



**Quarterly Report**  
**NEPAL: CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATION**  
**USAID Cooperative Agreement No. 367-G-00-00097-00**  
**October 1 to December 31, 2000**

**I. SUMMARY**

Although many Nepalis had high expectations that democracy would bring prosperity and development to their country, some have come to realize that without an active and informed citizenry, democracy, like any other form of government, will be unresponsive to citizens' needs. The lack of confidence Nepalis feel about their political process is due, in part, to the majority's unfamiliarity with and lack of participation in their democratic institutions. Since 1994, NDI has been partaking in a broader national effort to increase Nepalis contribution to their governing bodies. In July 2000 and with funding from USAID, NDI began civic and voter education programs in Nepal. These programs intend to inform Nepalis about how their government and electoral system work as well as encourage them to get involved in their political process.

During this quarter, the Institute conducted a variety of civic education related activities, including: 1) conducting a coordinating committee meeting for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and government agencies working in the field of education; 2) holding individual meetings with INGOs and NGOs working on education programs; 3) holding meetings with the Institute's Advisory Board; 4) redrafting the civic education materials; 5) drafting and preparing to implement a benchmark survey; and 6) identifying a potential partner NGO.

Also during this quarter, the Institute conducted a number of voter education related activities, including: 1) holding meetings with NDI's Coordinating Committee; 2) developing radio dramas in 10 different languages; 3) drafting a participant manual and voter education booklet; 4) drafting evaluation materials for the forums; 5) distributing election related documents to Election Commission staff; and 6) preparing to implement the two-day interactive forums.

**II. BACKGROUND**

## ***A. Civic Education***

Nepalis receive little, if any, civics training in school. As a result, the adult population in Nepal often lacks the necessary foundation for becoming active and informed citizens in their democracy. To address this gap in the education system, key leaders in Nepal's education community have been working to introduce civics training in school curriculums. As a result of their initiative, many schools around the country are now offering an elective civic education course entitled *Contemporary Society*. Unfortunately, many of the classes do not have materials for the course nor are the teachers familiar enough with civics to effectively relay the lessons to students.

In response to and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the Higher Secondary Education Board, the Nepali Foundation for Advanced Studies (NEFAS), academics and local and political leaders, NDI is producing and distributing civic education materials that will be used for the *Contemporary Society* course as well as by political and civic leaders throughout the country. The Institute is also preparing to conduct interactive workshops to inform teaching professionals and civic and political leaders about the contents of the materials as well as how to effectively use these materials to relay civic messages to others.

At the beginning of the program, NDI had expected to use already written civic education materials produced by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and NEFAS. However, once the materials were translated into English, it became obvious that they were not designed to be effective training tools for civic education. As a result, the Institute formed a task force with FES and NEFAS to redraft the materials. The re-working of this text has altered the timeline for executing the civic education training program. NDI now expects the materials to be completed by the end of March 2001, pilot workshops to be held in April 2001 and the other interactive workshops to be held in May and June 2001. (Please See Appendix A: Revised Timeline.)

## ***B. Voter Education***

Although materials about Nepal's election laws and expected polling practices have already been produced and distributed throughout Nepal, they are targeted for highly educated citizens. As almost 70% of Nepalis are illiterate; many of the materials cannot be easily communicated to an adequate number of voters. As a result, the majority of citizens know very little about how their electoral process is supposed to work or what role they should play in ensuring credible and fair elections. Furthermore, many of the local civic and political leaders are unaware of their responsibilities during the polling process. These circumstances have, in part, led to violations of the Election Code of Conduct, which is intended to restrict voter intimidation, vote buying, illicit fundraising and spending, and electioneering at the polling stations.

Within this context, NDI, in close consultation with the Election Commission, is conducting a nation-wide voter education program intended to increase citizens' awareness and participation in the electoral process. The Institute's activities will target the general public, with specific outreach to women and individuals from the lower castes, as well as

district leaders involved in elections. Through material production and distribution, discussion forums and radio programs, NDI will relay messages about voters' rights and responsibilities, election officials' duties, voter registration, the Election Code of Conduct and the procedures for reporting election-related violations. The program will also relay messages about the benefits that are gained from the public's active participation in the democratic process.

### **III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

#### **A. Civic Education**

##### *Conducting a Coordination Committee Meeting*

On October 18, NDI, in cooperation with the American Center, organized a Civic Education Coordination meeting to bring together the various INGO's, government agencies and local NGO's working in the field of civic education, to share information about their programs and to find ways in which the organizations can work together. Representatives from USAID, the Department for International Development (DFID), the Curriculum Development Center (CDC), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the American Center attended.

During the meeting, each participating representative made a brief presentation about their organizations' program activities. They also spoke about ways to incorporate civics training into their programs. Following the presentations, participants discussed ways to cooperate and ensure that their activities do not overlap (See Appendix B: Coordination Committee Meeting Minutes). The meeting revealed that further cooperative efforts are not only needed but also desired. A second coordination meeting was planned, scheduled to take place in mid-January.

##### *Holding Individual Meetings with INGOs and NGOs*

As a follow-up to the coordination effort, NDI has met individually with participating organizations and other organizations that were unable to attend the meeting. So far, NDI has met with representatives from the Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO), the Peace Corps, CDC, the Political Science Society (PSS), the United Mission to Nepal (UMN), DFID and Finland's Department for International Development and Cooperation (FINNIDA).

During the meetings, the Institute distributed a number of civic education materials used in the United States. Individuals from the CDC and the UMN mentioned their intent to incorporate the civics information into their program activities. The representative from VSO also requested that NDI write an article for its newsletter to gauge the interest of VSO staff in working with NDI to promote civic education throughout the country. Also during the meetings, NDI collected materials and made personal contacts with individuals who will provide valuable assistance in the design of NDI's civic education program.

##### *Holding Meetings with the Institute's Advisory Board*

NDI has been continuing to hold regular meetings with the Advisory Board. The Board consists of influential Nepalis in the education community. They provide assistance to NDI in the design and implementation of program activities. In recent meetings, NDI and the Board discussed the revised workshop schedule, the method and timeline for redoing program materials and the qualifications of various potential partner NGOs.

#### *Redrafting the Civic Education Materials*

NDI Nepal has been working with two partner groups to rewrite the civic education materials that NDI plans to distribute in many parts of the country and use during its interactive workshops. The Institute created a task force that includes NEFAS, a local NGO and the FES. Each organization was asked to rewrite various parts of the materials. NDI has been working on a number of sections and is responsible for editing and formatting the documents after each organization has completed its share.

The final documents will cover a variety of topics including how the government works, how citizens can get involved in their democracy to improve government responsiveness to citizens' needs, ways to increase women's involvement in identifying and vocalizing community needs, how to ensure that citizens' rights are respected by the government and how to develop effective solutions to social problems. Readers learn about democracy through interactive exercises where they identify problems in their communities, discuss ways to solve these problems, meet with political officials, practice public speaking, debate issues and practice various ways of lobbying government officials.

#### *Drafting and Preparing to Implement a Benchmark Survey*

To accurately assess the success of program activities, NDI developed a benchmark survey for assessing the needs of potential civic education workshop trainers and participants. The survey asks a variety of questions that will assist NDI in learning more about the workshop participants. Approximately 50 teaching professionals will participate in the survey. NDI hopes to target a total of 600 teaching professionals and civic and political leaders in its program. This means that the survey will reach 7.7% of the total target group. NDI is now preparing to test the survey in 5 locations in the Kathmandu Valley. Once the survey is finalized, NDI will conduct interviews in Kathmandu, Pokhara and the surrounding districts.

#### *Identifying a Potential Partner NGO*

Following discussions with the Institute's Advisory Board, NDI identified a potential partner NGO for the civic education program. The group is named the Society for the Promotion of Civic Education (SPCE) and was formed immediately after NDI and the American Center held a Civic Education workshop in August 2000. The group consists of a number of high-level political and civic leaders as well as teaching professionals. Its primary goal is to introduce civics training in schools. So far, NDI has helped the organization identify potential funders. The SPCE has also agreed to assist NDI in evaluating its activities.

## ***B. Voter Education Program***

### *Holding Meetings with NDI's Coordinating Committee*

NDI has held a number of meetings with the Coordination Committee, formed jointly with the Election Commission, to provide advice on program activities and to ensure that NDI's activities do not overlap with other international groups. During these meetings, NDI worked with the committee to review the scripts of the radio programs, discuss the design of the materials and make the logistical preparations for the forums.

### *Developing Radio Dramas*

The large illiterate population in Nepal poses a challenge to the effort to provide voter education. An estimated 80% of Nepalis have access to radios, making radio programming an outstanding means of educating voters. NDI is producing 20 radio dramas in Nepali and in nine other ethnic languages. To produce the shows, NDI hired a consultant and held several meetings with him to review what should be incorporated into the content of the shows. The content of the messages include: 1) citizens' constitutional rights during elections; 2) the voter registration process; 3) voting procedures; 4) information about the Election Codes of Conduct; 5) the importance of elections; 6) voters lists and identity cards; 7) voter qualifications; 8) the importance of voting; 9) electoral procedures; and 10) legal procedures regarding the Election Codes of Conduct.

During the quarter, NDI submitted all 20 radio episodes to the Election Commission for approval. The Commission has made minor edits to the episodes and NDI and the consultant are now incorporating those changes, which will be submitted to the Election Commission for final approval in January.

### *Preparing to Implement the Interactive Forums*

The Institute has finalized the list of 15 districts in which NDI will conduct the two-day interactive forums. The fifteen districts include: Dhankuta, Morang, Saptari, Rautahat, Makwanpur, Lalitpur, Kaski, Palpa, Rupandehi, Banke, Surkhet, Dang, Kailali, Kanchanpur and Doti.

NDI is now making the logistical arrangements to conduct two pilot forums expected to be held in Lalitpur and Rapandehi districts in February. These forums will allow the Institute to test the agenda and forum format and make changes if necessary, before proceeding with the final 13 forums. In conjunction with the Election Commission, NDI is developing the pilot forum participant lists. The lists will include women and have balanced representation from the political parties.

### *Drafting a Voter Education Booklet and Participant Manual*

The Institute worked closely with a consultant to design the voter education booklet and the forum participant manual. The booklet will be distributed to voters around the country and include information, in an easy-to-understand format, regarding election-day procedures, the registration process, obtaining voter identity cards and choosing candidates that represent citizens' interests. Graphic art will be included throughout the booklet to help in relaying the messages.

The participant manual will be used during the 15 district forums and serve as an ongoing resource for District Election Officers, political party leaders, civil society leaders, and other critical players in the election process. The manual includes information about the election process, summaries of pertinent election laws, as well as the Election Code of Conduct.

In early December, NDI submitted drafts of the participant manual and voter education booklet to the Election Commission for approval. On December 15, NDI and the Election Commission jointly sponsored a meeting of district election officials to pre-test the manual and receive feedback. Based on the comments from participants, NDI revised the manual. The Election Commission is currently reviewing both the revised manual and the booklet. The event also gave NDI the opportunity to establish contact with many of the district election officials who will participate in the forums.

#### *Drafting Evaluation Materials for the Forums*

NDI is designing a pre- and post-forum questionnaire in an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of the interactive forums. The questionnaire seeks information about participants' political experience, their knowledge of election procedures and the Election Code of Conduct, and their understanding of their job responsibilities during election time. Prior to the forums, participants will be asked to complete a pre-forum questionnaire. Additionally, they will also be asked to fill out the post-forum questionnaire after the forums are completed. NDI will compare the responses in the pre- and post-forum questionnaires to help determine the effectiveness of the forums.

To test the effectiveness of the participant manual, NDI will conduct a follow-up survey several weeks after the forums end. Approximately 10% of forum participants will be interviewed in the survey.

#### *Distributing Election Related Documents*

Additionally during this reporting period, NDI distributed several documents to members of the Election Commission that detailed the United States election debate. Most of these documents were based on information from Pat Merloe, Senior Associate and Director of programs on elections for NDI. The Election Commission staff found the description very interesting and expressed appreciation for the information.

## **IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

In keeping with the goals of the proposal, the work this quarter has addressed the following objectives:

*Objective: To work collaboratively with Nepali agencies to increase the population's general knowledge of the electoral system.*

*Objective: To promote awareness of democratic norms and human rights in Nepal.*

#### **A. Civic Education**

- NDI's coordinating effort has permitted participating organizations to share information and discuss ways to cooperate. NDI has also received oral commitments by at least two organizations that they will incorporate a civics component into their activities.
- When NDI began the program about 5 schools had offered civics as an elective course. Now approximately 40 schools offer the course. The result is due in part to the commitment NDI has made to produce materials for the course.
- Following NDI's civic education meeting held in August, a new NGO was formed with the primary goal of promoting civic education throughout the country. The development of this new organization reveals the increasing interest that Nepalis have for initiatives that address civic education.

#### **B. Voter Education**

- The Election Commission is engaged in outreach work to educate Nepalis about elections.
- The participant manual, booklet and 20 radio show episodes have successfully been developed.
- NDI is continuing to build strong relationships with Election Commission officials.
- NDI has successfully laid the basic structure to conduct district level forums and broadcast radio programs.

### **IV. EVALUATION/CONCLUSIONS**

Although the programs are still in their preliminary stages, NDI's activities thus far have reaped significant results and demonstrate that the Institute will likely meet its program goals. In addition, NDI's initiatives to bolster civic and voter education in Nepal have met with a very positive response from Nepali government officials and NGO and civil society representatives.

## **Civic Education**

The Institute's efforts to coordinate existing interest in improving the quality of Nepalese knowledge of government and civic structures has resulted in the formation of a new organization, the SPCE. Additionally, the growing interest in civic education is reflected in the improvement of civics curricula in Nepali schools. In conclusion, there have been excellent gains this quarter that mark an increased attentiveness to the value of civic education.

## **Voter Education**

Progress has been made in creating multi-media methods of informing the public about election rules, rights and procedures. The Election Commission has become involved in activities to increase public knowledge about elections. NDI will work through the next quarter to see the completion of the radio programs and the wide distribution of the voter education materials that are presently being edited.

## **V. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

In order to address the objectives outlined for this grant in the proposal, NDI will continue to engage in civic and voter education activities. During the next quarter, NDI will continue revising the civic education materials, and prepare to conduct the civic education workshops for trainers. NDI will hold a coordinating meeting bringing organizations together to foster collaboration and community planning for civic education programs. These meetings foster the growth of Nepali run programs in civic education and provide a forum for agencies to voice their opinions and ideas on the how to address the civic education needs of Nepal. For the voter education program, the Institute will air the 20 new radio programs. Beginning in April, NDI will hold the interactive forums on voter education in 15 districts.

<b>Program Activities</b>	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Laying the ground work for program activities													
Workshop with experts from the Center for Civic Education (USA)													
Writing, editing, translating and printing of the Civic Education Book and the Supplemental Guide													
Benchmark survey for the program													
Workshop design													
Two pilot workshops													
Logistical preparations workshops													
Workshops and distribution of the Civic Education book and supplemental Guide													
Workshop evaluation, drafting of the final report and program closure													

**APPENDIX A**  
**NDI/NEPAL**  
**Timeline for the Civic Education Program**  
**(July 15, 2000 through July 15, 2001)**

## APPENDIX B

### MINUTES OF CIVIC EDUCATION COORDINATION MEETING

October 18, 2000

American Center

Kathmandu

#### **Those Present Included:**

##### **National Education Commission (NEC)**

Dr. Shree Krishna Yadav

##### *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)*

Dev Raj Dahal- Advisor

##### *Curriculum Development Center (CDC)*

Dr. Shree Ram Upadhyaya-National Consultant

Bhupa Mani Niraula- Section Officer

##### *United States Agency for Development (USAID)*

Donna Stauffer – Acting Mission Director

Bishnu Adhikary – Democracy Program Manager

##### *Department for International Development (DFID)*

Mala Adhikary- Program Coordinator

##### *American Center (USIS)*

Bob Kerr- Director

Harka Gurung- Program Specialist

##### *National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)*

Mark Wallem- Director

Karen Stone- Program Officer

Dipendra Tamang- Program Officer

Ram Guragain- Senior Program Officer

**Welcome and Introductions:** Bob Kerr of the American Center welcomed all attendees and thanked them for coming. Karen Stone of NDI presented the proposed agenda for the meeting and asked the participants if they wanted to make any additions or deletions to the agenda– there were none. She highlighted the objectives of the meeting as the following:

- 1) To ensure that there is no overlap or conflict between each organizations’ programs;
- 2) To find ways to work together and hopefully improve upon current activities; and

3) To develop a more comprehensive strategy for introducing a civic education component to primary, secondary, higher secondary and college level education throughout Nepal.

Karen Stone served as moderator for the meeting. She asked one representative from each group present to give an overview of the programs they are conducting or interested in conducting related to civic education. The presentations were followed by general discussion.

### **Presentations and Discussion:**

**Dipendra Tamang** of **NDI** spoke about the Institute's civic education program. With funding from USAID, NDI is assisting in the design and promotion of a civics course for plus two students. The curriculum used for NDI's program, entitled *Contemporary Society*, covers topics such as the content of Nepal's Constitution, the decentralization process, methods of good governance, gender and caste discrimination, the role of civil society in democracy, Nepal's electoral process, the role of political parties in the parliamentary system and human rights. NDI is coordinating the drafting of a teaching manual for *Contemporary Society*, holding a number of workshops using participatory, role-playing techniques to communicate the civics materials to Nepali teachers as well as making the *Contemporary Society* textbook available, free of charge, to students and teachers involved in the course.

**Bob Kerr** of the **American Center** stated that the Center hopes to strengthen democracy and good governance in Nepal and promote good relations between Nepal and the United States. Civic education is an important component of good governance, particularly given Nepal's recent return to democracy. He offered the American Center's services in bringing specialists in the field of civic education to Nepal, as the Center has done in the past, to advise and support civic education efforts. He also encouraged participants and other interested individuals to utilize the Center's resource materials and library, containing computers with Internet access.

**Dr. Shree Ram Upadhyaya** of the **CDC** outlined the CDC's work in the area of civic education as well as emphasized the need to train teachers to promote effective student learning. The CDC is currently revising the country's 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum by incorporating minor changes recommended by students, teachers and principals around the country. The CDC is also developing a civics textbook for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and utilizing materials given to the CDC by the American Center and NDI.

**Mala Adhikary** of **DFID** gave general information about DFID's efforts to improve governance in Nepal. She distributed material that offers suggestions on how local groups should develop proposals for submission to DFID for funding. In the discussion, she noted that groups interested in conducting civic education projects should contact DFID to discuss possible funding options.

**Dev Raj Dahal** of **FES** stated that FES is contemplating the development of a simple booklet written in Nepali for use in schools and by the general public. This booklet would provide information, in layman's terms, about democratic norms. Dahal stressed the need for communicating basic information about democracy to Nepalis, stating that many Nepalis lack a clear understanding of how democracy should work in their country. The booklet may be drafted and revised early next year.

**Dr. Shree Krishna Yadav** spoke on behalf of the **Ministry of Education** and stated that the Ministry does not need to be convinced that civic education is essential for the country and will support good

ideas and programs, which are in the best interest of students and public education in general. He mentioned that it is a government policy to implement civic education in public schools. Yadav recommends, that those with the capacity should take initiative to develop civics courses, as he has done in the past.

**Dr. Yadav** also spoke on behalf of the **Society for the Promotion of Civic Education (SPCE)**. This newly developed local nongovernmental organization is interested in initiating civic education in public schools throughout the country and could use material, financial and technical support as they begin programs.

**Donna Stauffer** of **USAID** works on democracy and governance programs. She noted that while USAID is committed to promoting civic education, there is a lack of predictable and reliable funding available in this area. Although the mission does not have a specific objective regarding civic education, there is a commitment within USAID to encourage people, at the grass roots level, to affect change by influencing their government.

**Conclusion:** Karen Stone asked the group if they had found the meeting useful. The general consensus was that yes, the meeting provided an opportunity for information-sharing and potential coordination among the participating organizations. Harka Gurung encouraged attendees to continue their networking on an informal basis and to keep each other informed of future activities as appropriate.

It was agreed that a second meeting would be held in three months. In addition to the organizations represented, participants suggested that other groups be included in future discussions. Future invitations will be sent to representatives from:

Save the Children  
United Mission to Nepal  
Social Studies Society  
Peace Corps  
Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO)  
Embassy of Finland (FINIDA)  
Department for International Development (DFID)/ Education Division  
Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA)/ Human Rights and Good Governance  
Unit

After the meeting adjourned, the American Center provided tea and snacks, which allowed informal discussion among attendees.