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Elections and Democracy Activity (EDA)

Quarterly Progress Report

May 7, 2020 to June 30, 2021

Cooperative Agreement No. 72066921CA00003

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ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRACY ACTIVITY (EDA)
QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT
(May 7 – June 30, 2020)
Award No: 72066921CA00003

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The authors' views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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ACRONYMS

AMELP	Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
CoP	Chief of Party
CSO	Civil Society Organization
C-TIP	Countering Trafficking in Persons
CEDEM	Center for Elections Management and Democracy
CEMESP	Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding
DI	Democracy International, Inc.
DI HO	Democracy International, Inc. Home Office
ECC	Election Coordinating Committee
EDA	Elections & Democracy Activity
FLY	Federation of Liberian Youth
F&O	Finance & Operations
GOL	Government of Liberia
HR	Human Resources
IE	Impact Evaluation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IREX	International Research and Exchanges Board
LEON	Liberia Elections Observation Network
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
MOE	Ministry of Education
NEC	National Election Commission
NUOD	National Union of Organization of the Disabled
OD	Organizational Development
PMU	Program Management Unit
PYD	Positive Youth Development
RSO	Regional Security Officer
STTA	Short-term technical assistance
TAAP	Transforming Agency, Access, and Power
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WANEP	West Africa Peace Network
WONGOSOL	Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Program Name:	Elections and Democracy Activity (EDA)
Activity Start/ End Date:	May 7, 2021 to May 6, 2026
Name of Implementing Partner:	Democracy International, Inc. (DI)
Cooperative Agreement Number:	72066921CA00003
Name of Subawardees:	IREX UMOVEMENT
Geographic Coverage (countries)	Liberia
Reporting Period:	FY21 Q3 May 7–June 30, 2021

INTRODUCTION

With funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Democracy International (DI) is implementing the Elections and Democracy Activity (EDA) in Liberia from May 7, 2021 to May 6, 2026. EDA works to assist Liberia to overcome current challenges to the country's developing democracy. EDA intends to foster inclusive, sustainable democratic political processes; by strengthening political leadership of marginalized groups, with a particular emphasis on women and youth; by enhancing civic knowledge and sense of duty among citizens; and by providing technical support to the National Elections Commission (NEC) and national election observers. DI's technical approach centers around mobilizing a new cadre of leaders, informed citizenry and strengthened institutions to bolster Liberia's democratic space and practice. EDA is designed to ensure that Liberia's democratic development and process are locally driven and inclusive to ensure that Liberians determine how the country's democracy progresses. History shows that change in the Liberian political system is possible. However, more sustainable positive change often requires breaking down clientelism, and dismantling marginalization that perpetuates ethnic-based favoritism and limits inclusive and diverse political representation.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The EDA team made significant strides in achieving its mobilization phase milestones this quarter despite the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and amid a third wave impacting Liberia and many other countries worldwide.

Kickoff and Planning Activities

0.0 Operational Start-Up & Risk Assessment

Partnerships

On May 20, DI participated in the EDA Post-Award Meeting with USAID/Liberia staff, including the award's Agreement Officer and contracting office representatives; Democracy, Rights & Governance (DRG) Office team members; and representatives of several other offices at USAID/Liberia that will support the award. That afternoon, the EDA PMU staff met with EDA's Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) in Washington, DC. These introductory meetings clarified USAID's expectations for the program to enable effective EDA implementation and coordination with USAID.

DI has worked closely with EDA partners IREX and UMOVEMENT to finalize the details of their subaward agreements. DI drafted refined scopes of work based on the approved program description and held initial calls with both organizations during the week of June 14. Following these calls, subsequent discussions have continued to flesh out the details of our programmatic, financial, and operational collaboration to ensure effective partnerships.

These partnerships are critical to EDA's success. IREX will ensure EDA integrates Positive Youth Development approaches to advance youth leadership and political participation, to leverage a CSO and media network of more than 95 Liberian organizations and outlets, link media and CSOs to bolster civic and voter education, and improve critical thinking and information consumption skills to enable citizens to make informed political decisions. Meanwhile, DI's partnership with UMOVEMENT will ensure Liberian ownership and sustainability of the roll out of new civic education curriculum in schools. UMOVEMENT will build upon its long-standing relationships with the Ministry of Education (MOE) and existing networks within the Liberian school systems and training institutes to make the initiative successful.

The EDA Program Director initiated outreach to other potential partners and stakeholders in Monrovia in early June, including NAYMOTE, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY), and National Union of Organizations for the Disabled (NUOD). Also in June, the EDA Chief of Party (CoP) began coordinating an inception meeting with the UNDP Chief Technical Advisor for Elections to discuss support to the NEC that would take place in early July.

Personnel Recruitment and Hiring

The CoP joined the EDA team effective June 1. He worked remotely to support EDA mobilization efforts until he arrived in country on June 24. DI hired its incoming Finance and Operations Director on May 26 and its Program Director on May 28 as consultants in this interim mobilization period.

DI's home office Human Resource team is working with the EDA Finance & Operations Director to draft a DI Liberia Field Office Employee Handbook for local legal counsel to review to ensure compliance with the labor laws and regulations of Liberia. EDA will finalize its local employment contract template and the DI Liberia Field Office Employee Handbook in July. Concurrently, DI finalized its Local Compensation Plan for Liberia that will ensure EDA is providing equitable salaries to all staff based on their positions.

During this quarter, EDA senior management fine-tuned the EDA organizational chart and established a hiring plan. Priority EDA field office hires include Finance Officer, Grants Officer, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Specialist, Operations Assistant, Organizational Development/Awards Transition Officer, Elections Program Officer, Inclusive Leadership Program Officer, and Civic Education Officer. EDA in-country staff reviewed and shortlisted applicants and conducted first round interviews. Second round interviews with finalist candidates will commence in the beginning of the next quarter.

Office and Administrative Start-Up

The EDA Finance & Operations Director worked with DI's home office team to begin key procurement and business processes to facilitate a quick program startup. In early June, EDA initiated the process to register DI as a business in Liberia. Concurrently, EDA conducted competitive procurement processes to identify local legal counsel, an office space, internet, office furniture, temporary vehicle hire, and a bank for the EDA business account. During this quarter, DI successfully procured the rental vehicle on June 16 and its local legal counsel on June 21.

Risk Assessment & Security Management Planning

DI's Security and Operations STTA arrived in Monrovia June 28 and worked closely with DI's Global Security Director and the EDA CoP to assess the security and risk landscape in Liberia through desk review and a field visit. Upon arrival, the consultant conducted inspection of proposed office locations.

The consultant held discussions with the U.S. Embassy Deputy RSO and the Regional Security Officer (RSO). He also began scheduling appointments with the United Nations (UN) Chief Security Adviser, OSAC Representative from Samaritan Purse, and with other implementing partners working in Monrovia. DI also requested the STTA to review the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Compliance Plan that is due July 6. The STTA assignment will culminate with a Risk Assessment and Security Management Plan that EDA will share with USAID in early August.

0.1 Establish EDA Network

The Program Director started conducting a series of consultations with local organizations as part of the NGO mapping exercise that will help DI and its partners develop the EDA Network. In the reporting period, she had the following introductory meetings:

- On June 10, EDA Program Director met with Liberia Elections Observers Network (LEON) to discuss potential opportunities for election monitoring opportunities in the by-elections and 2023 elections.
- On June 11, EDA met with the Elections Coordination Committee (ECC), which is comprised of several CSOs, including Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP), Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL), and West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP).
- On June 21, the DI-Liberia team met with a representative from Sister Aid Liberia (SALIB). SALIB is forerunner of the platform “Liberian Women Can Lead, too.” This movement exists to bridge the gap between generations of women leaders through mentorship programs.
- On June 27, DI-EDA Program Director met with the National Union of Organizations for the Disabled (NUOD), which advocates for accessibility to buildings used during the electoral process for those with disabilities. The organization requested technical assistance building capacity in areas including but not limited to resource mobilization, advocacy, financial management and sustainability, monitoring and evaluation, and elections observation training.
- On June 28, DI-EDA met with the president of the Federation of Liberia Youth (FLY) to discuss possible collaboration with NAYMOTE on political leadership schools.
- Lastly, in late June, DI met with the West Africa Peace Network (WANEP) Executive Director, the executive director of the National Union of Organization of Disable (NUOD) , and a representative from the Center for Elections Management and Democracy (CEDEM). CEDEM hopes to organize a roundtable with civil society organizations (CSOs) and other stakeholders on these reform issues as a first step towards advocating for such reforms.

0.2 Conduct Inclusive Inquiry and Reflection Exercise, Rapid Inclusion Analysis

EDA began discussing the Scope of Work (SoW) for a Short-Term Technical Assistance (STTA) consultant to support EDA’s in-house phase of inclusion training using the Transforming Agency, Access, and Power (TAAP) Toolkit. EDA expects this STTA to work closely with the Program Director and the incoming Inclusive Leadership Officer to adapt the TAAP Toolkit to the Liberian context and provide technical

capacity to enable these EDA team members to roll out subsequent TAAP exercises with staff and partners. EDA plans to start the consultancy in the next quarter.

Objective 1: Leadership of Marginalized Groups in Political Processes Increased

No activities were planned for this quarter.

Objective 2: Civic Knowledge and Sense of Civic Duty Improved

No activities were planned for this quarter.

Objective 3: Self-Reliance of the NEC and CSOs to Independently Manage and Observe All Stages of the Electoral Cycle Advanced

No activities were planned for this quarter.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

The DI-EDA team revised the proposed Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP) to align with EDA's first Annual Implementation Plan, and submitted it to USAID on June 4. After a call with the Alternate AOR to review USAID's questions and comments on the AMELP, EDA submitted a revised version on June 24 for final review and approval.

REPORTING AND DELIVERABLES

The DI-EDA team submitted the following deliverables during this quarter:

- Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMELP): submitted on June 4, revised and submitted on June 24, and approved on June 24
- Annual Implementation Plan: submitted on June 4, revised and submitted on June 24, and approved on June 24

- Mobilization Implementation Schedule: submitted on June 4, revised and submitted on June 24, and approved on June 24
- Weekly Updates: starting the week of June 21

CHALLENGES AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

One challenge EDA faced this quarter was in negotiating the terms of the anticipated subaward with UMOVEMENT; in particular, managing UMOVEMENT's funding expectations. In order to make progress, DI adopted a strategy to lead negotiations from the field rather than the home office. The EDA team focused discussion on establishing an initial year-one budget that remained within the EDA approved budget, and a schedule of activities that aligned with the overall scope of work. Negotiations are progressing and DI anticipates that both parties will agree on the terms of this subaward early in the next quarter.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER INCLUDING UPCOMING EVENTS

Planned EDA activities for the next quarter:

- Continuing meetings between Risk Assessment STTA and stakeholders in Monrovia, through July 15, 2021
- Finalizing subaward agreements with IREX, UMOVEMENT, and NAYMOTE
- Continuing second- and final-round EDA staff interviews for all sixteen planned field staff
- Completion of minor renovations and partitioning on the DI-EDA office in Monrovia, by first week of August
- Onboarding of new national staff, September through October
- Assessment of Civic Education pilot to schools for Montserrado, Nimba and Grand Bassa, end of August through early September
- Finalizing and submission of FY2022 Annual Implementation Plan, September 1
- Impact Evaluation workshop, mid-September
- TAAP internal training of trainers workshop for EDA staff, late August/early September
- Finalizing and submission of Civic Education Books Implementation Plan, September 30
- Preliminary EDA CSO Mapping database inputs, by end of September

- Project launch, by end of September/early October
- Internal operationalization exercise on Annual Implementation Plan, by mid-October

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

In future reports, EDA plans to include a narrative and chart in this section that demonstrate the budgeted vs actual expenditures for the reporting period.