



**Final Report**  
**BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: POLITICAL AND CIVIC ORGANIZING,**  
**PARLIAMENTARY DEVELOPMENT**  
**USAID Cooperative Agreement No. EUR-A-00-94-00028-00**  
**September 1, 1996 to June 30, 1999**

**I. SUMMARY**

In February 1996 the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) conducted an assessment mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina to determine what role the Institute could play in contributing to the democratization process. This assessment mission was conducted in February 1996, just a few months after the Dayton Peace agreement was signed and NATO forces were deployed to Bosnia. The assessment team<sup>1</sup> concluded that conditions existed for an NDI program encompassing a civic participation and political party training. Given the elections which were mandated by the Dayton Peace Agreement to be conducted within the year, NDI's experience with voter education and political party outreach would be a valuable contribution to preparing the country for the election process.

Since the initial mission in 1996 the circumstances in Bosnia-Herzegovina have changed significantly. The physical rehabilitation of the country has proceeded and the country's basic infrastructure has largely been restored to working order. In addition, NATO forces have successfully established a secure environment to conduct democratization and other civilian implementation programs, which has allowed NDI to expand its programming from its initial civic and political party work in the Federation entity to the RS and to the institution-strengthening realm through a parliamentary development program.

In 1999 NDI's program reflects its growth from a small program working in the Federation entity with two full-time resident representatives to a fully operational program hosting offices in both entities under the management of four skilled resident representatives. NDI's work in Bosnia has also earned the respect of the international organizations charged with implementing the Dayton Peace Accords including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the

---

<sup>1</sup> Susan Atwood was then regional director of NDI's Central and East European Program, Les Campbell was NDI's field representative in Croatia, Les Francis is founder and partner of Winner/Wagner & Francis and a former advisor to President Carter, Sergei Markov was director of Carnegie's Moscow Center, John Swanson was NDI's field representative in Romania.

Office of the High Representatives (OHR). Over a three year period NDI's programs have worked with over twenty-five political parties in both entities, exposed nearly three hundred Bosnian communities to the ideas and practices of democracy through its civic organizing program, and developed training programs in consultation with the leadership of both entities level parliaments to address institutional and professional needs. This report will provide a summary of those activities from September 1996 through June 1999.

## **II. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

NDI program objectives in Bosnia-Herzegovina have remained largely unchanged over the three year course of the program:

- Political parties compete successfully using voter outreach techniques and through more effective election organization and activity.
- Citizens and citizen groups are empowered and constructively engaged in the political process.
- Legislative institutions are strengthened through greater understanding by MPs of their roles and responsibilities in governance, constituent outreach, and the legislative process.

## **III. BACKGROUND**

When the Dayton Accord was signed in December 1995, NATO troops were deployed to establish a secure environment for civilian organizations to begin work on the political and humanitarian aspects of the peace agreement. In 1996 the political environment in Bosnia was highly polarized. The political landscape was defined by nationalist parties representing the three main ethnic groups: the Bosniak Party of Democratic Action (SDA), the Croatian Democratic Party (HDZ), and the Serb Social Democratic Party (SDS). Political space in which to provide training and information regarding democratic practices was generally unavailable in the Republika Srpska (RS) entity, and the level of voter education and awareness throughout the country regarding the purpose and reason for elections which would occur in September 1996 was limited at best.

Since 1996 the situation in Bosnia has changed significantly. The investment of the international community in the reconstruction and development of viable political and social institutions, coupled with the presence of NATO military forces has allowed the initial transformation of Bosnia-Herzegovina from war to peace to occur without major incident. In the first three years of the process two national elections and one municipal election have been successfully conducted by the international community in addition to one extraordinary parliamentary election for the RS. Over these election cycles parties in opposition to the nationalist parties have made encouraging gains in both entities, but the strength of the nationalist parties has remained.

In 1997 and 1998 internal disagreement and eventual splits in the major Croatian and Serb national parties (HDZ and SDS respectively) resulted in the formation of two opposition parties, the New Croatian Initiative (NHI) under the leadership of Kresimir Zubak and the Serb People's Party (SNS) under the leadership of Biljana Plavsic. The formation of these parties were encouraging signs for the international community, which was looking for opportunities to break the power of the nationalists and encourage political pluralism and moderation in the country. Although these two new parties were indeed good signs for the multipartisan development of Bosnia's political system, the transition to democracy by the post-conflict, post-communist society continues to face major obstacles.

The main centers of power remain the nationalist parties and the international community. The struggle between the two presents itself constantly in the politics of the country. For example, in March 1998 the Office of the High Representative (OHR) dismissed Nikola Poplasen, newly elected President of the RS, on the grounds he was not cooperating with the joint governing institutions in Bosnia and was not willing to abide by the provisions of the Dayton Peace Accords. In response, Serbs boycotted joint governing institutions and remained in political deadlock over how to resolve the political crisis over the presidency and the appointment of a prime minister for the entity.

As a result of the economic leverage the international community has in Bosnia, the political struggles in both entities have often been resolved through a stick and carrot method. As an example, Prime Minister Milorad Dodic's Party of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD)<sup>2</sup> has effectively promoted cooperation with Dayton as a means of acceptance by the international community, opening the way for increased economic aid for the RS. The use of similar pressure against the SDA and HDZ in the Federation has met with varying degrees of success somewhat due to the large amounts of aid provided to the Federation early in the Dayton process with few conditions.

Although the power of the nationalist parties can be expected in a country which is still recovering from conflict, positive change in Bosnia over this grant period has been evident. The process of reconciliation has moved slowly, leaving the people of Bosnia with ethnicity and ethnic security foremost in their minds, but as peace has taken a firmer hold, people have become concerned about such issues as economic security and democratization. This shift in attitude has provided opportunity for opposition parties, like the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in the Federation, to consolidate support and speak to issues beyond ethnicity. In addition, it has led citizens and communities at the grassroots to take a more active interest in their political rights and responsibilities.

### **III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

---

<sup>2</sup> Prime Minister Dodik rose to power after the success of the SLOGA ("Unity") coalition of opposition parties in the extraordinary parliamentary elections held in November 1998. The SLOGA coalition includes the SNSD, the Serb People's Union (SNS), and the Socialist Party of Republika Srpska (SPRS).

## **A. Political Party Development Program**

Since 1996, NDI's political party program has promoted the development of a viable, multiparty system by providing political parties with the tools necessary to strengthen their organizational capacity in order to compete effectively in elections and participate in political affairs. NDI provides consultations and training seminars on topics that assist selected political parties<sup>3</sup> in strengthening internal party organization and improving public outreach capabilities. In 1998, NDI began a professional development program for six political party organizers to enhance the impact of NDI's program and promote indigenous party organizing capacity.

### ***June 1996 - NDI's Program Launched in the Federation Entity***

In late June, 1996, NDI opened its office in Sarajevo in advance of the September 1996 national elections. Following initial assessment meetings with parties in Sarajevo and local branches in Bihac, Konic and Zenica, NDI representatives held regular informal consultations with the national coordinating team for several leading opposition parties. In the following months, NDI conducted formal training seminars with leading parties and coalitions, which targeted party leaders, candidates and campaign managers and branch activists.

### ***Fall 1997 and 1998 - Refining the Program Through Memorandums of Understanding***

Throughout the first year of the program, NDI refined its methods for structuring training cycles and identifying parties that would most benefit from NDI assistance. In the fall of 1997, NDI conducted an assessment to evaluate the Institute's work with political parties and to decide which parties NDI should work with in the coming year. Based on the assessment and election results, NDI decided to focus on fewer regions and to provide more assistance to three selected groups of parties in the Federation. The parties were chosen based on: performance in the municipal and National Assembly elections; commitment to democratic politics and opposition to violence; commitment to creating a democratic party structure with a broad-based membership; and institutional capacity to absorb and use NDI training; and willingness to work with NDI.

In November and December, NDI's resident representatives negotiated memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the leadership of the following parties selected parties selected to participate in NDI's program were (sample copy of MOU is attached):

#### *Federation*

- Social Democratic Party (SDP);
- United List coalition, which includes the Union of Bosnian Social Democrats (UBSD), the Muslim-Bosniak Organization (MBO), the Croatian Peasants Party (HSS) and the

---

<sup>3</sup> Main criteria for selection of participating parties include demonstrated and stated support for the principles of the Dayton Accord and proven ability to absorb NDI training in addition to other evaluative criteria developed through program assessments over time.

- Republican Party; and
- Coalition for a Unified and Democratic Bosnia, which includes the Party for Democratic Action (SDA), Party for BiH (SBiH), Liberal Party and Citizens Democracy Party (GDS).

In the fall of 1997 NDI began to explore the possibilities for expansion of the political party program to the Republika Srpska. Following an assessment mission in January 1998, NDI opened an office and placed a full-time field representative in Banja Luka in February. As part of the assessment mission, NDI evaluated which parties to work with in the RS and signed MOUs with the following parties:

- Serb People's Union (SNS),
- Socialist Party (SPRS),
- Independent Social Democrats (SNSD),
- Serb Patriotic Party (SPAS),
- Democratic Patriotic Party (DPS),
- Democratic Party (DS);
- Serb Peasants' Party (SSS); and
- Social Liberal Party (SLS).

The MOU has proved effective in helping parties focus on their development needs and enabled NDI to reevaluate its relationship with each political party. In the fall of 1998, NDI conducted consultations with central party office representatives of several smaller parties to re-evaluate their potential involvement in NDI's 1999 training program. This mid-term assessment enabled NDI to evaluate parties according to previously-developed criteria and refine the program and working relationships with partners. The 1998 assessment demonstrated a need to further refine NDI's training program to reflect the specific needs of each party, which had by that time achieved differing levels of sophistication.

Based on the assessment, NDI renewed MOUs with the following parties in the Federation: the SDP; NHI; Liberals; GDS; SDBiH; and LSP. Due to either a lack of interest or an inability to absorb NDI training, the Institute decided it would not retain such agreements with the SBiH, HSS, LBO, MBO or Republican Party. However, NDI continued to invite these parties to multiparty activities. In the RS, NDI signed MOUs with the SNSD, SPRS and DS. NDI did not renew its MOU with either the Social Liberal Party (SLS) or the Serb Peasants' Party (SSS) based on the less developed nature of these parties and their low capacity to absorb NDI training, however these smaller parties were invited to participate in multiparty training activities.

### ***Training Cycles***

Since 1996, NDI has consistently evaluated and refined its political party development program to meet the changing needs of political parties with each election cycle. In the nearly four years since the Dayton Accord was signed and implementation began four elections have been held in Bosnia-Herzegovina. As a result, much of NDI's training has focused on election preparation and voter outreach. From 1996 through June 1999 NDI's training cycles concentrated on the following

key areas of development:

- Internal party organization including applying lessons learned from the previous election cycles and identifying priorities for municipal election preparation, improving internal party communication, coordination and communication between party branches and party headquarters.
- Strategic planning including developing priorities and calendars, use of resources, recruiting volunteers, and targeting.
- Message development, use of the media, free media, and voter outreach.
- Voter contact techniques including door-to-door canvassing and voter issue surveys.
- Candidate training including debate preparation, voter contact, and use of resources in low-budget campaign circumstances.

In order to more effectively organize its program for presentation to the parties, NDI's resident representatives created a training cycle format. The cycles grouped training topics together for presentation to the parties at the headquarters and branch level. Parties were thus aware how the training would be structured. NDI resident representatives then created a travel schedule in coordination with the parties to present the training cycles to the party branches. The cycles were introduced in advance of the September 1997 municipal elections, and were well received by parties.

The four training cycles in advance of the 1997 municipal elections were:

- Cycle I training sessions with central party campaign teams at the national level focused on establishing an election team, writing election plans, planning election timelines, understanding party strengths and weaknesses, analyzing past election results and determining target audiences.
- Cycle II training sessions with the central and regional party branches on the process of recruiting reliable volunteers and using volunteers to canvass voter opinion on election issues. Parties were introduced to citizen surveys as a means to determine voters' priorities and to develop relevant messages.
- Cycle III training on message development and media planning to develop effective and concise messages that reflect voter concerns and importance of building relationships with media, being creative and translating the parties' message into a media strategy.
- Cycle IV training on voter contact with central party election teams at the national and

regional levels<sup>4</sup> including: 45-day campaign planning; volunteer recruitment and voter targeting; and voter contact programs including door-to-door, phone banking and literature distribution.

In preparation for the September 1998 general elections, NDI followed generally a similar pattern of training, although in later stages training was concentrated on the central party and candidates. In addition, NDI built more elements of party organization into the training cycles. Topics of training for 1998 included: candidate recruitment, election strategy, coalition building, volunteer recruitment, message development, and media strategy. In addition, a multi-party youth event was organized in each entity to encourage youth development in the parties.

Training for the 1999 municipal elections began in March 1999. As part of NDI's objective to design and deliver a customized training and consultation program, the Institute's resident representatives in the Federation and the RS conducted meetings with parties to identify and assess their needs in preparation for the municipal elections and for long-term development. In consultation with its political party partners, NDI developed a training program of four cycles:

- Cycle I: Activating Membership: fundraising; membership development; and campaign planning.
- Cycle II: Strategic Planning: voter surveys; candidate recruitment; targeting; and strategic planning.
- Cycle III: Message Development and Delivery: message development; media; and campaign material.
- Cycle IV: Candidate training and Strategy in the Pre-election Period: message delivery, voter contact, and presentation for the candidate. Strategic planning and use of resources in the final weeks before the election.

Due to heightened security concerns in the Republika Srpska resulting from NATO bombing in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Kosovo, NDI's RS political party resident representative suspended training and evacuated to Sarajevo from Banja Luka in April 1999. In June the OSCE announced municipal elections would be postponed until April 2000.

### ***November 1997 - Regional Field Coordinator (RFC) Program***

In the fall of 1997, NDI began a professional development program for six Bosnian political party organizers to enhance the impact of NDI's program and promote indigenous party organizing capacity. In November 1997, NDI hired three coordinators in the Federation, and in December an

---

<sup>4</sup>At the cantonal level in the Federation (Sarajevo, Zenica, Tuzla, Mostar, and Bihac) and by region in the RS (Banja Luka, Prijedor, Doboje, and Bijeljina).

additional three were hired in the RS. Throughout the past two years, NDI's resident representatives have trained these individuals in methods of political party organizing and election techniques, gradually increasing their responsibility and involvement in training.

Initial training of the six coordinators included introduction to basic political organizing methods and team building skills. The RFCs also attended training sessions and consultations with NDI representatives in order to build relationships with party branches and to observe training techniques. To give these young organizers exposure to other multi-party systems, a study mission to Canada was implemented in March 1998 funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Following introductory training the RFCs were assigned a number of activities designed to put into practice their new skills and prepare them to take a more professional role in the NDI political party program. During the period from April to June 1998, the RFCs organized multiparty youth events with NDI's party program partners with the goal of: encouraging youth participation in the political process and enhancing the RFCs' credibility with party activists and leaders. In August 1998, the RFCs received training on party pollwatching and subsequently developed a pollwatching manual, based on Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) guidelines, for distribution at the party training sessions (please see attached copy). During the elections, the RFCs monitored polling sites using the manuals they had produced and subsequently organized and participated in a series of "lessons learned" political party roundtables following the elections. In follow-up activity to NDI's May training on research and volunteer recruitment the RFCs encouraged party activists to perform voter surveys. By August 1998, more than 9,000 surveys had been distributed to voters by parties in the Federation and nearly 3,000 in the RS.

Beginning in January 1999, the RFCs were fully integrated into NDI's political party training program as professional staff. The Regional Field Coordinators have been directly involved in all principle program areas in order to improve their training and organizing skills, as well as encourage their professional development. Working with NDI's resident representatives, the RFCs have participated in planning training cycles by helping to develop training outlines, preparing materials, and delivering mock training. The RFCs were also responsible for coordinating logistics with program partners, and conducting follow-up activities with party branches after each cycle of training was completed.

### ***1997 Party Platform Development***

In preparation for the 1997 municipal elections, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) collected party platforms to inform voters in the refugee community. To facilitate their distribution and educate voters, NDI published the platforms in three newspapers that reach the three main ethnic groups; these papers were also posted on the Internet and distributed to refugee communities throughout Europe and the United States. NDI also conducted media training for political parties on message development and delivery to show parties how to benefit from a more open press.

### ***July 1998 Expansion of Programming to the Eastern RS***

In July 1998, NDI conducted an assessment of the eastern RS in advance of NDI's program expansion into that area. Although hard-line Serb parties largely dominated the Eastern RS, NDI's program partners expressed an interest in campaigning in the region and some had begun to request training for municipal branches in the area. Following the assessment a short-term resident representative was deployed to organize and conduct special training sessions in Trebinje, Zvornik, Serb Sarajevo and Visegrad. This project was funded through USAID's CEPPS mechanism, and training for parties in the Eastern RS was then incorporated in NDI's new grant proposal and agreement with USAID.

### ***October 1998 Mid-term Program Assessment and Lessons Learned Roundtables***

In October 1998, NDI conducted "lessons learned" roundtables with political parties in the Federation and RS. The purpose of these meetings was to evaluate the Institute's 1998 training program and to help determine the design of the next phase of the political party program. NDI invited representatives from each cantonal branch and the central party offices. The venue provided party branches with a unique opportunity to interact and share best practices from the elections. It also contributed to internal party communications by providing an opportunity for discussions among local and central party activists.

### ***Encouraging Political Participation of Women and Youth***

During the summer of 1997, NDI co-organized and participated in a three-day multi-party seminar for young Bosnian political leaders funded by the OSCE in Budapest, Hungary. Trainings focused on volunteer and membership recruitment strategies and participants devised and presented mock volunteer recruitment and canvas cards. From January until March 1998, the RFCs worked on a special project to organize multi-party youth events in both entities.

From April to June 1998, NDI resident representatives provided informal technical assistance to women leaders and youth activists in developing political agendas. Resident Representative Sarah Jenkins participated as an observer and a facilitator in the multiparty Women's Roundtable in Tuzla and helped the group reach an agreement on a set of ground rules to govern their interactions and to develop strategies to implement their activities. During this meeting, participating women requested media training from NDI. Accordingly, NDI organized a one-day training session in both entities covering methods to increase the power and status women within their parties and how to initiate a women's vote project.

In May 1998, at the request of the OSCE regional office in Capljina, NDI conducted a multiparty training session for young party activists in Neum. Topics covered included: how youth can influence party policy, volunteer recruitment, campaign strategy and dealing with the media. NDI also assisted in planning a "voice of youth" seminar designed to foster cooperation and

communication between political party and NGO youth.

In June 1999, NDI held a conference for more than 60 young political leaders who had demonstrated a serious commitment to politics and assumed a leadership position within the youth branch of their respective political parties. The seminar was designed to provide participants with an understanding of the role and structure of youth branches, both in the overall political culture of BiH and within the larger structure of their political parties. In addition, the OSCE held a session to describe issues pertaining to a Permanent Election Law and Head of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia, Ambassador Robert Barry, engaged participants in an open debate about what Bosnia-Herzegovina must do to become politically independent from the international community. Finally, each party was invited for individual party consultations with trainers to discuss the political development and objectives of their respective youth branches.

### ***Summer 1998 Baseline Polling Assistance***

Many political parties with which NDI has worked are interested in polling, but lack the resources to conduct polling themselves. As the ruling parties already have the resources and conduct their own polling, NDI assisted opposition parties in interpreting polls to help them develop messages that take into consideration citizens' views. NDI cooperated with the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) of Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) to conduct a baseline public opinion poll in BiH. During NDI's training cycle on message development and media, NDI shared the research data gathered from this poll with the parties and trained party members on how to use this data in developing messages and targeting strategies.

### ***Party Pollwatcher Training***

Pollwatching training was designed to help parties develop a deployment plan and familiarize them with the role and responsibility of party pollwatchers within the framework of the election law. In the month preceding the September 1996 elections, NDI focused on providing pollwatcher training to party activists and select nonpartisan monitors. The training was reinforced by a NDI pollwatcher manual that was distributed widely among party agents. NDI estimates it reached more than 900 political party activists directly and distributed 3,000 copies of the manual.

In August and September 1998, NDI held party pollwatching training sessions. All parties were invited to participate in these multiparty sessions; and approximately 2,580 local party activists across BiH attended. The Banja Luka-based RFC team distributed approximately 3,000 NDI Pollwatching Manuals across the RS and some 3,500 NDI Pollwatching Manuals were distributed throughout the Federation, for a total of 6,500 in local language. Branch party members who had been designated as trainers for their respective parties attended these sessions as well as party pollwatchers.

### ***1996 Pre-Election Monitoring***

NDI monitored the election environment prior to the September 1996 elections. NDI provided information on the pre-election environment, particularly on the party situation, to the international community including Office of Democratic Initiatives and Human Rights (ODIHR), OSCE Provisional Election Commission, the European Union, the Coordinators for OSCE International monitors, and media.

### ***January 1998 Election Law Commentary***

In January 1998, NDI submitted a commentary on the election framework to the PEC and OHR. In this report, NDI outlined several issues that, from the Institute's experience, are important in creating a tolerant and pluralistic environment in which political parties can compete effectively. In order to increase political participation, transparency and public confidence in the elections, NDI urged the PEC to: ensure multiparty representation beyond its present composition in all election administration structures, from the PEC to the local level; make available voters lists to political parties, journalists and other interested actors; release the results for each polling station; and organize presidential debates to create opportunities for multi-ethnic parties to be on the same platform as nationalist parties. Attached is a copy of NDI's commentary.

## **B. Civil Society Development Program**

NDI's civic program began in July 1996 as a voter education program designed on NDI's civic forum model. NDI has steadily developed a program which would foster an indigenous grassroots civic education and advocacy capacity.

### **Voter Education**

#### *June 1996 through September 1996*

The governing systems and elected positions contested in the September 1996 elections were largely created by the 1994 Washington Agreement and the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement. The level of knowledge among citizens, pre-occupied with more immediate concerns, of the government structures and responsibilities was low.

In July 1996, NDI resident representatives conducted an assessment of the Tuzla Podrina canton and determined that there was limited and incomplete information available to voters about the September 14th elections. As a result, NDI's initial program activities were devoted to gathering, processing, and distributing information necessary to inform voters about the coming elections. NDI staff worked together with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to collect the necessary information and to develop appropriate educational materials.

The NDI civic team conducted 35 voter education seminars in the 12 municipalities that comprise the Tuzla Podrina canton<sup>5</sup> and involved local community leaders by enlisting their help to secure venues for the session and to promote participant turnout. The sessions consisted of a presentation about the election process and a brief discussion about the relationship between candidates and voters. The presentations were accompanied by handouts, posters and other printed materials that illustrated main points.

In addition to increasing the level of citizen awareness about the September 1996 elections, NDI also sought to identify: (i) resources that could provide reliable information; (ii) networks within the canton that could help organize discussion meetings and distribute materials, and (iii) potential moderators for its future civic education programming. These activities were designed to lay the framework for NDI's future civic programming in the Tuzla region.

## **Civic Education**

### *October 1996 through Winter 1998*

Although massive nation-wide voter education campaigns in 1996 and 1997 began to increase citizens' understand of the structures of government, deep gaps remained in citizen's knowledge about their governing structures and their rights as citizens. Building on the relationships built during the 1996 voter education program in Tuzla-Podrina canton, NDI sought to broaden its civic education work. The program was then expanded to other areas, first to the Western Republika Srpska and then to the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton.

### *Expansion to Banja Luka*

In February 1997 NDI resident representatives conducted an assessment mission to the Banja Luka and Bijelinja communities of Republika Srpska to determine if the civic program model could be replicated in a region of the RS based on need and appropriate conditions to introduce the program. The Institute had recently established a political party program in Banja Luka and wanted to further establish its credibility and nonpartisan status in the RS by conducting civic work in both entities.

Banja Luka was chosen as the best location for the civic program expansion because it is geographically well-situated for the Western RS. Moreover, local and international community leaders indicated that people in Banja Luka and the surrounding areas were most interested in obtaining the kind of information provided through NDI's civic program.

### *Expansion to Mostar*

---

<sup>5</sup> Sessions were held between August 26 and September 8 in Zivinica, Spinonipa, Lukovac, Rahic, Banovici, Gratanica, Srebrenik, Gradaca, Kladanj, Prutace, Doborovci, and Klaseija communities

In December 1997, NDI conducted an assessment in the Una Sana and Herzegovina-Neretva Cantons to select a third location for NDI's civic program. In considering where to launch this program, NDI addressed the following criteria: the presence of a functional NGO community; proximity to NDI's other program sites, including Tuzla and Banja Luka; NDI's ability to create a local team that can function safely; the geographic scope of the area selected and its potential for expansion; political "openness" and citizen readiness to engage in civic education discussions; presence of a stable population; and the possibility for program participants to address problems through representative and accountable local structures.

Based on its assessment missions to Bihac and Mostar, NDI selected Mostar as the third program site. Select criteria were instrumental to NDI's decision to launch its civic program in Mostar and its substantial Bosnian Croat population expanded the program reach to all three constituent ethnic groups. In addition, NDI determined that the degree of political openness in Bihac, where the SDA assumed a hard-line attitude toward dissent and activism, was limited in comparison with Mostar. Although both areas hosted substantial displaced populations, which NDI's previous experience had indicated created difficult working conditions because of the intense focus on return, Mostar's population was dominated by long-term residents who were more interested in grassroots political participation.

From October 1997 through June 1999 the NDI civic program incorporated the following activities to meet its objectives to increase citizen's understanding of their governing systems and increase citizen participation:

*1) Local Staff As Discussion Group Facilitators/Educators*

- In each site. NDI hired and trained local staff (over the course of the program a total of **30** Bosnians were hired and trained). Field coordinators from the three regions were trained in small-group facilitation methods, volunteer recruitment tactics and basic adult education approaches. The Bosnian staff members then worked with community leaders and active members of existing Bosnian citizen associations to organize discussion groups of citizens in all municipalities of a given region.

*2) Discussion Groups in a Large Number of Local Communities In All Three Sites*

- Small groups (between five and fifteen participants) meeting monthly, facilitated discussions of principles, processes and structures of democracy. Most groups participated in six meetings, in which they covered 13 discussion topics including: examinations of basic underpinnings of democracy, assessments of democracy in practice (the state of Bosnian democracy), concrete steps for participation ("how to's" of participation and advocacy), individual rights and democracy; accountability and transparency in government, role of media, role of political parties, role of elections, and role of citizens and citizen organizations.
- Publications created by Bosnian and international organizations as relevant to the topic of

discussion were disseminated in the sessions.

- In Tuzla-Podrina Canton 80 Discussion groups were formed in December 1996  
A second phase of discussion groups was completed with 48 groups in March 1998.
- In Banja Luka 57 Discussion groups were formed in July 1997
- In Herzegovina-Neretva Canton 80 discussion groups were formed in April 1998. Of these, 35 were in municipalities with Croat majority, and 45 were in Bosniac majority municipalities.

### *3) Assessed Groups Participating in Discussion Group Cycle to Determine If They Would be Interested/Prepared to Participate in Local Advocacy/Community Organizing Training*

- In order to determine which groups might be interested in and prepared to move into community organizing and advocacy, NDI worked with local staff to design evaluation tools to use with the communities participating in discussion groups. The NDI staff serving as group facilitators distributed a survey to program participants; conducted interviews with local volunteers who helped NDI organize the groups; and gathered letters from community leaders and other third parties noting the program's impact. Finally, each civic staff member prepared reports on their civic groups' progress and activities. The information collected during the evaluation cycle provided the program teams with the means to assess the program's impact, make any necessary modifications to the program's design, and determine which groups were most interested in community organizing.

## **Community Organizing and Advocacy**

*October 1996 through Winter 1998*

Building upon the skills learned in the discussion group phase of the program, the program then moved to an organizing and advocacy phase designed to encouraging citizens' participation in engaging their leaders to solve community problems

### *1) Prepared Groups To Begin Organizing/Advocacy Phase of the Program Through Participatory Activities*

- Starting in May 1997, NDI-trained Bosnian discussion group facilitators in Tuzla introduced interactive exercises and presentations and participants were encouraged to call political party representatives to get their party's view on a particular area of interest to them. These exercises were implemented to help determine which groups were interested in moving into the organizing phase of the program.

- In July and August 1997 organized candidate forums in seven municipalities in the Tuzla-Podrina Canton<sup>6</sup>
- In September 1997 discussion group participants in Banja Luka more involved in their communities by taking part in an election monitoring which was organized by a local NGO, Zlatna Jesen. NDI trained more than 70 monitors who manned polling stations in communities surrounding Banja Luka and Preidor.
- In August 1998 groups participating in NDI's program in Tuzla organized candidate forums in Siki Brod, Srebrenik, and Kalesija. In addition to organizing the forums, the groups raised funds from local donors to cover costs associated with the events and encouraged participation from the surrounding communities. NDI staff trained the groups on attracting desired turn-out from citizens and media, raising funds, and organizing the day's event. In total, more than 540 Bosnian citizens attended these three debates, and the media provided considerable coverage of events as well.
- In September 1998 groups previously involved in NDI's discussion groups joined an election monitoring coalition entitled *OKO* (Eye) comprising a total of 60 groups (30 civic associations and 30 NGOs) that organized and fielded more than 1,000 volunteer election monitors.
- The NDI program was already beginning to phase down when the Mostar groups began their discussion cycles. The proven program design allowed NDI to move the groups at a more accelerated pace. In June 1998, the Bosnian facilitators completed discussions on accountability and transparency in government, and structures of government. At this point, groups already began identifying local issues to organize civic initiatives. The advent of the September 1998 elections allowed the staff to prepare groups for election monitoring activities to begin their transition from discussion to participation.

## 2) *Trained Bosnian Staff In Community Organizing Techniques*

- NDI trained its staff of Bosnian community organizers in volunteer recruitment tactics and a basic approach to organizing issue-based campaigns. The Bosnian organizers worked with community leaders and active members of citizen associations to:
  - Develop a core action group of citizens
  - Identify concrete and pressing community issues
  - Conduct community outreach and volunteer recruitment and constituent contact activities

---

<sup>6</sup> Municipalities participating: Duboki Potok; Tojsici; Tinja; Banovici; Husino; Miricina; and Stupari. Parties participating included the Social Democratic Party, the Croatian Democratic Party; Joint List '97; Coalition for BiH; Democratic Party for Disabled Persons; Liberal Bosniac Organization; BiH Patriotic Party; Croatian Party; and Bosnian Party.

- Conduct research and analysis about viable policy alternatives and political cost/benefits
- Develop strategic plans
- Meet with and make demands of political officials and community leaders
- Follow-up on requests and demands
- Organize tactics, where needed to, to pressure community leaders
- Evaluate and assess results and progress

### 3) *Began Organizing and Advocacy Training and Facilitation*

- In fall 1997 five community groups<sup>7</sup> in Tuzla-Podrina Canton initiated surveys to identify and prioritize issues of concern to residents. In the summer of 1998, NDI expanded its community-organizing activities to 12 more villages<sup>8</sup> in the canton. In addition to surveys NDI-trained local organizers worked with the community groups on strategic planning, public outreach, volunteer recruitment, public meetings, and follow-up. Projects undertaken by the groups included: improving electricity and heat in a residential building; organizing town hall meetings; bringing water to a village; and participating in election monitoring.
- In April 1998 NDI began community organizing and advocacy with eight community groups<sup>9</sup> in the western Republika Srpska. Rather than using surveys to identify issues to work on NDI's staff organizers initially worked with 15 to 30 core leaders in each village to identify problems and prepare organizing campaigns. As a first step, NDI organizers and local leaders conducted village meetings with 30 to 200 people to identify issues important to the particular community. These issues included: repairing a water mill; getting clean and steady water supply; securing a village doctor; reestablishing the telephone network; expanding the road network; repairing a football pitch; repairing the plumbing system; establishing a proper trash collection; and reestablishing the electricity network.
- Following a June 1998 training on organizing fundamentals, NDI Mostar staff identified eight of the 80 education discussion groups to begin community organizing and advocacy work. The groups began researching their community's needs by conducting surveys with consultation from NDI's Bosnian staff. Examples of projects undertaken by the groups included fixing a municipality's water pump, repaving road surfaces, fixing the telephone network, and ensuring cooperative engagement on infrastructure repair in communities

---

<sup>7</sup> Communities included: Duboki Potok, Ljepunice, Miricina, Taravo, Tinja Tojsici, Stupari, and Skahovica.

<sup>8</sup> Villages included: Seona and Podrasje, Ratkovici, Si Selo and Brcanska Malta, Lukovac Mjesto, Staric, Gornja Dobosnica and Prokosovici, Omazici, and Litve and Visca.

<sup>9</sup> Communities included: Rudice and Vodiveco, Knezica, Dubrave, Josavka, Karanovac and Toplice, and Usorici.

where citizens had return after being displaced by the war.

In addition to the regular progression of program activities designed to encourage citizens to engage more pro-actively in their communities and apply democratic principles to their lives, NDI's resident representatives and local staff conducted activities designed to meet the program goals, to broaden the impact of NDI's civic program in Bosnia, and to lay the groundwork for a more sustained impact of the program as the program prepared to phase down its presence in the country. These activities included:

#### *The Citizen's Update Newsletter*

In the fall of 1997, NDI distributed its first version of *Citizen's Update*. This newsletter highlighted citizen concerns, networks local organizations and associations and detailed NDI program activities. An important source of information for citizens and local organizations, NDI's newsletter was an excellent step toward building connections among local NGOs, particularly between the two entities. In total, 2,250 copies were printed for distribution in RS, the Federation and to the international community.

#### *Broadening the Program Scope In Banja Luka*

In April 1998, NDI's Banja Luka staff held a retreat to modify the program based on the results of a mid-term assessment conducted the previous month. The staff concluded that there were other areas NDI could provide assistance to community groups in the western RS beyond the regular course of programming (the staff was in the process of weeding down the groups participating in discussions to those would progress to community organizing and advocacy). In order to work with as many of the interested civic groups as possible, NDI decided to expand its range of program activities in Banja Luka to include coalition building and volunteer discussion leader training. NDI dedicated four local staff to work with the emerging coalitions and three staff to train volunteer community leaders to lead civic education discussions. The following activities were undertaken to support these program areas:

- In May 1998, NDI's staff met with each of the youth and women's groups<sup>10</sup> that had shown an interest in networking. The leadership and membership of the organizations were provided with consultation and advice on a wide range of organizational development issues, including grant proposal development, donor contact, volunteer recruitment, and project management.
- In April and May 1998, NDI's Bosnian staff members identified program participants who were interested in more intense leadership training and development. In an effort to build local capacity to recruit volunteers and facilitate local discussion sessions, NDI resident

---

<sup>10</sup> The youth groups are in the Dubica, Teslic, Mirkonic Grad and Ribnik municipalities. The women's groups are in the Celinac, Sipova and Banja Luka and Dubica municipalities.

representatives trained 26 local leaders in developing and implementing education curriculum in their own communities<sup>11</sup>. By December 1998 12 of the volunteer leaders had conducted five discussion sessions. These individuals had adopted many of the objectives of the program and were interested in receiving training and support in order to carry forward NDI program objectives themselves.

### *NDI Civic Program Evaluation*

In June 1999, NDI organized an evaluation of the scope and impact of NDI's civic program activities prior to the creation of CCI with the help of a U.S. community programming evaluator. The purpose of the assessment was to: detail some of the significant aspects of NDI's direct civic work in Bosnia communities; provide analysis for NDI's future civic programs; and provide CCI with an example of an evaluation of program methods, impacts and possible areas of future focus. Sources of information for the assessment included interviews with former NDI staff, community leaders and benefactors, surveys from previous program participants, exit memos from former Bosnian and NDI staff, and letters from international and local community leaders.

### **NGO Development**

#### *Spring 1998 - June 1999*

In the fall of 1997, NDI's Tuzla staff became interested in developing an NGO to carry forward the work of NDI after the Institute's departure. To assist the Tuzla staff, NDI brought in organizational development trainers and resident representatives worked with the Bosnian staff to draft an organizational mission statement and examine future relationships with NDI.

Following these initial steps, NDI began developing a strategy to institutionalize civic education and grassroots organizing in BiH. In May 1998 the cornerstone of NDI's strategy became to facilitate the development of a Bosnian NGO called Centers for Civic Initiatives (CCI) with the Institute's local staff in Tuzla, Banja Luka, and Mostar. The cross-entity NGO would feature professional organizers capable of training grassroots leadership in direct action organizing and help develop sustainable citizen participation mechanisms in BiH after NDI's departure.

A part-time American NGO consultant was hired to work with NDI staff to develop a two-month plan to guide the local staff in the transition to an independent NGO. The plan included: development of a strategic framework, funding objectives, board of directors and staff structure. Through its work with the NDI consultant, CCI developed a workplan which prepared the organization to register itself with Bosnian authorities in both entities, recruit board members, and send out initial grant proposals to donors.

---

<sup>11</sup> Communities included: Kortor Varos, Laktasi, Srbac, Prnjavor, Celinac, Knezevo, Jezero, Sipovo, Mirkonik Grad, Prijedor, Serb Sanski Most, and Banja Luka.

Starting in October 1998, NDI's resident representatives in Tuzla and Banja Luka posted job announcements for a site coordinator position and all staff were encouraged to apply. By December 1998 a hiring process had been completed by the NDI resident representatives in the Tuzla and Banja Luka offices and site coordinators were hired to assume programmatic and staff management duties for each office eventually to assume these tasks for CCI. In addition, an office administrator responsible for all administrative duties and three field staff were also chosen to staff each office. After selection of a site manager for the Mostar office via a competitive hiring process managed by the NDI resident representatives, the other Mostar staff were chosen through a similar process implemented by the Tuzla site coordinator and the new Mostar site coordinator in March 1999.

To prepare CCI's new staff for their responsibilities in the new NGO, NDI's resident representatives created opportunities for staff to gradually assume management responsibilities during the transition from the NDI program to an independent CCI program. Coordinators for community organizing and discussion sessions were chosen after a competitive interview process. In addition, these staff members took a more active role in leading the activities of their respective programs and facilitated the reporting process of activities among staff.

In December 1998, CCI's site coordinators and NDI's Resident Representatives discussed progress made by CCI's recently formed organizational committees. This meeting was the first time the CCI management team convened to discuss ideas and plan organizational and development strategy. CCI and NDI identified training needs; formulated a process for hiring an executive director; developed a process for routing fundraising proposals; discussed administrative issues such as staff contracts and staff salaries; discussed the production and distribution of the CCI newsletter; set priorities for selecting new board members; discussed new electoral activities; and set a date to further develop CCI's program strategy. NDI's resident representatives facilitated initial discussion to set the stage for in-depth deliberation, but did not maintain on-going presence.

NDI's long term civic representatives departed Bosnia over the months that followed the December meeting. In April, NDI conducted an organizational assessment of CCI. The purpose of the assessment was to provide the organization with an informed assessment of its immediate and strategic development needs and NDI with a measure of the Institute's organizational development work to date. In addition, as NDI's field presence diminished the programmatic break with NDI was completed and a cooperative agreement with NDI which financially supported CCI's programmatic activities started in April 1999. Therefore the assessment provided the two organizations with an opportunity to understand their changing relationship. In June NDI began to search for a short-term representative to work with CCI specifically on management and organizational development issues in its initial months of independent functioning. The new representative was hired and deployed in July 1999.

### CCI's Initial Activities

As one of its first independent activities CCI was asked to present its successful advocacy skills at a workshop organized by Scottish European Aid in Tuzla. In November 1998, six CCI staff

members conducted two advocacy training workshops for 40 Bosnian NGOs from both entities of BiH. The training session featured volunteer recruitment, networking and community organizing. The participants even put the information to use by developing a mock strategic plan that addressed a water supply problem – a scenario common to many local communities in BiH. This event was a trial opportunity for CCI staff members to work together on a project requiring coordination, team-building and cooperation. As a testament to their preparation and presentation, CCI staff received praise from conference organizers and participants. In fact, the conference organizer noted that she was thrilled by how professional and engaging she found the presentation.

On December 5, CCI staff in Tuzla conducted a training presentation for women from the Tuzla-Podrina cantonal and municipal assemblies. CCI focused its presentation on the role of citizens and elected representatives in a democracy and the importance of transparency in the political process. Staff and participants also discussed the value in holding public forums with citizens to elicit their attitudes and opinions.

CCI had the unique opportunity to engage citizens in the development of the BiH Electoral Law through participation in the OSCE's Local Election Commissioners (LEC) Congress in December 1998. Although the conference focused on lessons learned from the 1998 election and the possible formation of an association of electoral officials, CCI took the opportunity to meet with and begin to organize with eight NGOs representing 140 organizations throughout Bosnia in 1998 election monitoring. CCI facilitated meetings in November and December to select and prepare regional representatives from the NGO working groups to attend the conference. After each daily session, CCI organized informal meetings with the eight representatives to discuss future election-related activities.

The first edition of CCI's *Citizen's Update* was published in December. The *Citizen's Update*, modeled on the NDI newsletter, highlights citizen concerns, networks local organizations and associations and details CCI program activities. An important source of information for citizens and local organizations, CCI's newsletter is an excellent step toward building connections among NGOs, particularly between the two entities. Articles were written by both CCI staff members and participants with an overall focus on examples of citizen participation and democratic development.

CCI continued NDI's advocacy and community organizing work throughout the first quarter of 1999, working with 14 groups on projects including: opening an open air market in the village; improving utility service to an apartment building; developing a community improvement plan; conducting community surveys to prioritize issues; reconstructing a community center; financing housing repairs; developing an informal coalition to improve telephone service; constructing a sidewalk; correcting improper disposal of industrial waste; and developing a network of citizen groups. In Tuzla and Banja Luka, CCI staff also found new communities to with which to begin discussion groups. In Mostar discussion group cycles were tailored to the needs of specific groups<sup>12</sup> on the topics of Human Rights and the Constitution and well as continued advocacy and organizing

---

<sup>12</sup> Municipalities where meetings were held included Citluk, Mostar, Prozor/Rama, Neum, and Capljina.

work with selected communities.

After holding two preliminary meetings with OSCE representatives concerning plans for raising public awareness of the draft BiH permanent election law, CCI engaged in a public education campaign funded by the OSCE working with community discussion groups in all three sites. Working in coalition with other regional NGOs across Bosnia, CCI coordinated the activities of the coalition and provide technical and training assistance for activities including informally gathering public opinion on election issues and the electoral law, and holding public education discussions on the concepts to be incorporated in the new law.

### **C. Parliamentary Program**

In January 1999, NDI launched a two-year parliamentary program that seeks to increase public confidence in the Federation Parliament and RS National Assembly (RSNA) by assisting those bodies to become more effective, accountable and transparent. This new program area built upon NDI's work in Bosnia-Herzegovina since 1996, and offers numerous opportunities for collaboration with ongoing activities in the civic and political party programs.

#### *Federation Parliamentary Assessment*

From November 30 to December 6, 1998, NDI conducted an assessment in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) to consider three separate levels of parliamentary institutions and to determine the direction of the Institute's programming in Bosnia in the field of parliamentary assistance. This assessment mission focused on the state-level Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the entity-level Parliament of the Federation, and the Federation's ten cantonal assemblies. Based on the findings of the assessment, NDI concluded its resources would be best spent by focusing primarily at the entity level parliaments in both entities. NDI proposed a comprehensive, introductory survey course approach, which would cover four major areas of concern, including political party caucuses, constituency outreach, legislative oversight of the executive, and ethics.

#### *Federation Parliamentary Program*

To introduce legislators to the new program, NDI held meetings in Sarajevo with parliament leaders in January and February 1999. After introducing the objectives of NDI's program, NDI solicited input on how the Institute's overall program and the first parties in parliament training seminar could best assist the work of the Federation parliament.

In addition to party caucus meetings, NDI's resident representative met several times with Enver Kreso, Speaker of the Federation Parliament, to discuss the program. NDI worked closely with the Speaker to plan training seminars around parliamentary sessions and to accommodate the schedule of the part-time legislators not residents of Sarajevo.

#### *Training Module I: The Role of Parties in Parliament, Multiparty Seminar and Individual Caucus*

## *Meetings*

In April 1999, NDI held its inaugural parliamentary seminar in the Federation on the Role of Political Parties in Parliament with the focus of demonstrating the benefits of working together in parliamentary groups (caucuses) and how to better address parliamentary and governance issues with party organizations and constituents. The topics covered during the multiparty session included:

- The role of party caucuses in parliament
- The challenges facing MPs
- The development of constituencies
- Building alliances across party lines

Expert trainers also met individually with MPs to discuss topics in greater depth. Party caucuses participating in follow-up training sessions included: the Social Democratic Party of BiH (SDP), the Coalition for a United and Democratic BiH (CD Coalition), the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), and the Croatian Democratic Union of BiH (HDZ).

### *Training Module II: Constituent Outreach/Meetings with Regional Party Caucuses*

From May to July, NDI conducted consultations with party caucuses at the cantonal levels to introduce the concept of constituent outreach and to provide simple examples of issue presentation which can help legislators and people better communicate. Bosnian politicians are not experienced in presenting issues of governance to people in terms easily grasped, and citizens are often frustrated with different levels of government and the seemingly incomprehensible bureaucratic processes. The NDI consultations were designed to begin to bridge the communication gap between constituents and their representatives. NDI organized meetings with SDP and HDZ caucuses in Sarajevo, Travnik, Tuzla, Mostar, and Livno to discuss this and other methods of outreach.

### *Consultations with Women MPs*

After participating in NDI's Parties in Parliament seminar, a multi-partisan group of women MPs requested additional training and technical assistance on specific parliamentary skills and strategic planning. Although the OSCE has organized monthly discussions sessions for women MPs designed to provide professional support and networking opportunities, the women wanted a skills development element built into the meetings.

NDI organized an information gathering meeting on May 30 in Sarajevo, facilitating a discussion with 10 women MPs on the kinds of issues on which the women felt they could work together. Women from different parties expressed their mutual concerns about the difficulty of being women MPs and the negative perception of their male counterparts that working in a multipartisan way would compromise their loyalty to individual party agendas. In the end the women agreed they would welcome future meetings facilitated by NDI where the group could find a topic of agreement and develop a strategic plan to act.

## *Republika Srpska National Assembly Assessment*

In February 1999 NDI completed an assessment of the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) in order to evaluate what role NDI can effectively play in assisting the institution with its development. Through the assessment, five main areas were identified where NDI could provide assistance:

- C Development of the Role of the Party Caucus
- C Constituent Outreach
- C Legislative Oversight of the Executive
- C Development of the Role of MPs
- C Development of the Role of Parliamentary Committees in the Legislative Process

Throughout the spring and summer of 1999 security concerns relating to the Kosovo crisis and continued political turmoil in the RS prevented NDI from launching its planned parliamentary development program in Banja Luka. NDI continued consultations with leaders in the RSNA through its parliamentary resident representative in the Federation and through these consultations, NDI agreed to undertake the following projects with the RSNA:

- C A review of the Rules of Procedure
- C A comparative analysis of parliamentary resource allocations
- C Translation of an NDI comparative research paper on the role of committees in a legislature

## *Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) Rules of Procedure Review*

In the spring on 1999 NDI enlisted the assistance of four parliamentary procedure experts to provide commentary on the effectiveness of the Rules in organizing the work of the National Assembly. The individual comments and a memorandum summarizing the expert's review were translated into Serbo-Croatian and transmitted to the Secretary General via NDI's office in Banja Luka (please see attached). Comments from the experts highlighted the importance of regular schedules and calendar procedures, the need for an enforceable agenda, the enhancement of legislative transparency and the role of the opposition.

## **IV. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

When NDI started its work in Bosnia in 1996 the program was the largest undertaken by NDI in the region. Despite the uncertainties of the post-conflict situation on the ground in Bosnia, NDI's program found success in its work with political parties and at the grassroots civic education level. Over time the program was able to expand and thrive, working in both the Federation and Republika Srpska, employing up to six resident representatives and more than 25 local staff. In January 1999, NDI also expanded its programming to incorporate a parliamentary development element.

### **A. Political Party Program - Results**

*Objective: Political parties will develop the capacity to train their own supporters in the basic elements of party organization at the local, regional and national elections.*

Through a process of ongoing program assessment and relationship-building with parties NDI has developed training programs which target eight political parties in the Federation entity and six in the Republika Srpska. Through NDI training parties have shown marked improvement in the areas of voter contact, message development, and campaign planning. Over a three year period NDI has executed more than 30 training seminars in 15 Bosnian towns and cities in both entities. Following the September 1998 general elections, parties began to provide more feedback to NDI regarding the value of the Institute's programming. Members of the SDP and the SNSD parties have consistently indicated that their steady gains in elections held since 1996 were clearly bolstered by the voter contact techniques the parties had learned through NDI training.

*Objective: Political parties will continue to improve and develop communication between central and regional party branch offices as well public outreach and communication strategies.*

The constant cycle of elections in Bosnia has not allowed a significant programmatic focus on internal party structure and development. However, NDI's work with party branches throughout the county has greatly improved the capacity and skills of parties at the grassroots level. In addition, the importance of planning, coordination, and strategy have been an integral part of NDI training especially in the area of message development.

*Objective: To promote, wherever possible, the roles of women and youth in political parties including as candidates and organizers in the party management structure and decision making processes.*

Youth and women are both significant demographic factors in Bosnia and the focus of parties regarding both groups has changed over time. NDI has encouraged parties to send women representatives to participate in training seminars and other events. Since 1996 NDI has organized a number of multiparty youth training workshops. In early 1999 SDP, SNS, and SNSD requested NDI assistance in planning and organizing their own youth development training.

*Objective: To train a core group of Bosnian political party organizers who will develop party organizing skills and training abilities.*

NDI has trained a core group of young Bosnian political organizers and graduated the six Bosnian "trainees" to fully responsible political party program trainers who assumed primary contact with political parties. These individuals have become primary party contacts and over time have assumed more and more responsibility for planning and co-training at NDI workshops.

## **B. Civic Program Results**

### **Voter Education**

*Objective: Increase the understanding among Bosnian citizens of the structures of government contested in the September 1996 election.*

By addressing fundamental questions about the country's first post-Dayton elections, NDI's voter education sessions allowed more than 1,200 voters to learn: 1) What bodies of government would be elected; 2) How the election process would be administered; 3) How the voting would take place; and 4) How the counting would take place and the winners be determined. For example, many of the sessions involved displaced persons, who were unaware that displaced voting took place in selected polling stations until attending NDI's sessions.

Recognizing the void of public information and understanding about the September 1996 elections in Tuzla Podrina canton, NDI developed a publication that outlined the Rules and Regulations of the election and helped design a poster describing the voting procedure. NDI published more than 10,000 voter education materials, including the poster and rules publication, which were distributed through the Institute's voter education program, other local NGO networks and political parties and IFES' program. These materials were seen in various polling stations on election day.

Local NGOs also enhanced their ownership of the election process. For example, BOSPO, an organization that addresses psycho-social issues of displaced persons, helped NDI access community centers and recruited participants for the sessions. BOSPO also took the lead in organizing "train-the-trainers" sessions for 50 NGO activists. In this way, local NGOs took a more active role in their electoral process.

*Objective: Develop relationships with local leaders and communities, forming the basis for future programming.*

Through its education sessions, grassroots, community leaders in the Tuzla-Podrina Canton gained trust in NDI. NDI was the first organization to attempt to increase understanding among citizens of the structures of the new Bosnian government and electoral systems. The trust the initial voter education program acquired as a reliable source of information and training became the foundation on which a larger, more comprehensive civic program was built. This foundation, including a network of community-level contacts, was critical to the early successes NDI achieved with its program in the Tuzla canton.

### **Civic Education and Community Organizing, and Advocacy**

*Objective: A core group of Bosnian organizers will develop the necessary skills to motivate and train Bosnian citizens to participate in the political process.*

NDI trained a core group of civic educators and organizers with skills in: adult education; discussion facilitation; content design; information gathering; and community organizing. These local staff assisted community organizations in identifying public advocacy issues and developing

organized, constructive and effective initiatives to see those issues resolved. Through its program, NDI also developed the skills of between 100 and 200 individuals as community leaders (i.e., individuals outside of government who, by virtue of their civic interest and community standing, assume leadership of community organizations and lead public advocacy initiatives.)

Early in the program NDI-trained civic educators and community organizers quickly developed skills which impacted the overall execution of the program such as effective organizing, planning, facilitating and team-work. Following the second and third round of discussions with participating community groups, these individuals were able to play a key role in the development of the training tools for the NDI program. The educators also began to use various methods to communicate information to participants such as anecdotes about a recent world event, metaphors related to accountability, or puzzles that highlighted differences in individual perception and illustrating the underlying themes of the discussion.

*Objective: Citizens and grassroots civic activists participating in the program will increase their knowledge about democratic processes and will develop the skills necessary to participate in their country's political process.*

NDI built a successful civic education program which expanded from the Tuzla site into two other sites. This program used a phased approach to engage local Bosnian communities at the grassroots level starting with discussion of democratic principles and moving into more action-oriented activities designed to help them better understand how to apply those principles. This was accomplished, despite the weak tradition and knowledge of nonpartisan, issue-based political participation in Bosnian post-conflict, post-communist society.

During the first cycle conducted in Banja Luka, participants assumed more active roles, with some groups beginning the discussions themselves without the civic educators' assistance, and other groups writing ideas on the blackboard for easy reference. Based on NDI discussions, participants are more aware of their responsibility as citizens. As one participant noted, "We know the structure of government and we know that we are directly responsible for not having good results of our elected representatives' work, because we have [the] right to dismiss them and force them to work well."

In Banja Luka, Tuzla and Mostar, more than 2,000 program participants are better informed about their government. This change can be summarized by the remarks of a civic program participant:

"We can influence government through different associations and groups of citizens, so that our system can be developed in [a] contemporary way. We also can have an influence on government through meetings like this one. Government should know what opinions of participants in discussions are. NDI's program is good. You introduce people to political processes and events. This should be organized on a broader level."

*Objective: Develop participants desire and skills to engage in political processes and recognize*

*that participation can have a positive effect.*

NDI's civic education discussion groups reached over 265 communities in the Tuzla, Banja Luka, and Mostar regions. Each group completed a minimum of six rounds of discussion meetings. In addition, through programs conducted in these communities thousands of Bosnian citizens participated in discussion groups, attended candidate forums, participated in election monitoring, and/or initiated an organized effort to address a problem facing the community. In a country where "political participation" is often associated with the conflict which caused so much destruction, NDI's program the sustained level of engagement of participants through various activities was significant.

Of the 265 communities in three regions where the NDI program conducted discussion groups, 21 communities participated in long-term civic organizing and advocacy training and completed advocacy campaigns which engaged local authorities and led to successful and tangible resolution to an identified community problem.

Prior to the September 1997 municipal elections, seven community groups in Tuzla each organized candidate forums that attracted a broad range of political party candidates. The groups secured free venues and media coverage, and attracted large audiences ranging in size from 140 to 250 participants. In the RS, ten percent of NDI's discussion group participants took part in two separate election monitoring efforts in September and November 1997 in cooperation with two Bosnian NGOs. Through this small-scale monitoring effort, NDI trained a core group of election monitoring trainers and created an opportunity for participants to become active in the political process.

For the September 1998 elections, 139 organizations participated in election-day monitoring activities and recruited 2,479 monitors. NDI trained 85 coordinators who recruited and trained the polling site monitors. NDI also provided guidance to the 31 organizations and their leaders participating in the management and implementation of the coalition's activities.

In the RS, of the groups which participated in discussion sessions and then joined the network of youth and women's organizations formed with NDI assistance, 94% participated in any of the following activities: candidate forums; election monitoring; community organizing and local advocacy; formation of a civil society organization (CSO); or representation in a CSO coalition.

*Objective: Local organizations will increase their internal (organizational) and external (outreach) capabilities to advocate effectively at local and regional levels.*

Civic organizations are advocating on community concerns. Of the communities participating in the NDI program 61 engaged in constructive advocacy campaigns designed to influence the decision making of local government authorities and open the political process to citizen participation and scrutiny. Through these initiatives, 1,382 citizens were mobilized to participate in issue-based campaigns. For example, A community group in Tarevo/Stupari (Tuzla-Podrina Canton) used techniques introduced by NDI-trained Bosnian community organizers to negotiate with their Mayor to achieve their goal of bringing a part-time dentist to the village. In

addition, at the request of the community group, the village school's roof and gym are currently being repaired, and the construction of a cross-walk construction has begun. Citizens engaged in a similar campaign in the village of Duboki Potok, also in the Tuzla Canton, researched the cost of installing a pump that would provide the village with water on a daily basis, as opposed to every three days. The group then successfully presented their case to the municipal council, which allocated the required 1,000 DM, and installed the pump.

The grassroots organizing and advocacy projects undertaken by community groups have created an indigenous base of community leadership which even after the end of the NDI program will assist communities in addressing problems and improve cooperation between communities and their elected officials. In the RS, NDI facilitated the formation of a network of youth and women's groups and provided specific leadership training to the network. Furthermore, in a number of villages, the community groups conducted local fundraising drives to raise money to defray project costs and received local media coverage of their successes. This experience will serve to maintain the impact of the program.

In addition, participants are creating new civic organizations or reforming their existing organizations to focus on their members' concrete needs. For example, a number of NDI discussion groups have developed into youth and women's organizations in the RS, and citizens' associations in the Federation. NDI's advanced assistance to a group called Democracy in 1998 enabled the NGO to effectively function as the only registered organization in its municipality. After two discussion groups began cooperating to organize a candidate forum in 1997 and won several organizing victories in the municipality, local NDI staff worked to assist the groups to establish a mission-driven community organization. NDI also helped the group design their own democracy education curriculum and trained them on civic education techniques. This group is now conducting its own democracy discussions independently.

*Objective: Informal networks of civic associations and organizations will develop.*

NDI increased linkages and cooperation among the women and youth organizations, particularly in the rural areas of western RS, but also among the three regional program sites. A total of 14 groups participated in network-building activities, eight of which were women's groups and six of which were youth groups. Beyond the development of these networks, the groups also jointly participated in election monitoring activities in the September 1998 elections.

NDI also facilitated the formation of a cooperative network between two communities of citizens in the Jablanica municipality (a citizens group of Bosniak Muslim returnees to Doljani/Sovici and a group of Bosnian Croats in Doljani). After each group had participated separately in the education cycles, NDI organizers began working with the groups by providing community organizing strategies to rebuild their community. By coincidence, both groups identified the same issue as a priority, and the leadership expressed an interest in cooperating with one another to increase their power vis a vis the government. This activity increased citizen cooperation and partnership in a formerly divided community by allowing two ethnic groups to work together toward mutually beneficial ends. These two groups have sustained their cooperative working relationship

and work together for the interests of the entire community.

*Objective: Support the initiative of former NDI-trained organizers and discussion group facilitators to form a country-wide organization which strengthens the capacities of citizens to solve community problems.*

In order to continue long-term civic organizing work in BiH, NDI's civic staff began taking steps in the spring of 1998 to form a NGO. By June 1998, NDI's staff members had formed a NGO development team, drafted a mission statement, and developed a six-month plan which includes legal registration; development of governing and advisory boards; and proposal writing.

On the grassroots level, NDI's support of its civic partner, CCI is ensuring the impact of citizen engagement in governance issues will be long-lasting. During the final quarter of the project, CCI made a huge leap toward organizational independence by managing and operating its own program without direct oversight from NDI field representatives. Although this is to be expected as an NDI sub-grantee, what is significant is the relative lack of struggle or fanfare over this new independence. Although NDI input is clearly sought and accepted on an advisory or consultative basis, a professional funder-fundee relationship has developed with few transitional problems.

In June, CCI completed its board recruitment process. Independent of NDI assistance, CCI staff identified, interviewed and invited the volunteer participation of seven board members. Board members were selected from respected members of the communities in which CCI works, two from Mostar, Tuzla and Banja Luka respectively, as well as one representative from Sarajevo.

As a sign of CCI's growing recognition and capacity to organize coalition activities, the OSCE awarded CCI \$ 36,000 to conduct a civic education project focused on the permanent election law. In addition, CCI has also developed a sound relationship with the Mott Foundation in hopes of receiving 2000 - 20001 funding. With these initial successes, CCI is beginning to develop a diverse funding base.

Other broad organizational accomplishments include: completion of statutes; registration of the organization; establishment of staff advisory committees and management team; enactment of a personnel policy; and regularly scheduled full staff and management team meetings.

### **C. Parliamentary Program Results**

*Objective: MPs will develop and implement new constituent liaison and public communication techniques.*

Following NDI's training in April, the Social Democratic Party organized "constituent office hours" in May in the party's Sarajevo canton office. In addition, party caucus leaders held consultative meetings in Travnik with NDI's resident representative to discuss more effective ways of translating complicated government procedures into language constituents could more easily

understand.

## **V. PROGRAM EVALUATION**

The overall success of the NDI program can be attributed to several factors: the willingness and interest of the political parties to work with NDI, the consistency and professional skill of NDI's resident representatives in the field, the experience of the NDI team in Washington in designing training programs which could be adjusted to the post-communist and post-conflict situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the professional development of local staff who assist NDI resident representatives with implementation of programming.

### **Political Party Program Evaluation**

The political party development program in Bosnia faced obstacles beyond the post-conflict realities in the country. The former Yugoslavia had descended into war prior to the start of any real democratic transition process. As a result, the experience of the Bosnian political leadership and the electorate was based on the single party socialist system. A tradition of multi-party representation was not developed and this coupled with the post-conflict atmosphere made the transition to a multi-party system with representation encompassing a scope of individuals not defined by ethnicity/nationality difficult. In addition, basic campaign organization and strategy skills were largely undeveloped and voter outreach experience was non-existent.

In the beginning, NDI's program cast a wide net, offering broad based training to the scope of Bosnian political parties in the Federation entity. Given the unsophisticated nature of Bosnia political parties this approach was appropriate to the general objectives of the program, to provide training and consultation to developing Bosnian political parties in the areas of campaign organization and structure and voter outreach. However, in 1997, as NDI became more familiar with the capabilities of the Bosnian political parties and the opportunity to begin work in the RS opened up, NDI sharpened its program focus by signing memorandums of understanding with specific parties which the program team assessed could best absorb NDI training.

To date the most important impact the political party program has had is in the area of voter contact. Following NDI training many local party branches initiated voter surveys using door to door canvassing techniques in order to identify issues of concern to the voters, an activity previously unknown to the parties or citizens. The impact these activities have had are measurable by the gains experienced by parties in elections held since 1996 in areas where voter contact techniques have been used. In addition, NDI's work with the municipal branches of political parties has clearly helped strengthen party capabilities at the local level in both entities. Training in areas such as voter surveys, message development, and grassroots canvassing has contributed directly to the capabilities of opposition parties in Bosnia and assisted the process of transition to a viable multi-party democracy.

### **Civic Education and Participation Program Evaluation**

A key element in the democratic transition process in Bosnia-Herzegovina is the participation of citizen's in the political process. Although the majority of Bosnian citizens remain suspicious of "government" institutions and consistently blame their leadership for the conflicts which have hampered Bosnia's transition to a modern, European state, they are concerned about the problems they face in their everyday lives. The devastation of the war in Bosnia left citizens feeling helpless to hold political leadership accountable for their needs at the community level. The new systems of governance and political processes which were created by the Dayton Agreement and the Washington Agreement were not well understood at the grassroots level.

NDI's programmatic objective was to engage the citizens of Bosnia in the political process at the grassroots level in order to increase their confidence in the system and provide examples of how that engagement could have positive results. Beginning in Tuzla in 1996, NDI laid the groundwork for Bosnian citizens to begin to understand the complexities of their new political system through civic education programming. The program was then expanded in terms of its content and its geographical reach. Moving from civic education through a discussion group format to training in community organizing and advocacy, Bosnian citizens were able to put into practice the theories of democracy and their political system they had previously discussed. By expanding the program from Tuzla to Banja Luka and finally to Mostar, NDI was able to expose three major Bosnian population centers encompassing all three ethnic constituencies to its program.

Through its civic participation program NDI did provide Bosnian citizen-leaders and their communities with a sense of engagement and empowerment. Over the period of the program, the attitude of the communities involved in NDI's programs changed as the program participants recognized that neither their local officials nor the international community fully understood the needs of individual communities. Identifying problems, creating a strategic approach to solving them, and then implementing the plan in many cases produced concrete results which individuals could understand and learn from. Simple problems, such as having a new crosswalk painted at a busy intersection, to more complicated ones, like restoring water service, empowered Bosnian communities at the grassroots level and showed them means of engaging in the political process.

### **Parliamentary Program Evaluation**

The parliamentary program is the newest element in NDI's work in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The parliamentary program has benefitted from NDI's relationships with political parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina built over the three-year course of the political party development program. However, after only several months into the program, it is too early to demonstrate measurable impact.

Nonetheless, NDI is uniquely positioned to provide technical advice, expertise and training which the entity level parliaments in both the RS and Federation desperately need. Given the relative inexperience of MPs working in legislative bodies and the nascence of Bosnian politicians and Bosnian people regarding the role of the legislature in a post-communist, democratic society, NDI's experience working with developing legislatures was welcome by the Bosnian institutions in both entities. Although the program in the RS has not yet begun, the early stages of the Federation

program have illustrated the difficult challenges NDI will face in the program area. Not unlike the early days of the political party program, when NDI field representatives first introduced voter contact concepts, Members of Parliament have shown some reluctance to accept the importance of constituent outreach techniques. In addition, the lack of defined electoral districts or constituencies outside the ethnic definition, have made these issues of communication and role definition difficult. The advent of a new election law for Bosnia, which includes districting, may help illuminate these concepts for the program.

However, excellent working relationships with Federation Parliament leadership allowed NDI to couple the program's training schedule with sessions of parliament, helping to ensure a higher rate of MP participation and greater impact for the program. In addition, despite the boycotts of BiH's political institutions by both Serb and Croatian government officials in previous months, the parliamentary training seminar hosted by NDI in Sarajevo in April was well attended (approximately 75 out of 140). This suggests that the MPs are interested in making Bosnia's legislative institutions independent and effective players in the political process rather than contributing to the political stalemate.

## **Conclusions**

In all three program areas the success of NDI's work in Bosnia-Herzegovina can be attributed to several factors including:

- Long-term, consistent program presence on the ground in Bosnia
- Training and investment of responsibility in local staff
- Pre-program assessments and consistent program evaluation and exchange of ideas with NDI Washington staff and outside experts
- Well-developed relationships with program participants
- Strong relationships and coordination with other international organizations working on democratization in Bosnia and with the USAID mission in Sarajevo

## **VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

NDI's programs in Bosnia-Herzegovina are ongoing, supported through a new regional cooperative agreement with USAID. As NDI's work has continued in Bosnia, however, NDI has evaluated and adjusted its training and consultation with Bosnian partners to best answer their developmental needs.

To date, NDI's civic program has encouraged Bosnians to participate in political life, especially within their local communities, and enhanced their confidence in their role in the political life of the country. Currently NDI is engaged in assuring the benefits of this programming are

sustained and expanded through the Bosnian NGO, the Centers for Civic Initiatives (CCI). CCI is staffed by local activists, trained by NDI, which have formed their own NGO which will continue to benefit from the advice, expertise, and organizational development assistance of an NDI resident representative through December 1999.

NDI's political party program will continue to promote the development of a viable, multiparty system in BiH by providing political parties with the tools necessary to strengthen their organizational capacity in order to compete effectively in elections. NDI's program will also focus on the development of youth leadership in the political parties. Individuals between the ages of 20 and 35 are a significant demographic element in Bosnian society. By focusing on youth leadership development, NDI's programming will have a longer-term sustainable impact on the development of Bosnia's political future.

Finally, the parliamentary development program will work with individual Bosnian MPs and party caucuses with the goal of making legislative systems in BiH more effective. The reality of parliamentary life in Bosnia today is one of difficulties with every aspect from the simple lack of resources to the more complex nature of nationalist and ethnically-based politics. For both the Federation Parliament and the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) candidates are elected from a party list system, creating a disconnect between MPs and the constituents they are elected to serve. In addition, the lack of institutional development leaves a weak legislative body in the shadow of a stronger executive dictating legislative priorities, drawing debate away from policy discussion and towards standing firm on ruling party lines. By focusing on skills development for MPs, as well as the introduction of conceptual models for more efficient working practices, the NDI program hopes MPs will have the capabilities to increase the capacity of legislative institutions in Bosnia.

**List of Attachments**  
**BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA: POLITICAL AND CIVIC ORGANIZING,**  
**PARLIAMENTARY DEVELOPMENT**

- I. Inventory Lists for Banja, Luka, Mostar and Tuzla, BiH
- II. Report on NDI's Parliamentary Assessment Mission to the Federation
- III. Report on NDI's Parliamentary Assessment Mission to the Republika Srpska
- IV. A Practical Guide for Field Coordinators
- V. Guide to Holding Voter Information Sessions
- VI. NDI's General Assessment on Municipalities
- VII. NDI Mostar Summary Report of Assessment of the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton
- VIII. Civic Programs
- IX. Centers for Civic Initiatives
- X. OSCE
- XI. Baseline Questionnaire for Local Political Parties
- XII. SDP BiH
- XIII. RS Serb Patriotic Party Municipal Board

