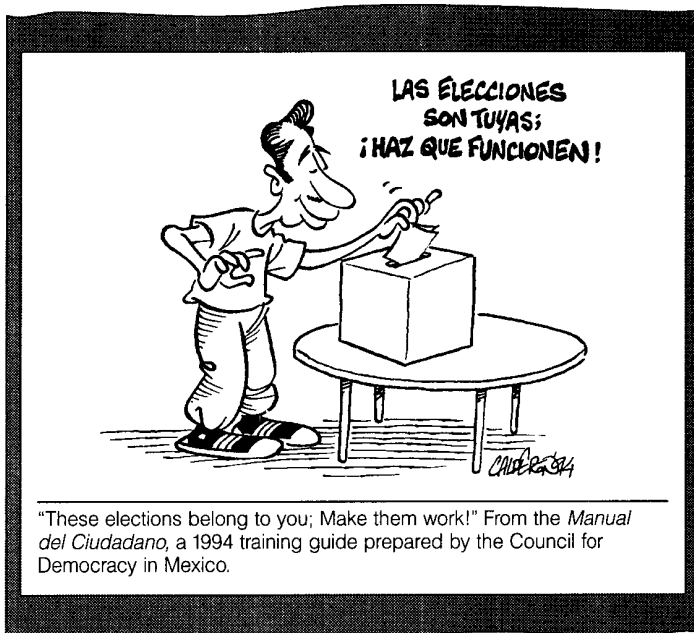


## E

Similarly, staff and volunteers in your organization must pledge to refrain from working for, or exhibiting any public preference for, the advancement or defeat of a particular political party or candidate.<sup>17</sup> The primary concern of a nonpartisan monitor should be to protect the integrity of the electoral process, regardless of who wins or loses. However, this directive does not, and should not, preclude monitors from expressing their personal political choice in the privacy of the voting booth.

At the same time, you should realize that impartiality and independence from political contestants does *not* mean your organization should have no contact with political parties or candidate organizations. On the contrary, it is essential that you communicate to political contestants what your objectives and guiding principles are and what your activities will entail. (Also, you should not preclude the possibility of contributing to the level of voter education, as many nonpartisan groups have, by sponsoring policy debates and candidate forums.) Open lines of communication will help the contestants to respect and appreciate the purpose of your organization and may encourage them to provide you with information that will be useful to your monitoring efforts.



### COMMUNICATE CLEARLY AND REGULARLY

Many monitoring groups are hesitant to publicize their activities. This tendency is often prevalent in environments characterized by serious repression or polarization. Nonetheless, your credibility will be enhanced to the extent that you pursue a policy of communicating openly with the political parties, the government and the media. You should clearly and openly present your objectives, goals, methodology and proposed activities in order to answer questions and clarify any misunderstandings about the nature of your effort. (See, for example, the brochure prepared by the Philippine group NAMFREL in Appendix II.)

These communications may take the form of press conferences, press releases, advertisements, letters, telephone calls or personal interviews. You should convey any relevant information before you conduct your activities. Such advance notice generally helps to deter fraud or intimidation and may also facilitate the execution of your activities. Moreover, demonstrating your dedication and courage through public pronouncements delivers a strong message that your monitoring effort is serious about its mission.

It is also valuable to share information about your efforts after they transpire. Distributing written and verbal reports about your activities and findings helps you to document your achievements and provides a useful reference for the media and other election observers.<sup>18</sup>

### ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF YOUR PLAN AND METHODOLOGY

Your plan and your methodology<sup>19</sup> (the specific approach you employ to execute your activities) are liabilities if they are perceived to be unsound, unreasonable or unlikely to be achieved. This means that your plan must be logistically and financially feasible and must, assuming it is properly executed, appear capable of accomplishing your established goals. A plan and methodology can best maintain this integrity if their underlying assumptions are sensible and valid.

<sup>17</sup> See also Section I, Recruiting.

<sup>18</sup> See Section Y, Post-Election Reporting.

<sup>19</sup> Issues regarding methodology are addressed in Part Two and Part Three of this chapter in the context of specific election monitoring activities.

For example, suppose that you set a goal of collecting vote count results from 100 counting stations located throughout the country and that you plan to deploy one volunteer to observe the count inside each station. If you can recruit only 10 volunteers, your plan may not be logistically feasible. If you have no money or vehicles to transport your volunteers, then your plan is similarly flawed. Alternatively, suppose that all of your volunteers have been instructed to collect vote count results by simply interviewing the first political party observer they can find who has been inside the counting center. In this situation, your methodology may be criticized because you cannot guarantee that the resulting data is convincingly trustworthy. In other words, even if it is properly executed, critics may argue that your methodology lacks integrity.



Illustration 9

NAMFREL's reputation as a credible, independent monitoring organization was tested when it publicly projected election results that contained serious mathematical errors following the May 1987 legislative elections in the Philippines. Upon discovering the mistake, NAMFREL promptly revised its announcement.

Nonetheless, parties opposed to President Corazon Aquino were convinced that NAMFREL was part of a plot to ensure overwhelming victories for pro-Aquino legislators. In the end, NAMFREL's excellent reputation, the organization's prompt retraction and correction, and its willingness to subject the quick-count results to an independent audit convinced a majority of the population that the error was indeed innocent.

F

**EXECUTE YOUR PLAN** The best plans and methodologies will be irrelevant if they cannot be properly executed, in which case your operation will lose credibility. Good execution requires the proper personnel and resources and, above all, good training.<sup>20</sup> (See *Illustration 9*)

It is common for critics to accuse monitoring organizations of bias or incompetence, particularly when the organizations are new and untested. Your conduct in executing the plan represents your most potent defense against such charges. If the performance of your members is characterized by impartiality, objectivity and professionalism, all reasonable critics will eventually be silenced, and your credibility will be assured.



### Operating Funds

Soliciting funds for a domestic monitoring effort poses several challenges. The often short time-frame for organizing an operation places enormous pressure on those responsible for fundraising and may compete with other, seemingly more important duties.

This urgency for raising funds, however, should not compromise the group's impartiality as stated above in *Section E, Credibility*. Depending on the circumstances, a perception of partisanship may be created if your organization accepts funds from the government, political parties or other groups that are supporting electoral contestants.

The election law may or may not provide precise directives regarding nonpartisan fundraising. Violating the terms or spirit of such legal regulations would likely contradict a fundamental goal of the operation and, therefore, should be avoided.

Common sources of funding for domestic monitoring operations include:

- 1 membership dues;
- 2 revenue from sales of your organization's paraphernalia, such as buttons, t-shirts, posters and banners;
- 3 contributions from businesses and wealthy individuals, some of whom may be asked to join the steering committee;
- 4 donations of materials or services from businesses and individuals, also called "in-kind" or "in specie" contributions (e.g., office space, equipment, transport and communication

<sup>20</sup> See *Section I, Recruiting*; *Section J, Training*; and *Section K, Training Manual*, for further discussion of this subject.

## G

devices, legal or accounting services, houses for meetings, food for election monitors, etc.); and

- 5 grants from domestic or international foundations interested in supporting democratic processes.

International organizations often provide domestic election monitoring groups with a large share of their initial funding needs. However, some groups refuse to accept monetary support from external sources in the belief that generating funds domestically demonstrates popular support and avoids any perception of outside control.

You should assign one or more people to concentrate on soliciting and collecting resources. Many organizations also establish a subcommittee for this purpose within the committee of directors.

As a preliminary step, you should analyze the budget to determine your estimation of expenditures needed to conduct the monitoring effort.<sup>21</sup> Next you should develop a plan by which you will solicit the resources. Some commonly used fundraising techniques include:

- 1 sponsoring entertainment events (e.g., a large dinner, musical presentations, etc.) at which you collect a fee for entrance or request voluntary contributions;
- 2 selling goods or services (e.g., artwork, food, cleaning services, etc.) for a profit, which is in turn donated to the monitoring operation;
- 3 directly soliciting contributions of money, equipment, office space, transportation, etc. (This may be accomplished by using mail, telephone, newspaper, radio, or personal appeals); or
- 4 writing and submitting grant proposals to foundations and other donor institutions.

In general, you should begin by soliciting resources from people who share your beliefs about the importance of the monitoring effort. Also, allocate a high priority to contacting people who can afford to contribute larger amounts of money or other resources before calling on others.

However, do not underestimate the importance of small donations received from multiple sources; the cumulative effect of many small contributions provides a basis to claim broad public support (which enhances your credibility) and provides a pool of names from which to recruit more volunteers. Finally, it is wise to record the name and address of each contributor as well as the amount and date of his or her donation. These records may be required by law, but more importantly they provide valuable information for the next time you ask for assistance.



## Office Facilities

A national office or headquarters provides a place where the staff of the monitoring group can meet to work, plan and communicate among themselves, regional groups and others. Factors to consider in choosing a national office include:

- 1 financial resources that can be dedicated to this purpose (i.e., how much can you afford to spend?);
- 2 types of projects anticipated before, during and after election day (e.g., assembling materials, convening meetings, conducting training sessions, holding press conferences, etc.), and the space necessary to implement those projects efficiently;
- 3 electrical and structural capacity to install communications networks and other equipment (e.g., photocopy machines, telephones and computers);
- 4 convenience, comfort and security for staff and volunteers, since they may be working late hours under difficult conditions;
- 5 easy access for ordinary citizens;
- 6 proximity to other participants in the electoral process; and
- 7 the possibility of using the facilities after the election, in the event that the organization decides to continue to operate. (See *Illustration 10*)

<sup>21</sup> See also the discussion on budgets in Section B, *A General Plan*.

**Illustration 10**

Upon its formation in April 1990, BAFE situated its offices on the ground floor of the Palace of Culture, located in the center of Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria. The Palace is a well-recognized landmark in the area, with access to conference rooms and other amenities. Bulgarian television also used the Palace of Culture as the headquarters for election-night broadcasts, thus enabling BAFE to relay with ease information collected from its parallel vote tabulation to the television studio.