

- 5 discussion of monitoring techniques;
- 6 simulation and role-playing exercises;
- 7 elaboration of situations and specific challenges that monitors may encounter in the course of their work;
- 8 timetable for implementing plan of action; and
- 9 questions and answers.

Some of these topics can be discussed in five or 10 minutes. Others, such as the review of election procedures, may require one or two hours. Remember to provide brief intermissions. Experience has shown that audiences have difficulty maintaining their concentration for more than 50 minutes at a time, no matter how interesting the subject matter.

Simulations have proven to be one of the most popular and effective methods of communicating information about election processes and monitoring. A training agenda should allow sufficient time for simulation exercises and a period to exchange questions and answers. (See *Illustration 14*.)



### Training Manual

If possible, you should produce a training manual (or handbook) to reinforce the information communicated during the training program. Creating a training manual assists both the organization and the volunteers. The act of writing and producing the document prompts an organization to further refine its goals and develop the plan by which these goals will be achieved. Volunteers benefit from a written resource that can be consulted and reread after the training session has ended.

A clearly and concisely written manual should outline the role, duties and responsibilities of election monitors. A good manual is easy to use, allowing readers to quickly find information on a particular topic. Pictures, graphics and anecdotal illustrations help make the text easier to understand.

The precise contents of the training manual may vary depending on the unique environment of each election and the focus of your monitoring activities. Most domestic monitors produce manuals that contain some or all of the following basic information:

- 1 an introduction, which briefly describes the formation of the organization and its principal goals;
- 2 a concise historical perspective, which explains the significance of the upcoming election;
- 3 a short overview on the evolution of nonpartisan election monitoring efforts, which should reassure the observers that the task before them is not an impossible one and has been accomplished by other organizations (examples may be taken from the descriptions of groups included in Chapter Two of this *Handbook*);
- 4 a synopsis of the election code and regulations, including a description of the responsibilities of various election officials, the election procedures, and the mechanisms for recording and filing complaints (samples of these materials are often published by the central election commission and may be copied and incorporated into your own materials);
- 5 a code of conduct for observers describing guidelines for acceptable behavior; and
- 6 a description of the activities undertaken by observers before and during election day, and the details involved in serving as an election monitor, including:
  - a when to arrive at the assigned site;
  - b with whom to speak upon arrival;
  - c what to do if problems arise; and
  - d where to deliver written or oral reports.

In addition, the training manual should include specially designed *checklists* or other forms on which the monitors may record their observations, accompanied by an explanation of how to

properly complete the forms. (See Appendix III.)

If your monitoring operation becomes more sophisticated or if teams are assigned for specialized functions, you may wish to prepare correspondingly specialized manuals. Potential topics for specialized manuals include:

- 1 monitoring the pre-campaign period (e.g., electoral reforms, voter registration, party registration, candidate nomination, delimitation of electoral districts, etc.);
- 2 monitoring the campaign period (e.g., media coverage, intimidation, voter education, political party activities, campaign finance, impartiality of election officials, etc.);
- 3 monitoring preparedness of election administrators;
- 4 monitoring the voting and counting;
- 5 implementing a parallel vote tabulation; and
- 6 monitoring the electoral complaint process.

You should carefully calculate the amount of time needed to produce training manuals from conception, to writing, to printing, to distribution. There is a tendency to underestimate the length of time required to complete this process, which may delay training and disrupt the overall monitoring plan. In any event, your budget should provide necessary funds to print and distribute the manual to all observers so they can keep it for future reference throughout their monitoring assignment.



### Public Information

In your general plan, you should include a component on providing information about your monitoring effort to the public and the press as well as to members of your organization. A well conceived and properly executed public information strategy determines whether you recruit and train enough volunteers to implement your operation and whether your message is heard, understood and influential. Therefore, you must learn to effectively use letters, literature, advertise-

ments, news stories, interviews, meetings and other channels of communication.

Managing public information is one of the most difficult duties in a monitoring operation. Thus, you should assign one or more *public information officers* or *press officers* to fulfill your public information needs. Individuals who have journalistic or editing experience and the capacity to develop a message make ideal candidates for the job. Experience in using or creating artwork, designing texts and printing is also helpful. It is especially important that your public information officers can adeptly communicate in front of a television camera, a radio microphone or a large audience.

The public information office has several responsibilities. The first of these is working with the committee of directors and the executive director to identify your organization's communication needs and priorities. Then, in conjunction with developing the general plan, the public information office should design a strategy for achieving these needs. Components of a good strategy include identifying the type of communication (e.g., educational, persuasive), the audience and the method of communication that will best serve your goals.

The public information office is also responsible for developing the specific message your group wants to communicate. The message may serve to:

- 1 recruit or train volunteers;
- 2 advise the public and election officials about your methodology and proposed activities;
- 3 answer questions or accusations aimed at your organization; and
- 4 report upon your activities, findings, evaluations and/or recommendations.

All information that is distributed outside of your operation should consistently and accurately reflect your objectives and activities. For this reason, it is important that all substantial communications, from training manuals to press releases, be conceptualized and reviewed by the public information office with the assistance of other relevant members of your operation.

All other members of your organization should exercise prudence in talking to media reporters. Most organizations discourage everyone except the public information officers from speaking with the media, unless they are authorized to do so, in order to avoid sending conflicting messages or premature evaluations. In furtherance of this concern, you should consider developing and distributing media guidelines to all members of the organization so that they know how you want them to interact with the media and how to direct inquiries to the public information office.

Once the strategy and message have been developed, it is the public information office's constant obligation to convey the information inside and outside of your organization. This duty commences when the organization first announces its existence and intention to monitor the elections and continues until all of its findings are reported and questions are answered.

**CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION** You can communicate your message through three types of channels: (1) personal contact; (2) publications; and (3) mass media.

#### *Personal Contact*

Whenever you address an audience in person, you are employing a channel of communication called *personal contact*. Private meetings, telephone calls, public rallies, conferences and interviews represent several types of personal contacts.

Personal contact conveys the style and emotion of your organization and your message. Given the immediacy and interactive nature of this medium, you can also emphasize important points and tailor your presentation based on the reactions of the audience. Most important, this channel of communication provides an opportunity for the audience to ask questions.

Personal contact is especially useful in countries where there is a low level of literacy and where the mass media reaches a limited audience. While personal contact is perhaps the most powerful method for communicating a message, it has

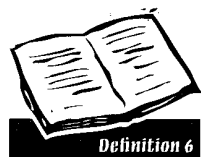
the disadvantage of being less efficient than publications or the mass media.

#### *Publications*

Many monitoring groups employ *publications* such as posters, informational leaflets, instructional manuals and written reports in order to communicate a message. (See Definition 6.)

Publications can be designed, written and delivered by your organization independently. With the exception of the actual printing or reproduction process, publications offer a monitoring group the advantage of not requiring the assistance, or potential for interference, of an intermediary (such as a newspaper, radio or television).

As a first step, the public information officer should prepare materials explaining basic information about your organization. Such materials often take the form of a document (variously called a *leaflet*, *pamphlet* or *brochure*) of one to 10 pages that can be distributed in the mail or by hand.<sup>24</sup> The brochure may serve many uses. You may distribute it with press releases, hand it out at meetings, or include it in other publications. It should describe the origins, objectives and methodology of the organization, and should include basic information about the organization's leaders, associated members, location, telephone number, etc. Many organizations recycle some or all of this information by attaching it or inserting it into the text of other written materials, including proposals, training manuals, press releases and reports.



**Definition 6**

### pub•li•ca•tion

The term *publication* may be used to indicate an issue of printed material that is offered for distribution. In this section of the *Handbook*, publication refers to materials prepared and made public *by the source* (in this case, the monitoring group) of the message, employing a medium within the source's control, as distinguished from those communications that are prepared and disseminated *by others* about the monitoring group or that employ a medium outside the group's control (e.g., the newspapers or radio, discussed below).

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, the NAMFREL brochure in Appendix II.

Special attention should be placed on the task of issuing written reports. Monitoring organizations around the world have written various types of reports, including: election law analyses, proposals for reforming the election system, pre-election assessments, studies of media fairness, post-election reports (preliminary and interim), as well as comprehensive reports about the entire electoral process.

The reports about the information you collect are the public record from which your credibility is assessed and by which the election's legitimacy is evaluated. These reports contain answers to the questions about your objectives, methodology, execution, impartiality, findings, conclusions and recommendations. The information you share and the manner in which you deliver it will, in large measure, determine the influence of your organization. The reports you write and distribute are also a valuable source of information for future generations of election monitors in your country. Finally, reports provide tangible evidence of your activities and may contribute to your success in obtaining funds and recruiting volunteers in the future.<sup>25</sup>

It is worth noting that many fledgling organizations are unaccustomed to, or intimidated by, the prospect of publishing information about themselves or their findings. It may be wise, therefore, to address certain questions during your planning meetings. For example, you should determine what your approach to report writing is and who, within your organization, is responsible for drafting, editing and publishing.

If you decide to issue reports, you must also decide when, and to whom, they should be distributed. You must also determine how much information to share and on what topics. One option, albeit extreme, is to share no information at all. Another approach involves relating general information about your objectives, methodology, personnel, election-related activities and future plans, but withholding any comment on your findings or evaluations. A third option may include all of these components and place heavy emphasis on your findings, evaluations and recommendations.

### Mass Media

The mass media refers to the print press (newspapers) and the electronic media (radio and television).<sup>26</sup> The mass media's most attractive feature is its capacity to rapidly reach a wide audience. This feature is particularly salient when using radio, and to a lesser extent using television, which are not affected by the common problems of illiteracy, long distances and bad roads. On the other hand, mass media has its disadvantages. With few exceptions (discussed below), using the mass media is extremely expensive. Also, in some countries access to broadcast facilities, televisions and radios is very limited. Furthermore, since reporters, editors and publishers/producers stand between you and the dissemination of your information, they can control the timing and content of its release, and may try to challenge its credibility.

For the purposes of this *Handbook*, you should view the use of the mass media from two perspectives. The first contemplates communications that you design, produce and issue on your own initiative, pursuant to your own plan. The second relates to news coverage, which may be described as those communications that are produced and issued by the mass media—according to the initiative and interpretations of journalists, reporters and editors—about your activities.

The main advantage of a communication initiated and produced by you is that you have maximum control over its message and timing. However, owners of newspapers and broadcast stations rarely offer the use of their services or facilities for free. Thus, a notable disadvantage of the self-initiated communication is its high cost. Still, if you determine that the objective of your communication merits the cost, you may choose to purchase space in a newspaper or time on radio or television in which to issue an *advertisement*. Monitoring organizations have bought advertisements for such purposes as recruiting volunteers, announcing meetings and notifying the public about items or services (e.g., literature, training, legal support, etc.) available from the organization.

Communications that are deemed to be “in the public interest” or “for the public good” are

<sup>25</sup> See Section Y, *Post-Election Reporting*, Section F, *Operating Funds* and Section I, *Recruiting* and Appendix IV.

<sup>26</sup> See also Section T, *Media*, for a discussion about monitoring the mass media.

sometimes called *public service announcements* ("PSAs"). The mass media occasionally publishes or broadcasts these communications free of charge in recognition of their value to the "public good" (i.e., an informed public). In other situations, the government or other sources will subsidize the costs. Such communications must nominally benefit the entire public, not just a particular segment of the community, in order to maintain the attribution of being truly in the public interest. Thus, PSA messages should be nonpartisan. PSAs often discuss issues relevant to the process rather than policies or criticisms about individual candidates. In the context of elections, PSAs may be used as a tool in conducting voter education on such topics as registration, voting, basic rights and obligations relevant to the election process, and information about all the candidates.

You may also choose to submit a public letter or a short article for publication in the newspapers. These communications, sometimes called *letters to the editor*, *commentary* or *opinion articles* cost nothing and they may reach a large audience. However, you have no guarantee that they will be published, so you should not rely exclusively on this mechanism.

Of course, if you purposely or otherwise attract the mass media's attention with something that merits a *news story*, the information related to this story may be printed or broadcast. Although there are little or no financial costs associated with this communication, unfortunately there is correspondingly limited opportunity for you to control the substance or timing of the message that is sent.

To the extent that news coverage by the mass media can be influenced, your public information office should make every effort to do so. This responsibility entails constant attention, including answering questions from reporters, responding to criticism, conducting interviews and briefings about your activities, and informing the media in advance about future events.

**PRESS RELEASE** In order to increase attention from the media, the public information office

should know how to issue a *press release*. A press release is a very short (usually one page) written notice publicizing an event that may be of general interest to the readers, listeners or viewers.

The press release and follow-up telephone conversations should, if properly prepared and timely distributed, help to convince the media that the story and the event are, indeed, worthy of discussing in the news. The public information office must, therefore, provide adequate details about your activities (e.g., recruitment meetings, rallies at which reforms are advocated, election-day monitoring, etc.) and subsequent findings and analyses.

Before you send out a press release, however, you should consider a number of factors that will improve your chances for coverage:<sup>27</sup>

- 1 Create a press list. Identify the news organizations that receive press releases, the format they prefer, and the information they require. Compile addresses, telephone/fax numbers and the names of appropriate personnel, including assignment editors and reporters, likely to cover your story.
- 2 Identify the deadlines for each media outlet with which you will be working. It is very important to understand that news organizations work under deadlines. For example, if a newspaper is published for distribution on Wednesday, and the deadline for receiving submissions is Tuesday morning, then a story you send them on Tuesday afternoon will be too late for publication.
- 3 Say something in your press statements that is newsworthy. If a reporter becomes accustomed to receiving press releases from you that do not merit news attention, the reporter may dismiss all of your future press releases without even reading them. The same is true for your prospective readers.
- 4 Try to limit your press release to one page that summarizes the major points or issues and their significance.
- 5 Prepare timely press releases. Do not send out a release a week after an event. The press is not going to print or broadcast it. Likewise,

<sup>27</sup> Excerpted from T. King and C. Olsen, "Delivering the Message," *Uneven Paths: Advancing Democracy in Southern Africa*, (NDI, edited by Padraig O'Malley, 1993, New Namibia Books (PTY) Ltd.), Chapter 4.3.

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do not send out a release so far in advance that the recipients forget about the event before it occurs.

- [6] Use vivid language in the press release. Quotations are valuable especially in press and television.
- [7] If possible, supply the newspaper media outlets with good quality photographs of events, fully explaining what is depicted (e.g., the names of those appearing in the photo, the date, location and nature of the event.) Many newspapers are more likely to use a press release if it is accompanied by a picture.
- [8] Follow-up on your press releases. Call those to whom the press release was sent to make sure they received it. Before an event, inquire whether someone from the news organization will be able to attend. After an event, contact the press who attended to answer any questions and emphasize important points or issues.
- [9] Develop relationships and good rapport with individual reporters at the news organizations. Such contact is a fundamental element of success.
- [11] In all press releases, be sure to list the name of your public information officer and the telephone number/address at which he or she can be contacted.



## Logistics

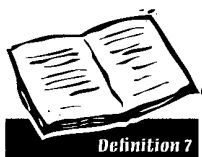
This *Handbook* describes many activities that your monitoring operation may attempt to execute. As previous sections suggest, developing an organization and a good plan are important

preliminary steps. *Logistics* touch every aspect of preparing for and implementing the various components of your plan, as outlined in the following steps. (See *Definition 7*)

First, you should consider designating a *logistics officer* or *logistics office* in your organization to take responsibility for all relevant planning and supervision. Individuals in the logistics office should, ideally, have experience in organizing large events and have working knowledge of basic communications and transportation systems. Most aspects of logistics have significant budget implications, thus it is also a good idea to encourage close cooperation between the logistics and accounting or budgeting offices. Similarly, since the execution of every activity both emanates from and impacts upon the general plan, you should ensure that the logistics office attends planning discussions and reports any logistical successes or failures in the operation.

You must consider three fundamental components of logistics: (1) communication; (2) transportation; and (3) accommodation (i.e., meals and lodging). When developing or using your communication, transportation and accommodation resources, you should determine the following:

- [1] What *quantity* of each is needed?
- [2] How much will it *cost*?
- [3] What are the *procedures* that must be followed to prepare for and use the resource?
- [4] What are the *restrictions* on their use?
- [5] What *timeframes* or *deadlines* apply? and
- [6] Whom should you *contact* (e.g., the driver, the hotel keeper, the caterer, etc.) regarding their use and how can they be reached?



## lo•gis•tics

The term *logistics* is a general reference to all activities related to physically executing an operation.

**COMMUNICATION** Communication is perhaps the single most important capability your monitoring operation needs in order to be successful. It is at the heart of your ability to invite regional field coordinators to a meeting, to receive urgent reports of election problems, or to draft a press release to announce your findings. With regard to most communications, the public

information office should decide what information needs to be shared and all the details about how and when it should be disseminated.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, managers at the headquarters and in the field can take responsibility for knowing what they need to communicate and how they want to do it. But they and everyone else in your organization must first have access to a system by which to communicate. It is a principal job of the logistics office to develop and maintain the infrastructure and essential information (e.g., names and telephone numbers, etc.) of the communications system.

First, you must identify everyone with whom you need to communicate and where they can be reached. In the beginning stages of the monitoring plan, you should collect the names and essential information (e.g., telephone number, address, etc.) of your steering committee members, staff and volunteers as well as representatives of the government, political parties, media and other civic organizations. Record this information so that it is secure but easy to retrieve. Where available, simple computer data bases are commonly used for this purpose.

Second, establish a comprehensive system by which participants in your operation can communicate. A partial list of mechanisms you might use in this system includes: telephone, facsimile (fax), electronic mail (by modem), regular mail, delivery services, foot and bicycle messengers, public address systems, as well as reproduction for printed materials (photocopying) and the various channels described in *Section L, Public Information*.

Specialized communication systems such as those used for interpretation (verbal) or translation (written) and for mobile communication (e.g., two-way radio and cellular telephone) may also be helpful.

An efficient system may also include procedures by which individuals communicate with each other. For example, some organizations create a procedure called the *telephone tree* (referring to the trunk, which leads to the branches, which connect to the small twigs of a tree). Under this procedure, one person (at the bottom of the tree) initiates the communication of a message to five members of the operation. Each of these five

is instructed to contact five others, who in turn are instructed to repeat the process, and so on. The key to making the telephone tree work is assuring that each person has a mechanism for communicating (e.g., a telephone or a means of transporting the individual to make a personal contact) and knows where the next person can be contacted (e.g., their telephone number or address.) The tree can be used in reverse to pass information to your central headquarters when large numbers of volunteers are in action, such as on election day.

Constraints of technology, infrastructure and budget are important considerations. For example, dedicating resources to buy fax machines is not a good plan in a country where the telephones do not work well. And computers are worthless if you do not also have the proper software or trained personnel to operate them. Complexity and high cost are not the best indicators of a good communication system; mechanisms that provide speed, accuracy and reliability of communication will serve your needs better and may save you money.

**TRANSPORTATION** In addition to being able to communicate, a successful election monitoring effort must have the capacity to transport materials and people. For example, transportation is needed for delivering recruitment materials to regional headquarters, taking observers to voting stations or flying trainers to remote parts of the country.

You should begin by identifying your transportation needs. Thus it may be useful to refer to, or develop, a calendar of events as discussed in *Section B, General Plan*, to determine what type, frequency and quantity of transportation is contemplated for the execution of the general plan. Activities such as recruitment, training, and election-day monitoring often place heavy reliance on transportation.

Modes of transportation can be expensive and hard to find, particularly in less economically developed countries. Therefore, you should develop an inventory of the resources available to you.<sup>29</sup> First, plan to make use of any means of

<sup>28</sup> See *Section L, Public Information* and *Section Y, Post-Election Reporting*.

<sup>29</sup> See also *Section B, A General Plan*, for the discussion on budgeting.

transportation that are available free of charge (e.g. walking, bicycling, sharing a ride, borrowing temporarily donated vehicles or using volunteers' vehicles). Next, consider how public transportation can meet your needs. Taxis, buses, boats, subways and trains are relatively inexpensive options, though with regard to scheduling or availability they lack the flexibility and reliability of other means. Finally, you must decide what should be purchased or rented. This approach initially appears to require significant funds, but it may be the most economical approach if you require frequent use, flexible application or continuous availability.

Also, try to efficiently match the type of transportation needed with the demands of the duty. For example, you may need a four-wheel-drive vehicle to carry trainers into rural regions, but not to carry messages between city blocks.

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Illustration 15

At the 1994 elections in South Africa, the domestic monitoring group NEON nearly ceased to function during the critical period of the election count. Some NEON volunteers, many of whom had risked their lives in carrying out their monitoring duties, believed that NEON's leaders had promised to pay certain wages and/or

food expenses. After the voting (and after much of the monitoring), when the leaders explained that this understanding was not correct, many volunteers were so disappointed and angry that they went on strike. NEON's reputation and credibility were severely damaged when the strike became violent.

## con•tin•gen•cy plan



Definition 8

A *contingency plan* is a plan of activities to pursue if unexpected or unforeseen circumstances arise.

**ACCOMMODATION** As already noted, executing an election monitoring effort can entail working long hours and travelling long distances. In cases where travel takes people away from home, you must be prepared to provide lodging for the night and adequate meals.

For example, when trainers make a circuit through the regional capitals in the country, they may be away from home for two or three weeks. The inexpensive solution for lodging is to find members or supporters of the monitoring effort who can make available extra rooms in their homes. Where free lodging is not an option, you may need to reserve hotel rooms.

Accommodations are also needed for meetings. Thus, you will need to identify and reserve the use of spaces in which to hold conferences, training workshops, recruitment rallies and strategy meetings. For large meetings, monitoring groups often use auditoriums, school rooms, conference halls in major hotels and in government buildings, and outdoor spaces such as soccer fields or village squares.

Where the monitors' duties keep them busy through normal meal times, monitoring operations sometimes provide food or reimbursement for the cost of purchased meals. The traditions regarding this practice vary among countries, and many organizations do not have enough money to pay for food. You will have to decide what you can afford and what is a fair policy. Experience from around the world has shown that if there is any misunderstanding about your policy or any inconsistency in its application, no matter how minor, volunteers can become extremely upset. Thus you should seriously consider developing and communicating a policy to all workers in advance of their activities, and apply the policy equitably and consistently. (See *Illustration 15*)

Finally, a good logistics operation contains a *contingency plan* for the possibility of systems or procedures that fail to work as you had hoped or expected. (See *Definition 8*)

Contingency plans should anticipate any number of potential problems that can undermine the logistical stability of the monitoring effort.