some staff on these. It has been fortuitous that these errors were discovered well in advance of an election date. Even so, the extent of the errors and the laborious checking process needed to find and correct them means that it is unlikely that the ECN will have a 'clean' voter register available until mid to late fourth quarter 2012.
- The nature of the voter register errors found are a result of ECN management and DEO staff not fully recognising the importance of clear procedures, comprehensive training, attention to detail, and intensive quality control for the successful maintenance of large, IT-based systems. Exacerbating this is the continuing inability of ECN to obtain agreement for the restructure and improvement of its IT department. The ECN has yet to digest all the components of the continuous voter registration system and be attitudinally and operationally ready to produce voter lists of sufficient quality for election purposes. Until the ECN can achieve this, it would seem unwise to attempt to implement another nationwide technology based system, such as the introduction of EVMs in all polling stations. IFES is continuing to advise the ECN against doing this at this time, and for the ECN to be careful in its ultimate choice of EVM, so that its chosen EVM ensures public and political confidence in the security and transparency of voting.

- The opening of the ECN's EEIC building has provided a new focus on the ECN's electoral education activities and, with IFES support, has been used to commence integration of the ECN's training and education functions. The use of the EEIC as a hub for nationwide activities will hopefully see more emphasis on electoral education at a DEO level – for which IFES is providing support, initially in training of electoral educators. IFES support has seen the EEIC take steps towards a proactive approach to promotion, and the EEIC library become a reality, with an extensive collection of materials and links being developed with other Nepali research institutions. EEIC requirements have been successfully integrated into the ECN website redevelopment, with IFES support. However, progress overall on the website has been disappointing, with lengthy delays in appointments and approvals from the ECN delaying IFES' contractor's work.
- With one exception, the public information materials produced by the ECN during this quarter have had a clear, modern feel. The exception – a lengthy radio PSA on claims and objections scripted by ECN – was later replaced by the PSA produced with IFES support. It is still not clear that a more modern style would be sustainable without external expert advice. The banners and print information materials produced by IFES CSO sub grantees to support the ECN's claims and objections and VDC level registration program have also been of high quality – bright, attractive, and moving away from the stereotypical designs for information on government activities.
- Due to the focus on the claims, objections and VDC level registration process this quarter, it has been a relatively quiet quarter for BRIDGE implementation, though IFES has supported significant work on BRIDGE and other training materials development. This will change next quarter, which currently has 21 three to five day BRIDGE and other training workshops scheduled. This will stretch ECN and IFES/other BRIDGE partner support capacities, and it may be necessary to postpone some planned workshops to the fourth quarter.
- The local voter education program implemented by IFES sub awardees has continued to exceed its targets, even in the face of disruption through lengthy bandhs in much of the Far West and Terai. Analysis shows that the methods adopted by the CSOs continue to be effective in transferring information. The help desk program to assist DEOs and registration centers in advising voters on claims, objections and registration processes, assisting them to complete the required forms, was effective in supporting ECN staff. The CSO sub grantees will initially operate at a reduced intensity during the next quarter, supporting the continuous voter registration in DEOs and other places as specified by ECN. Additional activities will depend on what political agreements are reached on proposed elections and the ECN's response to these.

National Democratic Institute (NDI) Quarterly Report

I. SUMMARY

On May 28, the Constituent Assembly (CA) was dissolved, plunging Nepal into a political emergency. The predicament was further complicated by the fact that the interim constitution contains no direction in the event of the CA's failure to deliver a new constitution. The major source of disagreement remained the question of the country's proposed federal structure. While the Maoist and Madhesh-based parties want districts created on the basis of ethnicity and identity, both Nepali Congress (NC) and the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) staunchly oppose this plan. The recent split of the Maoist party further deepened the political crisis. The new off-shoot party – Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist – rejected a new CA election and threatened to continue the “people's war”.

Despite the political upheaval, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI, or the Institute), along with sub grant partners Internews (IN) and The Asia Foundation (TAF), continued the program *Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes (SPELP)*. The program seeks to promote political party development, strengthen capacity for citizen oversight of the electoral process, support the institutional strengthening of the CA/Parliament and improve its capacity to address constituent needs.

This quarter, NDI launched the Future Leadership Academy (FLA) for emerging young political leaders. A total of 53 young political activists received capacity building trainings designed to strengthen their leadership and negotiating skills. Internews conducted investigative journalism training for almost 100 journalists on print, radio and TV media and broadcast radio programs on electoral and political party issues. More than 2200 participants attended TAF's sixth wave of town hall meetings to promote interaction between national legislators and members of the public.

Next quarter, NDI will conduct national and regional seminars with nine political parties in the central, eastern and western regions of the country. It will also begin Phase II of the Training of Trainers (ToT) program. Internews will build on its training programs for journalists while TAF will conduct the next set of town hall meetings and will continue to identify and audit relevant legislation.

II. BACKGROUND

On May 28, Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai dissolved the CA and called for elections on November 22. His move immediately set off protests questioning his action and his right to remain in office in the absence of the legislative body. The CA was elected in 2008 with a May 2010 deadline for writing the constitution. The last four years have seen four prime ministers between two parties and repeated extensions of the CA. In November 2011, when the Parliament extended the tenure of the CA for six months, the Supreme Court ruled that the latest extension of the CA would be the last. In addition, the court provided this option: if the CA failed to draft the constitution before the May 28, 2012 deadline, the house would be dissolved and the government would have to either hold new elections or seek a referendum.

Differences among major parties on federal restructuring was the main road block to completing the new constitution. The Nepali Congress (NC) and the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) were keen on postponing contentious issues, such as names and boundaries of

the “states,” until the formation of a new parliament. However, a constitution without specific agreement on identity-based federalism was unacceptable to the Maoists, Madhesh-based parties and other ethnic communities. When party leaders failed to reach agreement over this crucial issue, PM Baburam Bhattarai—in a dramatic midnight move—dissolved the CA.

In spite of daunting challenges, the CA scored some success. For instance, it resolved the issue of rehabilitating thousands of former Maoist combatants, completing the second phase of rehabilitation of former Maoist combatants on April 20. More than 5,500 combatants opted for voluntary retirement while roughly 3,100 combatants chose to be integrated into Nepal’s standing Army. Additionally, headway was made on the issue of the electoral system when the Dispute Resolution Sub-Committee recommended that a mixed electoral system be incorporated into the new constitution.

On June 18, a hardline faction of Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M) split from the mother party accusing Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal of revisionism and failure to live up to the ideals of the communist revolution. The newly formed Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist is headed by Mohan Baidya. Dahal tried several times to dissuade Baidya from splitting the party but was unsuccessful. Baidya said the new party would struggle for the establishment of a people’s republic and would opt for a “people’s revolt” or a “people’s war”, if necessary. About a third of the 246 Maoist lawmakers in the former 601-seat parliament sided with Baidya, including major leaders such as Ram Bahadur Thapa; CP Gajurel; Dev Guring and Netra Bikram Chand. Calling Nepal a neo-colony of India, Baidya was critical of India’s influence in Nepali politics.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

A. Political Party Development

Meeting with Inter Party Alliance (IPA): On April 4, the Institute met with IPA members in Kathmandu to review the effectiveness of national and regional level ToT events. They discussed the results of the parties’ post-training activities regarding voter registration and plans for future IPA activities with their respective parties.

IPA members updated NDI on the progress of district-level voter registration trainings. Members said the trainings were useful and helped them build better relationships with voters.

Workshop with IPA Members: On April 17, NDI conducted an IPA workshop on internal political party reform. Former NDI Nepal Country Director Dr. Sherrie Wolff facilitated the workshop. Wolff spoke about internal democratization, communication and party leadership. Senior Country Director Mark Wallem gave a presentation on how the U.S. Democratic Party selects its candidates and develops its platform, with special attention paid to the precinct caucus method.

Present were 12 members representing eight political parties: Nepali Congress (NC), Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), Madheshi Janadhikar Forum-Nepal (MJF-N), Madheshi Janadhikar Forum Nepal-Democratic (MJFN-D), Tarai Madhesh Democratic Party (TMDP), Rastriya Parajatantra Party (RPP), Communist Party of Nepal–Marxist Leninist (CPN-ML) and Sadhbhavana Party (SP).

Multi-Party Workshops: On April 19 and 20, NDI organized multi-party workshops on messaging, targeting and delivery for activists from nine political parties. The objective was to help parties

develop concise and coherent messages that respond to peoples’ needs and motivate individuals to vote. The participants learned various methods of contacting voters and effective ways for parties to deliver their message.

“The multi-party workshop has created a platform where activists from different political parties can sit and discuss issues together – this was not possible earlier. We thank NDI for initiating this process.”

- Hon. Pampha Bhusal, UCPN (M)

A total of 53 participants attended representing UCPN-M, NC, CPN-UML, MJF-N, MJFN-D, TMDP, RPP, CPN-ML and SP. The table below shows the breakdown of participants by gender.

Name of the Political Party	Participation by Gender					
	April 19			April 20		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
UCPN-M	3	1	4	1	3	4
NC	2	2	4	2	2	4
CPN-UML	2	2	4	2	2	4
MJF-N	1	1	2	3	1	4
MJFN-D	2	2	4	2	1	3
TMDP	1	1	2	1	1	2
RPP	1	1	2	1	1	2
SP	1	1	2	1	1	2
CPN-ML	0	2	2	1	1	2
Total	13	13	26	14	13	27

Multi-Party Workshops in Nepalgunj and Kavrepalanchowk: NDI led multi-party workshops May 3-4 on organizing party branches for 49 district-level leaders of nine political parties (UCPN-M, NC, CPN-UML, MJF-N, MJFN-D, TMDP, RPP, CPN-ML and SP) in Nepalgunj and Kavrepalanchowk. The workshop helped parties plan and conduct activities to energize local party branches. Sessions included event planning, door-to-door canvassing and voter contact strategies. At the end of the workshop, participants developed a three-month plan for their branch activities. NDI distributed large-scale monthly calendars to help activists with their planning activities.

District	Date	Male	Female	Total
Nepalgunj	May 2-3	13	13	26
Kavrepalanchowk	May 8-9	12	11	23

Future Leadership Academy (FLA) – Phase I: NDI launched a five-day residential workshop, the FLA, for emerging political leaders June 4-8 in Katmandu. The workshop was chiefly designed to improve the leadership skills of young political activists, ages 18 -35. 53 participants (27 women) from nine political parties⁷ represented diverse communities and 33⁸ of Nepal’s districts.

⁷The nine political parties are Nepali Congress (NC), Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M), Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), Tarai Madhesh Democratic Party (TMDP), Madheshi Janadhikar Forum Nepal-Democratic (MJFN-D), Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Communist Party of Nepal-Marxist Leninist (CPN-ML), Madheshi Janadhikar Forum-Nepal (MJF-N) and Sadhbhavana Party (SP).

Nepali youth make up a large percentage of the country’s population and represent a significant force for democratic change. If properly channeled, the energy of this vibrant and politically aware group could prompt dramatic democratic reforms. With this in mind, the FLA workshop was designed to help young leaders better understand the basics of policy and political party development while improving their leadership and negotiating skills. The course was also intended to facilitate inter-party and intra-party dialogue amongst the young participants.

The program was constructed around four modules:

Topic	Resource Person
Policy Development	David Vincent Rose
Leadership	David Vincent Rose
Negotiation	Surya Prasad Nepal
Internal Party Democracy	Mark Wallem & Sasha Pajevic

Both international and national experts, including political party consultant David Vincent Rose, Surya Nepal, Senior County Director Mark Wallem and Resident Director for Political Parties Sasha Pajevic, developed and delivered program content. Each module included group work that focused on interactive sessions, giving participants the chance to test and check their progress.

The second half of the program, FLA-Phase II, will continue with the same participants in Kathmandu July 1-5.

Multi-Party Workshops with David Vincent Rose: At its multi-party workshops June 11 and 12 in Kathmandu, NDI conducted a two-day training on enhancing party image amongst voters and campaign messaging. A total of 54 individuals took part in the event, of which more than half were women. The participants, who were chosen by their parties, came from diverse communities in 31 districts and represented nine political parties⁹. International Political Party Expert David Vincent Rose facilitated the sessions, which were requested by the parties.

The topics were broken into four components of campaign planning: messaging, voter targeting, how best to deliver your message and when to deliver your message. The interactive event focused on group exercise and role plays to encourage maximum involvement.

Participants were interested in the past conflict in Northern Ireland and solutions proposed for resolution of the conflict. They worked to find examples of tactics and strategies that would work well in their own parties and districts in Nepal.

⁸ Kathmandu, Dhanding, Nuwakot, Sindhupalchowk, Nawalparasi, Rupandehi, Tanahu, Kaski, Gulmi, Kapilbastu, Baglung, Jajarkot, Dailekh, Bardiya, Rolpa, Kalikot, Jumla, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Baitadi, Pyuthan, Banke, Rolpa, Sunsari, Morang, Jhapa, Siraha, Sarlahi, Bara, Parsa, Mahottari, Khotang, Bhojpur

⁹ The nine political parties were UCPN-M, NC, CPN-UML, MJF-N, MJFN-D, TMDP, RPP, CPN-ML and SP

Workshops for Inter Party Alliance (IPA) Members: On June 14 and 15, NDI-Nepal conducted a workshop on effective representation and coalition building with IPA members in Nagarkot. A total of 16 members, representing eight political parties¹⁰, took part in the event.

Consultant David Vincent Rose, who specializes in conflict resolution, facilitated the sessions. The themes covered included: negotiations, elements of ethnicity, coalition building, political mergers and accountability in times of transformation.

The seminar, which was designed to encourage discussion, provided IPA members a chance to interact with each other and exchange ideas for building consensus. Members questioned Rose about his experiences during the Northern Ireland conflict to solicit recommendations for their own parties and the country as a whole.

“I really appreciate the chance to engage in this type of training. It gives us a neutral platform to discuss our common problems and to learn from other countries’ experiences.”

- Chitra Lekha Yadav, IPA member

Social Media Workshop with IPA Members: NDI conducted a workshop on social media for IPA members and the communications directors of their respective parties on June 27 in Kathmandu. A total of 21 individuals participated in the training

Scott Perchall and Karen Karagheusian, visiting political party experts from Canada, facilitated the training. Topics included the definition of social media, differences between it and traditional media and the importance and benefits of the new technology.

Perchall showed examples of the many ways that Facebook, Twitter and YouTube can be used. He emphasized the growing importance of using these tools in political campaigns. Due to social media’s inter-active quality, campaigns have been increasingly using it to get their message out to voters, the press and other interested parties.

Political Parties Sign Memorandums of Cooperation (MoCs) with NDI: During this reporting period, NDI signed MoCs with eight political parties, including Unified Communist Party UCPN-M, CPN-UML, RPP, Tarai Madhesh Democratic Party (TMDP), MJF-N, MJFN-D, SP and the CPN-ML. The MoCs cover general parameters of political party assistance for the 12-month contract. The remaining party, the NC, is expected to sign the MoC in the near future.

Federation of Nepali Journalists Digital Database and Survey: NDI and Internews partner Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) created a digital database of FNJ’s membership base. FNJ collected membership forms from around 2,500 (out of 8000 members) from across the country. Forms were sent out to all of FNJ’s 123 chapters across the country. Most of those who participated in the first phase of the survey are active journalists. This quarter, FNJ completed digitizing the data and started a second round of surveys on use of social media and online tool.

¹⁰ The eight participating political parties were NC, CPN-UML, MJF-N, MJFN-D, TMDP, RPP, CPN-ML and SP

The survey included open-response items, Likert scale questions, and demographic categories. Usable responses were received from 1,119 members (representing about 14 percent of FNJ membership) from 71 out of 75 districts. Out of all respondents, 1,079 respondents (96.4 percent) completed the questionnaire. The total number of respondents included 11.7 percent females and 88.3 percent males, which corresponds to the male-female ratio of membership base of the FNJ. Key findings of the report include the following:

- a. *FNJ members use social media not only for communication but also for generating and making their news stories better through research and information verification.*
- b. *Members from the age group of 20-29 years of age embraced social media and used it most extensively for professional as well as personal advancement. This group has been using social media for the longest duration of time and utilizes the platforms better.*
- c. *The majority perceive social media to be one of the best ways to reach their audience as well as their colleagues.*
- d. *While majority use social networking sites such as Facebook, they do not use blogs or tools like Twitter to promote their stories and hold discussions.*
- e. *The respondents who have been using social media for various lengths of time would still like to improve capacity to make a greater online impact.*

See Appendix VI for full report of the Social Media Survey or click the link <http://www.fnjnepal.org/media/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Fnj-social-media-survey-report-2012.pdf>.

Monthly Journalism Reports: This quarter, Freedom Forum continued to prepare monthly reports on Nepali media and political and electoral developments to collect information about the incidents of violation of media freedom, activities (meetings, decisions) of the CA and its committees, activities of the Election Commission, views and opinions of the former chief election commissioner, and related experts. After the collection of this data, the information was analyzed and documented in a report.

The reports were updated on the website and published along with the Freedom Forum newsletter. Similarly, the PDF version of the reports were widely disseminated through email groups of national and international media, journalists, professionals, activists, diplomatic missions, and the international and domestic nongovernmental organizations working in the sectors of press freedom, media, human rights, and electoral system.

All reports are available on the site links below:

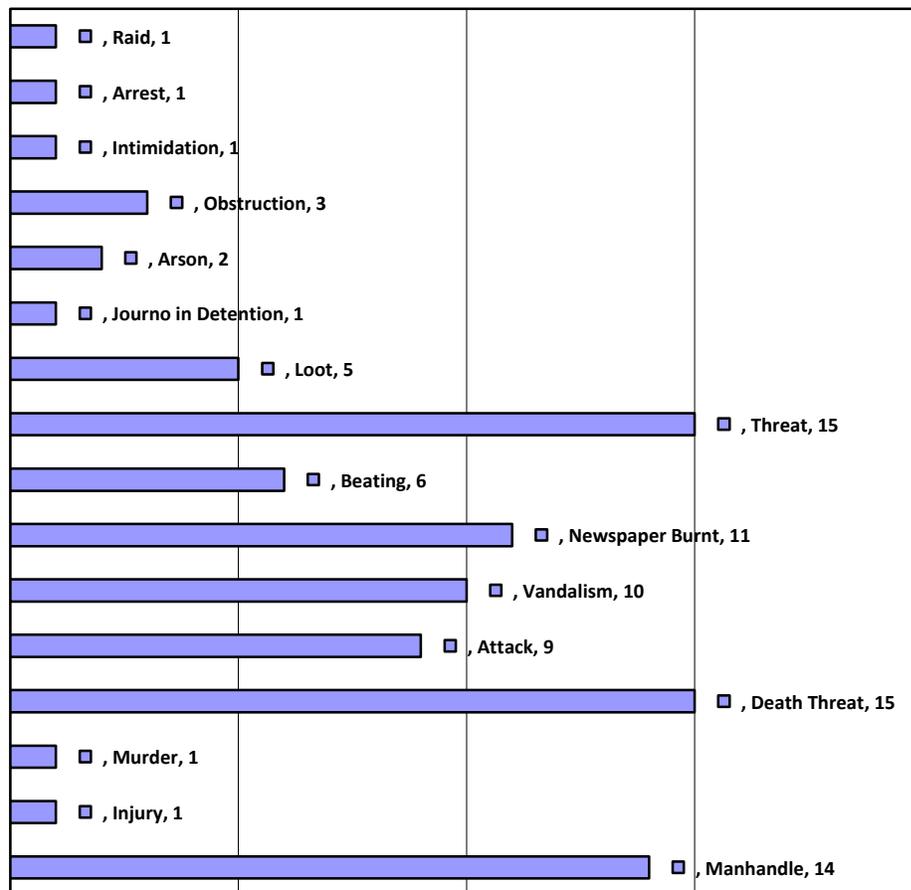
Website Version	Report Type	Link
Nepali	Media Monitoring	http://www.nepalelectionchannel.org/nepali/media-watch/press-freedom-watch.html
Nepali	Electoral and Political	http://www.nepalelectionchannel.org/nepali/media-watch/electoral-news-watch.html
English	Media Monitoring	http://www.nepalelectionchannel.org/english/media-watch/press-freedom-watch.html
English	Electoral and Political	http://www.nepalelectionchannel.org/english/media-watch/electoral-news-watch.html

Nepali	Violation of Media Freedom	http://www.nepalelectionchannel.org/nepali/media-watch/press-freedom-violation.html
English	Violation of Media Freedom	http://www.nepalelectionchannel.org/english/media-watch/press-freedom-violation.html

Legal Support to Journalists: Freedom Forum provided legal advice to dozens of journalists about their legal rights and protecting and promoting press freedom. When it comes to these issues, journalists are on the front lines. Due to Freedom Forum’s legal assistance, via provision of legal counsel, two court verdicts favored journalists’ rights.

Journalist Ram Prasad Dahal who was sacked by the Rajdhani daily in 2005 was restored to his post in May 2012 due in part to the untiring legal support of the Freedom Forum.

Cases of Press Freedom Violation Updated: More than 80 incidents of press freedom violation were updated to the Nepal Elections Channel website. For a breakdown, see graph below:



B. Election Program

Domestic Election Monitoring Organizational Assessment: On May 6, NDI conducted an assessment of domestic election monitoring organizations, exploring options for the Institute to partner with a coalition of NGOs or professional groups. NDI met with domestic election monitoring groups to evaluate their understanding of the process and their capacity and with international NGOs, donors, political parties, the media and civil society to further ascertain their ability to conduct domestic monitoring.

Meetings in the month of May related to elections included:

- International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES)
- INTERNEWS
- The Asia Foundation (TAF)
- USAID
- Mr. Yubraj Ghimire, Senior Journalist
- Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ)
- The Election Commission of Nepal (ECN)
- The Carter Center
- UNDP-Election Unit
- Danida/HUGOU
- ESP/DFID
- European Union (EU)
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
- Electoral Support Project (ESP) Evaluation Team
- National Election Monitoring Alliance (NEMA)
- National Election Observation Committee (NEOC)
- Mr. Subhadayak Shah, Former Executive Director, Democracy and Election Alliance Nepal (DEAN)
- General Election Observation Committee (GEOC)
- Constituent Assembly Election Observation Joint Forum (CAEOF)
- National Election Observation Women's Initiatives (New Initiatives)
- Hon. Pushpa Bhusal, CA member (NC)
- Hon. Nar Bahadur Bista, CA member (UCPN-M)
- Gangalal Tuladhar, Politburo member (CPN-UML)

Preparing Journalists for Electoral Period: During this quarter, Internews and its local partners, Antenna Foundation Nepal (AFN) and Freedom Forum and FNJ conducted investigative journalism and safety training for 96 journalists on print, radio and TV media, broadcast the radio programs on electoral and political party issues utilizing journalists trained under this project, operated the community of practice site www.nepalelectionchannel.org for coverage of electoral and political developments regarding election related issues, and produced monthly monitoring reports on press freedom, electoral and political party reform.

The first of its kind in Nepal, the investigative journalism training exclusively focused on the electoral process. The training not only gave journalists of print, radio and television media an opportunity to enhance their investigative skills and knowledge to report on political party activities and electoral processes, but also provided training to those journalists who have not benefitted sufficiently from Kathmandu- based training programs.

Needs Assessment of Journalists: Prior to conducting the training, AFN used a web-based Nepali-language questionnaire to understand the greatest areas of need for the journalists. From the 44 respondents, the web-based survey provided the below results.

- 17 picked media ethics as their first priority (38.63 percent).
- 13 picked safety as their first priority (29.54 percent).
- 11 each picked computer skills and advance research as their first priority (25 percent).
- Over 90 percent use a computer at office and have access to Internet.



Senior journalist Mr Kunda Dixit talking about confronting threats and intimidation at the training held in Kathmandu.

- Almost 70 percent of respondents use a computer at home but only 38 percent have Internet access at home.
- 33 of the respondents know about RTI (75 percent).
- 19 said their management supports them to do investigative journalism while seven said their management does not support and 15 said their management sometimes supports them doing investigative journalism.
- 19 of the respondents felt safety concerns stop them from doing more investigative journalism, eight did not feel so, while 14 felt so sometimes.
- All of the respondents thought reporters should cover all parties during an election.
- All of the respondents think reporters should not accept free transportation from a political party in order to get to one of the party's campaign events.
- All of the respondents thought it is not okay for a reporter to accept free food and drinks while attending a political party's campaign event.
- 22 (50 percent) of the respondents thought a columnist can tell voters which is the best party while seven said an editor and give selected a reporter for this role.

Internews undertook a wide-ranging series of consultations prior to developing the curriculum for this investigative journalism training program. The intent was to survey and gather input from experienced trainers, senior journalists, media organizations, training institutions and other interested parties on past investigative training experiences and the design of course elements that would best achieve the objectives of this project to enhance investigative journalism in Nepal. The curriculum input and consultation sessions during the first phase of the consultancy including the following key participants:

S/N	Name	Designation	Organization
1	Ashish Thapa	Director	Transparency International Nepal
2	Binod Bhattarai	Leading magazine columnist and media trainer	

3	Dharmendra Jha	President	Federation of Nepali Journalists
4	Dr. Ram Krishna Regmi	Professor	Journalism and Media Studies – Kantipur City College
5	Hasta Gurung	Media Trainer	Nepal Press Institute
6	Jay Nishan	Deputy Director	National Democratic Institute (Nepal)
7	Kanak Mani Dixit	Prominent columnist and editor for various publications	
8	Kiran Shrestha	Financial Manager	Antenna Foundation
9	Kishor Pradhan	Country Representative	Panos South Asia Training Institute
10	Krishna Sapkota	Executive Director	Freedom Forum Nepal
11	Kunda Dixit	Publisher and Senior Editor	Nepali Times/Himalmedia
12	Mark	Country Director	National Democratic Institute (Nepal)
13	Mohan Mainali	Senior Trainer	Centre for Investigative Journalism
14	Pradip Ghimire	Director	Nepalbani Network
15	Pranav Bhattarai	Director	Good Governance Program – Pro Public (Nepal Anti-Corruption NGO)
16	Rajan Parajuli	Production Manager	Antenna Foundation
17	Rajendra Sharma	Director	Antenna Foundation
18	Ram Guragain	Head of Political Parties Program	National Democratic Institute (Nepal)
19	Rem Bishwokarma	President and Directors	Jagaran Media Institute
20	Shiva Gaunle	Member	Centre for Investigative Journalism
21	Taranath Dahal	President	Freedom Forum Nepal
22	Umesh Prasad Dhakal	Director	Nepal Red Cross Society
23	Vikram K. Chang	Senior Public Sector Management Specialist	World Bank

Selection of Training Participants: A total of 244 journalists from different parts of the country applied to take part in the training. Out of the 96 journalists selected to take part in the training participants, 34 were female, 18 were indigenous peoples, 16 were Dalits, two were Madhesis and two were Muslims. Thirty-four (34) participants were from print media, 15 from TV and 47 from radio. Encouragingly, the selected journalists were from 45 districts (out of 75 districts).



Training participants learning First Aid skills.

Investigative Journalism Training: AFN organized a total of eight trainings in Kathmandu, Pokhara, Biratnagar and Nepalgunj. The 10-day long training covered issues related to concepts, tools and techniques of investigative journalism, safety of journalists, research for investigative stories, use of Unicode, web resources for journalists,

concept of blog making, first aid, concept and use of the Right to Information Law, journalism ethics and transparency. a wide range of local resource persons attended sessions of the training.

AFN selected Mohan Mainali as a Lead Trainer, while Chandrakishor Jha and Umid Bagchand were selected as Co-Trainers. Chandrakishor Jha facilitated the trainings in Biratnagar and the second trainings in Kathmandu and Pokhara, while Umid Bagchand facilitated the training in Nepalgunj and the first trainings in Kathmandu and Pokhara.



TOT on security by Hart Security Trainer Mr. Paul Jordan in Kathmandu.

Hart Security Training: In the safety/security training the trainers taught the journalists how to better ensure their personal safety whilst conducting investigating journalism. The session allowed the journalists to share their personal experiences of safety issues in their reporting and come up with tools to help make their work more secure.

The four-day training was conducted with the objective of increasing the participants' understanding of what makes them potential targets and familiarizing them with a specific process to help identify threats or dangerous situations, assess the risks involved and plan and prepare accordingly before moving forward. The training covered issues such as safe travel planning and situational awareness, how to safely cover riots, demonstrations, political unrest and acts of political violence such as bombings as well as understanding how microphones and cameras can appear as weapons to people from a distance. Participants were also trained in small arms awareness.

Mentoring: AFN staff mentored the training participants while preparing their reports for the *Loktantra Mantra* radio program. AFN guided the participants from issue selection to packaging the report. The training participants have also sent reports to other AFN radio programs. The main objective of the mentoring was to raise the professional standards of participating media and help to sustain skills learned in the investigative journalism training.

“I learned a lot about reporter’s security, journalists and citizen’s right to information, finding issues and the differences between normal journalism and investigative journalism. I will go through everything I have learned here once again when I return and try to make my journalism skills more professional by including investigative materials.”

-Trainee

Incentives to the Investigative Journalism Training Participants: To encourage the investigative journalism training participants to prepare media reports on political processes, AFN announced rewards would be given to the two best media reports. The media reports must be either published or aired to be eligible for the competition. AFN received a total of 180 radio reports from the training participants. Rajendra Dahal, Press Advisor to President and Chairperson of AFN, evaluated the reports.



Radio Program on Electoral and Political Party Reform: AFN produced 26 radio episodes on electoral issues, incorporating reports from participants in the investigative journalism training. The radio program, called *Lok Tantra Mantra* (Democracy, the Mantra), provided comprehensive information about the importance of elections, its process, consequence of not having elected government, malpractices during election, precautions needed for holding fair election, and

responsibility of citizens.

Pre-test of Program: AFN carried out pre-testing of *Lok Tantra, Mantra* in Bardiya and Rolpa to get feedback from grassroots communities. AFN received the following major comments and suggestions:

- The program covered contemporary issues and provided messages on problems stemming from a lack of local elections.
- It would be better to provide messages on the Nepalese government's mandatory provision for Village Development Committee (VDC) secretaries to stay at their assigned VDCs.
- People are facing problems not only because VDC secretaries are staying at district headquarters but also because secretaries are working for more than one VDC.
- Some of the radio reports are too long.
- Radio drama is good, but satire would be better.

Production of Radio Program: After incorporation of the comments and suggestions, AFN prepared 26 episodes of the radio program. The program included local radio reports, interviews, Vox-pop from across the country and a short drama of veteran comedy and satiric artists Madan Krishna Shrestha and Hari Bamsa Acharya. As per the objective of providing investigative journalism training, the training participants prepared investigative reports on political party reform, party activities and electoral process issues for the radio program. The reporters sent a total of 139 reports to *Lok Tantra Mantra* and 26 to other radio programs broadcast under the *Nepal Chautari* banner.



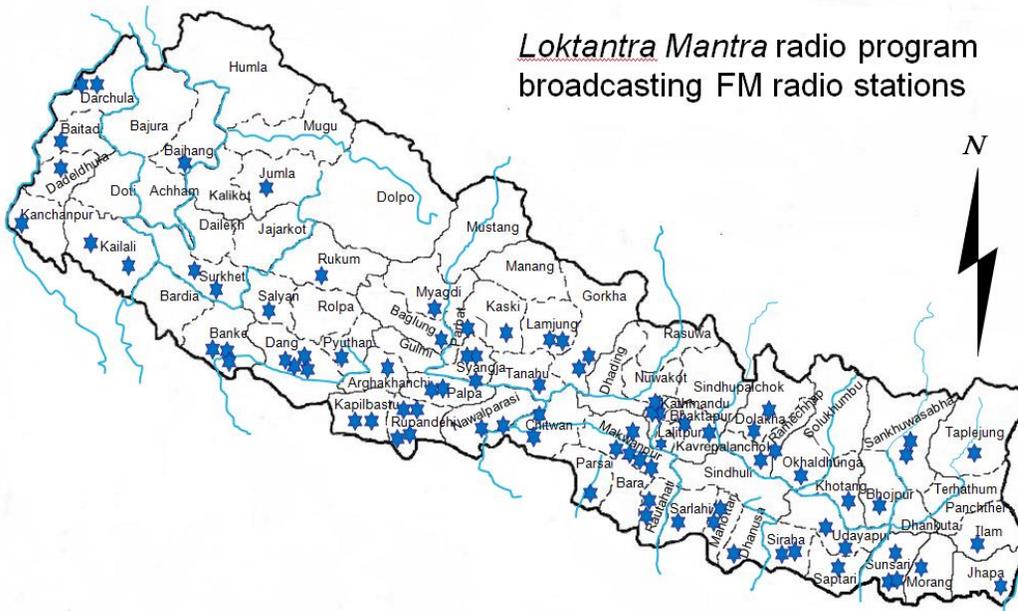
Veteran drama artists Haribamsa Acharya and Madan Krishna Shrestha recording drama of Loktantra Mantra at the AFN studio.

The radio program addressed issues affecting a broad section of the country including:

- problems faced by local people and local government because of absence of locally elected government;

- accountability and good governance at local level;
- misuse of government funds;
- behavior of voters;
- strategies adopted by political parties during election campaigns;
- voter registration;
- manifesto of political parties during the election;
- voter absenteeism;
- funding of political parties;
- physical intimidation in elections;
- engagement of political leaders; and
- proxy voting;

Broadcasting of Radio Program: Ninety-one local FM stations in 53 districts (Appendix V) agreed to voluntarily broadcast the program, and began doing so in April 2012. AFN inserted breaks in the program to allow for local commercials to generate income to cover costs associated with broadcasting. Since radio stations are paid for broadcasting most of the radio content in Nepal, AFN’s practice is expected to develop a culture of broadcasting radio programs of public concern free of cost.



Investigative Journalism: AFN, in cooperation with Internews, recently launched an e-learning toolkit in Nepali.¹¹ The toolkit is an adaptation of the 10-day training on investigative journalism organized at the beginning of the project phase. The initial idea for the e-learning toolkit was developed as an offline DVD distributed to journalists willing to learn basic investigative journalism skills via FJN and project partners’ networks. This toolkit is currently being promoted to journalists

¹¹ www.afn.org.np/elearning.php

who were part of the training, journalism training organizations and educational institutions. Requests will be also be made to these organizations to post the link to the toolkit on their websites and conduct outreach to attract more journalist users.

The e-learning toolkit is interactive with options to write answers, tally what journalists have written and easy interface to browse through the website that covers key areas of investigative journalism skills. The e-learning toolkit covers:

- theory/introduction to investigative journalism;
- selection of issues and preparations for reporting;
- information collection; and
 - written materials
 - people
 - observation
 - internet
 - use of right to information
- journalistic writing.
 - verifying information
 - information selection and categorization
 - story format
 - style
 - sentences and paragraphs
 - writing

C. Legislative Strengthening

Parliament Workshop – Effective Media Relations: On April 15 and 16, NDI, in collaboration with the Journalists Society for Parliamentary Affairs (JSPA), conducted a workshop on the parliament and effective media relations. Right Hon. Subhash Chandra Nemwang, chair of the CA, gave the keynote speech on the importance of good relationships between the Parliament and the media. Participants included five staff from the CA and 30 others, mostly young journalists. Discussion focused on methods to make the relationships more professional and productive. Former NDI-Nepal Country Director, Sherrie Wolff, led a session based on her experience with the U.S. Congress. JSPA led a panel discussion on the challenges of reporting on parliamentary affairs, journalistic ethics and best practices.

Parliamentary Library Improvement Program: Resulting from TAF's previous quarter's engagement with the Parliament Secretariat, including the Parliament Secretariat Library Improvement Plan, Secretary General Manohar Bhattarai has shown keen interest in this activity – particularly in the archiving all materials related to the CA. This reporting quarter, Mr. Binod Bhattarai has been facilitating the discussion with the Secretariat as well as retired senior librarian of Tribhuvan University Library, Mr. Krishna Mani Bhandari, on issues relating to the purchase of books, equipping the library with archiving equipment, training, staffing, etc.

Community Dialogues:

“Salahesh Festival” Press Conference: On April 8, NDI, in collaboration with Siraha Organization, held a press briefing to discuss its plan to boost tourism by linking the Salahesh Festival with the Nepali New Year. Members from Siraha district, including three ministers and three CA members, attended. Prior to the press conference, the Institute briefed participants on how to manage and conduct an effective news conference. The event was covered by leading national dailies in the next day’s papers (See Appendix I). A week later, Nepal President Ram Baran Yadav opened the Salahesh festival on New Year’s Day in Siraha district. The opening was widely covered by major national print and broadcast media such as the “Kantipur” a Nepali daily and “Himalayan Times” an English Daily (See Appendix II).

Consultation with Former MPs: During this reporting period, the Institute organized several meetings with former MPs to discuss the future of the community dialogues (see table below). In light of the CA’s dissolution, NDI wanted to gauge their interest and commitment. Most of the former MPs said that they would like to continue the program. The meetings are summarized below.

Bara: On June 4, the team met with former MPs of Bara district at Baneshwor, who wanted to continue the dialogues. They proposed meeting with the Secretary and Director General of the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation. They also suggested visiting the deforested areas together along with relevant government officers. In addition, they would like meetings with the monitoring committee and stakeholders to take a fresh look at the situation and determine necessary follow-up steps.

On June 6, the team met with Nabin Kumar Ghimire, Secretary of the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, to review the government’s plans to save Bara’s conservation forest areas. MPs said that they would like to visit the affected areas. Ghimire agreed to join the visit.

Surkhet: On June 6, the team met with former MPs of Surkhet district. MPs said the community dialogue program should continue as the dialogues provide an opportunity for MPs mix with villagers and constituencies to talk about development issues. MPs proposed visiting the tourism sites of Surkhet district collectively with the ministry staff/representatives. Before visiting however, MPs would like to meet with the secretaries of the Ministry of Local Development, the Ministry of Urban Development, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Finance. They would also like to meet with the Director of Archeological Department.

Doti: On June 7, the team held a meeting with the former MPs of Doti district. MPs said that a new approach needs to be adopted that involves the district-level political party leaders. MPs also raised the issue of coordinating among monitoring committees, local NGOs and former MPs. Furthermore they would like to meet with the founder of Kathmandu University, the Director of the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training the Dean of Tribhuvan University Engineering Institute and the Vice-Chancellor of the Far-Western University. MPs also suggested a visit to the Doti Campus’ library to explore ways to upgrade it.

Dailekh: On June 11, NDI met with former MP Kunti Kumari Shahi from Dailekh district. Shahi said that the community dialogues program accrues benefits independent of the CA’s status and should continue. She suggested district-level party leaders curtail their involvement with the monitoring committee and instead serve in an advisory role. She also raised the issue of building the capacity of the district coordinator. Finally, she proposed a meeting with the Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, the Director of Nepal’s Tourism Board and a representative of the Department of

Archeology. Additionally, the team met briefly with Raj Bahadur Budha, also of the Dailekh district, who confirmed his willingness to continue the dialogues.

Kapilbastu: On June 12, former MPs of Kapilbastu district pledged their support for the community dialogues regardless of the CA’s dissolution. They said the district’s local tourism support units need to be improved and coordinated. They also called for broader interaction and coordination among stakeholders. For example, former MPs and government officials from the neighboring districts of Kapilbastu, Rupandehi and Nawalparasi should work cooperatively with the Kapilbastu district to develop tourism at Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha. They also would like to visit the district’s major historical and archeological sites together but would like first to meet with representatives of the Ministry of Finance and the National Planning Commission.

Syangja: On June 19, NDI met with former MPs Mohan Prasad Pandey (NC) and Padma Aryal (CPN-UML) of Syangja district. They expressed interest in continuing with the community dialogues and added that a new approach could be adopted to involve the district party leaders. They also expressed interest in participating in a citizens’ open forum to discuss the current political situation, among other things. They suggested that these dialogues be scheduled for the near future.

List of Meetings:

Date	District	Former CA/Legislature-Parliament Members	Party	Issues
June 4	Bara	Jwala Kumari Sha	UCPN-M	Deforestation
		Shobhakar Parajuli	NC	
		Gopal Thakur	CPN-UML	
		Pramod Gupta	MJFN-D	
June 6	Surkhet	Kamala Sharma	NC	Tourism Development
		Khadga Bahadur Basyal Sarki	CPN-UML	
June 7	Doti	Khem Bam	UCPN-M	Technical Education
		Kalpana Sob	NC	
		Harka Bahadur Singh	CPN-UML	
June 11	Dailekh	Kunti Kumari Shahi	RPP-N	Tourism Development and Protection of Cultural Heritage
June 12	Kapilbastu	Deep Kumar Upadhyay	NC	Tourism Development
		Shanti Devi Chamar	CPN-UML	
		Dan Bahadur Kurmi	TMDP-N	
		Abhishek Pratap Shah	MJFN	
June 19	Syangja	Mohan Pandey	NC	Agriculture
		Padma Aryal	CPN-UML	

Next Generation Parliamentarians Group (NGPG): On April 6, NDI met with nine members of NGPG’s coordinating committee. The NGPG is a parliamentary group of young MPs and first-termers created to enhance leadership skills. NGPG’s coordination committee consists of 21 MPs from diverse parties, ethnicities and gender. Members reviewed past activities and discussed future plans. They also discussed the group’s management and expressed their commitment to improve the group’s operations.

On June 1, NDI met with NGPG members to discuss the future of NGPG after the CA's dissolution. They said that NGPG should continue grooming young leaders and that capacity building activities are still needed. NDI and NGPG also agreed to conduct a political leadership workshop in the near future.

Workshop on Political Leadership: On June 25 and 26, NDI conducted a workshop on political leadership with NGPG members and other former MPs in Gokarna. A total of 25 members, representing seven political parties, took part in the two-day event. The workshop aimed to build the former MPs capacity and to create an opportunity for them to network and partnership with each other.

Workshop topics included leadership and management, political communication, team building and strategic planning. Both international and national experts, including Senior County Director Mark Wallem, Director for Parliamentary Programs Jay Nishant, Tirtha Koirala, Dixita Silwal, and Bikram Subba facilitated sessions. In addition, a panel discussion was held to revisit lessons learned and the way forward. Panel members were former CA Chair Subash Chandra Nembang and Brinda Pandey, former chair of the CA Committee on Fundamental Rights and Directives Principles. The panel discussion was designed to encourage discussion and provided the first chance for NGPG members to interact with senior leaders since the CA's dissolution.

Constituency Services Offices (CSOs): The CSOs in Arghakhanchi, Dhanusha and Lalitpur Districts have been closed as a result of dissolution of the CA. The Institute has informed the district MPs and coordinators accordingly.

Prior to the dissolution, on April 26, NDI conducted a workshop on effective constituent relations with women MPs from the three Constituency Service Offices (CSOs) of Arghakhanchi, Dhanusha, and Lalitpur. NDI consultant Dr. Sherrie Wolff spoke about the importance of constituent relationships in a democracy. She also talked about management strategies such as conducting public outreach and the importance of responding to citizens' needs. MPs shared their experiences and expressed satisfaction with the utilization of the CSOs. Also present were former MPs from Dang and Mahottari Districts. The former MPs wanted to learn more about the CSOs and expressed interest in establishing the office in their districts.

Parliamentary Internship Program: The Institute is redesigning this component due to the CA's dissolution. NDI is currently preparing lists of ministries and constitutional bodies who might be interested in participating in the internship program. Meetings with these institutions will be held next quarter.

Prior to the CA's dissolution, on April 27, NDI met with representatives of three academic institutions: Kathmandu School of Law, ACE Institute of Management and Nepal Law Campus to discuss details of memorandums of understanding (MoUs) between them and the Parliament Secretariat. Topics included intern criteria selection, terms and conditions for the academic institutions, and the program's duration. The educational entities said they were willing to collaborate with NDI and were keen to provide this opportunity to their students.

Civic Awareness of the Legislative Process: After completing the setup of the media center at the Parliament Secretariat, TAF continued to be in close contact with the Secretariat to plan further

activities and to provide regular advice and support as requested by the Secretariat. This quarter, TAF submitted the *Parliament Media Communication Outreach Assessment Report* to the Secretary General and the Spokesperson of the Parliament Secretariat (See Appendix III). The report was based upon a review of documents, consultations with officers of the parliament, and focus group discussions with journalists (parliamentary reporters) and senior officials of the parliament. The report assessed the feasibility of the media center in the following areas:

- 1) the technical support and capacity enhancement needed for an on-site media center;
- 2) the functioning of the office of the spokesperson in terms of workflow and management and recommended changes; and
- 3) the human resource capacity for enhancing public outreach and communication.

Radio Program Hamro Kanoon: TAF continued its partnership with Interface Nepal, broadcasting a 30-minute radio program “*Hamro Kanoon*” from over 30 different FM radio stations across the nation (ensuring an adequate geographical coverage of all regions). Each episode introduced and discussed various aspects of the Nepali legislative process. This quarter, the program focused on the Consumer Protection Act, Education Act, Foreign Employment Act, Labor Act, Social Practice Reform Act, health policy and an introduction to consumer identity cards for cooking gas. As the deadline for the CA approached, the program concentrated on constitutional issues, such as state reconstruction, governance structure, and elections. After the dissolution of CA, the radio program addressed the various constitutional and legal challenges ahead and explored solutions with experts while including the voices of the people from around the country. (See Appendix IV for more details on the radio programs.)

Legislative Audits: TAF, with local partner NCF, conducted legislative audits with five specific interest groups – Dalit, Madheshi, Women, Youth, and Janajati. Most of the representatives in this coalition also have a legal background, which helps in the audit of legislative laws and acts to study compliance with international norms and standards, legal and statutory coherence, and other technical details. This quarter NCF audited the following acts:

1. Bill on Amendment of Nepal Health Services Act;
2. Bill for Revision and Integration of the Act on Children;
3. Bill to Amend Civil Services Act 2049;
4. Nepal Electricity Regulatory Commission Bill;
5. Gender Perspective on Draft Criminal Statutes; and
6. Proposed Provisions of *mens rea* in Penal Code 2067.

Following the social audit, TAF coordinated with local partner New Spotlight Pvt. Ltd. to disseminate the findings and recommendations of the social audits through three print media outlets – Spotlight (English), Nepal (Nepali) and Shichhyak (Nepali).

Audit of Gender Perspective on Draft Criminal Statutes

On June 15, the NCF organized an audit of the Gender Perspective on Draft Criminal Statutes, presented by Professor Amuda Shrestha. Various stakeholders, advocates and members of civil society also had participated in the program.



The audit found that the proposed criminal code was prepared with the intention of consolidating and codifying the existing criminal law of Nepal into a single comprehensive document. The proposed code was prepared with reference to various precedents set by the Supreme Court, the International Conventions on Human Rights, which have been signed and ratified by Nepal, and the changing situation of the Nepalese society. Therefore, it was expected to be gender sensitive. The participants recognized that before the laws can become gender neutral, they must become gender sensitive and recognize the disadvantaged position of women in society.

Town Hall Consultations with Youth and Women on Transitional Legislation: TAF continued working with its three partners – Samudayak Sarathi (SS), Rural Community Development Service Council (RCDS), and WomenAct (WA) – to conduct the sixth wave of town hall meetings to promote interaction between national legislators and members of the public. The discussions this quarter focused on the *Establishment, Operation and Management of Social Security Fund Bill 2012*, specifically laborers’ social security issues. More than 2200 participants across Nepal attended the 45 town hall meetings this quarter.



Photo montage from Town Hall meetings.

Demographic and Ethnic Profile of Participants:

Total	Gender		Age Group		Upper Caste		Adibasi/Janajati		Dalits		Un-identified	Muslims
	F	M	16-39	40+	Hill/ Mtn	Terai/ Madesh	Hill/ Mtn	Terai/ Madesh	Hill/ Mtn	Terai/ Madesh		
2210	976	1234	1833	377	856	145	440	377	156	113	66	57
					1001		817		269			

Given the dissolution of Parliament, TAF's town hall partners submitted a synthesis report to the Joint Secretary at the Parliament Secretariat, Mr Bharat Raj Gautam, who served as the chief of legislative committee. Some of the major recommendations are presented below.

Clauses	Suggestions	Reason
1(1)	Change the name of the bill to <i>"Establishment, Operation and Management of Laborers' Contributory Social Security Fund Bill 2069"</i>	With the addition of "Laborers' Contributory" to the name of the bill, it becomes clear that the bill is solely focused for laborers and operates only on contribution (of money) on a regular basis.
16	Add Clause as 16(n): "Based on market assessment, the fund will invest in other sectors as well"	To increase the investment opportunities for the fund.
37	Add Clause 37(h): "special social security plan for women under risk"	Women under risk need special consideration in this kind of social security.
51	There is already labor court under the Labor Act. Is it necessary to form similar kind of structure under this act?	This provision needs to be brought into discussion, as two similar courts at the same time increases financial burden of the government.
51 (a)	Among members of Social Security Tribunal, there must be a judge and representatives of the Office of Attorney General and Nepal Rastra Bank.	It is necessary to make the tribunal inclusive.
63	The act must be meant for a contributory fund. It should not be allowed to work on non-contributory front as well.	Management of non-contributory social security schemes has a large scope. A separate act should be formulated for it.
73	The ministries that need to formulate rule and sub-rule should be mentioned in this bill.	There should be clarity in law to the extent possible.
75	Can the government of Nepal take on the burden of this fund if it lacks financial resources?	Needs to be discussed thoroughly, as the government may feel burdened with this provision.

The participants also had general feedback that did not relate directly to any particular clause of the act but rather on the nature of the bill itself.

- There should be 33 percent women in every committee to be formed under the proposed bill.
- There should be separate special committee for women wage earners.
- There should be special facilities for widows and elderly citizens.
- The areas or sectors that fall under the informal labor sector are not defined.
- The bill should include social security for dependents, unemployed people, maternity/delivery cases, people who have gone abroad for foreign employment and in the cases related to accident.

- The provision of compensation for accident, medical treatment and social security for the aged, handicapped, single and minorities group should be in the bill.
- There must be certain provision for nominating management committee members; there must not be political influence.
- Grandparents and adopted children should be placed next in line to the nearest kin to get the benefits.
- The contribution of the laborer and the employer should be determined by rules and regulations.
- The process of selecting the executive director is not appropriate. There should be a different process of selection and subject matter experts be on the committee.
- It is better to operationalize the same executive committee as the management committee.
- The penalty for executive committee members if they misuse their authority should be added in the bill.
- A study should be made on whether a separate tribunal is needed instead of the existing labor court to execute the proposed bill.
- Civil society should be represented on the management committee, not solely government as in the existing provision.
- The bill is not able to address the real problems of the informal sector labor.
- The chairperson of the committee should be from civil society rather than the labor ministry.
- Laborers of formal sectors already have social security fund, therefore this fund should target only the informal sector laborers.

Given the dissolution of the Parliament, TAF town hall partners submitted a synthesis report to the Joint Secretary at the Parliament Secretariat, Mr. Bharat Raj Gautam, who served as the chief of legislative committee on behalf of the civil servants.

NDI and TAF have already initiated activities to prepare for the seventh wave of the town hall meetings, which includes orientation and trainings for moderators on the selected topic. The next set of town hall meetings will begin July 15.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

This quarter, M&E staff from NDI headquarters collaborated with Nepal staff to refine and develop additional data collection tools for several indicators for program components. Some of these tools, especially those related to the parties' program, have already been piloted. The M&E team also met with Murari Adhikari, M&E Specialist, USAID. The team briefed him about the progress of the M&E system and the data quality guidelines used by NDI. It was also clarified that while some of these data quality procedures were ongoing, new procedures had been developed too. The M&E team also met subgrantees TAF and IN during the quarter.

NDI produced a program analysis report on political parties' activities at the district level. The report reviews completed district-level activities including the replicate trainings for voter registration and

the ToT program, phase I. The report also provided a breakdown of participants by gender and age group. *See Appendix VII for the full report.*

E. Meetings/Consultations/Events

South Asian Youth Convention on Employment: On May 4, NDI attended the opening of the South Asian Youth Convention, which focused on youth unemployment in Kathmandu. In coordination with the local organizer, Lead International, youth groups contacted eight MPs from South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations to share their experiences. NDI and Lead International coordinated with NDI-DC to select a representative from the Maldives and with NDI-Kabul to select a representative from Afghanistan.

Meetings with the State Affairs Committee (SAC): On April 26, NDI met with Chair of SAC Ram Nath Dhakal and Mukunda Sharma to identify areas of mutual cooperation and possible topics of interest, including corruption, democratization of security agencies and knowledge-sharing of committee work from other countries. On June 7, NDI met again with Dhakal to discuss the CA's dissolution and possible repercussions. He expressed concern that political corruption could increase absent a governing body. On June 15, NDI and Dhakal met to confer about potential increases in crime resulting from the absence of elected officials. Additionally, Dhakal cautioned that in the absence of a parliament, Nepal might see an emboldened bureaucracy assert its authority. To guard against potential improprieties, Dhakal laid out a plan to enlist former MPs from various parties to serve as a watchdog group.

TAF Review of Proposed Legislation: On June 15, NDI attended a review and audit of proposed legislation. The event was organized by TAF's partner, NCF, and a coalition of interest groups, including Dalits, Madheshi, Janajati, women and youth. A total of 20 individuals participated in the event.

The group reviewed the criminal statute to see if it conformed to prescribed gender provisions as well as complying with international standards, legal and statutory coherence. Prof. Amuda Shrestha, former member of the National Women's Commission, presented the review paper.

IV. RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Objective 1: Promote and strengthen democratic political processes through political party development assistance.

- 75 party activists were trained in replicate trainings conducted by the political parties in their districts. As parties continue to report back to NDI with data, the number of members trained is expected to continue to increase.
- Successful launch of the FLA program:
 - 53 young political activists from nine parties and diverse communities representing 33 districts participated.
 - More than 50 percent of the FLA participants are women.
 - Many of the women serve in district leadership positions: president, secretary or treasurer.

- FLA graduates reached consensus on five areas of common national concern and committed to work to solve problems surrounding:
 - national hydropower;
 - proportional youth participation of youths at all level of country;
 - national development projects;
 - foreign policy; and
 - national security.
- As a follow-up to the workshops on voter registration by political parties, the NC issued an official circulation to the heads of all 240 constituencies. NC asked party branches to ensure that its potential voters are registered correctly.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capacity of citizen oversight of the electoral process.

- NDI produced an assessment report on domestic election monitoring organizations in preparation for election related monitoring.
- 96 journalists participate in first ever election-related investigative training course on print, radio and TV media and broadcast radio programs on the electoral and political party issues.
- 91 local radio stations in 53 districts donated free airtime to broadcast radio programs produced this quarter by IN on electoral processes.
- 139 radio reports by journalists following IN's investigative journalism training seminars on issues related to the electoral process and political party reform.

Objective 3: Support the institutional strengthening of the CA/Parliament and improve its capacity to address constituent needs.

- CA Secretariat staff and JSPA successfully conducted a media training that bolstered their understanding of the challenges of reporting on parliamentary affairs, the importance of best practices and journalistic ethics.
- Many former MPs voiced their interest in maintaining the community dialogues despite the CA's dissolution. They continue to want to serve as advocates for their communities. Additionally they would like to broaden the dialogues to include district party leaders.
- A proposal from MPs to conduct a citizens' open forum to discuss the current political situation, among other things. They suggested that these dialogues be scheduled for the near future.
- Linking the Salahesh Festival to the Nepali New Year was a proposal created by MPs and their local development authorities to develop tourism in their districts. The successful event increased meaningful dialogue between MPs and citizens. By working with their constituents, MPs were able to deliver a result that brought value to the district.
- TAF continued its partnership with Interface Nepal, broadcasting a 30-minute radio program "Hamro Kanoon" from over 30 different FM radio stations across Nepal.
- TAF, with local partner NCF, conducted legislative audits on six bills.

- More than 2200 participants attended the sixth wave of town hall meetings to promote interaction between national legislators and members of the public.

V. EVALUATION

A successful FLA will equip young political activists with democratic values and political skills to apply within their parties throughout their careers. To date, the training on leadership, political party democratization and policy development has been very well received. A second round of training will be provided to the same participants in July.

The Institute's parliamentary program had to be revamped somewhat because of the CA's dissolution in May. While the CSOs in Argkhanchi, Dhanusha and Lalitpur Districts were closed, community dialogues and the NGPG continued with slight modifications. In large part, former MPs are committed and interested in continuing the programs. Dialogue between former elected representatives and citizens, particularly at the grassroots level, is a proven way to build democratic practices.

Likewise, NGPG will continue to build the leadership capacity of emerging leaders. The conferences and workshops will continue to provide former MPs opportunities to improve their capacities and to network within their own ranks. Events also provide spaces for former MPs to interact with senior leaders to discuss the road forward.

Although the Institute had started to develop a parliamentary internship program, the program had to be suspended due to the CA's dissolution. Institutions were keen to participate and an MoU between NDI and the CA was drafted but remains pending. NDI is currently investigating an internship program with various ministries.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

- On July 1-5, NDI will conduct a five-day national FLA training, phase II, in Kathmandu. The same 53 participants who took part in phase I will attend.
- NDI will conduct a national seminar in Kathmandu and two regional seminars in Chitwan and Kaski.
- In September, NDI plans to hold a second five-day national ToT-Phase II in Kathmandu. NDI will develop training modules and secure national and international trainers to facilitate the trainings.
- NDI will continue community dialogue follow-up meetings with former MPs of the remaining three districts, Dhankuta, Siraha and Nuwakot.
- NDI will conduct issue-based meetings with national stakeholders and relevant ministries to help former MPs better understand how to lobby ministries on district-specific issues such as budget allocation and implementation of district activities.
- NDI will organize workshops for local NGOs, district coordinators and the monitoring committee coordinator to brief them on the redesign of the community dialogues.

- NDI will conduct at least one seminar or capacity-building event for NGPG members.
- NDI will plan and implement a series of district-level citizens' open forums. Topics might include ethnic federalism.
- Internews will upgrade its Nepali website to enable direct submission of reports by monitors, journalists and other concerned parties as well as crowd source mapping capabilities.
- Internews will review and evaluate the first phase of its activities to determine lessons learned and impact.
- TAF intends to work with Writing Workshop and the Parliament Secretariat to improve the Secretariat library, including archiving of all documents related to the Constituent Assembly.
- TAF will work with Writing Workshop to develop the Parliament Secretariat's media outreach policy and provide trainings to Parliament Secretariat staff.
- TAF will partner with SS, WA, and RCDSC to conduct the next wave of town hall meetings.
- TAF will continue to work closely with NCF and the interest group in identifying and auditing relevant legislation in the coming quarter. Furthermore, TAF will coordinate with New Spotlight Pvt. Ltd. to ensure a proper dissemination of the findings/recommendations of the interest group audits through print media.
- TAF and Interface Nepal will identify relevant legislation and provide assistance in producing and broadcasting the weekly radio show.

VII. APPENDICES

Appendix I - Article in Kantipur Newspaper

Appendix II - Article on Sahalesh Fair

Appendix III - Parliament Media Communication Outreach Assessment Report

Appendix IV - Hamro Kanoon Radio Program

Appendix V - AFN - Loktantra Mantra Broadcast Stations with Day and Time

Appendix VI - Annex 11 - FNJ - Social Media Survey Report 2012

Appendix VII – NDI's Work at the District Level