NDI
NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

THE QUICK COUNT AND ELECTION OBSERVATION

An NDI Guide for Civic Organizations and Political Parties

Melissa Estok, Neil Nevitte and Glenn Cowan

WHAT IS A QUICK COUNT?

A CITIZENS' TOOL FOR ELECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY

A METHOD FOR SYSTEMATIC ELECTION DAY OBSERVATION

A CRITICAL PART OF MONITORING THE OVERALL ELECTION PROCESS

WHY CONDUCT A QUICK COUNT?

EMPOWER CITIZENS

BUILD LOCAL CAPACITY

PROVIDE RELIABLE AND COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION

VALIDATE OFFICIAL VOTE COUNTS

A quick count is a powerful method for monitoring elections. Observers watch the voting and counting processes at selected polling stations, record key information on standardized forms and report their findings to a central data collection center. Quick count methodology is used to evaluate the overall quality of election day processes and to verify official election results.

This handbook is designed for civic activists, political party representatives and others who are systematically observing elections to protect their rights and to promote transparency and accountability in the process. It provides an overview of how quick counts have been conducted worldwide and gives a step-by-step explanation of how to organize an election observation effort from the planning stages through election day and afterwards. Appendices provide sample materials representing best practices from organizations around the world.

NDI stresses the importance of monitoring the entire election process. Readers interested in related election monitoring issues should also refer to: *NDI's Handbook on How Domestic Organizations Monitoring Elections: An A to Z Guide; Building Confidence in the Voter Registration Process: An NDI Monitoring Guide for Political Parties and Civic Organizations; Media Monitoring to Promote Democratic Elections: An NDI Handbook for Citizen Organizations;* and other NDI publications.

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ABOUT NDI

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

Democracy depends on legislatures that represent citizens and oversee the executive, independent judiciaries that safeguard the rule of law, political parties that are open and accountable, and elections in which voters freely choose their representatives in government. Acting as a catalyst for democratic development, NDI bolsters the institutions and processes that allow democracy to flourish.

Build Political and Civic Organizations: NDI helps build the stable, broad-based and well-organized institutions that form the foundation of a strong civic culture. Democracy depends on these mediating institutions—the voice of an informed citizenry, which link citizens to their government and to one another by providing avenues for participation in public policy.

Safeguard Elections: NDI promotes open and democratic elections. Political parties and governments have asked NDI to study electoral codes and to recommend improvements. The Institute also provides technical assistance for political parties and civic groups to conduct voter education campaigns and to organize election monitoring programs. NDI is a world leader in election monitoring having organized international delegations to monitor elections in dozens of countries, helping to ensure that polling results reflect the will of the people.

Promote Openness and Accountability: NDI responds to requests from leaders of government, parliament, political parties and civic groups seeking advice on matters from legislative procedures to constituent service to the balance of civil-military relations in a democracy. NDI works to build legislatures and local governments that are professional, accountable, open and responsive to their citizens.

International cooperation is key to promoting democracy effectively and efficiently. It also conveys a deeper message to new and emerging democracies that while autocracies are inherently isolated and fearful of the outside world, democracies can count on international allies and an active support system. Headquartered in Washington D.C., with field offices in every region of the world, NDI complements the skills of its staff by enlisting volunteer experts from around the globe, many of whom are veterans of democratic struggles in their own countries and share valuable perspectives on democratic development.

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This handbook was prepared by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) to assist those working to ensure electoral accountability around the world. Quick counts at times have played a decisive role by deterring or exposing fraud; at other times they have helped to establish confidence in the election process, leading to acceptance of results that otherwise may have been rejected. At still other times, quick counts have buttressed confidence that election day processes had become regularized and transparent. In every case, quick counts have required extraordinary efforts. These include: mobilizing hundreds, if not thousands, of volunteers; developing reliable and rapid communication structures across a country; precisely analyzing large volumes of data in high pressure circumstances; and exercising wise political judgment about how to present quick count methodology and findings.

In reality, there is no such thing as a "B+" quick count—far too much rides on the exercise to settle for less than excellence—excellence in the professionalism of organization and analysis, and excellence in the impartial political judgment needed for announcing quick count findings. NDI was privileged to see such an effort in its first experience in international election observation through the work of the Philippine-based National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL). NAMFREL's quick count in the 1986 "snap" election exposed the fraud attempted by Ferdinand Marcos' regime. Excellence was again demonstrated when the Committee for Free Elections (CEL) developed a quick count with NDI's assistance for the 1988 Chilean plebiscite, which rejected the extension of General Pinochet's presidency. Over the years since and through numerous elections, NDI has helped groups in more than 25 countries around the world to develop quick counts as part of their broader election monitoring efforts. Many of those organizations have joined NDI in conveying skills and knowledge to democratic activists in other countries. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that these organizations have helped foster and develop a worldwide movement for domestic election monitoring.

NDI is honored by and greatly indebted to political and civic leaders who have invited us to assist them in building their capacities to monitor elections, including through conducting quick counts. Many have faced threats to their personal safety for attempting to hold governments accountable to electoral laws and standards. While recognizing those who have taken up the challenge of conducting quick counts in their own countries, NDI also wishes to acknowledge the many activists who have joined NDI in helping to develop quick counts in other places. It is not possible to mention everyone who engaged in these activities, however, the following individuals frequently joined NDI missions to promote quick counts and broader election monitoring efforts: Marino "Mars" Quesada, Damaso Magbul, Jose Concepion, Jr., and Telebert Laoc (NAMFREL, the Philippines); Miroslav Sevlievski, Ivailo Partchev, Mariana Drenska, Krassen Kralev and the late Michael Yanakiev (BAFE, Bulgaria); Alina

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Melissa Estok, Neil Nevitte and Glenn Cowan wrote this handbook. The three of them have amassed great experience around the world in helping democratic activists to construct quick count efforts as tools for electoral accountability. They are the leading experts in the field. Glenn Cowan deserves special mention as perhaps the most active NDI volunteer over the years, from the Philippines in 1986 to Chile in 1988 to dozens of countries and scores of trips for the Institute. Patrick Merloe, NDI Senior Associate and Director of Programs on Election and Political Processes, helped in the conception and development of this handbook and served as editor of the project. His substantive contributions are evident throughout the handbook. Peter Redmond, former NDI field representative involved with quick count efforts in Bangladesh and Nicaragua, made important contributions to the editing of the handbook. Lawrence Lachmansingh, former Deputy Director of NDI's Asia Programs and a former NDI field representative who worked on quick counts and election monitoring in several countries, and Holly Ruthrauff, NDI Program Officer for Election and Political Processes, also contributed to the volume. Linda Patterson, NDI Program Assistant for Election Programs, helped in gathering information and materials for the handbook, and Suanne Buggy also assisted in the handbook's editing and production.

In addition, the experience reflected in this volume is based on a foundation laid by Larry Garber, who was a pioneer of quick counts during his time with NDI (1986-93). Other former and present NDI staff members have contributed to quick count efforts and their experiences are reflected in this handbook. They include: Lisa McLean; Mike Marshall; Santiago Canton; Eric Bjornlund; Tom Melia; Patricia Keefer; Edward McMahon; Mark Feierstein; Steve Griner; Adrian Muunga; Kate Kelsch; Kevin Johnson; Ken Morley; Richard Klein; Katie Fox; Kirk Gregersen; Matt Dippell; Jonas Rolett; Maryam Montague; Makram Ouaiss; Michael Stoddard; Kevin Johnson; Lynn Heller; and Justice Mensah.

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Kenneth Wollack
President, NDI

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FOREWORD

The will of the people of a country—expressed in genuine, periodic elections—is the basis of authority of any democratic government. This is recognized in Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and every major international human rights instrument addressing civil and political rights, thereby creating treaty obligations and international commitments to this principle. The principle is also enshrined in modern constitutions around the world. Yet, realization of this democratic precept too often proves elusive.

There are many countries that conduct democratic elections. Those who control state institutions and resources or organized means of bribery and intimidation, however, too frequently try to manipulate election processes by: denying opponents the right to stand for office; blocking them from organizing themselves to campaign for votes; restricting their access to mass communications media; preventing the electorate from gaining the knowledge needed to make an *informed* political choice; intimidating the electorate from making a *free* political choice; and gerrymandering election districts to deny equal suffrage. When these tactics appear insufficient to ensure victory, such perpetrators of fraud often seek to manipulate election day processes by: blocking access to polling stations; denying qualified electors the right to cast ballots; arranging for illegal voting in their favor; stuffing ballot boxes; manipulating vote counts; rigging vote tabulations; announcing fraudulent results; and blocking proper legal redress. Violence and political retribution also sometimes follow elections, and rightful winners are sometimes prevented from assuming their elected office. Such developments deny government its democratic mandate and set the stage for political instability.

Political parties and candidates therefore must develop skills to monitor the large variety of processes and institutions surrounding elections, and they must learn to mobilize public support and use complaint mechanisms to seek peaceful remedies for their grievances. Civic organizations and others committed to democratic governance also must engage directly in comprehensive monitoring efforts to help ensure electoral integrity. Elections simply cannot be separated from the broader political context of a country, and efforts to ensure electoral integrity must also be cast widely.

Nonetheless, all election processes come to a critical point on election day—and that is where reliable quick counts play a crucial role. A highly accurate and rapid report on the quality of the voting and counting processes from a random statistical sample of polling stations can serve to reassure political competitors and the citizenry alike that they should have confidence in the elections. Identifying irregularities can lead to timely corrections and proper assessments of their potential impact on electoral outcomes. A highly accurate and rapid projection of electoral results collected and reported from a sample of polling stations can deter fraud, calm tensions and allow those who assume office as a result of the elections to do so based on public confidence in their democratic mandate. On the other hand, systematic, impartial and accurate verification of results and the quality of election-day processes can also reveal widespread irregularities and attempts to hijack elections.

As the pages of this handbook reveal, quick counts can be at the center of dramatic, high stakes developments. They have exposed attempts to steal elections, thus helping to set the stage for popular defense of civil and political rights, as happened, for example, in the Philippines in 1986 and in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 2000. They have deterred those who were tempted to ignore the people's will, as in the 1988 Chilean plebiscite and in the first round of Peru's 2000 elections; they have allowed electoral competitors to accept surprise electoral losses or losses where opinion surveys showed a virtual tie just before election day, as in Bulgaria's 1990 elections or Nicaragua's 2001 poll; and they have encouraged electoral competitors and citizens to be patient where official tabulations were greatly delayed, as in 1999 in Indonesia. In each of these cases and more, quick counts have prevented conflict. In every case where NDI has assisted quick count efforts around the world, from Bangladesh to Malawi and Ukraine to Paraguay, quick counts have helped significantly to ensure that the people's political will was respected.

As the authors stress, not every election requires a quick count, at least not in its most comprehensive form. Moreover, quick counts only speak to election-day processes and say nothing in and of themselves about whether pre-election or post-election developments uphold or negate the democratic nature of an election. Quick counts are best understood as a critical element of comprehensive election monitoring, but they are unique in their impact and sometimes essential to determining the warranted degree of confidence in election results. NDI is therefore pleased to offer this handbook as part of a series of resource materials for election monitoring.

This handbook reflects the state of the art of conducting quick counts. The methodologies described have evolved considerably over the last 15 years and will undoubtedly develop further. At the same time, the most "high tech" procedures are not needed in every situation. Indeed, restrictions in time or in human and financial resources may preclude using some of the techniques described in these pages. NDI's experience has demonstrated that every election process and every quick count must be developed in light of particular country conditions.

The Institute hopes that this handbook will contribute to those civil society and political party leaders who decide to develop the know-how and organizational structures necessary to use this tool properly. We look forward to learning from other democratic activists about ways to improve quick counts and election monitoring more generally.

Kenneth Wollack
President, NDI

Patrick Merloe
Senior Associate and Director of Programs on Election and Political Processes, NDI

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Introduction

This manual describes how to organize and conduct a quick count, also known as a parallel vote tabulation (PVT). A quick count is a powerful method for monitoring election day developments. Groups around the world have undertaken quick counts to promote democratic electoral processes and to detect when election results have been manipulated. The handbook's primary audience is civic organizations that monitor elections, but the principles and advice presented also apply to election monitoring projects conducted by political parties and international organizations.

A quick count is a powerful method for monitoring election-day developments... to evaluate the overall quality of election-day processes and to project, or verify, official election results.

During a quick count, observers watch the voting and counting processes at specifically selected polling stations, record key information on standardized forms and report their findings (including the polling station's vote count) to a central data collection center. Quick count leaders use this information to evaluate the overall quality of election-day processes and to project, or verify, official election results based on precise analysis of polling station data.

Quick count methodology has become increasingly sophisticated over the last 15 years. A cornerstone of this methodology is its use of the science of statistics. Most quick counts today do not involve collecting information from every polling station; rather, data are gathered from a random statistical sample of polling stations. This allows groups to rapidly assemble and report data that are reliable and accurate within a very small margin of error.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) has worked with civic groups and coalitions in over 65 countries to observe elections, in 25 of these countries civic organizations have conducted quick counts.[1] NDI provides quick count support to its partner organizations based on a joint analysis of the needs of the organization. This may include providing technical experts, training and strategic planning advice. The Institute is particularly interested in helping groups link election observation to other democracy-building activities.

[1] See Appendix 1A for a list of organizations that NDI has assisted in conducting quick counts and Appendix 1B for a comprehensive list of nonpartisan domestic election monitoring organizations with which NDI has worked.

NDI's experience has shown that the quick count can play a vital role in promoting electoral integrity. When sponsored by nonpartisan civic organizations, quick counts can help to:

The experience of organizing a quick count can strengthen an organization and prepare it for continued work on related democracy projects.

- *Empower citizens.* A quick count allows civic groups to be involved in elections in a substantive and powerful way by mobilizing citizens to exercise their rights to particpate in governmental affairs and to seek and impart information about critical aspects of the election process. When evidence of mistakes or misconduct is present, citizens can hold officials or political leaders accountable. When quick counts help to validate a legitimate process, citizens can feel confident in the results and in the legitimacy of the resulting government.

- *Build local capacity.* Quick count leaders and volunteer observers become very well-versed in election law and procedures while preparing for a quick count. Leaders also build skills in project and budget management, communications and organizing. Moreover, the experience of organizing a quick count can strengthen an organization and prepare it for continued work on related democracy projects. Indeed, many NDI-supported organizations have grown to be strong, enduring civic institutions.

- *Provide reliable and comprehensive information.* Independent civic groups are well-suited to conduct credible quick counts. They typically can recruit and train thousands of observers in a relatively short time to guarantee broad election day coverage. Observers can be assigned to polling stations near their homes where they know the area well and can identify and respond effectively to problematic situations. Domestic observers are also well-positioned to provide necessary follow-up to prolonged vote counting/tabulating or complaint procedures.

NDI also encourages political parties to conduct quick counts. Political parties have much at stake on election day. They have the right to guard the integrity of the voting, counting and tabulation processes and the responsibility of safeguarding their supporters' votes. A growing number of political parties now engage in election observation activities, including quick counts, to build their long-term organizational capacity. Recruiting quick count volunteers at the grassroots and developing a strong communications network enhances constituency outreach and bolsters efforts to get out the vote.

News media and public opinion survey organizations also have conducted quick counts. It is, however, often difficult for them to build the large and reliable volunteer networks and communications systems necessary to achieve the small margins of error and high degree of confidence required for closely contested elections. International organizations conducting quick counts face the same problems.

International organizations usually have relied upon quick counts conducted by credible domestic civic organizations. In some situations, international organizations that are capable of building the necessary volunteer networks and data collection systems to conduct reliable quick counts can make an important contribution to electoral processes. This is particularly true in highly charged political environments, such as those found in immediate post-conflict situations, or where time and resource constraints prevent capable local groups from monitoring the elections.

International observer missions support the credibility and development of civil society when they work with local groups and publicly support their efforts.

Where both national and international groups are monitoring elections, NDI encourages cooperation. International observer missions support the credibility and development of civil society when they work with local groups and publicly support their efforts, and international missions should defend the right of domestic groups to observe elections and conduct quick counts.

An important note of caution must be emphasized. If the process is manipulated before the vote tabulation, a verification of the count's accuracy would legitimize the underlying fraud. For example, massive ballot box stuffing that took place in Nigeria's 1999 presidential election, or the likely misrepresentation of votes as officials called out and recorded them in Belarus' 2001 presidential election, would not have been reflected in the tabulation of results recorded from such polling stations. For this reason, quick counts as discussed in this handbook must also examine qualitative aspects of voting and counting processes.

Also, due to the exacting nature of quick counts and the high stakes they address, it is best not to conduct one unless an organization is and remains highly confident that it can execute the exercise successfully. It has been wisely decided in numerous countries not to conduct a quick count for these reasons, and in some cases election monitoring organizations have decided near the end of the pre-election period not to attempt to make numeric projections even though they had hoped to conduct a full quick count.

Quick counts are politically neutral—but those conducting quick counts must take careful account of the political environment.

The order of the chapters in this handbook reflect the chronology of a typical quick count project. Chapter One defines the quick count, reviews quick count goals and lists prerequisites to success to determine if such a project is appropriate and feasible. Chapters Two through Eight describe the nuts and bolts —the specific details of how to set up, organize and implement a quick count. Chapter Two helps groups establish an effective team, plan the project and secure financing. Chapter Three underscores the importance of promoting the quick count to establish credibility and garner support. Chapter Four provides useful advice for building and training a volunteer network. Chapter Five discusses the statistical principles used in quick count methodology and the process for constructing a sample. Basic guidelines for the qualitative component of the quick count are provided in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven describes

how to collect and analyze quick count data, and Chapter Eight offers advice on how to most effectively use the data on election day.

Quick counts are politically neutral—but those conducting quick counts must take careful account of the political environment. Throughout the handbook, the authors discuss how the local political context either facilitates, or impedes, quick count preparations and how political considerations must come into play so that the impartiality and accuracy of the quick count remain beyond question.

The authors do not presume to provide the definitive approach to quick counts in this handbook. Each country's history, culture and geography provide opportunities and constraints that influence a quick count's final organization. Resource and time constraints may force compromises. Some groups may utilize statistical sampling and analysis techniques described here but de-emphasize speed during data collection. Others may follow the advice on how to build a volunteer network and collect and use data, but they may not have the capability to organize around a random sample of polling stations. Nonetheless, the techniques discussed in this handbook should help any election monitoring group improve its capacity to speak to what happened on election day on a national basis and in a timely manner.

This handbook provides the basis for organizing and conducting quick counts, but these techniques will almost certainly continue to evolve. New methods may be discovered for managing data; observer forms may be refined to address emerging issues. Cooperation among observer organizations, both domestic and international, will likely improve. NDI looks forward to supporting organizations that use their skill, talent and creativity to add to the rich legacy of those that pioneered and developed this innovative and powerful tool.

CHAPTER ONE

Background on Quick Counts

"Democracy is based on the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people."
Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969)

Independent quick counts conducted by civil society organizations are remarkable and complex projects. They are often conceived by extraordinary leaders and conducted by courageous, ordinary citizens. Quick counts require expertise in political dynamics and grassroots organizing, a grasp of random sampling theory and some capacity with information technology. Hundreds or thousands of volunteers participate in a quick count and, in doing so, safeguard one of democracy's foundations—the vote.

Quick counts require expertise in political dynamics and grassroots organizing, a grasp of random sampling theory and some capacity with information technology.

Quick counts can project or verify official results, detect and report irregularities or expose fraud. In the majority of cases, quick counts build confidence in the work of election officials and the legitimacy of the electoral process.

QUICK COUNT DEFINED

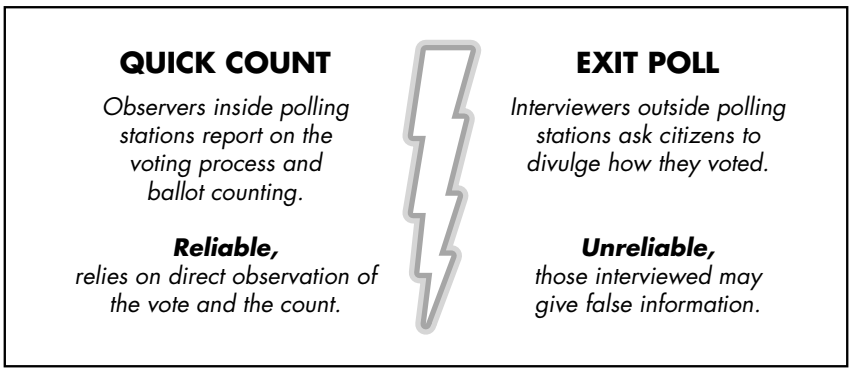
A quick count is the process of collecting information gathered by hundreds, or thousands, of volunteers. All information, or data, comes from the direct observation of the election process. Observers watch the electoral authorities as they administer the voting process and count the ballots. They record information, including the actual vote count, on standardized forms and communicate their findings to a central collection point.

A quick count IS NOT the same as political opinion research, or exit polling. Quick counts do not rely on asking voters, or anyone else, how they might vote or require that voters divulge how they did vote. No opinions are expressed and none are requested from anyone.

Groups that try to collect data from every polling station attempt a comprehensive quick count. Comprehensive counts are designed to mirror the official vote count. Alternatively, and more commonly, groups collect information from a scientific random selection of polling stations to derive a reliable projection of results.[1] Such quick counts require fewer volunteers, although even

[1] See Chapter Five, *Statistical Principles and Quick Counts,* for a more detailed explanation of random sampling theory.

FIGURE 1-1:
DISTINGUISHING A QUICK COUNT FROM AN EXIT POLL



groups that conduct quick counts using a random sample of polling stations often place observers in many more polling stations than those included in the quick count's random sample. This engenders wider accountability, provides a greater deterrent against manipulation and enhances citizen participation in the election process.

Most quick counts now have two components: 1) an independent check on the official vote totals and 2) a systematic analysis of the qualitative aspects of voting and counting processes.

Most quick counts now have two components: 1) an independent check on the official vote totals and 2) a systematic analysis of the qualitative aspects of an electoral process. Quick counts are used to monitor the vote as a reasonably straightforward arithmetic exercise. Was the counting process proper or manipulated? Were the votes added correctly from the precinct to the national (or district) total? Were voter preferences reflected in the results announced by electoral or other governmental authorities? These questions can be answered at the most basic level—by analyzing quick count polling station observations and comparing the recorded vote count with official polling station results, or by comparing quick count national figures against official national results.

In many instances there is no other independent assessment of the official vote count. In a political environment in which large segments of society lack trust in the electoral process, the quick count can promote confidence in official results.

The same volunteer and communications network used to report information on the vote count is also used to collect information on the qualitative aspects of an electoral process. Qualitative questions that commonly appear on observer forms include, for example:

- **When did the polling station open?** (Observers circle the correct answer; e.g., between 6:00 and 7:00a.m., between 7:00 and 8:00a.m., between 8:00 and 9:00a.m., or after 9:00a.m.)
- **Were required electoral materials provided?** (Observers check off materials provided, which may include the voter list, ballots, indelible ink, ballot boxes, voting booths and tally sheets.)
- **When did voting begin?** (Observers circle the correct answer; e.g., between 7:00 and 8:00a.m., between 8:00 and 9:00a.m., between 9:00 and 10:00a.m., or after 10:00a.m.)

- **Were any irregularities observed during the voting process?** (The form provides a list of potential problems to be checked off that address issues such as disenfranchisement of qualified voters, illegal voting, ballot box stuffing and compromises in ballot secrecy.)
- **Which political parties had representatives inside the polling station?** (The parties are listed on the form; observers check off those present.)
- **Did party pollwatchers challenge the results at the polling station?** (The form may provide a list of legal reasons for complaints to be checked off.)
- **Were the tally sheets completed accurately?**[2]

Groups can use this information to investigate and report on occurrences at specific polling stations. However, these data are most potent in their aggregate form; this can allow groups to comment on the quality of the process as a whole, and to identify precisely irregularities that could have affected the election's outcome.

Quick Count History—The NAMFREL Example

The Philippines, 1986:

The election results reported by Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos in 1984 were viewed with considerable distrust. When Marcos called a "snap" election for President in 1986, the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) initiated "Operation Quick Count" as a comprehensive attempt to mirror the official count of all 90,000 polling stations. Unlike most subsequent quick counts, which collect information from a random statistical sample of polling stations, NAMFREL performed a remarkable task in collecting data on a majority of the polling stations. The organization was instrumental in helping uncover the massive vote counting fraud attempted by Marcos supporters.

NAMFREL organizers are widely recognized as the pioneers of the quick count in emerging democracies. In the years since their first experience, quick counts have evolved, been thoroughly tested and now constitute a best practice for civil society oversight of the voting and tabulating processes.

NATIONAL CITIZEN'S MOVEMENT FOR FREE ELECTIONS (NAMFREL)

QUICK COUNT GOALS

A successful quick count begins with a clear understanding and statement of the project's goals. Quick count leaders should identify their goals to facilitate both a strategic approach and a tactical plan. Potential goals include:

- deterring fraud;
- detecting fraud;
- offering a timely forecast of the results;
- instilling confidence in the electoral process and official results;
- reporting on the quality of the process;

[2] Chapter Six, *The Qualitative Component of the Quick Count,* outlines considerations for developing the questions that appear on quick count reporting forms. The chapter discusses the optimal length for forms and types of questions to avoid (e.g., open-ended questions). It also recommends that questions be tested for usefulness, validity, reliability, exhaustive and exclusive response categories and overall efficiency.

- encouraging citizen participation;
- extending organizational reach and skills building; and
- setting the stage for future activities.

Deterring Fraud

The most basic reason to undertake a quick count is to deter fraud. A quick count that is widely publicized and implemented by a credible organization or political party can deter or derail a fraudulent vote count.

To fulfill that deterrent function, a quick count must be well publicized and conducted in a transparent manner. The project must be promoted to raise awareness that electoral misconduct will be detected. The project's methodology should be understood and trusted. Plans should be publicized and open for scrutiny and debate, and written materials such as observer training manuals and forms should be distributed.

THE COMMITTEE FOR FREE ELECTIONS (CEL)

Example: Chile, 1988

In the plebiscite[3] determining whether to continue General Pinochet's presidency, the Committee for Free Elections (CEL) used a statistically-based quick count to forecast the results from Chile's 22,000 polling stations. Based on a sample of 10 percent of the polling sites, CEL accurately forecasted the victory for anti-Pinochet forces. The quick count led to a statement by a member of the ruling Junta conceding defeat. Experts speculate it was highly likely that the Pinochet regime would have manipulated the vote count to declare victory had there not been this independent verification of the count.

Detecting Fraud

In cases where the quick count has been unable to deter fraud, the data should at a minimum be able to detect vote-counting fraud.[4] This may be based on identifying inconsistencies in polling station-to-polling station comparisons, where official results do not mirror observer reports. More often, fraud is revealed when the results of the official tabulation process differ from a quick count's comprehensive results or statistical forecasts.

THE COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

Example: Panama, 1989

When it became apparent to Panamanian President Manuel Noriega that his proxy in the presidential contest was losing the vote, the government suspended the the tabulation of results at the regional level and attempted to announce a fraudulent outcome. A Catholic Church organization, the Archdiocese Commission for the Coordination of Laity (a predecessor to the Commission for Justice and Peace), used its quick count (corroborated with a

[3] A plebiscite is a vote by which the people of an entire country or electoral district vote for or against a proposal, often on a proposed national constitution or issue of governance.

[4] As discussed in Chapter Six, *The Qualitative Component of the Quick Count,* quick counts can also help to identify irregularities and characterize their import on electoral outcomes.

comprehensive count done by the political opposition) to forecast what the vote would have been had the ballots been properly and completely counted. This independent result demonstrated that Noriega's candidate, in fact, lost the election, which was a major factor in the weakening of the Noriega regime.

Offering a Timely Forecast of the Results

In transitional democracies, the official vote count often can take days, even weeks, to be publicly announced. Extended time lags between the completion of voting and the announcement of an official result may produce an uncertain political climate or a political vacuum that threatens stability. An accurate, credible quick count can forecast returns in a timely fashion, help reduce post-election tensions and increase citizens' confidence in the election outcome.

Example: Indonesia, 1999

In the first truly free elections in Indonesia's history, the quick count conducted by the Indonesian Rector's Forum proved crucial. Indonesia's daunting physical geography and limited rural infrastructure resulted in a near collapse of the government's vote counting mechanisms. The only credible election results available for several weeks were those provided by the Rector's Forum quick count. The publication of those quick count results held rumor in check and helped prevent the onset of civil unrest.

THE INDONESIAN RECTORS FORUM

Instilling Confidence in the Electoral Process

When voters distrust the government, the operation of reliable quick counts by credible civic organizations and/or political parties can reduce the chances that the results will be manipulated and thereby increase citizen confidence in the outcome. Often, a quick count is the only verification method available when official results are called into question.

In countries where electoral authorities have not built a reservoir of trust, political tensions can create an atmosphere that undermines the stability of political institutions. In these instances, a quick count can be used to bolster the reputation of electoral authorities and verify official results.

Example: Bulgaria, 1990

In the first post-communist election, the combined opposition forces (UDF) were certain of victory against the Socialist (formerly Communist) Party. It was inconceivable to them that they could lose a free and fair election. When official results indicated a Socialist victory, tensions rose dramatically at a large (60,000) UDF rally in downtown Sofia, and a heavy contingent of government security forces was deployed. The Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECR), a nonpartisan organization trusted by the opposition, had implemented a quick count. BAFECR's results proved to the opposition that it had lost but had not been cheated. The demonstrators went home peacefully.

BULGARIAN ASSOCIATION FOR FAIR ELECTIONS AND CIVIL RIGHTS (BAFECR)

Reporting on the Quality of the Process

Most challenges to electoral processes are based on anecdotes. For example, one party may allege that its supporters were prevented from voting; in another instance a party may present witnesses who claim that they were paid to vote for a certain candidate. Without documentation and analysis of the impact of such problems it is very difficult to obtain redress.

A quick count is designed to collect systematic and reliable information about qualitative aspects of the process. Opposition political parties and independent monitors can rely on statistical methods used by quick counts to supply reliable and valid evidence about the voting and counting processes.[5] A quick count goes beyond anecdotes to characterize the magnitude and severity of problems in the electoral process. Information on the quality of the process can determine whether a quantitative assessment of the vote tabulation process is relevant.

Example: Dominican Republic, 1996

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION (PC)

The deliberate disenfranchisement of tens-of-thousands of opposition political party supporters in the Dominican Republic's 1994 elections allowed Joaquin Balaguer to fraudulently claim the presidency. A political crisis was triggered; Balaguer's term was halved as a consequence, and a new election was scheduled in 1996. A Dominican nonpartisan civic organization, Citizen Participation (PC), formed to monitor the election. During the pre-election period, a political party raised serious concerns about the potential for illegal voting by non-citizens. This raised tensions and heightened suspicions that either illegal voting or disenfranchisement from over zealous application of procedures could mar the election. However, PC election-day reports about the relatively trouble-free voting process helped to allay concerns in both rounds of the election. Similar reports by the domestic observer group during the 2000 presidential election also helped to calm skeptics and clarify the situation for that country.

Encouraging Citizen Participation

Quick count organizers mobilize hundreds, thousands, sometimes tens of thousands of citizens. These are often individuals who are not interested in participating in partisan politics but still want to actively support the development of a democratic political system. They serve as quick count trainers, observers, data processors and in other supporting roles. They become well versed in the country's electoral process and often stay involved in similar projects following elections.

Example: Ukraine, 1999

The Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU) was founded jointly by a student organization, a human rights group and a trade union in 1994. CVU was interested in monitoring the country's first parliamentary elections organized after

[5] See also Chapter Six, *The Qualitative Component of the Quick Count,* for further discussion of qualitative analysis.

Ukraine gained independence. CVU mobilized more than 4,000 observers for that election, more than 17,000 observers for the 1998 parliamentary elections and 16,000 for the 1999 presidential elections, for which it conducted a quick count. Through its 160 chapters around the country, CVU held over 200 meetings on the election law in 1998, which involved more than 10,000 people, and over 700 meetings, reaching many more for the 1999 elections. CVU has set up "public consulting centers" around the country to augment its election monitoring activities with civic education initiatives, monitoring the activities of members of parliament, promoting electoral law reform and helping citizens to formulate letters of appeal and develop approaches for direct contact between citizens and governmental bodies. The skills and organizational structures developed by CVU through its quick count and broader election monitoring activities have helped it to become a major center for promoting citizen participation in governmental and public affairs.

COMMITTEE OF VOTERS OF UKRAINE (CVU)

Extending Organizational Reach and Skills Building

The planning and operation of a quick count requires considerable management skill and organizational discipline. An exercise of this complexity can act as the glue that binds a new civic organization together during an initial election-related project. It also can provide a significant organization building experience for political parties. Quick counts extend organizational reach by bringing large numbers of volunteers into the process and building the capacity of civic groups or political parties to manage long-term projects.

Example: Kenya, 1997

Kenyan civil society demonstrated its strength by mobilizing more than 28,000 volunteers to observe the pre-election period and election day voting and counting procedures. National observers covered more than 14,000 polling stations, in addition to many counting centers. The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (working in a "joint-venture" for national monitoring along with the National Council of Churches of Kenya and the Institute for Education in Democracy) conducted a quick count. The data were collected slowly and were used to confirm that confidence in the official tabulation was justified. This approach was followed largely so that the Commission and its partner organizations could be in a position to use the methodology in future elections.

CATHOLIC JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION

Setting the Stage for Future Activities

Quick counts can set the stage for sponsoring groups to undertake non-electoral democracy-building activities. Successful quick counts set a precedent for citizens affecting the political process. Civic organizations emerge from quick count experiences with reputations for honesty and effectiveness, and citizens want and expect them to continue similar work. These organizations are equipped to do so because organizing a quick count builds skills that can be employed in a wide variety of activities. In fact, many organizations for

which a quick count was their first project have subsequently taken on programs to promote accountability and transparency in government, to educate citizens on the principles behind, and mechanics of, democracy and to advocate for democratic reforms or specific policies.

Example: GONG, 2000

CITIZENS ORGANIZED TO MONITOR ELECTIONS

Before Croatia's 1997 elections, a number of organizations from around the country started GONG (Citizens Organized to Monitor Elections). The electoral authorities did not permit domestic observers to enter the polling stations; so, GONG presented voters with questionnaires as they left the stations and compiled a report on the election process. In 1998, GONG, together with the Croatian Helsinki Committee, obtained an order from the Croatian Constitutional Court recommending that electoral authorities allow nonpartisan election observation. In 1999, GONG succeeded in lobbying Parliament to pass an amendment to the election law providing for nonpartisan election observation. The campaign included widespread citizen education and mobilization that involved distribution of hundreds of thousands of flyers, airing clips on radio and television and conducting meetings around the country. Besides monitoring elections—including through quick counts—advocacy and civic education activities have become two of GONG's hallmarks. Beginning in 2000, GONG developed a high profile "Open Parliament" program through

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Should groups prioritize quick count projects over other types of election observation?

As important a tactic as quick counts may be, this methodology is not a substitute for more comprehensive election monitoring. A quick count is one of numerous tools available to election monitors. By definition, a quick count focuses on the task of verifying that the ballots that go into a ballot box are counted accurately in the first instance and that these votes remain part of the final electoral tally. If a ballot is placed in the box illegally, a quick count will count it as surely as a legal vote (unless ballot box stuffing is also detected.) If voters have been paid for their votes, the quick count will count these like any other vote. If voters have been intimidated into staying away from the polls or supporting a party or candidate, the quick count will not report that problem. Thus, a quick count cannot act as a substitute for other more qualitative aspects of election monitoring. Crucial to comprehensive monitoring of an electoral process are 1) oversight and commentary on the election law adoption process and 2) observation and verification of: voter registration; qualification of candidates and parties for the ballot; access to and treatment of election contestants in the media; the conduct of the campaign; problems that take place away from the polls; and the post-election transition.[6]

[6] See *NDI Handbook: How Domestic Organizations Monitor Elections: An A to Z Guide (1995)* and other NDI publications on monitoring voter registries, media monitoring and other topics.

which the first citizens visited parliamentary sessions, the first citizen tours of parliament were organized and access to legislative proposals was provided to citizens. GONG published a booklet about parliament's procedures and began "Citizens' Hour," where citizens meet their elected representatives on local and national levels through panel discussions in communities and via talk radio shows. GONG has adapted its parliament program to open a number of county, city and municipal councils to Croatian citizens.

QUICK COUNT PREREQUISITES

Before a group commits to undertaking a quick count, it must determine whether one is feasible. In some cases, even if feasible, the requirements for a successful quick count are absent. Three basic conditions must be met:

- observers must have access to polling stations and to counting centers;
- the group must be credible (i.e., it has to be trusted by most key audiences on election day); and
- the project needs to be supported by adequate resources.

Access to data

Quick counts are based on actual observation of events. At the very least, observers must have free access to the voting and counting processes. Free access throughout the day from opening until close of the polls is indispensable if the observer group is to evaluate qualitative aspects of the process. Ideally, quick count groups should solicit and receive a document from election authorities guaranteeing observers free access to the polling station and the counting process at all levels.[7]

A civic group planning a quick count must be prepared to cultivate credibility with audiences it deems crucial to accomplishing its particular goals.

Credibility with Audiences

A civic group planning a quick count must be prepared to cultivate credibility with audiences it deems crucial to accomplishing its particular goals. For example, if the main goal is to deter fraud, electoral authorities and political parties are key audiences. If the goal is to instill public confidence in the process, it is important to build credibility with the general electorate.[8]

Two main components of credibility are competence and independence. To promote an image of competence, groups themselves have to behave in a transparent manner. They should make public items such as charters, bylaws and financial statements. They should publicize their plans and methods, which should be sensible and feasible. Key audiences must also see a quick count sponsor as independent. To ensure this, groups may require that every individual leader, staff member and volunteer have no partisan political involvement.

[7] See Chapter Three, *Promoting the Quick Count,* for a detailed discussion of methods for guaranteeing observers' rights to enter polling stations and counting centers.

[8] See Chapter Three, *Promoting the Quick Count,* for more comprehensive information on building credibility with key audiences and mounting a publicity campaign.

If this is not possible, the alternative is to create an organization that is politically representative and balanced.[9, 10]

Adequate Resources

Significant human, technical and financial resources are required to conduct a quick count. Groups must tap into, or create, a nationwide network of volunteers; they must develop a large-scale data collection system. Funding is required to build and support the observer network and technical system. Typically, this funding is obtained from sources such as international donor agencies or non-governmental organizations.[11]

Nearly every decision about the structure of a quick count has far reaching resource implications. Speed requires telephones and computers to collect and synthesize information. Accuracy demands more sophisticated systems to process data and complete reports. Comprehensiveness means more volunteers, more training and higher election-day costs.

MOVING FORWARD

This chapter provides background information on quick counts, how they are utilized and what is required for success. Given this information, some groups will eliminate the quick count as a potential activity. They may decide that financial and time constraints prohibit success, or they may focus exclusively on pre-election activities such as monitoring voter registration, auditing the voter registry, scrutinizing ballot qualification processes, monitoring political violence or evaluating the role of the media.

Studying quick count techniques will greatly assist in designing the election-day observation effort.

Even in cases where a quick count is ruled out, monitoring the quality of election-day processes requires being able to speak relatively quickly about the national picture. This demands a rapid communication system that reports on a cross-section of the country. While statistical samples with very low margins of error may not be required for this, studying quick count techniques will greatly assist in designing the election-day observation effort.

Many groups will decide to proceed with a quick count. They have choices between any one of three approaches:

- *Taking on a quick count in addition to one or more complementary pre-election projects and broad election-day monitoring*—A comprehensive approach to election monitoring begins with an analysis of the legal framework for elections and the broad political environment, including past and anticipated problems. Pre-election projects that complement a quick count

[9] See Chapter Two, *Getting Started,* for further discussion of strategies for composing a leadership team to ensure an organization's independence. Chapter Four, *Building the Volunteer Network,* offers methods for ensuring the neutrality of volunteers.

[10] Political parties must also be concerned with establishing the validity and reliability of their quick counts. They may elect not to publicize their results, but it is still in their interest to demonstrate that the methodology was sound and properly implemented. They may do this, for example, by inviting a highly respected and impartial appraisal team to evaluate the quick count.

[11] See Chapter Two, *Getting Started,* for more information on budgets and fundraising.

can be as simple as collecting and reporting complaints lodged by citizens or political parties or as complex as sponsoring a national civic education project. Organizations with sufficient time, organizational strength and financial resources may monitor several pre-election processes in addition to organizing a quick count and broad election-day observation. Many groups have managed such a comprehensive monitoring effort well; however, experience has shown that it is easy to underestimate the human and financial resources needed for a successful quick count, and leaders should be prepared to shift resources to that project as the election approaches.

- *Simultaneously organizing a quick count and general election-day observation program*—In these cases, all volunteers are trained as general observers. Once a sample is drawn, volunteers that live closest to polling stations in the sample are identified and trained as quick count volunteers. The Nicaraguan group Ethics and Transparency, for example, recruited and trained more than 4,000 volunteers to observe the 2001 national elections but only about 1,000 of these participated directly in the quick count. This approach maximizes the deterrent effect of a quick count, accommodates large numbers of volunteers and strengthens the volunteer network for future activities.

- *Focusing all available resources on a quick count*—This may happen particularly in countries with a history of fraud during the counting processes, and where resources available for election-related work are limited and best streamlined.

Quick counts, whether organized alone or as one component of an overall observation effort, are large and complex undertakings. The chapters that follow will help organizers approach the project logically, step-by-step. Chapter Two begins this process by describing how to establish an office, develop a strategic plan and secure adequate funding.

REMINDER

Nonpartisan organizations are advised to take three steps before committing to a quick count project:

1. Develop a thorough understanding of quick count methodology.
2. Develop a statement of goals based on an analysis of the local political context.
3. Consider whether the group possesses the prerequisites for success, including credibility, access to data and adequate funding.

Those that decide to move forward with a quick count should proceed to develop a strategic plan as described in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO

Getting Started

The success of a quick count hinges on groundwork laid early in the project. This chapter discusses the work that needs to be done in the first weeks of a quick count project. The key building block tasks are:

- recruiting leaders and staff;
- developing strategic plans; and
- designing budgets and fundraising.

The tasks for quick count staffing, planning and fundraising are the same for newly formed and established groups. Established groups have the advantage of being able to shift experienced staff to the quick count project. However, because quick counts are very time-consuming, particularly in the four to six months leading up to an election, it is generally a bad idea to ask staff members to divide time between the quick count and other projects.

While in crisis situations quick counts have been organized in very short timeframes, nonpartisan organizations conducting quick counts are advised to begin planning and fundraising about one year before an election.[1] Volunteer recruiting should start approximately eight months before the election, particularly for groups that do not have, or cannot tap into, existing networks. Planners must assume that they will need volunteers in every region of the country, regardless of how remote or difficult to access. The work of the technical team should start soon thereafter since it can take several months to procure equipment and to put into place the necessary computer software and hardware and communications system.

Nonpartisan organizations conducting quick counts are advised to begin planning and fundraising about one year before an election.

[1] The 1989 Panamanian quick count was organized in five weeks but had the pre-existing resources and organizational structure of the Catholic Church upon which to rely. The quick count in Bulgaria was organized by BAFECR in approximately two months, but there was an unexpected democratic breakthrough in the country, which brought a great deal of enthusiasm domestically and attention from the international community. Most quick counts take six months to one year to organize in the first instance. Even six months has proven in several countries to be insufficient; for example, quick counts were dropped from monitoring plans by groups in Azerbaijan and Ghana due to a lack of adequate preparation time.

Ignoring the political repercussions of decisions about how to organize, who to employ and other matters can seriously harm a quick count's credibility.

This chapter stresses the importance of keeping politics in mind because organizing a quick count can draw support and/or opposition from political factions. It is never too early to think about this, as ignoring the political repercussions of decisions about how to organize, who to employ and other matters can seriously harm a quick count's credibility. Common mistakes of this type include hiring individuals with partisan reputations or controversial pasts, and accepting donations from individuals or groups perceived to have political agendas.[2] Even seemingly innocuous decisions can have a political impact, as the Nicaraguan organization *Ethics and Transparency* discovered when its observers were accused of partisan ties because their forms were printed with ink that was the same color as a political party's propaganda. Moreover, the quick count can be seen as provocative or threatening to some political groups, particularly by those in government. Every effort, therefore, must be made to analyze the changing political landscape and ensure that the project is both impartial and widely perceived as impartial.

LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

The leadership and senior staff form a group that becomes the public face of the organization. This group, as a whole, must be viewed as credible. As discussed in Chapter One, credibility has two components: independence and competence. In order to be seen as independent, groups almost always exclude individuals with partisan political backgrounds. In addition, groups may seek to include representatives of various social groups to ensure actual and perceived political neutrality. It is crucial to structure leadership, staff and volunteers so that all sectors of the public, not just political elites, perceive the effort as credible. This means that women must be brought into key leadership, staff and volunteer roles. Appropriate inclusion of ethnic, linguistic, religious and other groups may also be important. To demonstrate competence, groups fill staff positions with individuals who are well-respected and who have reputations for being effective at what they do.

It is crucial to structure leadership, staff and volunteers so that all sectors of the public, not just political elites, perceive the effort as credible.

The Board of Directors

It is almost always advantageous to establish an oversight body, such as a board of directors, for a quick count project, whether the quick count is organized by a single organization or a coalition. Each organization should analyze the makeup and functions of the board of directors (also commonly referred to as the executive council or steering committee) before undertaking a quick count. The ideal board will:

- comprise several well-known and respected individuals;
- represent a cross-section of society, including civic activists, professionals, academics, businesspeople and religious leaders;

[2] As noted above, political parties also must establish the credibility of their quick count efforts, if the results are to be perceived as reliable. Those who conduct the quick count operations for a party must do so on the strict basis of gaining accurate results. Employing outside, politically neutral experts to help design the quick count and review its implementation can help to establish credibility. The party can maintain control of findings, as with opinion poll data. Reliable quick counts allow the party to accurately assess election-day processes, which is important for making judgements about characterizing election results and about pursuing complaints.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if quick count sponsors cannot find leaders and staff who are completely neutral?

It is sometimes helpful to strive for balance and independence rather than neutrality. It is difficult, in some countries, to identify individuals with no history of political involvement. Particularly in countries that have experienced internal conflict, virtually everyone has participated in partisan activities or been obliged to pledge allegiance to one party or another. In these cases, domestic observer organizations may decide to recruit leaders who represent the country's full political spectrum. They may distinguish between having a partisan history and current party activism, requiring that leaders and staff refrain from the latter while participating on the quick count project. The goal is to convince political parties, electoral authorities, donors and the public that the group will behave independently regardless of the election results.

- possess geographic, racial, ethnic and gender balance; and
- be perceived as credible, independent and impartial by the majority of citizens and political players.

The duties of a board of directors vary among organizations implementing quick counts. If the staff is particularly experienced, the board may play a hands-off, advisory role. During a first election observation experience, an organization may prefer that the board participate more directly in day-to-day

A Successful Board of Directors—The Nicaraguan Example

In 1995 a group of local activists were eager for Nicaraguans to take a more prominent role in consolidating the country's fragile democracy and safeguarding the integrity of its elections. They formed the nonpartisan civic group Ethics and Transparency (ET) to observe the 1996 national elections. Former leaders on the political left and right, the heads of the three major human rights groups, Catholic and Evangelical church officials, members of the business community and well-known academics were among the group's leadership. They forged affiliations with a broad range of non-governmental organizations involved in grassroots community development projects and recruited 4,200 volunteers to observe the electoral process and conduct a quick count. The quick count data proved crucial in confirming for the Nicaraguan public and the international community that Constitutional Liberal Party (PLC) candidate Arnoldo Aleman had defeated FSLN candidate Daniel Ortega. ET was heralded in the international press as "the real winner" in Nicaragua,"a useful foundation on which greater civic participation can now be built."[3] ET is still a strong organization; it was asked by the government to take a lead role in a post-election national dialogue. It subsequently monitored local elections and it ran a remarkably successful quick count in the 2001 national elections.

ETHICS AND TRANSPARENCY (ET)

[3] *Washington Post* editorial page, October 24, 1996. *The Economist* and the *New York Times* also mentioned ET's role.

operations. The members of the board of directors usually take on several or all of the following:

- serve as a decision-making body on matters of project goals, policy and implementation;
- recruit and hire an executive director to oversee day-to-day project operations and advise on the hiring of additional personnel to carry out organizing and implementation;
- direct the organization's external relations—build and maintain relationships with electoral authorities, government, political parties, the business community, civil society, donors and the international community;
- manage or assist the executive director with fundraising;
- Serve as spokespersons and represent the group at public functions, press conferences and other media events;
- form committees to study important emerging issues, such as pre-election problems or legal rights of election observers; and
- authorize or approve public statements.

Key Personnel

Groups should consider a number of factors when recruiting individuals for leadership or paid positions. These include:

- technical skill and experience;
- the quick count goals; and
- potential political implications.

The technical skills required for a successful quick count are similar for every country; they are included below in job descriptions. The goals of each quick count influence the general approach to staffing (e.g., a strong media campaign effectively publicizes the quick count, which helps to deter fraud). The political considerations for staffing are the same as those that apply to a board

FIGURE 2-1: FUNCTIONAL TEAMS

FUNCTIONAL TEAM	PRINCIPAL STAFF POSITIONS
Administration:	Executive Director Accountant
Media:	Media/Communications Specialist
Technical:	Statistician (Part-time) Computer Specialist Database Manager
Volunteer Coordination:	Volunteer Coordinator Lead Trainer Logistics Specialist Regional Coordinators

of directors. Groups may require political neutrality or seek political balance, and they may seek to represent various cultural, ethnic or regional groups. Personnel are commonly organized into functional teams, as shown below:[4]

A typical quick count organizational chart is shown below:

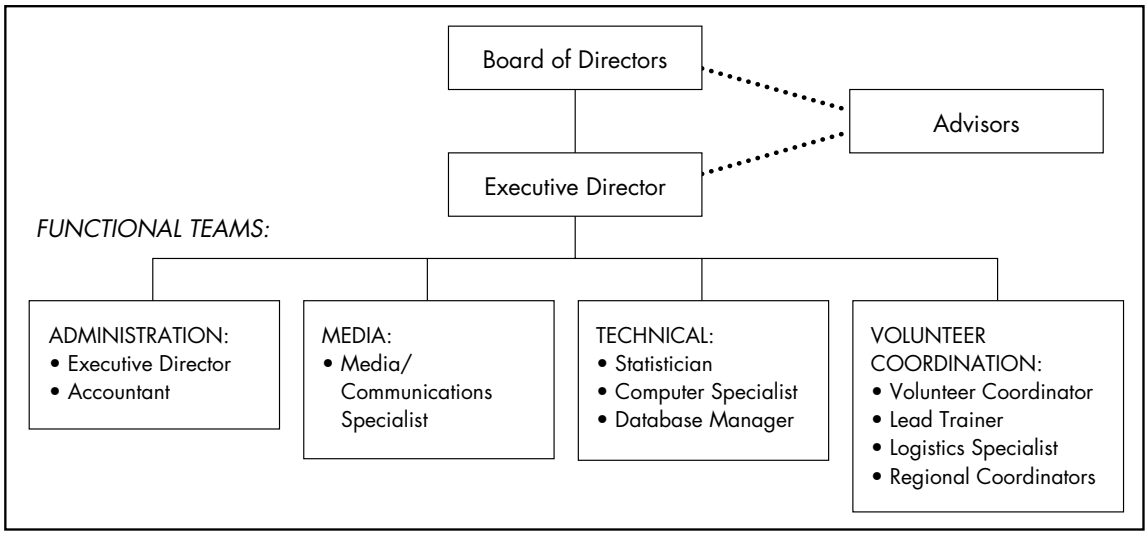


FIGURE 2-2:
QUICK COUNT ORGANIZATION

Typically, the most experienced staff member from each functional team serves as a team leader. This facilitates decision-making and streamlines communications between teams.

The executive director and functional team jobs almost always require significant time commitments and/or specific technical skills and are, therefore, paid. Regional coordinators are usually not paid but take on the position with the understanding that all expenses will be reimbursed.

Financial considerations usually limit an organization's ability to hire full-time people, particularly early in the project. Early in the planning and organizing process, each team may combine positions, delegate tasks to volunteers or enlist the help of members of the board of directors. Some examples of creative work assignments are:

- an accountant takes on office management responsibilities;
- a volunteer manages the reception area;
- the statistician consults part-time;
- the computer specialist also designs the database system; and
- volunteer lawyers or professors design observer manuals and forms.

[4] The work of the administration team is discussed in this chapter. Chapter Three discusses media work; Chapter Four outlines the responsibilities of the volunteer coordination team; Chapters Five, Six and Seven detail technical work.

A number of factors, such as funding delays or secondary projects, can upset tight schedules and create significantly more work—and anxiety—in the months before an election. Some of the most common ways to increase productivity as elections draw near include:

- adding staff, which could include logistics specialists to procure telecommunications and computer equipment, or database managers to continuously update information on volunteers and produce credentials;
- forming mobile teams of trainers to complete or reinforce the training of quick count observers; and
- utilizing volunteers to assist with important projects, such as distributing press packets or supplies to the volunteer network.

Below are model job descriptions of the most important staff positions with corresponding duties and qualifications:

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Executive Director

Duties:

- Directs and executes the quick count plan.
- Recruits personnel and supervises the work of the functional teams, ensuring the efficiency and quality of the work.
- Manages the budget and assists the board with proposal writing and other fundraising activities.
- Monitors and analyzes all political issues affecting quick count implementation.
- Directs efforts to solicit and acquire accreditation for monitors to legally observe the voting, counting and tabulation processes.
- Advises the board of directors on external relations, provides the board with frequent progress reports on internal operations and alerts the board to potential problems.
- Represents the organization, with board members and staff as appropriate, at public and press events.

Qualifications:

- A proven manager, preferably of a large volunteer organization.
- Unequivocal commitment to ensuring electoral integrity; election-related experience preferred.
- Reputation for professionalism and ability to be politically impartial.
- Maintains extensive contacts in the political and/or electoral communities.
- Possesses some experience with information technology.
- Willingness to work long hours in an extremely high-stress environment (project-driven).
- Shares in long-term vision of organization.
- Excellent organizational skills.
- Excellent communication skills.

Accountant

Duties:

- Responsible for general accounting, budget and subgrant activities.
- Maintains accounting oversight in accordance with donor agency regulations and standards.
- Serves as liaison between election monitoring organization and funding agencies on accounting-related matters.
- Periodically evaluates and informs executive director of the project's financial status.
- Assists and advises the executive director and board of directors on proposal writing.

Qualifications:

- A certified public accountant with experience working with large budgets.
- Experience working with a broad range of international funding agencies.
- A working knowledge of PC-based word processing, spreadsheet applications, accounting and finance-related software.

Media/Communications Specialist

Duties:

- Together with the board and executive director, develops the "message" of the overall project and for specific points as the project progresses.
- Develops a media strategy to generate publicity and promote an image of credibility and neutrality.
- Develops and maintains relationships with national/international media outlets, identifying opportunities to inform media of the organization's work.
- If necessary, educates local and international journalists about quick counts.
- Creates and directs individual public relations approaches for key audiences.
- Provides advice and guidelines to the board, executive director, functional teams and regional coordinators for speaking with the media.
- Organizes press conferences for the pre-election period, the simulation, election day and the post-election period; designs, produces and provides press packets for all events.
- Provides information through press releases, newsletters and other materials to the media and everyone involved with the project (which promotes staff morale and helps keeps everyone "on message").

Qualifications:

- Significant experience in public relations or as a journalist.
- Knowledge of local and international media outlets.
- Exceptional analytical, oral and written communication skills.
- Ability to communicate in front of TV cameras or radio microphones (and to coach spokespersons).

Volunteer Coordinator

Duties:

- Designs a structure for a national volunteer network, recruiting regional coordinators and establishing regional offices (and, if necessary, local offices).
- Motivates regional and local leaders and assists with volunteer recruitment.
- Takes the lead on designing observer forms; coordinates with trainer, electoral law specialist and quick count software designer and vets forms with board of directors and executive director.
- Works in conjunction with regional coordinators and the computer engineer to design a structure for the election-day communications system.
- Serves as a liaison between the organization's leaders and the grassroots network.
- Working with the logistics specialist, ensures that regional and local leaders receive needed resources such as training materials, observer checklists, observer identification cards and small budgets (when possible).

Qualifications:

- Experience recruiting and organizing volunteers.
- Enthusiastic and energetic personality; willing to work long hours.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Experience with election-related work and sound political judgement.
- Familiarity with regions of the country outside the capital.

Lead Trainer

Duties:

- Assists the volunteer coordinator to design observer forms.
- Designs all training materials, including manuals, visual aids, videos, handouts, etc.
- Designs a train-the-trainers program (or, if possible, schedules and delivers workshops) to ensure uniform and effective observer training.
- Assists database manager in developing a training program for telephone operators/data processors.
- If necessary, assists media specialist in designing a training program for journalists.

Qualifications:

- Experience teaching and training adults.
- Enthusiastic and energetic personality; willing to work long hours and to travel.
- Experience designing educational materials.
- Experience with election-related work.
- Familiarity with regions of the country outside the capital.

Logistics Specialist

Duties:

- Coordinates and provides logistical support for headquarters staff travel.
- Creates systems and procedures for supporting the volunteer network.
- Procures and distributes all supplies to the volunteer network. Supplies include items such as money, training packets, observer identification cards and legal credentials, observer checklists, reports and updates.
- Coordinates all logistical aspects of conferences and special events held in the capital city, including securing program sites, accommodations and transportation.
- Provides relevant information to the computer engineer for possible improvements in the election-day communications system, based on communicating with the volunteer network.
- Coordinates logistics demand with organization budget (accountant).

Qualifications:

- Experience working on logistics or event planning with broad-based civic organizations.
- Excellent organizational abilities and attention to detail.
- Working knowledge of PC-based word processing and spreadsheet applications.

Regional Coordinator

Duties:

- Establishes a regional office.
- Recruits quick count observers within geographical area of responsibility.
- May organize volunteers to divide responsibilities in a manner similar to headquarters: coordinator, accountant, volunteer recruitment and training, data collection and communications.
- Supervises regional observer recruitment and training in conjunction with national volunteer coordinator.
- Facilitates communication between headquarters and local volunteers.
- Assists national volunteer coordinator and computer engineer to design the regional piece of the election-day communications system.
- Responsible for deploying election-day observers around the region.
- Requests and distributes necessary material, supplies and information from headquarters. Collects and sends necessary materials and information to headquarters.
- Informs local electoral authorities, political players and the public of the organization's activities (per guidelines from national headquarters).
- Represents the observer organization at regional public events.

Qualifications:

- Respected regional leader with good contacts in civil society, business, politics and the media.
- Reputation for professionalism and ability to be politically impartial.
- Willingness to dedicate significant amounts of time to the quick count project.
- Experience recruiting and training volunteers.
- Excellent motivator.

Database Manager

Duties:

- Advises the volunteer coordinator and trainer on designing observer forms to ensure each question is designed to facilitate data processing.
- Designs or acquires computer software to process information collected on quick count volunteer checklists.
- Designs or acquires computer software necessary to establish a database containing information on the hundreds or thousands of volunteers in the monitoring network and on polling stations contained in the sample.
- Creates and implements tools for data security (such as volunteer codes).
- Responsible for testing all software used to input, analyze and report election-day data.
- Works with the volunteer coordinator and computer engineer to recruit and train those who will receive and input quick count data (telephone operators/data processors).
- Coordinates activities with the statistician and election-day data analysts.

Qualifications:

- A specialist in management information systems and computer science.
- Ability to define problems, collect data and draw conclusions.
- Experience in teaching and managing students or volunteers.

Computer Specialist

Duties:

- Advises the volunteer coordinator and trainer on designing observer forms. Provides insight into the organization's election-day ability to process certain volumes of information within desired time frames.
- Oversees the design and construction of a telephone and computer network to input, analyze and report election-day data.

Qualifications:

- A specialist in management information systems and computer science.
- Ability to detect problems related to computer hardware systems and make adjustments.
- Experience in teaching and managing students or volunteers.

Statistician

Duties:

- Designs and draws a statistical sample of polling stations for the quick count.
- Provides explanations of sample design to executive director, functional teams and board of directors, as well as periodically at outside meetings.
- Provides input into strategies for analyzing and reporting election-day data.
- Communicates with the volunteer coordinator regarding strategies for recruiting and training volunteers in sufficient numbers, and in regions affected by the sample.
- Participates in a simulation to test the quick count communication, data processing and reporting systems, preferably two weeks before election day.
- Represents the organization at media events as appropriate, including

media education events, a simulation day press conference and election-day press conferences.

Qualifications:

- Must be a well-regarded, formally trained statistician and social scientist.
- Experience with database management systems.
- Knowledge of relevant demographic data and trends.
- Ability to work, in coordination with international experts, in extremely high-stress environments.
- History of political neutrality.

PROJECT PLANNING

Project planning skills are essential for quick count success. The most complex, time sensitive tasks are best planned in reverse order working backward from key dates. This forces a focus on the importance of meeting deadlines. It also encourages organizers to tailor activities to achieve objectives. This backward planning approach is described below in three steps—developing a "to do" list, creating a timeline and assigning responsibilities.

The most complex, time sensitive tasks are best planned in reverse order working backward from key dates.

Step One: Creating a List of Important Events, Activities and Milestones

The first step to backward planning is to envision a successful election day. Then list important dates, milestones and activities that should precede this day.

Step Two: Plotting Activities on a Timeline

The next step in backward planning is to plot all activities on a master timeline. The master chart contains all major deadlines, events and activities leading up to and including the immediate post-election period and provides a powerful visual of the work ahead. Each functional team should develop its own timeline chart which is coordinated precisely with the master timeline chart. The charts should be the focal point for discussion at periodic all-staff meetings so that everyone at headquarters is aware of important events and any schedule changes.[5]

Step Three: Assigning Work

In addition to the master timeline, the executive director should work in conjunction with staff to divide up the work required to conduct each activity. It is crucial to delegate tasks wisely. Each activity requires tasks from more than one, sometimes all, technical teams. Figure 2-3, which assigns tasks entailed in recruiting volunteers, illustrates this point.

Considerations for Strategic Timeline Planning

These timelines are invaluable tools, allowing organizations to approach a very complex project one activity at a time, while keeping end goals in mind. Investing time up front to plan allows groups to work more efficiently than if

[5] Appendix 2A contains a work plan/timeline developed for a quick count in Nicaragua; appendix 2B shows a work plan developed in Indonesia.

FIGURE 2-3:
TASK ASSIGNMENTS UNDER RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

ACTIVITY: RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

TASK –	ASSIGNED TO –
Solicit cooperation from outside organizations with access to volunteers:	Executive Director
Develop a recruiting message and materials:	Volunteer Coordinator and Media Specialist
Identify target numbers and target geographical areas:	Statistician
Create regional committees:	Volunteer Coordinator with assistance from Board Members and Regional Coordinators
Create municipal committees:	Volunteer Coordinator with assistance from Regional Coordinators
Make arrangements for recruiting trips:	Logistics Specialist
Set up recruiting meetings:	Regional Coordinators
Facilitate recruiting meetings:	Regional Coordinators with assistance from the Volunteer Coordinator
Compile a database of volunteers:	Database Manager

Investing time up front to plan allows groups to work more efficiently than if operating on a reactive, ad hoc basis.

operating on a reactive, ad hoc basis and this reduces the risk of crises and failure. There are several things to keep in mind when using this technique:

- *Remember the simulation*—Most groups conduct a simulation of the entire quick count operation approximately two weeks before election day. It is important to keep this in mind while designing budgets, and while developing activity timelines and task lists. In effect, planners should treat the simulation as if it were election day. All activities to prepare for election day should be completed by simulation day, instead of by election day. (See the Frequently Asked Questions box below for more information.)

- *Allow for miscalculations*—Initial calculations of the time and resources needed to implement individual tasks are often optimistic. Significant time must be built into the timeline to allow for margins of error.

- *Periodically review and simplify*—The root word of logistics is logic. Quick count planning should be a logical process. Simplify all the elements of these activities to as rudimentary and functional a level as possible. Any system design that sounds too complex probably is.

- *Remember the complexity/time/budget algorithm*—As tactical elements increase in complexity they generally take longer (even if the complexity was supposed to shorten a process), and they cost more. Simple tends to be faster and almost always cheaper.

- *Coordinate*—The key to achieving maximum organizational capacity is coordination. Divided tasks have to be regularly coordinated because the work of some functional groups cannot begin until the work assigned to other functional groups has been completed.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a simulation, and is it essential to a quick count's success?
A simulation tests virtually every aspect of the quick count operation. Observers report fictitious data to the central and backup data collection centers. The information is processed and analyzed as it would be on election day. This exercise exposes weaknesses in the quick count plan, the volunteer network and the communications and data processing systems. The simulation is held approximately two weeks before election day to allow sufficient time for organizers to rectify problems.

The simulation has become standard practice for several reasons. As described above, it can reduce election day error and increase the efficiency with which data are retrieved. It provides leaders with an opportunity to discuss possible election day scenarios and refine data use protocols, which can reduce the likelihood that there will be internal disagreement on election day. The simulation also can inspire volunteers, staff and leadership. It provides the first concrete evidence that the quick count will be a success. Moreover, a successful simulation can build the quick count's credibility. Organizers can publicize the number of volunteers participating, the percentage of calls received and the capacity of the communication/data collection system to receive and quickly process data. Donors, media representatives, electoral officials and any affiliated non-governmental organizations can observe the process if the security situation allows.

Motivating Staff

Successful executive directors motivate board members and staff by involving them in the planning process. Board members and staff that feel ownership in the project are more likely to take initiative in their respective areas, and

their morale is more likely to remain high even in stressful situations. There also are practical benefits to a democratic planning approach. Consulting staff is crucial to ensuring the feasibility of work plans. Engaged board members and staff understand and accept, in advance, the commitment required. Individuals familiar with the entire quick count operation can fill a wider variety of roles in the event of an organizational or political crisis.

Successful executive directors take every opportunity to praise staff for work well done. This may include certificates of appreciation, direct praise from board members, informal celebrations for reaching important milestones, even bonuses. Every effort to thank and otherwise support a staff that typically works long hours in a stressful environment is appreciated, and it is a practical investment in the project's success.

An organization operating under tight deadlines needs to focus heavily and immediately on fundraising.

BUDGETS AND FUNDRAISING

Developing budgets and fundraising for a quick count project pose significant challenges. An organization operating under tight deadlines needs to focus heavily and immediately on fundraising. After funding to cover estimated costs is secured, an unexpected event may force changes and increases. Two examples of events forcing groups to augment budgets are:

- Electoral authorities release a last-minute addendum to the list of polling stations. Quick count organizers, therefore, are forced to increase the size of the sample, which in turn requires recruiting and training additional volunteers.

- The volunteer coordinator reaches target numbers for recruits well before the election, and receives repeated pleas from local organizers to allow additional applicants to participate in quick count or general election-day observation. Leaders decide to appeal to donors for additional support to accommodate a larger-than-expected number of observers.

Three design factors—speed, comprehensiveness and accuracy—directly impact cost.

Cost

The cost of conducting a quick count varies greatly. The most obvious determining factors are the size and infrastructure of a country. A quick count in a small country with a well-developed infrastructure costs less than one in a large country with poor infrastructure for transportation and communication. In addition, three design factors—speed, comprehensiveness and accuracy—directly impact cost:

- *Speed*—What are the goals for collecting and reporting data? If an organization needs the information fast, it must acquire more communication and data processing equipment.
- *Comprehensiveness*—How many polling sites will be covered? Greater coverage entails more volunteers, more training, higher election-day costs and more computers to process greater quantities of data.

- *Accuracy*—Given the political context, how accurate does the quick count need to be? If indications are that the race between two or more candidates will be very tight, the design should include more sophisticated communication and database systems. Smaller margins of error demand better, and more costly, systems.

The timing of drawing the random sample of polling stations directly impacts cost. The earlier the sample is drawn, the more organizers can potentially save on cost. Having the sample facilitates analysis of the location of the data points (polling stations) and streamlining of volunteer recruiting and training programs. The absence of key information, such as a final list of polling stations, precludes the drawing of the sample, and this forces groups to launch a less targeted, more comprehensive and more costly recruiting campaign.

A budget is the centerpiece of proposals to potential donors. A reasonable budget balances quick count objectives with realistic expectations for funding.

Budget Expenditures

Unless a group starts out with significant funding, a budget is the centerpiece of its proposals to potential donors. A reasonable budget balances quick count objectives with realistic expectations for funding. The initial budget may reflect plans to meet objectives without regard for funding limitations, the "perfect world" scenario. Leaders may need to modify or significantly alter these plans if the prospects for adequate total funding are dim. Leaders should approach prospective backers as early as possible to gather information about their interests and expectations. Funders should also be made aware of what are the trade-offs for modest, or generous, financial support.

Beyond its basic use for raising funds, the budget becomes an important point of reference for staff. It allocates funds to specific tasks. Anticipated categories for line items include:

1. Paid Personnel (salaries and benefits)
2. Office Expenses (fixed and recurring, for national and regional headquarters)
3. Volunteer Recruitment (travel expenses and per diem for national and regional recruiters and meeting expenses)
4. Volunteer Training (production of training materials, observer manuals and quick count forms; travel expenses and per diem for trainers and volunteer observers; and other meeting expenses)
5. Communications/Database Management Systems (telephones, computers, printers)
6. Election Day (transportation, per diem and telephone calls for observers; and transportation and per diem for national and regional headquarters volunteers, such as operators and data processors)
7. Publicity/Advertising
8. Contractual Services (e.g., legal fees or advisors/consultants)
9. Budget Management and Accounting

It is a good practice to draft several budgets based on high and low projections.

It is prudent to draft several budgets based on high and low projections. The size and scope of a quick count project can change during the run-up to elections. For example, an organization may change its policy on how many volunteers to recruit. Initially, it decides to cap the number of volunteers to equal or slightly surpass the estimated sample size. Then, more volunteers sign up than expected, and the group elects to include them. Larger objectives may also change as the election nears. For example, a group's original intent might be to observe only in the number of polling stations needed to provide a margin of error of $^{+/-}$3 percent for the quick count. As the election draws near, however, it looks like the race might end in a virtual tie. As a result, the number of polling stations observed must be sustantially increased to reduce the margin of error to $^{+/-}$1 percent or less.

One budget should reflect the cost of supporting the minimum number of volunteers required for the quick count and the least expensive communications and data processing systems. Second and subsequent versions should support larger numbers of volunteers, wider coverage and more communications and data processing equipment.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Budget Management

Helpful hints for managing a quick count budget include:

- Ensure sufficient staffing. The accounting for a quick count is a large and complex job, particularly if the organization receives funding from various sources. One accountant for a quick count organization was forced to manage 12 different bank accounts. Groups that cannot afford to hire staff should consider recruiting qualified volunteers.
- Work with the executive director to establish clear policies for activities such as staff travel and reimbursement and the procurement of goods and services. (Various donor agencies may require different procedures.)
- Dedicate sufficient time to build good relations with donors. Domestic observer groups and donors often need to work closely together under tight deadlines and trying political conditions.
- Become knowledgeable about and respect donor reporting requirements and deadlines, as well as all other pertinent accounting regulations.
- Prepare in advance for times when expenditures will be greatest, such as during a large-scale training activity or on election day. Groups receiving money in installments should ensure that the schedule allows for large cash expenditures for training and election day and the immediate post-election period.

Fundraising

Once an organization designs a realistic quick count budget, it can initiate a fundraising campaign. Fundraising approaches commonly used by election observer organizations include:

- Writing and submitting proposals to foundations and other donor institutions;
- Directly soliciting contributions of money, goods and services by mail, telephone, through the media or in person;
- Selling goods or services for profit, such as paraphernalia from the organization (t-shirts, buttons, posters); and
- Sponsoring entertainment events, such as a formal dinner or musical concert at which you charge an entrance fee or request voluntary donations.

Leaders should seek financial support from politically neutral sources, or ensure that backers are politically diverse and balanced.

FIGURE 2-4:
FUNDING SOURCES FOR PERUVIAN ELECTION OBSERVER ORGANIZATION, *TRANSPARENCIA*, 2001 NATIONAL ELECTIONS

PERUVIAN ASSISTANCE

Telefonica Peru (Peru Telephone)—*telephone costs*
Aerocontinente—*airfare*
Peruvian NGOs—*office space, furniture, computer equipment, etc.*
Individual Contributors—*food for observers*

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Association for Cooperation and Development International (ACDI)—*Canada*
German Society for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)—*Germany*
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (ASDI)—*Sweden*
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)—*Switzerland*
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)—*USA*
(USAID has provided substantial assistance to Transparencia since 1995.)

Government of Denmark
Government of Finland
Government of Great Britain (Department for International Development—DFID)
Government of Holland

European Union

Open Society Institute—*USA*
Broederlijk Delen (Brotherly Sharing)—*Belgium*

A fundraising approach can help build an organization's credibility and a reputation for independence. Consider the following:

- *Efficiency*—An efficient fundraising and accounting operation reflects well on the credibility of the organization and may increase the likelihood of gaining financial support.
- *Neutrality or Balance*—It is a good idea to consider the reputation and political history of every potential backer, whether an individual, local or

international organization. Leaders should seek financial support from politically neutral sources, or ensure that backers are politically diverse and balanced.

- *Transparency*—Publicizing funding sources can prevent suspicion and deny critics the opportunity to make unfounded allegations or start rumors about politically-motivated backers.
- *Local v. International*—Again, diversification is important, particularly for the long run. Local donors may have more of a stake in the success of a quick count. A local funding source may be more stable and reliable for groups planning to continue work after the elections. Receiving support from sources within the country may enhance the organization's credibility among local political players and the international community. However, international institutions, including embassies, government aid organizations and nongovernmental organizations and foundations potentially offer larger sums of money. This is particularly true for institutions from countries that have significant economic, geographical or other ties to the country holding an election.

REMINDER

The first weeks of work on a quick count project are critical to its eventual success. Leaders must:

- Evaluate the composition and duties of a board of directors;
- Hire qualified and dedicated staff;
- Invest significant time in strategic planning;
- Design realistic budgets; and
- Solicit funds using a variety of methods from a variety of sources.

CHAPTER THREE

Promoting the Quick Count

A quick count can be a technical success yet a public relations failure. All of the hard work is for naught if key audiences—civic leaders, political parties, electoral authorities, the international community and others—do not view the organization or the results as credible. When influential groups doubt either the motives of the organizers or the validity of the data, the quick count's contribution to the election-day process is marginal to negative. For this reason, building credibility must be a priority for every group planning a quick count.

Building credibility must be a priority for every group planning a quick count.

This chapter is about promoting the quick count during the pre-election period so that it is technically successful and recognized as credible.[1] It discusses how to build support among key audiences, addresses the most commonly raised concerns about quick counts and offers best practices for publicizing the project.

Most organizations form a media team to garner support for the quick count project and establish the organization as an independent voice for civil society—an organization above the partisan fray, working for a fair process rather than for a particular result.[2] The election commission, of course, is at the center of this process. Figure 3-1 illustrates the relationships managed by quick count promoters, beginning with the election commission and working outward toward the general public as the project progresses.

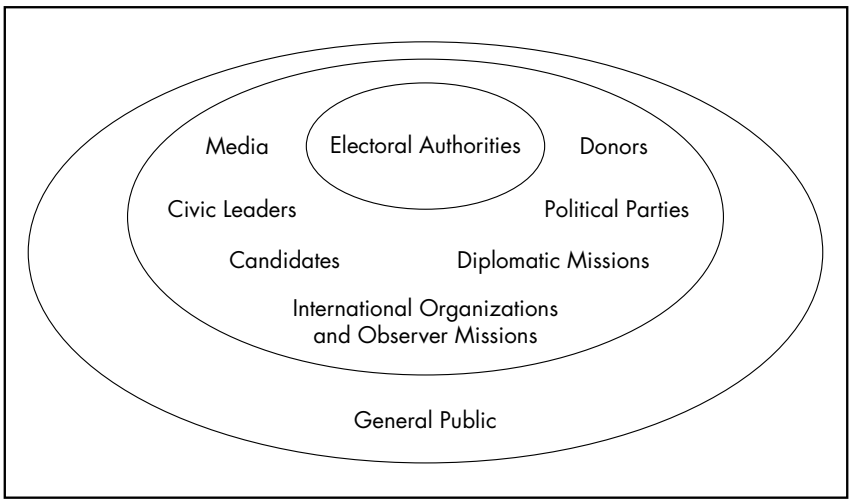
RELATIONS WITH ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES

Election commissions often view the presence of election observers with suspicion; many are particularly resistant to independent vote counts. It is in the interest of quick count organizers, however, to forge a cooperative relationship with electoral authorities. Electoral authorities can provide access to important information, such as the complete list of polling stations (needed

[1] While this chapter discusses how to build credibility while planning and organizing a quick count, Chapter Eight, *The "End Game,"* offers techniques for consolidating credibility and using quick count data during the period immediately surrounding election day.

[2] Two or more organizations may work jointly or form a coalition to conduct a quick count, but the need for the quick count project to establish its credibility remains the same.

FIGURE 3-1:
RELATIONSHIPS MANAGED BY THE MEDIA TEAM



to draw a statistical sample of polling stations) or models of official voting and counting materials (helpful to design quick count observer forms). The election commission also has the power to decide who does and does not get access to polling stations and counting centers.

Quick count organizers should establish an open channel of communication with electoral authorities early in the planning process.

Quick count organizers should establish an open channel of communication with electoral authorities early in the planning process. It is helpful for leaders to assure authorities that election monitoring activities are complementary to those of the election commission. Quick count leaders can reinforce this position by demonstrating transparency, sharing quick count plans and methodology—the only details that should not be shared are those that deal with the precise sample size and the locations of the sample points.

It is helpful to ascertain and directly address the specific concerns of an election commission at the outset. For example, officials may express concern that quick count organizers will undermine the election commission's authority by publicly releasing results. These concerns are not totally unfounded, but they can be managed. There is nothing lost, and much to be gained, for example, if organizers publicly express their willingness to support the efforts of the election commission and acknowledge that the election commission has sole authority to release official results.[3]

Credentials

Electoral law in many countries recognizes the right of citizens to observe elections, which is part of the right to participate in governmental and political affairs. This right, in many instances, is based on constitutional provisions and international obligations and can be recognized by pronouncements or regulations of electoral authorities even if the law is silent on the matter. Often,

[3] See Chapter Eight, *The "End Game,"* for a discussion of approaches to releasing quick count results.

election commissions also promulgate observer rights and responsibilities in a set of standards or a code of conduct.[4]

It is common for election observers to be required to present proof of legal authorization (accreditation) as they enter polling stations. Some election commissions approach this task by granting a letter of authorization to observer groups that meet established criteria. The groups, in turn, distribute the letter to their volunteers. In some countries, however, civic organizations work in conjunction with electoral authorities to produce individual observer badges, or credentials.

The time and effort needed to guarantee observer access to the polling and counting stations is ***always*** underestimated.

The time and effort needed to guarantee observer access to the polling and counting stations is *always* underestimated. Civic groups must begin the application process very early. The case of the Dominican Republic illustrates just how difficult the process can be, particularly for a group conducting its first quick count:

> In 1996, the civic group Citizen Participation (PC) faced a hostile election commission. The commission saw PC as a threat and resisted giving them observer credentials to enter the polling stations on election day. In fact, PC had to turn to the international community for help in persuading the election commission to release credentials. When the commission finally did grant permission for the group to observe the process, it argued that it was too busy to prepare credentials for the whole group. Then, twenty-four hours before the polls opened, the commission announced that it would require the inclusion of a signed photograph for each observer's credential. This created a major last-minute problem in PC's production and distribution of credentials.

It is instructive to note just how much circumstances changed in the Dominican Republic once the civic organization, PC, had gained experience and credibility among electoral authorities. By the 1998 elections, the relationship had improved significantly. Recently, the election commission asked PC for its assistance in training polling station officials. This type of progressively improved relationship is common between civic groups that observe elections and election authorities around the world.

Groups should avoid attempting to conduct quick counts by acquiring the information second-hand.

Absent official authorization, access to observe the election process is uneven at best. Groups should avoid attempting to conduct quick counts by acquiring the information second-hand, such as through political party representatives. This approach can compromise the quick count because the groups cannot attest to the quality of the voting and counting processes, nor can the group prevent collusion among parties. Alternatively, groups can station observers outside polling stations to rapidly report on a number of qualitative aspects of election-day developments. For example, such observers can measure voter

[4] Appendices 3A - 3D contain an election law, an election regulation and two codes of conduct regarding domestic election observers; and Appendix 4 is a compilation of excerpts from human rights instruments that apply to citizens' rights to monitor elections.

turnout against official reports, which in some instances is a critical indicator of whether or not official results are credible.

A significant challenge to a quick count may arise when election observation is not contemplated in current law and authorities believe it to be illegal. In this case, quick count sponsors may lobby for a revision in the law, a new regulation, a special decree or other document guaranteeing the right to observe. The objective should be to obtain a law containing the broadest possible language granting access to all aspects of the process. Many groups have offered authorities help in drafting a new law or regulation and have provided model laws and regulations from other countries where observers enjoy broad freedom to operate.

The objective should be to obtain a law containing the broadest possible language granting access to all aspects of the process.

While lobbying for the rights of election observers and soliciting observer credentials, quick count organizers should keep in mind the perspective of electoral authorities. Understanding electoral officials and empathizing about their challenges can facilitate solutions that meet the needs of all concerned.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The executive director should dedicate significant time to the relationship with the election commission, but she or he must also work with board members to build bridges to other key groups. These groups include:

- candidates and political parties;
- civic leaders, particularly those who work on similar programs;
- members of the local and international media;
- quick count donors;
- key international election observer and diplomatic missions.

The usual strategy is for quick count organizers to carefully assign representatives to set up formal meetings with these groups and to build alliances that will support the group in difficult times. There are several additional techniques for keeping audiences informed and supportive. They include:

- sponsoring roundtable discussions, debates or conferences;
- disseminating written letters or reports;
- offering training events, such as a workshop on local elections for international donors or quick count methodology for journalists;
- holding tours of the quick count facilities during simulations; and
- creating independent advisory boards with key audiences, such as political parties or NGOs, and holding periodic meetings to inform and receive feedback.

Each meeting or event should have a specific objective. For example, quick count leaders may seek financial support or help in persuading electoral authorities to release credentials. In general, representatives should always demonstrate the organization's capacity, independence and commitment to transparency. They should model transparency by presenting, in a general way, their progress

in technical and organizational matters. They may also share training materials, such as observer checklists, and ask for feedback when appropriate.

By providing information to key groups in the pre-election period, quick count organizers demonstrate confidence in the methodology. The messages are powerful: "We have nothing to hide." "We know what we are doing." "We are happy to discuss any of the details about methodology with you and your experts." Of course, organizers cannot discuss the precise sample size or the location of the sample points to prevent outside interference in the quick count.

By providing information to key groups in the pre-election period, quick count organizers demonstrate confidence in the methodology.

Answering the Skeptics

The context and circumstances surrounding each quick count is different. It is impossible to anticipate and prepare for all of the questions that will be asked of quick count organizers. But some concerns are repeatedly raised in almost every country. Below is a list of the most frequently asked questions and suggested responses to alleviate concerns:

Is a quick count legal?

- Point out provisions in the election law for nonpartisan organizations or citizens to observe elections. If no provisions exist, share copies from other countries and note constitutional provisions and international obligations that recognize the right of citizens to participate in governmental and public affairs and the right to democratic elections—from which election observation derives.
- Relate accounts of successful quick counts that have taken place in the region or other parts of the world.
- Mention that several international human rights instruments recognize the universal right of people to participate in their government by monitoring elections. (See Appendix 4)

Is your group credible; i.e. can you do this?

- Provide information on the quick count leaders and sponsors as well as the qualifications of your staff.
- Explain basic quick count goals and methodology.
- Make training materials and quick count checklists public to highlight their professional quality, legal accuracy and objective design.

Is your group neutral? How can anyone be sure that you do not have a partisan political agenda?

- Demonstrate that leadership and staff are not currently partisan activists.
- In cases where some group members have a reputation for partisanship, take care to show that the membership, taken as a whole, is politically balanced.
- Explain your commitment to recruiting volunteers not currently involved in partisan politics or actively supporting any candidate.

How do we know your volunteers, even those you have not yet recruited, will be neutral?

- Share a copy of a "neutrality pledge" signed by all quick count participants.
- Share the training manuals and highlight the fact that volunteers are uniformly trained regarding the role and responsibility of an observer.
- Share the quick count checklists. Explain that you are collecting objective data that is not subject to interpretation.
- Invite concerned individuals to observe training programs and the simulation.

If we have invited international observers, why do we need local observers?

- Point out that, in many places, it is a matter of national pride for domestic election observers to exist alongside international election monitors.
- Discuss how election observation and quick counts are a tool to build public participation in elections.
- Discuss the practical advantages of domestic organizations observing – they are present for the entire pre-election, election-day and post-election periods and they have better scope and coverage to implement a quick count.
- Argue that local citizens have the right to participate in their government and organize to hold officials accountable.
- Ask the international community to state the view that it would be a positive development if electoral authorities welcome and support a domestic organization planning a quick count.

How can we prevent unnecessary confusion in polling stations or counting centers with too many observers?

- Point out provisions in the current law for local officials to maintain order inside the polling stations and counting centers.
- Ask for feedback and make revisions to your volunteer training materials to reflect their concerns.
- As a last resort, offer to discuss the drafting of additional legal guidelines, such as a code of conduct for quick count observers.

How can we trust your results when you got them from a few hundred or thousand polling stations?

- Utilize this manual to explain the effectiveness of random sampling.
- Offer to schedule a formal or informal briefing with a statistician or quick count adviser.
- Remind them that a few hundred polling stations actually represent hundreds of thousands of voters!
- Provide concrete examples of the accuracy of quick count results in other countries.

Can we be sure that you will not manipulate the data at the central level, to arrive at a desired result?

- Invite concerned individuals to a quick count simulation to witness the communications and data processing systems (if security systems allow).
- Offer to place an advanced copy of your sample with a trusted individual, such as a religious official or international observer.
- Offer to make public three or more samples, one of which you will be using on election day.

THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Organizations that are new, little-known, or have other credibility issues should prioritize a media campaign. A media campaign raises awareness about the quick count, attracts volunteers to work on the project and answers any public criticism leveled at the group.

Education is an important component of a group's work with the media. Members of the media rarely know what a quick count is, yet they are uniquely placed to promote, or undermine, confidence in the methodology. Quick count organizers often find it useful to hold seminars about quick count methodology for journalists, publishers, editors and owners of media outlets.

A media campaign raises awareness about the quick count, attracts volunteers to work on the project and answers any public criticism leveled at the group.

FIGURE 3-2:
PROMOTIONAL STICKER FOR CESID, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

"1+1=2" INDICATES VERIFICATION OF VOTE TABULATIONS

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Below are several best practices for implementing a media campaign:

- *Develop consistent messages.* A message is what an organization wants the public to know about it as it approaches the quick count. Messages reflect the values or beliefs behind the quick count and inspire listeners. Each time a leader of the organization speaks, the basic message should be repeated and reinforced by several issues or detailed information. The public affairs team should be sure the same message is contained in all documents, reports and other materials that could potentially become public.

- *Establish standard procedures.* It is important to set up guidelines and policies that specify who is authorized to represent the organization and speak with the media. This helps to avoid sending conflicting messages or releasing premature reports.

- Stay "on message." All spokespersons should know the message and how to deliver it consistently. All press coverage should be monitored to determine whether the message is reported, and the board and spokespersons should receive regular reports on this topic.

- *Use a variety of publicity techniques.* These can include events and activities as diverse as holding press conferences, writing newspaper articles, creating paid television commercials, recording motivational songs and holding public recruitment events and pep rallies.

Publicity Techniques

The publicity mechanisms used by quick count groups primarily depend on the amount of time and money available. Groups with image problems and little time available to correct the problem, or those facing a serious crisis (such as an attack in the media or the inability to obtain access to polling stations) may opt to use paid advertising. Paid advertising through the mass media, including TV, radio and newspapers, allows a group to control the content and reach a large number of people quickly. However, it can be expensive, and in some countries access may be limited.

Most groups need to creatively exploit opportunities for free or low-cost publicity.

Most groups do not have the resources to rely primarily on paid media exposure and need to creatively exploit opportunities for free or low-cost publicity. Some of the following methods are used to get media coverage:

- *press releases*—one-page notices that publicize an organizational opinion or an event of interest to viewers, readers or listeners;
- *high-profile events*—such as training programs, visits from international experts, meetings with well-known personalities;
- *press conferences*—tied to significant dates or activities and timed well, considering journalists' deadlines, competing news events, etc.;
- *articles and letters to the editor submitted to the print media;* and
- *public service announcements (PSAs)*—most often produced for radio.

REMINDER

A media team promotes the quick count to build the credibility of both the project and the organization, to obtain practical and political support and to achieve quick count goals, such as deterring fraud and building confidence in the electoral process. These goals are achieved by:

1. *Forging a productive relationship with the election commission*—The executive director and board members, in particular, must recognize that election officials have the power to share key information, such as a list of polling stations, and to grant observers permission to enter polling stations. National election observer organizations in many countries have worked closely with electoral authorities to improve observer access and transparency.

2. *Building support from key audiences through an "external relations" program*—The media team, particularly members of the board, should keep media, potential and current donors, civic leaders and political parties informed about the quick count project. Each of these audiences has potential to be supportive, either by sharing information or providing direct financial, human or in-kind resources.

3. *Launching a media campaign to establish an organization's credibility*—The media campaign must convince the public that the organization has the capacity to conduct a quick count and the commitment to a fair process over a particular result.

CHAPTER FOUR

Building the Volunteer Network

Quick counts cannot happen without well-organized and trained volunteer networks. Most of the hundreds or thousands of people that form these networks live and work outside the capital city and are not readily visible to the organization's leadership, international donors and the press. Their often heroic efforts go virtually unnoticed. A case in point:

> Rhina Medal, 56, is a volunteer quick count observer in Diriamba, Nicaragua. At a training program sponsored by Ethics and Transparency, she was assigned the most remote polling station in her municipality. Her friends tried to convince her to take a different assignment. She refused, and, on election day, she rode two hours on a bus, one hour in a pickup truck and two hours up a mountain on horseback to the polling station. On election night, despite the fact that the counting process was not completed until 2:00 am, she rode on horseback down the hill and took the pickup truck to the nearest phone to make her report. When asked why she insisted on taking this most difficult assignment, she simply said, "for love of country."

Effective volunteer networks tap the energy of citizens like Rhina Medal. This chapter describes how to design quick count forms and training materials, build a national network and train and support volunteers. The information is designed to help groups trying to recruit and train large numbers of observers in a fixed and relatively short timeframe.

Chapter Two described a volunteer coordination team. Within that team, the volunteer coordinator is responsible for recruiting and maintaining communications with the volunteer network, and for taking the lead on designing observer forms. The lead trainer designs and oversees a national volunteer training program. The lead trainer, in collaboration with other staff, creates observer forms and instructional manuals, and then designs and oversees a national volunteer training program. The logistics specialist supports the coordinator and the trainer.

Leaders can facilitate the work of the volunteer coordination team in three ways. First, they should provide sufficient resources. This piece of the budget should be carefully designed to allow maximum flexibility and mobility for coordinators and trainers. Moreover, it should be possible for coordinators and trainers to start their work at least six months before the election. Second, they should strive to draw the random sample of polling stations early. If the sample can be drawn before recruiting and training begins in earnest, the team can target efforts to recruit observers in the precise locations needed.[1] Third, recruiters should try to establish an observer network that reflects society. To accomplish this, they should emphasize gender balance and seek representation from a variety of ethnic, linguistic, religious, age and other groups. This taps large numbers of people, facilitates national coverage and helps to establish widespread credibility for the quick count. Moreover, polling stations or voting lines in some countries are segregated by gender, which requires at least 50 percent women observers.

Recruiters should try to establish an observer network that reflects society.

If the statistical sample of polling stations for use in the quick count cannot be drawn early, the statistician should provide an estimate of the number of volunteers needed in each local area so that recruiting and training can proceed. It is best to overestimate the numbers needed. In most countries, volunteers who, in the end, are not needed for the quick count observe in non-sample polling stations and report findings for analysis beyond quick count findings.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Building an Effective Quick Count Volunteer Network:

1. *sufficient early resources*—provide flexibility and mobility;
2. *drawing the sample early*—allows geographical focus and streamlines expenditures; and
3. *recruiting among all sectors of society*—facilitates broad coverage and promotes credibility.

DESIGNING MATERIALS

It is critical to design clear, concise observer forms and training materials. The accuracy of the quick count directly depends on the quality of the materials developed to train volunteers and collect data. These materials ensure uniformity in training and the reliability of information collected.

The accuracy of the quick count directly depends on the quality of the materials developed to train volunteers and collect data.

It is important for the volunteer coordination team to focus on materials design as early as possible, certainly as soon as the law (or regulations) governing the voting and counting processes are available. The most important pieces of materials that the team will create are observer forms and manuals.

[1] See Chapter Five, *Statistical Principles and Quick Counts,* for more information on this process.

1. *Observer Forms*—Most groups develop separate forms for quick count observers and volunteers stationed at non-quick count polling stations. Quick count observers usually report information via telephone; volunteers at other sites use a separate relay system.

2. *The Observer Manual*—This manual contains relevant information on the election process and explains, step-by-step, the job of an election observer. (As noted below, manuals for training trainers, regional coordinators and other groups are also needed.)

Forms

The volunteer coordinator usually designs the forms. It is crucial that she or he does this in close collaboration with the trainer, the executive director, someone from the technical team that focuses on data analysis and one or more specialists in electoral law. The process begins with a vision of election day, an analysis of problems that historically have occurred and a list of issues that are of most concern to candidates and other key groups. This list is narrowed down to crucial issues to create forms that capture data about key questions concerning the quality of the process but that are not cumbersome. Questions are formulated to reflect the real order of events, and to contain the wording and terminology contained in election law and used by electoral authorities.[2] Observer answers to the questions reveal both the strengths and/or irregularities that may occur in election-day processes.

One form is designed to collect information on the opening of polling stations and initiation of voting procedures. A second form is designed to collect general information on voting and counting procedures. The second form also records the results of the count. In many countries a third, and perhaps longer, form is developed for non-quick count observers. Data from this form is compiled and analyzed for inclusion in detailed post-election reports. The more detailed reports can be crucial if electoral controversies develop.

Field testing the forms is critical to ensure that volunteers understand the questions as designed.

The volunteer coordination team must ask the executive director and the board of directors to review these forms thoroughly; these actors must understand exactly what information they will receive on election day. In some countries, organization leaders have not paid attention to the observer forms until just prior to, or on, election day, only to discover that a question they think is crucial has not been asked. At such a late date, it is impossible to gather systematic information on the crucial issue. In these cases, leaders typically end up calling local committee members for their impressions and putting together less powerful and less credible anecdotal information. Insufficient attention and inadequate planning have significant costs that could usually have been avoided.

[2] See Chapter Six, *The Qualitative Component of the Quick Count,* for a step-by-step guide to designing forms.

The forms must also be field tested with local volunteers. Field testing the forms is often viewed as a luxury and skipped due to time considerations, but it is critical to ensure that volunteers understand the questions as designed. Moreover, coordinators and other local volunteers often possess a wealth of experience inside polling stations. In addition to having voted, it is common for many to have served as polling station officials; they can provide valuable input about the wording of questions contained on forms.

The Impact of Observers Forms—The Case of Belarus 2001

In the 2001 presidential elections in Belarus, quick count observers were able to collect electoral results but often were not able to see whether ballots were actually marked for the person for whom officials credited the votes. There was great concern that officials manipulated the count by crediting votes to the incumbent president even though ballots were cast for the opposition. The quick count and broader observation did not have a question on the form covering this problem. As a result, the leadership decided not to release the numeric projections, because they did not have sufficient confidence that the numbers reported by quick count observers reflected real votes. The lack of qualitative data on this issue, however, left the decision open to criticism.

Manuals

The observer manual is a condensed version of all the information volunteers receive during their training program. The volunteer takes the manual home and is encouraged to review the information before election day. A pocket-sized version of the manual can be produced to allow observers to carry it on election day for easy reference.

A well-designed manual assures that consistent instructions and messages are being delivered at all levels.

A well-designed manual is an important asset; it assures that consistent instructions and messages are being delivered at all levels, in all geographical areas. This is particularly important when organizations use a cascade training approach—headquarters staff train regional leaders; regional leaders train municipal leaders, and municipal leaders train quick count observers. The observer manual promotes consistency when time constraints may prevent national leaders from supervising all training programs.

Contents of a typical observer manual include:

- a description of the organization—including mission, goals and contact information;
- a brief explanation of quick counts;
- excerpts of relevant election law;
- a reiteration of the observer code of conduct—including emphasis on impartiality and accuracy in reporting findings;
- step-by-step instructions on the election-day duties of an observer;
- things to remember/bring on election day; and
- telephone numbers and other contact information in case problems develop during the observation.

The volunteer coordinator and trainer should also develop special manuals for groups of volunteers other than quick count observers. These special manuals are usually created for:

- trainers (assuming the lead trainer will form a team that can cover the country)
- regional and municipal coordinators;
- telephone operators/data processors in the central data collection center;
- telephone operators inside a network of private homes or offices in the capital city;
- bikers, motorcyclists or drivers responsible for collecting forms from the network of private homes or offices in the capital city; and
- telephone operators in regional offices.

Like the observer manual, these manuals describe the organization, define quick counts, review relevant election law and reiterate a code of conduct. They also include step-by-step descriptions of each group's duties. Any manuals designed to train trainers also should include information on teaching tools such as using experiential learning techniques, as well as using flipcharts, visual aids, videos, etc. It is best to keep these training devices simple. It is often inappropriate, if not impossible, to use technological innovation such as a Power Point presentation in the rural areas of many countries.

RECRUITING

Recruiting is usually best divided into three major phases. First, committees are formed outside the capital city to better manage the massive amount of work entailed in building a volunteer network. Second, local volunteers are recruited to be quick count observers and to fill a variety of support roles required prior to and on election day. Third, the volunteer coordination team identifies groups of volunteers to support the national office during the run-up to elections and to fill key jobs on election day. Figure 4-1 illustrates a typical volunteer network structure:

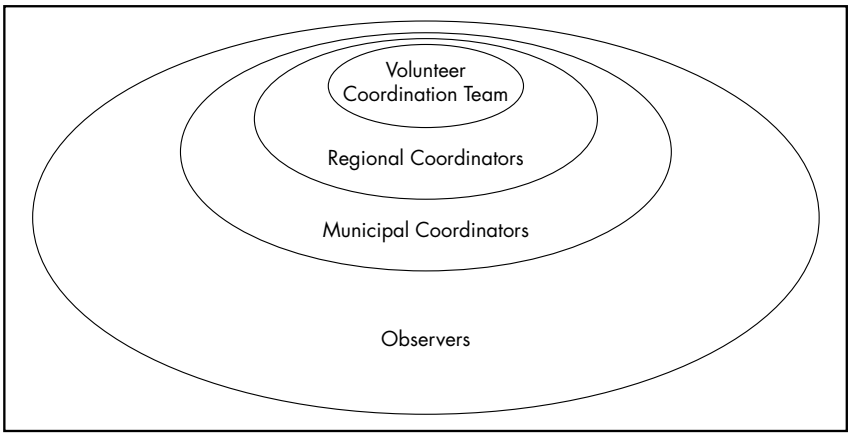


FIGURE 4-1:
VOLUNTEER NETWORK STRUCTURE

Create an effective multi-level organization; however, too many layers in the organization complicates communications and makes it difficult to ensure consistency and quality in volunteer training.

Regional and Municipal Committees

The most efficient way to recruit thousands of volunteers in a short period of time is to delegate much of the work to regional and/or municipal committees. Therefore, the first phase of a national volunteer coordinator's work is to travel around the country to organize these committees.[3]

The number and location of committees depends on the size, geographical characteristics and administrative/political divisions of each country. National organizers must create an effective multi-level organization to ensure that no one is overburdened by work. However, too many layers in the organization complicates communications and makes it difficult to ensure consistency and quality in volunteer training. The most common model is to have no more than two layers of committees outside the national office, one in the largest administrative division such as the province, department, state or region. The second one is either at the municipal or electoral district level.[4]

Each committee typically consists of a coordinator, a trainer and a logistics specialist at minimum. These roles usually mirror the internal organization of the national office, and consequently each member can communicate with a national counterpart. Regional coordinators build a relationship with the national volunteer coordinator, regional trainers consult with the head national trainer, and so on. That said, the size, composition and division of responsibilities within regions and municipalities should also be responsive to the geographical and political peculiarities of the area being covered.

National staff periodically bring regional leaders together in a central location. Regional leaders benefit from training as a group in three ways. First, they develop an organizational identity important to their motivation. Second, the national staff is assured that all instructions and messages are uniformly delivered across the country. Third, regional and national leaders learn from an open discussion of concerns and joint exploration of solutions to problems.

Local Volunteers

The bulk of volunteers are recruited at the most local level to cover polling stations in their neighborhoods.[5] This way, many individuals at recruiting meetings know each other and can weed out individuals with clearly partisan reputations. In order to get people to attend initial meetings, local recruiters use three basic techniques:

(a) affiliating with existing networks (e.g. religious laity groups, human rights networks, women's networks and student networks);

[3] See Appendix 5 for a sample recruiting letter addressed to coordinators used by Civic Eye in Slovakia.

[4] See Appendix 6 for a diagram of regional offices in Serbia.

[5] This practice originally was instituted as a way of guaranteeing that observers would be able to vote. In many countries, citizens are assigned to vote in specific polling stations near their legal residence, and it is important to not disenfranchise observers.

(b) establishing contacts with highly regarded institutions such as universities, communication media, teacher unions, labor unions, agricultural groups; and
(c) requesting endorsements from highly respected citizens, who help in the recruitment effort.

Once a person decides to volunteer, she or he becomes a natural recruiter of family members, friends, neighbors and co-workers. Approached in this way, the network often grows rapidly.

Once a person decides to volunteer, she or he becomes a natural recruiter of family members, friends, neighbors and co-workers.

National and regional leaders should attend as many of these meetings as possible; special guests can increase turnout, and leaders can use the opportunity to check on the progress of local recruiters and on the quality of volunteers being brought into the organization.

National leaders must guide local recruiters regarding the number of volunteers they need to recruit. The sample size will be the driving factor determining local target numbers. However, some groups that have an objective to involve as many people as possible in the electoral process may mount an open-ended recruiting campaign and plan to involve new volunteers in other projects. Time and financial constraints, of course, may limit the possibility of an entirely open-ended campaign.

Volunteers needed at the municipal levels include:

- observers to be inside polling stations (often in two-person teams to ensure accountability, share work and reduce potential intimidation);
- runners to collect forms and report information if observers are not permitted to leave and re-enter polling stations;
- office support staff;
- substitutes for observers who are fatigued, sick or absent;
- mobile observers to check outside polling stations and in the surrounding areas for vote-buying, intimidation, blocking entrance or movement of prospective voters, etc., to add to the qualitative analysis of the process;
- observers to cover and report on activities in regional and municipal election offices; and
- telephone operators, as necessary.

The sample size will be the driving factor determining local target numbers.

Volunteers for Central Operations

Once recruiting for quick count observers is well underway, the volunteer coordinator turns to centrally-based operations. National staff, such as the executive director, logistics specialists, trainers, media specialist and the accountant can all benefit from volunteer support. Demand for support in national headquarters increases as elections near. Potential jobs for volunteers include:

- welcoming visitors and answering telephones;
- assembling packets of materials going out to the field;

- assembling and distributing press packets;
- assisting the accountant with record-keeping; and
- providing back-up for busy drivers.

Perhaps the most important and time-consuming work is identifying people to fill various roles in the data collection process.[6] For recruiting purposes, the primary roles to be filled around election day include:

- answering telephones and processing reports in the central data collection center;
- staffing a backup network of data collection centers in the capital city;[7] and
- collecting forms from the backup data collection centers in the capital city, usually on motorcycles or in cars.

This work is done in coordination with the technical team. The number of people needed depends on the type of system designed, the quantity of data collected and the speed with which the data are to be processed. In general, the more sophisticated the system, the larger the number of volunteers needed to staff election-day operations.

Convincing and Screening Recruits

Recruiters at national and local levels must address a wide variety of audiences in their efforts to locate motivated volunteers. Regardless of whether the audience comprises civic or religious leaders, professional organizations, social clubs or combinations of these and members of the general public, recruiters should master a short, meaningful and substantive presentation. The presentation should include:

The recruiting message and broader presentation points should be disseminated through the media as much as possible.

- a succinct message about why this effort is important to the country at this time;
- an overview of the group's election-related activities (if applicable);
- why the group is undertaking a quick count;
- an explanation of the importance of competence and independence in quick count operations;
- a brief plan;
- who is needed for what duties; and
- an enthusiastic invitation to join.

The recruiting message and broader presentation points should be disseminated through the media as much as possible. This will raise awareness of the project, and project recognition is helpful to national, regional and local recruiters. It also will help enhance the group's credibility with the election commission, the public, political players and other key audiences.

[6] See Chapter Seven, *Collecting and Analyzing Quick Count Data,* for more information.
[7] See Chapter Seven, *Collecting and Analyzing Quick Count Data,* for a description of these backup data collection centers.

At each recruiting event, leaders provide a more detailed explanation of what a quick count is and why it is important given the national political context. They explain the overall timeline for organizing in preparation for elections. Finally, they review specific requirements for the jobs that need to be filled. Possible requirements and desirable traits include:

- credibility as an impartial agent and commitment to political neutrality throughout the process;
- ability to donate time;
- skills such as reading, writing, driving and using equipment such as telephones, faxes, computers;
- physical requirements such as good vision and hearing, the ability to walk long distances or stand on their feet all day; and
- expertise (for special projects) in areas such as the law, journalism, computer programming, database management, teaching and accounting.

Even at this early stage, it is a good idea to present a code of conduct that describes the rights and responsibilities governing observers. The code of conduct is based on the organization's mission and goals, requirements contained in national electoral law and regulations, and international standards.[8]

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is it essential to establish a database of all volunteers?

A recent innovation of quick count groups is to centralize biographical information on the volunteers. It facilitates a number of tasks for the volunteer coordination team:

- the production of volunteer identification cards;
- the maintenance of an overall picture of important milestones, such as how many volunteers have been recruited, completed training, or received observer credentials;
- the production of demographic breakdowns of volunteers by gender, age group, language or ethnic group or geographic area;
- the rapid generation of instructions, requests, or diplomas to groups within the volunteer network, or to the whole network; and
- printouts of contact information for the supervisors of observers who do not make timely election-day reports, allowing speedy recovery of missing data.

The database also can record interests of volunteers in various post-election activities, which is significant for the group's efforts beyond elections.

Of course, it is very important to consider security and confidentiality issues around these databases and to take necessary precautions. However, experience has shown that the advantages in most cases far outweigh possible problems.

[8] See Appendices 3 and 4 for more information on provisions that guarantee citizens the right to observe elections. See Appendices 3D-E for sample codes of conduct from Sierra Leone and Bangladesh.

At the end of each recruiting meeting, leaders extend an invitation to interested participants to fill out an application to join the organization. The application contains essential biographical and contact information, to be included in a central database. A pledge of impartiality should accompany the application. In the pledge, volunteers agree to the terms set forth in the code of conduct, attest to not being an activist or candidate for any political party and promise to refrain from participating in partisan activities through the election. It is advisable to maintain the pledge forms in a secure place to be able to demonstrate that all observers made the pledge, should questions be raised about any of them. Many recruiters end the meeting with a group reading and signing of the pledge.[9]

In the pledge, volunteers agree to the terms set forth in the code of conduct.

TRAINING

Volunteer training is generally delivered in three phases, reflecting the recruiting priorities described above. First, regional and municipal committee members are trained. Second, workshops are held for the actual observers, those who will work inside polling stations and phone in reports. Closer to the election, trainers work with computer specialists to train all of those who will work on data collection.

Training Regional and Municipal Committees

The first quick count training programs delivered are for regional committees. The design of these programs is complex because committee members are expected to do a wide variety of jobs, ranging from recruiting and training volunteers to forging good relations with local election officials. Some national trainers elect to gather committee members once for several days, while others offer a series of workshops to cover everything. Topics include:

- what a quick count is;
- why a quick count is important;
- how a quick count is implemented;
- electoral law and regulation, particularly sections directly pertaining to the voting and counting processes, and rights and responsibilities of election observers;
- the duties of regional committees;
- the duties of municipal committees;
- the duties of a quick count observers;
- how to set up regional and municipal offices;
- a timeline of activities up to the elections; and
- how the national office will support regional leaders (e.g., whether there will be financial remuneration or compensation for expenses).

Once regional leaders are trained, they are asked to establish and train municipal committees within their areas. The agenda is very similar to the one

[9] See Appendices 7A-C for sample neutrality pledges from the Ukraine, Guyana and Kazakhstan.

described above. Whenever possible, representatives from headquarters should assist regional leaders as they train municipal leaders.

Training Local Volunteers

Once all regional and municipal committees are trained, the organization focuses on volunteers who will be inside polling stations on election day. Time and resources are the principal factors that dictate the strategy used to reach thousands of people quickly. There are three basic options:

- *A pyramid, or cascade, system*—lead trainer(s) prepare regional leaders to train municipal leaders who, in turn, train quick count observers. This approach is quick, decentralized and economical.
- *Mobile teams*—teams are formed and prepared at the central level, individual teams divide and cover sections of the country until training has taken place everywhere. This system may better preserve uniformity and quality. It is also economical but requires more time.
- *National training day*—enough trainers are prepared and deployed to cover the entire country in one day. For example, a team is sent to train observers in each electoral constituency. This method is fast, and serves as a high-profile national event. However, it requires intensive preparation.

Decentralization should be kept to a minimum in quick counts, because it is vital to minimize mistakes in content and unevenness in quality.

Most organizations implement some combination of the above options. Whatever the techniques employed, the priority must be placed on uniformity. In general, decentralization should be kept to a minimum in quick counts, because it is vital to minimize mistakes in content and unevenness in quality. Good quality forms and training manuals promote consistency, but it is still a good idea to have a delegate from headquarters present at as many training programs as possible.

Some organizations preparing for quick counts establish parallel training operations for large urban areas, such as capital cities. It is important to ensure that adequate staff time and resources are dedicated to these cities, since they will contain a high concentration of polling stations and, therefore, sample points. In Nicaragua in 2001, for example, roughly one-third of the sample points were located in the capital city of Managua. The civic group *Ethics and Transparency* assigned a full-time paid coordinator to recruit and train Managua observers, and the result was nearly 100 percent election day coverage.

Some organizations preparing for quick counts establish parallel training operations for large urban areas, such as capital cities.

Training Volunteers for Central Operations

The volunteer coordination team must also train volunteers to help in the national office. All headquarters volunteers, whether assisting the executive director, trainers, logistics officers, information specialists or accountants, should also be trained and accredited as observers. This provides them with an intimate understanding of the work being conducted and the responsibilities of those they are assisting. It also prepares them to substitute for observers in the capital city, if needed.

Three specialized groups of volunteers are responsible for data collection and should receive separate training. As described above, they:

- answer telephones and process reports in the central data collection center;
- answer telephones and process reports in backup data collection centers; and
- use motorcycles or cars to collect forms from the network of private homes or offices in the capital city.

The volunteer coordination team must work closely with the technical team on these training programs; they should be co-designed and delivered by the head trainer and the computer specialist. These jobs require mutual knowledge of the volunteer network and the data collection and analysis system.

Quick counts are unique projects that call for special training methods. They are time and politically sensitive. They both motivate and teach.

Training Techniques

A thorough discussion of adult education methodology is beyond the scope of this handbook and likely unnecessary, because groups should have at least one seasoned trainer on staff. The head trainer should have significant experience designing materials and training programs for adults, and particular expertise working with volunteers. Nonetheless, quick counts are unique projects that call for special training methods. They are time and politically sensitive. Trainers must both motivate volunteers and teach them to do specific jobs. Described below are a few techniques and activities that have proven effective:

- Start with the big picture: Inspire volunteers by explaining why a quick count is considered crucial given the actual political context. Then go into the organization's overall plan. Educate participants on relevant pieces of the electoral process, and end with training on specific jobs.

- Provide the historical and political context: Explain the history of quick counts and how they have been used successfully in the region and around the world. It is useful to involve international guests at training sessions, such as advisors or donors, or prominent local figures who have been involved in quick counts in other countries. This is particularly helpful when training national staff and regional committee leaders.

- Convey the reason behind the plan: While detailing the organization's plans, explain why certain decisions were made. For example, observers are often asked to make the same report in three different phone calls. Trainers should explain that, in Paraguay and Peru, the electricity was shut off in the central data collection center on election day and, thus, the calls to backup telephones in private homes were essential. Volunteers are more likely to complete tasks if they understand their importance.

- Refer to the manuals: Well-designed manuals systematize training programs. Be sure all instructions and messages are uniform to avoid confusion about roles or jobs. Encourage volunteers to study them outside the training program.

- Use experiential techniques: Since many quick count observers will only have one formal training session, set up training to take them through the experience of observing. Have volunteers simulate the voting and counting process. Use role plays or dramas to illustrate problems that may occur. Perhaps most importantly, use debates, friendly quizzes or game show formats to test whether participants have really learned their jobs well.[10, 11]

- Always save time for small planning sessions: Dedicate time for trainers to meet one-on-one with committees or individual participants to set up realistic work plans and to resolve issues particular to a local area. Use sessions to take care of important details, such as how to reach a remote polling station or to resolve sensitive issues such as finances.

- Talk about quick count "politics": Quick count sponsors and organizers often face opposition from political parties and/or electoral authorities. Participants should be told that this is normal and to be expected. They should be encouraged to discuss their concerns and brainstorm responses should accusations be leveled at the group in public or in the press. Remember to teach and reinforce the organization's message on these points, so that the local response is consistent with the national message.

- Include a discussion on security measures: Depending on whether there is a history of violence and the likelihood elections will be hotly contested, security could become important. The sample is kept secret, and observers often do not know which polling station they will cover until very close to the election. Observers may be assigned codes for identifying themselves when reporting. In some cases where safety is a concern, local committees have had to send observers in expanded teams and provide vehicles. This kind of issue should also be addressed during the planning meeting suggested above.

Many groups publicize training activities to demonstrate to electoral authorities, political parties and the public that they are well organized and growing. Well-designed training programs highlight a group's commitment to professionalism, fairness and independence. In addition, disseminating training materials and observer checklists bolsters the deterrent function of a quick count.

Set up training to take observers through the experience of observing.

Many groups publicize training activities to demonstrate to electoral authorities, political parties and the public that they are well organized and growing.

[10] See NDI's *Pocket Guide to Training, (1998)*; J. Pretty and I. Guijt, *A Trainer's Guide for Participatory Learning and Action, (1999)* pp. 1- 12, 1999; J. Eitington, *The Winning Trainer, (1996)* pp. 174- 179, 1996.

[11] See Appendix 8 for an example of an experiential training exercise developed for quick counts.

The volunteer coordination team should continuously assess volunteer satisfaction, particularly in the busy regional and municipal committees.

Motivating Volunteers

Motivating volunteers is a frequently glossed-over but fundamental part of the volunteer coordination team's job. Showing appreciation for volunteers' dedication is not just the right thing to do, it is essential to the success of the effort. Many are entrusted with crucial information and asked to fill indispensable roles. Those who are dissatisfied are less likely to do a thorough job.

An effective recruiting message motivates volunteers from the start. In fact, experience across the world demostrates that, once volunteers understand how a quick count works and why it is important, they express appreciation at being given an opportunity to do something concrete to promote or strengthen democracy in their countries. Their enthusiasm as they read and sign impartiality pledges is palpable, and their motivation is inspiring.

During the run-up to elections, the volunteer coordination team should continuously assess volunteer satisfaction, particularly in the busy regional and municipal committees. The national coordinator should periodically contact them, either by visiting or making phone calls. Any problems or misunderstandings should be addressed and resolved before they become larger obstacles to the quick count's success. A side-benefit to these conversations is realized when regional and municipal coordinators provide volunteers with substantive information on pre-election activities or the political environment.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

The following additional activities have helped motivate volunteers in many countries:

- sending thank-you letters from the board of directors or other prominent figures;
- providing t-shirts, hats or other clothing identifying the volunteer as a member of the organization;
- giving gifts such as backpacks or bags to volunteers who take on leadership roles;
- issuing certificates to volunteers at important milestones, such as for meeting a recruiting target, successfully completing a simulation exercise and at the end of the project;
- featuring volunteers at press events or in promotional videos;
- inviting regional volunteers to attend meetings with donors, electoral officials or international election observer missions;
- organizing celebrations to mark a successful quick count operation and meetings to debrief volunteers and discuss lessons learned.

FIGURE 4-2:
CERTIFICATE ACKNOWLEDGING VOLUNTEER ELECTION OBSERVER

LOGISTICS

A successful volunteer coordination team will identify, recruit, train and deploy hundreds or thousands of volunteers. The logistics required to support and supply this cadre with needed materials and resources are considerable and daunting. Unfortunately, the costs and time needed to complete these tasks are often underestimated. It is not unusual for quick count sponsors to be forced to scale back their estimates (and their sample sizes) when the enormity and complexity of these tasks become apparent.

The work of a logistics officer is generally divided into two areas: 1) making travel arrangements for staff and volunteers; and 2) procuring and distributing materials and supplies. During the recruiting and training phases of the quick count project, there is a great deal of work to be done arranging travel for staff, including transportation, meals and lodging. As the election draws near, however, the logistics officer can be overwhelmed with the task of supplying the network with its various material needs, including:

- basic office supplies and equipment;
- training materials;
- money or reimbursement to cover national, regional and local organizing and training costs;
- election day per diem;
- election day forms, checklists;
- communications equipment such as telephones, radios, facsimiles; and
- data processing equipment such as computers and printers.

While the volunteer coordinator will often be the primary contact person for regional and local leaders and volunteers, she or he must count on the logistics officer to take care of local and logistical support.

In order to function well, the logistics officer has to coordinate her or his activities with the other members of the staff, such as the executive director, volunteer coordinator and accountant, to build systems and put in place policies for delivering and receiving materials. A few recommendations for the logistics officer are listed below.

- Seek advice from the network; understand that each region will have unique logistical quirks. Request information on best methods for distributing information or materials. Keep this information in a database.
- Have back-up systems for every region. Know about ground transportation if flights are cancelled. Know where a radio communications network exists in the event that telephone lines are down.
- Pick a primitive over a modern method. As a rule, basic systems pose less risk of breakdown. Plan to use the most basic transportation and communications systems possible and move to more sophisticated systems only when the basic systems are too slow.
- Time the process. Perhaps most importantly, estimate when the "last message" can be sent to reach the entire volunteer network. If this process takes five days, there is little point in worrying about a change in instructions three days before the election!

Dedicating Sufficient Time and Staff

Building and supporting a volunteer network is, by far, the most time consuming aspect of quick count preparations. It is important to stress that this work continues after election day. In many countries, the counting process continues for days, even weeks. Observers are often asked to investigate complaints or watch the resolution of challenges at local or regional election offices. Additionally, the national office should be prepared to receive calls from the field, as committee leaders and observers have questions and expect to be kept abreast of post-election developments. Finally, it takes a significant period of time to collect all forms. All of this should be considered and factored into planning for the post-election period.

REMINDER

The largest job within a quick count is to build and train a network of volunteer observers. The basic components of this job are:

1. designing observer forms and instructional manuals;
2. recruiting volunteers in every region of the country;
3. training volunteers on the electoral process and their duties; and
4. managing the logistics required to recruit and train, as well as to support the network.

CHAPTER FIVE

Statistical Principles and Quick Counts

The quick count methodology applies statistical principles to a very practical problem—verifying an electoral outcome.[1] This chapter outlines those statistical principles and describes how they work together. The briefest way to present this information is to use the language of mathematics, and to a certain extent that language is unavoidable. The goal of this chapter, however, is to present the basic concepts in a non-technical way so that the logic behind quick count methodology is accessible to a general audience.

The first part of this chapter presents the foundations of quick count methodology. It begins by considering the robustness of quick count data and such core concepts as sample and population. The chapter then turns to an explanation of statistical principles, such as the law of large numbers and the central limit theorem. The second, more technical half of the chapter presents the process for constructing a sample. It outlines measures of central tendency and dispersion, and then discusses standard strategies for calculating and drawing samples. It also takes up practical questions, such as correction factors, that are designed to manage the unique problems that arise in the application of statistical principles to quick count situations.

Statistical principles drive the methodology for collecting and analyzing quick count data.

BASIC STATISTICAL PRINCIPLES

Statistical principles drive the methodology for collecting and analyzing quick count data. This methodology is grounded in broadly accepted scientific principles. Like the law of gravity, these statistical principles are not just a matter

[1] This chapter focuses on the statistical principles involved in drawing a random sample of polling stations, from which data is collected and analyzed to project or verify election results. Quick count methodology, however, has evolved, and the same statistical principles now drive the qualitative observation of an election. Chapter Six, *The Qualitative Component of the Quick Count,* describes how information on the voting and counting processes can be collected from the same observers and the same polling stations used to retrieve data on the vote count. These findings can be reliably generalized to the quality of the voting and counting processes throughout the country.

of opinion or open to partisan interpretation; they are demonstrable and universally accepted. It is precisely because these principles are scientifically based that quick count organizers can make authoritative claims about election outcomes. It is one thing to claim that an election has been fair or unfair. Quick count methodology allows a group to demonstrate why election-day processes can be considered fair, or the extent to which they have been unfair.

Quick count methodology allows a group to demonstrate why election-day processes can be considered fair, or the extent to which they have been unfair.

Reliability and Validity

Statements made about election-day processes are only as strong as the data upon which they are based. Consequently, it is important to take quite deliberate steps to ensure that the data collected meet certain standards. One is that the quick count data themselves have to be "robust." That is, the data have to be both reliable and valid.

Data are considered reliable when independent observers watching the same event (the vote count) and using the same measuring instrument (the observer form) evaluate that event in exactly the same way. A simple example illustrates the point:

> Three different people (A, B and C) repeatedly measure the height of a fourth person (Z) on the same day. The measure of that person's height would be considered reliable if all three observers (A, B and C) using the same measuring instrument (a standard tape measure) produced exactly the same results in their measure of Z's height.

The very same principle applies to quick count data collection; it is essential that both indicators and measurements are reliable. The information produced by observers should not change because of poor indicators, inadequate measurement instruments (an elastic measuring tape) or poor procedures—nor should the results vary depending upon who is doing the measuring. Reliable results will vary only when there are genuine changes in the phenomenon that is being measured. Reliable data, then, are data that can be independently verified.

It is important to take quite deliberate steps to ensure that the data collected meet certain standards. One is that the quick count data themselves have to be "robust."

Quick count data should also be valid. Validity concerns how well any indicator used actually fits the intended concept that is being measured. A measure is considered valid if the indicator used for measurement corresponds exactly, and entirely, to the scope and content of the object that is being measured. The previous example can be extended to illustrate the point:

> Three additional observers (D, E and F) are asked to report the size of the same person, Z. D and E might report that Z, who is six feet tall, is big, whereas F might say that Z is medium. The problem is that the concept of size is ambiguous and open to different interpretations; for some people it might mean more than just height; therefore, size lacks validity. D might consider Z big because Z is much taller than D. E

might think of Z as big because Z is heavier than E. F might report that Z is medium because Z is about the same size and height as F, and F thinks of herself as medium. In fact, the ambiguity of the notion of size is a problem; it is a threat to reliability and validity.

It is for these reasons that exit polls and opinion polls should be interpreted with extreme caution. Exit and opinion polls often produce unreliable estimates of actual vote results on election day. This is because exit polls measure recollections, and opinion polls measure intentions concerning citizens' votes. For quite understandable reasons, people are tempted to misreport either how they voted or how they intend to vote. Quick counts, by comparison, are reliable and valid because observers collect official vote count results from individual polling stations. Quick counts measure behavior, not recollections or stated intentions. They measure how people actually voted, not how they might have reported their vote to a complete stranger.[2]

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can quick count leaders ensure that quick count data are reliable and valid?

The first step is to ensure that all leaders and staff understand these concepts. Everyone involved should be aware that quick count results will be compromised if data are not reliable (independently verifiable) and valid (measuring what is intended). The second step is to describe the implications. For example, questions on observer forms must be tested for validity; and observer forms should contain response categories that allow data to be reliably reported. Training programs are also crucial. They must be designed to ensure that all volunteers understand the concepts involved in observation, and that all observers will measure the same event using the same form in the same way.[3]

The Sample

The robustness of quick count data also depends on how the sample is constructed; the sample determines which votes are used as the basis for estimating election outcomes. The basic idea of a sample crops up in many different ways in everyday life. For example, chemists routinely take a "sample" of a compound and analyze that sample to make accurate statements about the chemical properties of the entire compound. Physicians take blood samples from patients to determine whether the composition of a their blood is causing illness. Fortunately, physicians do not need to drain all of the blood from patients' bodies to know exactly what it contains. Such an approach is impractical and

[2] Quick counts also measure qualitative aspects of voting and counting processes, and, as discussed in Chapter 6: *The Qualitative Component of a Quick Count,* great care is required in designing questions to measure qualitative indicators.

[3] These issues are considered in more detail throughout the manual. In particular, Chapter Four, *Building the Volunteer Network,* discusses designing observer forms and manuals, recruiting and training volunteers. Chapter Six, *The Qualitative Component of a Quick Count,* lays out further recommendations for designing quick count observer forms.

unnecessary, since a single blood sample reveals all that a physician needs to know about the contents of a patient's entire blood supply.

Quick count samples rely on exactly the same principles. An observer group might consider asking volunteers to observe every single polling station in the country and report every single result. That strategy would require a huge amount of resources, and it is unnecessary. Like the chemist and the physician, observer groups can learn everything they need to know about the entire voting population by using a carefully designed sample. The method is faster, cheaper and more practical.

Quick count samples provide a reliable foundation for making accurate estimates of the total population.

Quick count samples provide a reliable foundation for making accurate estimates of the total population because a sample is a particular subset of the total population, a subset that reveals population characteristics. Even so, designing samples means making choices, and those choices have a profound effect on both the accuracy of the data and the kinds of data analysis possible.

The Population

Technically, a population refers to all the relevant individual cases that exist within a certain boundary. Often statisticians are not concerned with counting individuals. Quick counts are not interested in every individual living within the boundary of a particular country. Quick counts are concerned only with the relevant population—every individual who is eligible to vote.

The quick count's relevant population excludes all people who, for whatever legal reason, are not eligible to vote. The electoral laws of most countries have clear rules concerning voting age, for example. Very young people are not usually eligible to vote, although the precise age limit varies from one country to the next. Similarly, most countries have citizenship requirements that allow only citizens to vote in national elections.[4]

Quick counts begin with the assumption that the vote count data themselves are reliable and valid.

Getting from a Sample to a Population

Quick counts begin with the assumption that the vote count data themselves are reliable and valid. In other words, quick counts assume that the official vote counts produced at polling stations—the data collected by observers from each and every sample point—are robust information. In fact, observer groups are able to verify that assumption by undertaking a systematic qualitative observation of the voting and counting processes at the polling stations.[5]

If a systematic qualitative observation of election-day procedures establishes that the vote count data are reliable and valid, and if basic statistical princi-

[4] It should be noted that the democratic nature of an election can be negated by improper, discriminatory exclusions from voting eligibility and/or by manipulations of official voter lists. Such issues are not addressed by quick counts but should be covered by other election monitoring activities. See, e.g., Building Confidence in the Voter Registration Process, An NDI Guide for Political Parties and Civic Organizations (2001).

[5] Chapter Six, *The Qualitative Component of the Quick Count,* details the procedures followed to systematically evaluate the quality of the voting and counting procedures.

ples are followed, then accurate estimates of the distribution of the vote for the entire country can be made on the basis of a properly drawn sample. It is possible to make very accurate estimates about the behavior of a population (how the population voted) on the basis of a sample (of the results at selected polling stations) because of the theory of probability.

Probability: The Law of Large Numbers and the Central Limit Theorem
Probability concerns the chance that an event, or an outcome, will occur. It is possible to estimate the probability of unknown future events – that Brazil will win the World Cup, or that it will rain today. No one knows ahead of time what will happen, but it is possible to make an educated guess based on the team's performance in other events, or the meteorological conditions outside. It is also possible to make predictions about probability based on the known likelihood that something will happen. Consider the classic statistical example of tossing a fair coin, one that is unbiased:

> A coin is tossed in the air 100 times. With a fair coin, the chances are that the outcome will be heads 50 times and tails 50 times, or something very close to that. Suppose now that the same rule was tested using only a few tosses of the same coin. Tossing that same coin 12 times in the air might produce outcomes that are not exactly even. The outcome could be 9 heads and 3 tails. Indeed, in exceptional circumstances, it is possible that, with twelve throws, the coin could land heads up every time. In fact, the probability that such an unusual outcome will occur can be calculated quite precisely. The probability of twelve heads in a row turns out to be one in two to the twelfth power $(1/2)^{12}$, or one in 4,096 or 0.024 percent. That is, the chance of getting twelve heads (or tails) in a row is one in four thousand and ninety six. Probability theory indicates that the distribution between heads and tails showing will even out *in the long run.*

One aspect of probability theory at work in the above coin toss example is the law of large numbers. This statistical principle holds that, the more times that a fair coin is tossed in the air, the more likely (probable) it is that the overall distribution of total outcomes (observations) will conform to an entirely predictable and known pattern. *The practical implication is clear: the more data we have, the more certain we can be about predicting outcomes accurately.*

This statistical law of large numbers is firmly grounded in mathematics, but the non-technical lesson is that there is safety in numbers. A second example illustrates a related point important to understanding the basis of the quick count methodology.

> Consider a class of 500 students taking the same university course. Most students will earn Bs and Cs, although a few students will earn As, and a few will earn Ds, or even F's. That same distribution of grades would almost certainly not be replicated precisely if the same course

had a class of 10 or fewer students. More importantly, the grades of exceptionally good, or exceptionally poor, students will have quite a different impact on the average grade for the entire class. In a small class, those "outlier" grades will have a big impact on the overall distribution and on the class average; they will skew the results of the grade curve. But in a larger class, the impact of any individual exceptional grade will have a far smaller impact on the average mark for the whole class.

The practical implication of the grade distribution example is simple: as the amount of data (number of observation points) increases, the impact of any one individual data point on the total result decreases.

A second statistical principle that is vital to quick count methodology is known as the central limit theorem. This axiom holds that, the greater the number of observations (sample points), the more likely it is that the distribution of the data points will tend to conform to a known pattern. A class of 500 physics students in Brazil will produce the same grade distribution as a class of 300 literature students in France, even though the marks themselves may be different. In both cases, most of the data points will cluster around the average grade.

These two statistical axioms – the law of large numbers and the central limit theorem – work in conjunction with each other. Together they indicate that:

1. the larger the number of observations (sample points), the less likely it is that any exceptional individual result will affect the average (law of large numbers); and
2. the greater the number of observations, the more likely it is that the dataset as a whole will produce a distribution of cases that corresponds to a normal curve (central limit theorem).

The greater the number of observations we have, the more likely it is that we can make reliable statistical predictions about the characteristics of the population.

A general principle follows from these statistical rules, one that has powerful implications for quick counts: the greater the number of observations we have, the more likely it is that we can make reliable statistical predictions about the characteristics of the population. However, it is absolutely crucial to understand that, for these two statistical principles to hold, the selection of the cases in the sample must be chosen randomly.

Randomness

A sample can be thought of not just as a subset of a population, but as a miniature replica of the population from which it is drawn. The population of every country can be considered as unique in certain respects. No two countries are the same when it comes to how such characteristics as language, religion, gender, age, occupation and education are distributed in the population. Whether an individual possesses a car, or lives in a city rather than a town, or has a job, or owns a pet dog contributes to the uniqueness of personal experience. It is impossible to produce a definitive and exhaustive list of every single feature

that distinguishes us as individuals, let alone for entire populations; there are just too many possible combinations of factors to document. Fortunately, quick count methodology does not require this. Quick counts are not concerned with all of the things that make people different. Quick counts are only concerned with factors that have a demonstrable impact on the distribution of votes within the voting population.

Sample points must be selected at random, and only at random, for the resulting sample to be representative of the total population.

Sample points from the relevant population must be selected at random, and only at random, for the resulting sample to be representative of the total population. In practice, randomness means that the probability of any single sample point being selected from the population is exactly the same as the probability that any other sample point will be selected. And for reasons that have already been outlined, the law of large numbers and central limit theorem indicate that the larger the sample drawn, the more accurately that sample will represent the characteristics of the population.

Homogeneity and Heterogeneity

Reliable samples do not require huge amounts of detailed information about the social characteristics of the total population. However, it is essential to know whether the population of interest is relatively diverse (heterogeneous) or not (homogenous). Assessments of heterogeneity and homogeneity have a significant impact on how populations can be reliably sampled.

There are several ways to examine the level of heterogeneity, or diversity, of any population. Ethnic composition, religion and languages can impact heterogeneity. The primary concern for quick counts, however, is not just with the level of ethnic or religious heterogeneity in a population. The vital question for quick counts is the question of whether that heterogeneity has a significant impact on voting behavior. If one candidate is preferred by 80 percent of the population, then that population is considered relatively homogeneous, regardless of the religious, linguistic or ethnic diversity of the population. Similarly, if the electoral race is close, with the votes evenly divided between two or more candidates, a population is considered relatively heterogeneous.

The greater the heterogeneity of the voting population, the larger the sample has to be in order to produce an accurate estimate of voting behavior.

A common misperception is that socially diverse populations will always be heterogeneous voting populations. However, just because populations are socially heterogeneous, it does not follow that they will be heterogeneous when it comes to voting. For example, India has a multiplicity of languages and religions but is relatively homogenous when it comes to constructing a sample of the voting population.

The greater the heterogeneity of the voting population, the larger the sample has to be in order to produce an accurate estimate of voting behavior. A comparison of required sample sizes for three countries with very different population sizes – Canada, the United States and Switzerland – illustrates this point.

FIGURE 5-1:
DESIRED SAMPLE SIZES FOR THE US, CANADA AND SWITZERLAND

	UNITED STATES	CANADA	SWITZERLAND
Population:	263,814,032	28,434,545	7,084,984
Margin of error:	+/-2%	+/-2%	+/-2%
Desired sample size:	1200	2400	4300

As Figure 5-1 demonstrates, heterogeneity is not determined by the ethnic characteristics of these populations. Heterogeneity is determined by the likelihood that one candidate will win a majority of the electoral support. In a two party system, as in the United States, the electoral race is often easier to follow and much easier to predict – voters usually have only two choices. But in Switzerland, the larger number of parties makes electoral competition more complicated. Swiss political parties are clearly supported by different language and religious groups. Even a country such as Canada, with five official parties, is less heterogeneous than Switzerland.

The safest strategy is to make the conservative assumption that the voting population is heterogeneous.

A related principle is also illustrated in Figure 5-1. The required sample size is determined by the expected level of homogeneity in voting results, not by the total population size of a country. These three countries with very different total populations require different sample sizes to maintain a margin of error of plus or minus two percent (+/-2%). Indeed, it turns out that the country with the larger population requires the smallest sample. In fact, the variations in the required sample size are attributable to variations in the homogeneity of the three different populations.

In practice, reliable information about the heterogeneity, or homogeneity, of voting populations in many countries is hard to find. The safest strategy under these circumstances, one that requires no guess-work, is to make the conservative assumption that the voting population is heterogeneous. As will become clear, that assumption has a profound impact on how a quick count's sample size is calculated.

The more confidence required that the sample distribution will reflect the population distribution, the larger the sample has to be.

Confidence Levels: Specifying the Relationship between Sample and Population

One additional piece of information has an important impact on how statisticians estimate population on the basis of a sample—the confidence level. Confidence levels concern how the sample data can be compared to the population. The more confidence required that the sample distribution will reflect the population distribution, the larger the sample has to be. This is because, in larger samples, exceptional individual results will have less effect on the distribution.

The conventional practice for statisticians is to rely on a confidence level of 95 percent. Technically, the confidence level expresses, as a percentage, the probability with which one is certain that a sample mean will provide an accurate estimate of the population mean. Thus, a 95 percent confidence level indicates that 95 percent of all sample means will, indeed, correspond to the mean for the population. Because the consequences of inaccurate quick count results can be so serious, the standard practice in election observations is to design the sample with more conservative parameters, a 99 percent confidence level.

Because the consequences of inaccurate quick count results can be so serious, the standard practice in election observations is to design the sample with a 99 percent confidence level.

CONSTRUCTING THE SAMPLE

The practical business of constructing a quick count sample involves making a combination of judgements. These include:

- identifying the unit of analysis;
- determining the margin of error and confidence levels;
- determining the most appropriate type of random sample; and
- estimating correction factors for sample retrieval rates and non-voting.

The Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis refers to the precise object that is being examined. If the goal is to generalize about an entire population, then the unit of analysis is often the individual. However, it is possible in some cases to generalize from a sample to a population by adopting a larger aggregate as the unit of analysis, such as a household or city block.

With quick counts, the objective is to estimate the distribution of citizens' votes between political parties. In a democratic election, the individual vote is secret and so the individual vote cannot be the unit of analysis. Instead, quick counts typically use the official result at an individual polling station as the unit of analysis. This is because the polling station is the smallest unit of analysis at which individual votes are aggregated and because election rules usually require that an official count take place at the polling station.

Quick counts typically use the official result at an individual polling station as the unit of analysis.

The Margin of Error: How Accurate Do We Need to Be?

The margin of error is one of the most important pieces of information considered when constructing a sample. Expressed as a percentage, the margin of error refers to the likely range of values for any observation. The following example illustrates the concept:

> Results from one polling station indicate that 48 percent of votes support Candidate A. If the designed margin of error is five percent, there is good reason to be confident that the actual results for Candidate A will fall somewhere between 43 and 53 percent when all voters within the population are considered.

Civic organizations conducting quick counts typically design the quick count samples to have a margin of error of plus or minus 0.5 percent (+/-0.5%).

Civic organizations conducting quick counts typically design the quick count samples to have a margin of error of plus or minus 0.5 percent (+/-0.5%). There is occasionally a reason (e.g., the expectation that a vote will be very close) to select an even more stringent margin of error. The desired margin of error depends on what degree of accuracy is required from the estimates.

The margin of error is calculated using the following formula:

$$ME = \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}} * z$$

Where
ME = margin of error
s = standard deviation (assume 0.5)
n = sample size
z = z value for the selected confidence level (for 95% is 1.96, for 99 is 2.58)

Any dataset, a set of sample point observations, has at least two properties. The data will have a central tendency, around which most of the results cluster. They will also have a variance or spread. Variance refers to how widely, or narrowly, observations are dispersed. There are different ways of measuring central tendency and dispersion, and these are relevant in calculations of the margin of error.

Measures of Central Tendency

The most widely known measure of central tendency is the mean. The arithmetic mean is simply the average value of all recorded observations. The arithmetic mean is derived by adding the values for each observation in a data set and then dividing by the number of observations. The following example illustrates this process:

> The following set of numbers: 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 has a mean of 5. This is because 1+3+4+6+7+9=30, the number of observations is 6, and so 30÷6=5.

There are other ways to measure the central tendency of any data. The mode, for example, refers to the number that occurs most frequently in any set of data. In the following set of numbers: 1, 3, 3, 3, 5, 6 and 7, the observation occurring most frequently is 3. Notice, however, that the arithmetic mean of this same set of numbers is 4 [(1 +3+3+3+5+6+7)÷7=4].

A third measure of central tendency is the median. This number occurs in the middle of a given set of observations. For the following data set: 1, 3, 6, 7, 8,

8 and 10, the number in the middle of the observations is 7; there are three observations smaller than 7 and three observations with values that are greater than 7. The mode for this dataset, however, is 8 because 8 occurs most frequently. The arithmetic mean for this data set is 6.14. Statisticians usually report the mean, rather than the median or the mode, as the most useful measure of central tendency.

Measures of Dispersion

A second feature of data concerns measures of dispersion, which indicate how widely, or how narrowly, observed values are distributed. From the example above, it is clear that any given data set will have an arithmetic mean. However, that mean provides no information about how widely, or narrowly, the observed values are dispersed. The following data sets have the same arithmetic mean of 3:

2, 2, 3, 4, 4

-99, -99, 3, 99, 99,

These two datasets have quite different distributions. One way to express the difference in the two datasets is to consider the range of numbers. In the first set, the smallest number is 2 and the largest number is 4. The resulting range, then, is 4 minus 2, or 2. In the second set, the smallest number is negative 99 and the largest number is positive 99. The resulting range is positive 99 minus negative 99, or 198.

Obviously, the different ranges of the two datasets capture one aspect of the fundamental differences between these two sets of numbers. Even so, the range is only interested in two numbers -- the largest and the smallest; it ignores all other data points. Much more information about the spread of the observations within the dataset can be expressed with a different measure, the variance.

In non-technical terms, the variance expresses the average of all the distances between each observation value and the mean of all observation values. The variance takes into account the arithmetic mean of a dataset and the number of observations, in addition to each of the datapoints themselves. As a result, it includes all the information needed to explain the spread of a dataset. The variance for any set of observations can be determined in four steps:

1. Calculate the arithmetic mean of the dataset.
2. Calculate the distance between every data point and the mean, and square the distance.
3. Add all the squared distances together.
4. Divide this by the number of observations.

The formula, then, is as follows:

For a dataset containing observations $x_1, x_2, x_3 \ldots x_n$

$$s^2 = \frac{(x_1-x)^2 + (x_2-x)^2 + (x_3-x)^2 \ldots (x_n-x)^2}{n-1}$$

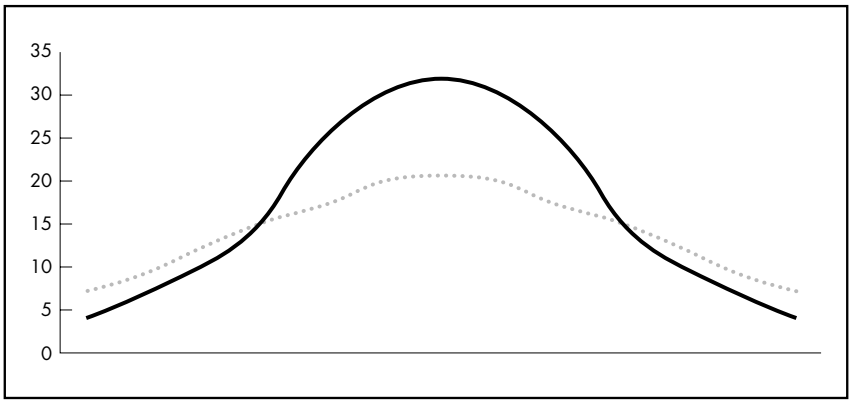
Where
s^2 = variance
$x_1, x_2, x_3 \ldots x_n$ are the observations
x is the mean
n is the number of observations

In short form, it appears as: $s^2 = \frac{\sum (x-x)^2}{n-1}$

The standard deviation is the square root of the variance. Statisticians usually rely on the standard deviation because it expresses the variance in standardized units that can be meaningfully compared. The larger the standard deviation for any dataset, the more the data are spread out from the mean. The smaller the standard deviation, the more tightly are the individual data points clustered around the mean.

There is one additional measurement concept that needs to be considered: the normal distribution. The preceding discussion shows that, in every data set, individual data points will cluster around an average, or mean, point. Another way to express the same idea is to consider what proportion of all of the observations fall within one standard deviation of the mean. If datasets are large enough, and if they conform to the principles of randomness, the dispersion of the data values will conform to what is called a normal distribution. The normal distribution has well-known properties: the normal curve, as seen in Figure 5-2, is bell-shaped and symmetrical, and the mean, mode and median coincide.

FIGURE 5-2:
NORMAL DISTRIBUTION CURVES



The size of the variance determines the precise shape of the actual distribution. The key point for quick count purposes is that any dataset that conforms to the normal distribution curve has exactly the same standard properties. These are: 68.3 percent of all observed values will fall within one standard deviation of the mean, 95.4 percent of all results will fall within two standard deviations of the mean and 99.7 percent of all results will fall within three standard deviations of the mean. Not all datasets will conform to this exact pattern. If there is a lot of variance within the data, the curve will be relatively flat. If there is little variation, the curve will appear more peaked.

The distance from the mean, expressed as standard deviations, can also be referred to as Z scores or critical values. Most standard statistics textbooks contain a table of Z values for the normal distribution and analysts do not have to calculate Z values each time they confront a data set. Significantly, if data have a 95 percent confidence interval (95 percent of all sample means will include the population mean), then it is clear that the results will fall within 1.96 standard deviations of the mean. Similarly, a 99 percent confidence level indicates that 99 percent of all results (for which the sample mean will include the population mean) fall within 2.58 standard deviations from the mean. In these cases, the values 1.96 and 2.58 represent the critical values, or Z values, for the confidence levels 95 percent and 99 percent, respectively.

Calculating the margin of error requires relying on the standard deviation and Z values. The standard deviation and Z values, in turn, involve measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion and confidence levels. As Figure 5-3 shows, margins of error vary with confidence levels and with sample sizes. In general, the higher the confidence level, the higher the margin of error. The larger the sample size, the lower the margin of error. Decisions about what margin of error can be tolerated with a quick count will directly impact calculations to determine the required minimum sample size.

Decisions about what margin of error can be tolerated with a quick count will directly impact calculations to determine the required minimum sample size.

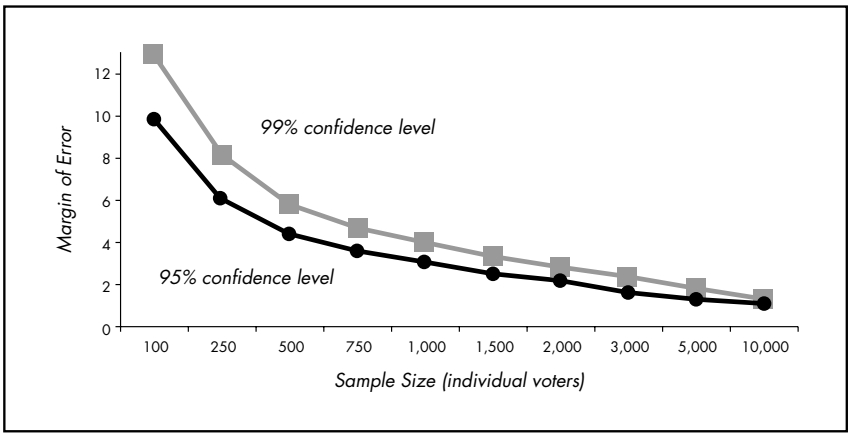


FIGURE 5-3:
MARGINS OF ERROR
AND SAMPLE SIZES

Types of Samples

There are two basic types of samples: probability samples and non-probability samples. Probability samples comply with the principles of randomness and are, therefore, representative of total populations. Quick counts always use probability samples.

Non-probability samples do not select sample points randomly, and the extent to which they are representative of the wider population is not known. Non-probability samples are useful under some circumstances. They are inexpensive and easier to construct and conduct than probability samples. The cases in the sample are chosen on the basis of how easy or comfortable they are to study. For example, a television reporter stands outside a ballpark and asks fans whether they enjoyed a baseball game. The strategy provides quick and interesting footage for broadcast, but it does not provide reliable information about the total population inside the ballpark.

For quick count purposes, the fatal limitation of non-probability samples is that they are not reliable for generalizing to the population. The data they produce, therefore, are not reliable estimates of population characteristics. If, for example, a quick count sample were constructed entirely from polling stations in the capital city, the results would almost certainly be different from those coming from a sample of polling stations in rural areas. People drawing on raw data at convenient, easily accessible, locations are not using data that are representative of the population as a whole.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can statisticians design quick count samples that combine the benefits of the probability sample with the benefits of a non-probability sample?

Absolutely not. Either a sample is a probability sample, in which case it conforms completely to the principles of randomness, or it is a non-probability sample. Combining elements of both sampling techniques will produce a non-probability sample. Consequently, the temptation to substitute "convenient" polling stations for inaccessible ones must be avoided. Sample points cannot be substituted for each other because that strategy violates the premise of randomness – that each sample point has exactly the same probability of being selected. Instead, quick count organizers must find a way to get trained observers to, and information from, the precise polling stations contained in the sample, even if they are in remote areas. Collecting and reporting data from a more convenient polling station can compromise the reliability and validity of the entire quick count.

Quick counts must always use probability samples to produce results that are representative of a defined population.

Quick counts must always use probability samples to produce results that are representative of a defined population. There are several types of probability

samples, and each can provide accurate representations of the population by relying on different methods. The two most common types of probability samples are the general random sample and the stratified random sample.

The sampling for a quick count can only begin when an accurate and comprehensive list of all the polling stations is available.

General Random Samples

In the general random sample, units of analysis are randomly selected one at a time from the entire population. This gives each unit in a population an equal chance of being included in the sample. However, for every unit of analysis to have an equal chance of being included in the sample, there must be an accurate list of all possible units of analysis.

Statisticians refer to the list of all members of a population as a sampling frame. In the case of a quick count, the unit of analysis is the polling station; therefore, the sampling for a quick count can only begin when an accurate and comprehensive list of all the polling stations is available.

Stratified Random Samples

The stratified random sample applies the same principles of randomness as the general random sample. However, the sample frames from which the sample points are selected consist of pre-determined, and mutually exclusive, strata of the total population. For example:

> The goal of a project is to use a sample of 1000 students to generalize about a university population of 20,000 students, half of whom are undergraduate students and half of whom are graduate students. While the general random sample approach simply randomly selects 1000 sample points out of the total list of 20,000 students, the stratified sample approach follows two steps. First, it divides the list of all students into two groups (strata), one including all undergraduate students and the other including all graduate students. Next, it selects 500 cases from strata 1 (undergraduates) and another 500 cases from strata 2 (graduates).

The practice of stratifying means that the end result will produce a total sample that ***exactly*** reflects the distribution of cases in the population as a whole.

In the stratified approach, the selection of each case still satisfies the criteria of randomness: the probability of the selection of each case within each strata is exactly the same (in the above example, 1 in 20). However, the practice of stratifying means that the end result will produce a total sample that *exactly* reflects the distribution of cases in the population as a whole. In effect, the stratification procedure predetermines the distribution of cases across the strata.

Stratification may be useful in another way. Some observer groups do not have the resources to conduct a nation-wide observation. In that case, the observer group might want to limit its observation to a particular strata of the country, perhaps the capital city, or a coastal region. In these instances, with a ran-

domly selected set of sample points within a strata, the observer group can generalize the results of the observation to the entire strata that the observer group covers.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Since most populations seem to be stratified when it comes to the vote, why not use stratified samples as a matter of practice?
The stratification approach seems to be an ideal, but there are two reasons why it may not be appropriate. First, if quick counts are using conservative assumptions about margins of error and confidence intervals, then the sample is likely to be large. And, because of probability theory, it is clear that large samples will end up producing accurate replicas of the total population even without stratification. Second, stratification assumes reliable information about how citizens tend to vote within the strata. Around what lines, exactly, should the stratification criteria be drawn? In many countries, the information needed to make that judgement may not be very reliable. Previous elections cannot be a reliable guide, especially if their results were questionable. The stronger strategy is to refer to strata post facto, that is, to check the distribution of cases drawn from a general random sample against strata within the population after the sample is drawn. So, if 40 percent of the voting population lives in the capital city of a country, then 40 percent of the randomly drawn sample points should end up being from the capital city.

Determining Sample Size

To determine the sample size for a quick count (i.e., how many polling stations should be included in the sample), analysts proceed through several steps. They identify the size of the relevant population (number of eligible voters); determine the level of homogeneity within that population, and select the desired level of confidence and the margin of error. Next, analysts calculate the sample size as follows:

$$n = \frac{P\,(1-P)}{\dfrac{\Sigma^2}{z^2_{99\%}} + \dfrac{P\,(1-P)}{N}}$$

Where

n =	size of the sample (number of eligible voters)
P =	suspected level of homogeneity of the population (between 0 and 1, so 50% = 0.5)
Σ =	margin of error (between 0 and 1, so 0.32% = 0.0032)
$z_{99\%}$ =	level of confidence in the case of normal distribution (99% in this case)
N =	size of the total population

The case of a quick count conducted during the 2001 Peruvian presidential elections can illustrate the above steps:

> The size of the total relevant population (number of eligible voters) in Peru was 14,570,774. The population was assumed to be heterogeneous—the race between two candidates was expected to be close, so the level of homogeneity of the population was set at 50 percent (0.5). A margin of error of 0.32 percent and a confidence level of 99 percent were selected. For the purposed of making a calculation, the proportion of homogeneity was expressed as a value with a range between 0 and 1, as was the margin of error. The expected level of homogeneity was set as 50 percent, the most conservative assumption; it is expressed as 0.5 in the formula, and the margin of error of 0.32 percent (out of a possible 100 percent) is expressed as .0032. These values were plugged into the formula as follows.

$$N = \frac{.50\ (1-.50)}{\dfrac{(.0032)^2}{(2.58)^2} + \dfrac{.50\ (1-.50)}{14{,}570{,}774}}$$

$$= \frac{.25}{\dfrac{.000010}{6.6564} + \dfrac{.25}{14{,}570{,}774}}$$

$$= \frac{.25}{.000001515 + .000000017}$$

$$= \frac{.25}{.000001532}$$

$$= \mathbf{163{,}185}$$

At this point, analysts know how many voters have to be consulted. However, the units of analysis are not individual voters; they are polling stations. Therefore, the next step is to determine how many polling stations must be selected to represent the required number of voters. The Peruvian calculation can be continued to illustrate the point:

> On average, there were approximately 160 voters per polling station in Peru. Therefore, the sample size of 163,185 (eligible voters) was divided by the number of electors per station (160) to determine the number of polling stations in our sample (1,020). Consequently, the sample size for the 2001 Peru quick count was 1,020 polling stations.

Selecting the Sample Points

Once the required size of the random sample is known, the sample can be selected from the sample frame. For quick counts, polling stations (the sample points) are selected from the complete list of polling stations (sample frame). The simplest way to do this is to use a random computer program. However, this task can also be accomplished without a computer. The first step involves dividing the total number of polling stations by the desired number of polling stations, and the second step requires determining a random starting point. Again, the numbers from the 2001 quick count in Peru can be used to illustrate how this is done:

Random ordering is a technique that provides additional assurance that the probability of the selection of each point in the sample is equal to the chances of any other point being selected.

> On election day, the Peruvian universe consisted of 90,780 polling stations. First, the total number of polling stations is divided by the desired number of stations in the sample (90,780÷1,020 = 89). This indicates that one in every 89 polling stations needs to be selected. Second, a random starting point is selected by placing 89 slips of paper, numbered 1 to 89, in a hat, and randomly selecting a piece of paper. The piece of paper selected contains the number 54. The 54th polling station on the randomly ordered list is the first sample point, then every 89th polling station after that first sample point is selected. Thus the second polling station in the sample is the 143rd polling station on the list (54 plus 89). The procedure is repeated until the total sample size of 1,020 is reached.

Why does the list of polling stations have to be ordered randomly? This strategy further protects the validity and reliability of the quick count. If the original list is organized by size, region, or other criteria, the results of a simple draw could be biased. Usually this is not a serious concern, but random ordering is a technique that provides additional assurance that the probability of the selection of each point in the sample is equal to the chances of any other point being selected.

No large-scale quick count undertaken by any observer group has ever been able to deliver data from every single data point in the original sample.

Correction Factors

It is sometimes necessary to make adjustments to various elements of the quick count methodology. These adjustments apply to volunteer recruiting and training and to more technical elements of the quick count, including sampling. The sample calculations outlined above usually require some additional adjustment. This is because it is assumed initially that all sample points will be identified and that data will be delivered from each and every point. In practice, however, no large-scale quick count undertaken by any observer group has ever been able to deliver data from every single data point in the original sample.

In quick count situations, it is important to draw a distinction between a *theoretical* sample and a *practical* sample. Most theoretical discussions of sampling assume that, once a sample point is selected, data from that sample point will

be generated with 100 percent efficiency. This assumption has never been satisfied in any large-scale national quick count. This is due to any combination of factors including mistakes made by inadequately trained observers, breakdowns in communication systems or unforeseen election-day developments. (For instance, observers are sometimes prohibited from entering polling stations; inclement weather might prevent observers from reaching a telephone or prevent data from being reported.)

Civic organizations undertaking a quick count for the first time, on average, are able to deliver about 75 percent of the data from sample points within a reasonable time frame, about 3 hours. The 25 percent of the sample that is not reported (these are missing data) can lead to problems with the interpretation of the other data. The practical usable sample, therefore, is always smaller than the theoretically designed sample. The margins of error that apply to the practical sample are also necessarily larger than planned.

In a closely contested election, missing data can be a very serious matter.

In a closely contested election, missing data can be a very serious matter. Moreover, these missing data are hardly ever just a random cross-section of the total sample. In practice, the proportions of missing data are nearly always greater from remote areas where data are most difficult to recover. If the missing data are not random or representative, they are biased. And if the missing data are biased, so is the remaining sample.

What is the best way to prepare for the fact that not all of the sample will be recovered on election day? The solution must be built into the original sample design; it is to oversample by the margins of the expected recovery rate.

The statistician must oversample by the margins of the expected recovery rate.

An experienced observer group might have an estimated data recovery rate of 80 percent of the sample points from the theoretical sample. In this case, the practical sample would be 20 percent smaller than the theoretical sample. The most direct way to address this potentential problem is to simply increase the sample size by 20 percent by randomly adding 20 percent more sample points to the sample that is first calculated. Such a straightforward strategy would work if the deficit in sample recovery were distributed randomly throughout the population. However, experience indicates that the deficit is usually unevenly distributed between the capital city, other urban areas and rural areas. The most difficulty is in remote areas, and the design of a corrected oversample component must take this into account. Figure 5-4 shows the distribution of a typical sample recovery pattern and the corrected oversample component. As Figure 5-4 indicates, the additional correction for uneven sample recovery would place at least half of the oversample in the rural areas.

FIGURE 5-4:
A TYPICAL SAMPLE RECOVERY PATTERN AND RECOMMENDED OVERSAMPLE DISTRIBUTION.

	SAMPLE RECOVERY	OVERSAMPLE DISTRIBUTION
Capital city:	85%	15%
Urban areas outside of capital city	75%	25%
Remote areas	65%	35%

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Isn't the sample very large anyway, since polling stations are being sampled rather than individual voters? If so, can analysts just weight the data after the sample is in?

Yes, the sample is large as designed, but weighting the data is not a substitute for real data. Weighting simply gives existing data "more weight" in the overall sample. There is no way to tell if the missing data from the remote part of the sample are typical of the data recovered from that particular sub-sample. Weighting is a last-resort statistical strategy that is best used after all other options have been exhausted.

The number of polling stations and the number of voters in a polling station will have an effect on the margin of error.

Correcting for Polling Station Size

Sometimes it is necessary to adjust the margin of error for quick count results due to practical considerations. For example, the size of the polling station—the total number of voters expected at the polling station—will affect the margin of error. This stems from the difference between the defined population and the unit of analysis. Recall that the original calculation of the margin of error relied on the total number of eligible voters. This was done to ensure that the sample design satisfied certain statistical principles. However, since polling stations are the unit of analysis, it is useful to revise the margin of error based on the number of voters in polling stations. In the previous example, an average of 160 voters were assigned to each polling station. It would have been important to consider the fact that polling stations can come in different sizes. If polling stations included 200 voters, this would have had an effect of reducing the number of stations needed for sample. If the polling stations were even larger, with 500 voters, then even fewer would have been needed to form the sample.

As Figure 5-5 illustrates, the number of polling stations and the number of voters in a polling station will have an effect on the margin of error. This is

attributable to the role of the sample size in constructing the margin of error. Recall that the formula for margin of error is:

$$\frac{\text{(Assumed heterogeneity)} * \text{(z value at chosen confidence level)}}{\sqrt{n}}$$

The fact is that variations in the size of polling station will also affect the 'n.'

FIGURE 5-5:
SAMPLE SIZE AND MARGINS OF ERROR

	VOTERS	POLLING STATIONS		
		If station size is 160	If station size is 200	If station size is 500
Sample	163,185	1,020	816	324
Margin of error (95% confidence level)	±0.24	±3.01	±3.43	±5.4
Margin of error (99% confidence level)	±0.32	±4.03	±4.5	±7.1

Notice that the margin of error depends on the number of polling stations in the sample. If the polling stations are large, fewer of them are needed to generate the desired sample of 163,185 voters. The margin of error calculated for the polling stations is larger than the margin of error calculated for the sample of voters. The resulting margin of error for quick counts falls somewhere in between the lower and higher margin of error.

As the number of stations need to form a sample of voters decreases, the margin of error increases.

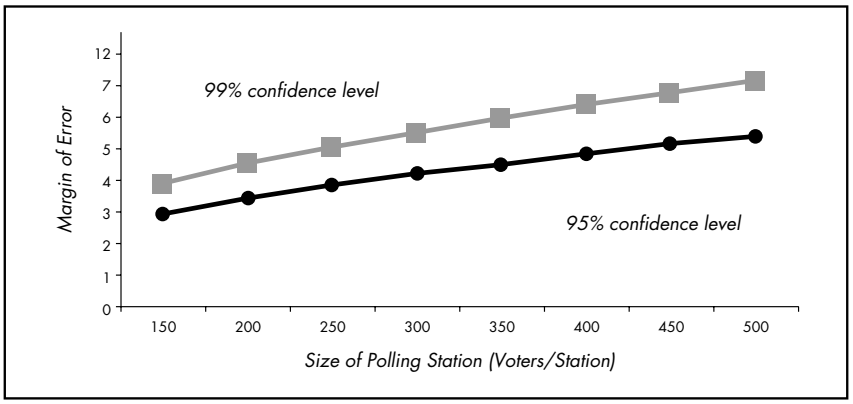
Tracking the changes to the margin of error for a range of polling station sizes shows that, as the number of stations needed to form a sample of voters decreases, the margin of error increases. Figure 5-6 illustrates the relationship between the size of the polling station and the margin of error.

FIGURE 5-6:
POLLING STATION SIZE AND MARGIN OF ERROR

VOTERS/ STATION	# STATIONS TO GET SAMPLE	MARGIN OF ERROR (confidence levels)	
		95%	99%
150	1,088	±2.97	±3.91
200	816	±3.43	±4.52
250	653	±3.84	±5.05
300	544	±4.20	±5.53
350	466	±4.54	±5.97
400	408	±4.85	±6.39
450	363	±5.14	±6.77
500	327	±5.42	±7.13

The margin of error increases as polling station size increases. The overall effect of polling station size on margin of error, however, decreases as both rise. Figure 5-7 illustrates this point.

FIGURE 5-7:
POLLING STATION SIZE AND MARGIN OF ERROR



When elections are very close, quick count analysts must also be concerned with the level of voter turnout.

Correcting for Turnout

When elections are very close, quick count analysts must also be concerned with the level of voter turnout. Even if observers have been successful at retrieving data from each of the 1,020 polling stations in the theoretical sample, low voter turnout will mean that there will be fewer votes included in the sample than if turnout had been high. The original calculation was based on the expectation of some 160 votes per polling station. If turnout has been at 70 percent, however, there would only be 112 votes at each polling station. If that pattern is repeated across the 1,020 polling stations, then the count would include only 114,240 votes, some 50,000 shy of the desired 163,185 needed to achieve a margin of error of 0.3 percent and a confidence level of 99 percent.

FIGURE 5-8:
TURNOUT AND MARGIN OF ERROR

TURNOUT	# VOTERS, VOTES	MARGIN OF ERROR (confidence levels)	
		95%	99%
Desired sample (turnout = 100%)	163,185	±0.24	±0.31
90%	146,867	±0.25	±0.33
80%	130,548	±0.27	±0.36
70%	114,230	±0.29	±0.38
60%	97,911	±0.31	±0.41
50%	81,593	±0.38	±0.49

Consequently, a cautious data interpretation strategy calls for re-calculating the margin of error based on the actual number of votes counted. Figure 5-8 illustrates this point.

As the table shows, as turnout decreases, the margin of error increases. If turnout is above 60 percent, margin of error will increase by approximately 0.02 percent for every 10 percent drop in turnout. As turnout approaches 50 percent, the increase in margin of error is much greater. A graph of the increase in margin of error corresponding to decrease in turnout is presented in Figure 5-9.

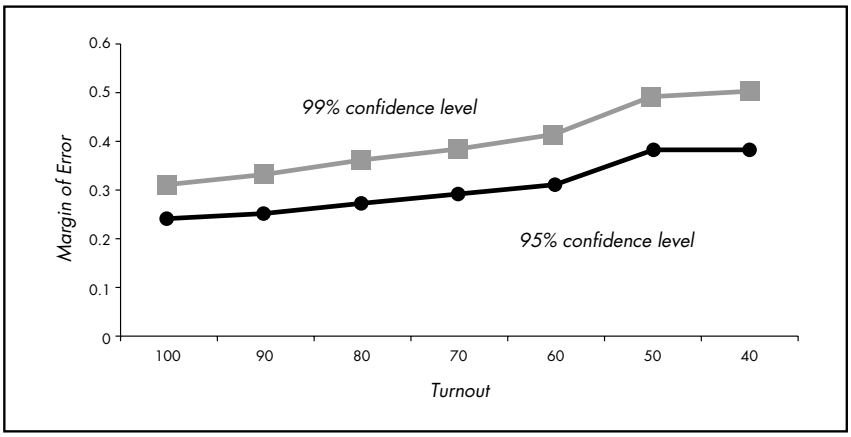


FIGURE 5-9
MARGINS OF ERROR AND TURNOUT

This chapter has laid out the broad statistical principles underlying quick counts for a general audience, and it has outlined the statistical foundations of the quick count methodology. Organizers should understand this methodology, particularly the concepts of reliability and validity, as well as why a sample must meet the criteria for randomness. This knowledge is vital to the design of effective and reliable observer forms and training programs. It also underscores the importance of preparing to retrieve data from every part of the country—even the most remote areas.

Finally, this chapter also has considered the more technical matters of how sample sizes can be calculated, and how such issues as levels of confidence, margins of error and heterogeneity or homogeneity of the population shape the sample. Most observer groups seek the services of a trained statistician to construct and draw a sample and to analyze the data on election day. Civic groups must realize that the quick count is a matter of applying statistical principles to practical, unique circumstances where standard textbook assumptions may not be satisfied. For that reason, the chapter outlines what are the most common correction factors that should be taken into account when analysts consider the interpretation of the data that are successfully retrieved on election day.

REMINDER

The broad principles underlying quick counts can be understood easily by non-statisticians, and there are important reasons why key personnel in observer groups should become familiar with these principles:

1. Understanding the importance of ensuring the robustness of quick count data will facilitate decisions about the design of the quick count and help staff to develop effective observer forms and training programs.

2. Staff that appreciate the relationship between a sample and a population and the centrality of the requirement of randomness to the integrity of that relationship are motivated to build a strong volunteer network that can cover even the most remote polling stations.

Groups should enlist the support of a statistician experienced in conducting quick counts to undertake the technically complex tasks of constructing a sample and analyzing quick count results. Experience with quick counts around the world underscores several points:

1. The unit of analysis for a quick count is the polling station. Sampling cannot begin until an accurate and comprehensive list of polling stations—the sampling frame—is available.

2. Quick counts always use probability samples (e.g., general random samples or stratified random samples) in order to produce results that are representative of the whole population.

3. Observer groups undertaking quick counts are never able to retrieve 100 percent of the data from the sample. Analysts must prepare for this inevitability. The solution, which can be built into the original sample design, is to oversample by the margins of the expected recovery rate.

4. Analysts must also consider correction factors when designing a sample. Most important are those that take into account variations in (a) voter turnout, and (b) the number of voters in the basic unit of analysis, the polling station.

CHAPTER SIX

The Qualitative Component of the Quick Count

In many election observations the final vote count attracts the most attention. This is entirely understandable. The vote count determines election day winners and losers, and the integrity of that count is a longstanding concern in many countries. The final count, however, is just one aspect of an election. No one doubts that an accurate, honest vote count is a necessary condition for a democratic election, but it is not a sufficient condition. Electoral outcomes too often have been rigged in ways that have little or nothing to do with the counting and tabulation of results. The will of the electorate has been nullified for example by: blocking legitimate candidates and parties from appearing on the ballot; otherwise tilting electoral laws and regulations; financing campaigns illicitly, including through the improper use of state resources; preventing open and free campaigns; intimidating and bribing voters; using biased voter registration lists; interfering with the secrecy of the vote; manipulating the administration of the election and complaint mechanisms; and preventing legitimate winners from assuming office.

Election observers must concentrate on the ***quality*** of the electoral process before, during and after election day.

For these reasons, election observers must concentrate on the *quality* of the electoral process before, during and after election day, and contemporary election observations should not depend on just impressionistic evidence of anecdotes. To be effective and credible, contemporary election observations should not depend on just impressionistic evidence or anecdotes. Anecdotal or impressionistic evidence is unreliable, and it leaves too many important questions unanswered. Qualitative problems in the process should be quantified as much as possible so that their impact can be characterized appropriately. For example, if unused ballots have been tampered with then there is surely a cause for concern. But the more important questions include: How widespread was this problem? Did the tampering work in favor of one party to the detriment of others? Was the tampering part of a larger scheme aimed at interfering with the outcome of the election? The only sure way to answer these

Contemporary election observations should not depend on just impressionistic evidence or anecdotes.

important questions is to collect reliable and systematic information from well-trained observers.

This chapter is divided into two parts and provides basic guidelines for designing the qualitative component of the election-day observation. To collect qualitative data, observers use standardized forms, and the place to begin is with the design of these forms. What should observers try to measure? What questions should be included? And what principles should be followed to make sure that the questions included on forms will produce reliable and useful evidence? What are the most common mistakes, and how can these be avoided? These issues are illustrated with a discussion of observer forms that have been used in the field. The second part of the chapter discusses a variety of strategies that can be used to analyze the qualitative results.

The qualitative data provide a *systematic* way of evaluating election day processes *on a national basis.*

Two preliminary points need to be emphasized regarding the qualitative component of an election obseservation. The first is that the general methodology driving the qualitative evaluation of elections through observer reports is exactly the same as the methodology that underpins the generation of the vote count data for the quick count. The qualitative reports come from the same observers and from the same polling stations used for the retrieval of vote count data. Recall that these polling stations are sample points that are determined by random selection. This means that the qualitative data gathered from observers have the same statistical properties as the vote count data; the findings of the qualitative analysis of sample data can be reliably generalized to the quality of the entire election-day process throughout the country. The same margins of error also apply. Because of these characteristics, the qualitative data provide a *systematic* way of evaluating election day processes *on a national basis.*[1]

Because national elections are difficult to organize you can expect that some things might go wrong on election day.

The second primary point to emphasize is: there is no such thing as an election that is completely free of error. Nor does the fact that errors have been made necessarily mean that fraud has taken place. Nationwide elections are complicated events to plan and administer. Election-day mistakes are made everywhere. In the vast majority of cases, these mistakes are simply a matter of human error. A polling official may get sick and fail to report to the polling station on election morning. As a result, a polling station may end up being short of the proper number of officials. Materials might have been misplaced or inadvertently sent to the wrong polling station. A polling station might not open on time because someone forgot to tell a supervisor that a building has to be unlocked early on Sunday morning so that officials can set up. Because national elections are difficult to organize you can expect that some things might go wrong on election day.

[1] Quick counts discussed in this handbook most often concern national elections (e.g., presidential elections and elections for proportional representation by national political party lists). The data collected for such quick counts is highly reliable for evaluating national developments but will not necessarily be able to assess processes and results at the sub-national level, such as elections for single-member legislative districts or local elections – unless the quick count is specifically designed to do so.

The important point is that most of these kinds of errors qualify as unintentional human error. In societies where corrupt practices have plagued elections for decades, people understandably tend to view any irregularities on election day with a great deal of suspicion. It is a mistake, however, to leap to the conclusion that each and every election day problem necessarily indicates that there has been a fraudulent attempt to fix an election. Such human errors are usually random; they do not conform to any particular pattern. Moreover, random error usually means that the "mistakes" do not end up favoring any one political party or any one candidate running for office.

Because the qualitative observation data rely on exactly the same statistical principles as those used to generate the quick count vote data, analysts using the qualitative data have the tools to determine whether "errors" found in the analysis of qualitative data at the national level are random or whether they are systematic. There are strong reasons to worry about evidence of systematic patterns of "errors." Random problems should certainly be reported, but the more important task for analysts is to determine what are the consequences of non-random problems. It is possible, for example, that analysis will show that a disproportionate number of problems that disenfranchise voters occurred in areas that are traditional opposition strongholds and/or problems that indicate multiple voting occurred in ruling party strongholds, at an incidence that could affect the outcome of elections. On the other hand, analysis could demonstrate that the problems do not follow a politically discriminatory pattern or that the incidence is *minimal.*

Analysts using the qualitative data have the tools to determine whether "problems" found in the analysis of qualitative data at the national level are random or whether they are systematic.

DESIGNING OBSERVATION FORMS

The goal of the qualitative part of the quick count observation is to provide a systematic and reliable evaluation of important aspects of the electoral process. But any effective evaluation needs benchmarks against which behavior can be evaluated. Administrative rules for elections usually set out in detail exactly how things are supposed to work at each polling station on election day, and these rules usually set out clear guidelines that cover the selection and duties of polling station personnel. These rules and administrative guidelines establish what are the acceptable procedures for the administration of the polling station. Typically, they specify what materials are required at polling stations, they provide instructions for polling station personnel and they set out procedures for dealing with anomalies. Electoral authorities issue these procedures based on the law—they should also should seek public input and broad political agreement. Domestic observation organizations might find that the official rules are incomplete, arbitrary or in some way fall short of desirable standards. If so, observers should point out these problems in a report. However, when it comes to the design of the qualitative observation forms, the place to start is with the rules established by electoral authorities. These rules are public and they define what are the *officially* acceptable, or unacceptable, standards for the election-day operations of polling stations.

How Long Should the Forms Be?

When election observer groups first try to decide precisely what qualitative issues they want to evaluate, they often produce a vast list of questions about election day procedures for observers to answer. Undoubtedly, a vast number of "important" questions *could* be asked about the quality of any electoral process, but it is not possible for practical reasons both to ask every single possible question and to have timely and useful data. The problem is one of resource constraints; tough choices have to be made.

For an observation to maximize its impact, observer groups have to be able to gather key pieces of information quickly, analyze the data quickly and interpret and release the data quickly.

The most important constraint on election day is time. The more data observers are asked to collect, the more time it takes to collect the data, transmit the information, enter the data into computer files and analyze the it. For an observation to maximize its impact, observer groups have to be able to gather key pieces of information quickly, analyze the data quickly and interpret and release the data quickly. Citizens want to know whether the election is "going well" or "going badly" on election day. They usually want to know about whether the polls opened "on time," for instance, before the polls have closed. Because time is vital, the qualitative reporting forms have to be short. That said, the next challenge is to decide which qualitative questions are the most important of all. Once decisions have been made about what needs to be evaluated and measured, the next matter is to decide the best way of going about constructing the measure.

It is useful to invest some time thinking about what particular issues might be uniquely relevant for a particular election.

There is no single list of qualitative questions that work equally well for every election in all countries. And it is useful to invest some time thinking about what particular issues might be uniquely relevant for a particular election. For example, if there has been recent experience with military intervention in election day procedures, and opposition parties and others express concern that these experiences might be repeated, then there are good reasons to consider including questions about the role of the military, or the police, on the qualitative observation forms. If there are reasons to believe that proper voter identification cards have not been universally distributed, or that the election day registration of voters will be problematic, then questions about these issues should be included in the qualitative observation forms.

How many questions should qualitative observation forms contain? There is no hard and fast rule, but most experienced election observation groups usually end up using qualitative observation forms that contain somewhere between 12 –15 questions. Experience shows that election day qualitative reports rarely use data from more than 8 of those 12-15 questions. At issue is a practical matter: It is simply not possible to collect, transmit, digitally enter and analyze more than 15 qualitative observation questions to report in a timely way on election-day processes. If data cannot be used, then why collect it?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

With such a short form (12 to 15 questions), doesn't this mean that we will not be getting some very important information?
No, not at all. Experience shows that the information needed to determine whether the election is proper or not can be collected in 12 to 15 questions. If observer groups want to ask many more detailed questions about the quality of the electoral process, this can be accomplished without compromising the short qualitative form. How? Usually, additional qualitative information is collected in one of two ways. One way is to ask quick count observers to collect additional qualitative data on a separate form. The additional information from that extra form can be collected from observers after election day. The reason for reporting these data separately is to avoid over-burdening the communications system. Alternatively, more detailed qualitative data can be gathered by observers who are not a part of the quick count observation. Either way, these additional data can be used in a more detailed post-election report. The important point is that this information should be reported separately so that it will not overload the communication system. The information is not lost, it is just collected and analyzed later.

The Do's and Don'ts of Question Design

Designing the content of the observation forms (the questions) is an important task that requires patient and careful attention to detail. Past practice suggests that the best way to go about designing the questions is to recruit a small team of people who can work together. That team needs to be able to identify what are the 12-15 most important qualitative questions for observers to ask, and they need to be aware of some key factors that will guide them to make informed decisions about what is the best way to ask these questions. For that reason, members of the team have to have some expertise.

The best way to go about designing the questions is to recruit a small team of people who can work together.

Typically, the volunteer coordinator takes the lead in designing forms. She or he works with several additional individuals, including:

- *The executive director or a board member*—Knowledge and judgement about the political environment is needed to be sure that questions address the likely key problems in election-day procedures, such as disenfranchisement or illegal voting based on voter lists, ballot box stuffing, crediting votes to the wrong candidate, etc. Therefore, the executive director, a board member, or other such person must help to design the forms.

- *An electoral law expert*—Because questions aim to evaluate the quality of election day processes, the team needs to include someone who is knowledgable about how election day processes are supposed to work. This means including someone on the team who knows the details of the electoral law and regulations.

- *The lead trainer*—Observers must be "trained to the forms." That is, trainers have to explain to observers the details about exactly how the forms are supposed to be used. This team member has to be able to think about the structure and content of the form from the point of view of the observer and to anticipate how the structure and content of the forms shape the training of observers.

- *A data analyst*—Someone responsible for analyzing data on election day must be on the team to consider methodological issues of question construction, the practical challenges of data transmission and data entry, as well as the interpretive challenges of how the data will be configured and used on election day.

Each and every proposed question should be able to pass a series of "tests."

With the team in place, the next task is to work together to make the detailed decisions about precisely how each question will be formulated. Cumulative experience with qualitative form construction and measurement suggests some useful rules to follow. In effect, each and every proposed question should be able to pass a series of "tests." These can be summarized as follows:

- *The usefulness test*—For each proposed question, the analyst should be able to specify first, why it is critical to have that particular piece of information quickly, and second, precisely how the data from that question will be used in the analysis. If there is no compelling reason for having the information quickly, or if it is not clear exactly how the data from the question will be used, then the question should not be asked.

- *The validity test*—Recall that validity refers to how well an indicator, the data produced by answers to questions on the form, actually measures the underlying concept to be measured. Here, the question that needs a clear answer is: Exactly what concept is being measured by the question? And, is there a better, more direct, or clearer way to formulate the question to measure that concept?

Validity and reliability are the most serious sources of non-sampling error plaguing systematic observation data.

- *The reliability test*—Reliability has to do with the consistency of the measurement. The goal is to reduce the variation in responses between observers, that is, to have independent observers watching the same event record that event in exactly the same way. When questions are worded ambiguously observers are more likely to end up recording different results when independently measuring the same event. Note that validity and reliability are the most serious sources of non-sampling error plaguing systematic observation data.

- *The response categories test*—Response categories for questions have to satisfy two minimal conditions. First, the response categories should be exhaustive. This means that the structure of the response categories should collectively cover all of the possible meaningful ranges of responses. Second, response categories have to be mutually exclusive. That is,

the range of values in one response category should not overlap with those of other categories.

- *The efficiency test*—Response categories should be designed to achieve the maximimum efficiency by keeping the number of response categories to a minimum. This has a significant impact on the volume of data that are being transmitted. The fewer the number of response categories used in a form, the faster and more accurately the data can be transmitted. Furthermore, fewer key strokes are required to enter the data into the computerized dataset.

What to Avoid

Lessons from past experience also suggest that some practices should be avoided. These include:

- Open-ended questions—When designing observation forms it is very tempting to want to include a few open-ended questions. For example, if observers record the fact that the police might have intervened in election day activities at a particular polling station, then it is natural to want to know the details of what exactly happened. But the qualitative short forms are not the best places to record this information; details of incidents that could have a significant impact on the electoral process should be gathered on separate forms. Answers to open-ended qualitative questions might well produce "interesting findings," but these kinds of data are cumbersome. Uncategorized answers to open-ended questions are a type of "anecdotal evidence," and to be of any analytic help these kinds of answers have to be re-coded into useful categories. The problem is that it is very time consuming to recode such data. For all practical purposes it is too difficult to both categorize and analyze these data within very tight time constraints.

- False precision—Analysts want to work with precise results, but attempting to achieve very high levels of precision is seldom warranted. Extra precision usually involves collecting more data, which increases the load on observers and communications systems. It also requires more time to enter data that, in most cases, do not provide a substantive payoff when it comes to the basic interpretation of the evidence. Consider the following example related to the opening of polling stations:

  We want to know at what time the first voter cast a ballot at a particular polling station, so we ask the observer to record the exact time, say 8:02 am. That may be the most precise result; however, that level of precision is unnecessary. Moreover, this specification of the question introduces time consuming complications for both data entry and analysis. Suppose five polling stations opened at the following times: 6:37; 9:58; 7:42; 11:59 and 12:10. To determine the average opening time involves

arithmetically summing all these times and then dividing them by the number of observations, five. Simple computational systems operate in units of 1, 10, 100 and so on. The problem is that the standard clock does not; there are 60 minutes in an hour, not 10 or 100, and there are 24 hours in a day, not 10 or 100. Computing simple averages, therefore, produces a figure that makes no sense and is actually incorrect. It is possible of course to write an algorithm that "translates" standard clock time into standardized units, and then translate those standardized units back into standard time. However, that practice is awkward, time consuming and it involves unnecessary extra work. At the end of the day what we really need to know is: What proportion of all polling stations opened "on time"? What proportions were "late" or "very late?" And how many, and which, polling stations did not open at all?

Observation Forms: An Example

How these design principles help to produce efficient, usable questions that satisfy the usefulness, validity, reliability, measurement and efficiency tests is illustrated in the forms presented in Figure 6-1.[2, 3]

The content of Form 1 covers six areas. The first part, the code and the polling station, are identification numbers. The "code" refers to the security code number assigned to each observer. Using such a code makes it far more difficult for outsiders to break into the observation system, or to interfere with the observation. Data entry personnel are trained not to enter any data from callers who do not supply the correct code number. The code number and the polling station number have to match those contained in the database. After the correct codes are supplied, the reported data from Form 1 are entered into the master database.

Data entry personnel are trained not to enter any data from callers who do not supply the correct code number.

The first substantive question identifies the time of installation of the polling station. The second set of questions indicate which polling station personnel were present at the installation and whether they were the appointed officials or substitutes. The third block of questions is a checklist for reporting the presence or absence of required voting materials, and the fourth block collects data on whether proper installation procedures were followed. The fifth section identifies which party agents were present at the polling station and the final part indicates what time voting began.

[2] These forms reflect the best elements of forms used in a number of countries, most especially Peru and Nicaragua. The original Nicaraguan forms are contained in Appendices 9A and 9B; the Nicaraguan forms include instructions to the quick count volunteers.

[3] These forms are not intended to present a definitive list of questions. They must always be adapted somewhat to meet the conditions in each election, and there are some questions that may be considered for inclusion in any election. For example, groups may consider placing a question at the end of the form asking the observer whether the results at her or his assigned polling station should be "accepted" or should be "challenged," or the observer may be asked to rate the overall process at the polling station on a scale from one to five (with one being "excellent," two being "good" three being "neutral," four being "bad," and five being "unacceptable").

FIGURE 6-1:
SAMPLE OBSERVER FORMS

FORM 1: Installation of the Polling Station

Code ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Polling Station ☐☐☐☐

1. What time did the installation of the polling station begin? *(circle the correct letter)*

A Before 6 a.m. B 6 - 7 a.m. C 7 a.m. - 9 a.m.

D After 9 a.m. E It was not installed.

Who was present to administer the polling station? *(circle the correct letter)*

	Original	Substitute	None
2. President	A	B	
3. First Member	A	B	C
4. Second Member	A	B	C

5. Were the proper materials in the polling station? *(circle YES or NO)*

YES NO

If your answer is NO, go to question 6.
If your answer is YES, skip to question 7.

Answer YES or NO.

6a.	YES	NO	Voter List
6b.	YES	NO	All required forms (tally sheets, protocols, complaint ledgers, etc.)
6c.	YES	NO	Ballot Boxes
6d.	YES	NO	Ballots
6e.	YES	NO	Voting Booth
6f.	YES	NO	Indelible Ink

7. Were the proper procedures followed? *(circle YES or NO)*

YES NO

If your answer is NO, go to question 8.
If your answer is YES, skip to question 9.

Answer YES or NO.

8a.	YES	NO	Ballots were counted before voting began.
8b.	YES	NO	Ballot boxes were confirmed empty before voting began.
8c.	YES	NO	The voting booth was set up to ensure secrecy.

Which party agents were present? *(circle YES or NO)*

9a.	YES	NO	Party A
9b.	YES	NO	Party B
9c.	YES	NO	Party C

10. What time was the first vote cast? *(circle the correct letter)*

A Before 7 a.m. B 7 - 8 a.m. C 8 - 10 a.m.

D After 10 a.m. E Never

FIGURE 6-1(CONTINUED):
SAMPLE OBSERVER FORMS

FORM 2: Voting and Final Results

Code [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

Polling Station [ ][ ][ ][ ]

1. Was the voting/counting process suspended at this polling station?
(circle YES or NO) YES NO

If your answer is YES, report the incident via telephone.

2. Were all proper procedures followed during voting?
(circle YES or NO) YES NO

If your answer is NO, go to question 3.
If your answer is YES, go to question 4.

Answer YES or NO.

3a. YES NO Officials explained the voting procedures.

3b. YES NO Each voter was provided and cast only one ballot.

3c. YES NO All persons with voter i.d. cards were permitted to vote.

3d. YES NO All persons on the voter list were permitted to vote.

3e. YES NO All persons who were not on the voter list and did not have voter i.d. cards were turned away.

3f. YES NO As voters were handed ballots, their names were checked off the voter list and ink was applied to their finger.

3g. YES NO Other significant problem (Note and report to local coordinator.)

4. When did the counting of votes begin?
(circle the correct letter)

A Before 6 p.m. B 6 - 8 p.m. C After 8 p.m.

Other than polling station officials, who else was present at the vote count? *(circle YES or NO)*

5a. YES NO Party Agents

5b. YES NO Observers

5c. YES NO Voters

5d. YES NO Police

5e. YES NO Others

FORM 2 *(continued)*

Which Party Agents were present during the counting process at the polling station? *(circle YES or NO)*

6a. YES NO Party A

6b. YES NO Party B

6c. YES NO Party C

7. Were there any irregularities in the counting process?
(circle YES or NO) YES NO

If your answer is YES, go to question 8.
If your answer is NO, go to question 9.

Answer YES or NO.

8a. YES NO There were more ballots found in the box than the number of voters checked off on the voter list as having voted.

8b. YES NO Party agents/observers could not observe the opening and scoring of ballots.

8c. YES NO Votes were credited to the wrong contestant.

8d. YES NO Ballots were improperly voided.

8e. YES NO Unused ballots were illegally marked and added.

8f. YES NO Tally sheets not posted, copies not given to party agents/observers.

8g. YES NO Other significant problem (Note and report to local coordinator.)

Results for the President

9a. [ ][ ][ ] Votes Party A

9b. [ ][ ][ ] Votes Party B

9c. [ ][ ][ ] Votes Party C

9d. [ ][ ][ ] Void (null and blank)

9e. [ ][ ][ ] Challenged ballots

9f. [ ][ ][ ] Spoiled ballots

10. Did any political party contest the results?
(circle YES or NO)

YES If your answer is YES, go to question 11.

NO If your answer is NO, go to the end of the form.

Which party contested the results? *(circle YES or NO)*

11a. YES NO Party A

11b. YES NO Party B

11c. YES NO Party C

The application of the principles of question design can be most easily illustrated by working through an example:

Suppose observers want to know whether polling stations opened on time on election day. One possibility is to simply construct a question as in version A.

> Version A: **"Did the polling station you were observing open on time on election morning?"**
> ☐Yes ☐No

But there are several problems with this wording of the question. First, observers will almost certainly have in their minds different ideas about just when a polling station is in fact "open." Is a polling station "open" when the election officials are all present? Is it "open" when all of the election officials and party agents are present and after all of the materials have been set out? Or, is a polling station "open" at the moment that the first voter casts their ballot? Moreover, we need to be very clear about what "on time" means? If a polling station is supposed to be "open" at 6:00 am and the first voter casts a ballot at 6:25, has the polling station actually "opened on time?"

Variations in how these concepts are understood pose problems of validity and reliability. If observers have in mind different views about what "on time" means, and it is left up to observers to decide what "on time" means, then the observers will produce unreliable measures. Version B of the same question is both a more valid and more reliable way to ask the very same question.

> Version B: **"When did the first voter cast a ballot at the polling station?"**
> ☐Before 7:00 ☐Between 7:00 and 8:00
> ☐After 8:00 ☐Did not open

This particular version of the question has several advantages:

- First, this question wording reduces any ambiguity about the question of when a polling station actually "opens," and it provides a clear guideline to observers for what qualifies as "on time." There is no conceptual ambiguity, and so there is vailidity.

- Second, because the response categories are varied across time, analysts can examine the distribution of "opening times" that will reveal the scale and scope of administration problems in getting polling stations "open." These categories allow responses to vary in meaningful ways; the "usefulness test" is satisfied. Also, the measurement categories are clear; there is no room for observers to provide their own interpretation of what is "late" or "early." Consequently, the measurement will be reliable. Note too that the response categories in version B of the question satisfy both of the measurement rules: the categories are exhaustive and mutually exclusive.

- Third, this version of the question also supplies us with an important additional piece of information; it tells us which polling stations did not open at all.

There is a caveat to the above example: The concern about late opening of polling stations is not simply a guage of administrative organization. It is also an indicator of whether prospective voters had a genuine opportunity to vote. Late openings do not measure whether anyone was disenfranchised as a consequence of the problem. An observer outside the polling station determining how many people left lines due to long waits might better measure that. Even that indicator does not address whether those persons returned later. These are the types of issues to discuss when designing an observation and its forms.

ANALYZING QUALITATIVE DATA

Analyzing data within very short time constraints is no easy task. Data analysts usually have to begin to prepare for the job well in advance of election day by:

- gathering contextual information;
- developing a clear election-day plan;
- creating a software "shell" for the presentation of graphics; and
- establishing a working protocol for management of results produced by the analysis team.

Pre-Election Preparation

During the run-up to elections, analysts gather different kinds of contextual information that will help them to interpret the qualitative data.

Typically, the most useful contextual data to gather are those from previous elections (when available).

Contextual Data

Typically, the most useful contextual data to gather are those from previous elections (when available), especially from the election immediately preceding the present observation. For example, consider the case of voter turnout. Voter turnout indicates levels of citizen participation on election day and citizen participation is an important measure of the health of an election process. But how do you know if voter turnout is "high" or "unusually low?" At least two kinds of benchmarks are helpful for making these kinds of evaluations. The most obvious benchmark comes from documentation of the recent electoral history of the country. Was voter turnout in the present election "unusually low" when compared with levels of voter turnout in the previous election, or with other national elections in the recent past? International benchmark comparisons might also be helpful, but these comparisons have to be made cautiously because electoral rules have significant effects on levels of voter turnout. Voter turnout is typically systematically higher in countries using proportional representation than in majoritarian electoral systems. Any international comparisons have to take such factors as electoral rules into account. Prior

elections can also provide useful benchmark data for interpreting whether the number of challenged ballots or other anomalies were "unusually high." Most election commissions keep records of prior elections, and those records should be publicly available.

Pre-election preparation also involves gathering data from international organizations that conduct election observations. These organizations may have participated in observer missions, or they may have assisted domestic non-governmental organizations conducting observations in the country. Some of these organizations keep records of previous involvement, and their archived files on other elections can provide important detailed contextual election data.

It is essential that analysts develop in advance a clear plan.

A Clear Plan

It is essential that analysts develop in advance a clear plan addressing: Exactly how will they work with the observer data when they start to arrive on election day? Which parts of the dataset will be examined first? In what order will the data be analyzed? Do the analysts know exactly how to proceed if findings indicate that there may have been some problems? Which are the problems that seem most likely to arise on election day? How will they be analyzed? These questions must not be left until election day, and they should be discussed in advance with those responsible for presenting the results to the public. The point is to eliminate as many "surprises" as possible.

In many cases newspapers will simply print the graphic results produced by observer groups.

Using Graphics

Next, analysts must plan how they will use graphics. Graphic presentations of data make observation results more accessible to the media and to the public. In many cases newspapers will simply print the graphic results produced by observer groups. The production of user friendly graphics solves two problems. It saves newspapers the trouble of producing their own graphics, and it reduces the chances that errors will be made in the presentation of findings.

The production of graphics is time consuming, and it is remarkable just how much disagreement can arise over the matter of what is the best way to present information. Just as the leadership of the organization should prepare in advance drafts of what an election day statement of results might look like, so too should the analysis team prepare ahead of time the software "shell" for the presentation of graphics. That "shell" should reflect choices about format, addressing issues, like: Will the data on key questions be illustrated with bar charts? Will they be presented using pie-charts? Or, will they be numeric tables? Will the charts include the organization's logo? How will each of the graphs or tables be labelled?

These questions may seem trivial, but it is essential to eliminate in advance as many things as possible that may cause election-day disagreements and lost time. Such disagreements have delayed press conferences, and they have led

to missed media opportunities. Advanced preparation avoids such problems. More importantly, they save time on election day and eliminate possibilities of making mistakes that can damage the credibility of the election observers.

Establishing an Election Day Protocol

Analysts should also prepare for election day by establishing a working protocol for the management of results produced by the analysis team. This protocol can significantly reduce the potential for election day friction with quick count leadership and mistakes like forcing premature release of data. The protocol should clearly address the following questions: *How, when, and to whom will the analysts report the results of the analysis on election day?* These issues need to be discussed and agreed upon prior to election day.[4]

Analysts should establish a working protocol for the management of results produced by the analysis team.

The political leadership of civic organizations does not always understand precisely what is entailed in the analysis of election day observation data, and they have expectations that are sometimes unfounded. Furthermore, there are extraordinary pressures surrounding election day. Quick count organizers are under external pressure to release results as quickly as possible. The pressures can come from multiple sources, including: the media, international observer groups, representatives of donor countries, political parties, and even the election commission. The constraint facing the analyst is that it takes time for data to arrive and be entered before they can be analyzed. Moreover, analysts need to have enough data to undertake a reliable analysis. If leadership bows to pressures and makes premature pronouncements, they may be inaccurate and produce extraordinarily negative consequences.

Steps in the Analysis of the Qualitative Data

On election day, the analysis of the qualitative data usually proceeds through three discrete steps:

1. *Scanning the data*—Identifying "outliers," signs that something has gone wrong.
2. *Searching for systematic patterns*—Determining whether problems are randomly distributed or clustered.
3. *Ascertaining the impact of the problems*—Determining whether problems have a material impact on the outcome and favor any particular party or candidate.

Scanning the Data

The analysis of the qualitative data usually begins with a scan of the data and an analysis of the distribution of the responses to each and every question in the qualitative dataset. The task here is to identify "outliers," those responses that signify that something might have gone wrong. Recall that all the questions were drafted, and informed in large part by, the election law and administrative

[4] See Chapter 8: *The "End Game"* for a discussion of developing and following a protocol for sharing internally and releasing quick count results.

regulations governing election day procedures. Consequently, the responses to each question will indicate whether those regulations have been satisfied or some problem is detected.

Consider the case of responses to Question 1 in Form 1 above. The response categories to the question about "installation of the polling station" allow for four responses. The distribution of responses across the first three categories indicates what amounts to the "rate" of installation. In well-run elections the expectation would be that the majority of polling stations should be installed before 7:00 a.m. if the polls are to open to the public at 7:00 a.m. If a large proportion of polling stations were installed between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00, then these would be "late" but not necessarily problematic, depending on whether there are still ample opportunities for everyone at those polling stations to vote and the absence of other problems. Far more problematic are those cases where observers report that the polling station was "not installed." In those cases, significant numbers of voters may be disenfranchised unless extraordinary remedies are set in place by authorities. These cases will require further investigation by the analyst.

Analysts should report the distribution of responses across all categories, identify precisely which polling stations were "not installed" and attach the list of non-installed polling stations to the report of the distribution of installation times. The reason for attaching to the report case-by-case identification of each polling station not installed becomes clear through experience. When reporting to the public that, say 4 percent of the polling stations were "not installed," the media typically ask two questions: which ones? and why were they not-installed? The first question can be addressed by supplying the attached report. The second question may be harder to answer in the initial report, but the reply should at least be: "We are investigating the matter." Local knowledge might reveal that the polling station was not installed because it had very few voters registered there and it was merged with a polling station at the next table, a polling station that also had very few registered voters. As long as all voters had a real opportunity to vote, there is no reason to assert that the problem was sufficient to compromise the fairness of the election. Contextual data collected prior to election day also is important. With these contextual data it becomes possible to say whether levels of non-installations are higher or lower than in previous elections.

The same procedure should be followed for each and every question. Consider another case. Questions 6a-6f on Form 1 above have to do with the presence of materials at the polling station. Most election laws require that all of these materials be in place. The analyst, therefore, should scan the data to search for *any* cases that do not satisfy these criteria. Those cases should be identified. The same applies to the responses to Question 10 about the time of the first vote. If a response to the first vote question is "never," the observer recorded that no one voted, then this indicates a serious problem at the polling station. The next step takes the analysis further.

Searching for Systematic Patterns

Step 1 procedures will indicate if anything has gone wrong, where it has gone wrong and what is the potential scope of the problem. Step 2 is essentially a search for systematic patterns. It begins by a statistical search for patterns of regularities, or irregularities, for those cases that step 1 analysis has identified as "problem cases." Recall that if the problem cases are distributed randomly and the scale is not large, then the likely cause of the problems is simple human error. However, this has to be determined systematically, and there are two ways to proceed. What needs to be determined, first, is whether the problem cases are clustered in any one region of the country or not. This can be established by cross-tabulating all of the problem cases by region of the country and within region, by district.

If the problem cases are distributed randomly and the scale is not large, then the likely cause of the problems is simple human error.

If the problem cases are clustered, say in the capital city, or in a particular region, then the reasons behind this should be explored. A clustering of problem cases may signify an administrative problem within a particular district. In those cases, it is useful to alert the emergency team about the problem and to contact the observer groups' regional or municipal supervisors to generate local information about why these problems arose. Regional or municipal supervisors are usually in the best position to get to the bottom of a localized problem—not least of all because they will be in contact both with the local observers and the local election commission officials.

While these local inquiries are being initiated, analysts should continue to analyze the data by cross-tabulating the problem cases with all other response to questions in the qualitative forms. That strategy is important because it can shed light on the shape and depth of the problems with these cases. For example, if the polling station was "not installed" (Question 1, response E) then it should follow that people should not have been able to vote (Question 10, response E). A simple cross-tabulation of these two sets of question can establish definitively whether this was the case.

A clustering of problem cases may signify an administrative problem within a particular district. District supervisors or coordinators are usually in the best position to get to the bottom of a localized problem

These cross-tabulation checks will also enable the analyst to determine if most of the problems across most categories are concentrated within the same polling stations, or if they are not. This is a critical line of investigation. Once again, an example helps to illustrate the point. If the analysts takes the problem cases where polling stations were "not installed" (Question 1, response E) and crosstabulates these with the responses to Questions 2-4, and Questions 6a-6f which concern the presence of polling station officials and election materials, then the results will allow the analysts to rule out, or isolate, certain reasons for why the polling stations were not installed. So if, for the majority of cases of non-installed polling stations, the analyst finds that the answer to questions 6a-6f is uniformly "no" (the materials were not present), but the answers to Questions 2-4 were "A" (all nominated polling station officials were present), then the analyst would conclude that the problem of non-installation was not the absence of polling station officials, but probably was the absence of proper election materials. Such a finding should be communicat-

ed to the observer group's regional coordinator who can be asked to investigate why materials did not arrive at these polling stations.

The analysis might reveal an administrative problem, as with the above example. These findings should form a part of the observer groups' report. Alternatively, information from a local coordinator may reveal that the polling stations that were "not installed" are not really a problem at all. The polling station might not have been installed for sensible administrative reasons. Local knowledge might reveal that the polling station was not installed because it had very few voters registered there and it was merged with the next polling station, one that also had very few registered voters. As long as all voters had a real opportunity to vote, there is no reason to assert that there was a problem.

The analyst should be prepared to combine local information with information that comes from the qualitative dataset.

However, the observer group's municipal coordinator may determine that materials (or, for example, ballots) were not delivered to the polling station in the quick count sample nor to any other polling stations in the surrounding area. Analysis of past voting patterns may reveal that voters in this area tend to favor a particular political party. This could indicate a deliberate political discrimination affecting a local election, or it could turn out to be part of a national trend.

In the interpretation of the qualitative evidence, therefore, the analyst should be prepared to combine local information with information that comes from the qualitative dataset.

Determining the Impact of Problems

In Step 3, analysts determine the impact of "the problems." At issue is the question: Does the scope and scale of the problems identified in Steps 1 and 2 have a systematic and/or material impact on any particular political party or candidate?

The data from the qualitative reports are a part of the same dataset as the data reported for the quick count. Because there are both qualitative and vote count data merged in the same dataset, it is possible to determine whether qualitative problems are related in systematic ways to vote count results. The crosstabulation of qualitative results with vote count results can incorporate items from either Form 1 or Form 2. The basic logic can be illustrated with a simple example.

Transparency is an essential characteristic of democratic elections, and the electoral rules allowing party agents to be present at polling stations are intended help to ensure transparency. The theory is that party agents from competing parties will serve as checks on the transparency of polling station procedures, including the counting process. Most elections feature at least two major parties with a reasonable chance to win national office, but some parties are better organized than others. All parties may be entitled to have party agents present at all polling stations, but not all parties will necessarily have the organizational capacity to place party agents in each and every polling station

to watch the vote count. A vote count might qualify as "transparent" at any particular polling station when party agents representing at least two different and competing political parties are present and can actually observe ballots being removed from the ballot box, the determination of for whom they should be counted and the recording of the results.

By combining the qualitative data with the numeric quick count data, it is possible to evaluate the issue of transparency systematically. Questions 6a-6c on Form 2 above and Questions 9a-9c on Form 1 indicate which party agents were present at which polling stations. And Questions 9a-9f on Form 2 indicate vote results. Using the qualitative data, analysts can identify precisely, first, which polling stations had fewer than two party agents present and also identify what was the vote count result from that polling station.

By combining the qualitative data with the numeric quick count data, it is possible to evaluate the issue of transparency systematically.

Following this approach makes it possible to determine the answer to important questions: Did vote counts at polling stations with fewer than two party agents have vote results that were systematically different from the results from polling stations where there were two or more party agents present? Did presidential candidate A, systematically win more votes in those polling stations where an agent from party A was the only party agent present? If the answers to those questions is "yes," then the data should be probed further. One possible reason for that finding might simply be that Party A is stronger in that region of the country. That outcome, then, does not necessarily mean that fraud has taken place. The data should be further analyzed, however, to determine whether the same finding holds for polling stations in the same region/district where there are two or more party agents present at polling stations. Further, analysis will be able to determine: 1) just how many polling stations in the sample had fewer than two party agents present; 2) what is the size of the vote "dividend" (if any) to Party A where Party A agents are the only party agents present; and 3) whether the size of that "dividend" could have had any impact on the overall outcome of the election.[5]

The general point concerning how to use the combination of the qualitative results and the count results is made using the case of "transparency." Exactly the same kind of combined analysis could be used with a number of other combinations. For example, analysts can examine the impact of irregularities on vote count results (Form 2, Question 2). The very same principle applies when a party contests the results from a polling station (Form 2, Question 10). In that case, it can be systematically determined whether all, or most, challenges were issued by the party in second place.[6]

[5] Here the size of the sample is very important. If a national sample is small, with corresponding relatively large margins of error, it will not be possible to conduct this type of analysis with a significant degree of confidence, and certain problems could even not be detected.

[6] The qualitative data provide a sound basis upon which to draw inferences about the severity of identified problems or the importance of the absence of significant problems. However, groups must use caution when speaking publicly about problems identified and the likely impact on the overall quality of election-day processes. Statements or reports should be carefully crafted so the significance of the qualitative data is not over-extended. For additional information on public statements, see Chapter Eight, *The "End Game."*

REMINDER

The central points emphasized in this chapter have focused on the design and the analysis of the qualitative part of the observation. The most important points can be summarized as follows:

1. There are strong reasons for observer groups to pay close attention to preparations for undertaking a qualitative observation that can complement the collection of data on voting results in a quick count.

2. Qualitative observations are very systematic and reliable precisely because they use the same general methodology, and observers, as those for collecting voting results in a quick count.

3. The design of the qualitative forms has to begin with a clear knowledge of the rules governing the administration of the election. The structure of the qualitative forms should be designed by a team that includes the volunteer coordinator, a trainer, an electoral law expert, a data analyst and the executive director or a board member.

4. The qualitative forms should be short, and there are principles that should be followed to ensure that the forms are useful and produce reliable and valid data.

5. Preparation for the qualitative analysis should begin with the collection of contextual data well before election day.

6. Analysts should develop an analysis plan before election day. That plan includes the creation, testing and development of graphics capacities that are approved before election day. And protocols for how, when, and to whom the analysis team distributes the results of the analysis should be established before election day.

7. The analysis of the qualitative data should be staged through three steps that include: basic data scanning; the search for systematic problems; and the analysis of whether the problems identified in the qualitative analysis are likely to have any material impact on the vote.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Collecting and Analyzing Quick Count Data

The random sample is drawn, observer forms are developed and distributed and observers are recruited and trained. On election day, observers take up positions at assigned polling stations and get ready to collect and report the data. This chapter deals with the next steps. The chapter begins with a discussion of data reporting protocols. It explains how and when observers report data on the quality of the process and the vote count results. Some of the problems associated with information flows on election day, and practical solutions to those problems, are discussed. The chapter then examines the important question of how the recovered data are used, particularly with regard to the vote count. It considers the main strategies for analyzing data on vote totals and steps taken to ensure that the results released will be reliable. It concludes with a discussion of how and when quick count findings can be released.[1]

DATA REPORTING PROTOCOLS

On election day, domestic observers usually make two reports. For the first report observers use a questionnaire similar to Form 1 illustrated in Chapter Six. Form 1 contains information about whether proper procedures have been followed during the *opening* of polling stations. This first qualitative report is made after the polling stations have opened, usually immediately after the first voter in line has voted. The second report comes from a form similar to Form 2, also illustrated in Chapter Six. This provides qualitative data on the voting procedures and the closing of the polling stations, as well as data on the vote count. The common practice is for observers to report these data immediately after polling stations have produced an official result. In most cases, a polling station result is "official" after the polling station officials and the party agents present at the count have signed the public document that records the vote totals for that particular polling station.

This chapter focuses primarily on the official vote data (Form 2), but there are broad issues of data reporting that apply to *all* observer reports. So, the place to begin is with general guidelines that apply to both the first and second reports.

[1] Readers should refer to Chapter Six, *The Qualitative Component of the Quick Count,* for more detailed information on how qualitative data are collected and analyzed.

For each report, observers make three separate calls; they report the same data to three different locations.

Call # 1: Observers make the first call directly to the central data collection center.
Call # 2: Observers make the second call to their assigned regional coordinator.
Call # 3: Observers make the third call to a back-up network of private telephones in the capital city.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why do observers make three telephone calls for each report on election day? Isn't this a waste of time and effort?
No, three calls are not a waste of time and effort. Sometimes attempts are made to disrupt domestic observation efforts, and the point of attack is usually the observer group's communications system. This might mean shutting down the power source to the data collection center or cutting off the telephone system. Precautions have to be taken. For that reason, it is now standard practice to install back-up power systems at the data collection centers so that the observation effort has an independent, stand-alone power source for election day. (Some groups locate the center in a hotel that has a back-up generator.) Having observers make Call #2, and Call #3 is another standard and complementary security precaution. With these back-up communications alternatives in place, a quick count's success is not entirely dependent on a single communications link. The availability of these alternative data routings means that observer groups still have the capacity to successfully complete a quick count even if the communications system at the data collection center is shut down or fails.

The main challenge of a quick count is to collect, deliver, assemble and analyze large volumes of information—and to do so reliably and quickly.

INFORMATION FLOWS

The main challenge of a quick count is to collect, deliver, assemble and analyze large volumes of information—and to do so reliably and quickly. Because the effectiveness of quick counts requires efficient information flows, it is important to have a very clear idea about exactly how election day information flows will work. In fact, there are two sets of information flows to consider. The first has to do with the information flows from observers in the field to the data collection center. Then there are the information flows within, and from, the data collection center. Both of these sets of information flows are monitored through the central database. In effect, it is through the database that information traffic can be directed in ways that maximize the efficiency of data recovery on election day.

Information Flows from the Field

The experiences of groups that have conducted quick counts provide two very clear lessons about information flows, and each of these has important logistical and analytic implications that need to be clearly understood.

There are very substantial fluctuations in the volume of information flows from observers in the field to the data collection center.

First, on election day, there are very substantial fluctuations in the volume of information flows from observers in the field to the data collection center. The typical pattern, summarized in Figure 7-1, is based on real data gathered from a recent Latin American election. In that particular case, the election law required that polling station officials open the polling stations by 7:00 a.m. Observers were asked to be present at the polling station by 6:15, some 45 minutes before polling stations were due to open. They were asked to report their Form 1 data, the qualitative data, immediately after the first voter had voted at their polling station.

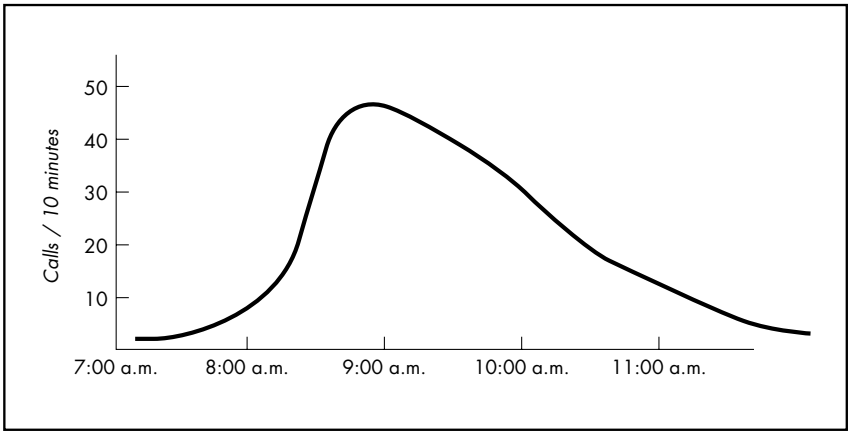


FIGURE 7-1:
TYPICAL DISTRIBUTION OF PHONE CALLS

This pattern of fluctuations in the volumes of information is essentially the same for both the qualitative and the numeric data. At 7:00, the data collection center receives no information at all. Information begins to trickle in to the data collection center after the first thirty minutes, between 7:30 and 8:00. The earliest data to arrive come from the most efficient polling stations and where observers have easy access to telephones. By 8:30, the number of phone calls into the data collection center has increased dramatically, and by 9:00 that trickle has turned into a deluge. In this particular case, calls were arriving at the data collection center at a rate of some 55 calls per 10 minutes or 5.5 calls a minute. After that peak period, the volume of calls coming into the data collection center starts to fall off, and then it slows down dramatically.

The task is to develop a strategy that effectively manages the peak volume of information intake.

These uneven information flows present a logistical challenge. The task is to develop a strategy that anticipates—and then effectively manages—the peak volume of information intake. At issue are two questions. Does the group have the communications capacity to accept all the calls during the peak period?

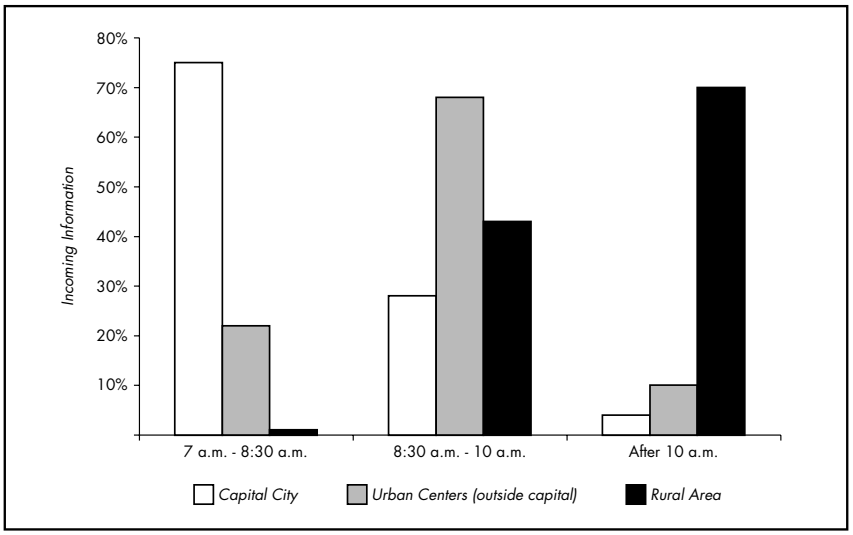
Information bottlenecks or breakdowns could lead to information losses.

More critically, are there information bottlenecks or breakdowns that could lead to information losses? Information losses are extremely serious for two reasons. First, they amount to an unnecessary waste of organizational time and effort. The practical issue is clear; there is no point in recruiting and training observers and asking them to report data if the communications system does not have the capacity to receive the data. Second, information losses mean that the *effective* size of the sample is reduced, and for reasons outlined in Chapter Five, it is clear that reducing effective sample size means increasing the margins of error of the quick count results. More technically, it means that the usable sample becomes a less reliable basis for estimating unknown population characteristics.

The second lesson learned is that, on election day, information flows into the data center at uneven rates from different regions of most countries. (See Figure 7-2.) There is no mystery about why there are dramatic regional variations in information flows. Information from the capital cities nearly always arrives first, mostly because the communications infrastructure in capital cities is nearly always far better than in rural areas, and observer access to telephones is nearly always easier in capital cities than elsewhere. Information from rural and remote areas, by contrast, are usually the last data to arrive because communications infrastructure is typically poor, and observers often have to travel great distances to reach telephones or radios. These uneven regional distributions of information flows have both organizational and analytic implications.

Because we know ahead of time that information flows are likely to be uneven in these two respects, it is important to take steps that will both maximize and protect our effective sample by managing the information flows more efficiently.

FIGURE 7-2:
REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION FLOWS



Strategies for Managing Information Flows from the Field

Most groups plan to report quick count data to data collection centers by telephone, if at all possible. The sample size determines the total number of calls that will flow through the data reporting system on election day. The configuration and capacity of the telephone system has to be designed to manage the volume of information that is likely to come via telephone lines. More importantly, the telephone system has to be able to manage the peak volume of data flows. The following example illustrates how the volume of data is calculated.

The telephone system has to be able to manage the peak volume of data flows.

> A quick count observation in one country uses a sample of 600 polling stations, and each telephone call takes, on average, about four minutes to transmit the observer information. This means that the volume of information to be transmitted is 600 x 4, or 2400, telephone line-minutes. In an ideal world, it might be possible to design a communications system so that each data point in the sample would have its own dedicated telephone number (in this example, 600 telephone lines). This is not necessary; it is not very efficient, and it is very expensive. An alternative strategy is to (1) estimate what the peak volume of calls will be and then (2) design a communications system that has the capacity to manage the volume of information at that estimated peak load, in countries where this is possible.

Generally, the most efficient telephone system to use is what is called a "cascading" telephone number system. Here, observers are provided with one phone number to call, but that phone number will automatically transfer and re-route observer calls to the next available free line. Cascading telephone number systems may have as many as twenty lines dedicated to a single number. This system is most efficient because it decreases the likelihood that callers will get a "busy" signal when they call the number.

Generally, the most efficient telephone system to use is what is called a "cascading" telephone number system.

"One-number/one-line" systems are more common but far less efficient. First, they require more available numbers. Second, observers need to be provided with a list of alternative numbers to call in case the first telephone number they are assigned turns out to be "busy." The onus is upon the observer to find an open line from the list of numbers. Unless the data center telephone numbers are carefully assigned to each observer, observers may face the problem of having to repeatedly call the same number until that particular line is open. This wastes valuable time. In "single-number/single-line" telephone systems, the more efficient practice is to have no more than fifteen observers assigned to the same data center telephone line and to provide each observer with a list of up to five alternative telephone numbers to call. If this strategy is followed, then it is important to rotate the order of the alternative numbers provided to each of the fifteen observers. Observers tend to use the first number at the top of the list of telephone numbers they are given, so rotating the numbers on these lists decreases the likelihood that each observer will be call-

ing the same number at the same time. Careful planning is required to reduce the chances of having information bottlenecks on single-number/single-line telephone systems.

Installing large numbers of telephone lines in any one facility and doing so at short notice is often a challenge. For bureaucratic reasons, it may take a long time to order telephones and to have the lines installed. Or it may be just too expensive to buy, or rent, and install the needed number of lines. Even when it is possible to install the necessary number of land lines, they may not be dependable. For these reasons, alternative ways of delivering observer information to data collection centers should be considered.

Alternative ways of delivering observer information to data collection centers should be considered.

Recall that a substantial proportion of the data reported early tends to come from observers who are located in the capital city region. If the data collection center is located in the capital city, then one alternative to consider is the possibility of hand-delivering observer data to the data collection center. For example, organizers might consider having volunteers on motorcycles pick up the data from observers at pre-arranged collection points and times throughout the city. If one third of a country's voters (and so, about one third of the sample) live in the capital city, then using such an alternative data delivery system to complement direct phone calls can substantially reduce the information load on telephone lines and the number of required telephones.

Strategies involving the hand delivery of data, of course, are manpower intensive and require careful coordination and supervision, but they can be effective. In Malawi's 1999 quick count, 16 vehicles rode circuits from three locations, picked up observer reports and delivered them to these locations. The forms were then faxed to a central data collection center.[2]

There are other alternatives to hard-wired telephones to consider. These might include the use of cell phones, solar phones, satellite phones, and radio and fax systems. Each alternative has its own combination of advantages and drawbacks.

In most developing countries, people do not have the luxury of entirely efficient and adequate telephone communications systems. For that reason it is important to evaluate the adequacy of the existing communications system well in advance. The next step is to calculate the load and distribution requirements for a quick count communications effort. And the final step is to strategically configure a quick count communications system around what is available, so that the system that can adequately manage the information load of the quick count. This may mean patching together a combination of communications avenues for the delivery of observation data.

[2] See Appendix 10 for additional information on the Malawi data collection process.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What type of telephones are most useful during a quick count?
The advantage of *cell phones* is that they reduce the amount of time it takes an observer to get to a phone. Observers have the phone in hand. Cell phones are particularly useful where the communications infrastructure is inadequate and where there are few working or reliable hard line phones available in the immediate vicinity of the polling station. However, cell phones tend to be expensive, and they have a limited range. Their effectiveness depends on the terrain and upon the observers' proximity to the data collection center. Cell phones are usually powered by batteries, and the effective battery life of a cell phone can be very unpredictable.

Solar phones have the same kinds of advantages as cell phones and some of the same limitations. The key difference is that these phones charge the power source through solar energy. Constant re-charging of these solar energy-absorbing batteries reduces the efficiency of the battery. That is a significant consideration because, in most cases, vote count data are delivered at night, when there is no opportunity to recharge batteries via solar sources.

Satellite phones are another option. The great advantage of satellite telephones is that they are the best, and sometimes the only, technological alternative for getting quick count data very quickly to data collection centers from very remote areas. Satellite phones work well regardless of terrain and regardless of how far an observer is from data collection centers. The major drawback of satellite phones is that they are extremely expensive and sometimes hard to acquire. In addition, they also rely on batteries as a power source, and in remote areas these may not be easily re-charged. Observers using satellite phones also require some special training in the use of the phones.

Radios are often very useful for retrieving data from remote areas. They do not have the range of satellite phones, but they are much cheaper. The major disadvantage of radio systems is that they are manpower and equipment intensive. Observers have to "buddy-up" with a radio operator. The use of radios also requires a great degree of coordination. Radio operators have to coordinate transmission times and radio band frequencies with other radio operators who, in turn, are buddied-up with observation data receivers. Furthermore, radio data sometimes have to be relayed, after radio transmission, via the regular telephone system. Radios are much less expensive than satellite phones, but extra steps are often required to get data to the data collection center, and this is organizationally burdensome. Further, these data can be difficult to verify because radio transmissions are usually "one shot" transmissions and observers cannot be recontacted easily.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Three key points emerge from this discussion of information flows:

1. There are huge differences both between and within countries when it comes to communications infrastructure. No two countries are exactly the same. Observation groups have to carefully design their communications system, and that design has to be grounded in a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the available communications infrastructure. Planning communications systems involves exploiting the strengths of the infrastructure and designing strategies that will compensate for weaknesses.

2. The volume of information flows is uneven. Effective communications systems are designed around estimations of peak information loads.

3. The sources of information are uneven. Because the timing of the delivery of final quick count results is geared entirely by the rate at which the slowest data arrive, special attention has to be given to the question of how data can be most efficiently transmitted from sample points that are located in remote areas.

Information Flows within the Data Collection Center

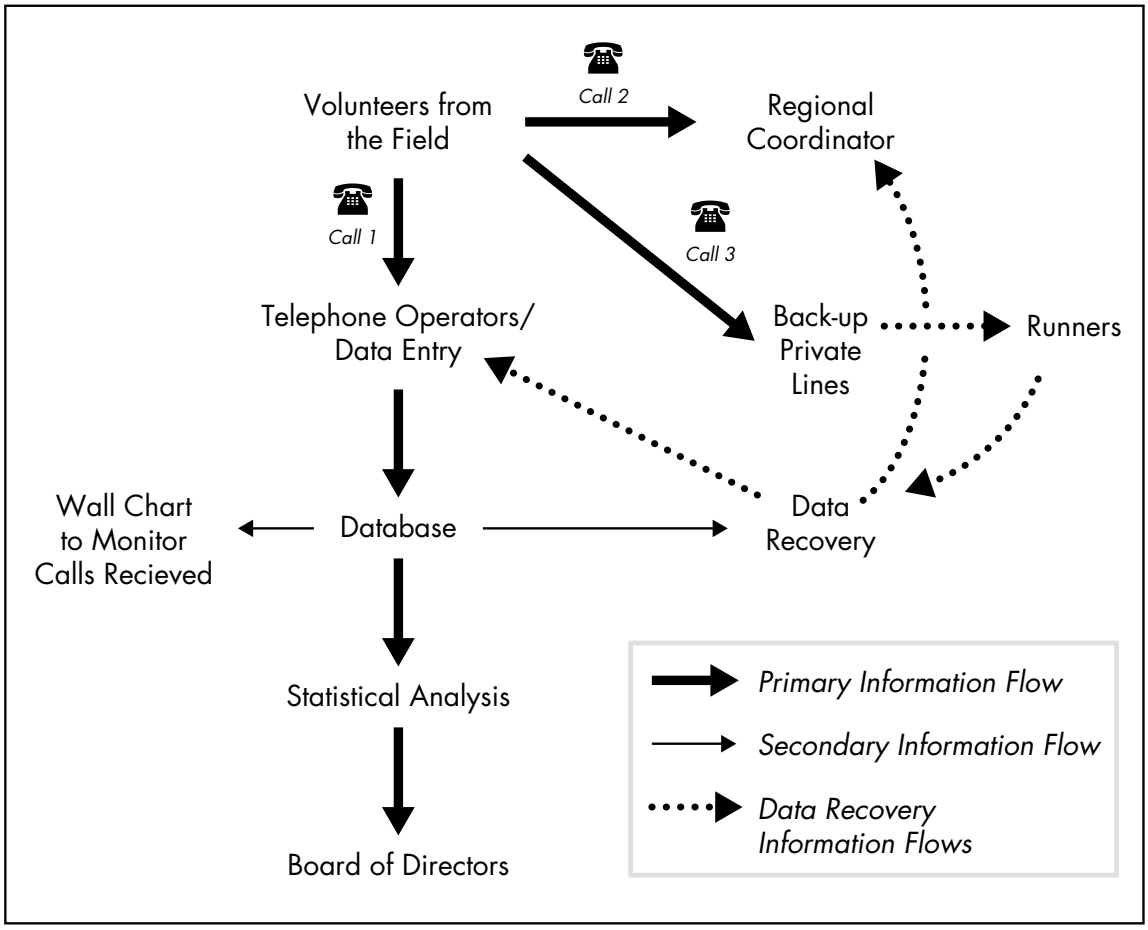
After observers have recorded quick count data at their polling station, they make their first telephone call directly to the data collection center. Figure 7-3 illustrates the pathways of information flows at the data collection center. After the identity of the caller has been verified (by the use of a security code word or set of numbers), the call from the observer is accepted and the observer information is recorded by telephone operators at the data collection centers.

Precisely how these data are recorded depends on what kind of technology is available to the observer group. Where there is little access to technology, a pen-and-paper approach can be enough. Phone operators simply enter the phone data by hand onto forms. Where more sophisticated technology is available, observers calls may be directly routed through to the data entry facility where operators using headphones can enter the data directly into the database, while the observer remains on the telephone line. Keeping observers on the telephone line while the data are entered is more efficient, and it reduces

[3] These types of direct data entry systems are far more efficient because built-in software safeguards alert data entry personnel to "illegal" responses to categories in observation forms. Keeping the observer on the telephone line during data entry reduces inaccuracies and eliminates the time consuming, and sometimes futile, task of trying to re-contact observers to resolve inconsistent or illegible responses that often appear in hand copied forms.

data losses.[3]

Follow the pathways in Figure 7-3 indicated by the solid arrows that go from Call #1 through to data entry. Notice that immediately after the data have been entered, the information is routed directly to the database. The database accepts these observation data and stores the data within a subfile that is attached to a larger database. That larger database contains a great deal of information that is vital to the entire observation. It is by linking the newly received observer data with these other stored data that the database can be used to direct



information flows instantaneously within the data collection center.

FIGURE 7-3: QUICK COUNT INFORMATION FLOWS

The Master Database

The master database, a computerized information storage place, can be developed during the very first phases of organizing for an election observation. In

The database should be developed from the moment when observers are first recruited.

fact, the database should be developed from the moment when observers are first recruited. This database is an important basic resource that can be used for tracking recruiting and training, as well as for monitoring election day information flows. The database contains information, stored as records, for each and every volunteer observer. It usually includes: each observer's name, address and contact telephone numbers; whether and when the observer has been trained; when the observer was sent election day observer materials; and when they received those materials.[4] The database also contains the name, location, address and contact telephone numbers of the regional coordinators to whom the observer reports (Call #2), and it contains the same information for the backup private telephones to whom the observer will make Call #3. Most crucially, the database also contains the number and location of the polling station to which the observer is assigned.

With these pieces of information in a single computer record, the database becomes an extremely efficient tool for retrieving and linking key pieces of information. For example, recruiters can consult the database to track how well recruiting is proceeding. Trainers can refer to the database to find out who has been trained and how to contact people who need to be trained. The organization can use the database as a source of addresses for mailings to volunteers. Regional coordinators can use the database to keep in touch with observers who report to them and to identify those observers who are collecting data from the sample points in the quick count.

The database is an extremely valuable tool for guiding information flows within the data collection center on election day.

In addition to these general day-to-day operational uses, the database is an extremely valuable tool for guiding information flows within the data collection center on election day. Refer again to Figure 7-3. Notice that immediately after data from observers are entered by the data entry operators, the information is directly entered into the database. A computer program then re-directs the quick count observation data simultaneously to three locations: to the statistical analysis unit, the wall chart and the data recovery unit. In the statistical analysis unit, data become available for analysis. Volunteers working on the wall chart record which polling stations in the sample have reported in their data, and keep a running tally of the arrival of reports from the polling stations in the sample. Volunteers in the data recovery unit track each sample point that has NOT reported.

Sample Clearing and Data Recovery

Suppose that, after the first two hours, 20 percent of the sample points from the capital city have not reported. The vital question becomes: How to retrieve these data? The data recovery unit will take computer generated reports from the database and start the process of data recovery. Each computer generated report received by the data recovery unit will contain the following

[4] The database may track additional information concerning the organization's staff and volunteers of various types, such as skills or types of tasks performed during the course of the election observation (e.g., types of pre-election monitoring undertaken) and interests/activities beyond election monitoring (e.g., voter education, "congress watch," etc.).

information from the database: the precise location of the missing sample point; the identity of the observer at that datapoint; the contact telephone number of that observer; the name and contact numbers of the regional coordinator for that datapoint; and the name and contact number of the back-up private phone contact for that datapoint. It might be difficult to contact directly the observers who are at the missing data point. They may still be at the polling station and out of telephone contact, and there are a number of possible reasons for why the data may not have been reported to the data collection center by the observer. The particular polling station might have opened late, and the observer may not yet have had the opportunity to gather the data. Another possibility is that the observer may have tried to call the data collection center while the data center phone lines were busy. Recall, though, that observers are required to follow a *three* call regime to report each piece of information. Call #2 should have gone to the regional coordinator and Call #3 to the back-up private telephone. So the data recovery unit can begin data recovery by phoning the back-up assigned to that observation point, or they can call the regional coordinator. If neither has received the data from the observer, the data recovery team alerts the regional coordinator so that she or he can investigate the matter. The regional coordinator directs efforts to determine the cause of the missing data, perhaps by involving a municipal coordinator to recover the data for the missing sample point.

The regional coordinator directs efforts to determine the cause of the missing data.

The dotted lines in Figure 7-3 indicate the calls from the data recovery unit to the back-up private telephones and to the regional coordinators. The process of data recovery is a continuous one throughout election day. The sample clearance unit has the task of identifying missing data points and alerting the data recovery unit to the possibility that data may be missing for an entire province or state. These patterns require immediate attention because they suggest that there is a systemic problem in data retrieval. There may have been a breakdown in the observation communications system, or they could indicate a substantial and regionally specific problem in the administration of the election. Either way, the task of the data recovery unit is to determine the source of the problem and to alert the leadership about the scope and scale of any such problem. This information also has to be relayed to the analysis unit so that analysts are aware that possible adjustments may have to be made in the weighting of the data for the final report.

Evidence of data retrieval problems usually becomes apparent after observers have completed the task of reporting the Form 1 data, the first qualitative reports that observers call in immediately after the first voter at a polling station has cast a ballot.[5] These Form 1 reports provide an early indication of where the observation effort is working and where it is not. The tasks of the data recovery unit are, first, to determine why there are the missing data points in the Form 1 phase of the observation, and second, to develop a strategy for

Form 1 reports provide an early indication of where the observation effort is working and where it is not.

[5] Chapter Six, *The Qualitative Component of the Quick Count,* details the content and reporting procedures for Form 1.

reducing the missing data points for the crucial vote data that are reported in the second phase of the observation. It might be that data are missing from a sample point in phase 1 because an observer has fallen ill. Another possibility is that the observer's cell phone batteries have gone dead. An observer may have been intimidated or refused entrance to the polling station by a poorly informed polling station official. Once the reason for the missing data point has been established, the regional coordinators can take steps to make sure that the problem is solved by the time that Form 2 quick count data are due to be collected. These corrective steps may entail assigning a back-up observer to the polling station, providing the observer with a new battery, or informing election officials to follow procedures to ensure that all observers are admitted to polling stations as entitled. Efforts to minimize missing data are vital because they increase the effective sample size and so reduce the margins of error in the vote count projection.

When the data recovery team recovers data for these missing sample points, the unit relays the new information directly to the data entry unit. As the recovered data are entered, they are cleared through the database, and they are automatically routed into statistical analysis and the sample clearance unit. This same procedure is replicated for each and every missing data point.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF QUICK COUNT DATA

Analyzing quick count data is part art and part science. Certainly, the foundations—the sampling and the calculations of the margins of error—are grounded in pure science. But there are judgments to be made at several steps in the process of arriving at a final characterization about election-day processes. Observation data accumulate fairly rapidly on election day. It is not unusual to have as much as 30 percent of the total sample collected and digitized within 90 minutes of the opening of the polls. And as much as 65 percent of the total expected data may be available for analysis within as little as two and a half hours of the polls closing. After the digital entry of the data, the data are usually stored in a simple data file.

The primary role of the analysis unit is to develop a clear picture of the character of the election day practices by carefully examining election day observation data.

The primary role of the analysis unit is to develop a clear picture of the character of the election day practices by carefully examining election day observation data. With data from Form 1, for example, it becomes possible to determine the extent to which proper administrative procedures for opening the polling stations were, or were not, followed. It is the analyst's job to ensure that the overall picture is an accurate and reliable one. That picture has to be developed one piece at a time.

The Initial Data Analyses

The very first data exploration undertaken by the data analysis unit has two goals. The first is to establish that there are no election day software or hardware problems that could interfere with the smooth flow of observation data

through the entire computing system. The second goal is to scan the data for any early signs of substantive election day problems. This scanning, described in Chapter Six, involves data sweeps across all observer responses, on all items in Form 1, to determine if there are any unusual response patterns.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do you recognize an unusual response pattern?

The statistical answer is to search for those items in the observer forms that signify that behavior at a polling station does *not* conform to proper procedural norms. For example, under usual administrative regulations, polling stations should be supplied with proper materials that include: ballot boxes; ballots; indelible ink; and so on. Usually, these materials are supplied and distributed by election commissions in single packages. Under ideal conditions, all polling stations should have all of these materials in place. An initial sweep of the data can verify whether or not this is the case. That data sweep should also be able to alert analysts to any substantial variations in these response categories. For instance, the data may show that ballot boxes and ballots were delivered to 98 percent of all polling stations. In that case we would expect indelible ink to be present at 98 percent of all polling stations, and we would be able to identify and include in our report a precise and systematic list of where these important materials were NOT present. If, to continue the same example, our data showed that indelible ink was present in only 65 percent of the observed stations, then we would want to determine why there is such a discrepancy. If indelible ink turns out to be missing in 35 percent of the cases, then one possibility is that the election commission made a logistical error. Are the 35 percent of the cases all in the capital city? Are the cases limited to particular regions? Or are they randomly distributed throughout the country? The initial data analysis will alert analysts to unusual variations in the data that require more detailed investigation when more of the data become available.

The Evolution of the Vote Count Results

Analysts simply do not have enough time to wait until "all the data are in" to analyze election day results. Indeed, it would be a very serious mistake to wait until all of the theoretical sample data have been reported by observers. No domestic observation group anywhere has ever succeeded in collecting 100 percent of the designed probability quick count sample. This presents a dilemma. The problem is that there is no way of knowing ahead of time exactly what size the effective sample will be. That being so, the standard practice is to repeatedly examine the data as they arrive and to continue to do so up to the moment when it can be clearly established that the data have reached the point where they are stable.

This "point of stability" is an important concept that underlies the evaluation of both qualitative and quantitative findings. Technically, the data are con-

This "point of stability" is an important concept. Analysts watch the data findings until the basic results, the distributions across key variables, do not change.

sidered to have stabilized when the addition of new information from observers has no discernible, or material, effect on the results that have already been accumulated. In practice, this means that analysts watch the data findings evolve until the basic results, the distributions across the key variables, do not change. To establish a point of stability, analysts have to plan regular "takes" of the data, regular intervals at which additional pieces of the accumulating data are downloaded from the quick count database and analyzed.

There is no hard and fast rule about precisely what these intervals should be or how regularly these data takes should be timed. One of two criteria are usually used. The frequency of the data takes might be set according to timed intervals: Take 1(T1) might be 30 minutes after the polls have closed, T2 might be one hour after they have closed, T3 after one hour and a half later, and so on. Alternatively, the intervals for the data takes might be established according to the number of completed cases in the evolving dataset. So T1 might be analyzed after there are 100 cases in the dataset, T2 after 200 cases, and so on.

The usual procedure is for T1 to be early, perhaps after the first fifty sample points have arrived. The T1 data take serves two purposes: It provides an initial check on whether all the computer hardware and software are handling the data satisfactorily, and it provides benchmark data. The data from T2 are usually used to conduct initial data sweeps, to scan the data for unusual variations. Then, data from T3 through to Tn, are used to investigate in greater detail the origins, and possible causes, of these variations. At issue are a number of key questions. What is the scope of the problems? Are the problems randomly distributed or not? If the problems are not randomly distributed, then in what ways can the distributions be said to be non-random? And, does the non-random distribution of problems work to the material benefit of any party competing in the election?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does the non-random distribution of a problem necessarily mean that fraud has taken place?

No, not necessarily. Consider the previous example once again. The fact that the indelible ink did not show up in 35 percent of the cases and that all of those cases are concentrated in, say, the capital city, may only mean that there was an administrative error in the distribution of materials and that administrative error was only made by the official working on the materials for the capital region. An election report should certainly draw attention to the evidence indicating the scope and location of such a problem. But that evidence, by itself, is insufficient grounds for drawing the conclusion that fraud has taken place. What is required is a further investigation of the reasons for why the indelible ink was missing from the materials for capital city region polling stations. Additionally, if the election is expected to be close (or a sub-national election in the area is quite competitive), the missing ink could warrant added vigilance against illegal, multiple voting.

Analyzing the Data by Strata

To this point, discussion has focused only on aggregate analysis; all of the available data are considered together as a single block of data. There are, however, compelling reasons to unpack the data when the vote count data (Form 2 data) are being analyzed. The standard practice is to divide the total sample into components (strata) and to examine, in detail and separately, the data from each of these different components. The strata, or segments of the total sample, that are commonly identified for this purpose often take the following form:

Standard practice is to divide the total sample into components (strata) and to examine in detail, and separately, the data from each of these different components.

Strata 1 – all sample points within the capital city;
Strata 2 – data from sample points in all urban areas outside the capital city; and
Strata 3 – the remaining points in the sample, from all rural areas in the country.

Strata may be defined differently in different countries. Capital cities are nearly always considered as a single strata for the simple reason that they are usually the largest urban population concentration in the country and they may contain as much as one third of the total population of the country (and so, one third of the total sample). The precise definitions of the other relevant strata require careful consideration. Selected strata should be relatively homogenous. For example, they might be defined by a regionally distinct ethnic or religious community in the country. They may have historically different political loyalties. Alternatively, strata might include a part of the country with a unique economy, such as a coastal region. For analytical purposes, however, it is rarely useful to identify more than four strata within the total population. Ideally, the strata should be of roughly equal size.

The strategy is to examine separately the evolution and sources of variation in the data from the capital city (Strata 1), separately from the data coming from urban areas outside of the capital city (Strata 2) and separately for data coming from rural and remote areas (Strata 3).

There are a number of reasons for analyzing the data using this stratification procedure. First, as has already been pointed out, data typically arrive at the data collection centers at different rates from different regions. Second, it is quite possible, and in fact quite likely, that different political parties will have different strengths and levels of citizen support among different communities in different parts of the country. Political parties often appeal to different class interests (e.g., the professional/business middle class or agricultural workers) and to different communal groups defined by language, religion, ethnicity or age. The point is that these communities, or interests, are hardly ever distributed evenly throughout the country. Those uneven distributions are usually reflected in regional variations in support for parties and in the evolution of quick count results. The following example illustrates this point:

In one country, different parties have different levels of support within different demographic segments of a population. Consequently, shifts in the balance of support for political parties during the evolution of quick count results (T1 ….Tn) simply reflect what is technically called different "composition effects." Party A may appeal to the young, and Party B to older citizens. If there are more young people living in the capital city, then "early" results from the quick count might show that Party A is ahead. These aggregate results change as data arrive from those parts of the country where there are higher concentrations of older people. In preparing for the analysis of quick count data, analysts should become familiar with what these variations might be. Census data, data from previous elections and knowledge of the historical bases of support for the parties are all useful sources for providing analysts with this kind of background information.

By analyzing the different strata separately, analysts can ascertain more reliably the point of stability.

By analyzing the different strata separately, analysts can ascertain more reliably the point of stability. In fact, the most reliable, and conservative, practice is to analyze the data to determine the point of stability *for each of the strata.* Statistically, by following exactly the same procedures that are outlined in Chapter Five, it is useful to calculate what are the margins of error for each of the strata. With that calculation in hand, analysts can determine what are the minimum number of data points required *within each strata* to satisfy a margin of error of, say, 1 percent for each of the strata. Using that guideline, analysts can determine quite precisely just how many sample points are required from each strata for the data within that strata to stabilize. When the point of stability is reached *for each of the strata,* then the addition of new sample data will have no impact on the distribution of the vote within each strata. Once the data have stabilized within all strata, the addition of new data cannot change the distribution of the vote for the country as a whole. The aggregate result, after all, is the sum of the stratified results. Figure 7-4 provides a graphic summary of how vote counts aggregately "stabilize" during an analysis of data from "takes" T1…Tn.

Once the data have stabilized within all strata, the addition of new data cannot change the distribution of the vote for the country as a whole.

Notice in Figure 7-4, that the early results (T1, T2 and T3) show considerable variation in the distribution of support for Party A and Party B. That variation can be explained by a combination of factors. First, the data that arrive first come from the capital city, and support for Party A is higher in the capital city. Second, the effective sample, at T1, is very small, and it produces estimates that are both biased (capital city results) and have high margins of error. By T4, as the effective sample size increases, the differences in the balance of vote support for the parties is declining. At T4, Party A and Party B are in a close battle, and Party B appears to be catching Party A. By T5, Party B's popular strength in the rural areas is beginning to show. The effect is to place Party B ahead of Party A, and by T6 the data appear to have stabilized.

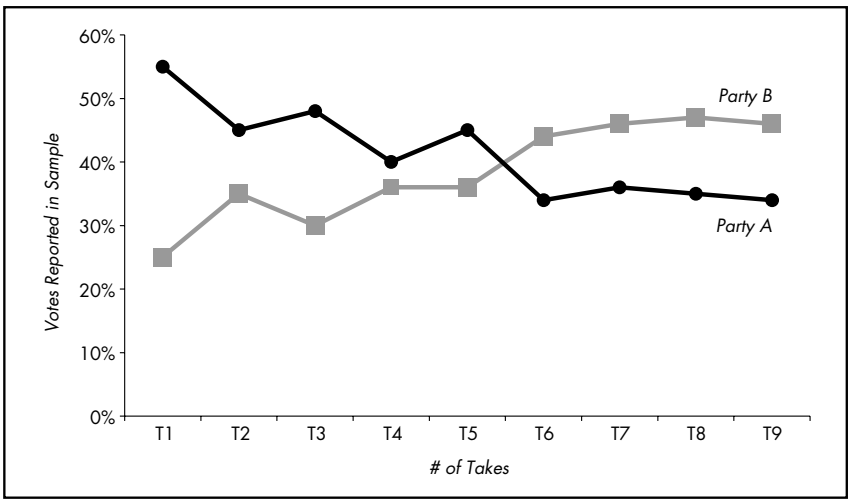


FIGURE 7-4:
STABILIZATION OF VOTES REPORTED IN SAMPLE

Projecting the Election Result

On election day, domestic observation organizations come under intense pressure to "call the election," to release quick count results on the vote projection as early as possible. It is sometimes argued that such an early projection is important because it will help to contribute to political stability. These pressures may come from the media who are anxious to break the news and to meet their deadlines. Pressure may come from organizations that fund the observation effort and which feel entitled to get the very earliest results first. Pressure may also come from within the ranks of the election observation group, perhaps from those who want to see the group be the first to release results or from those who worry that to release the data late will make the observation efforts irrelevant. Typically, pressure to release projections of electoral results as soon as possible comes from all of these sources.

The analyst's priority, however, must be a commitment to ensure that any data that are released are only released after it has been clearly established that the data are accurate and reliable. In fact, it is clearly a very serious mistake to release data that have not been thoroughly checked. The consequences of releasing unreliable, or worse yet incorrect, data can be disastrous. The release of very early, or preliminary data, can be both misleading and counterproductive, and the effect may be to undermine the legitimacy of the quick count and the entire observation effort. There are very strong reasons, then, to exercise caution. All of the results should be re-checked even after the data have apparently reached the point of stability.

The analyst's priority must be a commitment to ensure that any data that are released are only released after it has been clearly established that the data are accurate and reliable.

The following checks on the data are now standard, and they help to increase confidence in the election observation findings:

- *Voter turnout rate*—Recall from Chapter Five that the efficacy of the sample depends partly on assumptions about levels of voter turnout. Previous elections provide a record of what the typical voter turnout rates for the

country have been. Recall that information about the typical level of voter turnout is usually used to inform analysts about the estimated sample size. Voter turnout is factored into calculations about the margins of error. There is no way to predict what turnout rates will be before election day, but Form 2 quick count data will provide a real measure of actual voter turnout on election day. So, the analytic questions to examine are: was the voter turnout rate in this election higher or lower than average, and does the voter turnout rate in the election meet the assumptions used in the original calculation of the margins of error? If the turnout rate meets, or exceeds, the levels assumed in the calculation of the margins of error, then there is no problem. But, if the voter turnout is lower than expected, the margins of error have to be recalculated, and the new criterion has to be applied to the stabilized data. A lower than expected turnout may mean that the effective sample size has to be somewhat larger than originally anticipated, and that might mean delaying the announcement of a result until the minimal criterion is satisfied.

- *Rogue data*—In nearly all election observations, there are findings that are difficult to account for and which apparently indicate that, to some extent, procedural requirements for the administration of the election may have been violated. In some instances, these "findings" might be attributable to something as simple as errors in data input, which can and should be corrected. In other cases, there may be genuine rogue results. If, for example, quick count data show that 757 votes were recorded at a particular polling station when the allowable maximum for each polling station is 600 votes, then this rogue result should be documented and investigated. If the number of rogue cases is large, then there may be reasons to question the legitimacy of the count. The prudent strategy is to conduct a late sweep of the data to identify the scope and scale of "outlying data results" and to do so before the quick count results are released.

- *Missing data*—Even though the data on the vote count may have stabilized by T6, as in the example in Figure 7-4, it will almost certainly be the case that 100 percent of the entire sample will not have reported. Missing data require the attention of analysts. The analysts must determine how the missing data are distributed across the sample. If the missing data are distributed relatively evenly between the various strata (capital city, urban areas outside of the capital, and rural/remote areas), then it is unlikely that the addition of these data to the sample will have a material effect on the outcome predicted by the stabilized data. The problem is that missing data tend not to be evenly distributed throughout the effective sample. Data from rural/remote areas are usually more likely to be missing than are data from the capital city region. In that case, it is prudent to run an analytic check to determine what the overall result would look like if there were no missing data. That can be done by analyzing the differences in vote distributions for the competing political parties within each strata and then supplementing the stabilized data with weighted missing data. The weights are determined arithmetically

simply by the proportional distributions of missing data across each of the strata. For example, if in the rural areas Party B's support is greater than party A's by a ratio of 6:4, and 50 percent of the missing data are in the rural areas, then all that is required is an adjustment of the stabilized results that allocates additional votes to Party B and Party A by a ratio of 6:4 for those missing cases. The same procedure is followed for each of the other two strata. This weighting procedure is a technical adjustment to the stabilized data from the effective sample. For statistical reasons it is clear that, if the minimal limits for each of the strata have been satisfied, then it is highly unlikely that such adjustments would have any material effect on the outcome of the election. Nonetheless, the weighting procedure and the technical adjustment produces a statistically more accurate quick count result.

- *Projecting a close race*—The most difficult circumstances facing quick count analysts are those that arise from a very close competition between rival political parties. Under these conditions, it is particularly important for analysts to resist any pressure for the early release of quick count results and to concentrate on the main task of accumulating as much data from the sample as possible. At issue is the margin of error of the effective sample. If the stabilized results show that the votes for the main contestants for office (Party A and Party B) are separated by less than the margin of error of the effective sample, then the quick count results cannot statistically project who the winner should be. That same principle can be expressed as a more positive rule of thumb: *quick count data are reliable and can be released when the data within each strata have reached the point of stability, and when the difference in levels of voter support for rival political parties exceeds the margins of error of the effective sample.*

If the stabilized results show that the votes for the main contestants for office (Party A and Party B) are separated by less than the margin of error of the effective sample, then the quick count results cannot statistically project who the winner should be.

Careful analysts will work through all of the above checks before coming to their conclusion.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Has a close election ever significantly delayed the release of quick count results?

Yes. For example in Peru's 2000 presidential election, the race between political rivals was so close and so hotly contested that the willingness of the observer group (Transparencia) to release a quick count result hinged not only on missing data but also on the analysis of a subsample of polling stations located in foreign countries. The question facing analysts in that particular case was: could the outstanding votes put the leading candidate over 50 percent to avoid a runoff? In this instance, the leadership of Transparencia was sufficiently experienced to resist the release of the quick count data until that detailed analysis had been concluded. Transparencia's credibility as a nonpartisan group with substantial technical competence allowed the public to accept with confidence Transparencia's projection that a second round should be required.

Most observer groups now routinely work with sufficiently large random samples that they are unlikely to face the problem of elections that are statistically "too close to call." Even under these unlikely circumstances, of course, domestic observer groups have a vital role to play. In these situations, they should promote and monitor a comprehensive and completely transparent vote count by election authorities, as well as the impartial and expedited resolution of any electoral complaints.

Moreover, analysis of the quality of voting and counting processes (together with analysis of the broader electoral environment) can help determine whether official results are to be accepted as credible.

REMINDER

Information is the lifeblood of quick counts, and the goal of this chapter has been to outline what are the most important aspects of information management to ensure a successful quick count. There are a number of points to re-emphasize:

1) Election day information flows are uneven. The volume of election day information flows is uneven, and the origin of incoming information is uneven. Communications systems have to be designed to accommodate these variations.

2) The design of the communications system has to begin with a careful examination of the adequacy of the available communications infrastructure. Because quick count samples will identify data points that are in remote locations with weak or no communications infrastructure, special attention has to be given to developing a strategy for delivering data from remote areas to data collection centers.

3) Problems will inevitably develop in the data collection process as in all complex, time-sensitive operations. Data flows can be interrupted, cellular phone systems can be overloaded, electrical power can be cut, viruses can affect computers—but anticipating possible difficulties and preparing in advance to manage them will allow for a successful quick count.

4) The development of a core database has become an important tool for increasing the efficiency of information management. That tool is useful not only for larger organizational planning but also for election day data recovery and analysis.

5) The analysis of election day quick count data has to be staged through several sequential steps that include: monitoring data recovery and sample clearance; tracking data distributions between different strata; identifying points of data stabilization; conducting data checks against specific criteria to establish the reliability of vote distribution results; recalculating the margins of error of the effective sample; and weighting the recovered data against the designed sample.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The "End Game"

After promoting the quick count, building a volunteer network, training observers and setting up a data collection system, election day arrives. At headquarters, phones begin to ring, volunteers key in data, and analysts compile reports. At this point, organizers celebrate the technical success of the quick count. What is often underestimated, however, is the difficulty of the work that immediately follows—managing and releasing quick count results.

The strategic use of quick count results is the most sensitive phase of the project. The "end game" can also be the most controversial aspect of a quick count. Who should have access to the qualitative information? Who should get the projected election results? When and how should the information be shared?

The difficulty of managing and releasing quick count results is often underestimated.

This chapter suggests ways that groups might approach the end game. It describes a process for developing data use protocols, discusses the most common approaches to releasing results and describes specific activities that support a data use plan. This chapter concludes with a few words on how organizations that conduct successful quick counts work after elections to prepare for the future.

DEVELOPING A PROTOCOL FOR DATA USE

Many successful groups hold a pre-election meeting or retreat at which leaders, key staff and advisors can develop a protocol for releasing quick count results. Experienced groups with a strong, cohesive leadership facing a fairly predictable electoral situation may need only a short time for such a meeting. However, new groups struggling with internal factions and confronting a murky and problematic election day may need an entire day in a confidential setting to reach consensus on how, when and with whom to share quick count results. In any case, groups usually proceed through several steps to arrive at a data use protocol. They review the electoral context, revisit their original goals and create a draft election-day schedule.

Reviewing the Electoral Context

A discussion about managing quick count data should be preceded by a review of the electoral context. While many key staff and board members may be experts in election administration, electoral law, political campaigns, media coverage or international cooperation, it can be difficult to keep abreast of every development in every area. This is particularly true during the often action-packed run-up to elections. It is, therefore, best to briefly discuss the following areas concerning the electoral context:

- *Administrative preparations*—Are materials in place? Are polling station officials trained? Are counting centers properly outfitted? Have election officials held simulations to estimate the timing of voting procedures and the duration of the official counting process? How will authorities release the official election results (e.g., in real time on the Internet, at time intervals as preliminary results, not until a percentage of results are in)? Have authorities made any public statements regarding quick counts?

- *The political environment*—Are the candidates and parties expecting a fair process, and are they likely to challenge the outcome in the event they do not win? What election-day problems are the political contestants expecting, if any? Do political parties trust the independent quick count? Will they be doing their own quick counts?

- *Polling data*—How does the public view the process to date? What is the likely turnout? Are there any reliable opinion polls on election results? What is the status of public confidence in the process? Will citizens trust the official results and/or the quick count?

- *The international community*—Are international observer organizations present? Are any of them considered credible, and are any coordinating with national observers? Will diplomatic missions also report on the process? Are they prepared to play a role in providing external validation that the election satisfies the necessary minimal conditions of a genuine, democratic election?

Revisiting Quick Count Goals

It is important for groups to reaffirm the validity and appropriateness of their original quick count goals before finalizing data use decisions. The purpose of a quick count can impact how groups use results. Goals include:

- deterring fraud;
- detecting fraud;
- offering a timely forecast of results;
- instilling confidence in the electoral process;
- reporting on the quality of the electoral process;
- encouraging citizen participation;
- extending organizational reach and skills building; and
- setting the stage for future activities.

Creating an Election-Day Schedule

Setting out an election-day schedule helps develop a reasonable timetable for releasing qualitative and quantitative data. This is an important resource for staff responsible for running or supporting specific election-day activities. The schedule should highlight important external and internal milestones or activities, such as the following:

- officials and observers arrive at polling stations;
- voting begins and quick count observers leave polling stations to make their first call;
- the majority of Form 1 quick count reports (on the opening of the polling stations) arrive at the data collection center;[1]
- quick count analysts complete a first report on Form 1 data;
- group releases a report of quick count findings on installation of the polling stations at an estimated time;
- voting ends;
- minimum and maximum time it will take for votes to be counted at the polling station level;
- the majority of quick count Form 2 data (on the quality of the voting and counting processes, and the vote totals) arrives at the quick count center;[2]
- report completed on quick count Form 2 data, including projections of the election results;
- the electoral authorities tabulate and release official results (whether in real time, in increments or once totals are available); and,
- group releases qualitative data and quick count vote projections at an estimated time.

The Content of a Data Release Protocol

Now retreat participants are ready to turn to the specifics of a protocol that will govern how they release quick count results. Any data release protocol should answer at least five basic questions:

1. Who will have access to quick count results internally, and when?
2. Precisely what information will be available for release to outside sources?
3. To whom will the data be released?
4. When (estimated) will the information be shared?
5. In what manner will reports be shared?

Experience shows that it is critical to establish ground rules for managing quick count findings within the organization well in advance of election night. Projections of election results, in particular, are vital data, and it is often best to limit internal access to this data to (1) the statistician who is generating and checking the results as well as preparing the graphics and (2) the executive

Projections of election results, in particular, are vital data, and it is often best to limit internal access to this data.

[1, 2] See Chapter Five, *Statistical Principles and Quick Counts;* Chapter Six, *The Qualitative Component of the Quick Count;* and Chapter Seven, *Collecting and Analyzing Quick Count Data* for detailed information on Forms 1 and 2 and the manner in which data from the forms are collected.

director and designated members of the board of directors. Civic groups may take steps to ensure the security of quick count findings, including:

- explaining to all headquarters staff who will, and will not, have access to quick count data;
- banning all cell phones from headquarters on election night; and
- placing security guards at the main doors of the data collection center and at the analysis room.

In discussing how to share quick count results with outside sources, groups should consider first the legal framework. Are there any requirements or restrictions regarding "going public" (i.e., releasing the information publicly or privately to others)? In some cases, election law prohibits the release of any results by any group prior to the public announcement of the official results by the election commission.

Civic groups must also address the expectations of several groups and actors, including:

- electoral authorities;
- political contestants;
- funders;
- affiliated non-governmental organizations;
- important civic and religious leaders;
- international observer missions; and
- the diplomatic community.

Many individuals or groups may request, or expect to have access to, quick count data. Quick count leaders must consider their responsibilities to each group, as well as advantages and disadvantages of sharing quick count results with them. For example, quick count organizers may acknowledge the legal obligation of election officials to provide accurate and timely election results, and they may feel obligated to allow reasonable amounts of time for this to take place before releasing quick count results. However, authorities should know that the group has completed an accurate quick count and is prepared to release results if fraud becomes apparent or an extended delay causes serious public concern. Political contestants have a right to an open, honest and competent electoral process; quick count organizers have a responsibility to inform all of the contestants, without discrimination, of their findings, including apparent fraudulent practices that may affect election results.

Funders may expect to receive quick count results. Therefore, quick count organizers and funders should hold open discussions before election day about strategies for managing qualitative and quantitative quick count data. Finally, quick count organizers must evaluate the role that civic leaders, the diplomatic community and international observer groups can play in achieving electoral accountability and share quick count findings with them accordingly.

A protocol provides a detailed framework for managing qualitative and quantitative information gathered during the quick count. Advance agreement can help ensure that the group's internal election day operation runs smoothly. It also gives groups an opportunity to publicize and discuss plans with key audiences such as political parties, electoral authorities, funders, civic leaders, the international community and the media. This demonstration of transparency can promote better communication and cooperation with these audiences and increase the project's overall credibility.

Almost all groups release their quick count results publicly in two phases.

RELEASING QUICK COUNT DATA

Almost all groups release their quick count results publicly in two phases. First, they hold a midday press conference to share results from the morning report (Form 1). This is the early qualitative information, which provides hard data and attaches percentages to such questions as how many polling stations opened on time and how many received sufficient quantities of the required materials. This report provides officials, political leaders and other interested parties with an evaluation of how the process started, and at the same time it provides them with a reminder of the presence of observers.

A second press conference is held or a statement is released once the data has come in from the evening observer calls, after the quick count data have been processed and analyzed (Form 2). These data contain information on the quality of the process as well as the election results. Some groups plan to release all of the information to the public as soon as the reliability of the data is determined. Others release only the qualitative information to the public and the projected results are shared only with the election commission and/or individuals or groups that are pre-selected for their trustworthiness, neutrality and leadership.

Groups that decide to release all of their information to the public as soon as possible usually do so because they face no legal restriction regarding release of information. Groups that decide to release a limited amount of information to the public (usually the qualitative information) do so because they are prohibited by law from publicly divulging quick count results until either partial or full official results are released. Others are required by law to first provide information concerning numeric projections of results to electoral authorities. Still others make a determination that they are not interested in "beating the election commission to the punch." Instead, they wait a reasonable amount of time for the election commission to release official results. Then they release quick count results to reinforce confidence in the election authorities.

Under some circumstances, quick count organizers release results publicly despite legal restrictions. This strategy might be followed because their qualitative information indicates that the process has been severely flawed, official results will most certainly be fraudulent, or it is believed that no official result is forthcoming.

Statements should NOT overemphasize data on election results or solely focus on election-day events.

Two crucial points should be made regarding election-day statements by civic organizations conducting quick counts. First, statements should NOT overemphasize data on election results. Responsible, well-crafted statements place information on numeric election results firmly within an analysis of the quality of the voting and counting processes. Second, statements should NOT solely focus on election-day events. Effective statements evaluate election-day events within the context of pre-election factors and the need to monitor post-election developments.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can groups respond to external pressure to release quick count results?

Groups often experience extreme pressure to provide various constituencies access to their information and, in general, to release it quickly. Requests can come from internal and external sources (e.g., from board members, funders or the press).

The first step in responding to this pressure is to discuss the factors limiting the ability to predict when results will be available. The simulation held prior to elections will help to establish a general time frame, but leaders should be aware that no simulation can accurately predict election-day delays. Interference on telephone lines or viruses in the computer system may prolong data processing. Moreover, close or poorly administered elections will force organizers to allow more time for complex data analysis.

It is important for observer groups to stress their commitment to working within the law and explicitly state their commitment to independence and the truth rather than speed or politics. The point to be made is that the observation plan has been devised with great care and with the dual purpose of benefiting the country's political process and safeguarding the organization's long-term credibility.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Once groups establish consensus on how they will manage and share election-day data, they can prepare for the practical work required during elections. Certain pre-election and election-day activities can help groups play an effective and constructive role. They include:

- *The election-day simulation*—A successful simulation is the first concrete predictor of election-day success. The group can hold a press conference following the exercise to share the success, emphasizing the number of volunteers participating, the percentage of calls received of those expected and the capacity of the communication/data collection system to receive and quickly process the information. Alternatively, organizers can invite small groups to witness all, or parts, of the simulation. Funders, media representatives, electoral officials and any affiliated nongovern-

mental organizations are often particularly interested in seeing the event. Of course, security issues must be contemplated before inviting anyone to observe a simulation.[3]

- *Role-plays for the board of directors*—As the final phase of the quick count simulation, usually held two weeks prior to an election, leaders can participate in role-plays during which they are confronted with various election-day scenarios. Scenarios may include significant problems in the quick count operation, problems in the voting and counting processes and different projections of election results. The leadership treats these situations as "real life" and attempts to develop public statements characterizing quick count findings in each case. They may also practice releasing quick count results by holding simulated press conferences.

- *A final promotional campaign*—Some groups save resources to mount a media campaign close to elections. This is particularly effective in countries where political ads are prohibited for a period immediately before elections. Promotional advertisements often take on a character of promoting peaceful participation as well as raising awareness about the quick count.

- *A final round of meetings*—Leaders should visit electoral authorities, candidates or political party representatives, members of the local and international press and representatives from influential diplomatic and international observer missions. This is a final opportunity to build credibility and collect relevant information before election day.

- *Briefings and tours*—Many groups demonstrate transparency by providing key audiences a chance to see the quick count data collection center and ask questions regarding the technical system or the plan for releasing information. Allowing key stakeholders to see the data collection system can markedly increase their trust in the eventual quick count results. Of course, this type of activity may be impossible where there are serious security concerns.

- *Briefing materials*—Groups should consider distributing information packets on the organization and its quick count, which can be particularly interesting to international observers and media who arrive in a country close to elections.

- *Election information center*—Some groups establish a drop-in center where groups or individuals can collect information on the quick count, the electoral process and the country. When possible, resources such as phones, computers, televisions and comfortable chairs are provided, particularly on election day.[4]

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[3] See Chapter Two, *Getting Started,* for a more detailed description of a quick count simulation.

[4] In Nicaragua, Ethics and Transparency opened an information center geared toward the needs of visiting and domestic press. The pamphlet used to inform the members of the press about the quick count project appears in Appendix 11.

- *General networking*—Many groups exploit election-related public events to collect information on the process and promote the quick count. Such events may include: candidate debates; roundtables or dialogues on election-related themes, often sponsored by non-governmental organizations; and pre-election press conferences held by political parties, electoral authorities or other election observation missions.

- *Press statements and conferences*—All groups communicate to the public several times on election day. This is generally done through written statements, press interviews or, most commonly, press conferences. (See Figure 8-1 for helpful hints on holding press conferences to release quick count findings.)

DO...

Rehearse before election day. All leaders should participate in role-plays of various election-day scenarios.

Wait for the data to stabilize. The analysis team should be confident that data are valid and reliable before leaders finalize statements.

Consult with experienced technical advisors and other trusted counselors while developing reports.

Carefully select spokespersons based on their credibility and political neutrality (or balance).

Invite local and international media, affiliate organizations, supporters, electoral authorities, political party representatives and election observer missions.

Keep any written statement clear and concise. Include only a brief summary of activities and specific findings.

Stress any positive developments in the electoral process (i.e., high voter turnout, smooth administrative procedures).

Frame projections of election results in the broader context of the qualitative data and pre-election findings.

Congratulate and thank quick count volunteers and staff for their hard work and dedication.

DO NOT...

Avoid planning for worst-case scenarios (e.g., a political crisis, disagreements among quick count organizers or inconclusive quick count results).

Release any information that is subject to change, except in emergencies. Always very clearly attach appropriate caveats.

Rush a report in response to external pressure, or out of a desire to be the first group to publicize results.

Select controversial spokespersons, particularly if they are known to be unfriendly to parties or those who may be the subject of criticism (e.g., electoral authorities.)

Hold a press conference at the same time as electoral authorities, candidates, political parties or other election observer organizations.

Make statements that cannot be supported by hard data.

Discourage citizens from voting. Negative characterizations reported publicly at midday can have this undesired effect.

Over-emphasize "the numbers."

Give the impression that the work is over. Observers must be called upon to follow and report on any post-election developments.

FIGURE 8-1:
GUIDELINES FOR ELECTION-DAY CONFERENCES

When Rapid Post-election Action is Needed

While it is hoped that election-day procedures all run well, this is too often not the case. The period immediately following an election often becomes more tense than the lead up to election day, and election monitors must be prepared for protracted activities, irrespective of the demands of successfully concluding an election day quick count. Figure 8-2 describes the human and financial resources that must be placed in reserve.

SITUATION	ACTION REQUIRED
A natural disaster or administrative breakdown occurs. It requires the extension of voting hours or even the unexpected extension of voting over more than one day.	Observers must cover and report on these developments.
The tabulation of results falters or breaks down.	Observers must be able to follow and report on developments at district, regional and national electoral bodies, sometimes over extended periods.
The number of voting results placed into question as a consequence of irregularities or possible fraud is near to, or exceeds, the margin of difference between political contestants. (Or, the scale of irregularities or possible fraud renders it impossible to determine the necessity of a run-off or re-voting.)	The organization must be able to follow and report on developments, including carefully monitoring the processing of complaints, observing recounts and/or re-voting in specific districts, and potentially prepare for new elections.
Attention is focused on a presidential election or national proportional representation vote, but there are problems with other elections (such as elections for single-member legislative districts and local elections).	Observers must be mobilized to concentrate attention on problem issues over a period of days.
Problems surrounding the election create a political crisis.	The leadership of the monitoring organization must be prepared to be called upon to help develop mechanisms to mediate or otherwise resolve the controversy.

FIGURE 8-2:
CIVIC GROUPS CONDUCTING QUICK COUNTS MAY BE ASKED TO RESPOND TO DIFFICULT SITUATIONS DURING AND IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING ELECTIONS.

Post-Election Reporting

The work of compiling, analyzing and reporting information does not end with an election-night or next-day press conference. Many groups take on observation work beyond the quick count. They monitor the resolution of complaints, the announcement of final results, the taking of office by rightful winners and the reactions of key individuals and institutions (e.g., winning and losing candidates, the government, military and the media).[5] Often, they release a series of press statements on these processes.

During the post-election period, many groups must turn to the work of compiling and analyzing information obtained from non-quick count observers and regional or municipal coordinators. This may be presented in interim reports if the immediate post-election situation is controversial and in a final report—a comprehensive evaluation of the election process with specific recommendations for its improvement.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Groups undertake a host of post-election activities, in addition to writing and distributing final election observation reports. Leaders and staff document lessons learned, thank volunteers and, if they are planning for future activities, consolidate ties between leaders and volunteers. The post-election period also is a time when the board of directors and key staff summarize their unique insights into the election process. They may consider activities to promote electoral reform or other projects to promote or strengthen democracy.

Unfortunately, quick count funding typically ends soon after an election; therefore, post-election activities often must be conducted even as staff are tired and major staff reductions are looming. The effort is, nevertheless, crucial to the success of future activities. It is important to involve each functional team (e.g., media, technical, administration, volunteer coordination and other areas, such as legal analysis)[6] so that valuable information is not lost. The following outlines activities typically undertaken by each functional team and the organization's leadership.

The Media Team

- Lists best practices for developing relationships with the media, electoral authorities, candidates, donors, diplomatic community and international organizations. Develops a contact list for future networking.
- Compiles, evaluates and stores all materials used to promote the quick count.
- Collects evidence of the quick count's impact on the electoral process and how it affected public attitudes toward electoral authorities, political contestants, civic groups and government (e.g., through documenting news coverage, collecting public opinion survey information and conducting periodic interviews with key individuals).

[5] See NDI's Handbook, *How Domestic Organizations Monitor Elections: An A to Z Guide,* for more specific information on monitoring post-election developments.

[6] See Chapter Two, *Getting Started,* for detailed information on functional teams, their composition and responsibilities.

The Technical Team

- Sums up lessons learned regarding the application of statistical methods to the voting, counting and tabulation processes.
- Recommends future activities requiring the application of statistical methods (e.g., verifying the accuracy of voter registries, assessing the proper delineation of election districts or analyzing media coverage of political parties and issues).
- Documents how communications and information technology were used to (1) rapidly transmit information to and from large numbers of people and (2) efficiently organize, store and retrieve that information.

The Administration Team

- Documents effective mechanisms for working with numerous donors and managing funding for large-scale, time-sensitive programs.

The Volunteer Coordination Team

- Holds post-election debriefing sessions for observers, regional coordinators and communications volunteers to explain the nature of the group's longer-term structure, activities, and possibilities for involvement. Gives volunteers an opportunity to provide feedback regarding the future nature and role of the organization.
- Establishes mechanisms for future communications with volunteers (e.g., setting up a database, providing contact information, publishing newsletters).
- Compiles, evaluates and stores all training and observation materials.

Legal Analysis Team

- Documents knowledge about the legal framework for elections and its implementation; the electoral environment and opportunities for political competition; the ability of citizens to make informed choices without being intimidated or improperly influenced; and voter turnout, voting patterns or other background information.
- Helps group to raise awareness about election-related problems (e.g., by holding roundtables or other events with political parties, candidates, electoral authorities, the media and other civic organizations).
- Helps group to make recommendations and advocate for needed reforms.

Leadership (Board of Directors, Executive Director and Key Staff)

- Holds a retreat or series of meetings to process and evaluate the quick count project.
- Reviews reports and recommendations made by the functional teams and considers feedback from volunteer coordinators and observers.
- Makes basic decisions about the future in light of pre-existing plans for longer-term activities (e.g., whether to continue as an organization, how to structure the organization, what activities to pursue, how to pursue financing).

Successful quick counts demonstrate the vital role that civic organizations (and political parties) can play in promoting electoral accountability. In most countries where quick counts have been successful, groups emerge with high public profiles, reputations for integrity and competence, strong national volunteer networks, substantial knowledge of the political process and enhanced organizational capacity. Some organizations disband after elections, others go dormant between elections. Many, however, continue to play a central role in their country's political process, taking on activities such as advocating for electoral reform, promoting accountability in government and educating citizens about democracy. In this sense, the long-term impact of a quick count goes far beyond election-day reporting and includes the sustained involvement of citizens and organizations in a country's democratic development.

REMINDER

The "end game" is the final phase of the quick count project; it includes actions taken before, on and immediately following election-day to support an open and genuinely democratic election.

To maximize their impact, groups conducting quick counts should:

1. Hold a strategy meeting to consider the electoral context, review quick count goals, draft an election-day schedule and develop protocols for data use.

2. Develop and follow a protocol that estimates when information will be available and how, when and to whom it will be released.

3. Prepare to make statements or hold press conferences twice on election day: at midday to comment on the opening of the polling stations; and in the evening or the next day, once data is in on the vote count.

4. Design briefings, tours, meetings and press conferences to support plans for using quick count results; position the organization to constructively influence election-day events and promote electoral accountability.

5. Be prepared for rapid post-election activities to address urgent situations that develop as a consequence of major problems in the election process.

6. Wrap up the quick count project by implementing several activities: document lessons learned and best practices; debrief and thank volunteers; summarize knowledge of the electoral process and recommend needed reforms; and hold a retreat to re-evaluate strategic plans for the organization's future.

Appendices

ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE RECEIVED NDI ASSISTANCE TO CONDUCT QUICK COUNTS

COUNTRY/PLACE	ORGANIZATION
Albania	Society for a Democratic Culture (SDC)
Bangladesh	Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA)
Belarus	The Independent Observation Network
Bulgaria	Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECR)
Burundi	Ligue Burundaise des Droits de l'Homme "Iteka" (Burundian League for Human Rights "Iteka") Group of Independent Observers
Cambodia	Committee for Free and Fair Elections (COMFREL)
Chile	Comité para Elecciones Libres (Committee for Free Elections) Participa (Participate)/CIVITAS
Croatia	GONG (Citizens Organized to Monitor Elections)
Domincan Republic	Participación Ciudadana (Citizen Participation)
Georgia	Independent Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)
Guyana	Electoral Assistance Bureau (EAB)
Indonesia	Forum Rektor Indonesia - YPSDM (Indonesian Rectors' Forum - Human Resources Development Foundation)
Kenya	Institute for Education in Democracy (IED) National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC)
Kosovo	Council for Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF)
Malawi	The Church/NGO Consortium
Mexico	Alianza Cívica (Civic Alliance)
Montenegro	Center for Democratic Transition (CDT)
Nicaragua	Etica y Transparencia (Ethics and Transparency)
Panama	Comisión Arquidiocesana de Coordinación Laical (Archdiocese Commission for the Coordination of Laity)
Paraguay	Centro de Estudios Democráticos de Paraguay (Center for Democratic Studies - CED) SAKA (Transparency)
Peru	Transparencia (Transparency)
Romania	Asociatia Pro Democratia (Pro-Democracy Association - APD)
Fed. Rep. of Yugoslavia	CeSID (Serbian Center for Free Elections and Democracy)
Slovakia	Občianske Oko (Civic Eye)/Association for Fair Elections
Ukraine	Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU)

NONPARTISAN DOMESTIC ELECTION MONITORING ORGANIZATIONS WITH WHICH NDI HAS WORKED AROUND THE WORLD

AFRICA

Benin	• Association des Femmes Juristes (Association of Women Jurists) • GERDDES—Benin • Centre Afrika-Obota
Burundi	• Ligue Burundaise des Droits de l'Homme "Iteka," (Burundian League for Human Rights "Iteka") • Group of Independent Observers
Central African Republic	• GERDDES—Central African Republic • Ligue Centrafricaine des Droits de l'Homme (Central African League for Human Rights) • Association des Femmes Juristes (Association of Women Jurists)
Côte d'Ivoire	• Observatoire Nationale des Elections (National Observatory of Elections—ONE: a network of human rights and pro-democracy organizations including Association Syndicale de la Magistrature, Association Internationale pour la Démocratie—Côte d'Ivoire, GERDDES-CI, Association Ivorienne de la Défense des Droits des Femmes, Mouvement International des Femmes Démocrates—Côte d'Ivoire) • Collective des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales (Collective of Nongovernmental Organizations) • Mouvement Ivoirien des Droits Humains (Ivorian Movement for Human Rights—MIDH)
Ethiopia	• A-Bu-Gi-Da (Ethiopian Congress for Democracy) • AD-NET Ethiopia

[3] Many of the organizations listed below are coalitions, some of which have well over a hundred member organizations. All of the organizations developed structures reaching to the local level to recruit, train and deploy volunteers, which have numbered in the hundreds, thousands and in some cases hundreds of thousands of people. Several either dissolved after elections or evolved into a successor group; the vast majority, however, continue their work today. Almost all of these organizations have developed activities beyond elections that promote governmental accountability, public policy advocacy, civic education and/or citizen participation in governmental and political processes. In a few instances (e.g., the Dominican Republic, Pakistan and Tunisia), NDI has provided minimal assistance to the monitoring efforts but has gained valuable insight from cooperation with the organizations over the years. For a list of the organizations that have conducted quick counts, see Appendix 1A.

Ghana	• Network of Domestic Election Observers (NEDEO) • Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA) • Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)
Guinea	• GERDDES—Guinea
Kenya	• Institute for Education in Democracy (IED) • National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) • Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) • Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) • Bureau of Electoral Education Research and Monitoring (BEERAM)
Lesotho	• Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (LCN) • Lesotho Federation of Women Lawyers • Lesotho Catholic Bishops' Conference/Justice and Peace Commission • Christian Council of Lesotho • Lesotho Trade Union Congress • Lesotho Youth Federation • Lesotho Young Christian Students
Liberia	• Liberia Election Observers Network (LEON)
Malawi	• Public Affairs Committee (PAC) • Church/NGO Consortium • Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR) • Malawi Centre for Advice, Research and Education on Rights (Malawi CARER) • Malawi Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace (Malawi CCJP) • Malawi Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (MIDEA)
Mali	• Appui au Processus Electoral au Mali (Network to Support the Electoral Process in Mali—APEM)
Mozambique	• Associação Moçambicana para o Desenvolvimento da Democracia (Mozambican Association for the Development of Democracy—AMODE)
Namibia	• Namibian Council of Churches • Namibia Peace Plan 435 • Namibia Non-Governmental Forum (NANGOF)

Niger	• Le Collectif (The Collective of NGOs for Election Monitoring) • GERDDES—Niger • Association des Femmes Juristes du Niger (Association of Women Jurists of Niger) • Ligue Nigérienne de Défense des Droits de l'Homme (Nigerien Human Rights Defense League) • Réseau d'Intégration et de Diffusion du Droit en Milieu Rural (Network for the Integration and Dissemination of Rural Citizens' Rights) • Association Nigérienne de Défense des Droits de l'Homme (Nigerien Association for the Defense of Human Rights) • Démocratie, Liberté, Développement (Democracy, Liberty, Development). • Association des Journalistes du Niger (Journalists Association of Niger) • Union des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Niger (Union of Labor Trade Unions of Niger)
Nigeria	• Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) • Abuja NGO Coalition • Yakubu Gowan Center
Republic of Congo	• Ligue Congolaise des Droits de l'Homme (Congolese Human Rights League) • GERDDES-Congo
Sierra Leone	• National Election Watch (NEW—Coalition of Civic Groups, Labor Unions, Professional Associations and Religious Organizations in Sierra Leone)
Togo	• GERDDES—Togo • PACED—TOGO
Zambia	• Foundation for Democratic Progress (FODEP) • Committee for a Clean Campaign (CCC) • Coalition 2001 • Zambian Independent Monitoring Team (ZIMT) • Zambian Elections Monitoring Committee (ZEMCC)
Zimbabwe	• Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN)
Regional Network	GERDDES—Afrique (Groupe d'Etude et de Recherche sur la Démocratie et le Développement Economique et Social en Afrique—Research Group on Democracy and Economic and Social Develop-

	ment in Africa); GERDDES—Afrique maintains its headquarters in Benin and has established country chapters as well; NDI worked with the headquarters from 1992 until 1996 and continues to work with several country chapters on domestic election monitoring efforts.
ASIA	
Bangladesh	• Fair Elections Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) • Study and Research Group on Democracy and Socio-Economic Development (SRG) • Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh (CCHRB)
Cambodia	• Committee for Free and Fair Elections (COMFREL) • Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (COFFEL) • Neutral and Independent Committee for Fair Elections in Cambodia (NICFEC)
Indonesia	• Forum Rektor Indonesia—YPSDM (Indonesian Rectors' Forum—Human Resources Development Foundation) • University Network for Free Elections (UNFREL) • Komite Independen Pemantau Pemilu (Independent Election Monitoring Committee—KIPP)
Malaysia	• Malaysia Citizens Election Watch (MCEW)
Nepal	• National Election Observation Committee (NEOC)
Pakistan	• Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)
Sri Lanka	• Movement for Free and Fair Elections (MFFE) • People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL) • Centre for the Monitoring of Election Violence (CMEV)
Thailand	• PollWatch • People's Network for Elections in Thailand (PNET)
Regional Networks	Asia Monitoring Network (AMN), a network of 29 organizations that monitor elections in 11 Asian countries; NDI has worked with the network and with its member organizations on election monitoring efforts; many of the organizations are also

part of the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), which together with the Thailand-based Forum-Asia provided technical resources to ANM with NDI's support; in addition, NAMFREL has co-sponsored regional election monitoring forums with NDI and has played a broader regional role in election monitoring.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Albania	• Society for Democratic Culture (SDC) • Albanian Human Rights Group • Albanian Helsinki Committee • Albanian Youth Council • National Forum for Albanian Youth • The Women's Center
Bosnia-Herzegovina	NDI trained Bosnian trainers who worked with 43 Bosnian NGOs to prepare monitors in an informal effort for the 1996 elections, and NDI assisted NGOs in limited monitoring of the 1997 elections; in 1998, NDI assisted election monitoring coalitions of local NGOs in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Mostar and Banja Luka that included 110 organizations; more than 150 Bosnian organizations then coalesced under the auspices of Bosnia's Centers for Civic Initiatives (CCI), an organization with which NDI worked closely.
Bulgaria	• Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections (BAFE), which later became the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights
Croatia	• GONG (Citizens Organized to Monitor Elections)
Fed. Rep. of Yugoslavia	• CeSID (Serbian Center for Free Elections and Democracy)
Kosovo	• Council for Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF) • Kosovo Action for Civic Initiatives (KACI)
Macedonia	• Most (Bridge) • Macedonia Association for Fair Elections • Association for Civic Initiative (ACI) • Association for Independent Initiatives (ANI) • Citizens for Citizens (C4C)

Montenegro	• Center for Democratic Transition (CDT) • Association of Young Journalists (AYJ) • Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM) • Center for Monitoring (CEMI)
Romania	• Asociatia Pro Democratia (Pro-Democracy Association—APD) • League for the Defense of Human Rights (LADO)
Slovakia	• Občianske Oko (Civic Eye/Association for Fair Elections) • MEMO '98
Regional Network	European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations Initiative (ENEMO), an association of 11 organizations in Central and Eastern Europe that monitor elections; NDI has worked with the association and with its member groups.
EURASIA	
Armenia	• It's Your Choice (IYC) • Vote Armenia
Azerbaijan	• For the Sake of Civil Society (FSCS) • Election Monitoring Center (EMC)
Belarus	• The Independent Observation Network • Central Coordinating Council (CCC) • Assembly of Democratic NGOs
Georgia	• International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)
Kazakhstan	Informal Monitoring Network, including, among others: • Center to Support Democracy (CSD) • DETAR (Organization for the Dissemination of Democracy in the Kazakh Language)
Kyrgyzstan	• Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society
Russia	• Voice Coalition
Ukraine	• Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU)

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Chile	• Comité para Elecciones Libre (CEL) • Participa/CIVITAS
Dominican Republic	• Participación Ciudadana (Citizen Participation)
Ecuador	• Participación Ciudadana Ecuador (Citizen Participation Ecuador)
Guyana	• Electoral Assistance Bureau (EAB)
Haiti	• Conseil National d'Observation (National Observation Council—CNO)
Jamaica	• Citizens Action for Free and Fair Elections (CAFFE)
Mexico	• Alianza Cívica (Civic Alliance) • Consejo por la Democracia (Council for Democracy) • Convergencia (Convergence) • Foundación Rosenblueth (Rosenblueth Foundation)
Nicaragua	• Etica y Transparencia (Ethics and Transparency) • Consorcio Cívico Electoral (Civic Electoral Consortium)
Panama	• Comisión Arquidiocesana de Coordinación Laical (Archdiocese Commission for the Coordination of Laity) • Comisión de Justicia y Paz (Commission of Justice and Peace)
Paraguay	• Centro de Estudios Democráticos del Paraguay (Center for Democratic Studies—CED) • SAKA (Transparency) • Decidamos (Let's Decide)
Peru	• Transparencia (Transparency)
Venezuela	• Escuela de Vecinos de Venezuela (School of Neighbors—EVV) • Queremos Elegir (We Want to Choose) • Momento de la Gente (Moment of the People—MG)
Regional Network	Acuerdo de Lima (Lima Accord: Network of Latin American Observation), a network of 16 organizations that conduct election observation and civil society strengthening activities beyond elections;

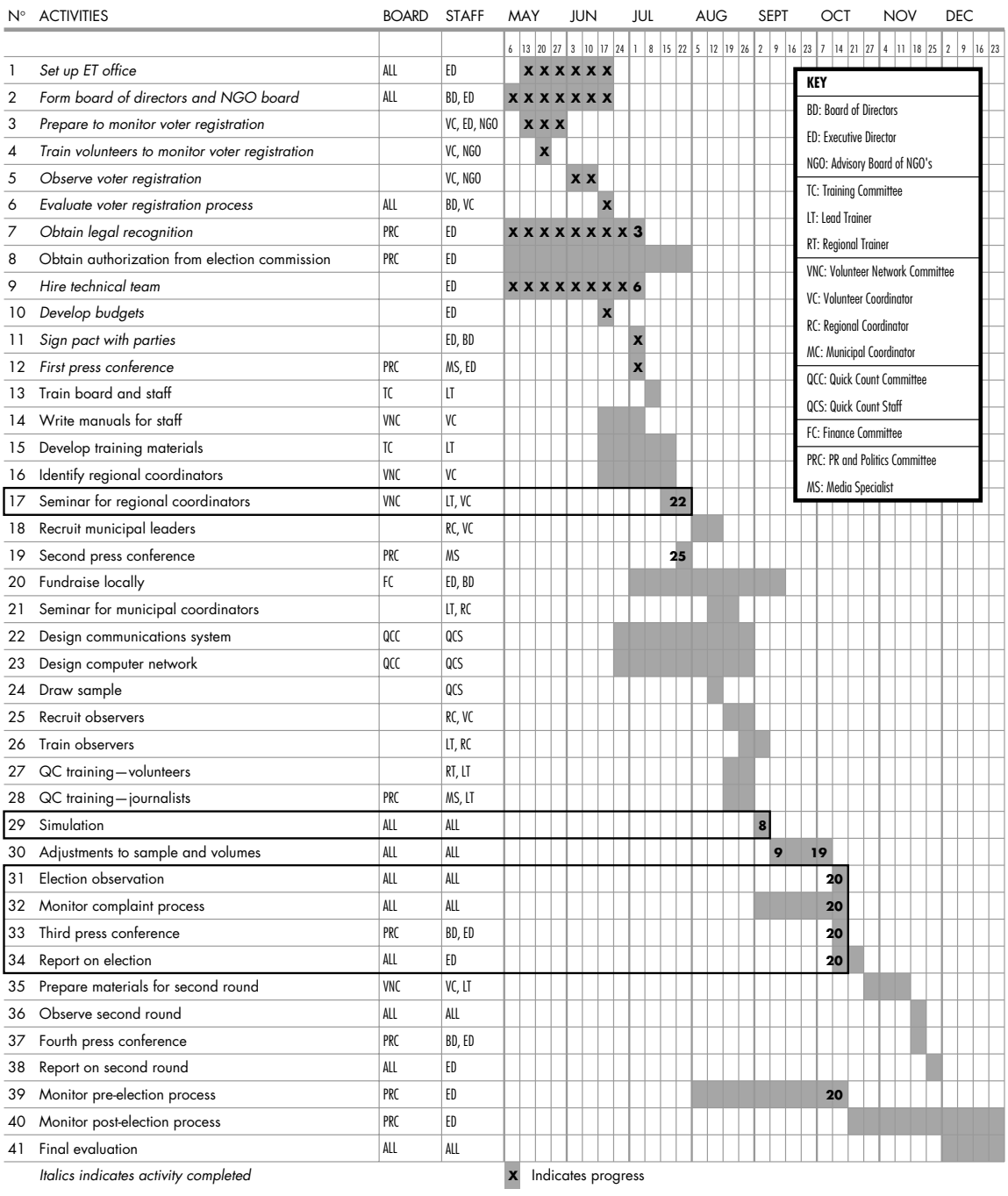
NDI is part of the network and has worked with most of the other members on election observation efforts.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Egypt	• Independent Commission for Electoral Review (ICER) • Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development (ICDS) • Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) • Center for Human Rights Legal Aid (CHRLA) • Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR)
Lebanon	• Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE)
Morocco	• Le Collectif Associatif pour l'Observation des Elections (Coalition of Associations for the Observation of Elections—CAOE) • Organisation Marocaine des Droits de l'Homme (OMDH) • Association Marocaine des Droits de l'Homme (Moroccan Association for Human Rights—AMDH)(OMDH and AMDH are founding members of CAOE, formed in 2002, and they monitored previous elections)
Palestinian Territories	• Palestinian Domestic Monitoring Committee (PDMC)
Tunisia	• Ligue Tunisienne de Défense des Droits de l'Homme (Tunisian League for the Defense of Human Rights—LTDH)
Yemen	• National Committee for Free and Fair Elections (NCFE – a project of Yemen's Organization for the Defense of Rights and Liberties) • Arab Democratic Institute (ADI) • Election Monitoring Committee (EMC) • Yemen Institute for the Development of Democracy (YIDD)
Regional Network	Arab Network for Democratic Development (ANDD), a network of 15 organizations from seven countries in the Middle East and North Africa that conduct or are interested in conducting election monitoring; NDI has worked with the network and with its member groups.

8-MONTH TIMELINE ILLUSTRATING WORK PLAN FOR DOMESTIC MONITORS IN NICARAGUA, 1996

N°	ACTIVITIES	BOARD	STAFF
1	*Set up ET office*	ALL	ED
2	*Form board of directors and NGO board*	ALL	BD, ED
3	*Prepare to monitor voter registration*		VC, ED, NGO
4	*Train volunteers to monitor voter registration*		VC, NGO
5	*Observe voter registration*		VC, NGO
6	*Evaluate voter registration process*	ALL	BD, VC
7	*Obtain legal recognition*	PRC	ED
8	Obtain authorization from election commission	PRC	ED
9	*Hire technical team*		ED
10	*Develop budgets*		ED
11	*Sign pact with parties*		ED, BD
12	*First press conference*	PRC	MS, ED
13	Train board and staff	TC	LT
14	Write manuals for staff	VNC	VC
15	Develop training materials	TC	LT
16	Identify regional coordinators	VNC	VC
17	Seminar for regional coordinators	VNC	LT, VC
18	Recruit municipal leaders		RC, VC
19	Second press conference	PRC	MS
20	Fundraise locally	FC	ED, BD
21	Seminar for municipal coordinators		LT, RC
22	Design communications system	QCC	QCS
23	Design computer network	QCC	QCS
24	Draw sample		QCS
25	Recruit observers		RC, VC
26	Train observers		LT, RC
27	QC training—volunteers		RT, LT
28	QC training—journalists	PRC	MS, LT
29	Simulation	ALL	ALL
30	Adjustments to sample and volumes	ALL	ALL
31	Election observation	ALL	ALL
32	Monitor complaint process	ALL	ALL
33	Third press conference	PRC	BD, ED
34	Report on election	ALL	ED
35	Prepare materials for second round	VNC	VC, LT
36	Observe second round	ALL	ALL
37	Fourth press conference	PRC	BD, ED
38	Report on second round	ALL	ED
39	Monitor pre-election process	PRC	ED
40	Monitor post-election process	PRC	ED
41	Final evaluation	ALL	ALL



Italics indicates activity completed

WORK PLAN FOR FINAL MONTH BEFORE QUICK COUNT (PVT) IN INDONESIA, 1999

WEEK	TASK	DESCRIPTION	DATE	WHO TO INVOLVE?
1 (May 10-16)	Letter to Provinces (info on training plan)	Send out a letter requesting information on the training plan in the provinces – where, when, how will the volunteers know, etc.	May 12	Provincial organizers, Prof. Saphi'ie, others?
	Draw the sample	Draw the sample for the 27 villages and send, together with maps, to the provinces	May 16	Prof. Sembring, Provincial organizers, others?
	Letter to the Provinces (info on transp. costs)	Send out a letter, with the sample, instructing organizers on gathering transportation costs + the dealine for sending information back to Bandung (May 20)	May 16	Provincial organizers, Prof. Saphi'ie, others?
	Manual	Create a manual to instruct volunteers on filling in the checklist	May 16	??
	Data/communication system	Discuss and decide on a data/communication system that can be set up in 2 weeks, is affordable, fast, and easy to train on usage.	May 18	Bazuki, Lawrence, Prov. organizers. others?
	General coordination	Everything else!!		
2 (May 17-23)	Send Manual	Send the manual (on filling in the checklist) to the provinces. Via fax, courier, anything!!	May 17	??
	Send checklists	Send the checklist to the provinces. Via fax, courier, anything!!	May 17	??
	Finalize Data/communication system	Make a final decision on what the system will be and what the provinces must do to prepare for implementation, training, etc. Communincate this to the provinces (letter/fax + phone).	May 18	Bazuki, Lawrence, Prov. organizers. others?
	Transportation costs	Call up miscreant provinces that haven't yet sent in cost estimates for transportation	May 20	Accounting, Lawrence, others?
	General coordination	Everything else!!		
3 (May 24-30)	Train volunteers	Training for volunteers commences in the provinces	May 24	??
	Send transportation money	Transfer money for transportation to the provinces, based on estimates received	May 24	Accounting, provincial organizers, others?
	Monitoring/ troubleshooting	Keep calling or visiting provinces to ensure all is well, resolve questions, etc.	Every day	??
4 (May 31-June 6)	Last day to communicate changes	This is the absolute last day on which any changes to the monitoring plan (training/deployment/report-ing, etc) can be made.	May 31	
	Monitoring/ troubleshooting	Keep calling or visiting provinces to ensure all is well, resolve questions, etc.	Every day	??
5 (June 7-13)	ELECTION DAY	Let's see how the KPU does!!	June 7	

EXAMPLE OF AN ELECTION LAW REGARDING DOMESTIC ELECTION MONITORS, ROMANIA, 1993
(Please see Article 51.)

LAW
ON LOCAL ELECTIONS*

CHAPTER 1

General Provisions

Art. 1. — The Local Councils and Mayors are elected by universal, equal, direct, secret and freely expressed suffrage. The County Councils are elected by indirect suffrage.

The Local and County Council are elected in the constituencies by expressed list suffrage.

Mayors of the communes and towns are elected in the constituencies by expressed uninominal suffrage.

Art. 2. — Romanian citizens, without any distinction of nationality, race, language, religion, sex, political belief or profession are entitled to the equal exercise of their electoral rights.

Art. 3. — Romanian citizens having attained the age of 18 by or on the election day, have a right to elect.

Each elector is entitled to one single vote for the election of the Local Council and of the Mayor.

The right to vote shall be exercised only in the commune, town or municipality of the voter's domicile.

Art. 4. — Citizens having attained the age of 23 with a right to vote have the right to be elected councillors or Mayors.

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* The Law no. 70/1991 — Law on Local Elections — was published in the "MONITORUL OFICIAL" (Official Gazette) of Romania, no. 238, 28 November 1991.

It is prohibited to use the special places for the posting up of election notices in such a manner as to prevent the use of these places by another party, political organization or independent candidate.

Art. 48. — The subsidizing of the electioneering campaign with funds received from abroad or not declared publicly is prohibited.

CHAPTER III

Conduct of Elections

Art. 49. — Each polling station shall be provided with a sufficient number of polling booths, ballot boxes and voting stamps, which shall be made available by the Mayors.

The polling booths and ballot boxes shall be located in the same room with the Chairman's desk.

The Chairman of the electoral bureau of the polling station shall be present at the polling station on the day prior to election day at six o'clock p.m. and it is his duty to take the measures deemed fit to secure order and fairness to the polling operations.

The Chairman shall decide on the location of guard posts outside the polling station.

Art. 50. — At five o'clock a.m. on election day the Chairman of the electoral bureau of the polling station, with the other members attending, shall check the ballot boxes, the existence of the electoral lists, ballot papers and stamps, after which he shall lock and seal the ballot boxes by applying the control stamp of the polling station.

It is the Chairman's duty to ensure that the control stamp is applied on the ballot papers.

Art. 51. — It is the duty of the Chairman of the electoral bureau of the polling station to take the necessary measures for the polling to take place in order.

His powers in this respect cover the polling station and the area outside within a radius of 500 metres.

The polling operations may be attended by foreign observers and Romanian observers, accredited for this purpose.

Accreditation as Romanian observers can be given to representatives of legally created non-governmental organizations whose only goal is to protect human rights.

Such organizations may nominate only persons who are not members of a party or political organization.

The accreditation of a Romanian observer can be questioned at the Central Electoral Commission.

Besides the members of the electoral bureau of the polling station, the persons accredited in keeping with the law and Romanian and foreign journalists, no other person shall be allowed to remain in the public places in the polling area or in the polling station longer than the time needed for the polling operations.

For the keeping of order, the Chairman of the electoral bureau of the polling station shall have at his disposal the necessary order keeping means, through the care of the prefect.

Art. 52. — The polling shall take place in a single day, between six o'clock a.m. and nine o'clock p.m. In case it has been found that there are still electors who have not cast their vote, the president of the electoral bureau of the polling district may, subject to the approval of the Chairman of the constituency electoral commission, extend the time of polling until midnight at the latest, when the polling shall be declared closed.

Art. 53. — The electors shall vote only at the polling station where they are registered in the electoral lists.

Admission of electors to the polling station shall be permitted in such numbers as to fit the number of polling booths. Each person shall show his identity card to the electoral bureau of the polling station, which, after checking the registration in the electoral list shall deliver to the respective voter the ballot papers and the polling stamp.

The electors shall, cast their vote individually in polling booth screened from observation, by applying the stamp with the mark "votet" in the box which comprises the list of candidates or the name of the candidate voted.

The stamp with the mark "votet" must be of round shape and of such size as to be smaller than the box in which it is stamped.

After having marked the paper, the elector shall fold it so as to show the blank page with the control stamp on the back and shall put it into the ballot box, taking care not to unfold the paper.

EXAMPLE OF AN ELECTION REGULATION REGARDING DOMESTIC ELECTION MONITORS, SOUTH AFRICA, 1993

INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Code of Conduct for Observers in terms of section 24(1)(b) of the Independent Electoral Commission Act, 1993 (Act No. 150 of 1993)

PRELIMINARY

1. This Code shall be binding upon all Observers registered with the Commission.

2. The object of this Code shall be to ensure that the activities of Observers are facilitated by the Commission, conducted with integrity, and contribute to public confidence in the electoral process.

THE CODE

All registered Observers undertake that their observer activities throughout the election period shall be conducted in accordance with the following principles, viz:

(a) Observers shall maintain strict impartiality in the conduct of their duties, and shall at no time indicate or express any bias, or preference with reference to any registered party or nominated candidate.

(b) Observers shall when so requested immediately identify themselves to any interested person, and shall, during the conduct of their activities, at all times carry, wear or otherwise prominently display the prescribed identification badges or cards issued by the Commission to registered observers and their vehicles.

(c) Observers shall refrain from carrying, wearing and displaying any electoral material or any article of clothing, emblem, colours, badges or other item denoting support for or opposition to any party or candidate, or with reference to any of the issues in contention in the elections.

(d) Observers shall refrain from the carrying or displaying of arms during the conduct of their observer duties or while wearing the insignia issued by the Chief Director: Monitoring.

(e) Observers shall ensure that their conduct strictly conforms to the laws and regulations, including the Electoral Code of Conduct pertaining to the elections, and they shall both acknowledge the overall authority, and abide by the decisions of the Commission, and its sub-structures, in relation to their conduct as Observers.

(f) Observers shall immediately comply with any direction issued by or under the authority of the Commission with reference to the elections including any request to leave or refrain from entering a particular area or venue, or to depart from a voting or counting station, or any specified area thereof.

EXAMPLE OF A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTION OBSERVERS, SIERRA LEONE, 2002

Code of Conduct

Voluntary Standards
For Domestic Election Observation in Sierra Leone

We members of Civic Organizations, aware of the role domestic election monitoring plays in ensuring free and fair elections and concerned to safeguard the integrity, impartiality and effectiveness of monitoring efforts, have voluntarily come together and agreed upon a code of conduct for election monitoring. We hope that others interested in monitoring elections in Sierra Leone will adopt this code.

We have learned from experience the great need for a spirit of non-violence, non-discrimination and the observance of human rights in the conduct of our democracy and it is in this spirit that we commit ourselves to the code.

WE WILL BE IMPARTIAL AND NON-PARTISAN

Monitors shall in all cases act, speak or write without prejudice or preference towards any political party or candidate, region, ethnic group or persons.

WE WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH THE ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES, POLITICAL PARTIES OR VOTERS

Monitors shall observe and report on election related activities and shall not interfere with the actions of authorities or any participant in the election. Monitors must not attempt to influence the voter, nor direct or obstruct the electoral process.

WE WILL OBSERVE ALL RELEVANT LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS

Monitors must know the laws, rules and regulations that guide the conduct of elections and must strictly adhere to these laws and regulations in the performance of their functions.

Monitors may bring irregularities to the attention of relevant authorities and to the public but will not give instructions to electoral officials.

WE WILL MAINTAIN A CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH ELECTION AUTHORITIES AND POLITICAL PARTIES

Monitors shall maintain a respectful and principled relationship with election authorities and with political parties.

Monitors must never receive any reward or favor from an election official or on behalf of a political party or candidate. This may influence their impartiality.

WE WILL COOPERATE IN OBSERVING THE ELECTIONS

Organizations conducting domestic monitoring programs should endeavor to work together by sharing information, regularly interacting and developing common procedures for reporting.

Domestic Monitors should also cooperate and coordinate with international observers.

WE WILL REPORT IN A NEUTRAL, ACCURATE AND VERIFIABLE MANNER

Monitors must report events and issues impartially and objectively. The events and issues so reported must contain scene, incident, time and persons involved.

- National Forum for Human Rights (Convening Organization)
- Civil Society Movement – Sierra Leone (Convening Organization)
- Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone
- Council of Churches of Sierra Leone
- Campaign for Good Governance
- Sierra Leone Bar Association
- Sierra Leone Teachers Union
- National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights
- Sierra Leone Labour Congress
- National Union of Sierra Leone Students
- Women's Forum – Sierra Leone
- Network Movement for Justice and Development
- Forum for Democratic Initiatives
- Academic Staff Association, University of Sierra Leone
- Center for Coordination of Youth Activities
- Independent Youth Forum

This document was drafted on Sept 16, 2001 in a retreat held at Milton Margai College of Education and Technology. The retreat was hosted and facilitated by the National Democratic Institute (NDI)

(NDI Programs in Sierra Leone are funded by USAID/OTI)

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EXAMPLE OF A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTION OBSERVERS, BANGLADESH, 1995

FEMA FAIR ELECTION MONITORING ALLIANCE
ফেয়ার ইলেকশন মনিটরিং এলায়েন্স

a citizens coalition for monitoring elections in Bangladesh

GUIDELINES OF NONPARTISAN ELECTION MONITORS

Prepared by Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA)

October 26 1995

Introduction

International standards and norms, as well as past practice in Bangladesh, have recognized the important role that domestic nonpartisan monitors can play in ensuring a free and fair election. The activities of monitors, both before and on election day, can enhance public confidence and involvement in the election process. The presence of monitors at polling stations, for instance, helps to identify election abuses, irregularities and innocent administrative mistakes. Pre-election activities – such as issuing public statements and reports to improve the content and enforcement of election laws, as well as engaging in civic education – also helps to build public support of the democratic process.

The following are guidelines established by FEMA for its monitors during the coming national elections. These guidelines are designed to emphasize the positive contribution domestic monitors can make, together with national and local election officials and the political parties, in promoting an election process that can widely be accepted as legitimate and fair.

Guidelines:

01. Monitors will pledge to act in a nonpartisan manner. They will not exhibit any bias in favor or in opposition to any candidate or political party.

02. Monitors will recognize that election officials have the principal responsibility for ensuring the integrity and fairness of the election process. Monitors will strictly obey all laws and regulations.

03. Monitors will not interfere in any way in the voting process, nor will they violate the secrecy of the vote. When in the polling station monitors will not engage in any activity except as necessary to perform their duties as monitors.

[illegible] BIPAT BHAB, MOHAMMADPUR, DHAKA-1207 [illegible]

04. Monitors may enter, remain and remain in the polling station in order to perform their duties as nonpartisan domestic observers. They may make reasonable inquiries to election officials regarding any aspect of conducting the poll.

05. Monitors will observe and report during the pre-election period and on the conduct of the election. Monitors will not intervene when they witness problems or irregularities. They will, however, observe what is occurring, record their observations, and report their findings to FEMA headquarters.

06. Monitors will, when appropriate, report problems and irregularities on election day to election officials or other national and local officials.

07. Monitors will, where practicable, cooperate with the representatives of all political parties in investigating and confirming reports of election law violations and other abuses and irregularities in the election process.

08. Monitors will identify themselves to all interested persons as FEMA monitors and they shall prominently display identification badges or distinctive emblems.

HUMAN RIGHTS PROVISIONS CONCERNING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

...

Article 21

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Article 2

1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

2. Where not already provided for by existing legislative or other measures, each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take the necessary steps, in accordance with its constitutional processes and with the provisions of the present Covenant, to adopt such legislative or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights recognized in the present Covenant.

3. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes:

   a. To ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognized are violated shall have an effective remedy, notwithstanding that the violation has been committed by persons acting in an official capacity;

   b. To ensure that any person claiming such a remedy shall have his right thereto determined by competent judicial, administrative or legislative authorities, or by any other competent authority provided for by the legal system of the State, and to develop the possibilities of judicial remedy;

   c. To ensure that the competent authorities shall enforce such remedies when granted.

Article 25
Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions:

a. To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;

b. To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;

c. To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country.

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
Article 5
In compliance with the fundamental obligations laid down in Article 2 of this Convention, States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of the following rights:
…
c. Political rights, in particular the rights to participate in elections – to vote and to stand for election – on the basis of universal and equal suffrage, to take part in the Government as well as in the conduct of public affairs at any level and to have equal access to public service; …

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
Article 7
States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

(a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

Convention on the Political Rights of Women

Article I

Women shall be entitled to vote in all elections on equal terms with men without any discrimination.

Article II

Women shall be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.

Article III

Women shall be entitled to hold public office and to exercise all public functions, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

Article 13

1. Every citizen shall have the right to participate freely in the government of his country, either directly or through freely chosen representatives in accordance with the provisions of the law.

American Convention on Human Rights

Article 23 Right to Participate in Government

1. Every citizen shall enjoy the following rights and opportunities:

   a. to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;

   b. to vote and to be elected in genuine periodic elections, which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and by secret ballot that guarantees the free expression of the will of the voters; and

   c. to have access, under general conditions of equality, to the public service of his country.

2. The law may regulate the exercise of the rights and opportunities referred to in the preceding paragraph only on the basis of age, nationality, residence, language, education, civil and mental capacity, or sentencing by a competent court in criminal proceedings.

American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man

Article XX

Every person having legal capacity is entitled to participate in the government of his country, directly or through his representatives, and to take part in popular elections, which shall be by secret ballot, and shall be honest, periodic and free.

Inter-American Democratic Charter

Article 1

The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it.

...

Article 3

Essential elements of representative democracy include, inter alia, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, access to and the exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law, the holding of periodic, free, and fair elections based on secret balloting and universal suffrage as an expression of the sovereignty of the people, the pluralistic system of political parties and organizations, and the separation of powers and independence of the branches of government.

Protocol (No. 1) to the [European] Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

Article 3

The High Contracting Parties undertake to hold free elections at reasonable intervals by secret ballot, under conditions which will ensure the free expression of the opinion of the people in the choice of the legislature.

Document of the 1990 Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension (Copenhagen Document of the OSCE)

...

[The participating States] recognize that pluralistic democracy and the rule of law are essential for ensuring respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, the development of human contacts and the resolution of other issues of a related humanitarian character. They therefore welcome the commitment expressed by all participating States to the ideals of democracy and political pluralism as well as their common determination to build democratic societies based on free elections and the rule of law.

...

In order to strengthen respect for, and enjoyment of, human rights and fundamental freedoms, to develop human contacts and to resolve issues of a related humanitarian character, the participating States agree on the following:

...

(3) They reaffirm that democracy is an inherent element of the rule of law. They recognize the importance of pluralism with regard to political organizations.

...

(5) They solemnly declare that among those elements of justice which are essential to the full expression of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all human beings are the following:

(5.1) - free elections that will be held at reasonable intervals by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedure, under conditions which ensure in practice the free expression of the opinion of the electors in the choice of their representatives;

…
(5.10) - everyone will have an effective means of redress against administrative decisions, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights and ensure legal integrity;

(6) The participating States declare that the will of the people, freely and fairly expressed through periodic and genuine elections, is the basis of the authority and legitimacy of all government. The participating States will accordingly respect the right of their citizens to take part in the governing of their country, either directly or through representatives freely chosen by them through fair electoral processes.

(7) To ensure that the will of the people serves as the basis of the authority of government, the participating States will:

(7.1) - hold free elections at reasonable intervals, as established by law;

(7.2) - permit all seats in at least one chamber of the national legislature to be freely contested in a popular vote;

(7.3) - guarantee universal and equal suffrage to adult citizens;

(7.4) - ensure that votes are cast by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedure, and that they are counted and reported honestly with the official results made public;

(7.5) - respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, individually or as representatives of political parties or organizations, without discrimination;

(7.6) - respect the right of individuals and groups to establish, in full freedom, their own political parties or other political organizations and provide such political parties and organizations with the necessary legal guarantees to enable them to compete with each other on a basis of equal treatment before the law and by the authorities;

(7.7) - ensure that law and public policy work to permit political campaigning to be conducted in a fair and free atmosphere in which neither administrative action, violence nor intimidation bars the parties and the candidates from freely presenting their views and qualifications, or prevents the voters from learning and discussing them or from casting their vote free of fear of retribution;

(7.8) - provide that no legal or administrative obstacle stands in the way of unimpeded access to the media on a non-discriminatory basis for all political groupings and individuals wishing to participate in the electoral process;

(7.9) - ensure that candidates who obtain the necessary number of votes required by law are duly installed in office and are permitted to remain in office until their term expires or is otherwise brought to an end in a manner that is regulated by law in conformity with democratic parliamentary and constitutional procedures.

(8) The participating States consider that the presence of observers, both foreign and domestic, can enhance the electoral process for States in which elections are taking place. They therefore invite observers from any other CSCE [now OSCE] participating States and any appropriate private institutions and organizations who may wish to do so to observe the course of their national election proceedings, to the extent permitted by law. They will also endeavour to facilitate similar access for election proceedings held below the national level. Such observers will undertake not to interfere in the electoral proceedings.

(10) In reaffirming their commitment to ensure effectively the rights of the individual to know and act upon human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to contribute actively, individually or in association with others, to their promotion and protection, the participating States express their commitment to:

(10.1) - respect the right of everyone, individually or in association with others, to seek, receive and impart freely views and information on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights to disseminate and publish such views and information;

...

(10.3) - ensure that individuals are permitted to exercise the right to association, including the right to form, join and participate effectively in non-governmental organizations which seek the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including trade unions and human rights monitoring groups;

(10.4) - allow members of such groups and organizations to have unhindered access to and communication with similar bodies within and outside their countries and with international organizations, to engage in exchanges, contacts and co-operation with such groups and organizations and to solicit, receive and utilize for the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms voluntary financial contributions from national and international sources as provided for by law.

(24) The participating States will ensure that the exercise of all the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out above will not be subject to any restrictions except those which are provided by law and are consistent with their obligations under international law, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and with their international commitments, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These restrictions have the character of exceptions. The participating States will ensure that these restric-

tions are not abused and are not applied in an arbitrary manner, but in such a way that the effective exercise of these rights is ensured.

Any restriction on rights and freedoms must, in a democratic society, relate to one of the objectives of the applicable law and be strictly proportionate to the aim of that law.

In addition to the provisions of these international human rights instruments, which create obligations for the states that are parties to them, there are a number of other significant declarations and documents of associations of states and of the associations of the legislative branches of governments. Included among those that are directly relevant to democratic elections are the following: The Harare Commonwealth Declaration (1991) of the Commonwealth of Nations; Documents of the Summit Meetings of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe subsequent to the 1990 Copenhagen Document; the 2001 Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region adopted by the Southern Africa Development Community Parliamentary Forum; and the 1994 Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

GENERAL RECRUITMENT LETTER FOR REGIONAL COORDINATORS, SLOVAKIA, 1998

'98, Its Aims and Structure

Dear friends,

We would like to address you in connection with the project, **Občianske Oko '98**, organized by the **Association for Fair Elections**. Our association was established in Slovakia in 1998. The objective **Občianske Oko '98** project is to organize a network of domestic observers who would observe the election process in the polling stations.

Very much is at stake in the elections. It is the main mechanism through which the power is transferred from citizens to our representatives – the deputies. We want to make sure that people who will represent our interests during the next four years acquired their mandates based on democratic, free and fair elections. Only then can we influence public matters.

Projects of domestic and civic election monitoring are carried out around the world. The Slovak project of domestic monitoring started with the support of Electoral Reform International Services (EU) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (USA).

There are several mechanisms for ensuring fair elections. Election laws regulate the behaviour of citizens during elections and the election campaign. Political parties appoint their members to election commissions, and they watch carefully for any manipulation with election results. Election processes will be monitored by international observers, as well, but they will spend only a short time at polling sites and will not be able to evaluate the situation in the polling station in such a comprehensive way. It is mainly in our interest, citizens, to be directly on the site where we as citizens decide about our future and about the future of our country. To be an election observer means to deeply understand the election process as such, to approach the task of citizen more actively and, instead of sitting in front of the television during those two days, to be present... in the polling stations.

The **Association for Fair Elections** is trying to create a network of coordinators around the whole territory of the Slovak Republic who would secure the organizational side of this project. You will find a more detailed structure of coordinators in the annex.

We believe that, if the elections are fair, then all of us will win. That is why the **Association for Fair Elections** asks all of you to participate in the Občianske Oko '98 project. We want to recruit as many volunteers as possible – citizens who would monitor the polling sites around the whole country.

We are looking for people from all age groups, occupations, voters who are able to be impartial. We are looking for impartial election observers, who would remind our citizens by their presence (by the way, wearing very nice T-shirts) what the elections are about.
We are looking for people who are willing to help with the creation of the coordinator network or with recruiting and training of civic observers.

Any help is welcomed!
You may contact us at the following address: **Association for Fair Elections**

Sucié Mýto 19
811 03 Bratislava

Tel: 07/531-7305 Fax: 07/533-2963 Mobil: 0905/482 457
531-6750 Zuzana Janovicová

The Association for Fair Elections will provide training for coordinators and observers. The position of domestic observers is not paid. Thanks to the support of the domestic and foreign organizations, we have money for reimbursing travel expenses and other small costs. Volunteers will be put into contact databases of the organizations looking for international observers for the elections around the whole world. Become acquainted with the people who think about democracy in the way that you do. But, in the first place, you will contribute to democratic, free and fair elections.

In the annex, you will find the answers to frequent questions of volunteers and other information materials about Občianske Oko '98. We believe that our project has addressed you, and you will join us whether as a coordinator or as an observer. We are looking forward to your quick response.

Yours sincerely,

Zuzana Janovicová
Project Coordinator

Občianske Oko '98

APPENDIX 6

DIAGRAM OF REGIONAL OFFICES IN SERBIA

SAMPLE OBSERVER NEUTRALITY PLEDGE FROM UKRAINE

WHO MAY BECOME A MONITOR?

Every adult citizen may take part in the activities of the committee by pledging the following:

VOLUNTEER PLEDGE

I, _____,
citizen of Ukraine and voter, join in the efforts of the non-partisan monitoring of the election process, understanding the responsibility I take upon myself. In no way will I show my political sympathies, and I will not impose on others my beliefs for or against any candidate, party or bloc.

I have the opportunity to express my opinion by secret ballot.

My activities will be aimed only at strengthening democratic norms in the election process, and I hope that my efforts will promote and confirm true democracy in our society.

"___" _____1994

_____
signature

SAMPLE OBSERVER NEUTRALITY PLEDGE FROM GUYANA

OBSERVER'S PLEDGE

Local Authorities Elections 1994

I, the undersigned, hereby pledge as follows:

1. That I agree to serve on behalf of the Electoral Assistance Bureau as a polling place Observer at the Local Authorities Elections on 8th August 1994.

2. That I am neither an activist nor a candidate for any group or party contesting these elections.

3. That I have attended a training session and that I fully understand the duties of an Observer.

4. That I shall execute my duties impartially and objectively and to the best of my ability, and in keeping with the directions for observing provided by the Electoral Assistance Bureau.

5. That the reports I shall give, both orally and in writing shall represent an accurate account of the proceedings witnessed by me.

.....
Signature

.....
Name in Block Letters

SAMPLE NUETRALITY PLEDGE FOR REGIONAL COORDINATORS, KAZAKHSTAN

REGIONAL CAPTAIN NON-PARTISANSHIP PLEDGE

As a condition of being a regional captain for the Non-Partisan Domestic Monitoring Program organized by CSO and DUFAR, I pledge the following:

To the best of my knowledge, neither I, nor anyone else serving in the non-partisan domestic monitoring network, is currently a candidate for election on October 10th. Additionally, neither I, nor anyone else serving in the non-partisan domestic monitoring network, holds any position in a political party or an organization which is promoting any candidate in the upcoming election.

I understand that this domestic monitoring network must be non-partisan in its actual function and in its appearance to others. Should we be, or appear to be, partisan or to be coordinating in any way with individual candidates or political parties, then our work will no longer be credible.

Therefore, I also pledge that while working as a Regional Captain, neither I nor anyone involved in the non-partisan domestic election monitoring network will engage in any activity that supports or opposes any candidate or political party, either directly or indirectly. To insure this, candidates and political parties will be barred from attending our organizing meetings or making use of our office space or any of our resources. In addition, any communication with any political party or candidate shall be limited to such communication that is equitably available to any and all parties and candidates.

_____ (Name) (Date)

EXAMPLE OF TRAINING EXERCISE DEVELOPED FOR QUICK COUNTS

Quick Count Training Skit

Following are instructions for conducting a Quick Count Training Skit. The skit illustrates simply how random samples can match accurate, official election results.

What preparations are needed for the skit?

1—Decide on the Type of Election. First, trainers should decide on the type of election to be simulated as well as the number and names of the candidates and/or parties contesting the election. It is easiest to use a fictional presidential election with only two candidates to simplify the process and clearly demonstrate relevant lessons. Trainers should avoid using the names of real parties or candidates to avoid appearing biased, and should choose names very carefully so that no ethnic, geographic, gender or racial preferences are shown.

Example:
The small island country of Chilumba is holding presidential elections. Candidate X from Party A will be competing against Candidate Y from Party B. This election is going to be observed by a network of organizations called CCCE (Civic Coalition for Clean Elections). The CCCE is going to deploy monitors to polling stations to observe voting and counting and is going to conduct a quick count to monitor the tabulation process.

2—Determine Number of Polling Stations to Include in the Exercise. In reality, elections typically involve hundreds or thousands of polling stations. Depending on the size of the training session, it is recommended, however, that only 12, 16, 20 or 24 polling stations be used for the demonstration. Each polling station should be assigned a number for identification purposes.

Example:
On the isle of Chilumba there are just 20 polling stations where people will go to vote for president. In order to better manage the election process, the Chilumba Election Commission has assigned each polling station a unique two-digit number from 01 to 20.

3—Create Vote Counts for Polling Stations. Next, trainers should create official vote counts for all of the polling stations in the exercise, as shown below. For each polling station, the number of votes for each candidate needs to be created as well as the total number of valid votes. The worksheet should also include columns with the percent of the vote for each candidate and a row with the total figures. Keep the number of valid votes per polling station more or less the same for all of the polling stations, but not identical. Using an average number of valid votes per polling station of 1,000 is easy, but a higher or lower figure can be used if that would be more consistent with local practices. Make sure each candidate is the winner at some polling stations. So that the lesson of the exercise is obvious, one of the two candidates should be the clear

winner (by at least 52% to 48% overall). Bring a copy of this spreadsheet to the training, but do not show it to the participants before the demonstration.

Example:

Results by Polling Station for Presidential Elections in Chilumba					
Polling Station	**Candidate X**	**Candidate Y**	**Total Valid Votes**	**% X**	**% Y**
01	538	475	1,013	53.1	46.9
02	601	430	1,031	58.3	41.7
03	468	589	1,057	44.3	55.7
04	560	458	1,018	55.0	45.0
05	512	532	1,044	49.0	51.0
06	549	489	1,038	52.9	47.1
07	499	517	1,016	49.1	50.9
08	545	501	1,046	52.1	47.9
09	441	552	993	44.4	55.6
10	559	428	987	56.6	43.4
11	513	429	942	54.5	45.5
12	490	538	1,028	47.7	52.3
13	575	398	973	59.1	40.9
14	457	495	952	48.0	52.0
15	565	421	986	57.3	42.7
16	595	473	1,068	55.7	44.3
17	461	571	1,032	44.7	55.3
18	475	535	1,010	47.0	53.0
19	556	379	935	59.5	40.5
20	545	480	1,025	53.2	46.8
Results	**10,504**	**9,690**	**20,194**	**52.0**	**48.0**

4—Make Individual Statement of Poll Forms. In the quick count demonstration, election officials and monitors are going to collect vote count information from individual polling stations. Statement of Poll forms must be created for each polling station indicating the polling station number, the number of votes received by each candidate, and the total number of valid votes cast at the polling station.

Example:

Chilumba Election Commission

Official Statement of Poll Form

Polling Station Number		01
Candidate	Party	Votes
X	A	538
Y	B	475
Total		1,013

5—Create Blank Transmission of Results Forms. For each polling station, a participant playing an election official will need to transmit the results from a polling station to the election commission's national headquarters for tabulation using a blank Transmission of Results form. This form should provide spaces to record

the polling station's number, the number of votes each candidate received, the total number of valid votes cast, and the election official's signature. Produce one blank Transmission of Results form for each polling station.

Example:

Chilumba Election Commission

Official Transmittal of Results Form

Polling Station Number ___

Candidate	Party	Votes
X	A	___
Y	B	___
Total		___

Election Official's Signature _____

6—Select a Sample of Polling Stations for the Quick Count. Before the demonstration, trainers should select a sample of polling stations from which the monitors will collect vote count information. Participants should not be involved in the selection, just as in real situations where it is a statistician that selects the sample, rather than the observers. To simplify the process, the sample should be set at 25% of the total number of polling stations in the exercise. For the exercise, the polling stations should be chosen carefully to ensure that the proper lessons are learned. Because the total number of polling stations in the exercise is small, the likelihood that a truly random sample of polling stations will accurately project the election outcome is similarly small. Choose a sample of polling stations ahead of time and make sure the percentage vote for each candidate matches the percentages for the total number of polling stations. If necessary, change the sampled polling station so that the percentages relatively match. Bring a copy of the spreadsheet with just the data for the sampled polling stations to the training, but don't show it to participants before the demonstration.

Example:
The CCCE has decided to include five (5) polling stations in its quick count sample or 25% of the 20 total polling stations in Chilumba.

Sampled Polling Stations for the CCCE Quick Count for Presidential Elections in Chilumba

Polling Station	Candidate X	Candidate Y	Total Valid Votes	% X	% Y
02	601	430	1,031	58.3	41.7
05	512	532	1,044	49.0	51.0
10	559	428	987	56.6	43.4
17	461	571	1,032	44.7	55.3
20	**545**	**480**	**1,025**	**53.2**	**46.8**
Total	**2,678**	**2,441**	**5,119**	**52.3**	**47.7**

7—Create Blank Quick Count Forms. Participants selected as monitors will need blank quick count forms to collect data from sampled polling stations. One form should be produced for each sampled polling station. These forms should provide spaces to record the polling station number, the number of votes each candidate received, the total number of valid votes cast, and the monitor's signature.

Example:

CCCE

Quick Count Form

Polling Station Number ___

Candidate	Party	Votes
X	A	___
Y	B	___
Total		___

Monitor's Signature _____

8—Gather Additional Supplies. You will need:

- Ink Pens
- Two Flip Chart Stands with Paper and Markers
- Rolls of Tape
- Two Calculators (recommended)

All of the above tasks should be completed several days before conducting a Quick Count Demonstration.

Setup for the Quick Count Exercise

1—Tape Statement of Poll Forms Up. Around the room or area where the training is taking place post all of the Statement of Poll forms with the vote count information in clear view and in any order.

2—Place Flip Chart Stands Back-to-Back at the Head of the Room. It is critical to the exercise that the flip chart stands are back to back so that the person writing on one stand cannot see what the person at the other stand is writing. At the top of one flip chart write "Official Results. " On the top of the other flip chart write "Quick Count Results." Also write the number of each of the polling stations included in the sample at the top of this flip chart.

How to Conduct the Skit

1—Give an Introduction. Explain that this is a demonstration for participants to see with their own eyes how a quick count works. Explain that one group of participants will demonstrate how election officials transmit and tabulate the official results and another group will demonstrate how monitors transmit and calculate the results of a quick count. Give participants background to the demonstration, such as the type of election, number of polling stations, contesting parties and candidates and the monitoring effort.

2—Assign Roles. Everyone will have a role to play in the demonstration, but some specific roles need to be assigned. Ask for volunteers and be sure to select men and women, young and old, as well as shy and outgoing participants. Participants will be needed for the following roles:

a) Official Tabulator. One person will be needed to do the official tabulation of results at the election commission headquarters. Explain that this person will be responsible for adding together the vote counts collected by the election officials from all the polling stations and he or she will calculate the percent vote for each candidate. When finished, this person should have written on his or her flip chart the vote counts for every polling station, the total number of votes cast for each candidate and the percentage of votes cast for each candidate. This person is given a marker and a calculator. Have this person stand in front of the "Official Results" flip chart (the election commission headquarters).

b) Quick Count Tabulator. One person will be needed to tabulate the quick count results at the monitoring effort's headquarters. Explain that this person will be responsible for adding together the vote counts collected by monitors from all of the sampled polling stations and then he or she will calculate the percent vote for each candidate. When finished, this person should have written on his or her flip chart the vote counts for each sampled polling station, the total number of votes cast for each candidate and the percentage of votes cast for each candidate. This person is given a marker and a calculator. Have this person stand in front of the "Quick Count Results" flip chart (the monitoring efforts headquarters).

c) Election Official. One election official will be needed for every polling station in the demonstration. Explain that these people will each collect the vote count information from one and only one polling station and give it to the Official Tabulator. Remind everyone that in reality these people would be responsible for conducting voting and counting at the polling station on election day and then transmitting the results to the election commission. For the purposes of this demonstration, election officials will only record and transmit vote counts to the election commission headquarters. Assign each person a polling station give them one blank Transmission of Results form and a pen. Ask all of the election officials: to go to their assigned polling station when the start signal is

given; record the vote count there; and then proceed to the "Official Results" flip chart and remain standing there once they have given their completed form to the Official Tabulator.

d) Monitors. One monitor will be needed for every sampled polling station in the demonstration. In the example used here, 5 monitors would be needed. Explain that these people will collect the vote count information from one and only one of the sampled polling stations and give it to the Quick Count Tabulator. Remind everyone that in reality the monitors would be present to observe both voting and counting, but for the purposes of this demonstration monitors will only be recording vote count information and delivering it to the Quick Count Tabulator. Assign each person the number of a sampled polling station and give them one blank Quick Count Form and a pen. Ask all the monitors: to go to their assigned polling station when the start signal is given; record the vote count there; and then proceed to the "Quick Count Results" flip chart and remain standing there once they have given their completed form to the Quick Count Tabulator.

e) Audience. Everyone not selected to play another role in the demonstration will be the audience. Explain that audience has an important role to play, and that they must watch what happens during the demonstration and be prepared to discuss what they have witnessed.

Before proceeding, answer any questions from participants about what they are supposed to do.

3—Start the Demonstration. Give the start signal, and have the participants carry out their instructions. The demonstration is over when both the official results and the quick count results have been calculated. Be sure to note if the official results or the quick count results are calculated first.

4—Reveal the Official Results and the Quick Count Results. Turn the two flip charts around so that the audience and all the other participants can see the results. Ask the audience if the results are similar or different. Check the results with the figures from your spreadsheets. Don't panic if the results did not work out as expected. The learning experience will still be valid. If there are errors, discuss with the participants why they occurred.

5—Discuss the Quick Count Training Skit.

6—Review Major Points and Thank Participants.

SAMPLE OBSERVER FORM FROM NICARAGUA

FORM 1
INSTALLATION
GENERAL ELECTIONS 2001

Code
Polling Station

1. What time did the installation of the polling station begin?

   A Before 6:00 am B 6:00 – 7:00 am
   C 7:00 – 9:00 am D After 9:00 am
   E It was not installed

Who was present to administer the polling station?
(circle the correct letter)

		Official	Substitute	None
2.	President	A	B	
3.	First Member	A	B	C
4.	Second Member	A	B	C

Were the proper materials in place? (circle yes or no)

5. yes no Voter List
6. yes no Forms Certifying the Opening and Closing of the Polling Station
7. yes no Forms for Challenges and the Ballot Count
8. yes no Ballots
9. yes no Voting Booth
10. yes no Ballot Boxes
11. yes no Indelible Ink
12. yes no Black light
13. yes no Holepunch
14. yes no Notebook for Documenting Problems

Party agents present for the installation (circle yes or no)

15. yes no Constitutional Liberal Party
16. yes no Sandinista National Liberation Front
17. yes no Conservative Party
18. yes no YATAMA Party
19. yes no PAMUC Party

20. What time was the first vote cast? (circle the correct letter)

   A Before 7:00 am B 7:00 – 8:00 am
   C 8:00 am – 10:00 am D After 10:00 am
   E Never

Polling Station No. _____

Formulario 1
Instalación

CODIGO
JRV

Recuerde llenar y reportar el Formulario # 2

Nº 0589

FORM 1 (BACK)
Instructions for the Quick Count Observer

Remember that you have to make three phone calls, in the following order:

1. Ethics and Transparency's Computer Center
2. Godfather or Godmother*
3. Departmental Coordinator

The telephone numbers are the following:

1. Ethics and Transparency's Computer Center
   _____
2. Godfather or Godmother
   _____
3. Departmental Coordinator
   _____

IMPORTANT

1. When calling from a department to Managua, you should first dial zero (0).
2. Remember to write your Quick Count Observer CODE in the boxes indicated. Follow this procedure for reading the code: Read the first number and pause briefly, then read the second two numbers together, and finally read the last two numbers together.

   Example: 5 32 97
   Five (Pause); Three, Two (Pause); Nine, Seven
3. Remember to write the number of the polling station at the beginning and end of the form.
4. Your answers to the Operator should be CLEAR AND DELIBERATE.
5. If you are interrupted or experience confusion, follow the lead of the operator; repeat information beginning with the question requested by the operator.
6. It is important to make all of the calls, starting with the Computer Center, then the Godfather or Godmother, and finally the Departmental Coordinator.

   After three unsuccessful attempts to the Computer Center, call the Godfather or Godmother, then make your call to the Departmental Coordinator. After this, try the call to the Computer Center again until you have been successful.

In case of emergency, call your Municipal Coordinator.

REMEMBER TO FILL OUT AND REPORT FORM 2

Instrucciones al Relator

1.- Centro de Cómputo de Ética y Transparencia
2.- Padrino o Madrina
3.- Coordinador Departamental

Los teléfonos son los siguientes:

1. Centro de Cómputo

270-3200

2. Padrino o Madrina

3. Coordinador Departamental

IMPORTANTE

Ejemplo: 5 | 3 2 | 9 7

Cinco(Pausa), Tres, Dos (pausa), Nueve, Siete

CLARAS Y PAUSADAS

Recuerde llenar y reportar el Formulario # 2

* "Godfathers and Godmothers" were private citizens who volunteered on election day to receive quick count observer telephone calls at their homes as a backup to the quick count computer center.

FORM 2
FINAL RESULTS
GENERAL ELECTIONS 2001

Code
Polling Station

1. Was the election process discontinued at this polling station?
   yes no *If your answer is yes, proceed to the end of this form and make your phone call*

2. Were there any irregularities during the voting or counting processes?
   yes no *If your answer is yes, answer question #3; if your answer is no, proceed to question #4*

Answer YES or NO.

3-A yes no The president explained the voting procedures
3-B yes no Persons carrying weapons were allowed to vote
3-C yes no The polling station closed with voters still waiting in line
3-D yes no Electoral police were inside the polling station
3-E yes no Voters had political propaganda
3-F yes no The form certifying the close of the polling station and the final count was not signed
3-G yes no Inebriated persons were allowed to vote
3-H yes no Persons without proper documentation, but whose names appeared on the voter list, were not permitted to vote
3-I yes no Persons with proper documentation were not permitted to vote
3-J yes no Other

4. When did the counting of votes begin? (circle the correct letter)
   A Before 6:00 pm B 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
   C After 8:00 pm

During the counting process, other than the administrators of the polling station, who else was present? (circle the correct letter)

5. yes no Party Pollwatchers
6. yes no Election Observers
7. yes no Voters

Party agents present for the vote counting process (circle the correct answer)

8. yes no Constitutional Liberal Party
9. yes no Sandinista National Liberation Front
10. yes no Conservative Party
11. yes no YATAMA Party
12. yes no PAMUC Party

Results for the presidential election:

13. _____ votes Constitutional Liberal Party
14. _____ votes Sandinista National Liberation Front
15. _____ votes Conservative Party
16. _____ votes Null
17. _____ votes Challenged

18. Did you observe the entire counting process at this polling station? (i.e., all 4 elections)
    yes no *If the answer is yes, answer question #19; if the answer is no, proceed to the end of the form.*

19. Did any political party contest the results at this polling station?
    yes no *If the answer is yes, answer questions #20 and #21; if the answer is no, proceed to the end of the form.*

Which party contested the results at this polling station?

20-A yes no Constitutional Liberal Party
20-B yes no Sandinista National Liberation Front
20-C yes no Conservative Party
20-D yes no YATAMA Party
20-E yes no PAMUC Party

What were the arguments for the challenge?

21-A yes no Legal procedures for installing the polling station were not followed
21-B yes no Voting took place at an unauthorized location
21-C yes no The documentation of the process was incomplete or altered
21-D yes no Other

Polling Station No. _____

FORM 2 (BACK)
Instructions for the Quick Count Observer

Remember that you have to make three phone calls, in the following order:

1. Ethics and Transparency's Computer Center
2. Godfather or Godmother
3. Departmental Coordinator

The telephone numbers are the following:

1. Ethics and Transparency's Computer Center
   _____
2. Godfather or Godmother
   _____
3. Departmental Coordinator
   _____

IMPORTANT

1. When calling from a department to Managua, you should first dial zero (0).
2. In Question #1, the discontinuation of the election process refers to a stoppage during the installation, voting process or counting process.
3. Remember to write your Quick Count Observer CODE in the boxes indicated. Follow this procedure for reading the code: Read the first number and pause briefly, then read the second two numbers together, and finally read the last two numbers together.
   Example: 5 32 97
   Five (Pause); Three, Two (Pause); Nine, Seven
4. Remember to write the number of the polling station at the beginning and end of the form.
5. When answering questions #13 to #15, you should fill in the boxes representing single digits, then tens and then hundreds, filling in empty spaces with zeros.
   Example: 5 = 005 (zero, zero, five)
   21= 021 (zero, two, one)
6. As you transmit results from questions #13 to #15, you should read digit by digit, from left to right, and repeat the word "votes" after each line.
   Example: 082 votes = zero, eight, two, votes
7. Your answers to the Operator should be CLEAR AND DELIBERATE.
8. If you are interrupted or experience confusion, follow the lead of the operator; repeat information beginning with the question requested by the operator.
9. It is important to make all of the calls, starting with the Computer Center, then the Godfather or Godmother, and finally the Departmental Coordinator.

   After three unsuccessful attempts to the Computer Center, call the Godfather or Godmother, then make your call to the Departmental Coordinator. After this, try the call to the Computer Center again until you have been successful.

If the polling station has not opened, or closes before it is supposed to, make your three calls to report the situation, regardless of the time of day.

Once you have reported the information on this form, deliver it to your municipal coordinator as soon as possible.

Intrucciones al Relator:

1.- Centro de Computo de Etica y Transparencia
2.- Padrino o Madrina
3.- Coordinador Departamental

Los teléfonos son los Siguientes:

1. Centro de Cómputo
270-3200

2. Padrino o Madrina

3. Coordinador Deptal.

IMPORTANTE

1. Para los departamentos al hacer las llamadas a Managua deberá comenzar marcando el número cero "0".
2. En la pregunta No. 1, la **"suspensión de cualquier proceso"** se refiere a los procesos de construcción de JRV, proceso de votación y proceso de escrutinio.
3. Recuerda escribir su **CODIGO** de Observador (4) los necesitamos compañeriteros. Al dictarlo debe leer el primer dígito luego hacer una pausa breve; los dos siguientes dígitos juntos, (pausa) y los últimos dígitos también juntos.

   Ejemplo: 5 3 2 9 7

   Cinco(Pausa), Tres, Dos (pausa), Nueve, Siete
4. Recuerde anotar el número de la JRV al inicio y al final del Formulario.
5. Al **ESCRIBIR** los resultados de las preguntas de la 13 a la 17, lleva los recuadros en el orden de las unidades, decenas y centenas, llenando los espacios vacíos con ceros.

   ejemplos: **5 = 005 (cero, cero, cinco)**
   21= 021 (cero, dos, uno)
6. Al **TRANSMITIR** los resultados de la preguntas **13 a la 15**, debe dictar dígito por dígito, de izquierda a derecha y repetir la palabra **voto** después de cada resultado.
   (ejemplo: 082 = cero, ocho, dos, votos).

   Recuerda que al Centro de Cómputo le preguntará **2 VECES** la información de Resultados para Presidente. **(13 A la 15)**
7. Sus respuestas al Receptor deben ser **CLARAS Y PAUSADAS**.
8. En caso de alguna interrupción o confusión repitan la información a partir de la pregunta que le solicita el Receptor.
9. Es importante que realice todas las llamadas, comenzando con la del Centro de Cómputo, luego con la del Padrino o Madrina y finalmente la de su Coordinador Departamental.

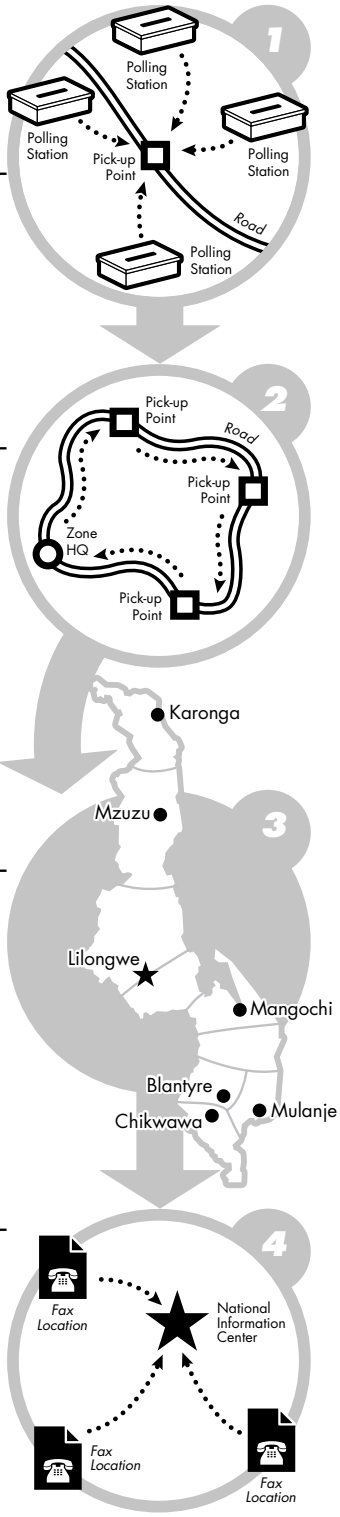
   Si después de **TRES INTENTOS**, no logra comunicarse con el Centro de Cómputo, haga su llamada al Padrino o Madrina, luego al Coordinador Departamental. Intente nuevamente llamar al Centro de Cómputo hasta lograr comunicarse.

En caso de que la JRV no abra o cierre antes de tiempo, deberá hacer las 3 llamadas informando la situación en cualquier momento del día.

Después de la transmisión de este Formulario, entréguelo a su coordinador municipal, lo más pronto posible.

MALAWI DATA COLLECTION DIAGRAM

This diagram depicts how the Church/NGO Consortium moved quick count data from individual polling stations selected at random from across Malawi to a centrally located National Information Center (NIC) in the capital Lilongwe at the Capital Hotel (which had a generator for a guaranteed continuous electrical supply). In the absence of a robust nationwide telephone network, it was decided early on to transmit the quick count data on paper forms. It was anticipated that it would take the Malawi Election Commission (MEC) four days to tabulate the election results. The Church/NGO Consortium took only three days using the procedures outlined below.



Step One
Church/NGO Consortium monitors recorded the quick count data on specially designed one-page forms at individual polling stations (PS) (monitors also completed longer more detailed forms on the conduct of the voting and counting processes). Once the counting procedure was completed and the election officials had closed the polling station, monitors moved by automobile, motorcycle, cart, bike or foot to previously agreed upon pick-up points (PUPs) with all of their completed forms. Over 100 pick-up points were designated by Church/NGO Consortium members during training workshops held across the country. Monitors were instructed to wait at pick-up points until their forms were collected. In practice, monitors travelled, mostly by foot, through the night and the early morning to reach their assigned pick-up points.

Step Two
For monitoring purposes, the Church/NGO Consortium divided Malawi into eight zones—Karonga, Mzuzu, Lilongwe (North), Lilongwe (South), Mangochi, Mulanje, Blantyre and Chikwawa. Each of the Church/NGO Consortium's four lead members was given the management responsibility of two zones of the country. Each zone was designated two 4x4 vehicles to be used to collect quick count forms (as well as voting and counting forms) from monitors waiting at pick-up points. Before election day, pick-up points were assigned to each vehicle and specific routes were determined for each vehicle to travel to reach all its assigned pick-up point and return to the zone headquarters (ZHQ).

Beginning very late in the night on election day (ED) and continuing throughout the following day (ED+1), the 16 vehicles traveled their routes: visiting all their assigned pick-up points; collecting quick count forms (as well as voting and counting forms); returning to zone headquarters; and heading out again to collect remaining quick count forms (as well as voting and counting forms).

Each staff member was provided with a list of polling stations for which quick count forms were expected at his/her assigned pick-up points (see attached for an example). Each vehicle made three or four complete circles in order to collect all of the anticipated quick count forms.

Step Three
For the two zones centered in Lilongwe, the journey of the quick count forms was at an end. Vehicles returning to Lilongwe would simply go to the National Information Center and drop of the forms for data entry and filing.

For the remaining six zones, however, the quick count forms still needed to be transmitted to Lilongwe. Because each zone headquarters was located in a relatively more urban setting and because the quick count forms were only one-page long it was decided that the forms would be faxed to Lilongwe. Each zone headquarters already had a telephone line and fax machines were distributed prior to election day. In addition, secondary locations were identified from which the forms could be faxed if the telephone line or fax machine failed to work during the days following the election.

On the second day after the election (ED+2), all of the quick count forms as well as the voting and counting forms were boxed up and sent to Lilongwe by passenger bus or airplane.

Step Four
In order to ensure that each zone headquarters would always have a open fax line in Lilongwe to which to send the quick count forms, six separate lines at three different locations were selected (no single site in Lilongwe could accommodate six phone lines and each site chosen had a generator to ensure continuous electricity). Each zone headquarters was given one number as its primary fax number and one number as its secondary fax number. The fax machines at these three offices were manned day and night for 60 hours starting at midnight of election day. A vehicle traveled periodically from the National Information Center to each of the three sites collecting faxed quick count forms. In total, over 800 quick count forms were received at the National Information Center within 72 hours of the close of polling stations and, importantly, before the announcement of results by the Malawi Election Commission.

QUICK COUNT COLLECTION FORM, MALAWI, 1999

Church/NGO Consortium **Presidential and National Assembly Elections, Malawi, 1999**

Collection of Quick Count Forms from Pick-Up Points – Accounting Sheet

Election night and the following day, your team will be responsible for collecting quick count forms and other monitoring materials for the Church/NGO Consortium. Below is a list of pick-up points for which you are responsible. Map out now, before election day, the best route to drive to reach all of these pick-up points and return to the Church/NGO Consortium Zone Office. You will have to drive this circuit several times election night and the following day in order to collect all of the expected quick count forms. At each pick-up point monitors will be waiting for you to collect their materials. During training, monitors were assigned specific pick-up points to go to and wait to have their forms collected. The list of pick-up points below also contains a list of monitors expected at each pick-up point. At no pick-up point are quick count forms expected for more than three polling stations. Each time you receive a quick count form check it off the list below. By noon of the day after the election if there are forms you still have not received go to the listed polling station and attempt to track down the assigned monitor and collect his or her quick count form. If you receive any unexpected quick count forms (meaning that they are not included on this list) then record the polling station's name and number as well as the monitor's name at the bottom of this form.

Zone _____ Co-ordinator _____ Headquarters _____

Vehicle Number _____ Vehicle Supervisor _____ Vehicle Driver _____

Pick-Up Point's Name	Forms Expected (number)	Expected Polling Station's Name	Assigned Monitor's Name	Form Received ✔
A.		1.		
		2.		
		3.		
B.		1.		
		2.		
		3.		
C.		1.		
		2.		
		3.		
D.		1.		
		2.		
		3.		
E.		1.		
		2.		
		3.		
F.		1.		
		2.		
		3.		
G.		1.		
		2.		
		3.		
H.		1.		
		2.		
		3.		
I.		1.		
		2.		
		3.		
J.		1.		
		2.		
		3.		
K.		1.		
		2.		
		3.		

Unexpected Quick Count Forms Log		
Polling Station's Name	**Number**	**Monitor's Name**
1.		
2.		

PROMOTIONAL PAMPHLET FOR ELECTION DAY PRESS OFFICE SET UP BY ELECTION OBSERVER GROUP

ELECCIONES 2001 / ELECTIONS 2001

GRUPO CIVICO ETICA Y TRANSPARENCIA

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INTRODUCCIÓN

El Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia es una fundación no gubernamental, sin fines de lucro constituida por un Consejo Directivo, un Consejo de más de 20 Organismos de la sociedad civil y una Red de mas de 5,000 Voluntarios distribuidos por todo Nicaragua.

El grupo fue fundado en 1996 y ese mismo año observó las elecciones nacionales, constituyendo esta observación la primera en Centroamérica realizada por un grupo nacional.

En las controversiales elecciones de 1996, el grupo utilizó por primera vez en Nicaragua, el método del Conteo Rápido de los votos. Este método fue un factor decisivo para establecer, sobre base científica, la legitimidad del proceso electoral y facilitar la segunda transferencia pacífica del poder en nuestra historia.

Entre otros logros del Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia en el campo de la observación electoral están las elecciones regionales de la Costa Atlántica en 1998 y las elecciones municipales del 2000.

Por otra parte, este Grupo ha sido el único organismo en Latinoamérica que ha moderado un diálogo entre el gobierno, los partidos políticos y la sociedad civil, con el fin de buscar soluciones a los problemas sociales, políticos, económicos y culturales de Nicaragua, y resolver la mayor crisis de gobernabilidad en la historia reciente del país.

Ética y Transparencia también promueve la participación activa de ciudadanos de diferentes sectores de la sociedad civil a través de las Consultas Ciudadanas donde, de manera trimestral, unos 100,000 ciudadanos exponen sus opiniones sobre temas de interés nacional.

El Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia ha facilitado procesos de resolución de conflictos de forma pacífica contribuyendo así a la gobernabilidad del país, al mantenimiento de la paz y al desarrollo económico, fortaleciendo el proceso de consolidación de la democracia en Nicaragua. En este

ámbito de destacan las mediaciones en los conflictos entre el gobierno y los estudiantes y la resolución de la huelga médica.

El prestigio y reconocimiento acumulados en los años que lleva sirviendo a la sociedad Nicaragüense han hecho al Grupo merecedor de participar como observador en elecciones de países como México, El Salvador, República Dominicana, Perú y otros.

La misión del Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia es contribuir al desarrollo democrático de Nicaragua mediante la promoción de la transparencia, el diálogo y la facilitación de procesos que garanticen la paz.

OBJETIVOS PARA LAS ELECCIONES NACIONALES DEL 2001

Para garantizar la transparencia en las Elecciones del 2001 Ética y Transparencia cuenta con la participación de unos 4,500 voluntarios todos debidamente capacitados y acreditados por el Consejo Supremo Electoral y con la metodología para realizar un conteo rápido preciso y veraz sobre los resultados presidenciales.

Los coordinadores voluntarios departamentales y municipales y, en fin todos los observadores electorales en las Juntas Receptoras de Voto (JRV), darán testimonio de la instalación de estas, del proceso de votación, del acta de cierre y del acta de escrutinio o conteo de votos.

Es posible que la mayor contribución del Grupo, para superar posibles crisis y controversias en estas elecciones sea la realización de su conteo rápido con un margen de error menor al 1% que permitirá obtener resultados científicos que pueden ser comparados con los resultados oficiales que dará el Consejo Supremo Electoral.

Para garantizar que el conteo rápido cuente con la precisión que su metodología encierra, Ética y Transparencia está asesorado por personalidades internacionales como Neil Neville, autoridad máxima a nivel mundial sobre el tema con experiencia en 22 países y 35 procesos electorales.

OFICINA DE PRENSA

La oficina de Prensa de Ética y Transparencia cuenta con el apoyo logístico de personal altamente calificado. No está afiliada a ningún partido político y es una fuente independiente de información.

Le ofrece al periodista extranjero facilidades para la transmisión del noticia y una red de información local necesarias para la efectiva elaboración de ellas. Contamos con computadoras con acceso al Internet, faxes e información actualizada del proceso electoral.

Una gran parte de las delegaciones de alto nivel de países amigos y organismos multilaterales han hecho obligatoria su visita y consulta a Ética y Transparencia, para obtener su valoración de las diversas situaciones que atraviesa el país.

Le invitamos a visitar nuestra oficina y beneficiarse con la valiosa información objetiva que ponemos a su alcance.

INTRODUCTION

The "Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia" is a non-governmental and non-profit foundation. It is constituted by a Board of Directors, a Council with more than 20 civil society and grass roots groups, and a Network of more than 5,000 volunteers located all over the country.

The Group was founded in 1996. That year, Ética y Transparencia observed the national elections, the first in the Central American region to be monitored by a national group.

In the controversial elections of 1996, the Group's Quick Count was a crucial factor in establishing on a scientific base, the legitimacy of the electoral process. At the same time, it facilitated the second peaceful transference of power in our history.

Among the achievements of the "Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia" in the electoral observation field are the regional elections of the Atlantic Coast in 1998 and the municipal elections of 2000.

Moreover, this Group has been the only civil society group in Latin America that has moderated a dialogue between the government, the political parties and civil society. The objective for this was to find solutions to the social, political, and economic problems of Nicaragua and solve the largest threat to governance during the present administration.

Ética y Transparencia also promotes the active participation of citizens from different groups of civil society through a Civic Council. Every three months around 100,000 citizens participate in these polls contributing with their opinions to topics of national interest.

The "Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia has facilitated conflict resolutions in a peaceful manner contributing to the country's governability, peace sustainability and economic development, which has strengthen the process of democracy in Nicaragua. A multiyear agreement to solve the annual conflict between the government and the students, and the resolution of the medical strike are among the successful processes in which Ética y Transparencia has participated.

The recognition and prestige accumulated over the years of service to the Nicaraguan society, and to the Group's participation as an observer in the elections of countries such as Mexico, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic and Peru.

The mission of the "Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia" is to contribute to the democratic development of Nicaragua through the promotion of transparency, dialogue and the facilitation of processes that preserve the peace and democracy in the country.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS 2001

To ensure the transparency of the Elections in 2001, Ética y Transparencia will realize a Quick count of the presidential elections with the support of about 4,500 volunteers all of whom are properly trained and accredited by the Supreme Electoral Council (CSE).

The departmental and municipal volunteer coordinators, and the whole body of electoral observers that will be at the Voting Stations (JRV), will give testimony of the activities performed there: the installation of the station, the voting process, the closing record of proceedings and the vote count.

It is possible that the major contribution of the Group, to overcome a possible crisis and controversy in these elections, will be the implementation of the Quick Count method. It has an error margin lower than 1% that will allow to obtain scientific results that can be compared to the official results given by CSE.

To guarantee the accuracy of the Quick Count, Ética y Transparencia receives the advice of Neil Nevitte, the foremost authority in Quick Counts, having executed 35 of them in 22 countries.

PRESS OFFICE

The Press Office at Ética y Transparencia has the logistic support of highly qualified personnel. It is not political and it is an independent source of information.

It offers to the international media the facilities to transmit news and a local information network for the effective elaboration of it. Our facility counts with computers with internet access, media and updated information of the electoral process.

A great deal of delegations from friendly countries and multilateral organisms has made an obligatory visit to Ética y Transparencia to obtain opinions of the different situations that the country is going through.

We invite you to visit our office and benefit from the valuable objective information that we will provide.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Melissa Estok is a Senior Advisor to the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and has more than 15 years experience in international and democratic development. Over the past decade, Ms. Estok has specialized in election monitoring, quick counts and civil society development. She has served as a resident technical advisor to election monitoring groups in Bangladesh, Peru, Nicaragua and Yemen, and has provided direct technical assistance to civic organizations and political parties in Ecuador, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Russia and Venezuela. Ms. Estok also has worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other organizations to evaluate election-related assistance and to design programs that promote the participation of women in politics. In addition, Ms. Estok worked with Peace Corps in Honduras as a trainer and grassroots community organizer. She has an M.A. degree in Counseling Psychology and a B.A. in International Relations and Spanish.

Neil Nevitte is Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto, Canada, and is an internationally recognized expert on quick counts. Dr. Nevitte previously taught at Harvard University and Leeds University, United Kingdom. He has published fourteen books including most recently: Anatomy of a Liberal Victory (2002), Value Change and Governance (2002), Unsteady State (2000) and The Challenge of Direct Democracy (1996). His research on elections has also been published as chapters in books and in such journals as: The Journal of Democracy, Comparative Political Studies, Electoral Studies, Public Opinion Quarterly, Political Methodology and the European Journal of Political Research. For the last 15 years, Dr. Nevitte has been a consultant to several international organizations on electoral matters, and is a Senior Advisor to NDI. He has provided direct technical assistance to domestic election observer groups—usually as principal technical advisor on quick count projects—in more than 15 countries, including Albania, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Senegal and Venezuela.

Glenn Cowan is a Vice President of Opinion Dynamics Corporation where he specializes in the application of research findings to guide public affairs campaigns and constituency development efforts. Over the past twenty-five years he has advised scores of candidates, trade associations, corporate and nonprofit clients. Since 1985, Mr. Cowan has served as a Senior Advisor to NDI, participating in approximately 100 NDI technical missions and delegations to more than 35 countries. He helped to pioneer the methodology used in quick counts around the world and other approaches to democratic development. Mr. Cowan was a senior staff member in both the Carter/Mondale and Mondale presidential campaigns. He has served in local government in both elected and appointed positions, and with the U.S. Army in Vietnam as an infantry officer. Mr. Cowan graduated from Rutgers University and did his graduate work in public administration at the University of Pittsburgh. He also currently serves as an elected member of the Kensington, Maryland, town council.

SELECTED NDI PUBLICATIONS ON ELECTION MONITORING

NDI Handbook on How Domestic Organizations Monitor Elections: An A to Z Guide (1995). This handbook provides a comprehensive overview of how to organize a nonpartisan domestic election observation effort. It covers: planning and organizational issues; recruiting, training and logistical issues in building a communications network for reporting; various issues to monitor in the pre-election, election day and post-election periods; and considerations for how the organization and skills developed can be applied to non-election activities. The guide is designed for election monitoring by civic organizations; it also can be used by political parties in designing their efforts to ensure electoral integrity and protect their votes.

Promoting Legal Frameworks for Democratic Elections: An NDI Guide for Developing Election Laws and Law Commentaries (2002). This guide addresses the importance of developing legal frameworks that promote democratic elections; why it is important for political parties, civic organizations and others to analyze the strengths and weakness of existing and proposed laws affecting election processes; the importance of developing an open and inclusive political process to address those laws so that political competitors may agree on the "rules of the game" and the public can develop confidence in the process. The guide presents the main issues to examine when evaluating the legal framework and over 200 questions to consider, as well as sources of international law on the subject and samples of NDI election law commentaries.

Building Confidence in the Voter Registration Process: An NDI Monitoring Guide for Political Parties and Civic Organizations (2001). This voter registration monitoring guide addresses: the role of voter registration and the principal types of voter registration systems; why it is important for political parties and civic organizations to monitor these systems; and specific techniques for monitoring processes for collecting names, creating a voter registry and polling station voter lists, correcting errors in the lists and use of the lists on election day.

Media Monitoring to Promote Democratic Elections: An NDI Handbook for Citizen Organizations (2002). This handbook takes a step-by-step approach to media monitoring. It covers: the importance of determining who controls the media and the difference between state-controlled versus private and broadcast versus print media; issues to address in deciding what media and what subjects to monitor; planning and organization of a media monitoring project; monitoring methodology, including specific instructions for monitoring different types of media; and considerations for the presentation of findings and recommendations.

In addition to these materials, NDI has produced over 300 reports, papers and statements concerning ways in which to promote democratic elections generally and concerning the election process within specific countries. See NDI's website: www.ndi.org "Access Democracy" and "Global Programs/Elections and Political Processes" for more information about these and other NDI publications.