



Quarterly Report
NEPAL: CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATION
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I. SUMMARY

Although many Nepalis had high expectations that democracy would bring prosperity and development to their country, they have come to realize that without an active and informed citizenry, democracy would be unresponsive to citizens' needs. The lack of confidence Nepalis feel about their political process is due, in part, to the majority's unfamiliarity with, and lack of participation in their democratic institutions. Since 1994, NDI has been participating in a broad national effort to increase Nepalis contribution to their governing bodies. In July 2000, with funding from USAID, NDI began civic and voter education programs in Nepal. These programs intend to inform Nepalis about how their government and electoral systems work as well as encourage them to get involved in their political process.

During this quarter, the Institute conducted a variety of civic education related activities, including: 1) preparing for and conducting additional teacher training workshops; and 2) distributing additional textbooks and teacher's guides;

The Institute also conducted voter education activities including: 1) completing the broadcasting of the first cycle and the writing and producing of the second cycle of radio shows; 2) holding district level forums; 3) printing and distribution additional resource manuals and voter education booklets.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Civic Education

Nepalis receive little, if any, civics training in school. As a result, the adult population in Nepal often lacks the necessary foundation for becoming active and informed citizens in their democracy. To address this gap in the education system, key leaders in Nepal's education community have been working to introduce civics training in school curriculums. As a result of their initiative, many schools around the country are now offering an elective civic education course entitled *Contemporary Society*. Unfortunately, many of the classes do not have materials

for the course, nor are the teachers familiar enough with civics to effectively teach the lessons to students.

In response, NDI worked in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the Higher Secondary Education Board, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), academics and local civic and political leaders to produce a civic education textbook and teacher's guide for use in the *Contemporary Society* course. The Institute is also conducting teacher-training workshops to inform teaching professionals and civic and political leaders about the contents of the new materials as well as how to effectively use these materials to relay civic messages to students.

Upon completion of the activities proposed in the grant agreement, approximately \$40,000 remained. The Institute drafted a memo and budget for USAID outlining add-on civic education activities. These activities included seven additional teacher-training workshops in four locations, Nepalgunj, Dhangadhi, Bhairawa and Kathmandu, and included participants from 35 neighboring districts. Approximately 35 teachers and principals were expected to attend each workshop, for a total of 245. With the remaining funds, NDI also printed 2,000 more Civics in Nepal textbooks and 500 teaching manuals for distribution throughout the country.

B. Voter Education

Although some materials about Nepal's election laws and polling practices have already been produced and distributed in the country, they continue to target highly educated citizens. Approximately 70 percent of Nepalis are illiterate, and thus many of the existing materials are inaccessible to an adequate number of voters. As a result, the majority of citizens know very little about how the electoral process works or what role citizens can play in ensuring credible and fair elections. In addition, the Election Commission recently established 30 district offices. However, the staff in these district offices lacks visibility in the community and the citizenry require information about the role of their district offices and how they can utilize these offices' services. Furthermore, many of the local civic and political leaders are unaware of their responsibilities during the polling process. These circumstances have led to violations in the Election Code of Conduct, which is intended to prevent voter intimidation, vote buying, illicit fundraising and spending and electioneering at the polling stations.

Throughout the previous year, NDI, in collaboration with the Election Commission and district election offices, conducted district level forums in 15 districts, bringing together 500 political and civic leaders and election officials. The Institute also conducted an extensive voter education program to increase citizens' awareness of and participation in the electoral process. The Institute's activities targeted the public, and included reaching out to women and various ethnic groups, as well as district leaders involved in elections. Through material production and distribution, discussion forums and radio programs, NDI relayed messages about voters' right and responsibilities, election officials' duties, voter registration, the Election Code of Conduct and procedures for reporting election-related violations. The program also included general messages about the benefits of participating in the democratic process.

In July 2001, USAID provided NDI with a \$250,000 extension to conduct additional voter education activities. With this money, NDI will hold forums in 15 additional districts where the Election Commission has district offices. NDI will also hold workshops at the local level in five parliamentary constituencies in an effort to bring messages about voters' rights and responsibilities to more people.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

A. Civic Education Program

Preparing for and Conducting Additional Teacher Training Workshops

During this quarter, NDI in cooperation with the Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB) conducted six additional teacher-training workshops. NDI began by hiring a Logistics Coordinator in October to help in the preparations of the workshops. These workshops were originally scheduled to be held in Dhangadhi, Nepalgunj, Bhairawa, Bharatpur and Kathmandu. To prepare for the workshops, the HSEB assisted in selecting the training sites and identifying workshop participants. NDI also hired logistics assistants in each of the three locations to help in delivering the invitations, confirming attendance, securing a caterer and fielding questions from participants.

NDI held the first workshop in Dhangadhi from November 24-25, 2001 and there was a large participant turnout. Unfortunately, the rest of the workshops had to be postponed as a result of the King's calling a State of Emergency. Due to security reasons, NDI decided to hold the remaining workshops to Kathmandu. Workshops were held in Kathmandu from December 11 to 14 for participants from Rupandehi, Kapilvastu, Gulmi and Argakhanchi, from December 19 to 22 for participants from Makwanpur Nawalparasi and Chitwan and from December 26 to 27, 2001 for participants from Dhading, Ramechhap, Sindupalchowk, Dolakha, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu. Approximately 33 teachers and principals attended each workshop.

During the course of the workshops the trainers used the training manual and were quite effective in conveying the messages to participants. They were interactive workshops where the participants were asked to do role-plays and given time to write and teach their own lesson plans and develop effective questioning techniques to ask in class. Participants were made familiar with the Civics in Nepal textbook and teachers' guide and learned ways to teach the books in an interesting way to students. NDI also distributed the textbook and teacher's guide to participants and had them fill-out a pre and post workshop questionnaire that NDI will use in its program evaluation.

Distributing Additional Textbooks and Teacher's Guides

To date, NDI has printed approximately 10,000 Civics in Nepal textbooks and 1,300 teacher's guides. In addition to providing these books to participants at the workshops, the HSEB is distributing them to schools around the country. Principals and teachers come to the HSEB from around the nation to pick-up the books for their classes. So far, the HSEB has

distributed more than 3,130 copies of the textbook to schools from different regions of the country.

B. Voter Education

Broadcasting the First Cycle and Writing and Producing the Second Cycle of Radio Shows

The Institute completed broadcasting the first cycle of radio episodes of five-minute mini dramas throughout the country in Nepali and in nine local languages on October 7.

Following the completion of the first cycle of radio dramas, the Institute, in collaboration with a professional radio consultant, produced the second cycle of radio programs and held several meetings with Election Commission officials to discuss the messages to be conveyed. Two popular male TV artists and three female artists provided the voices for the mini dramas. The Institute produced 10 radio dramas of 15-minute duration each in Nepali language and submitted the scripts and tapes to the Election Commission for approval. NDI is planning to broadcast these shows through Radio Nepal and various popular FM stations throughout the country.

Holding District Level Forums

Following the training of trainers' workshop, NDI conducted district level forums in Sunsari, Jhapa and Ilam districts. The Institute organized the forums in collaboration with the Election Commission and the district election offices, which assisted in selecting locations, delivering invitations and identifying participants. More than 35 participants attended each of the three forums. Two resource persons from the Central Election Commission and the District Election Office led the discussions in all districts. During all forums, NDI received sincere support for our efforts to improve the electoral process.

In all three districts, participants included local level civic and political leaders, district and local government officials, the district election officer and the staff of the district election office. The District Chief Judge, the District Development Chair, the Chief District Officer, and the Mayor were invited to attend the inaugural session of the district forums, and most of these officials did attend in each district. These officials made brief presentations to welcome participants and thanked NDI for conducting the program. The officials, as well as participants, highly praised the written materials used during the forums.

The major political parties were all represented at the forums, and this will continue to be an ongoing objective for the Institute during upcoming activities. Women's participation reached 30 percent in Sunsari, 51 percent in Ilam and 57 percent in Jhapa.

Due to the King's declaration of a State of Emergency, and after consultation with USAID and the Election Commission, the Institute postponed scheduled forums in December. The Institute, however, moved forward with forums for Kathmandu and Bhaktapur districts, given the relative security of the Kathmandu valley area. These forums were well attended by participants in both the districts. NDI was pleased to welcome USAID Cognizant Technical

Officers, Bishnu Adhikari and Netra Sharma to the Kathmandu forum. Similarly, the Institute was pleased to welcome Bishnu Adhikari, Anita Mahat and Madhuri Rana Singh, all of USAID, to the Bhaktapur forum.

Printing and Distributing Additional Resource Manuals and Voter Education Booklets

At the request of district level participants and the Election Commission, the Institute printed and distributed an additional 1,500 copies of the resource manual during this reporting period. To date, the Institute printed a total of 5,000 copies of the resource manual and 50,000 copies of the voter education booklet. NDI distributed resource manuals and voter education booklets to all forum participants. The Institute is also distributing the booklets through the Election Commission and district election offices, and is also providing them to political and civic leaders for distribution. District Election Officers are also distributing booklets during seminars organized by various NGOs in their respective districts.

IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Objective: Increase Nepalis knowledge of their electoral system; and

Objective: Increase Nepalis awareness of the basic norms of democracy and their human rights.

The activities described in the previous section produced the following results. The Institute:

A. Civic Education:

- Made available a civics textbook and teacher's guide for the *Contemporary Society* course. These resources will serve as effective teaching tools long into the future to help inform young people about how their government works and how to solve local problems using the democratic process.
- Helped distribute the Civics in Nepal textbook and teaching manual to at least 3,130 students and teachers around the country. The HSEB houses additional copies of the books and is distributing them to various schools.
- Worked successfully to increase the number of schools offering the civics course. When NDI began the program approximately five schools offered *Contemporary Society* as an elective. More than 40 schools are now requesting books for the course and intending to offer it.
- Provided training to 600 teachers and principals on effective ways to use the new course materials.
- Garnered support, among principals, teachers, donors and civic and political leaders, for civic education programming in Nepali schools. Widespread support for civic education

is apparent through articles printed in local newspapers calling for increased civics training for Nepali youth throughout the country, the formation of a local NGO with the primary goal of promoting civic education, comments made by local leaders and donors praising NDI's program and requesting additional civics materials to use in development projects and requests from teachers and principals for more Civics in Nepal textbooks and training manuals and additional training workshops.

- Facilitated participating organizations to share information and discuss ways to cooperate on civics programming.
- Built strong relationships with local organizations and government agencies involved in civics and education.

B. Voter Education

- Completed the first cycle of radio dramas and began production of the second cycle.
- Continued to build strong relationships with Election Commission officials at the central and district levels. District election offices are strengthening in capacity, increasing their profile in their communities and building good relationships with civic and political leaders in their respective districts.
- Successfully completed district level forums in Sunsari, Jhapa, Ilam, Kathmandu and Bhaktapur districts and distributed resource manuals at these forums.
- Distributed voter education booklets to the general public.

V. EVALUATION/CONCLUSIONS

Through many meetings and the distribution of materials, NDI has helped to inspire interest and commitment among donors, government agencies and local NGOs for introducing civic education in formal and informal education throughout Nepal. There has been a great deal of positive feedback from Nepali academics, civic leaders, government representatives, teachers and principals on the usefulness of the civic education materials and the benefits of the teacher-training workshops. Schools are increasingly exposed Contemporary Society, which will lead to more students being introduced to civic education.

NDI worked to increase the public's knowledge of the electoral system by facilitating the development of election education activities run by the Election Commission. By broadcasting radio shows and distributing voter awareness booklets, NDI is helping to increase the public's knowledge of the electoral system. NDI built close relationships with local level NGOs, political party leaders, and district election officials during the implementation of the forums. District election offices are being strengthened, increasing their profile in their communities and building good relations with civic and political leaders. The Institute is continuing to receive positive feedback from forum participants, and also receives praise from forum participants and the general public for the materials and requests for additional copies.

IV. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

During the next quarter, NDI plans to continue working in the field of civic education. The Institute is also looking at the feasibility of conducting one more workshop for participants from Dang, Banke, Bardiya and Surkhet, which was postponed for security reasons.

During the next quarter, NDI will conduct voter education district and constituency level forums and will start airing the second cycle of radio dramas.

NDI is continuously monitoring the national security situation and will continue consulting with the Election Commission, district level officials, the US Embassy and USAID and taking appropriate security measures.