

**Legislative Strengthening:  
A Synthesis of USAID Experience**

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## **LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING: AN OVERVIEW OF USAID EXPERIENCE**

### **Introduction**

The term "legislative strengthening" refers to activities that contribute to the institutional development and technical capacity of legislatures. USAID has sponsored activities in this field for more than two decades, beginning in Latin America and Southeast Asia. In both regions, highly centralized military dictatorships gave way to fledgling democracies whose legislative systems lacked the capability to effectively represent constituents, introduce legislation, and act as a sufficient check to the executive power. In the past six years, several new democracies with similar legacies, from Africa to the former Communist bloc, have also undertaken efforts to strengthen the legislative branch of their governments with the help of USAID.

This overview draws from evaluations, interviews, and lessons learned, to examine the methodology and effectiveness of USAID-supported legislative strengthening projects. A collection of lessons learned follows the overview, as well as an annotated bibliography, and a contact list of organizations that have worked with USAID in this field. In all, this package attempts to synthesize existing information on USAID experience in legislative strengthening. It does not address the larger conceptual issues of whether legislative strengthening activities may be appropriate for a given USAID Mission's democracy program.

The first section of this overview focuses on the two main components of legislative strengthening assistance -- educational activities and information services development -- and reflects on some of the benefits of the approaches used. The second section highlights several variables involved in project implementation, based on the particular needs of different legislative systems. The final section examines potential problems and contains a warning: Legislative strengthening projects strike at the heart of sovereign political systems, and so implementers must take pains to avoid being accused of meddling in the host country's internal affairs. The lessons learned on this topic indicate that careful coordination among donors, implementers, legislative leaders, and other political actors is the key to forestalling such concerns if and when they arise.

### **Components of USAID Legislative Strengthening Programs**

#### *Educational Activities*

USAID-sponsored educational activities for legislators and their staff have focused on transferring knowledge and sharing experience of how legislatures work within the framework of a democratic political system. Such training has typically taken two forms, seminars and study tours. Since USIA also sponsors study tours to visit state legislatures, USAID's legislative strengthening efforts tend to focus on seminars.

**Seminars** can be held either in-house, involving all legislators and key staff members of a sitting parliament, or else regionally, involving select groups of legislators and staff from several neighboring countries. While in-house seminars are generally easier to organize and offer the advantage of covering an entire legislature, regional workshops and panel sessions are useful for building contacts and sharing experiences among more targeted groups of legislators from several countries.

**Study tours**, in contrast, allow participants to visit and observe more advanced legislatures, usually in the United States and Europe. While study tours typically involve delegations of 20 or 30 legislators, some relatively advanced parliamentary research centers have provided tours for research technicians and librarians as well. These programs offer participants a glance at how better established legislative systems conduct business, and also how legislative support systems can strengthen the entire legislative branch.

The advantages of such educational activities derive from the legislators' opportunities to interact with others. Regional seminars and study tours foster ties among legislators and technicians that can lead to an international constituency for democracy. The same activities also promote cooperation and communication among legislators from different political parties, whose personal interactions at a seminar or on a study tour may encourage deeper understanding and less mutual animosity. Most importantly, training activities tend to generate favorable attention in the local press and often involve local legislative experts in the planning stages. These activities are designed to encourage other sectors of society to take a broader interest in the legislature, which in turn may contribute to the overall relevance of the legislative branch to the political process.

#### *Information Services Development*

The information services component of USAID legislative strengthening projects provides technical assistance in accessing and keeping track of information relevant to the legislature's activities. Depending on the existing research and data tracking resources already available, a project's technical activities may concentrate on setting up databases, bill tracking systems, or constituent services; modernizing an out-of-date parliamentary library; or starting entirely from scratch with an assessment of the legislature's most urgent information resource needs.

The advantages of information services development derive from the legislature's increased ability to receive and process data that may have an impact on legislation. Expanding the body's research capability allows members to scrutinize incoming proposals from a more knowledgeable standpoint, leading to informed debate and, ideally, better laws. Members with knowledge on a given topic may then opt to initiate legislation rather than just voting on proposals sent from the executive, a process which ultimately increases the scope and power of the legislative branch within the political system. Also, information services can act as a liaison between members and their constituents, either through polling, or through direct communications with outside interest groups, academic experts, and the media. In sum, the

lessons learned suggest that developing information systems can help legislatures become more responsive, more proactive, and generally more vigorous within the political system.

### **Issues in Legislative Strengthening**

Since all legislatures are unique, several different approaches to legislative strengthening have been implemented and evaluated. The literature on this subject is rife with examples of how the same basic procedures and components of legislative strengthening projects can be modified to fit the needs of a particular legislature. These modifications are based on a series of choices, a few of which are summarized as follows:

*1. Should information services be developed on-site, under the direct supervision of the legislative staff, or off-site, through affiliation with a local university or research institution?*

A review of USAID's experience suggests that both approaches have met with success. Cost considerations usually determine whether information centers are based on or off-site, since it is generally much less expensive to modernize and expand an existing parliamentary library or nearby research facility than to start anew in a different location.

Even so, on-site information centers are generally more accessible to legislators and staff, and they have fewer conflicting interests, since they answer directly to the legislative leadership. On the other hand, off-site centers at universities or research institutions may already have a capable staff that can easily adapt to the needs of the legislature without a great deal of additional training. One way to judge the effectiveness of these institutions in advance is to involve them in preparing materials for legislative seminars or study tours, if these educational components are part of the project.

*2. Should the majority of funds for a legislative information component be spent on skills training for personnel, or for technology and office equipment?*

The evaluative material collected on this topic suggests that implementers, in their enthusiasm to modernize, sometimes overlook the importance of staff training as opposed to advanced information technology and automation. Many of the tasks involved in compiling and disseminating legislative information depend on sound judgment and reasoned analysis, which requires a well-trained human mind rather than a computer. Also, advanced technology may be less cost-effective than staff training in the long run, depending on the infrastructure of the host country (including the reliability of electrical currents and phone lines), and the availability of vendors and repair people.

*3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using consortia to implement legislative strengthening projects?*

Consortia have received mixed reviews from project evaluators. On one hand, they provide a wealth of knowledge by uniting several different contractors with a wide variety of

experience in an equal relationship. On the other hand, without clear lines of communication and authority, the individual contractors, as well as the USAID Mission, can get bogged down in administrative issues that reduce the effectiveness of an otherwise fruitful arrangement. According to the evaluations and lessons learned, the key to avoiding these administrative problems is to develop a detailed plan that defines member roles and provides a means of resolving disputes as soon as they arise.

### **The Problem of Political Sensitivity**

Regardless of the approaches used in a particular project, the sensitive nature of legislative strengthening activities creates political risks for both donors and implementers. Legislators and their staff may at first be suspicious of outside experts asking frank questions about their needs and prospects. Seminars and study tours that involve only certain parties or political factions can seriously offend other members and damage the perception of implementers as impartial assistance providers. And, as legislative strengthening efforts begin to show signs of progress, outspoken actors in other branches of government or certain sectors of society may see their own power diminish slightly. All these factors can potentially spell disaster for the project and even, in a worst case scenario, influence bilateral relations.

A review of USAID's experience suggests that open communication and cooperation among donors, implementers, legislative leaders, and other political actors are the keys to avoiding these grave risks. The Missions and implementers must listen to and work with legislative leaders to develop a work plan that satisfies all members and ignores party differences. All major political actors who may eventually feel the effects of the project -- including the media and, in most cases, the military -- should be at least notified, if not consulted, from the outset. USAID should keep a low profile and, if possible, involve other donors to reduce political sensitivities.

### **Conclusion**

Legislative strengthening activities enhance democracy by increasing the institutional and technical capacity of the legislative branch, whose power offsets the executive and, ideally, represents the will of common citizens. However, changes to the power structure of any political system require a long-term effort, which is often inconsistent with fluctuating donor priorities and tightening budgets. USAID-supported projects are oftentimes only the first step in the long process of legislative development.

As a result, the issue of sustainability needs to figure prominently in the design and management of legislative strengthening projects. The lessons learned from various overviews and long-term perspective studies suggest that if institutional memory survives project closure, then the initiatives often continue to receive financial and political support from key legislators. Developing a well-trained staff, as well as establishing a mechanism for assessing the ongoing needs of legislative members and their assistants, will contribute to

**the viability of legislative strengthening activities for several years after the Mission's financial obligations have ended.**

## **LESSONS LEARNED IN LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING**

The following lessons learned were identified by examining a variety of evaluations and project documents available on USAID's Development Information System database, as well as documents provided by implementing agencies, statements from Missions, and interviews with project participants. The lessons have been grouped as follows:

- I. Mitigating the Political Sensitivity of Legislative Strengthening Activities**
- II. Planning and Preparation**
- III. Project Design**
- IV. Managing and Maintaining the Project**

A complete bibliography of cited sources follows this section. Citations containing a document identification (PN or PD) number are available from the USAID Development Information Services Clearinghouse.

### **I. Mitigating the Political Sensitivity of Legislative Strengthening Activities**

Legislative strengthening involves political risks for donors, whose activities may be regarded by some as meddling in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation. A review of the literature suggests that the key to safeguarding against such accusations is careful coordination among all organizations participating in the legislative development process.

#### **A. Internal Coordination**

- "Considering that strengthening the legislative capacity could be interpreted as 'political meddling' in the internal affairs of a country, legislative development should be pursued only insofar as there is demand from within the country to do so" (Creative Associates International 1987 [PN-AAZ-442]:II6-II7).
- "No project for strengthening the legislature can succeed initially, or in the long run, if it is not seriously embraced by the legislative leadership and members" (Baaklini 1994:359). Work in concert with leaders and other interested members to incorporate their hopes and concerns into the project's goals. Maintain close communications with the legislative leadership throughout the life of the project.
- Compromise and coalitions among legislators, donors, other branches of government, and influential non-governmental actors -- such as the military and the media -- are essential to the success of the legislative reform process (Consortium for Legislative Development 1992 [PN-ABP-499]:3; Baaklini 1994:359-360).

## **B. External Coordination**

- "Legislative assistance has higher chances of success when financial support is not solely dependent on one donor government. When several governments participate in the financial support or when foundations, international organizations, and the private sector participate in funding, the assistance is viewed as neutral and objective, while when it is solely supported by one government, partisan political aims could be seen as the *raison d'être* of the assistance" (Creative Associates International 1987 [PN-AAZ-442]:II6-II7).
- Because of the political sensitivity of the issues dealt with in legislative strengthening projects, USAID should continue to work through a grantee or contractor (Creative Associates International 1993 [PD-ABF-904]:81; Creative Associates International 1987 [PN-AAZ-442]:II6-II7).

## **II. Planning and Preparation**

The centerpiece of any successful legislative strengthening project is a detailed plan that clearly outlines the relationships among implementers, the mission, and the legislature in question. Project managers have relied on local experts and legislative leaders during needs assessments, and have chosen implementers whose technical expertise and organizational flexibility seem most appropriate to each legislature's specific needs.

### **A. Needs Assessments and Planning**

- Participants in the preparation of a needs assessment must educate themselves in advance about the political culture and history of the host country, to ensure that recommendations made to the legislature will be relevant to that country's current political needs (Creative Associates International 1993 [PD-ABF-904]:32).
- When conducting needs assessments, set deadlines with the understanding that legislative strengthening involves politically sensitive issues. Recognize that legislators and their staffs often take considerable time building up enough trust to communicate what they really hope to gain from the project (Creative Associates International 1993 [PD-ABF-904]:17).
- Before embarking on the project, consult with a broad cross-section of people who work closely with the legislature(s) in question. Involve the legislature's leadership in the writing of the needs assessment, in order to help the implementer better understand the needs of the legislature as a whole, and to give leaders an opportunity to review, prioritize, and approve project goals. Also consult with staff members, academicians, and other legislative experts

who can share their knowledge of the existing parliamentary structure and power relationships (Creative Associates International 1993 [PD-ABF-904]:17, 32; Baaklini 1994:359-360).

- Prepare an overall plan for each legislative strengthening project. Include details on how and when to implement the component parts of the project, as well as guidelines for evaluating each section separately, and together as a whole. If kept flexible, this plan can help identify, and in some cases mitigate, the competing interests of USAID/W, the USAID Mission(s), and the legislatures (Creative Associates International 1993 [PD-ABF-904]:12, 40).
- Leaving the final design of the project's activities to the implementing organizations tends to decrease delays, make use of the organizations' technical expertise in the final design work, and help the Mission meet its workload. On the other hand, the Mission becomes very dependent on the implementing organizations for programming guidance once the project is underway (Oleson 1994 [PD-ABK-251]:31-32).

#### **B. Choosing Implementing Organizations**

- Implementing organizations should possess knowledge in three areas: fluency in the local language(s), familiarity with USAID's requirements and regulations, and technical expertise in legislative programming, on levels that satisfy both the Mission's responsibilities and the beneficiaries' demands (Creative Associates International 1993 [PD-ABF-904]:vi, 12, 82).
- Avoid implementers whose ties to the legislature may influence their performance as apolitical information providers (Creative Associates International 1993 [PD-ABF-904]:40).
- Consortia can provide a wealth of expertise by combining several organizations' experience. However, a project operated by a consortium requires a plan of action that clearly defines tasks, individual roles and responsibilities, lines of authority, and a means of resolving conflicts (Fauth and Corbett 1992 [PD-ABE-794]: iv-vi,14-23).
- "It is not wise to leave to the implementation agencies the major responsibility for conducting the policy dialogue....[O]nly a representative of the U.S. Government can really speak for it without running the risk that the spokesman may confuse his technical role with that of the policy maker" (Oleson 1994 [PD-ABK-251]:31-32).
- Each individual legislature has its own specific needs, and a previously successful implementer or consortium may fail unless it develops expertise

about each new legislature it attempts to assist (Statements from a USAID Mission regarding a specific contractor).

### **III. Project Design**

Legislative strengthening projects have been either educational programs (training seminars or exchanges), technical programs (setting up or improving legislative research centers), or both. Seminars are highly valuable in the short term, since they allow legislators to exchange information and build contacts with others in their field, as well as attracting significant (usually favorable) interest in the local press. Bolstering the legislature's research capability, on the other hand, increases legislators' effectiveness over the long term, and thus requires a more substantial commitment. Project managers should consider a legislature's overall needs, as well as the mission's resources, when determining which type of project to implement.

#### **A. General Design Techniques**

- External assistance to legislatures should be essentially educational (e.g., showing the experiences of other countries) or technical (e.g., holding a workshop on the technical aspects of bill-drafting). Equipment and other support should be considered only to the extent they contribute to the above goals (Baaklini 1994:360).
- One way to win over skeptical or cost-conscious legislators is through a low-cost pilot project that makes use of existing legislative branch resources. By modernizing and/or reforming the operations of one small sector of the legislative staff, an otherwise reluctant legislature may come to recognize the benefits of a full-scale legislative assistance project (Rundquist 1994:403-404).
- Because legislatures change leadership often, the project design should be flexible enough to adapt to the continuous flux of a host country's social, political, and economic conditions (Creative Associates International 1993 [PD-ABF-904]:vi, 17, 81; Baaklini 1994:360). For example, allow project managers to review and revise allocations at regular intervals to ensure that financing reflects the ever-changing needs of an ongoing project (Fauth and Corbett 1992 [PD-ABE-794]:30).

#### **B. Designing Training Seminars & Exchanges**

- The most successful training seminars enjoy good management throughout the life of the project, from the pre-event preparation and logistical arrangements, to the event itself, to the evaluations and participant follow-up sessions (Creative Associates International 1993 [PD-ABF-904]:v).

- Preparing background orientation materials for seminars will increase the level of seriousness that legislators take toward them (Nuccio and Fleischer 1990 [PD-ABF-457]:33-34). Also, in order to tie other elements of society to the legislative development experience, enlist local academicians, journalists, and researchers to assist in preparing materials for the seminar (Baaklini 1994:359-360).
- Offering legislative development services to all legislators (and select staff), regardless of party affiliation, will eliminate allegations of partisanship and ensure that democratic values are shared with all members, particularly those backbenchers and opposition politicians whom the ministries may not adequately serve (CDIE/R&RS 1993; Creative Associates International 1993 [PD-ABF-904]:81; Robinson 1994:381).
- Exchanges among representatives of different regions or countries offer unique opportunities for legislators to discuss and compare legislative techniques. Study tours of U.S. state legislatures provide models for proper legislative functioning and help forge relationships that may reinforce the entire legislative development process (NCSL 1994a:2, Nuccio and Fleischer 1990 [PD-ABF-457]:28). However, intra-regional exchanges are sometimes more appropriate than study tours in the United States because of cultural similarities and lower travel costs (Hein 1994:365).
- Consider a roundtable format for seminars that incorporate a large number of legislative topics and/or participants. Plenary sessions may be too large or too formal to promote discussion, whereas roundtables function "as a more intimate venue for exchanging ideas" and building linkages among attendees (NDI 1994a:III,12).
- Have all written materials and spoken presentations delivered in (or translated into) the language(s) of the seminar participants (Creative Associates International 1993 [PD-ABF-904]:41; NDI 1994a:III,12).
- Information sharing seminars get coverage in the local press. As a result, both the legislators and the general populace become more familiar with legislative issues (Consortium for Legislative Development 1992 [PN-ABP-499]:3).

**C. Designing Legislative Support & Information Services**

- A particular parliament may decide to develop support services on-site, as an extension of existing parliamentary staff, or in cooperation with a nearby research center, such as a national library or university (CDIE/R&RS 1993; Robinson 1994:383). Both avenues have proven effective in past projects, although some implementers have found public administration institutes to be

more flexible and responsive than universities (Baaklini 1978 [PN-AAM-294]:19-20).

- When allocating funds between personnel and computer equipment, keep in mind that "[c]omputers can help in assembling and processing data, but legislative research and policy analysis ultimately require the human mind" (Rundquist 1994:403-404). Legislative support services must have a well-informed, well-organized staff -- and not just the latest technology -- in order to be effective.
- Develop a strategy to replace, repair and update any computer equipment provided as part of an information services project. Figure out in advance how to access the resources and supplies that such technology will eventually need (Cooper, *et al.* 1993:15-16).

#### **IV. Managing and Maintaining the Project**

Truly successful legislative strengthening projects leave behind institutionalized research or training organizations that contribute to the day-to-day operations of the legislature and enjoy ongoing support from its members and staff. Project managers can help sustain these organizations by ensuring that implementers transfer their skills and information to legislative staffers before the end of the life of the project.

- Clear communication among implementers and USAID personnel will eliminate most management problems that could otherwise undermine an efficiently executed project (Creative Associates International 1993 [Creative Associates International 1993 [PD-ABF-904]:iii).
- The issues involved in strengthening legislatures (and all governance related projects) are closely linked to longstanding political, economic and cultural conditions. To be resolved, these issues require a sustained effort that concentrates on long-term structural reform (Creative Associates International 1993 [PD-ABF-904]:81; Steinberg 1994:46-47).
- Identify ways to ensure the sustainability of the project for several years after the completion date. Work with legislative leaders, staff members, and information providers to assess their ongoing needs. Prepare a plan to transfer the institutional memory of the project to the newly created research or training agencies (Oleson 1994 [PD-ABK-251]:31-32).

## **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING**

The documents included in this bibliography contain significant information on the field of legislative strengthening in general, and USAID-supported activities in particular. Key USAID-funded documents are listed first, with full annotations. The second section contains an annotated list of important outside materials, including journal articles and working papers written by experts in the field. The third section provides bibliographic information for background and supplementary materials.

### **KEY USAID DOCUMENTS**

Baaklini, Abdo I. 1978. SUNYA/AID Legislative Development Program 1971-1978. Reflections and Analysis: A Final Report to AID. Albany, NY: State University of New York at Albany. PN-AAM-294.

SUNY-Albany has been involved in legislative strengthening activities for more than 25 years. This retrospective, written by the director of SUNYA's Center for Legislative Development, discusses the "science engagé" approach employed by the Center in its activities during the early 1970s. It stresses the value of using a multilateral approach for legislative development assistance, with the implementer as the organizing institution that mitigates the conflicting interests of the various political and technical participants.

Consortium for Legislative Development. 1992. Panama Activity Report: Seminar on the New Role of the Legislative Assembly. Miami, FL: Florida International University. PN-ABP-499.

This report provides a brief summary of the Consortium's "New Role Seminar," held for 70 Panamanian legislators and staff on October 27, 1992. The seminar focused on the role of the legislature in Panamanian society, its history and process of modernization, and introduced participants to the Chilean parliament's recent experience in reconstructing a role for itself during the transition from military rule. The paper examines both the successes and failures of the conference. A schedule of the proceedings is attached.

Creative Associates International, Inc. 1993. Regional Legislative Development Project: Midterm Evaluation. Washington, DC: Creative Associates International, Inc. PD-ABF-904.

This evaluation addresses two important questions relating to the design of a legislative strengthening project: whether the project should be regional or country-specific in focus; and whether the project implementers should act as a consortium of equal contractors, or else maintain a more traditional contractor/subcontractor relationship. Regional projects that provide technical assistance, training seminars, and workshops win the evaluators' support as cost-effective means of promoting

integration and information-sharing. At the same time, the evaluators advise that consortia develop a well-defined strategic plan and a means of settling internal disputes so as not to hinder their effectiveness as a technical team.

Creative Associates International, Inc. 1987. Retrospective of AID's Experience in Strengthening Democratic Institutions in Latin America, 1961-1981. Washington, DC: Creative Associates International, Inc. PN-AAZ-442.

This comprehensive overview of the Agency's Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) democracy projects focuses on four topic areas: legislative training, public administration development (particularly on the municipal level), civic education, and leadership training. It includes several lessons learned from each of these areas, and offers guidance for future democracy projects, including determining what types of assistance are likely to be the most effective and appropriate for USAID support. Chapter II, which covers legislative strengthening, profiles SUNYA's activities in Costa Rica from 1970 to 1973. The chapter also includes follow-up interviews and field studies that examine the project's long-term effectiveness.

Nuccio, Richard A., and David Fleischer. 1990. Report on the Center for Democracy: Evaluations of Regional Program, Central American Legislative Leaders Training Seminar (CALTS), and Guatemala Bilateral Project, Strengthening of Democracy. Washington, DC: Checchi & Co. Consulting, Inc. PD-ABF-457.

In 1986, the Center for Democracy organized the CALTS seminar, which brought 20 legislators from five Central American countries (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) to the United States to observe state legislatures and the U.S. Congress in operation. The following year, USAID/Guatemala entered into a three-year cooperative agreement with the Center for Democracy to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Guatemalan congress. The evaluation covers both of these projects, focusing on the latter, and listing such major accomplishments as: instilling awareness among legislators and staff of the need for legislative development; establishing confidence and trust with legislators; and designing innovative programs focused on legislatures, including a regional Association of Central American Legislative Technicians.

Oleson, John R., *et al.* 1994. Final Report: Evaluation of Democratic Institutions Project (511-0610). Washington, DC: Checchi & Co. Consulting, Inc. PD-ABK-251.

The Democratic Institutions Project (511-0610) began in 1988 as a means of strengthening the Bolivian electoral system and legislative branch. The legislative component of the project, implemented by the SUNY Office of International Programs, focused on the analysis of budget and fiscal issues, the provision of information on existing laws, assistance in bill drafting, and constituent outreach.

USAID. 1994. Strengthening Democratic Institutions (SDI) -- Component II. Legislative Enhancement. Tegucigalpa: USAID Mission to Honduras. PD-ABJ-170; and Strengthening Democratic Institutions (SDI) -- Component IV. Democratic Leadership. Tegucigalpa: USAID Mission to Honduras. PD-ABJ-172.

Documents PD-ABJ-170 and -172 are companion evaluation summaries for the Honduras SDI project (522-0296). Component II of the project focused on establishing a legislative support center for the Honduran Congress, whereas Component IV attempted to provide training seminars for Honduran legislators and other local political actors. Georgetown University acted as the prime contractor in both cases.

## KEY NON-USAID MATERIALS

Baaklini, Abdo I., and Charles S. Dawson, Jr. 1994. "Building Legislative Institutions in Emerging and Newly Democratic Nations." In Working Papers on Comparative Legislative Studies, edited by Lawrence D. Longley, 351-360. Appleton, WI: Research Committee of Legislative Specialists of the International Political Science Association.

This piece deals with the conceptual issues surrounding legislative development, which the authors define as "the ability of the legislative institution, acting through its leadership, to study, assess, and identify its needs for resources and information, to formulate plans and programs to acquire those needed resources, and to continuously assess those needs and develop its resources for the purpose of reaching political agreements with the executive" (p. 355). The authors see legislative strengthening activities as being more closely tied to public administration than political science. They argue that a successful legislative development project involves the interplay of several key components: vision; appropriate structures and sets of relationships; appropriate linkages to the public, the media, academia, and other branches of government; good management; and appropriate physical facilities. Finally, the authors provide guidelines for future legislative assistance projects.

Gordon, Dianna. 1993. "They're Over Here from Over There!" State Legislatures (December):19-22.

Study tours to U.S. state capitols have long been used as a component of legislative development projects. Nowadays, in several states, foreign study delegations arrive so frequently that special international relations offices have been set up to coordinate their visits. This article, while aimed at helping state legislators and their staff cope with these delegations, also provides useful information as to the states best equipped to handle foreign observers. In addition, several organizations with experience in coordinating such visits (mostly through the USIA) are mentioned.

Hein, Gordon R. 1994. "Strengthening Legislatures in Asia: The Challenges of Institution Building, Political Power, and Popular Legitimacy." In Working Papers on Comparative Legislative Studies, edited by Lawrence D. Longley, 361-371. Appleton, WI: Research Committee of Legislative Specialists of the International Political Science Association.

This paper provides an overview of recent legislative strengthening activities in Asia, seen through the prism of the three sets of challenges indicated in the title. The author provides numerous suggestions on how to transfer knowledge from relatively advanced democracies to other polities in the same region. He also discusses the importance of ongoing legislative training in countries whose legislatures are currently ineffective, or even defunct.

Kelley, John F. 1993. "Automation for the New Democratic Parliaments of Eastern Europe." In Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science 19 (no. 4):13-14.

Providing office automation as part of a legislative strengthening project requires careful planning beforehand. This brief article, written by a senior computer analyst at the Congressional Research Service, explains the procedure followed by CRS for its assistance activities in Eastern and Central Europe. Among the factors considered in designing the automation aspects of the CRS projects were: the availability of local vendors, the actual physical state of the parliamentary buildings, the reliability of the local electric power grid, the process of acquisitions and bidding for equipment, and parliamentary staff training. Many of these concerns would be relevant to legislative development projects in other regions as well.

Robinson, William H. 1991. "Building a Parliamentary Research Capability." IFLA Journal 17 (no. 4):379-388.

How do a legislature's information needs change as it becomes more independent and self-directed? Whom should a parliamentary research center serve? Should the center be a centralized, on-site agency of the legislature, or instead be coordinated by a neighboring university or institutional research facility already in existence? The answers to these questions affect the design and implementation of any legislative strengthening project whose scope of work includes setting up or improving upon a parliamentary research capability. Drawing on the experience of the Congressional Research Service in their legislative development activities in Eastern and Central Europe, this article provides insight into how to conceptualize some of these issues.

Rosenbaum, Allan, and Gerald Reed. 1994. "The Development of Legislative Bodies as Institutions of Democracy in Latin America: Some Participant Observations." In Working Papers on Comparative Legislative Studies, edited by Lawrence D. Longley, 1-13. Appleton, WI: Research Committee of Legislative Specialists of the International Political Science Association.

Legislative bodies, as complex social structures, perform several different and complicated functions simultaneously. This analysis lists seven ways to view modern legislatures (for example, as a policy decision-maker for society, an arena for the resolution of social conflict, and/or an aggregate of individual personal roles), and then examines the legislatures of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama to identify how recent legislative strengthening activities have affected each system, according to the suggested perspectives. The author's framework provides an example of how to gauge the impact of future legislative assistance projects.

Rundquist, Paul S. and Clay H. Wellborn. 1994. "Building Legislatures in Latin America." In Working Papers on Comparative Legislative Studies, edited by Lawrence D.

Longley, 387-405. Appleton, WI: Research Committee of Legislative Specialists of the International Political Science Association.

This study surveys five Latin American legislatures (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Honduras) in an effort to compare their experiences in legislative development during the past decade. The authors derive their data primarily from in-country interviews with legislative leaders and their staff, as well as with officials from local and international agencies involved in the legislative development process. Their analysis examines several factors contributing to each legislature's particular approach to legislative development, namely: the legislators themselves, including their role, tenure, and prior expertise; the mechanisms by which each legislature approached the question of legislative assistance; human resources available to the legislative branch, including issues of patronage, professionalism, and pay differentials; information resources; the role of the media; and the extent and availability of legal documentation. The piece concludes with a summary of lessons and commonalities gleaned from the survey.

## OTHER BACKGROUND MATERIALS

- Center for Democracy. 1994. Contact List of Organizations Involved in Legislative and/or Democratic Development. Washington, DC: Center For Democracy. Photocopy.
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## **CONTACT LIST**

The following list provides addresses and names of contact people for several organizations that have worked with USAID in the field of legislative development. The "regional expertise" cited below reflects work done under USAID contract, and should not be construed to imply a lack of experience in other regions. Please contact the individuals listed below for more information.

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