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PD-ABS-009

**Final Report**  
**POLAND POLITICAL PARTY BUILDING**  
**USAID Cooperative Agreement NO EUR-A-181-0021-G-00-5220**  
**February 1, 1996 to January 31, 1999**

**I SUMMARY**

From January 1996 to January 1999, with funding from the U S Agency for International Development (USAID), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) implemented a political party building program to support Poland's multiparty system by strengthening the communication skills and organizational capabilities of political parties at the local level

NDI's program was divided into three phases. The first phase of NDI's program (January to October 1996) focused on local operations in the areas of membership recruitment, fundraising, communications, branch creation and functions, and relations with party headquarters. The program's second phase (November 1996 to September 1997) focused on local level preparations for the parliamentary elections held in September 1997. The third and final phase of the program, beginning in October 1997, focused on training candidates--particularly women and youth--running in the 1998 local elections, assisting political parties in preparing for those elections, and training political party activists in how to train colleagues in political organizing.

**II BACKGROUND**

**A Political Background**

In the 1990s, Poland has created a functioning democratic political system based on free speech, free association, and free and fair elections. However, to consolidate its democratic transition, Poland has needed to create a representative, multiparty political system. The development of Poland's political parties into well-organized bodies connected to and representing the country's political constituencies has been retarded by several important factors that are tied not to a lack of political will but to the dearth of experience in building and sustaining modern political parties.

The first factor has been a somewhat elitist tradition that holds that direct political participation is best left to the intellectually gifted or financially endowed. Without the existence of a middle class, politics in Poland, be it under communism or before, has indeed been waged by elites. As a consequence, the common individual has not seen a role for himself or herself in political affairs beyond voting. There has been, to be sure, a growing recognition among political leaders that their parties should change from intellectual talk shops into membership-driven, representative



organizations concerned with the everyday problems of ordinary people. This conversion must, by necessity, take place at the local level, with proper support and resources provided by national headquarters. If done correctly, it would draw more people into public life as elected leaders, activists and volunteers.

A second, related factor has been the centralized structure and resource allocation of political parties. Parties have been bent on establishing their credibility at the national level on high-level issues related to accession to NATO and the European Union, privatization, unemployment, etc. Less consideration, and hence fewer resources, has been devoted to building party identity at the regional or local level. Preoccupied with national stature, party leaders have amassed enough power within their parties such that rank and file members, those who can and should build the party at the local level, do not contribute sufficiently to decisions on policy matters, resource allocation, or other such issues. Party leaders should reconsider their power as derived in fact from support accorded to them by rank and file members who are consulted on party affairs regularly.

A third factor concerns the practice of coalition-building, both with other political parties and with other politically active organizations. Individual parties, acting alone in the political marketplace, cannot achieve as much as they would in alliance with other parties, or with environmental groups, trade unions, business groups, and other constituent-based, non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Such coalitions can be built around specific issues at both national and local levels, and be ad hoc or long-term in nature. In either form, coalitions are extremely useful political and organizational tools to promote and gain support for one's agenda.

To be sure, these developmental obstacles have not applied to Polish parties equally. There have been sharp contrasts between the country's two principal political blocs: post-communist and post-Solidarity. The two post-communist parties currently in power, the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and the Polish Peasants' League (PSL), have demonstrated the ability to adopt modern political party techniques to reform and reinvigorate their organizations into well-structured, well-disciplined bodies. Now a single political party, the SLD had been, in fact, a coalition of some 25 NGOs, headed by a party called Social Democracy for Poland (SdRP), and includes environmental groups, trade unions, and other civic organizations. The post-communist resurgence is due in large part to solid experience in organizational management and political organizing at both national and local levels.

Moreover, the post-communists' political position was strengthened by the 1995 presidential victory of Aleksander Kwasniewski, the former SdRP leader, over incumbent Lech Walesa, by the smooth functioning of the government of Prime Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, and by the decision of a military tribunal not to prosecute former Prime Minister Josef Oleksy for alleged, KGB-sponsored spy activities, based on a lack of evidence.

The situation in the post-Solidarity camp was less sanguine. Numerous political parties emerged from the breakup of the Solidarity political movement in the early 1990s, led by Solidarity leaders who had grown estranged from the movement's leader and then Polish president Lech Walesa. To some observers, Solidarity's break-up was an inevitable consequence of the loss of a

unifying enemy--the communist system. Others saw a reunified Solidarity movement as a political imperative given the post-communist resurrection. There have been well-intentioned, albeit failed attempts to unite, as seen in the shaky post-Solidarity governments between 1991 and 1993 and the aborted campaign to promote one candidate for the 1995 presidential elections. It was not until 1997 that the post-Solidarity camp, prior to parliamentary elections, created a politically viable coalition in Election Action Solidarity and was able to score a resounding election victory and re-take the government.

Several factors impeded post-Solidarity's coalescence prior to 1997: personality conflicts among party leaders, antagonistic relations between those leaders and former President Walesa, and a rift between those who view the post-communists as legitimate political opponents and those who see them as unreformed, anti-democratic opportunists undeserving of political power. Perhaps most important, key ideological differences concerning such key economic and social issues as the role of religion in secular life and privatization separated post-Solidarity parties.

Ultimately, post-Solidarity's fragmentation and weakness resulted in 35 percent of the electorate, which voted for post-Solidarity parties, not being represented in the 1993-97 parliament when those parties failed to pass the election threshold for parliamentary representation. This glaring deficiency in political representation was perhaps the single largest threat to Poland's democratic transition.

Given this deficiency in political representation, the fragmentation and weakness of the Poland's right-wing, and the overall need for all parties to strengthen their connection to the electorate, NDI embarked on a program to strengthen parties' internal organization and public outreach in the mid-1990s.

## **B NDI in Poland**

NDI's involvement in Poland began in September 1989 with a seminar in Warsaw on the role of parliament in formulating national economic policy. In April 1991, American and European political experts advised representatives of 14 Polish parties on organizing for legislative elections in October of that year. NDI provided follow-on individual assistance focusing on party organization and communication strategies to ten of the 14 parties just prior to the elections.

In April 1994, NDI organized a conference on constitutional models in which four politicians and jurists from the United States and Europe, members of parliament's Joint Constitutional Committee, and representatives of several extra-parliamentary parties discussed such topics as drafting a constitution for long-term political stability rather than short-term political interest, involving the public in the constitutional drafting process, and the respective merits of presidential and parliamentary systems of government. NDI staff worked closely with leaders of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary parties in preparing and convening this conference. In discussions following the constitutional model conference, political party leaders suggested that NDI work with their parties at the local level.

As a result of the above discussions, the Institute began an initial six month program in January 1996. However upon the end of the first six months, NDI realized that while most parties had well-functioning national offices and parliamentary clubs, they lacked political and organizing skills to develop grassroots bases of support and identity. At this time, NDI had already worked with political parties at the local level elsewhere in Eastern Europe and believed it could make an effective contribution to how parties function at the local level.

Hence with additional program funding from USAID, NDI implemented a 2.5 year program and placed Andrew Young, an activist and local government councillor from the British Conservative Party, in Warsaw as the program's resident representative and trainer. Over the course of the program, three Polish staff joined NDI as trainers: Dorota Mitrus, Marcin Ciok, and Marcin Walecki, who now will serve as co-directors of the European Institute for Democracy, a Polish nongovernmental organization, a direct offspring of the NDI program.

### **III PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

The program's overall objective is to help parties further their political organizing and communications skills at the local level in the context of preparing and implementing election related activities:

- the development of election related organization plans at the local level that are coordinated with national level election strategies
- the placement of appropriate structure and management to implement local level organization plans
- increased skills in implementing organization plan components: fundraising, membership and volunteer recruitment, public opinion polling, message development, coalition building, voter outreach, candidate training, and free and paid media
- increased participation of women and youth in local level politics
- increased training capabilities within parties
- increased awareness at the national level of how local branches can and should assume more responsibility for party decisions and operations

### **IV PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

NDI's Political Party Building Program aimed to strengthen the organizational structures and public outreach capabilities of Poland's major political parties, to create more organized, broad based, and transparent party operations, and to give the public a better understanding of what each party stands for. During the course of the program, NDI conducted program activities in three phases concentrating on party development, election related assistance, study missions, women and youth programs, training capabilities and the development of a Polish based NGO.

## **Phase I Long-term Party Development (January 1996 - September 1996)**

### *Party Assessment*

The program's first activity was an assessment in February to determine with which parties the Institute would work with and the level of their assistance needs. Program Officer Robert Benjamin and Resident Representative Andrew Young were joined by Hege Hero, a local government official from Oslo, Norway and past NDI trainer in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia. After holding initial party consultations with approximately eight parties, NDI chose five parties to formally work with during the first phase: the Freedom Union, Confederation for an Independent Poland, the Conservative Party, the 100 Movement and the Christian Peasant's Alliance. In addition, NDI trained on an ad hoc basis four other parties (the Democratic Left Alliance, the Polish Peasants' League, the Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland and the Labor Union party) as well as the Solidarity trade union. Most of NDI's assistance was targeted at the so-called post-Solidarity parties. As relatively new organizations, they were in greater need of assistance than the more established post-communist parties.

NDI based its decision on the following factors: each party's need for and ability to absorb NDI assistance relative to others, their interest in working with NDI, their ability to articulate technical assistance needs, and their current and projected status in Polish politics. NDI ranked parties in terms of their need for assistance (relative to other parties), their ability to articulate assistance needs, the level of enthusiasm expressed toward the project, their current polling numbers and long-term viability, and their willingness to form coalitions to consolidate the party system. Based on this ranking, NDI grouped the parties into two categories: those which would work with NDI in formal consultation rounds, and those with which the Institute would work on a more informal, ad hoc basis. NDI also concluded that the post-Solidarity bloc required more assistance than their post-communist counterparts and as such its training was structured accordingly.

Assessment findings also indicated that although well-developed at the national level, Polish parties were organizationally weak at the local level and would benefit from external assistance in developing local level capacity. As such, NDI implemented program activities which developed action plans related to parties long-term development at the local level in areas of membership recruitment, fundraising and communication. NDI also assisted newer parties in their structural development including relations between party headquarters and branches and the composition of branch organizations.

### *Party Consultations*

In April 1996, NDI conducted the first round of party consultations with the selected parties on membership recruitment, fundraising, and free and paid media for the Freedom Union and the four smaller conservative parties. Separate training for Solidarity focused on strategies for cooperating with political parties. Five NDI advisors and Andrew Young offered strategies and techniques on the topics and worked with local activists to produce action plans to be implemented at the branch level.

The consultations took place over a 10-day period, in Krakow and Torun, grouping activists from the core parties from northern and southern Poland, respectively. Training sessions with several other parties were held in the latter part of the month in and around Warsaw. In total, NDI worked with approximately 200 local activists.

After this formal training, approximately 40 branches from across the country drafted action plans to build capacity in the above-mentioned areas. NDI subsequently assisted the branches in implementing the action plans during the summer months. All of the participating branches came to understand the necessity of building organizational viability and maintaining contact with the electorate in non-election periods.

NDI utilized an international group of pro bono experts to enhance NDI training during this period. Two senior officials of Hungary's Alliance of Free Democrats, Mark Webster, a communications specialist from the United States, Michael Terris, an American pollster, and Daniel Radford, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council joined Andrew Young in delivering NDI training. Each consultation group featured a Polish co-trainer. This was an important element of the program because it contributed to each party's in-house training capability, a long-term goal of NDI's party building program.

At the end of the program's first nine months, NDI realized that there was far more to do with parties than the Institute could accomplish in nine months. The work begun affirmed the technical assistance needed by Polish parties based on the following five factors. First, although locally organized, parties lacked organization at the grassroots level. Second, Poland's political party system remained fragmented. Third, no other political development organization was providing similar technical assistance at this time. Fourth, the two post-communist parties, gave the Institute specific areas of assistance to address. Fifth, the Solidarity trade union, while not a party, was the strongest political organization in the post-Solidarity camp, operated as a quasi political party, and merited more direct assistance. These findings laid the foundation for the program's next phase.

## **Phase II Election Preparedness (October 1996 - September 1997)**

### *Party Consultations*

In November 1996, NDI began its election-related phase of its program with a series of party consultations in Warsaw, Torun, Krakow and Lodz. An international group of pro bono experts facilitated these consultations with Andrew Young, Michael Balagus Campbell, an activist of Canada's New Democratic Party, Mark Webster, and Edith Wynne, an activist of Ireland's Fine Gael party. NDI worked in target cities training approximately 20 local branches. NDI provided multipartisan training aimed at increasing the participation of women and youth in political parties and in politics generally.

The training program brought together local activists from the Freedom Union (UW) and the newly formed Solidarity Election Action Coalition (AWS) composed of Solidarity trade union and

center-right/right parties. In these consultations, branches received information and skills with which to draft a strategic, pre-election plan, campaign structures and platforms, the roles of campaign managers and candidates, timetabling, and communications. There was particular focus on how to build resources (financial, human and otherwise) with which to carry out election-related activities. These consultations marked the transition from phase I of NDI's program to the second phase on election-related activities.

### *Organizational Plans*

Over the course of 12 months, Andrew Young and Polish trainers Dorota Mitrus and Marcin Walecki provided continual training to branches of approximately eight political parties throughout Poland on such issues as campaign structure and staff, targeting, timetabling and communication. NDI's election-related training was aimed at allowing party activists to return to local branches with a basis for launching election plans to be used by branches to develop a strategic campaign plan including fundraising, membership development, volunteer recruitment, message development, media, voter outreach and candidate training. In advance of the September 1997 parliamentary elections, NDI trained approximately 50 local branches representing AWS and three political parties across Poland on strategic election planning. Technical assistance revolved around the program's six targeted cities: Warsaw, Krakow, Lodz, Lublin, Bydgoszcz, and Torun.

NDI gave participating parties the flexibility to design plans specific to their local needs rather than imposing uniform structure and content of election-related plans. Mr. Young delivered the majority of technical assistance through one-on-one contact with party activists in consultation with political party leaders. Moreover, NDI assessed and recommended improvements in the election preparations to party branches in the six cities and assisted branches in readying their candidates for the election period.

As an integral part of its training program, NDI produced Polish language adaptations of an extensive range of training materials used by parties in Western Europe and North America which set out the tasks and activities undertaken before and during an election period. These materials were distributed to all party branches with which the Institute has worked as well as to individuals who attended NDI's training sessions. NDI also held "open houses" at NDI's Warsaw office which offered candidates additional training in media communication.

### *UK Work/Study Mission*

In April 1997, NDI led a 13-person, multiparty delegation of Polish party activists from the Solidarity Election Action (AWS), the Freedom Union (UW), Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and Reconstruction of Poland (ROP) to the United Kingdom for an intensive, four-week internship program in which activists were placed as full-time staff members in party campaigns for parliamentary elections in April. The internship placed activists with Conservative and Labour Party organizations. These activists were selected by NDI on the basis of political experience, language capability, and gender, party and geographic balance. With the objective to expose activists to the various and inter-related activities of an election, they attended daily election team briefings, conducted

door-to-door canvassing and other forms of voter contact, worked closely with parliamentary candidates, and were exposed on a daily basis to strategic considerations of election preparations (See appendix for the trip report)

### *Women and Youth Programs*

During the programs second phase, the Institute launched its women and youth training components. Due to the under-representation of women and youth in Polish political affairs, NDI created training programs designed specifically to increase their political skills and level of political participation. These programs ran alongside the technical assistance and training provided through the organization plans. NDI's training incorporated the following discussions on how European and North American parties encourage women's participation and reach out to women voters, and offered personal experiences on how politically active women climbed up the political party ladder.

To launch and publicize NDI's women's component, at the end of February, NDI held a women's training conference in Warsaw in conjunction with Project Parity, a European Union-funded program. This conference transferred election-related skills to activists from a number of local branches involved in NDI's larger program. It also increased NDI's profile as an organization committed to increasing women's political skills and participation, and helped publicize NDI's message that women represent both an important focus and a crucial asset for political parties seeking to strengthen their organization and their electoral support.

Building on conference proceedings, NDI held a women's training 'road show' in March 1997. American political/media consultant Annie Burns, Andrew Young and the NDI women's program coordinator, Dorota Mitrus conducted training sessions in Lublin, Warsaw and Poznan which focused on effective message development, speeches, press relations, and radio and television skills. Because most of the participants had no previous media experience, they benefitted not only from NDI's training on message, content and press relations, but also from NDI's critiques of mock interviews and speeches videotaped during the actual training.

An additional multi-partisan conference for women candidates in advance of the September parliamentary elections was held over a three day period in July to train candidates on targeting women voters and to maximize voter contact, communication and public speaking skills. Ms Annemie Neyts, a member of the European Parliament from Belgium and Ms Christine Jahnke, an American media specialist co-trained with Andrew Young. This session was the largest training for women candidates in Poland and brought women together from across the ideological spectrum and from throughout Poland.

NDI's youth training was launched alongside the women's component in November and was designed to increase youth participation in politics. To introduce the youth component to parties, NDI held opening sessions for its party youth training in Warsaw and Krakow. Through multipartisan forums, NDI provided focused training on increasing campaign skills among young activists, while simultaneously training parties on the value of targeting young voters and increasing

youth participation NDI trained young activists in five different cities across Poland on such topics as door-to door canvassing, targeting youth voters and coordinating young volunteers In June 1997, NDI held a week long series of training for youth activists in Krakow, Lodz, Lublin, Torun and Warsaw for approximately 25 activists Training focused on the role of youth organizations in an election period, targeting first-time voters and other youth, recruiting and coordinating election volunteers, special election events for youth, and get-out-the-vote techniques designed for young voters Training was led by Mark Arsenault, a former president of the Young Conservatives of Canada and at the time NDI's resident representative in Macedonia

### **Phase III Post-election and Training Sustainability (October 1997 - October 1998)**

The third and final phase of the program began in October 1997 focusing on training candidates --particularly women and youth -- who ran in the 1998 local elections, assisting political parties in preparing for those elections, and training political party activists in how to train colleagues in political organizing

#### *Post-election roundtables*

As follow-up to the September Parliamentary elections, NDI organized post-election roundtables for election team leaders from the Freedom Union and AWS in November and December, respectively UW election team leaders from the national party headquarters from Torun, Krakow, Bydgoszcz, Lublin, Warsaw and Gdansk presented their election activities and materials which were in turn critiqued by the other participants and the NDI staff These roundtables provided a platform for participants to exchange views on what worked and what did not work during the election period Participants also held preparatory discussions for the proposed June 1998 local elections and on how to build on their work from the last elections

The roundtables conducted with AWS brought together election team leaders and 35 of the 50 regional AWS election managers

#### *Women and Youth Programs*

NDI continued to build on its women's component with a three-day conference in Warsaw at the end of February 1997 This multipartisan conference featured 45 women who would be candidates in the scheduled 1998 elections and who had trained with NDI for the first time Training was co-facilitated by Christine Jahnke, a media specialist from the United States, Francesca Binda, NDI's party building representative in Bosnia, and Andrew Young Participants were trained on a range of topics including targeting voters, media training, public speaking, and the role of local candidate or councillor (See appendix for training report)

A similar three-day conference was held for a multipartisan group of young local election candidates Interest in this seminar far outweighed NDI's capacity and therefore only 50 participants were selected from a pool of more than 400 applicants These participants were selected based on criteria designed to ensure participation by those who had never received NDI training or who came

from regions that do not normally benefit from technical assistance. The intensive training provided by NDI<sup>1</sup> afforded participants with the skills to pass their training on to colleagues and the ability to apply new skills towards their own branches' activities.

As follow-on to the Institute's youth training programs during phase II, in late 1997 NDI sent questionnaires to all 450 participants in its youth program. Replies from these surveys, provided NDI with detailed information about participants activities during the parliamentary elections and about their plans to run in the 1998 local elections.

#### *Work/Study Missions (UK & Serbia Study Missions)*

Feedback from candidates who participated in the United Kingdom study mission in April 1997 proved invaluable to their parliamentary campaigns. Candidates utilized new campaign techniques which increased voter contact and understanding of their electorate. With local elections scheduled for October 1998, NDI believed an additional study mission to the UK for candidates preparing for these elections would be lucrative.

In October 1997 three Polish party activists traveled to Great Britain to observe the British Conservative and Labour parties annual conferences. All were veteran NDI trainers from the UW and AWS, and a newly elected Member of Parliament from the SLD. The study mission allowed them to observe internal party debate, how the parties actively targeted specific types of voter, and how business groups interact with political parties.

In April 1998, NDI sponsored a second study mission to the United Kingdom for a group of six political activists to observe and participate in the UK local election campaigns. One man and one woman each representing the Freedom Union, the Democratic Left Alliance and Solidarity Election Action parties worked for two weeks as election organizers prior to local elections held at the end of April. The Democratic Left Alliance activists worked with the Labour Party, the Freedom Union and Solidarity Election Action participants worked with the Conservative Party. Over the two week period, participants were able to cover all aspects of grassroots election work.

From September 22-29, 1998, NDI/Poland hosted 12 Serbian political activists involved in NDI's Serbia political party building program to take part in the Polish local election campaign. Serbian activists campaigned with local candidates, met with national campaign managers, and met local and national journalists to see how they cover the campaign. Unlike a study mission to a western-style democratic country, like the United Kingdom or United States, this program represented the first "East-East" political party exchange for NDI and allowed participants to see another emerging democracy and meet with others who had been trained by NDI.

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<sup>1</sup>Mark Webster, an American political expert and veteran NDI trained co-facilitated with the Warsaw staff.

### *Local election preparedness*

In advance of the October 1998 local elections, NDI provided ongoing training for party branches and candidates. On average three to four training sessions were held each week geared toward preparing for the local elections. Training focused on volunteer recruitment, voter outreach, message development and delivery and fundraising. During these training sessions, train the trainers participants participated as co-trainers for their own respective parties.

During this phase, NDI provided summer training camps for young activists from the AWS, SLD, UW, ROP and SdRP in Elk, Bytom, Poznan, Lodz and Ostroleka. Training programs centered around membership recruitment, fund raising and door-knocking.

As a result of the increase demand for technical assistance just prior to the local elections, and more than 50,000 candidates competing throughout Poland, the Institute utilized an 'open-house' policy to encourage candidates to visit the NDI office in Warsaw where they could access translated training materials (some incorporated from the recent British local government campaign), as well as receive specific individual training.

### *Training of Trainers*

In order to ensure the sustainability of the Institute's work in Poland, NDI launched a training of trainers program in January 1998. From January to September 1998, NDI worked intensively with a groups of 16 activists from the Solidarity Election Action, Freedom Union and Democratic Left Alliance, chosen largely as a result of their engagement in NDI's program over the last two years and their commitment to passing on training to their colleagues. NDI provided these activists specialized training, in order that they could assist NDI in its political party work, but more importantly to carry on the training after NDI departed Poland in November 1998. Activists were trained in all of NDI's training areas including fundraising, communication, media presentation, election campaigning and membership recruitment.

Through monthly, multipartisan sessions that combined presentations from NDI with mock training conducted by participants, the 16 trainees became full-fledged trainers in their own right. Each presented individualized training curriculum and conducted workshops to their Democratic Left Alliance, Solidarity Election Action, Freedom Union and the Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland colleagues.

### *European Institute for Democracy*

NDI's program trained more than 2,500 party activists. Yet ongoing demand for NDI training far outstripped resources. NDI anticipated an increase in needed technical assistance with local elections approaching and the government's introduction of the *powiat* level of local self-administration which would increase the number of locally elected representatives significantly.

With this in mind, NDI assisted in the creation of a Polish nongovernmental organization, the European Institute for Democracy (EID), to consolidate Poland's democratic transition as well as democratic transitions in neighboring countries. EID is headed by two NDI Polish staff/trainers, Dorota Mitrus and Marcin Ciok, who, with assistance from former NDI resident representative Andrew Young, train political parties on general development and work intensively with women and youth activists following on similar work generated under NDI's programs.

EID has secured seed monies from the U.S. Democracy Commission, operational monies for a women's program from the Stefan Batory Foundation, program funds for a Roma local governance project from the British Know How Fund, and potential funding from the European Union's assistance program for Central and Eastern Europe, PHARE.

## **V RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

In more than two years, NDI's political party program reached several thousand political party activists throughout Poland, as well as the leadership of nearly every major political party. NDI's institutional resources and expertise were used constantly, consistently, and purposefully. Because of NDI's intervention, political parties in Poland brought more resources to bear on their organizational development—particularly at the branch level, planned for and executed election campaigns that were responsive to voter interests, saw women and youth attain more dynamic positions within party organization, and left behind a Polish organization to carry on political party and democratization work.

### **Long-term Party Development**

The initial party consultations established a solid basis for long-term cooperation with individual party leadership and branches. By the end of the program's first phase, party branches directly involved in the program started to build capacity to implement well-defined, well-planned, comprehensive activities which impact how the electorate views political parties. For example, branches added new members to their organizations, started to build or renew relationships with media and developed databases of actual and potential donors.

The first phase also allowed NDI to build a solid professional relationship with the leaders of participating parties. The parties have come to understand the importance of NDI's technical assistance and to rely on NDI's counsel on party development.

### **Election-Related Assistance**

NDI's election-related training afforded branches with a foundation upon which to draft election plans that incorporate timely execution and comprehensive activities. NDI's pre-election party consultations enabled activists to grasp the relevance of the issues involved in running a successful campaign and remained interested in further training. Consultations afforded parties with a foundation to begin local election activities and to think about the importance of timely planning and organization. The multipartisan women and youth sessions generated enthusiasm for future

sessions and provided NDI staff with an indication of specific direction in which to proceed with future training. These consultations provided the foundation for party activists in advance of the October 1998 local elections as well.

### *Election Techniques*

During the 1997 parliamentary elections, the utility of NDI election-related assistance was exemplified. Parties engaged in moderate political discourse, while voters were able to rely on direct contact with candidates to make informed decisions. These elections indicated that the consolidation of democracy in Poland, which must occur at the local level ties between citizens and elected officials, had made important progress.

Many of the candidates and campaign managers who participated in NDI's training, especially those on the UK election work/study program, applied their experience in a systematic and comprehensive fashion with impressive results. The AWS campaign manager from Siedlce, for instance, applied techniques from NDI training to post Solidarity's highest voter percentage in the country. Following the elections, Janusz Tomaszewski, AWS' national campaign manager, commented that the elections results proved how effective NDI assistance had been for his coalition's candidates, campaign managers and activists. The *Washington Post* echoed this by reporting that "*opposition groups with some guidance from western advisers such as the U S -based National Democratic Institute did what they had never, in any orchestrated or systematic way, done before. They knocked on doors. They passed out campaign literature. They went hoarse chatting up voters. They carried questionnaires from Krakow to Poznan to Torun to Lodz to ask Poles what they wanted from their public servants.*"

Prior to the 1998 local elections, the pre-election period showed an increase in the level of sophistication and professionalism developed within the parties. Noticeable improvements included increased reliance on direct voter contact such as doorknocking and voter questionnaires. The standard of election-related literature was high, TV campaigns were sharp, short and to the point. By utilizing techniques introduced by NDI, such as issuing questionnaires, holding focus groups and producing targeted timetables, candidates showed good standing with election results. A number of candidates trained under NDI's program advanced on their party list as a result of using door to door voter contact and responding to citizens inquiries. This was a marked improvement from just three years ago.

For example, the Freedom Union, which had employed new election techniques during the 1997 elections showed an impressive standing in the elections.

The two work/study missions to the United Kingdom, in which Polish activists worked with British counterparts in the Tory and Labour parties in preparation for parliamentary and local elections respectively, provided Polish activists with first-hand exposure to the elements of modern election preparation. Participants observed and participated in a broad scope of intensive grassroots activity and applied these skills in their own election activities as candidates, election managers and volunteers.

They acquired useful techniques and skills regarding the creation and management of election teams at the branch level, the development and executive of strategic voter targeting plans, and the methods used to contact voters, including door-to-door canvassing, leafleting, public rallies and public candidate appearances. Upon returning to Poland, the participants assumed key roles in their parties' national and regional election teams, and produced election-related literature based on their work in Britain. These skills were later transferred and applied during campaigns leading up the 1997 parliamentary elections and 1998 local elections.

One participant, Sylwia Pusz of the Democratic Left Alliance, applied skills acquired in Britain to her personal campaign for parliament. Using doorknocking and other means of voter contact, Sylwia rose from the 14<sup>th</sup> position on the SLD's regional list in Poznan to the 4<sup>th</sup> position on the basis of preferential voting, and won a seat in parliament as one of Poland's youngest national legislators.

The second mission to the United Kingdom had a positive impact on local elections in Poland. The mission provided participants with the skills, motivation and, perhaps most important, the vision to undertake a dynamic, comprehensive and well-organized campaign for Poland's local elections. The participants were able to direct, instruct and motivate many others who did not participate in the mission. As campaign managers, they designed leaflets, recruited volunteers, briefed candidates and organized election teams. Moreover, each participated in door knocking which they in turn utilized during their own campaigns.

The first "East-East" exchange of Serbian political party activists to Poland afforded the Serbian delegation enabled NDI's Polish colleagues to train others in skills which they had acquired through their association with NDI. The Serb activists were able to observe the positive change in Poland's political parties and how far Poland's system had moved from communism in only a short time and demonstrated that possibly it could be done in Serbia as well. The utility of seeing door-knocking in a post-communist setting is exemplified by the quote from a Serbian participant in the study trip to Poland: "*the idea to organize such a trip was excellent. On this trip I learned how the political parties work in Poland, a country that was under communism rule just a few years ago, and I realized that it is quite possible to change the political system in Serbia. Some of the new things I learned can be used right away, such as voter contact and contact with the media.*"

### *Women and Youth Programs*

The multipartisan training components for women and youth political activists increased their political skills and the level of inter-party cooperation. In addition to increasing their political skills, women and youth from opposing parties have fostered friendships through the training, thereby helping to reduce longstanding political animosities between the Solidarity and post-communist blocs in the past impeded the political transition process. Following one of the women's training sessions, one AWS activist joined activists from the post-communist party to produce a joint televised information session on the importance of targeting women. The impact of NDI's training was immediately felt as participants from training sessions with women political activists initiated agendas to strengthen the presence of women within party ranks and to focus party attention on women's issues.

Parties have now acquired useful techniques and skills regarding the targeting of women voters, message development, public speaking and communications, and maximizing voter contact using such means as door-to-door canvassing. Through the use of taped 'mock' television appearances, participants at NDI's women's conferences received practical media training relevant to the Polish context of readily available local television access. Based on follow-up questionnaires completed at the close of workshops, participants stressed the relevance of the training topics and indicated in almost all cases that they planned to implement the techniques covered in the workshops.

In October 1998, Dorota Mitrus, Director of NDI's women's project was featured in a popular Polish women's magazine "Twoj Styl". In the article, Ms. Mitrus spoke about the obstacles women face entering political life in Poland and how NDI's women's program teaches women how to be successful politicians.

The results of NDI's youth training appeared during the election period in September 1997 and October 1998. In the 1997 parliamentary elections, several of the young candidates who had participated in NDI's training conducted remarkably effective campaigns that successfully targeted young voters and recruited young activists. Several young first-time candidates used techniques such as door-knocking as part of their campaign strategies and succeeded in moving up their respective party lists to earn seats in parliament.

### *Sustainability*

NDI's completion of its train the trainers program generated 16 well trained activists from all regions and all of the major parties. These trainers can now train members within their own parties. NDI has also built the capacity of its trainer network through the development of the Polish based NGO, European Institute for Democracy (EID). As demonstrated by the visit of the Serbian delegation, EID is now prepared to conduct political party building programs in Poland for its neighbors.

NDI's Warsaw office developed a database of more than 1,000 trained activists that has proven to be a valuable asset. Through it, NDI's Warsaw office has ensured that all activists, particularly those not trained directly, received training materials by mail. Through the database, NDI and now EID can identify successful Polish activists, who can share their relevant experiences with visiting activists from elsewhere. NDI's outreach will expand further with the production and dissemination of videotapes of its training.

NDI's technique of multipartisan training provided a neutral ground for people to meet and discuss similar ideas. Party activists and trainers have developed cross-party relationships that are highly unique in the Polish context, such as assisting each other in their work and even carpooling to each others' training. The cross-party training utilized by NDI allowed for activists from different parties to share experiences and ideas and afforded activists from opposite ends of the spectrum interaction that they would otherwise not have. This presents a very positive development in an otherwise highly polarized Polish political context.

## **VI EVALUATION/CONCLUSIONS**

Throughout the course of the project, NDI evaluated the program's progress through participant surveys and informal feedback, feedback from political party leaders, written evaluations of program advisors, and written and oral reports of the resident representative and Washington-based staff. Results were further evaluated based on the degree to which political and organizing skills were transferred to participants by assessing the effectiveness of the local plans, and, how, in turn, such skills were offered to other local branches not directly involved with NDI's program.

The following are indicators which correspond to the program objectives outlined in NDI's proposal. Analysis regarding the extent to which the objectives have been met follows at the end of each set of indicators. NDI relied primarily on "before and after" criteria in measuring the impact of program activities.

### **Long-Term Organizational Development**

- Action plans containing specific goals and activities are developed and implemented by local branches of participating parties. Action plans will focus on such activities as fundraising, recruiting new members, communication with constituencies, free and paid media, and internal party organization.
- Fulfillment of action plans by local party branches on the basis of consultations with NDI.

Program participants developed a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship among membership development, fundraising and communications, and the related need to approach party operations strategically as well as applied skills in each of the three areas. After just six months, activists demonstrated that they could hold successful fundraising events, publish newsletters which were appealing to voters and increase their membership base, all as a direct result of NDI's training.

### **Development of Election-Related Action Plans**

Election-related action plans are developed by local branches in cooperation with regional coordinators for each participating party to include such components as

- fundraising plan and strategy that targets both individual donors and potential business donors
- membership development and volunteer recruitment plan to solidify a party's base vote and to recruit volunteers to handle the tasks of the election plan
- public opinion polling and survey plan to inform message development
- voter outreach plan, targeting "persuadable" voters and developing and communicating clear positions on issues of interest to them
- candidate training plan to help individual candidates to campaign more actively and effectively
- press relations media plan to strategically build the party's image through both free and paid media
- each local branch involved in development of election-related action plans has devised a structured that responds to the needs of their action plans

NDI training provided activists with information and skills to draft strategic, pre-election plans including organizational structures and party platforms, the roles of campaign managers and candidates, timetabling, message development, targeting and communications. Further training was provided to implementing the election plans. As a result of NDI training prior to the 1998 local elections, party branches complied strategic election plans. This work assisted voters as well in understanding where parties stand on local issues, and built bridges of communication between elected representatives and constituents following the elections. Branches are now able to produce election plans and activities that feature specific activities and indicators of achievement.

NDI analyzed returned questionnaires on the branches' preparations for elections indicated that a number of branches with which NDI worked had incorporated NDI training in several important areas: election managers and teams assembled and are operational, election budgets had been prepared and in some cases potential donors had been identified and contacted, branches which had commenced volunteer recruitment efforts, branches were preparing voter contact activities, in particular door-to-door canvassing, based primarily on NDI training, and branches reported a more concerted effort than in the past to develop pro-active relationships with local media, and to prepare party representatives for media appearances. As noted by Freedom Union's Krakow branch chairman, Tomasz Schoen, "Your advice, instruction and suggestions are both a tremendous support for us and present new challenges to our branch and other political parties."

### **Post-Election Action Plans**

- Based on lessons learned from elections, local party branches have developed post-election action plans
- Participating parties will have commenced activities designed to increase the level of communication between elected representatives and citizens

The post-election roundtables held after the 1997 Parliamentary elections provided a platform where national and regional election staff came together for joint debriefing/planning sessions. The contact between these groups resulted in a valuable exchange of information: regional leaders heard from their colleagues about new approaches that worked, while national and regional leaders received the opportunity to articulate ways to make cooperation more effective in the future.

NDI staff also held lessons learned debriefings with local clubs and national headquarters where they discussed not only problems encountered during the election and pre-election periods, but worked with local branches on plans for the 1998 local elections.

### **Increasing Women and Youth Participation in Polish Political Life**

- A training program is designed that targets women who are members of political parties and leaders of political party youth wings
- Local branches develop a plan to incorporate women and youth into their election-related plans and establish targets for increased participation of these two groups in local politics

- A series of training seminars is begun to assist politically motivated women in running for local government office

The impact of NDI's training of women political activists during phase two was evident when participants from training sessions pressed forward with an agenda to strengthen the presence of women within party ranks and to focus party attention on women's issues. One member of the 100 Movement's Gdansk branch, Anna Hutyra, a participant in NDI's training sessions for women, has written *"The training has helped us and our male colleagues to see that women's participation in politics is very important. It is crucial for the effectiveness of [our] party's activity and increases the chances of winning the elections. Your training gave us additional arguments to use during many talks that we held with other people involved in politics. We really appreciate the practical examples and directions."*

Following the multipartisan women's conference, participants stated that they had been convinced to run as candidates in the 1998 local elections and to utilize new campaign techniques introduced by NDI such as door-to-door campaigning.

#### **Development of Training Capacity within Each Party**

- For each participating party, one activist is identified and will be serving as co-trainer
- A target group of three to five activists is identified from among co-trainers and other activists nominated by political parties' headquarters, and will be serving as regional coordinators within each group of parties and be responsible for training activities
- A total group of nine to 15 regional coordinators is trained as trainers and is capable of training party colleagues

With the creation of the European Institute for Democracy and the development of 16 in-house political party trainers for Poland's three major parties, the Institute helped establish a solid foundation for future political party building activities. The Institute has also created a useful vehicle for Polish political expertise to be shared in neighboring countries.

Through the participant database created by NDI, EID can identify successful Polish activists, who in turn can share their relevant experiences with visiting activists from outside of Poland. Moreover, EID has now developed a highly trained cross-party team of Polish trainers from throughout the country.

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

- 1 Training portfolio statistics on number of people trained, names and party positions, cities where trainings took place
- 2 Annotated bibliography of trainers
- 3 Press articles
- 4 Thank you letters
- 5 Selected program reports NDI Resident Representative Andrew Young's reports on Polish activists