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Promoting Thailand's Democratic Reform Process:

The TAF/USAID Thailand Election Project
1998-2001

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The TAF/USAID Thailand Election Project

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Introduction

Thailand tested a legal framework to promote free and fair elections, as stipulated in the 1997 Constitution and three related election laws, during two recent national elections: the March 2000 Senate Elections and the January 2001 General Election. The purpose of this report is to assess the outputs of these reforms and the gains achieved by citizens and civic organizations who took part in the elections. More specifically, this report seeks to assess whether the approach of the TAF/USAID Election Project contributed to achievement of these reforms and promoted free and fair elections.

This is an issue of interest because the U.S. government officially provided \$1,250,000 to support Thailand's electoral reforms.¹ In comparison with election support provided to other nations during the past decade, this amount was conservative. Nevertheless, the U.S. made the single largest international donation toward Thailand's elections.² In view of the importance of these elections to the Thai political reform process, and Thailand's leadership role in promoting democracy and human rights in the region, it is surprising that more international support was not forthcoming. However, by the mid-1990's many international donors had, or were in the process of graduating Thailand from foreign aid due to its success in economic development over the previous decade. Indeed, by this period, Thailand had more than sufficient public funds to carry out various activities that had previously been supported by international donors. Nevertheless, the mechanisms designed to implement Thailand's political reform process, such as the new electoral system, were essentially conceived before the onset of the 1997 Asian Economic Crisis; therefore, reformers paid little attention to budgetary implications. An unfortunate impact of the economic crisis has been the lack of sufficient domestic resources to fully support the reform process and the numerous new mechanisms designed to promote and secure these reforms.

The objectives of the TAF/USAID Election Project were twofold. First, the Foundation sought a process whereby voters at the grassroots level could be informed about the new electoral reforms and the impact these reforms would have not only on elections but also on individual citizens and their system of governance. The Foundation understood this educative process had to provide voters with more than just information; it also had to

¹ These funds were granted to the Thai government as part of a package of support provided to Thailand after the economic crisis when Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai visited the United States. The United States Agency for International Development administered the funds through grants to The Asia Foundation (\$1.0 million) and the National Democratic Institute (\$250,000).

² Japanese support through the Miyazawa Funds contributed significantly to the elections. However, the Japanese government had not earmarked these funds specifically for electoral reform, rather various Thai government agencies drew on the funds for employment creation activities, some of which supported voter/civic education activities. These programs were based on the products created under the TAF/USAID Election Project.

encourage citizens to act on this knowledge. The second objective of the project was to enable civil society organizations to monitor the elections, both before and on election day, to ensure free and fair elections.

Initially, the Foundation also had proposed a third objective, which was to support the institutional development of the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT). However, prior to receiving funds for the project, the ECT ruled that under the new election law the ECT was prohibited from accepting financial support from any international or domestic donor. This rule was designed to prevent any real or perceived conflicts of interest from arising.³ As a result, the Foundation was unable to provide direct support to the ETC.

The civic/voter education programs designed by the Foundation were highly innovative within the Thai context and resulted in reform of the content, process, and replication of traditional Thai voter education strategies. The civic/voter education program designed by the Foundation and its partners was adopted by the Election Commission of Thailand and various government agencies that implemented voter education projects. Similarly, media strategies developed under the project proved successful and were replicated by other organizations. As a result, training activities and media products reached a massed-based audience well beyond the limits of U.S. government funding. They also were highly effective in changing the values, attitudes and actions of Thai voters. The success of election monitoring efforts were more narrow due to funding limitations and a fundamental philosophical difference of opinion between PollWatch and the ECT on the role and function of election monitoring organizations. The ECT made significant progress in developing its internal systems and structures drawing only on its internal budget; nevertheless, the commission faced serious institutional problems in attempting to implement the new electoral system.

The Election Commission of Thailand required five months in 2000, five rounds of voting, and numerous Constitutional Court challenges to complete the election of 200 senators. Repeated by-elections were required in some constituencies because the ECT refused to endorse candidates it believed had engaged in electoral fraud. The new powers of the ECT to refuse endorsement of certain candidates, to disqualify and bar others from contesting by-elections, and to dismiss from office parliamentarians it had previously endorsed, was one of the most significant and effective measures adopted by Thailand to reform its legislature. The protracted Senate elections prompted adoption of several major changes in the electoral laws to enhance the ECT's powers and to reduce the time required for the endorsement of winning candidates. As a result, the Commission was able to complete

³ It is interesting to note that the primary concern of the ECT was contributions from domestic sources rather than international donors. Specifically, they feared the provincial election commissions would accept funds or in-kind contributions from local power brokers who would subsequently attempt to influence local commissioners. (Discussion by author with ECT Commissioners).

the January 6, 2001 General Elections in less than thirty days, which made it possible for His Majesty the King to formally open the 500 member House of Representatives on schedule on February 4, 2001. The Commission ordered only two new general election polls, the first and largest on January 29 in 62 of 400 constituencies and the second on February 1 at 11 polling stations in Nakhon Nayok's Constituency 1.

In the view of some analysts, the general election was the dirtiest, most corrupt in Thai history marking the beginning of the end for the Thai political reform process.⁴ For others, however, it generated many of the changes that reformers had intended, even though the process was marred by numerous electoral violations and procedural deficiencies. From the perspective of The Asia Foundation, the elections were a benchmark in a slowly unfolding process of political and administrative reform. The 2000 election established Thailand's first elected Senate, which provides an official platform for civil society to balance its interests with those of politicians and bureaucrats. Second, the 2001 election was successful in promoting the creation of an administration premised on a more stable model of larger, policy-based political parties, rather than the historic trend of governments being formed by uneasy, constantly shifting coalitions of a multitude of partners, each promoting their own personal interests. Third, after decades in which unscrupulous individuals were able to manipulate election results through vote-buying, scores of politicians whose careers had been marred by allegations of fraud, both in the election process and subsequently in the performance of their duties, were turned out of office.

This report on the TAF/USAID Thailand Election Project is divided into two parts. The Foundation and USAID recognized early on that the timing of project activities would be difficult to state because much rested on when the Chuan Leekpai Administration would call for general elections. Therefore, at the request of USAID, each previous report on this project prepared by the Foundation included a section on local developments that established the context for project implementation. This report continues that practices in Part 1: "The Context of the TAF/USAID Election Project", which analyses the electoral reform process and outlines the outcomes of both the 2000 Senate Election and the 2001 General Election. Part 2: "Program Description and Evaluation", outlines the assumptions underlying the design of the Foundation's programs and seeks to assess the impact of the program on Thailand's recent elections.

⁴ See for example: Shawn W. Crispin, "Thailand Reform: At Death's Door," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 8, 2001, pp. 16-19.

PART I:
The Context of the TAF/USAID Election Project

A. Objectives of Thai Electoral Reform

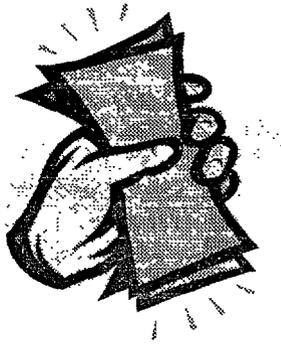
In order to assess the impact of the TAF/USAID Election Project on Thailand's Senate and General Elections, it is important to first outline the goals of Thai electoral reform. The underlying root of Thailand's political reform movement was the desire to recast the Thai system of governance from a bureaucratic command and control structure to a people-centered participatory democracy. Fundamental to this process has been reform of the electoral system. Allegations of fraud, intimidation, and the dominance of money have marred Thai elections for more than four decades. The first major instance of electoral fraud occurred during the 1957 General Election, when it was alleged the Seri Manangkhasila Party of Field Marshall P. Pibul Songkhram engaged in numerous illegal tactics to ensure victory. Pibul formed a government in spite of strong protests from the public. Within months, however, General Sarit Thanarat exploited the election fraud as one pretext to instigate a military coup in September 1957 to overthrow the Pibul Administration. For most of the following two decades, Thailand was ruled by military decree until the student uprisings of the mid-1970's.

The late 1970's witnessed initiation of a slow process of liberalization of Thai politics and the emergence of the National Assembly as a viable institution. It was during this period that Thailand's most notorious form of electoral abuse arose. The "Roi Et Disease," or vote-buying, had its origins as a fine art of electoral manipulation during a by-election in Roi

Et Province during the administration of General Kriengsak Chomanan (November 1977 - February 1980). By 1996, analysts estimated the spread of the "Roi Et Disease" nationwide was costing political parties and their candidates as much as 25.5 billion Baht, (US\$1.02 billion), per election. Reformists were convinced the scourge of money politics had promoted

TAF a Leader In Thai Electoral Reform

For the past two decades, The Asia Foundation has been the leading international organization working with Thai partners, in both government and civil society, to explore innovative strategies to reduce electoral abuses in Thailand. Support to MP Watch resulted in recommendations for the formation of an independent election commission. Research by the Foundation for Democratic Development Studies examined the process, structure and impact of a variety of irregularities and malpractices in local and national elections. Support to regional educational institutions resulted in a better understanding of voter behavior in various regions of the country. Such research was used by members of the Constitutional Drafting Assembly in their deliberations on how to improve Thailand's electoral system. The 1997 Constitution reflects the adoption of many of the recommendations that arose from these studies, such as the move to single seat constituencies and centralized ballot counting. The Foundation also was the earliest international supporter of PollWatch, helping to create Thailand's first, nationwide, independent poll monitoring organization.



corruption of the political system because once elected, officials had to seek ways to recoup their vote buying investments. As the system deteriorated, corruption within the system actually attracted dishonest individuals to secure office in order to use their positions of power for personal benefit at the expense of national economic, social, and political development. The vision of reformers was to wield electoral reforms as a tool to remove the unscrupulous from the political scene.

The first goal of reformers was to create an elected bicameral legislature with a Senate representing the people's interests. Previous appointed Senates had been dominated by senior military and civilian bureaucrats, as well as those well connected to the ruling party. The Senate served essentially as a rubber stamp for the administration and as a conservative force to temper changes to the Thai political and administrative system. The drafters of the 1997 Constitution envisioned the Senate as an apolitical body representing civil society that would serve as a counterbalance against both politicians in the House and bureaucrats in the civil service.

The electoral reforms proposed by the Constitutional Drafting Assembly for the House of Representatives were more complex than those for the Senate and had a variety of objectives. Collectively, however, these reforms were designed to promote two primary goals. The first goal was to remove politicians from office whose long careers had been marred by allegations

Major Goals of Thai Electoral Reform

- Establishment of an elected Bicameral Legislature with an apolitical Senate to counterbalance politicians in the House and bureaucrats in the civil service.
- Removal of long-serving politicians from the House whose records were tainted by allegations of corruption, abuse of power, and conflict of interest.
- Promotion of larger, policy-based parties on which to build a stable administration.

of corruption, conflict of interest, and abuse of power. Replacing them would be new faces willing to pursue policies and development projects which would benefit citizens rather than the interests of small cliques of politicians and senior bureaucrats. The second goal was to encourage the evolution of a few policy-based parties which could establish a stable administration, either independently or in small, like-minded coalitions. These larger parties would reverse the tradition of fractious, multi-partied coalition governments composed of a plethora of faction or clique-based parties led by charismatic or influential individuals whose fundamental policies were centered on self-interest rather than national aspirations. The 2001 General Elections demonstrated significant progress in the realization of both goals, although the ideal of neither goal was fully achieved.

B. The March 2000 Senate Election

Thailand passed its first major benchmark in the political reform process on March 4, 2000 as 71.5% of registered voters participated in Thailand's first direct election of senators. Previous appointed Senates had been dominated by senior military and civilian bureaucrats, as well as those well-connected to the ruling party. The new 200-member Senate had been envisioned by the drafters of the 1997 Constitution as an apolitical body representing civil society which would serve as a counterbalance against both political and bureaucratic forces. There was great concern therefore when a number of ex-politicians, as well as spouses, siblings, and aides to politicians, entered the senate race bringing along with them the bane of vote buying. Citizens recalled the powerful Ministry of Interior had never been able to stop such fraud when it had managed elections; how could five independent Election Commissioners fare any better. Citizens also recalled that whenever a few cheaters were actually caught, they usually were able to complete their term of office long before the courts ever issued their final judgement. It appeared the critical senate elections would be politics as usual; however, for the forces of the *status quo* there were two major problems. First, the ECT was playing with a new set of rules which were stacked against the traditional tricks of electoral fraud. Second, a year-long, nationwide series of voter education activities under the TAF/USAID Election Project had created a civil society backlash against electoral irregularities.

In view of the number of well-connected candidates, political analysts were initially surprised when Bangkok voters rejected the scores of politically affiliated candidates running in the 18-member capital constituency. Instead, reflecting constitutional intent, voters favored a set of individuals representing the diversity of Thai civil society. Elected in Bangkok were such well-known civic leaders as street children's advocate Wallop Tangkhanaurak, "slum angel" Pratheep Ungsongtham, non-profit spokespersons Sophon Supapong and Meechai Viravaidhaya, AIDs activist Jon Ungphakorn, constitutional reform advocate Kaewsan Athibhoti, and Law Society public legal aid defenders Sak Korsaeanguang and Seri Suwanpanont. Pramote Maiklad, the retired Director General of the Irrigation Department, associated in the minds of most citizens with His Majesty the King's royal projects and drought relief activities, received the highest number of votes. He was followed by Damrong Phutthan, a media personality and founder of the Anti-Drunk-Driving Club, and by Dr. Chirmsak Pinthong, a former university lecturer turned political talk-show moderator. Former Minister of Education, Chumphol Silapa-archa, was perhaps elected precisely because of his well-known disgust with the politics of his elder brother, former Prime Minister and Chat Thai Party leader Banharn Silapa-archa.⁵

⁵ Bangkok was not squeaky clean. In view of irregularities, the ECT refused to endorse the election of Vichien Tejapaibul, Chairman of the Board of Trade and the Thai Chamber of Commerce. An appointed senator and the leader of a wealthy Sino-Thai business family, Vichien has been criticized the

The provincial returns were less impressive because vote-buying and other irregularities were rife. More than half of those elected in the provinces were openly connected with politicians. Nevertheless, the provinces also elected some stellar members of civil society including well-known children's rights champion Montri Sinthavichai; hill-tribe advocate Mrs. Tuenjai Deetes, local governance promoter Udon Tanthisunthorn, human rights and gender equality activist Mrs. Maleerat Kaewkam, media freedom defender Somkiat Omvimol, and prominent human rights lawyer Thongbai Thongbao. Khon Kaen Province elected long-retired, multi-imprisoned, former Socialist Party of Thailand gad-fly, Klaeo Norapati.

To the average Thai citizen, the first solid indicator that reforms were underway was the ECT's refusal to endorse the election of most politically well-connected victors; disqualifying 76, or 42%, of the 182 provincial winners, and two Bangkok winners, on the basis of *prima facie* evidence of vote buying or other electoral irregularities. The boldness of the ECT's action was unprecedented, as the commissioners had the courage to disqualify the wife of the Minister of Interior,⁶ the chief political advisor of the Minister of Interior,⁷ the elder brother of the Deputy Minister of Interior,⁸ the wife of the Minister of Justice,⁹ the sister of the Deputy Minister of Agriculture¹⁰, and the wives, siblings, canvassers, and business associates of numerous members of parliament, provincial governors, and city mayors.

past year for using his senate immunity status to avoid indictment for banking fraud associated with the Asian Economic Crisis. Also disqualified was the alleged "godfather" of the Taopoon district. Chatchawan Khongudom has invested in a number of legitimate businesses over the past five years but he has been unable to shake his shady image. His patronage network among those who allegedly protect his illegal gambling dens in the slums was strong enough to provide a voter base of just over 50,000. Ironically, Bangkok voters also elected retired Police General Pratin Santiprapob. He had built his "mafia-busting" reputation based on his dogged pursuit of Chatchawan. In the first by-election, Chatchawan was able to win his seat again and was endorsed by the ETC. Vichien was not as lucky. In the second round he was beaten by Khunying Chodchoy Sophonpanich, daughter of Bangkok Bank founder Chote Sophonphanich. Khunying Chodchoy gained national recognition as a leading environmental advocate, particularly for her NGO, Magic Eyes, which focuses on keeping the streets of Bangkok clean and instilling environmental concerns among school children.

⁶ Mrs. Chaweewan Kachornprasart was soundly defeated in the second round of voting nearly 2 to 1 by Khunying Jintana Siritwansan, wife of former Minister of Defense General Vichit Siritwansan.

⁷ Maj. General Mannonkrit Roobkachorn was subsequently endorsed after winning in the second round of elections. After the dismissal of Senate President Sanit Worapanya, Mannonkrit was elected President of the Senate in March 2001.

⁸ Prasit Potasunton, owner of the Golden Triangle Casino and Paradise Resort in Burma, was defeated in the second round of voting by Ms. Busarin Tiyapairat, elder sister of Democrat MP Yongyudh Tiyapairat.

⁹ Mrs. Maliwan Ngermuen was subsequently endorsed after she won a seat in the third round of voting. She had been defeated in the 2nd round.

¹⁰ Ms. Usani Chidchob was subsequently endorsed after she won a seat in the second round of voting.

This revolution in Thai electoral politics was the result of two fundamental changes: an independent ECT and an active civil society movement. Thai elections previously had been administered by the Department of Local Administration under the Ministry of Interior. There always have been allegations that the ruling party, through the Minister of Interior and his subordinates, had turned a blind-eye to electoral fraud, if they had not actually promoted irregularities. This was one of the principal reasons why the Constitutional Drafting Assembly decided to create an independent election agency. The independence of the new ECT was clearly a factor in creating a new electoral environment, however, this independence would have been meaningless without a critical legal reform in the new Election Act. Previously, only the courts had the power to disqualify a candidate and order a by-election. With the lengthy appeals process, a case could drag on for years while the elected official retained his or her seat. Under the new rules, the ECT is empowered to disqualify candidates and call by-elections on the basis of *prima facie* evidence that fraud has been committed. It is still within the jurisdiction of the courts to determine guilt or innocence; and in the case of guilt, determine the penalties.¹¹ However, during the course of judicial proceedings, the defendant is denied the right to assume office.

In reality, the ECT exercised its new powers with extreme caution. In the view of many constitutional reform advocates, the ECT set for itself a much higher standard than necessary for *prima facie* evidence by requiring proof it believed would actually lead to a conviction in a court of law, as opposed to the lower level of evidence actually required for an indictment. Prosecutors of previous electoral fraud have been plagued by the dearth of hard evidence and the lack of witnesses, yet during the 2000 Senate Election the ECT was inundated with videos, pictures, and hard evidence of vote buying from hundreds of witnesses. Indeed, after the ECT showed the media its stockpile of evidence, which included both cash and a vast array of food and consumer products, an independent iTV political news commentator jokingly noted the ECT was now fully stocked to open its own 7-11 convenience store. What had changed? An unplanned by-product of TAF/USAID Election Project was the creation of a web of provincial and district level civil society networks whose members had assumed for themselves, as individual citizens, the mission of promoting free and fair elections by documenting fraud and signing affidavits for the ECT. While the role of individual citizens was important, PollWatch, the civil society election monitoring organization, also played a critical role in documenting electoral fraud.

With only 122 Senators-elect endorsed by the ECT, the Constitutional Court ruled the Senate could not convene until all 200 had been endorsed. Although the ECT was under

¹¹ Court imposed penalties can be significant, with prison sentences ranging up to ten years and/or fines up to Baht 200,000. Guilty parties may also be ordered by the Court The two most critical reforms were the promotion of to pay for the cost of by-elections (millions of Baht), and may be barred from any political office for twenty years.

pressure from the government and even pro-reformers to endorse all winners in the by-election so the Senate could begin to function, after the second round of balloting on April 29, the ECT held to its principles and refused to endorse 12 winners. Moreover, in order to control fraud, the ECT issued a new ruling that any candidate previously suspended twice would be prohibited from running in subsequent by-elections. Nevertheless, fraud continued and the ECT refused to endorse four winners in the third round held on June 4. Before the fourth round of voting could be held, one of the suspended candidates filed a complaint with the newly established Ombudsman arguing the ECT had no authority to prohibit twice-suspended candidates from running in a by-election.¹² In a highly controversial ruling, the Constitutional Court agreed the ECT had overstepped its authority and power. Nevertheless, no candidate who benefitted from the Court's ruling was elected during the fourth or fifth round.

Implementation of the Senate Elections demonstrated flaws, lacuna, and contradictions in the new electoral rules and regulations. Thus, from the inception of candidate registration, there was intense debate among reformers on methods of improving both the ECT and the election laws. At the same time, forces in favor of the *status quo* sought ways to weaken the power of the ETC. The only issue on which there was general agreement was that the ECT Act required amendment before the General Elections were called to ensure that five months of balloting would not be required before a government could be formed.¹³ The government therefore appointed a panel of distinguished experts, chaired by former Senate Speaker Meechai Ruchapan, to analyze the problems which had arisen in implementing the law during the Senate elections and to propose a series of amendments which would address these problems, as well as further strengthen the ETC.

In mid-July 2000, the Meechai Panel submitted a list of 22 amendments it believed were essential to curb electoral irregularities. A number of influential MPs and Senators immediately criticized the changes focusing on three critical issues. First, the Panel proposed the ECT would have the power to declare a candidate unqualified to contest an election for one year if the candidate were implicated in electoral violations. This would prevent candidates charged with cheating from running in a by-election, and effectively counter the Constitutional Court's previous decision during the Senate elections that the ECT could not

¹² Mrs. Phornthip Thanasrivanitchai had been suspended from the first and second round. She had been barred from the third round. Perhaps reflecting local discontent with her complaint to the Ombudsman, in the fourth round she was defeated by a new face, Panya Yuprasert. Nor were the other three candidates who benefitted from the Court's ruling elected. They were Prawat Thongsomboon, who was defeated in Mahasarakham by another new face, Witthaya Masena; Udon Thani candidate Chairat Soda, who was defeated by new face Panya Yuprasert; and Mrs. Sirirat Chuklin of Nong Khai, who was defeated by previously suspended candidate Mrs. Aranya Sujanin.

¹³ A hard core group of constitutional drafters, however, insisted no amendments were required. They argued that if the ECT properly implemented the constitution and the law, there would be no need for any legislative changes.

revoke the candidacy of twice-suspended candidates.¹⁴ Secondly, the ECT would have the power to dissolve any political party found to have abused a rival candidate. Third, while in the course of an investigation of electoral irregularities, the ECT would have the power to search without a warrant.

It was no surprise, therefore, when the panel's proposals reached the House of Representatives that conservatives sought to redraft the amendments to eliminate the ECT's most critical authority, the power to suspend a winning candidate from assuming office, and the enhanced power to bar cheats from by-elections. The House proposed the Supreme Court rule on all disqualifications. For the next two months there was acrimonious debate within both the House and the Senate, followed closely by the media and civil society organizations. When the bill reached the Senate, the independence of the ECT was restored. A joint House-Senate committee version of the bill was passed subsequently on October 9, 2000 but only after public demonstrations in the central business district brought pressure on the coalition whips in the House to yield to public sentiment.

The Senate's attempt to protect the powers of the ECT was its first major test as a balance against the interests of political forces. However, an initial indicator that the new Senate did not appreciate fully its role as a balance against both political and bureaucratic forces was the intense lobbying by members for election as President and Vice Presidents of the Senate. A clique of retired senior bureaucrats was successful in seating themselves in these position. Nevertheless, within the year one Vice President, Chalerm Promlert, was forced by intense public pressure to resign his senate seat to face charges of statutory rape against a minor. There was a major public out-cry when the Senate voted in a rushed session 87 to 54, (with 47 Senators absent from the floor) to grant Chalerm parliamentary immunity. After civil society forces mounted a campaign to remove him from office under Section 304 of the constitution, Chalerm voluntarily resigned his seat to avoid further public confrontation.

Within weeks, Senate President Sanit Worapanya, who was perceived to be the leader of one of the major bureaucratic cliques in the Senate, was among ten senators dismissed from the Senate on March 13, 2001 by the Election Commission of Thailand on suspicion of cheating in the March 2000 Election.¹⁵ Although they were allowed to contest the by-

¹⁴ The Court had ruled Sections 124 through 126 of the Constitution defined the qualifications of a candidate for the Senate elections. The ECT had no authority to amend this list. Under the amended election law provisions, the ECT is actually empowered to suspend a candidate's right, as a person, to vote. The ECT Act authorizes the ECT to determine who may be disenfranchised. Under Section 126(4) for Senators and Section 109(3) for MPs, a valid candidate must have the right as a person to vote.

¹⁵ The ECT retains the right to dismiss Senators and MPs even after they have been endorsed if new evidence of fraud or other electoral irregularities surfaces. After the Senate was formed, the ECT warned the new senators that investigations would continue. On April 13, 2001, the ECT announced it had sufficient evidence to expel 10 senators on suspicion of electoral law violations. Only two of the senators, Chit Charoenprasert and Nirun Pitakwatchara, were able to regain their seats in the April 21, 2001 by-elections.

election, only two were successful. Maj-Gen. Manoonkrit Roopjachorn, a former young turk who involved in several successful and unsuccessful coups¹⁶ was elected by the Senate as its new President. During the previous year Manoonkrit had maintained a high profile in the Senate, backing an inquiry into corruption in the selection of the National Telecommunications Commission and the promoting the resignation of Deputy Senate Speaker Chalerm.

Some analysts believe the Senate's first year is an indicator that constitutional reforms in this sector are failing; however, this new institution is attempting to develop its unprecedented powers and authority within a highly political atmosphere. While retired bureaucrats and ex-politicians may hold a majority of seats, they have discovered that civil society and the media are determined to place their every action under intense public scrutiny in order to hold them accountable for their decisions. In sharp contrast, the proceedings of previous appointed senates were barely mentioned in the press. Second, although civil society representatives may be a minority within the Senate, they are still sufficiently strong in numbers to thwart attempts by their more conservative peers to overturn the reform process. Moreover, due to the nation-wide reputations of a core group of thirty former activists, the coalition of civil society representatives are able to call upon allies in the media and civil society to focus public attention on critical issues and the actions of their conservative peers.

C. General Elections for the House of Representative: 2001

The first goal for lower house electoral reform was directed primarily against politicians who operate in cliques, often controlled by provincial godfathers. They had begun their rise to power during early liberalization of representative government in the 1970s and 1980s expanding their provincial patron client networks to support their national aspirations. In the view of reformers, these tainted but powerful politicians had used their influence in the executive and legislative branches for the last quarter century to create personal wealth at the expense of tax payers and national development. In addition, these same politicians, in collusion with corrupt bureaucrats were perceived to be the major source of human rights abuses in provincial areas where intimidation and lethal force were often used to sustain their political and economic power.

The 2001 elections did not result in a clean sweep of these provincial barons from power but election results were a rude awakening for many of those who were snubbed for the first time by the majority of voters in their fiefdoms. Among the most influential to fall were

¹⁶ Maj. Gen. Mannon Roopkachorn was a the center of many coup during the 1970's and 1980's. The first was General Thanom Kittikhachorn's coup against the Parliament in November 1971. He engineered the October 6, 1976 coup which ended the brief period of democracy in the mid-1970's, and he then toppled the Tanin Kraivixien Government in October 1977 to raise General Kriangsak Chomanan to power. His last two coup attempts were failures against General Prem Tinsasulanonda in April 1981 and September 1985.

the Asavahame family in Samut Prakan, the Angkinan clan in Phetchaburi, the Yoobamrung of Thonburi, the Harnsawat in Pathum Thani, and the Wongwan in Lamphun.¹⁷ Other extended clans were able to survive but were mauled to one degree or another, such as the Chidchop of Buriram, the Khunpluem of Chonburi, and the Silapa-archa of Suphanburi. The clique of Sanoh Thienthong, which had defected to Thaksin Shinawatra's Thai Rak Thai Party, was the least unscathed and the only family to sweep a province.

Provincial barons and their associates may have experienced difficulty in gaining reelection, however, most incumbents with a reform-oriented reputation were returned to office. In addition, about one-quarter of the constituency MPs are new faces to national politics, although their commitment to the reform process is yet to be tested.¹⁸ As a result, there is a general public perception that reforms were generally successful in creating a lower house with a higher caliber of representatives, and a cleaner Council of Ministers.

The success of reforms geared toward promotion of larger, policy-based parties was even more apparent to the public. Forty-three parties registered 3,721 candidates to contest the 400 Constituency seats and the 100 Party List seats of the new National Assembly. Nevertheless, only nine parties secured a seat, with the leading Thai Rak Thai Party winning 248 seats, just three seats shy of a majority. No other party in Thai history has won more than a third of the seats. Influential clique parties of the past, such as Muanchon, Rassadorn, Prachakorn Thai, and Social Action were essentially wiped out while many others, including Chart Thai, Chart Pattana, Seritham, and New Aspiration saw considerable reduction in their seats.

Secondly, more than in any previous election, the campaign centered on contending policies rather than personality issues.¹⁹ Thai Rak Thai's populist platform, and its slogan of "think anew, act anew" had mass appeal. It was in sharp contrast to the Democrat Party's

¹⁷ Other influential clans who were defeated in the elections include: the Moolasartsathorn in Surin, the Manasikarn in Phitsanulok, Iaasakul in Nong Khai, Lik in Kamphaeng Phet, Lertnuwat in Chiang Rai, and Khamprakorb in Nakorn Sawan.

¹⁸ During the first round of elections, 97 new faces were elected to office. Fifteen were disqualified by the ECT for electoral violations and only six were elected in subsequent rounds. Thus, the new House only has 91 new faces. The 15 disqualified candidates represented 15.5% of all "new face" candidates who won the election. This is the same ratio for the other 303 winners, of whom 47 were disqualified. This suggests that, on average, new face candidates are no cleaner nor dirtier than incumbents. More than half (54%) of the new faces are members of Thai Rak Thai, while the second largest group comes from the Democrat Party (31%).

¹⁹ The 1995 General Election was the first campaign during which political parties made an outward attempt to present policy platforms. However, few policies were clearly stated and there was very little substantive difference between the platforms of the various parties. Secondly, the focus of the campaign was on which party leader would make the best Prime Minister. As one analyst noted: "many voters felt they were being asked to choose a prime minister, not members of Parliament." Kiratipong Naewmalee, Polices of Thai Political Parties in the 1995 General Election, (Bangkok: Institute of Public Policy Studies, 1995), p. ii.

more conservative platform -- primarily a continuation of Democrat policies implemented the previous three years that citizens had grown weary of. Therefore, voters were presented with a clear choice of two different paths the nation could follow over the next four years, along with numerous other options offered by other parties. Personality issues in the campaign were limited to the leadership styles of the major contenders. Again there was a clear distinction between the decisive, decision-making CEO management style cultivated by Thaksin Shinawatra and the public perception that Chuan Leekpai was indecisive and bureaucratic. The three other aspirants for the position of Prime Minister were viewed as either dinosaurs²⁰ or too inexperienced. Thaksin was indicted just days before the election by the National Counter Corruption Commission for hiding assets. This may have caused many voters to turn against him personally but not enough to prevent the landslide victory of Thai Rak Thai.

Improving MP Accountability through Reduction of Dinosaurs in the House of Representatives

An examination of several specific electoral reforms may help to demonstrate how significant progress was made in achieving the goals of reformers. The first set of reforms focused on the issue of vote-buying. During the constitutional drafting process, one of the most contentious issues was a proposal to count all ballots from a constituency in a single location rather than continue the traditional practice of counting ballots at each polling station. Proponents of this reform believed it would be the most critical mechanism to subvert vote buying. Counting ballots at the polling station made it too easy for candidates and their canvassers to calculate the return on their investment. Therefore, they were in a position to intimidate citizens to cast their ballot in favor of the candidate who had purchased their vote. Proponents rejected the conventional wisdom that held villagers cast their ballots for vote-buyers out of a sense of honor for having accepted a bribe. They argued voter behavior was the result of fear of what would happen to them physically at the hands of a candidate if they failed to cast their ballot for a vote-buyer. They further pointed out that, particularly in constituencies controlled by influential dark figures, to simply say no to vote buying was not an option. To reject money was a statement of opposition against the candidate and an invitation for retribution.²¹

²⁰ Thais have adopted the English-language word “dinosaur” (with a Thai accent) to describe any politician or bureaucrat perceived to be against constitutional reforms or with a reputation for serving their own self interests. Dinosaur is derived from a Thai language term for “old think”, which translates as “million year old turtle”.

²¹ See for example the arguments of Khanin Bunsuwan, Database for Thailand’s Constitution Drafting Assembly Records: Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2540 (1987), SR 19/2540, p. 119. Through a grant from The Asia Foundation, the King Prajadhipok’s Institute has digitized and indexed more than 10,000 pages of CDA debate transcripts (of which only one type-script copy exists at the National Assembly of Thailand) and subcommittee working papers on two CD disks. This important historical document is available for purchase from KPI or may be accessed through the KPI website at

The legislature earlier had considered a similar proposal which was soundly rejected by the House of Representatives.²² It was therefore no surprise that the principal opponents of centralized ballot counting on the CDA were former MPs and senior bureaucrats. They highlighted the logistical difficulties and high costs of centralized counting and noted the practice of observing ballot counting at the polling station was a treasured part of village tradition. They also countered that the reform would make the problem of vote buying worse because candidates would simply purchase the counters rather than spread their money to the voters. One former MP insisted the issue should not be specified in the constitution but rather be considered under the new election law which would be scrutinized by the House and Senate.²³ In frustration, another charged that those drafting the law were not the ones using the law, while those who will use the law have no say in the drafting, and when they do have input no one listens to what they have to say.²⁴

**Key Elements of Electoral Reform
to Counter Vote-Buying**

- Centralized ballot counting
- Decriminalization of accepting money
- Single Seat Constituencies
- Mandatory voting
- Election Commission powers to reject winners who had cheated

While centralized ballot counting may make it more difficult for canvassers to hold citizens accountable for money paid, there were several other critical reforms adopted to counter vote buying. First, the acceptance of money or any other incentive in exchange for a promise to vote for a candidate was decriminalized; under the new electoral laws it is illegal only to offer an inducement. The effect of this reform was to free citizens from any sense of

guilt or feelings of obligation. Reformers believed this would be particularly important for citizens who had been forced in the past by socio-cultural circumstances to accept bribes. Secondly, in the past, if a citizen filed a complaint and provided evidence to substantiate a

<<http://www.kpi.ac.th>>.

²² Professor Montri Rupsuwan pointed this out during the debate. Database, SR 19/2540, p. 132.

²³ Buaphrom Thirakalyanphan, Database, SR 19/2540, p. 112. Buaphrom had been an MP representing Chaiyaphum from 1979-1986, and 1988-1991. During the 2001 General Election he ran for a seat in Chaiyaphum Constituency 7 under the New Aspiration Party but lost to Seritham candidate Suravit Khonsomboon.

²⁴ Mrs. Phuanglek Bunchiang, Database, SR 19/2540, p. 118. Phuanglek had been elected to the House seven times from Payao Province under the Chart Thai Party. She ran in the 2000 Senate Election and secured one of two seats in Payao during the first round of elections. She was one of 10 Senators expelled from office on March 13, 2001 by the ECT on suspicion of electoral law violations. In the April 21, 2001 by-election she lost, coming in third after Sa-nguan Nanthachart.

vote buying charge, the citizen was himself charged with accepting a bribe. The net effect was citizens did not come forth with the evidence required by prosecutors to pursue a case; therefore, vote buyers knew they could act with impunity because no case would ever get to court.

Equally critical to the reduction of vote buying was the creation of single seat constituencies and the requirement for mandatory voting. Although not specifically designed to address vote buying, both measures nevertheless disrupted traditional structures which had enabled canvassers to purchase votes or otherwise coerce citizens.²⁵ Specifically, canvassers could no longer extend support to two or more candidates running under a party's banner in a multi-seat constituency and assume that all the candidates would be elected on the coattails of the lead runner. They were forced to support only a single candidate. Secondly, canvasser networks had rarely reached the entire voting population of a constituency. The purchase of a winning margin always had been carefully calculated. The reservoir of traditional nonvoters made such calculations meaningless.

Another critical reform was to grant the Election Commission the power to investigate and make decisions on instances of alleged vote buying. Local police had traditionally conducted investigations; however, they were often under the influence of local power brokers and thus investigations were not always intensive, and in some cases the police are alleged themselves to have intimidated witnesses.²⁶ Secondly, lengthy court procedures and evidence requirements made it nearly impossible to convict anyone of vote buying. The ECT was empowered to overturn any election in which there was convincing evidence of vote buying without the need for a lengthy trial.

The end products of these reforms was not a reduction in vote buying but rather frantic efforts by candidates and canvassers to buy votes with many citizens taking money from more than one candidate. Indeed, just prior to the election, several candidates complained that citizen demands for payments had gone to an extreme and called for a return to prosecution of those who accepted bribes. What the politicians had failed to appreciate was the success of the nationwide effort at civic/voter education in villages to inform citizens

²⁵ The drafting committee did not claim single seat constituencies were designed to reduce vote buying. Indeed, Prawit Chenwiranon expressed his fears this reform would have no impact on vote buying, while Phongthep Thepkanchana (Minister of Justice in the new Thaksin Shinawatra Administration) argued other reforms were designed for this purpose. In his view the single seat constituency was designed to promote the concept of one man, one vote and to make it easier for MPs to respond to their constituents. See for example, Database, SR 19/2540, pp. 93-100. Nevertheless, the reform did contribute to the reduction in vote buying.

²⁶ This particular reform was not always effective. In one case witnessed in Kalasin Province, citizens had filed a vote buying complaint. The local police entered their village in a convoy of police vehicles, sirens whaling, and requested over loud-speakers that villagers should come forth with their evidence. This tactic successfully intimidated the citizens to keep their mouths shut. (Confidential sources to TAF staff member.)

about the electoral reforms and, more significantly, the implications of those reforms for ordinary citizens. One of the messages of the civic/voter education program was simple: take whatever is offered to you but vote your conscience in complete confidence your vote will be secret. As a result, on election day more than 70 longtime politicians reputed to have based their previous wins on vote buying were soundly rejected by their once “faithful” constituents.

A second product of the reforms was citizen activists who provided the ECT with literally tons of evidence against candidates who had attempted to purchase votes.²⁷ Some of the most damaging evidence included nearly 2,000 video tapes of alleged irregular actions. As a result of this evidence, the ECT refused to endorse the win of 62 candidates, and banned eight from contesting in the new round of polling.²⁸ During the second round, voters refused to endorse 21% of those who had been disqualified.²⁹ As with the Senate election, the ECT will continue to review evidence and retains the right to dismiss any MP it has previously endorsed and to call a by-election if it believes the seat was won through fraud.

Finally, as noted in the introduction to this section, a number of very powerful provincial families who had dominated their provinces for nearly a quarter of a century were mercilessly rejected by their constituents. Several of these cliques had gained notorious reputations for involvement in crime and had allegedly used their positions in national government to promote and protect their underworld interests. A question for future research remains, however. Although the majority of the clans were defeated, how was it possible that a few were able to survive? Part of the answer may lie in investigation of new methods of election fraud which certain candidates used to circumvent electoral reforms against vote buying and to take advantage of new loopholes created by reforms such as centralized ballot counting. The Asia Foundation is seeking those answers through a project on “Money and Elections” coordinated by the Political Economy Center of Chulalongkorn University, which is gathering data for analysis from various election monitoring organizations and the ECT.

²⁷ Vote buying is not always achieved through the transfer of cash; many candidates attempted to buy votes with material inducements including rice, cooking oil, fertilizer, clocks, clothing, and household goods. One television news commentator noted after viewing the ECT’s evidence storage room that the ECT had sufficient quantity and diversity of goods to open a convenience store. On the down side, the ECT had to contend with the odor emanating from perishable items.

²⁸ Thai Rak Thai Party candidates received just over half of the disqualifying notices. Five were banned from contesting the second round and another 27 were issued warnings. Chat Pattana and New Aspiration each had 8 candidates disqualified, with 2 NAP candidates banned. Seven Democrats were disqualified, with 3 each for Seritham and Chat Thai. One Chat Thai candidate was banned. The sole Rassadorn candidate to win was also disqualified. “EC Orders New Polls for 62 Seats,” The Nation, January 24, 2001, pp. 1-2.

²⁹ Forty-three of the 54 MPs who were disqualified and allowed to contest the second round were able to win for a second time. Eleven candidates failed to receive approval from their constituents.

Strengthening Government Stability through Stronger Political Parties

When the TAF/USAID Election Project was initiated in 1998 there were concerns the Chuan Leekpai Administration would be forced to call early elections. At that time, the conventional wisdom was such a contest would be a race between Chuan's Democrat Party and the New Aspiration Party led by former Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyut. By 2000, however, Chavalit's party had passed through several phases of self-destruction. The NAP had never had a clear political platform and was basically an uneasy coalition of fractious cliques. As a result, in 2001, it received only 7.2% of the House seats, coming in fourth after Thai Rak Thai (49.6%), the Democrats (25.6%) and Chart Thai (8.2%).³⁰

The general election results demonstrated a clear public mandate for Thai Rak Thai with 48% of the party-list votes and 50% of the constituency seats. TRT was less than three years old when it won the election having been registered in July, 1998. The question arises therefore, how did TRT not only win the election but do so with a greater margin than any party in Thai political history. Detractors of TRT point out that Thaksin bought incumbents from other parties, in particular NAP and Chat Pattana, in order to secure his victory.³¹ However, the 76 TRT candidates who were

2001 General Election Results

PARTY	Party Seats	Constituency Seats	Total MPS	% 2001	% 1996
TRT	48	200	248	49.6	0.0
DEM	31	97	128	25.6	31.6
CTP	6	35	41	8.2	9.6
NAP	8	28	36	7.2	32.4
CPP	7	22	29	5.8	13.2
SER	-	14	14	2.8	1.0
RAS	-	2	2	0.4	0.0
SAP	-	1	1	0.2	5.2
TTP	-	1	1	0.2	0.0
TOTAL	100	400	500	100%	93.0%

 TRT, Thai Rak Thai - Thaksin Shinawatra;
 DEM, Democrat - Chuan Leekpai;
 CTP, Chat Thai - Banharn Silapa-archa;
 NAP, New Aspiration - Chavalit Yongchaiyut;
 CPP, Chat Pattana - Korn Thepharangsri;
 SER, Seritham - Prachuab Chaiyasorn;
 RAS, Rassadorn - Watana Asavaheme;
 SAP, Social Action - Narongloes Suraphol;
 TTP, Thai Motherland - Bhichit Rattakul.

In 1996 TRT and TTP were not registered parties;
 RAS is a faction of CTP members created in 1997.
 After the elections, Seritham announced it would
 merge with TRT providing TRT with a 52.4%
 majority in the House.

³⁰ In comparison with the 386 member House elected in 1996, NAP held 32.4% of the seats, the Democrats 31.6%, Chat Pattana 13.2%, Chat Thai 9.6%, and Social Action 5.2%. *"Phakkanmuang Samphan,"* Vol. 4, No. 1, December 1998 - January 1999, pp. 4-5. (The newsletter of the Registrar of Political Parties, Election Commission of Thailand.)

³¹ Caution must be used when alleging Thaksin "bought" incumbents. One of the roles of political parties is to provide financial support to its members in elections. It is clear that Thaksin and TRT offered many incumbents substantial funds for their campaigns. This does not mean, however, that they were "bought" in the general sense of corruption.

incumbent MPs elected in 1996 under the banners of other parties only represented 19% of TRT's constituency candidates. Of those, only 52 won their seat, representing 26% of the certified winning TRT candidates.³² Had these incumbents remained with their original parties and still won, TRT would still have won the election by a landslide of 39.2% of seats. Moreover, switching to TRT was no guarantee of victory as nearly a third (31.6%) of incumbents who jumped aboard the TRT bandwagon failed in their bid for reelection.

Analysts were aware there would be significant party-jumping before the elections. However, this had less to do with Thaksin and his money and perhaps more to do with constitutional reforms. Thai politicians are accustomed to having the freedom to jump from one party to another both during the four year term of a House and at any time prior to general elections. Reformers believed this freedom was a barrier to political party development and a contributing factor to the instability of government administrations. To address this problem, completion of the 2001 General Election activates a critical reform designed to reverse this trend. Specifically, if an MP resigns from his/her party, they immediately lose their seat and a by-election must be called within 45-days. If the House is dissolved, elections must be held within 60 days. However, a candidate for a House seat must prove membership in the party he or she is running under for a minimum of 90 consecutive days before applying for candidacy.³³ In the future, therefore, an MP thinking of a party switch will only be eligible to contest in a general election if he/she resigns their seat at least four-five months before the House is dissolved -- not something that can always be correctly calculated. Moreover, a clique leader no longer holds in his hand the threat of withdrawing his members from the party as part of his arsenal to thwart a decision on any issue made by the party majority. As a result of this new equation, every politician had to make a calculated decision before the 2001 general election about which party banner he/she would adopt.

The question is why did the major parties attract so few incumbents while TRT was able to entice 76.³⁴ As noted above, Chavalit's NAP went through several rounds of self-destruction as factions fought for control of the party, causing many NAP incumbents to jump ship. The NAP also carried on its shoulders the reputation of being the party in power when the economic bubble burst in 1997 leading to the Asian Economic Crisis. The Chat Pattana

³² Of the TRT winners who were incumbent MPs elected in 1996, 40.4% were from NAP, 21.2% were from Chat Pattana, 15.4% came from Chat Thai and another 6% from Social Action, 11.5% were former Democrats. Two were from Solidarity and one was from Prachakorn Thai.

³³ Office of the Council of State, Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, 1997, (Bangkok: Office of the Council of State, 1997), Sections 107(4), 116, 118(8), and 119(2).

³⁴ All other parties combined only attracted 13 winning incumbents. Seritham attracted five: one each from NAP and CPP and three from SAP. Chat Thai also attracted five: three from CPP and one each from Solidarity and the Democrats. The Democrats attracted one from CTP and CPP one from NAP. The NAP attracted one member from the defunct Thai Party.

Party also faced serious internal problems after the death of former Prime Minister and party leader Chatichai Choonhavan. Many CPP members feared Chatichai's nephew, and new party leader, Korn Thappharangsri lacked the charisma and political skills to lead the party to victory.³⁵ Similarly, the fractious Social Action Party was unable to control its members after the death of party leader and financier Montri Phongpanich. All of the other parties were either new and led by relatively unknown individuals, or they were older clique parties which had never had a major presence in Parliament.

Obviously, both incumbents and new comers to party politics were attracted to TRT because it was a new party and because it was very well financed. There was more at work than these two issues, however. First of all, the party was led by a high-profile individual who was generally recognized as offering a different style of leadership and management, in sharp contrast to the indecisive and bureaucratic styles associated in the general public's mind with the leaders of all other major parties. Thaksin Shinawatra, Thailand's wealthiest individual and IT guru, offered to run the nation with the same efficiency he had been running his telecommunications conglomerate. He would strike at corruption, reign in the bureaucracy, support small and medium enterprises, bring Thailand into the global internet world, and create an environment for national economic recovery.

Secondly, Thaksin was the first party leader to successfully build a party based on ideals, issues, and public participation rather than simply pulling together a contentious mixture of charismatic individuals and the overlords of provincial political cliques with their own self-interested agendas.³⁶ Taksin first entered politics when Major-General Chamlong Srimuang appointed him in October 1994, as a non-MP, to serve as Minister of Foreign Affairs in the first Chuan Leekpai Administration under the Phalang Tham (New Force) Party quota. Chamlong subsequently pulled his party out of the coalition, precipitating the end of Chuan's administration and organization of the July 2, 1995 general election. At the same time, Chamlong resigned as party leader and handed Phalang Tham over to Taksin, who aligned the party with Banharn Silapa-acha's Chat Thai Party to form the next government. Chamlong had attempted to build a reform image for Phalang Tham but Taksin's alliance with Chat Thai led to the party's defeat in the November 1996 general election and the elimination

³⁵ Chatichai's only son, Kraisak Choonhavan, is a prominent social activist and former advisor to the party. Rather than pursue a political career, he successfully contested the 2000 Senate Election. In addition to being chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he is recognized as one of the leaders of the Thursday Group, a coalition of 30 activist young turk senators.

³⁶ Thaksin came under heavy criticism during the final year before the election for his decision to cultivate several provincial godfathers, in particular the NAP faction of Sanoh Thientong. It was after their inclusion that many party faithful, mostly new to politics and who had thought they had been promised places on the party's ballot, discovered their home constituency or party list number had been allocated to "dinosaur" politicians. It was also at this time that Thaksin, under pressure from these conservatives, backed off on several early proposals, such as his promise to promote women candidates through affirmative action measures.

of its influence.

Although Thaksin resigned as Phalang Tham Party leader, General Chavalit Yongchaiyut nevertheless appointed him as a Deputy Prime Minister. However Thaksin was laying plans for his own Thai Rak Thai Party, which he registered on July 24, 1998. For the next two years, through TRT-sponsored seminars and training workshops, Thaksin built a strong grassroots base for the party. Almost ignoring the middle-class and academics, the party gathered public opinion in the countryside in a participatory, two-way communication process to develop the planks of its campaign platform. It then used the marketing techniques that had made Thaksin's telecommunication empire thrive to create a sense of excitement nationwide about TRT and its potential.

It was these factors that drew politicians to TRT as the party of the future and a safe bet for the time when it would no longer be possible to jump from party to party. It was these same factors that drew so many voters to TRT, particularly after it announced key party platforms with populist appeal. These included a million baht (\$24,000) revolving fund for every village, a three-year moratorium on farmers' debts, and a national health plan that would limit patient expenses to 30 Baht (\$0.70) per hospital visit. For the finance and business community, TRT offered the creation of an Asset Management Company (AMC) to deal with non-performing loans arising from the economic crisis in order to spur bank liquidity and to expand credit, as well as a program to promote and sustain small and medium enterprises.

Although election reforms had been designed to promote the use of party platforms, TRT must be given credit for being the first to take the reforms seriously. Among the major measures taken to promote strong, platform-based parties, was the CDA's decision to establish two types of seats in the House of Representatives. Four hundred MPs would be elected in single seat constituencies, while 100 seats would be allocated on the basis of votes for parties. Only those parties which received a minimum of 5% of valid votes would receive an allocation of party seats. It was presumed that the party list candidates would reflect a party's proposed cabinet line-up with the number one slot reserved for the proposed Prime Minister. To promote the separation of powers between the executive and representative branches of government, the Prime Minister and his cabinet were required to forfeit their parliamentary status, and the next person on their respective party list would become assume their seat.³⁷

Taksin understood the importance of securing as many of the party list seats as possible in order to strengthen the party's position in the House. He also understood that these seats were best won by presenting both a strong party platform and a list of competent potential ministers. Had TRT not created a platform of very clear policy proposals, it is doubtful that public policy issues would have played as important a role in the 2001 election

³⁷ Constituency MPs are not prohibited from taking a cabinet position but this was not encouraged. In such a case, however, a constituency by-election is required to replace the minister.

as they did. The Democrat Party must be given credit as well for responding to the TRT platform, point-by-point with its own clear vision and an alternative set of distinctive policy options. This interaction caused most other parties to promote their own policy options. At the same time, however, as a result of voter education programs the public held higher expectations of the political parties and demanded parties explain their policies.

Due to such expectations, Thaksin and TRT recognized they would have a very short honeymoon in which to demonstrate that the party can transform party platforms into public policy. Also hanging over the administration is his indictment by the National Counter Corruption Commission for willfully failing to fully and accurately disclose his assets and liabilities during his stint as Deputy Prime Minister. Taksin initially believed his case would require two or more years for the Constitutional Court to review, thus providing him with ample time to implement his policies. However, the Court operates in a different style from the regular judicial system and will take less than six months to reach its decision.

Taksin is not well positioned to win his case because the Constitutional Court has confirmed the NCCC's seven previous indictments, including that of former Minister of Interior and Democrat Party Secretary General Sanan Kachornprasart, thus barring the officials from any public office for a period of five years. In addition, Taksin's legal team is more accustomed to the regular judiciary and seems unable to address the issue before the Court. Initially taking the position, "I am not corrupt", the Court has reminded Taksin's lawyers that he is not charged with corruption but rather with the failure to disclose assets. The facts are indisputable: Taksin and his wife used household servants as proxies to hold billions of dollars worth of stocks, and failed to report their ownership of these stocks to the NCCC. The only way for Taksin to win his case is for his lawyers to convince the Court that the NCCC's definition of "willful" is not applicable to Taksin's case. Currently that definition is premised on whether or not an individual derived any substantive benefit by the failure to fully and accurately disclose assets and liabilities. Although Taksin has argued that the shares in question represent less than 2% of his wealth, and thus inconsequential, the NCCC points out the shares were just sufficient to lower his family's alleged holdings below the threshold of ownership that triggers a series of Securities and Exchange Commission reporting requirements.

The ultimate test of the Thai political reform process may be how Taksin and his supporters respond to a guilty verdict; or, how reformers respond to a verdict of not guilty. Taksin has suggested that the landside victory of Thai Rak Thai should be taken into account in the Court's judgement. However, although TRT may have received 40.64% of the party list votes, that means the majority, nearly 60% (59.36%), voted against TRT and Taksin Shinawatra.

The TAF/USAID Election Project Program Description and Evaluation

A. The Asia Foundation Civic/Voter Education Program Design Assumptions

The Asia Foundation set about the task of developing a set of activities to promote free and fair elections premised on the Foundation's understanding of the Thai political reform process, and the importance of elections to securing these reforms. In designing a voter education program for the TAF/USAID Election Project, The Asia Foundation was guided by several assumptions which may be grouped into principles of content, process, and replication.

Based on more than two decades of experimentation with voter education, candidate training, legal literacy, and human rights training programs, TAF concluded that both the content and process of voter education would have to be reformed if it were to be effective. Moreover, new methods of replication were required to ensure that the largest number of citizens possible were reached. In terms of content, Thai voter education programs, whether conducted by government agencies or NGOs, have focused traditionally on election mechanics, such as how to register, what to do at the polling station, and how to correctly mark a ballot. These programs also have offered admonitions against vote buying and other sloganeering. To be more effective, the Foundation believed the focus of the curriculum should be on changing values, attitudes and behavior. In terms of process, again regardless of who conducted the programs, typically mass groups of individuals numbering in the hundreds have been brought together for lectures lasting a few hours to a full day by trainers well-informed on technical issues. The Foundation believed a participatory, face-to-face approach would be more effective. In terms of replication, the vast majority of Thai citizens have been untouched by voter education programs because localities which were convenient for trainers to access and which offered appropriate amenities for officials were favored sites to organize training. The Foundation was therefore concerned with developing a process that would enable citizens at the grassroots level to participate in voter education.

TAF concluded Thailand's electoral reforms were ultimately designed to change habits

Transforming Thai Voter Education through the TAF/USAID Election Project

The TAF/USAID Election Project Training Curriculum was designed to promote reform of the Thai system of voter education in three areas and thereby increase program impact.

CONTENT

From the mechanics of voting TO
changing values, attitudes and behavior

PROCESS

From mass lectures TO
face-to-face, participatory discussion

REPLICATION

From select areas TO
grassroots level nationwide

built over decades by parties, politicians, and voters. Nevertheless, the written reforms by themselves would be insufficient to compel any significant change in traditional voter values, attitudes, and behavior. For voter education to be effective, citizens would have to broadly understand the reforms and, in particular, the intended impact of the reforms on the political system and individuals. Secondly, knowledge about the intent of reforms would be insufficient by itself to change the behavior of voters. They also needed to understand how Thailand's 1997 Constitution had established a blueprint for changing the entire system of governance from a bureaucratic polity to a participatory democracy in which citizens have access to redress for their grievances. Voters would need to understand how electoral reforms fitted into this larger package of political measures. Third, since previous constitutions had deterred citizen participation (except for elections), Thai citizens had never learned how to be active participants in their political system. Therefore, a program would have to be designed which would provide participants with both the knowledge and skills requisite for public participation. Moreover, if citizens were to quickly comprehend and use this new knowledge and skills, the focus of the training curriculum would have to be on issues of day-to-day concern to the average citizen, rather than lofty national policies over which

they believe they have no control, or the technicalities of how to mark a ballot.³⁸

**TAF/USAID Election Project Research Identifies
Voter/Civic Education Needs**

The Local Information Center for Development conducted a political perception and attitude survey among a statistical sample of 505 voters in the Northeast between December 1-15, 1998. The findings confirmed assumptions that voter education should focus on the importance of representative democracy, the new electoral system, and the powers and responsibilities of members of the House and Senate. It would also be essential to examine the relationship between the life of the average citizen and the role of citizens in the constitutional reform process. Women, rural inhabitants, youth groups and those with an income of less than Baht 5,000 (US\$120) per month had the least understanding of the new system.

The Election Commission of Thailand requested permission to reproduce the LICD's survey results to inform the 76 Provincial Election Commissions about important issues to consider in the development of voter/civic education activities.

Pre-election research by the Local Information Center for Development (LICD), the Campaign for Popular Democracy, and PollWatch confirmed citizens were unaware of the impact of either constitutional reforms or electoral reforms. For example, most continued to perceive the role of MPs to be the promotion of local rural development plans, the building of roads, the provision of electricity and water, and the development of income generating projects. Under the new constitution, these activities are clearly the domain of

³⁸ Concerns were expressed that the TAF/USAID curriculum may have gone to the opposite extreme of traditional voter education programs by providing insufficient attention to such issues as how to mark a ballot. An unusually high percentage of invalid ballots was raised as an indicator of this flaw. The curriculum may have been a fault; however, further research is being conducted to determine if other factors were at work. Specifically, there are allegations that in some ballot counting stations, officials engaged in fraud to invalidate ballots. For example, in one documented case, the official responsible for unfolding the ballots was found to have attached a small pen to his finger and would make a mark on the ballots of certain candidates to invalidate them. The ECT is currently investigating such allegations.

local elected officials. The majority of rural voters were also clueless to the existence and intent of most electoral reforms. The Asia Foundation drew on this research to identify specific issues to be covered in voter education programs. In addition, the Election Commission of Thailand used the research to inform the development of its own internal and external training programs.

In terms of process, the Foundation held several assumptions paramount. First, the Foundation's own evaluations, particularly in the legal literacy field, clearly demonstrated that the traditional mass lecture methodology had no impact on participant attitudes or behavior. Indeed, the Foundation had strong evidence this methodology failed to provide participants with even a basic grasp of the facts and issues because: 1) the method is boring, causing participants' minds to wander to other issues; and 2) highly qualified, well-intentioned lecturers were usually unable to adjust their vocabulary or examples to a level easily comprehended by the average person.³⁹

Secondly, Thais love to talk politics. However, perhaps because of decades of authoritarian governance, they prefer to do so in face-to-face, or small group encounters. Earlier experiments by the Foundation proved that training programs conducted in small groups of 25-30 participants were not only more effective in transmitting information, they also had a high impact on changing attitudes and behavior. Moreover, participants had a documented history of disseminating their new-found knowledge, values and attitudes to their circle of friends, business associates, and relatives in face-to-face discussions.

Third, Thailand is not a reading-oriented society. The primary source of information for Thai citizens is via television and radio rather than the print media. The Foundation therefore determined training materials should rely, to the degree feasible, on visual images rather than lengthy text. At the same time, this assumption prompted

How Thais Receive Political Information

Pre-election research by the Campaign for Popular Democracy and PollWatch confirmed conclusively that most Thais prefer to receive political information in face-to-face encounters followed by radio and television

Post-project surveys by these organizations demonstrated the TAF/USAID media products reached a broad audience and were well received.

the Foundation to consider development of mass-oriented voter education activities through television and radio.

Fourth, through experimentation, the Foundation confirmed that a participatory training methodology, in which the trainer serves primarily as a facilitator rather than as a

³⁹ This point should not be misconstrued to suggest Thai villagers are politically unsophisticated. In sharp contrast, they are very astute, pragmatic, and resourceful in responding to what they perceive political realities to be in a political system at the local level highly regulated by patron-client relationships. However, just as the typical American might listen to a lawyer or Harvard Political Science professor (or read IRS directions) and scratch their heads wondering what the person is trying to say, the Thai education system equips villagers to comprehend a less complex vocabulary and syntax.

lecturer, promoted a training atmosphere in which participants developed the skills and confidence required to put their new knowledge into practical application. In essence, they were changed from passive participants into engaged activists.

Time Is of Essence in Participatory Training

To ensure trainers prepared under the TAF/USAID Election Project understood the content of the curriculum, as well as developed the skills and attitudes required to disseminate this information to a broader audience, a four-day training cycle was developed. There was initial resistance to the length of the training program from participants and their immediate superiors because such programs are traditionally conducted in Thailand in only one or two days. Indeed, in anticipation of such resistance, the curriculum had been designed to fit into the shortest time frame deemed feasible. A survey of participants conducted six months after their training, however, highlighted a consensus view that four days had been too short. In hindsight, most participants thought a program five-six days long would have been more appropriate.

1,400 trainers were prepared under the project. They are strategically dispersed nationwide among NGOs, government agencies, and academic institutions. With this core of expertise in place, The Asia Foundation believes there will be greater support in the future for efforts to design training programs premised on time required rather than traditional time frames.

Fifth, although it may be feasible to transfer a body of knowledge to participants through a training program lasting several hours, this is insufficient to change values, attitudes, and behavior. To effect such changes it is necessary to either engage participants for several days or to have constant face-to-face reinforcement. Therefore, rather than beginning from the question of how much could be done with a limited budget (i.e., how many people could be trained), the Foundation and its partners began from the premise of how much it would cost to do what needs to be done. This presented two problems. First, if the training lasted more than one or two days, there would be resistance from the participants' superiors because such training programs in Thailand rarely exceed two days. Secondly, there was the issue of where to secure funds to enable the trainers to provide training at the grassroots level.

Finally, to ensure maximum program impact, the Foundation realized it would have to select partner organizations which shared the Foundation's assumptions, and which collectively had the expertise to design the curriculum, provide training nationwide, and engage key contacts to secure additional resources to

Partnering with Networks for Broadest Program Impact

Identify potential partner organizations for the TAF/USAID Election Project was not difficult due to the Foundation's 47 year presence in Thailand and the resulting long-term development of close relationships based on mutual interests and trust with government agencies, academic institutions, and civil society organizations. More problematic was how to coordinate with such a vast array of partners. The solution to this dilemma was to work directly with networks such as the Women and the Constitution Network, the Campaign for Popular Democracy, PollWatch, and the Student Network for Elections that collectively represent hundreds of civil society organizations and university-based institutes, as well as hundreds of civil servants wearing their off-hours civil society hats. Coordinating with networks, which in turn coordinated with their members, enabled the Foundation to efficiently conduct a nationwide program in a cost effective manner. At the same time, it was the linkages these networks had that made it possible to identify and secure funding to expand the scope of the program to reach voters at the grassroots level.

supplement the USAID grant in order to do what needed to be done.

In terms of replication, the Foundation understood that USAID funds would be insufficient to implement a nationwide voter education program. This led to two fundamental assumptions. First, funds could be most effectively used if TAF were able to build the base for a training pyramid scheme. Second, the TAF/USAID curriculum would have to be effectively marketed to the ECT, government agencies, academic institutions, and other funding agencies in order to secure their support and funding for higher levels of the pyramid that would reach villagers at the grassroots level.

One of the most rewarding outcomes of the TAF/USAID Election Project was the favorable reception it received from government agencies, NGOs, and academic institutions, which made nation-wide replication possible. The participatory curriculum developed by the Women and the Constitution Network, with its emphasis on advocacy, participation, and empowerment, was acknowledged as an effective methodology to transfer knowledge, attitudes, and skills to voters. The pool of participatory trainers prepared by the project were recognized as a valuable human resource. This recognition was more than a result of the quality of the curriculum and trainers,

it was also due to efforts by the Foundation to nurture an appreciation of the program. This was achieved by recruiting trainers from a broad spectrum of government agencies, academic institutions, and NGOs, who subsequently marketed the program to their superiors. An added value outcome of this process was a significant reduction in animosity and mistrust between civil servants and NGO workers who trained together and develop friendships under the project.

Replication Was the Key to Reaching a Mass Audience

Thai organizations drew on a variety of domestic and international funding sources to replicate and expand the TAF/USAID Election Project. Three of the largest initiatives are noteworthy. The Election Commission of Thailand contracted trainers prepared under the TAF/USAID Election Project to adapt the curriculum and provide training for 304 election trainers, four from each of the nation's 76 provinces. These second generation trainers prepared over 700 provincial election commissioners and 20,000 election volunteers. The volunteers, in addition to providing direct, face-to-face voter education to millions at the village level, assisted the provincial commissioners and the ECT to manage polling stations.

With support from the Japanese Miyazawa Fund, the Ministry of Justice contracted project trainers to adapt the curriculum to train 300,000 legal aid workers nationwide to conduct village-level training in constitutional rights and conflict management. This program offered recent college graduates and young professionals unemployed due to the economic crisis with the opportunity to both work and contribute to promotion of constitutional reforms and fair elections.

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the ECT, contracted project trainers to adapt the curriculum to train 4,600 teachers nation-wide from the departments of Non-Formal Education, Vocational Education, and General Education in order to ensure young voters participated in the Senate election as informed citizens. Prior to the general elections, the Ministry conducted training for another 656 teachers who subsequently provided voter education training to 30,000 teachers, one from each school in the nation. Approximately 20% of eligible voters were students 18-23 who were voting for their first time in national elections.

As part of the hands-on skill development component of the trainer's training component, TAF had sufficient funds to provide direct voter education to less than 3,000 citizens. Nevertheless, through replication of the curriculum by other organizations and their reliance on the trainers developed under the project, millions of citizens were touched by the TAF/USAID Election Project. In this manner, TAF was able to achieve its goal of using the pyramid system to provide voter education at a mass level with a minimum investment of USAID funds.

B. Designing a Participatory Curriculum

The curriculum for the TAF/USAID Election Project was built on the experience of the Foundation's "Women, Men and the Constitution Project" conducted by the Women and the Constitution Network from December 1997 through December 1998.⁴⁰ Through a series of 65 two-day training workshops, the Network developed, tested, and refined a participatory curriculum that was practical and applicable to a cross-section of society from villagers with a low level of literacy, to local elected leaders, students, and government officials. The workshops were originally designed for women at the local level; however, experience demonstrated that the curriculum was applicable to those with a higher education and that the interaction of a mixed group of participants produced more lively discussion and better comprehension of gender values by both male and female participants.

The core of this early curriculum focused on participants' appreciation of human dignity and equality as fundamental rights under the 1997 Constitution. Key elements examined human rights; community rights; the rights of suspects, the accused, and detainees; and the special rights of the less privileged, the handicapped, and women. The curriculum further focused on the new mechanisms mandated by the constitution designed to protect these rights and to provide redress to citizens, such as the Constitutional Court, the Administrative Court, the Ombudsmen, and the National Human Rights Commission.

After further refinement of this module, the WCN developed a second module focusing on elections under the new constitution. Beginning with a discussion of the different stages and levels of participation in the political process, this module focused on the power potential of ordinary citizens in the political sphere and the importance of a single individual's vote on polling day. Working in close consultation with the Election Commission of Thailand, the Network also developed easy-to-understand sections on election regulations and procedures, and the roles of citizens in oversight of campaigns, voting, and ballot counting.

Finally, members of the Network distilled nearly a decade of experience in organizing grassroots participatory training into a third module on Participatory Training Methodology and Techniques. The entire curriculum was designed so that participants would have an

⁴⁰ The "Women, Men and the Constitution Project" was initiated through a grant from USAID/ESF and subsequently received additional support from Canadian CIDA and AusAid.

opportunity to thoroughly review various techniques as applied by the trainers in each session of the workshop. As part of the hands-on skills development component of the curriculum, participants were split into teams to develop their own mini-workshops. Team members then practiced facilitating a session before video cameras so that their performance could be analyzed and feedback could be provided on how to enhance their delivery. To cap off their training, participants facilitated a full workshop for ordinary citizens, under trainer supervision. For details of the curriculum, see Appendix B.

C. Building the Training Pyramid Team

A fundamental step in the implementation of a nationwide civic/voter education program was the creation of a pool of qualified participatory trainers strategically placed with institutions throughout the nation. The Foundation and its partners organized three types of workshops to achieve this objective: 1) Master Trainer Workshops to prepare Civic/Voter Education Trainers, 2) Trainer Trainer Workshops to develop Civic/Voter Educators, and 3) Civic/Voter Education Workshops to disseminate civic/voter education to villagers. Premised on the Foundation’s previous experience with the preparation of participatory trainers, the partners assumed that only one-third to one-half of the participants in the first two levels of workshops would develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to serve as effective participatory trainers. Therefore, the Foundation established a training schedule to prepare nearly 1,400 trainers with the expectation that only 400 to 600 would be able to consistently contribute to project objectives.

To develop a core group of Master Trainers, the Foundation relied on the expertise of twenty participatory trainers who had refined their skills through a series of Foundation-sponsored projects in the mid-1990's, including the Women in Politics Project and the Women, Men and the Constitution Project, both funded through the Department of State (ESF) via USAID. Eight Master Trainer Workshops were organized for 306 participants drawn from applicants representing members of the Women and the Constitution Network and the Campaign for Popular Democracy, as well as representatives of other NGOs, community organizations, and youth groups. From the formal sector, lecturers from regional universities and the Rajapath Institutes, and trainers from the Election Commission of Thailand and the Ministry of Interior’s Community Development Department were invited to participate. Geographically,

**Participatory Trainers Require
a Diverse Set of Skills**

Not every well-intentioned person has the capacity to serve as a participatory trainer due to the diverse set of skills which must be developed. This is particularly true of university professors and school teachers who have adopted a strictly lecture-oriented method for the delivery of information.

While lecturers perceive themselves as the font of all knowledge and the correct answers, a participatory trainer must be primarily a good listener who can direct participant discussion along a chosen path. The trainer must be non-judgmental and adhere to democratic attitudes by respecting the views of participants while defending fundamental concepts.

the workshops were held in Bangkok, the upper and lower North, the upper and lower Northeast, the East, and the South in order to establish the foundations for a regional network of institutions that could serve as the focus of subsequent project activities.

Select Master Trainers from this group subsequently organized 21 workshops to train 1,091 Civic/Voter Education Trainers. These workshops were organized on a regional basis with six lead institutions focusing on specific target audiences. The Local Information Center in Northeastern Thailand, for example, recruited participants from among village and district leaders, public health volunteers, farmers groups, and secondary school teachers. The Women in Politics Institute focused on Ministry of Interior Community Development Department staff, women's groups, and government officials. The Student Network for Elections recruited students from the nation's universities.

Under the careful supervision of the trainers, the voter educators subsequently conducted Voter Education Workshops for approximately 3,500 villagers. These village-based workshops were designed to provide hands-on training to the voter educators, as well as to test the effectiveness of the curriculum and materials with a grassroots audience and to develop the momentum required for project participants to seek alternative sources of funding to implement voter education workshops at the district and village level.

Throughout this three-step process, the Foundation and its partners ensured that leadership from a broad range of government agencies and the Election Commission of Thailand were invited to participate or observe the various levels of training. Indeed, a Minister in the Prime Minister's Office even participated in one workshop. As a result of this marketing, the project created a core group of officials who had witnessed with their own eyes the positive impact of the TAF/USAID participatory training project on the knowledge, values, and attitudes of Thai voters. Therefore, when it came time for government organizations and the ECT to organize their voter education efforts, all the major programs selected the TAF/USAID curriculum and relied on trainers prepared by the project.

D. Civic/Voter Education Media Programs: the Use of Edu-tainment

The foundation's previous experience with media interventions for legal literacy programs, back by an analysis of commercial media rating surveys, clearly indicated that, with the exception of the educated, urban middle-class, the majority of Thai citizens prefer to be entertained rather than watch serious programs with a political message, such as U.S. productions "60 Minutes" or "Face the Nation". Although similar Thai production proliferate the airwaves, they have low ratings and tend to air outside prime-time when most viewers are watching television. Therefore, the Foundation decided an edu-tainment approach would be necessary if voter education messages were to be spread by the electronic media. Within the Thai cultural context, edu-tainment refers to programs which are essentially entertainment in nature but which nevertheless provide viewers with a subtle, if not in-your-face or comic information message. The Foundation applied this principle to the development of television,

radio, and stage performances to deliver education messages nationwide.

Media Campaign Reaches 1/4 of the Thai Population Every Sunday Evening

The Asia Foundation worked with the Constitution for the People Society to develop and script a weekly ½ hour television program to bring voter education messages to a mass audience. The highest rated Sunday evening program on Thailand's most popular television station, Channel 7, it was nominated for the Thai equivalent of an Emmy for the best new program of the year. Its audience rating of 6.5 translated into 16,250,000 viewers, over a quarter of the Thai population, and commercial revenues to sustain production for the season. The producers received over 40,000 letters a month from admiring viewers with questions and suggestions. The ECT and the Ministry of Interior adopted the program as an official forum for providing election information to the public. The program's success spurred the creation of several copy-cat programs, creating a new genre of Thai television comedy with a political twist.

Tee Khong Rong Pao (Beating the Gong) refers to the practice of village headmen beating a bronze gong to alert villagers that he is calling a meeting to discuss village affairs. The program was designed as a traditional Thai television comedy with the potential to reach a mass audience targeting rural society with a secondary target of women and secondary school students who do not traditionally watch television programs with a political context. The script for each program was built around one specific concept related to the new electoral system or a constitutional reform. The popular anchor of Channel 7's evening news opened each episode with a brief explanation of the problem the villagers were facing. A comedy team, representing some of Thailand's best known comics, then performed a sketch that explained the problem and options for resolution in easy to understand terms and situations familiar to the average citizen. The news anchor then concluded the program through a brief discussion with the cast and a well-known expert or official to analyze in simple terms the villagers' decision.

The TAF/USAID Election Project provided financial support to produce eight pilot programs of *Tee Khong Rong Pao*. Due to the programs high audience ratings, the producers were able to secure commercial backing from such firms as Sony, Coke, and producers of name-brand Thai food products to fund the rest of the television season. Unfortunately, the program is no longer on the air. During its first year, Foundation staff and representatives of the Women and the Constitution Network worked closely with script writers to develop the message and context of each episode. They were unable to sustain this intensive creative collaboration during the second year due to other commitments. Without their assistance, the writers were unable to create subtle scripts that accurately examined critical issues and program quality suffered. *Tee Khong Rong Pao* had been successful due to the unique blend of political expertise from NGO activists mixed with the comic timing of the script writers. This program genre proved very popular. It is now up to producers to discover writers who are able to replicate the unique blend of context and timing.

The Foundation's first endeavor was the weekly television comedy/drama *Tee Khong Rong Pao* produced in cooperation with the Constitution for the People Society. This critically acclaimed series reached a quarter of the Thai population every Sunday evening (see box story). Due to the commercial success of this format, a number of production agencies copied the principles of *Tee Khong Rong Pao* to produce other edu-tainment programs with civic/voter education messages, adding value to the initial TAF/USAID investment.

One of the lessons learned by the Foundation from the *Tee Khong Rong Pao* production was that a critical element to success of edu-tainment programs is a thorough understanding by script writers and performers of fundamental civic and voter education principles so that they are able to more convincingly and accurately convey their intended messages. To draw on this lesson, the Foundation worked with the Gender Network for

Human Rights (GNHR), the Election Commission, and the Prince of Songkhla University Faculty of Fine Arts to design a series of programs based on traditional southern folk arts. As the first step, the WCN provided civic/voter education to 41 southern folk artists, including

22 *Nora* Dance performers, 13 *Nang Talung* puppeteers, and 6 *Phlaeng Bok* singers. The GNHR then assisted the artists to develop a series of scripts and songs which would provide southern audiences with voter education. Live performances were organized in 39 locations throughout the south. Dance and puppet productions were broadcast several times throughout the south via Channel 7 Television, while music tapes were broadcast over four southern radio stations. To reach an even broader audience, the GNHR distributed 100 video tapes and 500 audio tapes to media outlets, schools, and NGOs throughout the south.

In a similar manner, the Campaign for Popular Democracy assisted artists in the northeast to develop traditional *Moh Lam* and *Luk Tung* style songs for distribution throughout the northeast and among migrant labor in Bangkok and the central plains. The Student Federation of Thailand produced a series of twenty-four radio plays "With Love and Faith" to inform citizens about their new political rights and the elections. The WCN also made a series of discussion tapes "Politics for All" on issues related to the election. After the WCN series was aired five times a day over FM 99.5 "Women's Wave", the production, along with CPD and GNHR audio productions, were distributed to Closed Circuit Broadcast Stations reaching villages nationwide.⁴¹

Not all of the Foundation's media efforts were limited to edu-tainment. In cooperation with PollWatch, TAF supported the development of a fifteen-part video series to assist teachers and their students to understand the development of democracy in Thailand, the impact of the 1997 Constitution on Thai society, the essential changes in the new electoral system, and the role of citizens in political participation. The series of half-hour programs was first broadcast nationwide by ETV, the Department of Continuing Education, Ministry of Education's educational television network. Due to the popularity of the program, Channel 11 Public Television further broadcast the series.⁴² In the second stage of the project, PollWatch distributed 1,500 boxed sets of the video series, along with a teacher's manual, to secondary schools and colleges nationwide.

⁴¹ Closed Circuit Broadcast Stations are loudspeaker systems set up in every village in Thailand serving as a community radio station. By Western standards the CCBS are a highly intrusive invasion of privacy as the loudspeakers begin to blare in the early morning hours at a sound level set to ensure everyone in the village is able to hear the broadcast as they begin their day, and again in the late evening as villagers wrap up their day. Nevertheless, CCBS are an integral part of Thai village social life.

⁴² Neither ETV nor Channel 11 are commercial stations, therefore, no commercial rating services were available to determine the extent of the audience -- unlike *Tee Khong Rong Pao* which was broadcast over a commercial station. However, public opinion surveys conducted by the Campaign for Popular Democracy and PollWatch suggest that about 1/3 of the target audience viewed, and appreciated the program.

E. Women and the Elections: Swimming against Patriarchal Structures and Attitudes

Increasing the representation of women was not a stated goal of the TAF/USAID Election Project; nevertheless, the promotion of gender balance in Thai electoral bodies has been an on-going objective of The Asia Foundation since the mid-1980's. The Foundation made a conscious decision to reject the development of a specific women in politics or gender sensitization module for the TAF/USAID civic/voter education program. Rather, TAF staff and curriculum designers from the Women and the Constitution Network (WCN) integrated these issues as a cross-cutting theme into every module of the curriculum.

Based on previous experience with legal literacy and candidate training programs, the Foundation understood that a separate module on gender issues would be counter-productive in the Thai context where patriarchal values remain strong. Agencies dominated by male attitudes often seek to eliminate "Gender Modules" as a lesser priority citing the need to save time and budget. Since the curriculum was specifically designed for adaptation and replication by a variety of organizations, TAF therefore sought integration as a method to prevent such agencies from easily removing the topic from discussion. In addition, even when such modules have been retained, the sessions which address gender issues were often a source of tension when male participants reacted to "women's issues". By integrating a gender perspective and strategically introducing and reenforcing gender issues in each module TAF discovered there is not only less male resistance but also ultimately greater male consciousness of the fundamental principles.

The gender components of the TAF/USAID curriculum were an outgrowth and continuation of efforts to address the traditional under-representation of women in Thailand's Parliament. During the 1980's Thai women began to realize that without a critical mass of elected women leaders, their interests would continue to be ignored by the government. To resolve this impediment, in the early 1990's the Foundation, in cooperation with the Women

Gender Issues: Most Parties Still Don't Get It

With support from the TAF/USAID Election Project, the Women and the Constitution Network and the Women's Group for Clean Elections sent a formal request to each of the 54 parties with candidates in the 2001 General Elections requesting their party submit its platform on a series of six specific issues. The parties were informed their platforms would be published in a paper to be distributed nation-wide in a project to encourage women to exercise their right to vote. Each party would receive equal space (9 cm x 5 cm) to state its position on each question. Each party would also have equal space for a picture of the party leader, the party logo, and the party's slogan.

The purpose of the exercise was to promote a election campaign which would focus on issues rather than personalities and cliques. Secondly, it was to promote debate on issues of concern to women, such as the rights of women, human rights, the informal labor sector, environmental issues, and poverty alleviation. Only a quarter (15) of the parties submitted responses. Of those, only three parties provided substantive policy initiatives on each issue. Collectively, these three parties garnered 407 (81.4%) of the 500 seats in the National Assembly.

Will parties take women more seriously in the 2005 General Elections?

Women Have Slowly Increased Their Representation but Have Far to Go

The gender balance of Thailand's House of Representatives and Senate has been consistently below that of other democracies. TAF programs to encourage the bi-partisan development of women candidates and the promotion of public policy agenda of concern to women has helped to more than tripled the number of women representatives over the past decade.

Election Year	Total MPs	Women MPs	Percent Women
1957	160	3	1.9
1958	160	n.d.	—
1969	219	5	2.3
1975	269	3	1.1
1976	279	6	2.2
1979	301	8	2.7
1983	324	13	4.0
1986	347	12	3.5
1988	357	10	2.8
1992	360	12	3.3
1992	360	16*	4.4
1995	391	24	6.1
1996	393	22	5.6
2001	500	47	9.4

Appoint Year	Total Senators	Women Senators	Percent Women
1975	100	9	9.0
1976	340	16	4.7
1977	360	10	2.3
1979	225	3	1.3
1981	225	3	1.3
1983	243	4	1.6
1985	243	5	2.1
1986	260	5	1.9
1987	260	5	1.9
1988	267	5	1.9
1989	267	6	2.2
1992	270	7	2.6
1996	260	21	8.1
2000**	200	21	10.5

* Includes increase of one in a by-election.

** The first elected Senate.

in Politics Institute (WIPI), the Gender Development Research Institute (GDRI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the Women Local Leaders Program (WLLP) of Chulalongkorn University began to offer candidate training on a bi-partisan basis to women in order to provide them with the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence required to compete with male politicians on an equal basis, and civic education programs to prepare constituencies to understand the benefits of elected officials who have a gender perspective.

The Foundation believed that women politicians, like their male counterparts, needed to develop skills and a constituency base before they would be able to compete at the national level. Therefore, TAF, and its partners initially focused attention on elections at the local level. With such encouragement, in less than four years, elected women representatives increased from less than 1% to 8.5% at the local level and from less than 1% to 6.3% at the provincial level.⁴³ More significantly, in areas where candidate and voter education programs were conducted, women constituted 14% of elected representatives. A number of these representatives subsequently contested elections at the national level.

In 1997, TAF the WLLP, the WIPI, the Women's Lawyers Association, and the Gender Watch Group forged creation of the Women and the Constitution Network (WCN),

⁴³ Gender and Development Research Institute, Data on the Role of Women in Thailand, (in Thai), March 2001. It should be noted that while U.S. government funds were used for the design and early implementation of project activities, the program would not have succeeded without the Foundation and partner organizations convincing AusAid, CIDA, and FES to provide additional financial support for more training programs nationwide.

a coalition of 45 civic organizations whose goal was to ensure the representation of women on Thailand's Constitutional Drafting Assembly and the incorporation of women's rights and interests in the new constitution. After success in this area, the WCN turned its attention to the elections. On a non-partisan basis, the WCN approached the leadership of all parties requesting that they promote a party interest in the development of more women candidates and the pursuit of public policies that the WCN had secured in the 1997 Constitution.

In response, Thaksin Shinawatra, leader of the Thai Rak Thai Party, established the non-partisan Political School for Women, adopting TAF/WIPI/WCN materials and trainers to provide training for potential candidates.

Sunee Chaiyarose, a core member of the WCN was named the school's first Director. The majority of TRT's women candidates in the 2001 elections were graduates of this school. Many graduates, however, including Director Sunee, actually ran under the banner of other parties. In addition, for the first time in Thai history, election campaigns (both Senate and House) discussed critical issues of concern to women such as poverty alleviation, public health care, the informal labor

sector, domestic violence, and trafficking in women and children.

As a result of these Asia Foundation initiatives, women were able to increase their representation in the 2000 Senate elections from an historic level of less than 2% to 10.5%. In 2001, representation in the House, which had averaged less than 3% before the 1990s, was increased to 9.4%. Over half (51%) of the women elected to the House of Representatives in 2001 were graduates of candidate training programs developed by partner organizations of TAF. The incumbent women MPs re-elected represented only 2.8% of total MPs, close to the historic level of women representation in the House. Among the ten women with no previous training who were elected, six were immediate relatives running in the seats of their brothers or fathers who had moved to the party list, and one was a popular movie star.

**The Asia Foundation Candidate Training Initiatives
Contributed to the Election of Half of Women MPs
in Thailand's January 2001 General Elections**

Party	Trained Candidate	MP	Political Link	No Experience	Total Women	Total MPs	% Women
TRT	18	5	2	2	26	248	10.5
DEM	4	5	2	1	12	128	9.4
CTP	1	3	0	1	5	41	12.2
CPP	0	1	1	0	2	29	6.9
NAP	1	0	0	0	1	36	2.8
RAS	0	0	1	0	1	2	50.0
SER	0	0	0	0	0	14	0.0
SAP	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
TTP	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.0
Total	24*	13	6	4	47	500	9.4
%	51%	28%	13%	8%	100%		

 TRT-Thai Rak Thai; DEM-Democrat; CTP-Chat Thai; CPP-Chat Pattana; NAP-New Aspiration; RAS-Rasadorn; SER-Seritham; SAP-Social Action; TTP-Thai Motherland

* Includes one incumbent MP who was trained before the 1996 elections.

The Asia Foundation's strategy of providing training to potential women candidates in tandem with civic/voter education at the grassroots level, and efforts to promote public policy debate on issues of interest to women both before and during election campaigns have had a positive impact on the role of women in politics in Thailand. With this new base of elected women leaders in place, Thai women look forward to elections in 2005 when they seek to further decrease the gender imbalance among elected leaders and further promote issues of concern to women and their families.

"We welcome women with open arms but there are so few women candidates. What are we to do?"

Chuan Leekpai
Democrat Party Leader

"Women do not ask for special favors or privileges to become party candidates but women must be nurtured in the same way political parties have always cultivated male candidates."

Teeranat Kanjana-uksorn
WCN Coordinator

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F. Election Monitoring

Critical to the achievement of free and fair elections is adequate monitoring of the electoral process to identify irregularities and to gather evidence in order to discipline those who disregard the rules. Thailand's monitoring record has been traditionally weak. In the view of many reformers, lax election monitoring was due to the fact that the Ministry of Interior was responsible for implementation, monitoring, and enforcement. Invariably, the Minister of Interior was a senior official of the ruling party and the career path of officials was dependent on their loyalty to the Minister rather than the public. Moreover, at the provincial and local level, ministry officials were often controlled by influential local power brokers. As a result, officials often turned a blind eye against electoral irregularities and there were very few official complaints. In the rare instance where citizens and the media were able to shed light on violations, the cases required prosecution in the courts. However, without vigorous

⁴⁴ Theeranat Kanjana-uksorn was the first WCN Coordinator. Tragically, she and her deputy, Jeeraporn Chimpimai, were killed in the crash of flight TG 114 as it approached the Surat Thani airport in southern Thailand during a thunderstorm on December 11, 1998. Theeranat and Jeeraporn were on their way to conduct one of the civic/voter education training programs. In recognition of her contribution to the nation, His Majesty the King dispatched a flame from the Royal Palace to ignite her funeral pyre.

investigation by the Ministry (the Police), the courts had little evidence on which to base a guilty judgement. In addition, it could take a case years to wind its way through the judicial system while the defendant continued to serve as an MP, if not a minister.

An initial step to address this problem was the establishment of PollWatch in 1992 to both provided voter education and independent monitoring of the polls.⁴⁵ Secondly, under the 1997 constitutional reforms, an independent election commission was created to organize and monitor the elections and enforce election laws. The constitution also empowers the ECT to entrust private organizations to assist it in fulfilling its mandate. In this manner, organizations such as PollWatch would be able to extend their expertise to the Commission.

The Asia Foundation earmarked funds to assist the PollWatch to continue its role as an election monitor. At the same time, TAF provided research and voter education funds to PollWatch to enable its nationwide network to identify trends among candidates and their canvassers, as well as to rebuild relations with local community groups. In this manner, PollWatch would have a better understanding of the tricks certain candidates might entertain during the election as well as develop linkages with local partners who would serve as the eyes and ears of PollWatch. The TAF/USAID Election Project funding for monitoring activities was initially reserved for the development of a training program and reference materials for the thousands of PollWatch volunteers who would monitor the elections. TAF and PollWatch assumed that funding for actual poll monitoring activities would be forthcoming from the government or the ECT in the form of a block grant, similar to previous elections since 1992. However, as events unfolded, TAF/USAID funds had to be redirected to actual monitoring activities.

The ECT established the Center for Coordination of Non-governmental Organizations in Election Monitoring (the Center) to serve as the conduit for providing funds to NGOs such as PollWatch and to provide overall coordination of election monitoring. Only those organizations registered with and approved by the Center were eligible to receive public grant funds for election monitoring activities. Philosophical differences soon emerged, however, between the Center and PollWatch. In the view of the Center, recipients of public funds were in essence contractors of the ECT and therefore were required to follow ECT instructions, including how to monitor and where to monitor. Secondly, in the view of the ECT, monitoring would be most effective if it was decentralized to enable a variety of civil society organizations to monitor in their own area rather than focus all resources on a single organization such as PollWatch.

⁴⁵ PollWatch is officially registered as the Open Forum for Democracy Foundation. Since 1992, PollWatch has received grants from the Thai government to monitor elections on polling day. The Asia Foundation has assisted Pollwatch with the development of training materials and the implementation of training for poll monitors. TAF has also supported post-mortem seminars and workshops to enable PollWatch to learn from each election to improve its monitoring efforts and to develop election law reform proposals.

In the view of PollWatch, public funding should be extended, as in the past, without conditions, particularly those which would compromise its independence. Moreover, PollWatch believed that part of its role was to monitor the ECT itself, just as in previous elections it had monitored the Department of Elections in the Ministry of Interior. PollWatch also believed that it already had a decentralized structure since it was in essence a network of community organizations, the People's Network on Elections in Thailand (P-Net), made up of students, teachers, college professors, professionals, and civic leaders in communities nationwide. PollWatch, at the core of this network, provided expertise, materials, training, coordination, visibility, credibility, and power.

PollWatch believed the ECT strategy was a mistake. Although the ECT could provide expertise, materials, training, and coordination, community groups working outside P-Net would lack visibility, credibility, and power. Over the past decade, PollWatch had developed a respected "brand name" image recognized nationwide. Critical to monitoring would be the ability of citizens to know to whom they could turn and place their trust in with information on electoral irregularities. More critically, the key to silencing citizens is intimidation. In the past, citizens had trusted PollWatch because they perceived it had the power and connections to protect them from intimidation. Small community groups, within the context of their local patron-client social setting, would never be able to provide this level of protection.

Although PollWatch received a significant budget from the ECT for the 2000 Senate elections, as a result of these differences, PollWatch only received Baht 3.0 million (\$69,125) from the ECT for the 2001 General Election, far less than their original proposal of Baht 43.4 million (US\$1.0 million). At the request of PollWatch, the Foundation therefore agreed to provide remaining USAID Election Funds (Baht 3.5 million) for poll monitoring activities and to assist with additional fund raising.⁴⁶ PollWatch also reduced its campaign from all 400 constituencies to a select group of 200 constituencies which, based on its experience in three previous elections, had the most egregious history of poll fraud.

As predicted by PollWatch, the ECT's strategy to monitor through scores of small civic groups was not particularly effective. One of the principle problems, in addition to lack of recognition by the local communities, was that these organizations usually filed their reports directly with the Provincial Election Commissions (PEC). In some instances, local

⁴⁶ One of the most successful fund raising activities was a \$230 per table dinner whose guests represented a cross-section of the Thai business community and the political parties. Renown national artists donated pieces of their work for an auction at the dinner. This was followed by a dinner talk by former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun (who had established PollWatch) and respected social commentator Dr. Prawase Vasi. The evening talk was broadcast live on national TV. Another major PollWatch initiative was Thailand's first televised debate among the five leading contenders for the position of Prime Minister: Chuan Leekpai (Democrat), Thaksin Shinawatra (Thai Rak Thai), Banharn Silapa-archa (Chat Thai), Korn Thepharangsri (Chat Pattana), and Chavalit Yongchaiyut (New Aspiration). It should be noted that these were the only party leaders who publicly presented themselves to the public in their party's campaign as a potential Prime Minister.

commissioners disregarded the confidentiality of those who had filed complaints and as a result citizens were intimidated into withdrawing their complaints. As rumors of such instances began to circulate, fewer individuals were willing to come forward with evidence to either local civic monitors or to the PECs alleged to have betrayed citizen trust. In contrast, the work of PollWatch, and its announcements, received wide and constant coverage in newspapers and over radio and television. Due to the diligence of PollWatch workers, as well as public confidence in the organization, PollWatch was able to file complaints backed by hard evidence and willing witnesses directly to the ECT against candidates in 84 of 200 constituencies.

Part III: Conclusions

The Asia Foundation stands by the opinions of PollWatch in concluding that the January 6, 2001 General Elections made significant progress in promoting Thai political reforms. Although vote buying and other acts of electoral fraud were rampant during both the 2000 Senate Election and the 2001 General Election, the incidence of such irregularities was not significantly higher than in elections during the previous decade. What made the two most recent elections different was a change in the attitude and behavior on the part of concerned citizens who came forth in unprecedented numbers with evidence of irregularities, and a willingness to sign official complaints so that officials could proceed with investigations.

The international media interpreted the flood of complaints announced by the ECT and organizations such as PollWatch, and dutifully reported in the local media, as evidence of the "dirtiest" election in Thai history. For PollWatch, the ECT, and the average citizen, however, such reports were merely a reflection of the reforms which had made it more feasible to report historic reality in the knowledge that something might

PollWatch Conclusions on the January 6, 2001 General Elections

... P-NET found reports by foreign news agencies that the 6 January election was the dirtiest in Thai history misleading. ... it appears new regulations and procedures served to maintain basic standards for a democratic election. Cheating at the polls became more difficult. Vote counting carried out at central counting centers proved to be relatively successful in providing voters greater freedom of choice. With less fear of intimidation and retaliation, the voting public expressed their free will at the polls. Equally important, broad-based education programs of the Election Commission and private groups seemed to be effective in creating more informed and reasoned voting behavior. Democratic aspirations of the people was a key to success in the fight against political patronage. To a certain extent, money and intimidation no longer produce the desired results in garnering support for votes. Preliminary results of the election also indicate that, despite concerns about rampant cheating and election-related violence, Thailand moved to a higher level of political maturity as a number of candidates accused of vote buying, fraud, and political violence were rejected by their constituents. In many provinces, a system of patronage politics inherited along family lines was put to an end.

Press Release
People's Network for Elections in Thailand
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actually be done to punish those involved in fraud.

Secondly, again due to a change in the attitude and behavior of citizens, money and intimidation in the recent elections failed to consistently produce the results which they had historically achieved. At least 70 incumbents whose careers were marred by allegations of vote buying failed in their efforts to re-purchase their seats. More significantly, citizens in a number of constituencies who had suffered under intimidation by local godfathers for more than two decades took the opportunity to cast their tormentors out of the political game.

It is true that a number of vote buyers and several god father-types did achieve their re-election goals. What is more noteworthy, however, is the dramatic reduction in the number of this type of politician in the new Thai parliament and the sharp reverse of an historic trend in which such politicians had been consistently increasing their presence in Parliament. This reversal is a positive indicator of the initial success of Thailand's electoral reforms and bodes well for the next elections in 2005.

The critical question is what led to the dramatic change in the attitudes and behavior of Thai voters which resulted in such a clear redirection of electoral outcomes. Clearly a number of factors were at work including the existence of numerous electoral reforms and citizen expectations about the entire constitutional reform process. Nevertheless, this was also the first election in Thai history in which the objectives and methodology of voter education programs were focused on changing attitudes and behavior rather than simply transmitting knowledge about the mechanics of voting. It was also the first time in which voter education programs reached down to the grass roots level in villages nationwide in a face-to-face interchange of information and ideas with citizens.

Anecdotal evidence from the Election Commission, PollWatch and Foundation partners suggests that the voter education model developed under the TAF/USAID Election Project played a significant roll in the massive shift in Thai voter attitudes and behavior witnessed during the 2000 and 2001 elections. Nevertheless, due to the multitude of variables interacting with each other over the past three years, it would be inappropriate to attempt to rank the importance of the project in relationship to other elements. Clearly, however, the TAF/USAID Thailand Election Project was a contributing factor to furthering Thailand's political and administrative reforms, and in particular electoral reforms.

**APPENDIX A:
BUDGET ISSUES**

Budget Overview

Due to the uncertain nature of this project, USAID issued this grant with a single line item for the entire amount obligated. Nevertheless, the Foundation provided USAID with a planning budget on August 25, 1998 with eight principal line items.

1. Monitoring Activities	\$124,280
2. Voter/Civic Education Activities	412,900
3. Publications	122,120
4. ECT Technical Assistance (IFES)	100,000
5. Evaluation Conference	24,281
6. Reserve	10,665
7. TAF Direct Program Costs	82,804
8. Indirect Costs	202,950
TOTAL	\$1,000,080

Grant funds were used as follows

1. Monitoring Activities	\$ 87,076 (- 37,204)
2. Voter/Civic Education Activities	410,205 (- 2,695)
3. Publications	9,909 (-112,211)
4. ECT Technical Assistance (IFES)	0 (-100,000)
5. Evaluation Conference	1,234 (- 23,047)
6. Reserve	0 (- 10,665)
7. TAF Direct Program Costs	112,926 (+ 30,122)
8. Research	56,245 (+ 56,245)
9. Media Productions	148,982 (+148,982)
10. Indirect Costs	173,503 (- 29,447)
TOTAL	\$1,000,080

Budget Notes:

1. PollWatch requested \$37,492 of the budget originally allocated for monitoring activities to produce a 15-part video series on the development of Thai democracy and the intended

impact of the new electoral rules and regulations. PollWatch believed this production would have national appeal, and more specifically, would be a critical education medium for its monitors, the majority of whom are teachers and professors.

2. As originally intended, the majority of funds were devoted to the creation and implementation of a voter/civic education training program.

3. The cost of publications is subsumed in the budgets for the Monitoring and the Civic Education activities.

4. The Election Commission of Thailand ruled that it would be against the Election Commission of Thailand Act for the ECT to accept foreign aid. Therefore, these funds were diverted to media productions.

5. The plans for an international evaluation conference were cancelled in favor of a domestic, internal review of the elections. These funds were diverted to voter education activities.

6. Reserve funds were used for media productions.

7. The increase in TAF Direct Program Costs reflects the accounting rules which require the Foundation to charge the time of the Foundation's Program Manager to Program Costs rather than Grant Costs. TAF's Program Manager was a member of the WCN team which designed the civic/voter education curriculum; she also served as both a Master Trainer and a Facilitator Trainer. Other project designers and trainers received honoraria for their contributions, and were reimbursed for their travel costs under a sub-grant. The Foundation's Program Manager received no honoraria but her time was charged to Program Costs, as were reimbursement for her travel costs to participate in training activities.

8. The Foundation added a Research line item in order to conduct research to inform the development of the civic/voter education curriculum.

9. The Foundation added a Media line item to produce civic/voter education visual and audio materials which research indicated were preferred by the majority of Thai voters over publications.

10. The original budget was premised on a provisional indirect cost rate of 23.14%. This line item reflects actual indirect costs as charged to the grant.

APPENDIX B:
Sample Civic/Voter Education Curriculum Outline

Civic/Voter Education Curriculum

Which Curriculum?

The Asia Foundation and the Women and the Constitution Network have received many requests for copies of the Civic/Voter Education Training Curriculum. However, the curriculum was, and remains, a product under development. As a result, no final version has been compiled and the WCN has no intention of publishing “the curriculum” because its members believe the modules should be constantly up-dated to reflect changing circumstance and the needs of different target audiences. Nevertheless, there are as many printed versions of the curriculum in the Thai language as there were training programs conducted. The intended target audience explains the significant differences between these versions. For example, the Election Commission of Thailand version, targeted at provincial election officials and poll workers, includes more technical sessions on the legal and procedural issues that officials who would implement and monitor the elections would need to fully understand. Training programs offered by women’s organizations, on the other hand, tended to add more sessions on gender issues; while those from the Ministry of Education oriented the program more toward the interests of young, first-time voters. Nevertheless, each of these curriculum retain the core elements of the WCN design.

A second problem with printing the curriculum is that it is a process rather than a text of information. To provide an insight into this process, and the interaction between trainers and participants, in this appendix the Foundation has translated core elements of the four-day curriculum which was designed for the training of facilitators -- with the note that even this curriculum has been further up-dated. The curriculum includes objectives, essential background information, and activity instructions. Boxed text provides a flavor of the types of responses received from participants. Unfortunately, this translation does not include copies of the scores of overhead transparencies, handouts, and legal texts which were provided to all participants.

The Training Environment

Upon arrival at the training venue participants received the workshop schedule but no other information or hand-outs. On the first day, other than a brief introduction and sharing of expectations between the participants and the workshop organizer, the training team did not elaborate on the structure of the workshop nor explain its contents or training methodology. These were left to unfold as the workshop progressed and the participants experienced them directly. This was intentional to allow participants to think freely and to reduce their anxiety about being ‘wrong’ or trying to give the ‘right answers’ they thought would be expected of them by the facilitators.

The process and the atmosphere in which a workshop is conducted is of no less importance than the content itself, especially when an emphasis of the workshop is a

participatory approach. It is also normal that we tend to 'teach' others the way we were 'taught'. All sessions are therefore designed not to 'transfer knowledge', as usually happens in normal Thai teaching-learning situations, but to create situations where participants would have an opportunity to view their knowledge and experiences from new or different perspectives. The types of questions posed by facilitators were not intended to measure knowledge but to stimulate critical thinking and to encourage the exploration and probing of issues.

On a session-by-session basis the trainers used many overhead transparencies and other teaching aids. Copies of these were provided to the participants along with background materials on the substance of the session, including copies of relevant laws. The objective of the sessions was not for the participants to learn all of the substance in the hand out materials but rather know where they could find the details they would need in the future. A major objective of the participatory methodology is to promote the concept of life-long, self-study.

To be successful, facilitators need to ensure there is an atmosphere of equal relations and mutual respect between the participants and the facilitators, and among the participants themselves. This is in direct contrast to the unequal atmosphere typical of government-organized, top-down, lecture-oriented training sessions. Genuine respect shown to each other through the acceptance of the ideas and opinions of others is critical.

The Western meeting or workshop culture tends to draw a clear distinction between work and play. It usually begins with an ice-breaking activity and a little introduction of participants and that is it. The Thai 'training culture' is slightly different. Short periods of games and songs inserted here and there do much to decrease tensions and create feelings of togetherness, closeness and openness. Fun activities to make participants change their seats so that they belong to a new group in a new activity were be done often. Volunteers were requested to lead 'behavior melting' and 'group relations' activities which contributed to the creation of a friendly atmosphere. Participants were encouraged to use poems, rhymes, songs and skits for group presentations. Finally, a fun-filled recreational evening was scheduled where everyone could show their talent by singing, dancing or leading fun games.

**CIVIC/VOTER EDUCATION
Sample Workshop Agenda**

DAY 1

07.00 - 10.30	Arrival of participants, Registration
10.30 - 11.00	SESSION 1: Welcome and Introductions
11.00 - 12.00	Ice-breaking, Expectations
12.00 - 13.00	Lunch
13.00 - 14.45	SESSION 2: Human Dignity and Equality
14.45 - 15.00	Tea break
15.00 - 18.00	SESSION 3: Rights and Mechanisms to Protect Rights
18.00 - 19.00	Dinner
19.00 - 21.00	SESSION 4: Rights and Mechanisms to Protect Rights-continued

DAY 2

08.00 - 09.00	Recap of Day 1 by two participants
09.00 - 10.00	SESSION 5: Life and Politics
10.00 - 10.45	SESSION 6: Sovereign Power of the People
10.45 - 11.00	Tea Break
11.00 - 12:30	SESSION 7: Participation of the People in a Democratic System
12.30 - 13.00	Lunch
13.00 - 14.30	SESSION 8: Roles of People and Political Parties
14.30 - 14.45	Tea Break
14.45 - 17.00	SESSION 9 Political Party Law
19.00 - 21.00	Master Trainers on Stage (dinner and group activity)

DAY 3

08.00 - 09.00	Recap of Day 2 by two participants
09.00 - 12.00	SESSION 10: New Election Process, Laws and Rules
12.00 - 13.00	Lunch

13.00 – 14.00 SESSION 11: People's Participation in the Election Process

14.00 – 15.45 SESSION 12: Participatory approach and facilitating techniques

14.45 – 15.00 Tea break

15.00 – 17.00 Preparation for team practice

DAY 4

08.30 – 12.30 Team practice and debrief

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 14.30 Continuation of team practice/debrief

DAY ONE:
**Expectations, Human Dignity and Equality, Rights
and Mechanisms for Protection of those Rights**

SESSION 1: Expectations

Background Input: Welcome Remark by Training Team

This workshop is the beginning of a very important task - writing a new chapter in the history of Thai politics which requires cooperation from many organizations. This common task of ours is to enable Thai people to understand that they have the power to create a better future for themselves and for the country. In carrying out this task women will not be at the back any longer.¹ Women have been involved in the process of political reform from the stage of drafting of the new Constitution until it was completed. The task lying ahead is even more important- the election, the means for entering into state power. Please therefore regard this workshop as a place for sharing and exchange of knowledge and mutual learning.

Session Objectives: Participants express their expectations of the workshop.
Participants begin to feel comfortable with the participatory training environment.

Training Activity

Before the participants introduce themselves, ask them to draw a picture of something they like on a small piece of paper. Then divide participants into 3 groups, put each group's pictures together and develop a title to the combined work. When they are finished the members of each group introduce themselves one by one, and explained their individual picture.

Group A: The Constitution, Our New Hope Group B: Democratic Society Group C: Lover of Righteousness

This process helps to break down the inhibitions of individuals to talk about how they feel about issues. Drawing a picture and using the picture helps to divert the participant's aversion about explaining amorphous feelings to explaining something concrete (i.e., the picture).

Request participants to write down their expectations of the training program on a flip chart page.

¹ A traditional Thai saying: "men are the front legs of the elephant and women the rear legs", meaning the rear must follow from the back.

Typical answers include:

see, think, do and plan
share experiences and knowledge
learn new things, new ideas, new perspectives
learn about the new constitution and be able to tell others about it
learn new training techniques
know the new rules about elections and the election laws
meet new people, make new friends, expand own network, find new funding supporter for voter education activities
that the next election will fulfil the hope of Thai people
meet other people who have similar aims

Session Wrap-up

The workshop facilitator states the hope that the participant's expectations will be fulfilled. On the part of the workshop organizers it is hoped the workshop will help develop a common ground of understanding on many issues which were interrelated and important to the elections.

SESSION 2: Human Dignity and Equality

Background Input

Citizen's knowledge and understanding of what is written in the Constitution is essential if democracy is to succeed. The 1997 Constitution is revolutionary in many aspects, in particular, the Articles related to human rights, dignity and equality. It is the first time in Thai history that the basic rights of a person are guaranteed and protected under the constitution. For over half a century, since the change from absolute monarchy to constitutional democracy there have been 15 constitutions during the period 1932 –1997. The "constitution" has been a sacred document and few people were allowed to study it or interpret its meanings. Unlike in many Western nations, there are no civics courses in primary and secondary schools where constitutional principles are discussed. Discussing what the constitution contains and how it relates to the daily life of ordinary citizens is not only a demystifying process but also a process of enabling people to view old issues from a new perspective. Progressive forces campaigning for human rights in Asia have also been smeared through claims that 'Western' values are unsuitable to Asian values, culture and way of life. Changing people's perception is therefore not an easy task.

- Session Objectives :**
1. Trainees understand human dignity as usually perceived by the general Thai public and as written in Article 4 of the Constitution.
 2. Trainees understand the root cause of discrimination.
 3. Trainees understand equality as described under Article 30.

Training Activity

Divide the participants into seven groups and assign each group a different problem to consider.

Group 1. The Thai dictionary of the Royal Institute gives the meaning of 'dignity' as honor, 'honor' as reputation, prestige; while 'human being' refers to an animal with the ability to rationalize or an animal with high morals. In the news we sometimes come across things like "a father raped his daughter", or "a woman prostitute" Question: In your opinion do you think the father and the prostitute have any dignity, why ?

The father did not have dignity because human being means a person who can rationalize, but in this case the father behaved like an animal
In the case of the prostitute, there is a need to look at the situation and cause for such action; if she was in circumstances such as needing the money to help her mother who was sick it was acceptable, but if she did that as a profession then she did not have dignity, it was immoral, there are many other types of work one can do.
The facilitator might ask about men who buy the service, do they have dignity? (Just asked the question but do not wait for a response.)

Group 2. Mr. Ma discovered his wife Ms. Mee committed adultery. He shot both his wife and her lover dead. Mr. Ma later confessed in court that he shot the two persons, claiming that the actions of Ms. Mee and her lover had insulted the dignity of his manhood (male pride). Question: In this case, what does 'dignity' mean? Is it the same as what is stated in the Section 4. What does manhood mean?

Dignity means manhood according to the values of a certain culture
Reflects a double standard and narrow-mindedness of that culture
Not the same as stated in Section 4, which has an international meaning
Manhood means a man would rather be killed than humiliated

Group 3. Police Lt. Jit tried to rescue a hostage taken by a drug-crazed man. Unfortunately Lt. Jit was shot dead in his attempt. At his funeral Lt. Jit was praised that he died honorably with dignity while on duty, truly serving the people. Question: In your opinion how does dignity relate to duty? How do dignity and duty relate to Article 4?

Everybody has equal human dignity- policeman, drug-crazed man, the hostage
The policeman died with dignity because he sacrificed his life for other people
The hostage was a citizen therefore protected by the state under Article 4, the policeman was the state's mechanism

Group 4. A slogan of a previous government stated: "There is no poverty among those who work hard". Question: What is the logic behind this slogan ? Do you agree with this slogan ? Why ? Why not ? If a government thinks along this line what would be the result for the people.

The logic was people were poor because they were lazy.
Do not agree because it does not take into account social and economic structure, opportunity, circumstance, and personal differences.
If a government continued on this line there would not be action to increase social and economic opportunities for poor people, only those who already have opportunities would continue to enjoy them.

Group 5. Family law states “when a husband provides care and openly elevates another woman to the status of a wife, or when a wife commits adultery, either party can file for divorce”. Question: What does this law reflect? Should it be improved? How?

Inequality before the law between men and women
Women did not have a role in drafting the law
The culture that promotes men’s superiority
Should be improved by giving women a voice in drafting the law
The law should accord equal rights to both men and women Education and publicity are needed to create understanding among the public on the issues of roles, rights and equality so that the society at large would see the importance of such issues
Need to start a cultural process which emphasizes values and attitude of gender equality

Group 6. It was reported in the press that an administrator of a teacher’s college would not allow ‘kateuy’ (male students who behave like women, often with a loud personality and appearance) to study at the college. Question: Do you agree with this action? Why or Why not?

Do not agree with the administrator because the order restricted the rights of those persons
Individual’s sexual orientation does not affect learning
The person might have been affected by hormones, but this can’t be used to judge whether he is good or bad
The order denied those students the opportunity to study

Group 7. At a diamond cutting factory, some diamonds were stolen. The factory owner ordered the security guards to strip search all the female workers. The female workers resisted as they did not want to be stripped naked. There were lots of arguments and pushing back and forth between the foreign employer and the workers. The employer was very angry and sacked all the female workers and filed a case against the women for violating his dignity and hurting him. Question: What does this case demonstrate? How does this case relate to dignity?

Those who have a better position in society usually claim to have more dignity than those who have less opportunity and think they can make others do what they want.
The workers did not violate the employer’s dignity in Article 28; the workers themselves also have dignity.

Session Wrap-Up

The facilitator notes many key words were mentioned during the session which need further consideration. They are: sex, gender, social prejudice, sex object, double standard, stereotype, bias, discrimination, equality, women-men roles as expected by the society, women-men roles to increase individual potential.

The facilitator shows the participants a picture of a child, a woman and a man, and asks the following question. What do we see as the same or different in the three persons?

We usually see the differences first before seeing the common attributes among people. Stereotyping also makes it difficult to see the potential of people performing different roles than what we usually see (showing a picture of a woman driving a car and a man carrying a baby).

The worth of a person is often given according to social status, position, and wealth, or sometimes it is linked to duty and responsibility. Buddhism, a value of Asian origin, teaches that all human beings have the potential to learn and develop, and all love their own lives and want to live. International thinking believes that human dignity and rights are birth rights.

SESSION 3: Rights and Mechanisms for Protection of Rights

Background Input

Provided in the new Constitution, through much hard work of the Constitution Drafting Assembly, the Chapter on rights and liberties of the Thai people is quite comprehensive. However, if citizens are unaware of their rights the Constitution will not be very useful. (A copy of the Constitution should be included in the package given to each participant on arrival.)

Session Objective: 1. Participants understand mechanisms to protect their rights.

Training Activity

Divide participants into 2 groups and ask them to give examples of:

a) problems faced in daily life

garbage in the town was left to pile up uncollected and gave out a horrible smell a dam was built in a province but the villagers who were affected did not get any compensation a police officer who was in charge of a rape case talked about what he knew in a -public place to irrelevant people
--

b) experiences where rights were violated

a woman was sexually harassed by a man
the neighbor turned on very loud music bothering everybody in the vicinity
a dog was let loose by its owner and made other people afraid
a school was prejudiced in accepting children who applied

Session Wrap-up

The facilitator outlines the six groups of articles in the Constitution related to citizen rights and liberties.

1. Rights of the accused, detainee, witness, victim or sufferer. Related Articles are: Article 31- right over life, Article 33 – right of the accused, Article 237-condition of an arrest, Article 238- search of a private place, Articles 245-247-rights of the sufferer and compensation.
2. Community rights. Related Articles are: Article 42- academic freedom and rights, Article 44- freedom of assembly, Article 46-local resource management, Article 56- local environmental management, Article 59- right to receive information and public hearings.
3. Rights of the disadvantaged. Related Articles are: Article 30-rights to equality, Article 43- right to basic education, Article 52-right to public health services, Article 54-rights of the elderly, Article 55-rights of the disabled.
4. General rights of people. Related Articles are: Article 34-right of privacy/confidentiality, Article 39-right to express an opinion, Article 57-consumer rights, Article 58-access to public information, Article 62-right to sue a government agency.
5. Women's rights. Related Articles are: Article 5 – equal protection, Article 30-right to equality, Article 53-treatment and care, Article 86- labor protection, and Article 190-right to participate in law drafting.
6. Political rights. Related Articles are: Article 45-right to associate, Article 47- right to form a political party, Article 170-right to submit a petition, Article 304- right to request impeachment and to lodge complaints.

The problem we face now is many rights prescribed in the constitution are not recognized in practice. In reality, there are many hurdles to overcome because the old ways that have been practiced, accepted, or ignored for centuries still prevail. Numerous practices of the police and the judiciary are still in conflict with what is written in the Constitution.

There are rights which are in effect and can be cited. These are Article 31,34,35,39,44. Some Articles are difficult to pursue within the context of Thailand's patron-client relationships, such as the right to sue government agencies and officials for wrong doing. Other rights await the implementation of new mechanisms or laws to become effective, such as the law and procedure for submitting petitions or to impeach an official.

Session 4: Rights and Mechanisms to Protect Rights (continued)

Background Input

Mechanisms for exercising and protection of the rights of citizens which already exist are the normal judicial system comprising the Lower Court, the High Court and the Supreme Court. Article 28 on human rights, dignity and liberty can be invoked as a defense or in filing a suit. A new and very significant provision already functioning is the Constitutional Court which has a mandate to amend or overturn existing unconstitutional laws, decrees and orders, and to conduct judicial reviews when requested.

Four other important mechanisms to be developed within two years are:

1. Administrative Courts which will have a mandate to take care of disputes between state agencies and disputes between individuals and government agencies.
2. Ombudsmen who will look into complaints concerning wrongdoing of government employees and submit reports and suggestions to the National Assembly.
3. The National Human Rights Commission which will have a mandate of promoting, protecting, and investigating cases of human rights violation.
4. The laws to implement Articles 170 and Article 304.

Session Objectives:

1. Participants to learn about the various rights provided under the new Constitution.
2. Participants develop skills in to analyze daily problems and relate these to their constitutional rights and to think of possible ways to address their problems.

Session Activity

Divide participants into five groups. Refer to five of the issues raised in the previous session and request each group to analyze one issue. Participants should identify the right(s) violated in each situation, identify the relevant Article of the Constitution, and suggest which mechanism might be used.

Each group presents their analysis through a role play.

DAY TWO;
Life and Politics, Roles of Citizens and Political Parties,
and the Political Party Law

Begin the day by selecting two participants to recapitulate the previous day's sessions. The facilitator then sets the stage by linking previous sessions with the second day's sessions.

SESSION 5: Life and Politics

Session Objectives: Participants appreciate the role of power in politics and society.

Session Activity

Distribute copies of two newspaper articles to the participants.

“The Cobras’ Throats Will Be Slashed”
(a story about Prachakorn Thai MPs who defected from their party)
“Masseuse Killed by Taiwanese Boyfriend”

Ask the participants how they feel when we see this news? What is the effect on their thinking?

Depressed Worried; if an early election was called it would be difficult because the ECT is not yet ready Don't want to read newspapers
--

Distribute 7 news articles to participants who are divided into 7 groups. Request each group to analyze their article with reference to the following questions:

Who suffered?
Who benefited?
What causes the problem?
What was the consequence of the situation?
What process is needed to remedy the situation?
Who has the power to remedy the situation?

The stories covered in the news articles include:

- Corruption at the Ministry of Health over the purchase of overpriced medicines and supplies.
- A mother kills her HIV+ baby. The mother was infected through her husband.
- Disputes between rice farmers and shrimp farmers.
- Villagers living near a reservoir have been affected by poor environment, drought, and floods.
- An 8 year-old girl had been sexually abused by many of her male relatives.
- Corruption and subsequent collapse of the Bangkok Bank of Commerce
- Mae Moh power plant polluting the air in the immediate area.

Each group presents the results of their discussion.

Background Input

The facilitator summarizes that in all of these cases, the people involved were ordinary citizens. They were sometimes the sufferer and sometimes the perpetrator of the problem. The interconnectedness of most of the situations involved citizens – as individuals and as a group, the laws (inadequate), politicians (corrupt), and government officials (inefficient). There are three main factors contributing to and affecting each other in the political triangle:

Laws/Policies

Agents/mechanisms

Culture

A Passive Culture has the following features: nepotism, patron-client relationships, weak community and weak people's organizations, women are seen as sex objects, pornographic materials and irresponsible media, people lack morals, government officials are used to and see nothing wrong with their abuse of power, and lack of transparency

Inadequate Laws and Policies which are not tough enough to properly check nor protect. Policies and plans are unclear and do not take into account the consequences on the people or the environment, and measures to assist the disadvantaged are unclear.

Corrupt Agents or Officials who benefit themselves and/or friends and families, men who abuse their power, governments which do not give clear/straight forward information, government media which gives one-sided information.

The facilitator asks the questions: What is needed to change from a passive political culture to a more active one, so that the rights of ordinary people and the less advantaged are not violated, and to prevent problems from the local community rising up to the national level? What do we need to do in order to change the political process from the old to a new one?

Session Activity (continued)

The facilitator asks the participants when they hear the word 'power' what do they think of?

the leaders exploitation, advantage taking laws gangsters government mechanisms decision making
--

The facilitator asks participants where power comes from?

someone gives it to someone
being born a human
negotiation

Session Wrap-up

The facilitator explains how power can be used or abused.

Power may be used openly, such as in a competition, use or allocation of resources, promotion or prevention of people's participation. Power may be used which is hidden from the people, such as support of passive culture, acceptance of inequality or development of fatalistic attitudes. Invisible power may be used such as discrimination, denial of opportunities, taking advantage of others, preventing people's unity (divide and rule), restrictions on information.

SESSION 6: Sovereign Power Belongs to the People

Session Objectives: Participants appreciate the different ways in which power is used and abused.

Training Activity

Divide participants into 6 groups and distribute 6 pictures cut from newspapers and asked: How does each picture relate to the three key words power, people and change ?

- Picture of a crowd surrounding Anwar Ibrahim.

People showing support to Anwar, Mahathir used his power to oppress dissidents, political culture of a dictator who does not want to change, people have the right to express their opinions and they want political change.

- Picture of political party leaders (Thaksin and Chavalit) campaigning among people.

Politicians want support from the people. Thai society and political system have been top-down for ages. People who are down below have been ordered by the people on the top, it's like a waterfall where water always comes down. What is needed is a fountain, where water comes up from the people.

- Banham blowing out his Birthday cake candles with senior people from other parties looking on.

People gave power to political parties, but they used that power for their own benefit, politicians cutting cake seem like they are dividing national interests among themselves, don't know whether they would give anything to the people.

- A big group of villagers praying to a banana tree said to have given many people luck.

People feel powerless trying to find real power; people don't believe in their own power.

- A big group of women garment workers marching on a street.

Power is with the people, when people join forces they can have bargaining power.

- Head of Agricultural Department giving seeds to villagers.

Distribution of power; the late news was that there was major corruption in the seed buying arrangement.

SESSION 7: Participation of the People in a Democratic System

Session Objectives: Participants appreciate the power of citizens in directing their own political affairs.

Learning Activity

Divide the participants into three groups. The facilitator asks: When you hear the phrase "participation by the people", what do you think of?

Group 1 - people have not yet participated in the political process

- exercise the right to vote
- apply to be a member of a political party
- choose one's representative (MP)
- examine the use of power

Group 2 - vote in the election

- examine the work of MPs
- vote for good people to become MPs
- spread the ideas
- take part in political gatherings
- people have the power to change politics, society and the economy

Group 3 - local administrative organizations, NGOs

- follow up and evaluate
- vote
- stop vote buying
- examine politicians
- prevent plundering of natural resources

Background Input

The facilitator shows the participants the Political Participation Ladder.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION LADDER

11. Taking political position
10. Apply to stand as an MP candidate
9. Help in fund raising
8. Become a core member of a party
7. Take part in political campaigns
6. Donate funds to support political activities
5. Give ideas, suggestions on policies to politicians/political leader
4. Campaign and convince other people to support a certain party
3. Start talking about political issues
2. Exercise the right to vote
1. Pay attention to news and political activities

Session Wrap-up

The facilitator notes that the level of participation from low to high among the people is an important factor to move the old, corrupt political triangle to a better new one.

SESSION 8: Roles of People and Political Parties

- Session Objectives:**
1. Participants understand the power of citizens in shaping the policies of political parties.
 2. Participants examine political parties and political party laws.

Learning Activity

The facilitator requests each participant to draw a picture of Thai politics, and then divides the participants into five groups. Each group is asked to develop a theme to describe the group's various pictures and to report to the larger group.

Group 1. "A Big Mess": Thai politics is messy . There are no rules. Both the government and the opposition just do what they want. It is like a big tree with a lot of fruit many birds want to eat. But there are worms everywhere both on the fruit and on the tree. The tree is very unstable, without firm roots and is about to fall at any time. There is a politician with broken teeth. Before he got his position he gave money and gifts away, but once he got power he ate (became corrupt) and ate to the extent that his teeth were broken.

Group 2. "Waiting for an Explosion": A volcano- outside the volcano looks good with birds flying in the sky. However inside the volcanic mountain there are Satan, as well as all sorts of evil and ghosts. Their political power came from money. They are fighting each other very hard inside and it is about to explode.

Group 3. "Present Day Politics and Hope for the Future": At present, the Thai body politic is messy, shaky and unfair. Politicians are the cause of disunity within the nation. They came to power through vote buying or giving gifts, pretending that they are good people.

Group 4. "From Problems to Hope": People join together to form political parties. There are many trees representing many parties. The politician is holding a sweet icy pole but he has been licking it, nearly nothing left for the people. The people have to organize themselves with strong principles to serve the people.

Group 5. "Political Allergies": The citizens do not participate. Nobody pays attention to politics thinking that it is dirty and does not lead to anything. The people are crying. The constitution says power comes from the people but in reality it comes from speculators both Thai and foreign.

NOTE: All pictures and their descriptions clearly reflect participants' feelings on the failure of present Thai politics.

The facilitator notes that we have a new Constitution, we have a new path to follow, and asks how citizens can participate? The facilitator asked the participants to draw another picture to depict the features of desirable politics.

Group 1. "Happiness": Women, the disadvantaged, and the disabled are treated with dignity and with equality. The factors bringing about happiness are both the people and the political parties. People have to refuse money offered. We have to ask ourselves why do we vote for this person? 15 persons can form a political party. The work of politicians has to be transparent.

Group 2. "New Dreams in a New Home": Building good politics is like building a new house. All of us need to contribute in this task based on common principles.

Group 3. "Allergy Free": The new Constitution was created from the will and efforts of people all over Thailand. It will make our lives better.

Group 4. "The New Society Will Be Better than the Old One": People had the right to take part in drafting of the Constitution.

Group 5. "A Clear Day": The Constitution will help create transparency, bring good honest people to the parliament. The Constitution will also help open the eyes, ears and mouths of the people. All people, the disabled, children, the elderly participate in the new political process.

NOTE: Much hope and expectation is vested in the new Constitution. Passing of the new Constitution provides citizens with much inspiration and encouragement.

SESSION 9: Political Party Law

Session Objectives: 1. Participants understand the essential elements of the new election law.

Background Input

The facilitator summarizes the features of the new political party law.

Political parties are very important actors in making our hopes and dreams come true. The three organic laws are important tools to develop political parties. Therefore we need to know the law well to monitor and ensure that the operations of political parties are transparent and in compliance with the law. There are also important Articles for example, Article 47, which prohibits government officials from taking any action to benefit or jeopardize any candidate or party. The Political Party Law has laid down matters and conditions for:

- the formation of a political party
- the dissolution of a political party
- the conduct of activities of a political party
- financial regulations.

The facilitator concludes that good politicians and clean politics will happen only through a process in which people participate actively. The facilitator divides the participants into two groups and asks them to discuss the role and activities of citizens with relation to political parties?

Direct roles	Indirect roles
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. form a political party with other people who have common principles 2. become members of or an advisor to a party 3. assist in campaign activities 4. become supporter (as volunteer, give funds) 5. become an MP candidate for a party 6. massive resignation from membership to cause a dissolution of a party 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. monitor their activities, give suggestions or ideas 2. spread information regarding their activities 3. form pressure group to support or protest certain issues

Provide ample time so participants are able to share ideas, comments and expanded on what is presented.

DAY THREE:
New Election Process, Laws and Rules,
People's Roles in the Election Process

Begin the day by selecting two participants to recapitulate the previous day's sessions. The facilitator then sets the stage by linking previous sessions with the third day's sessions.

SESSION 10: The New Election Process, Laws and Rules

Session Objectives:

1. Participants understand the need for political reform and the underlying intent of the new election laws and rules.
2. Participants understand the new election process and the new organic laws related to the ECT, and the election of MPs and Senators;

Session Activity

The participants are arranged standing in a large circle. The facilitator asks them: When you hear the word 'election' what do you think of? The facilitator then throws a ball to a participant and the participant gives an answer before throwing the ball back to the facilitator.

go to vote	-vote buying
politics	-candidates
politicians	-ballots
District Chief	-Political parties
Democracy	-Sub-district chiefs
ECT	-citizen ID card
Election registration list	-campaigns
Cheating	-doubts
the constitution	-policies
more women participate	-alcohol-mocracy
people's power	-some people don't go to vote
campaign posters	-volunteer to monitor
120 baht (infamous amount in the last general elections)	-village headmen
	-consider who to vote for

NOTE: Most of the views will reflect personal experiences during previous elections. The facilitator notes these may be placed into three categories: personalities involved – from MP candidates to local MOI officials; behavior – from cheating, vote buying to alcohol-mocracy; and principles -- including democracy and an increase in women's participation.

To assess the knowledge of the participants regarding the new electoral rules, participants are divided into three groups to consider the question: What is your understanding about the new election process, laws and rules?

18 years old can vote
 25 years and over can become a candidate
 a Minister cannot maintain MP status at the same time
 the staff of the ECT at different levels will be responsible for the duties
 formerly done by the Ministry of Interior
 the Prime Minister has to be an elected MP
 100 MPs will come from the party list, while 400 more will be elected from
 constituency basis
 the ballots will be counted at a central location
 an MP candidate has to hold at least a Bachelor's degree
 Senators will be elected
 50,000 people can file a complaint to remove a politician holding an office
 4 year-terms

The facilitator and participants discuss and clarify a selection of important points identified. The facilitators then goes through the details of two organic laws regarding the Election Commission of Thailand and the Election of Members of House of Representatives and Senators. Many diagrams containing rather detailed information are projected on the screen one after another.

The facilitators raises the question: What might make the next election better than the last one, and would that remedy work?

If there was no intensive voter education, it might just be the same as in the
 past
 The new rule of one MP for one constituency might lead to more vote
 buying
 Because the ballots will not be counted at the local polling stations like in
 the past, this might reduce vote buying
 The staff of the E CT themselves will need examination and monitoring, in
 one province the provincial ECT said they knew who would be the next MPs

The facilitator discusses with participants the importance of issues raised and then leads a discussion about why voting for a certain party was given such importance in the new election process.

NOTE: Care must be taken in this session that the facilitator does not overwhelm the participants with technical details they will have difficulty following or remembering.

SESSION 11: Participation in the Election Process

Session Objectives: Participants appreciate the role of individual citizens in clean and fair elections.

Learning Activity

The Facilitator divides the participants into four teams. Each team spends 5 minutes at each of 4 stations around the meeting room to write down answers to questions presented on a flip chart at each station.

Question 1. Before the election day what can you do to participate?

discuss the election with friends and relatives
find out about policies of each party
check own name in the registration list
conduct voter education, how to vote – correct way of marking
help good candidates in their campaigns
apply to be a member of a party
prepare venue for different parties to explain their policies(ECT)

Question 2. On the election day, what possible problems could happen and how might they be prevented?

Possible Problems	Prevention
1. name not on the list	1. Check the list before the day
2. did not bring/have ID card	2. Have it ready
3. some drunk people came to threaten/ harass people in the area	3. Get policemen to guard the station
4. vote buying/selling	4. Inform the ECT
5. black out, flooded	5. Prepare a contingency plan
6. some people do not go to vote	6. Voter education, campaign

Question 3. When the voting is over, ballot boxes will need to be transported to a central place for counting, what problems do you envisage in the process up until the announcement of the result? How might problems be prevented?

Possible Problems	Prevention
1.the box was broken	1.Prepare a spare box
2.the box was missing	2.inform the E CT staff
3.the box has been robbed or exchanged	3. inform the ECT staff who will have to work with the police, prepare a contingency plan

Question 4. If you came across any wrongdoing or misuse of power in the process what would you do if you were: a citizen, a member of the committee for that polling station, a poll monitoring volunteer?

As a citizen	Polling Station committee	Poll monitoring volunteer
-Inform polling station committee -take down names take pictures -inform media -serve as witness -form an observer group	- inform police, inform next level committee - halt the voting process - in case of a proven fault inform provincial elect com	- record action, collect evidence and inform the polling station Committee

Session Wrap-up

The facilitator summarizes the issues raised emphasizing that before the election voter education emphasizing why and how to vote needs to be conducted. During the election, besides exercising the right to vote, citizens can observe and monitor the action and behavior of voters, candidates and the polling station committee. When voting is completed, counting of the ballots will need close monitoring. The facilitators also explain the structure and functions of the newly established ECT.

SESSION 12: Preparation for Team Practice

For two and a half days, the participants directly experience a participatory approach and facilitation. Team practice delivering a training module should serve as a tool to assess the participants' understanding of the content and their skills as trainers. Another skill to be tested is the ability of each of the participants to work as part of a team.

The facilitator gives a briefing on the participatory approach and facilitating techniques. These include:

- adult learning principles
- appropriate techniques and methods; and
- strategies to encourage participation and use of materials.

The facilitator assigns four teams to develop a training module for one of four topics, which include:

- human dignity and equality
- rights and mechanisms to protect those rights
- the election (for 2 groups)
- political parties

During the final hour of the afternoon session and during the evening the teams will prepare their module for presentation on the final day.

**DAY FOUR:
Team Practices, Wrapping Up and Future Tasks**

Team Practices

Each of the teams is allowed 30 minutes to conduct their their session.

At the end of each presentation, each team is debriefed on how they prepared their session.

For these debrief sessions to be most effective, the presentations should be video taped.

Wrap-up

The facilitator notes the workshop sought to bringing the participants and the facilitators through a critical thinking process. However, for the next stage of training, to be done with trainers or villagers, the curriculum would need to be modified. The three key issues: the Constitution contains the new rules that we need to know, the election is the key to change, and people's participation is essential. Thai politics now is at a critical juncture when all parties and stakeholders including progressive forces lare waging a war to win power, geographical areas, and the people, trying to make the most out of this opportunity.

The pillar of thought behind the theme of this workshop is that without a firm belief in human rights and dignity, a just society cannot happen. We also need to convince people that politics is our life, we cannot avoid and cannot escape from it. Therefore, we need to understand it well and change our thinking and action to be proactive. Only through people's power can make change happen; we need to help them realize that power.