



**Quarterly Report**  
**ALBANIA: POLITICAL PARTY DEVELOPMENT AND**  
**PROMOTING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**  
**USAID Cooperative Agreement No. EE-A-00-98-00028-00**  
**July 1 to September 30, 2001**

**I. SUMMARY**

Albanian parliamentary elections in June were the first since snap 1997 elections were called following widespread rioting due to collapsed pyramid schemes. In 1997, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) oversaw the elections, and Italian peacekeeping troops patrolled ballot stations. During this election, violent political rhetoric was considerably toned down and candidates began to conduct issue-based campaigns. The main conflict surrounding the elections centered on the central voters' list and the declaration of independent candidates. The relatively positive climate of the 2001 election cycle demonstrates a growing ability to attain democratic norms among political parties in Albania and indicates progress in the country's democratic transition.

During 2001 the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), through its political party and civic forum programs in Albania, has pursued the following objectives: citizens understand and engage in the political process; approximately 120 emerging political party leaders and activists acquire party building and election preparation skills that favor their development as future political leaders; and party outreach to the electorate is strengthened through increased levels of participation and responsibility among youth activists in party structures and decision-making. NDI has provided training to political parties through its multiparty Political Leadership Development Program (ZHUP) and in separate single-party seminars, assisting candidates and activists as they increased their political participation and prepared for elections. NDI's Civic Forum program, which seeks to engage citizens at the grassroots level in discussions on democratic principles and advocacy techniques on issues of local concern, has expanded to a third site and has also established an innovative evaluation tool to assess program progress.

In this quarter, NDI conducted the following activities:

**Civic Forum**

- Administered an evaluation questionnaire to citizens' groups;
- Began intensive training of four newly-hired Kavaje field coordinators; and
- Initiated discussions with international organizations on possibilities for collaboration.

## **ZHUP**

- Conducted an evaluation of Albanian political parties in the post-election period; and
- Consulted with political parties to design NDI programming for 2002 to 2004.

NDI observed the following results this quarter:

### **Civic Forum**

- As part of the initiative to increase citizen participation in the political process, citizens from six Civic Forum groups attended municipal and commune meetings; and
- Two villages and one municipality successfully organized and completed community development projects with the help of Civic Forum and World Learning.

## **ZHUP**

- Twelve ZHUP participants stood for election in the parliamentary elections; and
- Four ZHUP participants conducted strong campaigns using techniques acquired through NDI training.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

On June 24, Albanians voted for the fifth time in parliamentary elections since the collapse of communism 10 years ago. Due to various problems with the electoral rules, parliamentary elections were held in four rounds in June and July. The final results garnered a victory for the Socialist Party (PS), which in turn nominated Ilir Meta for another term as prime minister despite the bitter and personal battles between Meta and Socialist Party chairman Fatos Nano. The Socialist Party, which has been in power since 1997, won 73 seats in the 140-member legislature. Forty-six seats were won by the opposition Union for Victory coalition, which was led by the Democratic Party (PD) under former President Sali Berisha. The remaining 21 parliamentary seats were allocated among five smaller parties, as each of them reached the necessary (2.5 percent) threshold for inclusion in the parliament. The PS will now have the power to elect a new president in 2002, when the term of the incumbent, Rexhep Meidani, expires.

These were the first Albanian elections where the focus was more on domestic issues of citizen concern and less on the personality of the leaders. Voter turnout was rather low, with only 54 percent of voters participating in the first round and 48 percent in the second. However, one must keep in mind that absentee voting is not permitted under Albanian law, thus preventing the approximately 2.5 million Albanians who reside abroad from voting. Despite some irregularities and one death, a press release by the OSCE stated that the first round was generally regarded as free and fair and that Albania had shown positive signs of meeting European election standards.

Although the elections were relatively transparent, the election process has been seriously criticized by the PD, which received a high percentage of votes cast but not, in its view, a corresponding number of parliamentary seats. As a result, Sali Berisha has announced that the Union for Victory coalition will neither recognize the results nor participate in the parliament

unless voting is repeated in more than 30 constituencies. Berisha has been called “immature” by the Republican Party (PR), which has referred to his plea for a boycott as “potentially damaging.” The recently founded Democrat Party (PDR), the third strongest Albanian political party, is likely to gain a significant number of disaffected PD members. Finally, the PS could experience further problems due to the ongoing struggle between Nano and Meta, which could in turn seriously impair the credibility of the new government.

Another pressing issue in Albania has been water decentralization. On January 1, 2002, the managing of wastewater systems and the responsibility for providing potable water is to be transferred to local governments. At the request of Chair of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Decentralization (ICD) Bashkim Fino, the OSCE and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) assisted in organizing regional meetings in 12 locations throughout the country to discuss the decentralization of the public water services. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the transfer of power and responsibility with Albanian citizens, mayors, regional council chairpersons, regional prefects, elected MPs, managers of water enterprises in the city centers of the regions and other relevant officials. Additional regional meetings are expected to take place over the next several months, addressing a variety of issues on the decentralization process including urban planning, local taxes and the transfer of state property to local governments. In the coming months, Civic Forum will be working with citizens’ groups and local governments to discuss the process of decentralization and incorporate it into the citizen advocacy program.

NDI has worked with emerging political party leaders through its Political Leadership Development Program (ZHUP). Since 1999, ZHUP has provided emerging political party leaders with practical training on election campaign planning, media skills, and direct voter contact in multiparty settings. The national and regional ZHUP programs have helped cultivate a new body of reform-minded and skilled young leaders across Albania. NDI’s Civic Forum program encourages citizens disconnected from their government as a result of past political and governmental controversies to attend civic education discussion groups and facilitates their ability to become more involved in the democratic process in their communities.

### **III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

#### **Civic Forum**

##### ***Field Coordinators***

In July, NDI trained four newly hired Kavaje field coordinators on democratic principles, civic education topics, and facilitation skills. Veteran field coordinators from Tirana and Durres conducted the discussion series training for their colleagues on five discussion topics: “What is a Discussion,” “Elements of Democracy,” “Rule of Law,” “The Albanian Constitution,” and “Structure and Functions of Government.” NDI’s resident representative led the new field coordinators through team building and listening exercises, and facilitated role-playing. In addition to formal training, NDI’s resident representative observed all of the field coordinators as they interacted with their community groups and offered feedback to improve the development of facilitation skills.

### ***Civic Forum Evaluation***

In July and August, NDI Civic Forum administered an evaluation questionnaire developed in May and June. The survey, designed to measure changes in citizens' knowledge of and attitude toward democracy and their participation in political life, was given to all citizen group participants in Civic Forum, including the newly formed citizen groups in Kavaje, whose answers to the survey will provide a baseline of citizens' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior upon entering the Civic Forum program.

In preparation for administering the survey, field coordinators developed presentations to explain the survey to citizens and participated in role-play exercises to troubleshoot potential questions that could arise. After administering the survey to groups in Durres, Tirana, and Kavaje, NDI entered the survey data into a computer-based statistical program and has since begun preparations for final data analysis. The findings will provide NDI with a qualitative and quantitative means for measuring progress to date and informing the future direction of the program. A copy of the report will be provided to USAID.

### ***Civic Forum Newsletter***

NDI field coordinators have been researching, writing articles, and preparing the design for the second edition of the Civic Forum newsletter, scheduled for distribution in early October. In order to improve their design and writing skills, the field coordinators invited an American university journalism professor to critique the first edition of the newsletter and make suggestions for improving future editions. In addition to meeting with the professor, the field coordinators worked with NDI's resident representative to improve the quality and objectivity of their reporting. These activities have been effective in improving the quality of the design, content selection, and writing of the newsletter and have increased the professional skills of the field coordinators.

### ***Staff Development***

During the months of August and September, Civic Forum field coordinators attended neighborhood municipal council meetings to gain experience participating in local decision-making processes. In September, staff evaluations were conducted, providing detailed feedback and explanation of future expectations relating to their individual employment performance.

Civic Forum field coordinators continued to participate in working groups on topics that facilitate their professional development. The working groups focused on newsletter production, website design, and youth outreach techniques. A fourth working group on cross-community citizen group visits is currently being established.

### ***Cooperation with International NGOs***

NDI's Civic Forum program continues to communicate, and where possible collaborate, with other organizations whose programs complement its mission and goals. The extensive and unique grassroots network of Civic Forum places the program in an optimal position to

collaborate with other community development and political development programs. As a result, during this quarter NDI has discussed collaboration with the following organizations:

### OSCE

NDI began preliminary discussions with OSCE about collaborating on a pilot court monitoring project, which would also be conducted in conjunction with other local and international NGOs working with the judiciary. OSCE also indicated interest in involving the citizens of Civic Forum in the decision-making processes of how to dispose of a defunct pesticide plant in the area of Porto Roman in Durres.

### Management Systems International (MSI), Anti-Corruption Coalition

As a member of the MSI Anti-Corruption Coalition, Civic Forum has created a discussion series on corruption and is now working to produce a reader-friendly version of the Freedom of Information Act and will incorporate it into community organizing training. NDI has also presented its work to the coalition and has shared its experiences with a consultant interested in assisting MSI in the establishment of a judicial watchdog group.

### Netherlands Development Association (SNV)

NDI gave several presentations on citizen engagement to five new NGO Resource Center managers supported by the SNV and OSCE. NDI will work with the SNV to conduct workshops for area NGOs on the importance of citizen participation in community affairs.

### Urban Institute (UI)

As part of an initiative to decentralize water control and distribution, which is scheduled for January 2002, UI is holding meetings for local officials and citizens in their communities to discuss the decentralization. Civic Forum is collaborating with UI on encouraging increased citizen involvement in water distribution, and has used its network to notify citizens of meetings and encourage citizens to request that local officials attend. At UI meetings this past quarter, local government representatives attended from all three of the areas in which Civic Forum operates, and the only citizens present were from Civic Forum citizen groups, representing approximately five different communities.

### American Bar Association—Central and Eastern Europe Law Initiative (ABA-CEELI)

Field coordinators met with ABA-CEELI representatives in Albania who are sponsoring a local NGO crime prevention program in community schools. Civic Forum will be meeting with middle and high school youth and teachers to discuss the mission and goals of Civic Forum as well as the experiences of the three groups in their areas.

### International Rescue Committee (IRC)

With input from NDI, IRC has developed a concept paper for collaboration that links IRC's expertise in infrastructure work with NDI's grassroots network and mission to foster

citizen participation. It has been proposed that IRC provide financial and technical assistance to citizen groups that lobby local governments for infrastructure development. Citizen transparency committees would oversee management and completion of the projects and the transparent use of funds.

### ***Civic Forum Staffing***

The recent expansion of Civic Forum to Kavaje has significantly increased the program workload, and NDI has hired Kristi Vander Berg, a Fulbright scholar in Tirana, to work as a resident program officer. Vander Berg has assumed oversight and implementation of facilitation skills training for field coordinators, allowing the Civic Forum Resident Representative Mary Margaret Dineen to provide hands-on support to those field coordinators whose groups have begun community organizing and advocacy.

## **ZHUP**

### ***Political Party Evaluation***

Between August 28 and 31, NDI conducted an evaluation of political parties in the post-election period. NDI held meetings with political party leaders from the Socialist Party (PS), Democratic Party (PD), Democrat Party (PDR), Republican Party (PR), Democratic Alliance Party (PAD), National Front Party (PBK) and Human Rights Union Party (PBDNj), as well as national and regional ZHUP participants, with the objective of determining the optimal direction of NDI programming during the next two years.

Participating in the evaluation were NDI Albania Political Party Director Gillian Gloyer, Former Chief of Staff to Helmut Kohl Dr. Hans Achim Roll, and NDI/Albania Program Manager Amy Gray. NDI discussed the results of the parliamentary elections with the parties; in all cases, the parties expressed their frustration with constitutional court decisions, which they felt had unfairly reduced their representation in parliament. NDI and the parties focused on the direction in which the parties wanted to move and the ways in which NDI could assist them. Four areas of party strengthening were discussed: constituency relations, party branch development, caucus development, and increased women's participation. ZHUP participants expressed an interest in strengthening relationships with their respective parties, strengthening their skills as they work on party branch development, constituent outreach and increasing the political participation of women and youth. A formal report on the political party assessment is currently being drafted and NDI will customize future assistance to meet individual party needs.

## **VI. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **Civic Forum**

***Objective:***     ***Citizens understand and engage in the political process.***

- Citizens from at least six Civic Forum citizen groups attended municipal and commune meetings, and visited their local elected representatives to discuss community concerns.

- In the past quarter, there were several examples of citizens successfully organizing and working with local governments to solve community problems. Citizens in these communities pooled money from local government, World Learning, and the community for projects that would improve their communities. As an integral part of all projects, a citizen transparency group monitored project expenditures and deadlines and prepared project reports. The following projects were completed:
  - Citizens in the village of Rubjeke worked with teachers, parents and students to rehabilitate the community primary school. Citizens built a school fence, fixed the garden, replaced all windows, painted, repaired the toilet, and fixed the sport field of the school. After successfully completing that project, citizens from the community are now pressuring the regional education department representative to provide new desks. The citizens have already started meeting to determine the focus of their next initiative. The successful rehabilitation of the school is the subject of a Heroes of Albania program produced by IREX, which will be televised nationwide in October.
  - The municipality of Manez received money from World Learning to open a community information center. The municipality rehabilitated a room in the building, and citizens from Civic Forum worked together to purchase a computer, printer and furniture. They are now working together to make the center a place that serves the community. The next issue the citizens have identified is an awareness campaign for garbage disposal, and the center will be used to produce awareness materials for the campaign.
- The following communities have also taken action in this reporting period:
  - After many tries, citizens in Hamallaj successfully advocated to their local government for windows for the community's elementary school.
  - In the town of Peze, where three Civic Forum groups meet regularly, citizens developed a strategy for community engagement in cleaning the water canals. After holding awareness meetings, community members organized and participated in a successful effort to clean the canals.
  - In Bexulle, citizens are strategizing about ways to improve the garbage collection system, as there currently are no garbage collection sites and too few garbage dumpsters. The citizens approached both their local government as well as the prefecture, both of which have no money for such a project. The citizens continue to meet and plan for a solution.
  - After successfully lobbying their local government for a water pump, citizens in the village of Mucaj are again without water due to shortages in the Tirana water supply. These citizens have become actively involved in

discussions hosted by the Urban Institute regarding the approaching deadline for decentralization of water distribution in 2002.

## ZHUP

**Objective:** *Approximately 120 emerging political party leaders and activists acquire party building and election preparation skills that favor their development as future political leaders; and*

**Objective:** *Political party outreach to the electorate is strengthened on the basis of increasing levels of participation and responsibility among youth activists in party structures and decision making.*

- Twelve ZHUP participants stood for election in the parliamentary elections.
- From ZHUP I, Roland Bejko of the Union for Victory (BF) ran a close race in Zone 89. Bejko garnered 4,969 votes and ran a textbook modern campaign, which drew heavily on NDI's training in the ZHUP program. He was assisted by ZHUP participants Juxhin Shazivari (ZHUP II), Altin Babameto, and Kristina Fidhi (Regional ZHUP). He forced the deputy prime minister into a second round, and won 40 percent of the vote, almost twice as much as his party had obtained in 1997.
- After participating in ZHUP I, Reiz Mulita of the Social Democrat Party (PSD) ran in Zone 73 and concentrated on publicizing his party through the local media. Destan Spahiu (PAD) ran in Zone 10, and used techniques of direct contact with voters to boost his party's vote. In both these cases, although the number of votes obtained by the individual candidates was not very high, they achieved their objective of maximizing the vote for their respective parties. On this second ballot, both Mulita and Spahiu secured a higher percentage of the proportional vote (around 5 percent) than their party's national average.
- A participant in ZHUP II, Thanas Poçi (PBDNj), ran in Zone 81 and garnered 1,236 votes. Despite running a campaign with no support from his party, he achieved an excellent result in comparison with that of many better-known figures from the PBDNj. Similarly, Erion Dasho (PSD), also a participant in ZHUP II, ran in zone 77 and garnered 221 votes.
- From the regional ZHUP program, the following participants ran in the parliamentary elections: Arjan Qiriazhi (PSD) ran in zone 87 and won 311 votes. From the PDK, Ferdinand Marku ran in zone 50 and won 192 votes. Nedai Kambo ran in zone 55 and won 25 votes, Flori Karriqi in zone 59 garnered 317 votes, Ilia Jatagani in zone 79 won 105 votes and Avdulla Cano in zone 85 won 107 votes.

## **V. EVALUATION**

Although NDI continues to make progress toward its objectives, due to the terrorist attacks on September 11 and the subsequent cancellation of international flights, NDI had to delay sending consultant and Civic Forum survey co-designer Dr. William Millsap to Tirana to train field coordinators on analyzing and reporting on the participant evaluation data. In the next reporting period Civic Forum anticipates it will complete the data analysis, administer focus groups, and write a report on its findings.

NDI is currently in discussions with USAID regarding a no-cost extension through May 2002 to complete activities.

## **VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

Civic Forum activities in the next quarter will include the following:

- Staff training on communication, leadership and team building in October, with training provided by the local Albanian National Training/Technical Assistance Resource Center (ANTTARC);
- Continued discussions with citizen groups in Kavaje on democratic principles and processes; and
- Continued training on organizing and advocacy techniques with established citizen groups.

ZHUP program activities in the next quarter will include the following:

- Summit conference for all members of the first and second ZHUP training cycles in late October that will focus on political party development between elections; and
- Continued regional ZHUP training, with a focus on training for trainers in local campaigning and communicating with voters.