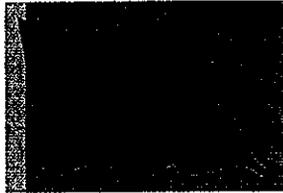


PN-ACQ-842

**A Guide to Organizing
Election Observation
in Bangladesh**



The Asia
Foundation

A GUIDE TO ORGANIZING ELECTION OBSERVATION IN BANGLADESH

Published

July, 2002

Copyright

The Asia Foundation, Bangladesh

Preparation and Coordination for The Asia Foundation

Dr. Karen L. Casper, Representative

Debbie Ingram, Consultant

Riffat Jahan, Program Officer

Graphic Design and Printing

The CAD System, Dhaka

This publication was made possible with support provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development under Cooperative Agreement #388-A-00-00-00056-00. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID.

C

Table of Contents

The Need for Election Monitoring	1
Concept of a Working Group	3
Technical Assistance	7
Essential Organizational Ingredients	9
Written Materials	13
Nationwide Coverage	21
The Numbers	27
Relating to the News Media	39
Advocating for Change	41
Obtaining Accreditation	45
A Sense of Accomplishment	49
Figures	
Figure 1: Polling Observation Form	16
Figure 2: Vote Counting Form	18
Figure 3: Sample Constituency Level Deployment List	22
Figure 4: Code of Conduct	25
Figure 5: Planned Structure of the EMWG Network	28
Figure 6: Union Consolidation Forms	30
Figure 7: Various Data Tables	34

The Need for Election Monitoring

In many nations, there are regulatory or watchdog mechanisms in place which ensure free and fair elections. These mechanisms include an independent election commission and/or other regulatory bodies, a free and non-partisan press, and responsible, accountable party leadership. These kinds of institutions are not currently strong enough to take on the role of safeguarding the electoral process in Bangladesh, however. Though elections are administered by the Election Commission, it is not fully independent, and the country relies on the institution of a non-party caretaker government to prevent bias, corruption, and illegal tactics from tainting the process. Yet at present neither body can ensure public confidence in unbiased enforcement of elections procedures and regulations. Furthermore, orderly polling procedures have yet to be completely developed and incorporated, many media outlets maintain political ties, journalists lack the skills to report in a balanced manner, and political party leaders themselves are not chosen democratically and tend to act in their own self-interest.

A second type of mechanism can be successful in fostering free and fair elections — that of active, widespread, and well-coordinated citizen and civil society observation of elections. Monitoring offers citizens the opportunity to see for themselves that the election process is carried out in a free and fair manner. The knowledge that citizens and civil society groups are observing the process deters political parties and special interest groups from engaging in violence, intimidation, and fraud, and encourages election officials to discharge their duties responsibly and accountably. The presence of domestic

observers can also encourage voters to participate in the election by building their confidence in the security and integrity of the process. Furthermore, domestic observers can encourage the widespread acceptance of results by certifying that votes were cast in an environment conducive to a free and free election and/or by documenting where the process cannot be guaranteed as legitimate.

Election monitoring is not a political activity but a civic right and opportunity for all interested citizens. The right to observe election day procedures from the opening of the poll through the counting process by domestic monitors is a key element in internationally accepted standards on free and fair elections. These standards are captured in the Inter-Parliamentary Union's "Criteria on Free and Fair Elections," to which Bangladesh is a signatory.

Election monitoring is not a political activity but a civic right and opportunity for all interested citizens.

In new democracies or where political instability or polarization is significant, it is difficult to ensure high public confidence in democratic processes. In these contexts, increased openness and participation is important for developing ownership and greater confidence in the processes. Nationwide domestic monitoring offers a means for citizens and civil society to not only ensure the integrity of electoral processes, but also to promote greater civic participation and development of a stronger democracy.

Concept of a Working Group

To carry out such a nationwide domestic monitoring initiative that ensures a free and fair election and promotes the principles and processes of democracy in an effective way, civil society organizations can join together into a temporary association to work collectively for this common goal. For the October 1, 2001 national elections, just such a group was formed in Bangladesh. Out of approximately 40-45 organizations that met together to share concerns about the 2001 elections, 29 formed a temporary group called the Election Monitoring Working Group (EMWG) to jointly achieve the following goals:

- To promote a peaceful election
- To promote a free and fair process
- To engender broad ownership of the electoral process
- To foster high public confidence in the election observation process
- To foster high public confidence in the election results

Based on the experiences of the EMWG, this guidebook is written to help future organizations to determine the essential elements and best methods to coordinate a large scale, nationwide domestic monitoring effort for the further strengthening of democracy in Bangladesh.

As a first step, any future Working Group should be made up of organizations that share two primary objectives:

- 1) to coordinate and cooperate to achieve national coverage of domestic observers, and

- 2) to coordinate and cooperate to manage the elements of the observation process, including coverage by the media, interaction with the Election Commission, designing and implementing training, and standardizing data collection and reporting, among others.

Balance and non-partisanship are essential characteristics of the observation effort. The best way to ensure that bias does not ruin the monitoring process is to be as **inclusive** as possible. In this way, with a diverse group of members, the wide variety of points of view represented would act as a system of checks and balances on any possible bias.

Complete nationwide coverage is also critical for optimum results. Organizations involved in the Working Group must have capacity sufficient to coordinate and deploy observers in order to achieve 100% coverage of ballot boxes, which is the international standard for monitoring. This is the only way to ensure that there are no irregularities, or to identify where they have occurred if there are irregularities. Results that cover every polling center but do not include observation at individual booths will not inspire confidence in the people, as one observer could easily miss fraud or false voting in one booth while he or she was observing in another booth, even in the same center.

Diversity in terms of types of organizations and their capacities is also extremely useful for achieving balance and accomplishing the goals of the Working Group. Ideally, the coalition should be comprised of non-government organizations (NGOs) which program in human rights, women's rights, or governance, of monitoring alliances, and of citizens groups. These entities should vary in size and capacity, and the group should encourage the involvement of small, geographically

specialized organizations in order to fill in crucial gaps in coverage and to include new partners to achieve not only greater diversity, but also broad ownership of the monitoring process. Organizations that can recruit a wide range of individuals – including poor people, members of ethnic or religious minorities, and disabled persons (blind persons observed in 2001 with the aid of a sighted assistant) – should be encouraged in join. Requirements for membership should be minimal in number but demonstrate accountability and responsibility. Possibilities include:

- Registration with the NGO Affairs Bureau or Social Welfare Department
- Strong programmatic track record
- Commitment to non-partianship and professionalism

It is also important to ask members of the Working Group to commit to certain **performance standards** in the course of their monitoring activities. Some of these should be:

- To achieve 100 % coordinated coverage of the polling booths throughout the nation by civil society organizations;
- To actively involve a sufficient number of civil society organizations in the monitoring activity so that the monitoring reports will have credibility and can not be viewed as politically biased, and so that broad ownership of the monitoring process can be achieved;
- To utilize a coordinated deployment strategy drawing on the human and financial resources of member organizations
- To develop a data collection system utilizing a standard set of questions that include only objective criteria

- To develop a coordinated data consolidation system for rapid nationwide reporting with confident results
- To ensure that monitors from a minimum of two organizations will be present at each polling center to serve as a cross-check on each other
- To ensure that three to five organizations will cover each constituency
- To draw on local observers only through formal affiliations and partnerships with core EMWG members to ensure the accountability of observers
- To report on election results per constituency in a way that allows the identification of specific problem areas, and otherwise confirms the validity of the election elsewhere
- To issue timely and thorough reports on the election process
- To build the capacity of organizations in Bangladesh to develop a structure for large-scale domestic monitoring that is effective, cost-effective, and sustainable with declining foreign funding.

In addition, the Working Group should require monitoring organizations to become more cost-effective on a per monitor basis while at the same time they field a substantial number of monitors. This approach has the benefit of ultimately resulting in 100% sustainability, eliminating the need for foreign donors. This in turn would have the added benefit of increasing national pride in freeing an important aspect of the electoral process from dependence on outside assistance.

In these ways, the Working Group member organizations will demonstrate commitment to contributing to the continued maturation and strengthening of the democratic process in Bangladesh.

Technical Assistance

The Working Group should consider soliciting technical assistance from an organization with experience in election monitoring in Asia and in other developing countries. Such an organization can add great benefit to the monitoring effort by providing specialized technical expertise and advice based on experiences from other contexts, offering assistance in managing the diverse interests of the Working Group, and assisting with the challenges of coordination. An international or regional organization can also offer linkages to the international observation effort, diplomatic community, and foreign donors, and provide support in asserting and upholding international election standards in Bangladesh. A local organization or technical expert offers greater potential for sustainability.

For the 2001 election, The Asia Foundation (TAF), a non-profit organization based in the United States, provided technical assistance to EMWG organizations to assist them in making the transition from limited coverage of polling stations to coverage of each polling booth. With comprehensive coverage, the organizations were able to collect data on the election day process throughout the country and generate data that would offer a fairly complete picture of the proceeding, constituency by constituency throughout the country. Technical assistance from TAF also included guidance on the development of standardized monitoring materials and an aggregation system for the collection of the election-day data and general program and financial management oversight. To ensure that the environment allowed such visible involvement by civil society, TAF also assisted its partners in continuing efforts to advocate for more transparent procedures for monitors.

This kind of technical assistance is invaluable in bringing together a diverse group of players and surmounting any challenges caused by lack of experience, capacity, and cooperation among the member organizations.



TAF Regional Elections Advisor facilitating EMWG meeting.

Essential Organizational Ingredients

There are certain elements of organization that add value to the Working Group's efforts. Several of these are described below.

Office

It is recommended that the Working Group set up an office in a neutral location for their weekly coordination meetings, subgroup meetings, and press briefings (more on these later). The choice of office space should be made taking into consideration the following factors:

- convenient access for all organization members,
- secure building, and
- adequately equipped office facilities.

Other elements to think about include the availability of a large room with a table to accommodate up to 40 people for meetings, and adequate machinery such as computers, UPS, printers, fax machines, and a photocopy machine, which can be rented from local companies. Necessary office supplies including letterhead stationery and tea-making facilities should also be purchased.

Staff

In addition, the Working Group should strongly consider hiring a full-time administrative officer who can be present in the office during working hours and perform such duties as word processing, photocopying, writing and distributing the

minutes of all meetings, maintaining telephone and fax logs, controlling the inventory of office supplies and other materials, and verifying daily accounts sheets. Other personnel that may be necessary and can possibly be seconded from Working Group member organizations are assistants to work on media issues, logistics, and deployment. Security personnel are also important and can usually be contracted from the owner/manager of the office building or from a separate security company.

Meetings

Periodic meetings and discussions to formulate a methodology and plan of action add great value to the coordination of the Working Group. In 2001, the EMWG held a total of 20 working group sessions. The concept of rotating leadership, so that at each meeting a different head of participating NGOs leads the meeting, helps greatly in establishing balance and a collegial working atmosphere.

Members should be encouraged to use the large group meetings only for giving progress reports and for maintaining a common vision, not for conducting work. The group is too large to accomplish specific tasks which can be undertaken much more effectively in sub-groups and workshops (see below).

Workshops

A small number of workshops, two or three, can be helpful in focusing on subjects of particular concern on which all member organizations must agree. In 2001, workshops that were facilitated by The Asia Foundation's Election Advisor were held in order to focus on the accreditation process, network development, design of the observer manual and form, and

development of a strategy for meeting with the Chief Election Commissioner.

Sub-Groups

Sub-groups are highly recommended to address particular aspects of the observation process that need the work of smaller groups and focused attention. Based on past experience, the following sub-groups would be most beneficial:

- 1. Materials Development.** To write and oversee the printing of necessary material, particularly to design and develop the observer manual and forms;
- 2. Deployment.** To advise and coordinate on recruiting and training of observers, and to organize and administer the data collection process on and after election day;
- 3. Data aggregation.** To plan and coordinate an effective, efficient system to report and aggregate the data collected on election day so that it can be compiled and prepared in a final report as soon as possible after the election;
- 4. Media.** To deal with the press, radio, and television, which entails coordinating press releases, organizing press briefings, and responding to and correcting misinformation in the press regarding coordination and the election monitoring process;
- 5. Advocacy.** To hold discussions with the Election Commission (EC) and lobby for changes in the regulations regarding observers on behalf of the entire Working Group;
- 6. Accreditation.** To coordinate with the EC to ensure the printing of adequate numbers of ID cards and their distribution according to legal requirements in a timely manner.

The work of each sub-group will be described in greater detail in the following sections.



2001 Working Group Meetings



Written Materials

The Working Group will need to develop a uniform manual to train and guide all observers, as well as a core training curriculum and the standard forms that will be used to collect and aggregate data.

A manual

For the manual, it is a good idea to draw on materials previously used in election monitoring. There are examples of manuals that have been used in previous Bangladesh elections as well as in other countries. These can be adapted for use in the context of the particular election that is being observed. The manual should be printed in both English and Bangla. The English version is useful because donors like to be able to see an example of the materials that have been developed. Of course, for practical reasons the manual should be in Bangla for domestic observers. In addition, the English manual can serve as a guide to international observers who may be brought in specifically for the election.

Key elements that "An Election Observation Manual" should include are as follows:

- Description of the official polling procedures (e.g., opening the booth, checking voters' names off lists, giving them a ballot, showing them to a set-aside location to mark their ballot in secret, making a mark of indelible ink on their thumb, etc.)
- Description of the official counting procedure
- Code of conduct for election observers
- Rights and responsibilities of observers

- List of irregularities that might possibly occur so that observers know what to watch for
- What to do in the event that irregularities occur in view of the observers
- Suggestions on how to ensure the security and safety of the observers

Forms

In the 2001 election, the EMWG found that it was quite convenient to include the Polling Observation Form and other necessary forms inside the election manual itself. In this way, they were always readily available to the observer or the trainer. Three different forms should be included in the manual:

1. Polling Booth Observation Form
2. Vote Counting Form
3. Polling Station Aggregation Form

In addition to these forms the Working Group will need to distribute additional forms to enable aggregation of data at each level, including:

- Union
- Constituency

The development of the forms should be the result of the collaborative effort of the member organizations of the Working Group in the Materials Development Sub-Group, although all member organizations should be encouraged to voice their opinions in general sessions about specific questions that they would like to see included.

Below are the characteristics that should be attributed to questions on the Polling Booth Observation form:

- Ask "yes" or "no" questions, or request numerical information
- No longer than 1 or 2 pages in total length including identification information
- Cover elements which are objectively observable (e.g., "Is the polling center free from posters, banners, wall writing or any other canvassing materials of the candidates?")
- Cover items directly related to election regulations
- Cover the entire process from the polling center environment, to procedures during the vote and during the counting
- There should be an opportunity for observers to record an overall evaluation using their subjective judgment, but the scoring system should be devised in such a way that it is quantifiable and uniform so that comparisons among locations can be made legitimately
- To maximize inclusivity and indicate concern for all voters, some questions should address the experiences of women, special needs voters (disabled, elderly, blind, and pregnant persons), and religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities

As examples, two of the forms used in the 2001 Election are reprinted below.

Figure 1: Polling Observation Form

8th National Parliamentary Elections 2001

Polling Booth Observation Form

Form no

Observer's name Organization

Address

1. Constituency Number 7. Total # Booths Male Female

2. Polling Center Name 8. Total # Voters in Centre

3. Center/Booth Number Male

4. Union/Municipal Ward 9. Total # ballots

5. Upazilla/Thana 10. Name of the Presiding Officer

6. Zilla

Electoral Camp	AL	BNP	JP	Jamat	11 party	Ind.				
Total polling agent	<input type="text"/>									

Instruction: Read the following questions carefully and tick (✓) in the appropriate place. Explain in the comment section if you answer "no" to any question; think carefully when answering, give your own observation. Do not be influenced by rumors

	Yes	No
Polling Center Environment:		
1. Is the polling center in its assigned location?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is the polling center free from posters, banners, wall writing or any other canvassing materials of the candidates?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Was the empty ballot box shown to and sealed in presence of agents of the principal candidates and the election observer after completion of all necessary pre-election formalities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Were the voters free from any direct or indirect intimidation on their way to the polling center, in and around the polling center?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During Vote:		
5. Did voting start on time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are the voters able to cast their votes in secret?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is the voter list free from complaints?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Is voting proceeding as per the election law in the center? (i.e. confirmation of voter's identity, use of indelible ink, official seal on ballot paper, polling officer signature, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Is the center free from false voting? (If no, number of false vote <input type="text"/>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Is voting proceeding without violence or gross irregularities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Are women able to cast their vote without any fear or intimidation or pressure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Are aged persons, pregnant women and disabled people getting preference in the queue to cast their vote?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Are blind and other disabled people able to select their own assistants to help them cast their vote?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Are the agents of the principal candidates able to perform their duties without obstacles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Are the Election Officials performing their duties in a neutral manner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Are the security forces performing their duties in a neutral manner?	Yes	No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. According to the election law, were all the voters who were in queue during the voting time permitted to cast their vote?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During Counting:		
18. Did vote counting take place in the presence of the agents of the principal candidates and the election observers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Were only authorized persons present during count?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Was the vote counting process completed without any objection/complaint?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Once counted, were the results properly enunciated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Was the result sheet distributed to the polling agents and election observers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. As an election observer were you free from intimidation and/or violence from the beginning of the process to the end?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Number of votes cast	Male <input type="text"/>	Female <input type="text"/> Total <input type="text"/>
Overall Evaluation:		
25. Evaluation of this center. Put a tick (✓) next to the statement that best describes the voting process at your polling center.	Opinion of observer	
a) Good - no significant disorder took place	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Minor incidents - should not impact on election results	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Gross violation occurred - could impact on election results	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Very serious violation occurred - results of this center must be canceled	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Additional Question:		
26. Were religious, ethnic and linguistic minority groups able to cast their vote without any fear or intimidation or pressure?	Yes	No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signature of the Observer <input type="text"/>	Date	<input type="text"/>
Comments <input type="text"/>		

Training materials

A core, standardized training curriculum should be developed, centered on covering the following:

- items that are found in the Observer Manual
- form fill-up
- codes of conduct
- election procedures
- possible irregularities
- safety
- data aggregation

It is especially helpful if the training includes a mock voting procedure, staged by training staff, so that the trainees can practice observing in a real-life setting and go through the process firsthand so they know what to expect on election day.

Member organizations may also want to add customized elements to their training sessions based on potential for irregularities, local power dynamics, and quality of officials or other factors in their geographic location. These additional elements should be based on the common core training curriculum, however.

For the 2001 elections, there was a training of district and constituency coordinators in Dhaka and then these coordinators recruited and conducted training in the field. In general, at the national level, individual organizations shared resources and cross-trained their coordinators together. Training at the district level, lasting from one to four days with sessions for as many as 80 observers, was generally conducted by individual organizations using EMWG guidelines, with optional added materials.



2001 Manuals



Steps in the polling process



Nationwide Coverage

The Working Group must decide together on a deployment strategy in order to achieve 100% coverage of all ballot boxes during the election. This strategy will affect the recruitment of observers, the expenses allowed by observers, and the designation of stationary or mobile observers.

To keep costs low, it is recommended that Working Group members recruit volunteer observers from geographic locations near the polling centers. To accomplish this, Working Group member organizations should agree to cover those areas where they have field staff or are able to easily mobilize representatives. Small, locally based NGOs should be included to ensure that difficult-to-reach locations or gaps are easily filled.

Ensuring maximum coverage will require a certain minimum number of organizations assigned to each constituency. In 2001, the EMWG agreed to deploy three to five organizations to each constituency to act as a check on each other. To come up with the actual assignment of organizations and individuals, the EMWG members were given lists from the 1996 elections which included the divisions, names and numbers of constituencies, and the number of polling centers and booths. The member organizations used these lists as guidelines to make their deployment assignments, identifying the organizations that had the potential of mobilizing staff in those constituencies, estimating the potential numbers of observers each of the organizations in each constituency could field to achieve 100% coverage of the polling booths, and identifying specific representatives of each organization who also lived in the constituency to serve on the Constituency Coordinating Committee. Certain observers were designated

as coordinators for each constituency, and his or her telephone and fax numbers were included. Below in Figure 3 is a sample page from the polling center lists, with monitor assignments.

Figure 3: Sample Constituency Level Deployment List

No.	Name of Constituency	Organization and Monitors	Poll Centers to be (Est. begins to 96)	Name of contact person	Te/Fax/Email
TOTAL: 727					
NILPHAMARI ZILA:					
12	Nilphamari - 1	BNPS - 265 Dem. Watch-92 FEMA - 233 RDRS - 134 Total : 790	NEOC - 10	111 (496)	Sankar Kumar De Dham (BNPS- Manoh Kalyan Parishad) Humayun Kabir Mazumder, P.O.Fs.: Rhoda, Panchagar.
13	Nilphamari - 2	BNPS - 265 FEMA - 233 Khan Found. - 200 RDRS - 134 Total : 838	NEOC - 10	92 (407)	Sankar Kumar De Dham (BNPS- Manoh Kalyan Parishad) Amritul Haque (LM) Shahin Islamgir Alam (KF), CAMP
14	Nilphamari - 3	BNPS - 265 FEMA - 233 RDRS - 134 Total : 658	NEOC - 10	73 (323)	Sankar Kumar De Dham (BNPS- Manoh Kalyan Parishad)
15	Nilphamari - 4	BNPS - 265 FEMA - 233 Total : 524	NEOC - 10	69 (393)	Sankar Kumar De Dham (BNPS- Manoh Kalyan Parishad) Amritul Haque (LM)
LALMONIRHAT ZILA:					
16	Lalmonirhat - 1	BNPS - 265 FEMA - 233 Khan Found. - 200 RDRS - 133 Total : 837	NEOC - 10	90 (396)	Tariful Islam (RDRS) Dilip Kumar Sarkar (BNPS-Zibika) M.A. Hill (KF), ADO, Harbhadrachak
17	Lalmonirhat - 2	BNPS - 265 FEMA - 233 Khan Found. - 200 RDRS - 134 Total : 857	NEOC - 10	90 (398)	Tariful Islam (RDRS) Dilip Kumar Sarkar (BNPS-Zibika) Abdus Sobhan Badoi (DW), Palli Pragati
18	Lalmonirhat - 3	BNPS - 265 FEMA - 233 Khan Found. - 200 RDRS - 134 Total : 857	NEOC - 10	55 (243)	Tariful Islam (RDRS) Dilip Kumar Sarkar (BNPS-Zibika) A.G. Jinat Ferdous Ara Rosi (KF)
RANGPUR ZILA:					
19	Rangpur - 1	FEMA - 233 Khan Found. - 200 Total : 433	NEOC - 10	85 (367)	Moisuzzodin (LM) Anser Ali (KF), NDC
20	Rangpur - 2	FEMA - 233 Total : 233	NEOC - 10	86 (380)	
21	Rangpur - 3	FEMA - 233 Khan Found. - 200 Total : 433	NEOC - 10	93 (411)	Jalal Sarkar (KF), NDC
22	Rangpur - 4	FEMA - 233 Khan Found. - 200 Total : 433	NEOC - 10	96 (424)	Samsul Rabman (LM) Jahedul Islam (KF), NDC
23	Rangpur - 5	FEMA - 233 Total : 233	NEOC - 10	96 (424)	Samsul Rabman (LM)
24	Rangpur - 6	FEMA - 233 Total : 233	NEOC - 10	72 (315)	
KURIGRAM ZILA:					
25	Kurigram - 1	FEMA - 233 BNPS - 265 RDRS - 133 Total : 657	NEOC - 10	127 (561)	Liqat Ali Khan (RDRS) Masik Chowdhury (BNPS-Zibika) Golam Mostafa (LM) Geesh Chandra Sen (Broter) Barobari Saranj Udayan Sangha, Mollar para
26	Kurigram - 2	BNPS - 265 FEMA - 233 Khan Found. - 200 RDRS - 133 Total : 857	NEOC - 10	134 (592)	Manjuntze Shaha (RDRS) Masik Chowdhury (BNPS-Zibika) Ferdous Hosen Shappa (KF), KDC Geesh Chandra Sen (Broter) Barobari Saranj Udayan Sangha, Mollar para
27	Kurigram - 3	BNPS - 265 FEMA - 233 Khan Found. - 200	NEOC - 10	99 (430)	Manjuntze Shaha (RDRS) Masik Chowdhury (BNPS-Zibika) Geesh Chandra Sen (Broter)

These lists were shared among organizations. When necessary, organizations negotiated the deployment of their observers with other NGOs to prevent concentration of too many observers in one location at the expense of other places and to ensure diversity of representation at both station and constituency levels. The EMWG agreed that at the level of the polling station, observers from at least two organizations would be assigned to ensure balance.

Individual observers must be deployed to ensure that one person can cover each polling booth throughout the 300 constituencies. These individuals are responsible for observing the box from its first inspection to the completion of the final count. These observers are referred to as "stationary observers." A few organizations also sponsored "mobile observers," who moved from station to station. These observers were responsible for monitoring the surrounding environment on election day. The Working Group should be careful to restrict the number of mobile observers, as they do not enhance significantly the observation power of ensuring the sanctity of every individual vote. A limited number of mobile monitors deployed to observe if movement is free and unhindered throughout a designated area is sufficient. If movement of public and private vehicles is limited, a heavy emphasis on mobile monitors will also be undermined.

The Working Group must be committed to keeping costs per monitor as low as possible. While district and constituency coordinators will most likely be paid staff of the participating Working Group member organizations, other observers will probably be volunteers. Their expenses will consist of transportation costs, food, and possibly lodging the night before the election. Of course, other costs such as development and printing of manuals, forms, training materials, and office expenses will also factor into the overall budget. To continue

to be able to achieve 100% coverage for future elections, these costs must be kept at acceptable levels in order to be successful at mobilizing sufficient financial resources and in order to eventually achieve 100% self-sufficiency (a critical ingredient of a strong democracy).

Observer recruitment

Observers should be recruited to maximize inclusiveness and balanced representation of the Working Group member organizations. Observers should also be recruited from areas as close to deployment as possible to minimize costs and ensure easy access to observation sites. These are recommended as selection criteria for recruiting observers:

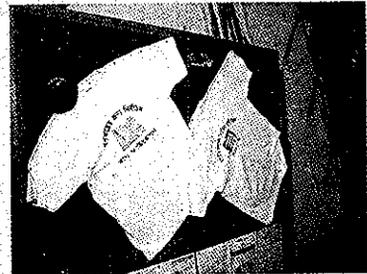
- Observers must be representatives of an NGO or other officially registered organization.
- All organizations have to be approved by the NGO Affairs Bureau to receive foreign funds in support of a precise number of observers.
- All organizations have to be issued accreditation cards for this precise number of observers.
- Organizations can only recruit individuals who fulfill certain criteria required by Election Commission regulations (in 2001 these were being 25 years or older, having no official connections to any political party, and residing in an upazila different from the one in which they observed)
- Observers must agree to an Observer Code of Conduct (see Figure 4 below) and commit to using the standardized form for observation.

Figure 4: Code of Conduct**Code of Conduct for Election Observers**

- ❑ Observers will carry the identification card provided by the Election Commission and show such accreditation, if requested, by the concerned election authority.
- ❑ Observers will maintain strict impartiality in the conduct of their duties, and shall at no time, express any bias or preference for any party or candidate, reference any contentious issues or participate politically in the election process.
- ❑ Observers will not display or wear any partisan symbols, colors, or banners.
- ❑ Observers will undertake their duties in an unobtrusive manner, and will not interfere with the election process, polling day procedures, or the vote count.
- ❑ Observers may bring irregularities to the attention of the election officials, but they must never give instructions or countermand the decisions of the election officials.
- ❑ Observers will base all conclusions on well-documented, factual and verifiable evidence, and —
- ❑ Observers must comply with all relevant rules and regulations.



Election observers



Materials for easy identification of observers

The Numbers

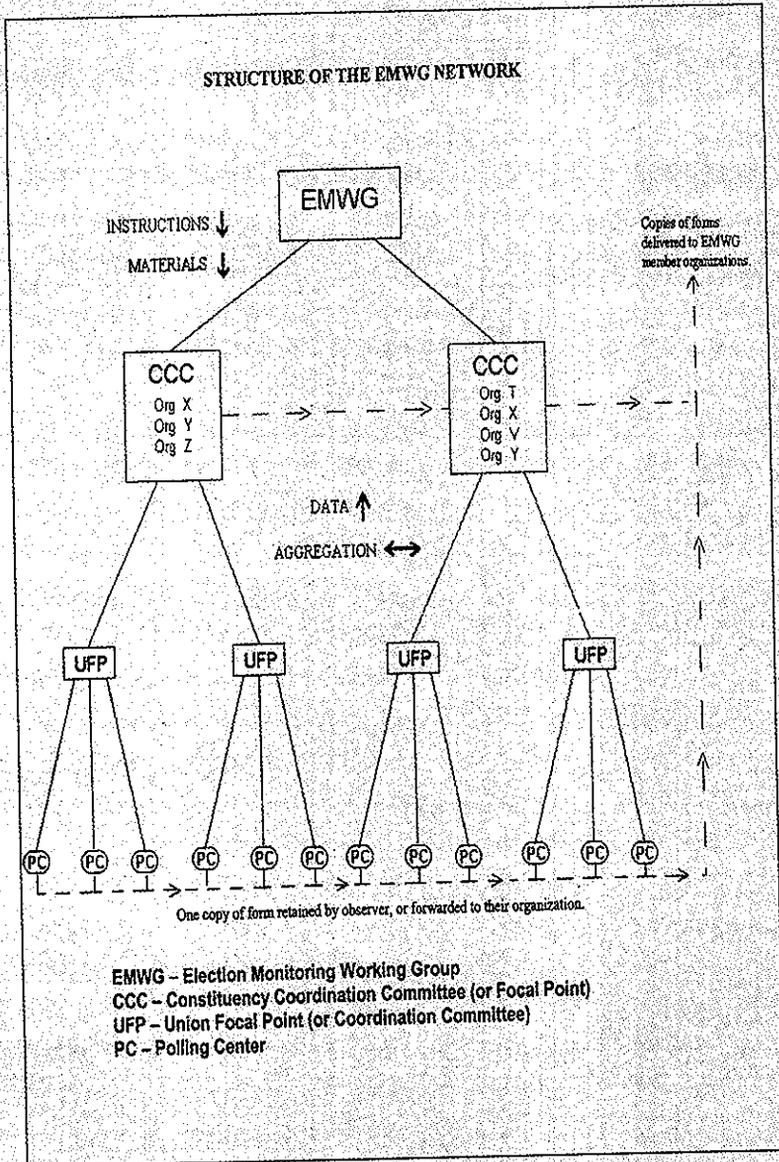
Speed and quality of data aggregation are the two most important factors for credible reporting. To achieve these objectives, the Working Group must devise a strategy to pass along the information from individual observers at polling centers to higher levels for consolidation, and then finally to the central Working Group office for compilation and tabulation.

In 2001, the EMWG established a system whereby each observer at a polling booth filled out two identical copies of the observation form. One copy was to be given to the EMWG representative at the polling station, and the other copy to their organization. The next step required each of the observers to compile their individual observations into one polling station report as an aggregated count of the individual observations for each of the 26 questions on the form. The EMWG-appointed representative at the polling station was to then deliver this form (and the supplementary individual forms) to the EMWG Union Focal Point (UFP), a committee made up of at least one representative from each organization that observed in that union.

The next step was to compile all the union data into an aggregate report, then hand deliver it to the Constituency Coordinating Committee (CCC). This committee was supposed to compile the union data into constituency reports. These 300 constituency reports were then meant to be faxed to the EMWG coordinating office in Dhaka within 24 hours of the election. The hard copies of this data form and all supplementary forms were to be sent by courier to the EMWG. In Dhaka the aggregated constituency data would be entered into the computer by a separately contracted data

management firm. Figure 5 portrays the manner in which the system was intended to work.

Figure 5: Planned Structure



In 2001, the actual aggregation process was followed in only one-third of the constituencies. As a result, literally thousands of individual observer forms were faxed to the central office bypassing lower levels of reporting. By the end of election day the EMWG office was inundated with faxes of individual observer forms. While efforts were made to get participating organizations to go back to the originally conceived system and work together to prepare aggregated data for each level, this proved nearly impossible at that point. As a compromise, each organization worked to prepare aggregated data for their organization for the union and constituency levels.

This departure from the agreed-upon structure required the The Asia Foundation and the separately contracted data management firm several extra weeks of work. Data had to be cleaned, checked, aggregated, and disaggregated in order to be reported. From this difficult experience, it is hoped that member organizations now see the value in following the structure of coordination and consolidation at lower levels before reporting to the central office.

Ideally, data aggregation would occur at each level of the deployment structure: polling station, union, and constituency. Figure 6 below shows the Union Observation Consolidation Form and the Union Results Consolidation Form that were supposed to be used to aggregate results. The polling station and constituency level versions of these forms would be almost identical, except for the "Location" box, which would specify the constituency, union, and polling station as appropriate.

Figure 6: Union Consolidation Forms

All original result forms should be attached to the consolidation sheet		Network Copy	
8th National Parliament Election 2001			
Union Observation Consolidation Form			
Location		Union Coordinating Committee	
Union:		Name	Organization
Thana:			
Constituency:			
National number of constituency:			
District:			
Total No. of reports received*			
Total No. of PC in the Union			
Total No. of PB in the Union			
Instructions			
Aggregate and record the total number of "yes" and "no" responses to each question in the appropriate box below from all polling booth observation form.			
Environment of the Polling Center		Total Yes	Total No
1. Is the polling center in its assigned location?			
2. Is the polling center free from posters, banners, wall writing or any other canvassing materials of the candidates?			
3. Was the empty ballot box shown to and sealed in the presence of agents of the principal candidates and the election observer after completion of all necessary pre-election formalities?			
4. Were the voters free from any direct or indirect intimidation on their way to polling center, in and around the polling center?			
Polling Process		Total Yes	Total No
5. Did voting start on time?			
6. Are the voters able to cast their votes in secret?			
7. Is the voter list free from complaints?			
8. Is voting proceeding as per the election law in the center? (i.e. confirmation of voter's identity, use of indelible ink, official seal on ballot paper, polling officer signature etc.)			
9. Is the center free from false voting? (if yes how many false vote)			
10. Is the voting proceeding without violence or gross irregularities?			
11. Are the women able to cast their vote without any fear or intimidation or pressure?			
12. Were aged persons, pregnant women and disable people getting preference in the queue to cast their vote?			
13. Are blind and other disabled people able to select their own assistants to help them cast their vote?			
14. Are agents of the principal candidates able to perform their duties without obstacles?			
15. Are Election Officials performing their duties in a neutral manner?			
16. Are security forces performing their duties in a neutral manner?			

17. According to election law, were all the voters who were in the queue during the voting time permitted to cast their vote?					
Counting Process				Total Yes	Total No
18. Did vote counting take place in the presence of the agents of the principal candidates and the election observers?					
19. Were only authorized persons present during count?					
20. Was the vote counting process completed without any objection/ or complaint?					
21. Once counted, were the results properly enunciated?					
22. Was the result sheet distributed to the polling agents and the election observers?					
23. As an election observer were you free from intimidation and/ or violence from the beginning of the process to the end?					
Number of Voters		Male	Female	Total	
24. Number of votes cast					
Overall Evaluation				Total	
a)	Good- no significant disorder took place				
b)	Minor incidents- should not impact on election results				
c)	Gross violation occurred – could impact on election results				
d)	Very serious violation occurred- results of this center must be canceled				
Additional question				Total Yes	Total No
26. Are religious, ethnic and linguistic minority groups able to cast their vote without any fear or intimidation or pressure?					
Signature of Union Coordinator:				Date:	

** this number must equal the total number of forms to be consolidated and affixed to this consolidation form*

Once the data has been aggregated, cleaned, and checked, donors and other interested parties will be anxious to examine the results. The data can be presented by constituency, by constituency by union, by constituency by organization, by constituency by union by organization, and even by booth and by polling center if desired. A sample page from each of these kinds of tables based on 2001 election data is shown below.

Figure 7: Various Data Tables

Bangladesh National Election October 1, 2001

Table 1: Constituency Level Data

Constituency No	Constituency	Unions Covered	Total Observations	Weighted Score	Results
1	Panchagarh-1	23	324	3.94	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	23	476	3.99	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	25	447	3.99	Passed
4	Thakurgaon-2	17	284	4.00	Passed
5	Thakurgaon-3	13	275	4.00	Passed
6	Dinajpur-1	19	458	3.96	Passed
7	Dinajpur-2	17	560	3.98	Passed
8	Dinajpur-3	13	372	3.91	Passed
9	Dinajpur-4	17	356	3.98	Passed
10	Dinajpur-5	26	823	4.00	Passed
11	Dinajpur-6	25	358	3.98	Passed
12	Nilphamari-1	20	477	3.97	Passed
13	Nilphamari-2	16	325	3.95	Passed
14	Nilphamari-3	15	288	3.86	Passed
15	Nilphamari-4	12	275	3.90	Passed
16	Lalmonirhat-1	17	393	3.95	Passed
17	Lalmonirhat-2	16	469	3.98	Passed
18	Lalmonirhat-3	9	246	3.85	Passed
19	Rangpur-1	8	80	4.00	Passed
21	Rangpur-3	8	116	4.00	Passed
22	Rangpur-4	10	107	4.00	Passed
25	Kurigram-1	27	948	3.97	Passed
26	Kurigram-2	21	725	4.00	Passed
27	Kurigram-3	14	296	3.96	Passed
28	Kurigram-4	14	465	4.00	Passed
29	Gaibandha-1	14	255	3.83	Passed
30	Gaibandha-2	14	300	3.89	Passed
31	Gaibandha-3	20	396	3.95	Passed
32	Gaibandha-4	16	515	3.99	Passed
33	Gaibandha-5	10	168	4.00	Passed
34	Joypurhat-1	18	605	3.92	Passed
35	Joypurhat-2	14	240	3.92	Passed
36	Bogra-1	14	277	4.00	Passed
37	Bogra-2	12	219	3.99	Passed
38	Bogra-3	11	215	3.99	Passed
39	Bogra-4	13	208	4.00	Passed
40	Bogra-5	17	333	3.81	Passed
41	Bogra-6	19	521	3.98	Passed
42	Bogra-7	13	349	3.97	Passed
43	Nowabgonj-1	11	239	3.90	Passed
44	Nowabgonj-2	15	568	3.99	Passed
45	Nowabgonj-3	15	428	3.95	Passed
46	Noagaoan-1	12	31	4.00	Passed
47	Noagaoan-2	9	46	4.00	Passed
48	Noagaoan-3	13	106	3.96	Passed
49	Noagaoan-4	4	8	4.00	Passed
50	Noagaoan-5	22	509	3.94	Passed
51	Noagaoan-6	15	193	3.99	Passed
52	Rajshahi-1	12	470	3.95	Passed
53	Rajshahi-2	43	591	3.97	Passed
54	Rajshahi-3	22	434	3.97	Passed
55	Rajshahi-4	14	446	4.00	Passed
56	Rajshahi-5	12	377	3.97	Passed
57	Natore-1	17	290	3.89	Passed
58	Natore-2	12	256	3.64	Passed
59	Natore-3	14	134	3.93	Passed
60	Natore-4	14	170	3.98	Passed
61	Sirajgonj-1	11	214	4.00	Passed
62	Sirajgonj-2	14	593	3.99	Passed
63	Sirajgonj-3	16	326	3.84	Passed

Page 1

Bangladesh National Election October 1, 2001

Table 2: Union Level Data by Constituency

Constituency No.	Constituency	UNION	Total Observations	Weighted Score	Results
1	Panchagarh-1	ALOWA KHOWA	17	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	AMARIGHARA	17	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	BALARAMPUR	20	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	BANGLA BANDHA	8	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	BHAJANPUR	7	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	BLRABURI	5	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	CHANDLA HAT	23	3.86	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	DEBANAGAR	19	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	DHAKKAMARA	11	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	DHAMOR	12	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	GARINABARI	5	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	HAJIZABAD	14	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	HARIBHASA	14	3.43	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	KAMAT KAJAL DIGHI	23	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	MAGURA	22	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	MRZAPUR	14	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	PANCHAGARH	12	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	RACHANAGAR	13	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	SALBAHAN	10	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	SATMARA	22	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	TARIA	15	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	TENTULIA	14	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	TIRNAHAT	11	3.36	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BARA SHASHI	69	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BARAPATIA	7	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BENGHARI BANAGRAM	32	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BLASHI	17	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BODA	6	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	CHANDANBARI	22	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	CHENGTI	4	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	CHILAHATI	17	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	CHANDAPAL	23	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	DEBDOBA	10	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	DEBGANU	97	3.55	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	JHALAISHALSIRI	8	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	KAJAL DIGHI KALIGANU	6	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	KALGANU	12	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	MAIGAN DIGHI	15	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	MAREA BAMAHAAT	31	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	PAWULI	14	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	PANCHPIR	24	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	SAKOA	15	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	SHALDANGA	15	3.67	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	SONAHAR MALLKADHA	18	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	SUNDAR DIGHI	15	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	TEPRIGANU	5	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	AKCHA	14	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	AKHANAGAR	15	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	AULAPUR	15	3.96	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	BALIA	23	3.96	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	BARABARI	1	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	BARAGAON	18	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	BEGUNBARI	33	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	BHOMRADAHA	5	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	CHILARANG	18	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	DEBIPUR	15	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	GACURA	27	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	GAREYA	8	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	JAGANNATHPUR	23	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	JAMALPUR	19	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	KUSHA RANGANU	6	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	MAHAMUNADPUR	21	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	NARGUN	24	3.96	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	RAJMAHPUR	26	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	RAJAGANU	14	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	ROYPUR	21	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	RUTEA	27	4.00	Passed

Bangladesh National Election October 1, 2001
Table 3: Organization Level Data by Constituency

Constituency No.	Constituency	Organization	Total Observations	Weighted Score	Results
1	Panchagarh-1	BNPS	264	3.95	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	BSEHR	51	3.92	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	RDRS	9	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BNPS	263	3.98	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BSEHR	12	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	FEMA	1	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	RDRS	200	3.99	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	BNPS	301	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	FEMA	12	3.92	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	RDRS	134	3.97	Passed
4	Thakurgaon-2	BNPS	217	4.00	Passed
4	Thakurgaon-2	RDRS	67	4.00	Passed
5	Thakurgaon-3	BNPS	213	4.00	Passed
5	Thakurgaon-3	FEMA	1	4.00	Passed
5	Thakurgaon-3	RDRS	61	4.00	Passed
6	Dinajpur-1	BNPS	271	3.93	Passed
6	Dinajpur-1	Khan Foundation	187	4.00	Passed
7	Dinajpur-2	BNPS	335	3.95	Passed
7	Dinajpur-2	Khan Foundation	199	4.00	Passed
7	Dinajpur-2	RDRS	26	4.00	Passed
8	Dinajpur-3	BNPS	188	3.82	Passed
8	Dinajpur-3	FEMA	1	4.00	Passed
8	Dinajpur-3	Khan Foundation	183	4.00	Passed
9	Dinajpur-4	BNPS	172	3.97	Passed
9	Dinajpur-4	Khan Foundation	184	3.99	Passed
10	Dinajpur-5	BNPS	274	3.99	Passed
10	Dinajpur-5	Democracywatch	349	4.00	Passed
10	Dinajpur-5	Khan Foundation	200	4.00	Passed
11	Dinajpur-6	BNPS	168	3.96	Passed
11	Dinajpur-6	Khan Foundation	190	4.00	Passed
12	Nilphamari-1	BNPS	259	3.96	Passed
12	Nilphamari-1	Democracywatch	92	4.00	Passed
12	Nilphamari-1	RDRS	126	3.98	Passed
13	Nilphamari-2	BNPS	233	3.93	Passed
13	Nilphamari-2	Khan Foundation	92	4.00	Passed
14	Nilphamari-3	BNPS	188	4.00	Passed
14	Nilphamari-3	RDRS	100	3.61	Passed
15	Nilphamari-4	BNPS	228	3.88	Passed
15	Nilphamari-4	RDRS	47	4.00	Passed
16	Lalmonirhat-1	BNPS	115	3.92	Passed
16	Lalmonirhat-1	Khan Foundation	179	4.00	Passed
16	Lalmonirhat-1	RDRS	108	3.94	Passed
17	Lalmonirhat-2	BNPS	169	3.93	Passed
17	Lalmonirhat-2	Democracywatch	2	4.00	Passed
17	Lalmonirhat-2	Khan Foundation	178	4.00	Passed
17	Lalmonirhat-2	RDRS	100	4.00	Passed
18	Lalmonirhat-3	BNPS	78	3.91	Passed
18	Lalmonirhat-3	Khan Foundation	107	3.79	Passed
18	Lalmonirhat-3	RDRS	61	3.88	Passed
19	Rangpur-1	Khan Foundation	80	4.00	Passed
21	Rangpur-3	Khan Foundation	116	4.00	Passed
22	Rangpur-4	Khan Foundation	107	4.00	Passed
22	Rangpur-4	RDRS	428	3.99	Passed
25	Kurigram-1	BNPS	310	3.96	Passed
25	Kurigram-1	BROTEE	8	4.00	Passed
25	Kurigram-1	BSEHR	8	4.00	Passed
25	Kurigram-1	RDRS	202	3.98	Passed
26	Kurigram-2	BNPS	390	4.00	Passed
26	Kurigram-2	BROTEE	239	4.00	Passed
26	Kurigram-2	RDRS	106	4.00	Passed
27	Kurigram-3	BNPS	169	4.00	Passed
27	Kurigram-3	RDRS	127	3.92	Passed
28	Kurigram-4	BNPS	226	4.00	Passed
28	Kurigram-4	Khan Foundation	119	4.00	Passed
28	Kurigram-4	RDRS	121	4.00	Passed
29	Gaibandha-1	BNPS	235	3.81	Passed
29	Gaibandha-1	BSEHR	20	4.00	Passed
30	Gaibandha-2	BNPS	149	3.92	Passed
30	Gaibandha-2	BSEHR	19	4.00	Passed
30	Gaibandha-2	Khan Foundation	132	3.85	Passed

Bangladesh National Election October 1, 2001

Table 4: Organization Level Data by Union by Constituency

CONSTIT	Constituency	UNION	Organization	Total Observations	Weighted Score	Results
1	Panchagarh-1	ALOMA KHONA	BNPS	17	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	AMARGHANA	BNPS	12	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	AMARGHANA	BSEHR	5	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	BALARAMPUR	BNPS	11	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	BALARAMPUR	RDRS	9	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	BANGLA BANDHA	BNPS	6	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	BHAIJANPUR	BNPS	7	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	BURABURI	BNPS	5	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	CHAKLA HAT	BNPS	11	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	CHAKLA HAT	BSEHR	17	3.76	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	DEBNAGAR	BNPS	10	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	DHAKGAMARA	BNPS	3	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	DHAKGAMARA	BSEHR	2	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	DHALOR	BNPS	12	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	GARNABARI	BNPS	1	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	GARNABARI	BSEHR	4	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	HAFIZABAD	BNPS	10	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	HAFIZABAD	BSEHR	4	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	HARSHASA	BNPS	14	3.43	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	KAMAT KAJAL DIGHI	BNPS	20	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	KAMAT KAJAL DIGHI	BSEHR	3	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	MAGURA	BNPS	12	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	MAGURA	BSEHR	10	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	MIRZAPUR	BNPS	14	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	PANCHAGARH	BNPS	12	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	RACHANAGAR	BNPS	13	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	SALBAHAN	BNPS	10	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	SATARA	BNPS	16	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	SATARA	BSEHR	6	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	TARA	BNPS	15	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	TENTULA	BNPS	14	4.00	Passed
1	Panchagarh-1	TIRANAHAT	BNPS	11	3.36	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BARA SHASHI	BNPS	59	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BARA SHASHI	RDRS	10	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BARAPATA	RDRS	7	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BENGHARI BANAGRAM	BNPS	26	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BENGHARI BANAGRAM	RDRS	7	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BILASHI	RDRS	11	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	BODA	RDRS	6	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	CHANDANBARI	BNPS	12	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	CHANDANBARI	RDRS	10	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	CHENGTI	BSEHR	4	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	CHILAHATI	BNPS	11	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	CHILAHATI	RDRS	6	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	DANDAPAL	BNPS	10	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	DANDAPAL	BSEHR	8	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	DANCAPAL	RDRS	5	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	DEBDIOBA	BNPS	10	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	DEBIGANJ	BNPS	23	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	DEBIGANJ	RDRS	74	3.67	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	HALASHALSRI	BNPS	8	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	KAJAL DIGHI KALIGANJ	RDRS	6	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	KALIGANJ	BNPS	12	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	MADAN DIGHI	BNPS	10	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	MADAN DIGHI	RDRS	5	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	MAREA BAMANHAT	BNPS	21	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	MAREA BAMANHAT	RDRS	10	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	PAVLU	BNPS	8	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	PAVLU	RDRS	1	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	PAVLU	RDRS	5	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	PANCHIPUR	BNPS	12	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	PANCHIPUR	RDRS	12	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	SAKDA	BNPS	15	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	SAKDA	RDRS	5	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	SHALDANGA	BNPS	10	3.50	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	SHALDANGA	RDRS	5	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	SOKANAR MALLKADHA	BNPS	12	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	SOKANAR MALLKADHA	RDRS	6	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	SUNDAR DIGHI	BNPS	10	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	SUNDAR DIGHI	RDRS	5	4.00	Passed
2	Panchagarh-2	TIPSIGANJ	RDRS	5	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	KACHA	BNPS	12	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	KACHA	RDRS	2	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	KHANAGAR	BNPS	13	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	KHANAGAR	RDRS	3	4.00	Passed
3	Thakurgaon-1	KULAPUR	BNPS	15	4.00	Passed



Compiling official
voting results and
observer
assessments



Relating to the News Media

Newspaper, radio, and television reporters will be interested in the activities of the Working Group. Effective communication with these persons is an important means to reach the public to highlight the value of a nationwide coordinated domestic monitoring coalition. The right kinds of messages can serve as voter education and awareness raising; deterrents to candidates, political parties, and their hired thugs to violence, intimidation, fraud, and corruption; encouragement to a high voter turnout; and confidence-building for potential voters and the international community in the legitimacy of the election.

For these reasons, the Working Group will want to produce and release its own press statements. In the pre-election period these may cover observations of violence or intimidation, as well as updates on the recruitment, training, and deployment of observers and information about the diversity of the member organizations of the Working Group.

As the election draws closer, the Working Group will most likely want to utilize the benefits of the press in presenting a united front as a coalition, in stressing its common goals and objectives, and in emphasizing important voter education messages to the public in order to encourage participation in polling and holding candidates accountable after the election.

As soon as possible after election day, the Working Group will want to make an announcement to the press about its collective assessment of the polling procedures. This is the culmination of all the group's activities, as the public, donor community, candidates, and parties will want to hear if the group believes the election can be considered free and fair. This evaluation will have a direct bearing on whether these entities will accept the results of the election, so it has great

value in promoting democratic values and the electoral process in Bangladesh.

After an initial aggregation of data is performed, concentrating on the one specific question on the form that evaluates the polling as a whole, the Working Group will be able to comment on whether the election was free and fair. At this point the group should appoint spokespersons on behalf of the coalition, a joint announcement should be written, and a press conference should be called at which the announcement is made.

This initial announcement of election quality will carry significant weight and impact. It is therefore critical that the Working Group reach consensus regarding the overall assessment of whether the election can be generally characterized as free and fair. The very precise quantitative data available to the Working Group will allow for more detailed identification of any trouble spots. Following the initial assessment, therefore, the Working Group should move quickly to assess whether any of the constituency level data reveals that irregularities were sufficient to have altered the election results, and therefore, the seat. If it can be concluded from the data that there were widespread or serious enough problems or irregularities to have altered the election only in certain places, the Working Group should publically state that with the exception of specific constituencies or polling stations (identified by name), the election in the rest of the country was free and fair. This allows the Working Group to confer public confidence on these areas with no problems and to celebrate the success of the process there. The Working Group should then describe its advocacy plans to ensure that the areas where problems were significant enough to alter the results are investigated and/or re-pollled.

Advocating for Change

Although Bangladesh has made great progress in strengthening its democracy, there are still challenges ahead that need to be addressed. As in 2001, a Working Group for future election observation will most likely still need to advocate with the Election Commission (EC) in favor of certain changes which will benefit the electoral process and in particular, observation procedures.

In 2001, a sub-group made up of representatives from the member organizations, as well as staff and consultants from The Asia Foundation, met with the EC and the Chief Advisor of the caretaker government to lobby for certain measures. In addition, the Working Group kept the international diplomatic and donor community informed of their concerns so that the two could work in tandem to advocate for the same kinds of changes, and thus have greater likelihood of success.

The following issues were advocated for and successfully achieved in 2001:

- Permit at least one observer per booth. There was one observer per booth for this election as opposed to one observer per station in 1996.
- Permit observers to observe the process from beginning to end, including the counting process. The 1996 guidelines did not permit observers to observe all day or observe the count.
- Permit disabled domestic observers to participate.
- Permit special needs voters to proceed to front of the queue (blind, disabled, elderly, and pregnant).

There were other issues which the EMWG tried unsuccessfully to persuade the EC to change. These issues should be considered as possible advocacy topics in future:

- Permit observers to observe in their own communities to minimize cost of transport and increase ownership and quality of observation.
- Permit observers to vote by postal ballot if they could not observe in their own upazila.
- Lower minimum age for observers from 25 to 18 (voting age).
- Facilitate early accreditation process by organization.

In addition, there are certain issues that the government should consider in advance of elections. Many Working Group member organizations have on-going advocacy and governance programs which seek to address these topics. These should still be considered priority concerns:

- **Representation of women in Parliament.** Proposals to set aside reserve seats again, as there have been in the past, should be advocated for until the government acts to pass legislation. At least 30 seats should be reserved, as has been law in the past, although 64 seats, one for each district, would be even more beneficial and has been agreed to in principle by both of the major parties.
- **Direct election of the reserved women's seats.** The 30 seats reserved for women previously were appointed by the ruling party, so the measure was largely a political tool to benefit the majority. Direct election would require women candidates to compete with other women for the seats and would allow

voters to make their own choices, thereby empowering women and fostering democratic processes.

- **Recovery of illegal arms in advance of elections.** This measure was executed rather poorly prior to the 2001 elections and a great deal of pre-election violence occurred. Members of the Working Group would most likely want to continue to encourage the caretaker government in future to make a more serious drive to recover violent weapons.
- **Complete independence of Election Commission.** The EC is still often used as a political tool by the major parties and subject to threat and intimidation. NGOs that focus on governance and human rights issues continue to advocate for greater autonomy for the EC and widespread respect for non-partisan election procedures. This would most likely be a concern for an elections Working Group in future as well.

And finally the Working Group must be prepared to advocate for investigation, re-polling, and disciplinary action of officials where appropriate, if irregularities — sufficient to alter the election results — were observed. Under such circumstances, the Working Group should follow the grievance procedures made available under the Election Commission, and work in support of their adherence.



2001 Working Group members discuss their findings and recommendations with each other and the media



Obtaining Accreditation

The official Election Commission requirements for domestic election observers have been minimal, indicating that greater inclusivity is a value which the EC shares, at least in theory. For the 2001 election, these requirements were:

- 25 years of age or older
- no official political party affiliation
- observing in an upazila different from the upazila of their residence

For each observer who met these criteria, the items required in order to receive the proper accreditation identification card in the 2001 election were the following:

- organization's registration information,
- organization's income source for deploying observers,
- organization's governing body/executive board of directors
- identification information about individual observer (name, address, date of birth, father's/husband's name)
- two stamp-sized photos of observer
- prior election observation experience, if any

This represents a heavy burden for accreditation. A more appropriate set of criteria would consist of:

- registered voter or of voting age
- staff or selected representative of approved organization

- commitment to following observer code of conduct

The simplest procedure for accrediting the large numbers of observers needed for achieving nationwide coverage would be for each organization to present the required information on behalf of their entire list of individual observers (based ideally on the latter list of criteria above), along with the organization's information, directly to the EC. After submission, the EC could then distribute the requisite number of ID cards to each organization and have them distribute the cards to their observers.

In the 2001 elections, the EC initially authorized the Deputy Commissioners (DCs) in each district to accredit observers. Rather than adhering to the standards devised by the EC, however, many of the DCs imposed their own arbitrary requirements on member organizations of the EMWG, such as asking for Secondary School certificates, subjecting them to personal interviews, demanding letters of commitment from the funding organization, and requiring clearance from the Special Branch of police, among others. The result was that no accreditation cards had been issued almost a week before the election, and The Asia Foundation along with representatives from the EMWG were forced to lobby the Chief Election Commissioner to intervene. In the end, the EC issued the accreditation cards to the Foundation and the EMWG, which then distributed the cards to each member organization, which in turn handed out the cards to individual observers. All of the observers who received ID cards did in fact meet the legal requirements.

To avoid such confusion and inefficiency in future, the Working Group will most likely need to address the issue of

accreditation early in the pre-election phase and advocate for a streamlined distribution process.


বাংলাদেশ নির্বাচন কমিশন
 ৮ম জাতীয় সংসদ নির্বাচন - ২০০১

নির্বাচন পর্যবেক্ষক পরিচয়পত্র




নাম : বাকির আহমদ
 স্বাক্ষর : Ranid
 প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম : এশিয়া ডাটা সিস্টেম
 পর্যবেক্ষণ এলাকা : কুলা বন্দা-৩ ও চন্দ্রনগর
সংশ্রম এলাকা
 কার্ড নং ০০০২

নির্বাচন কমিশন কর্তৃক
 স্বাক্ষরিত কর্তৃত্ব
 ২৫/১১/০১

মঃ মুঃ মুঃ

Observer Identification Card



Special needs voters turned out on election day

A Sense of Accomplishment

On Election Day itself, Working Group member organizations' staff and volunteers will most likely experience a great sense of accomplishment. It is exciting to see democratic processes in action, and to witness the free and fair polling of millions of their countrymen and women. Domestic observers and international observers alike in 2001 felt joy and satisfaction at the achievement of one of the great signs of liberty and participatory government.

To get to this point of accomplishment, there are many steps along the way. The following is a final checklist of rights, responsibilities, do's and don'ts for observers. If these are followed, ultimately the effort required will be worthwhile.

Preparation:

- ❑ Attend observation-related training arranged by your organization.
- ❑ Obtain your observer's accreditation card issued by the Election Commission and your organization.
- ❑ Collect necessary observation materials (such as forms, ID card, T-shirt, hat) from your organization.
- ❑ Agree on pre-designated locations to meet with other observers at the end of polling day to consolidate data.

Initial set-up:

- ❑ Arrive in time for the opening of the polling center when the voting materials are being checked and the empty ballot box is sealed and locked.

- ❑ Show your observer accreditation card to the election officials in the polling center, establish a good rapport with them and tell them about the materials you have brought with you.
- ❑ Pick a spot inside the polling booth from where you will observe election day proceedings.
- ❑ Check to make sure that all of the required polling materials are present in the center (ballot papers, seal, indelible ink, voter lists, etc.)
- ❑ Check to make sure there is no campaign literature or posters inside the booth.
- ❑ Observe if all party agents are present in the polling center.

Voting process:

- ❑ Observe the voting process without actually watching a voter mark a ballot.
- ❑ Check to see if officials allow people to vote if they already have ink on a finger.
- ❑ Observe whether officials are marking voters' fingers with the official ink in an easily noticeable spot.
- ❑ Observe whether officials are calling out the name and number of each voter so that they are clearly audible to polling agents and observers.
- ❑ Check to see if there are any voters being allowed to vote more than once, or if there are significant numbers of tendered or challenged ballots.
- ❑ Remain in the polling booth to observe casting of votes from start to finish (for stationary observers).

- ❑ Address comments and observations to the Presiding Officer, without making orders or interfering in activities.
- ❑ Be alert for any violence or other threats to your security or the polling process.

After polls close:

- ❑ Remain in the polling center for the counting of the ballots.
- ❑ Record the totals for each candidate when they are announced.
- ❑ Record the totals for tendered ballots, challenged ballots, and spoilt ballots, if any, when they are announced.
- ❑ Check to ensure that the totals recorded on the official forms for the individual candidates are the same as those observed during the count.
- ❑ Check to ensure that the total number of used, unused and spoilt ballot papers equals the number of ballot papers received.

For data aggregation:

- ❑ Move to pre-designated polling station meeting spot.
- ❑ Turn in form to polling station coordinator.
- ❑ Assist coordinator in adding up numbers for Polling Station Consolidation Form.
- ❑ If a coordinator, move to pre-designated union meeting spot to turn in forms to Union Focal Point (UFP) and assist in consolidating data at union level.

- If UFP, move to pre-designated constituency meeting spot to turn in forms to Constituency Coordinating Committee (CCC) and assist in consolidating data at constituency level.
- If member of CCC, fax consolidated polling station, union, and constituency data to central Working Group office in Dhaka and compile observer forms for hand-over to respective member organizations.