

PROGRAM EVALUATION

NDI staff members conducted program monitoring and evaluation activities throughout the training period. Monitoring included staff meetings to review the program as it progressed, the collection of comments from training sessions, and feedback obtained from District Coordinators, Party Trainers, central and local party leaders, and other relevant individuals in Nepal.

During the pre-election period, NDI's District Coordinators and other field staff members were the primary evaluators of the effectiveness of the 64 different training sessions held for women candidates and their campaign staff. The District Coordinators attended every session held in their districts, while other field staff members traveled to numerous training sessions during the run-up to the elections (Appendix 8: District Coordinator Evaluative Meeting Agenda and Report).

At NDI's Training-of-Trainers Workshops, NDI administered a questionnaire to the participants before and after the seminar to assess participant knowledge and attitude changes as a result of the workshops. For example, questions regarding the functions of the Village Development Committee were asked to determine changes in participants levels of civic knowledge as result of the workshop.

At the request of USAID, NDI initially made plans to test participants in the women candidate training sessions before and after they participated in the training workshops to gauge shifts in understanding as a result of NDI's program. This proved to be impossible, since the tests were initially developed in Nepali, and training sessions were conducted in a variety of languages, Maithali and Bhojpuri among them. Also, many women participating, either as potential candidates or as campaign staff, could not easily read and write in order to fill out the questionnaires. With USAID's approval, NDI dropped the pre- and post-testing requirement, and decided to retain an independent evaluator once the elections were finished to determine how much women training participants may have learned during the training sessions and applied to their campaigns, if they ran as candidates.

Immediately after the elections, NDI developed and distributed a request for proposals (RFP) to contract a Nepali firm to conduct an independent evaluation of NDI's program to increase the number and effectiveness of women running for local government office. The evaluation will establish a control group of women outside of the target districts who did not benefit from NDI's program, and will include the opinions of women candidates, NDI's District Coordinators, Party Trainers, and political party and NGO officials regarding the women candidate and campaign staff training program and materials. The independent evaluator's report detailing the findings of almost 150 in-depth interviews and several discussion groups, is expected in October 1997 (Appendix 9: Request for Proposals from Independent Evaluators; Research Firms and Contacts to Receive Independent Evaluation).

Finally, during the campaign period NDI traveled throughout the Tarai to observe and evaluate firsthand how the women candidates that participated in the NDI program met with voters and took part in all aspects of the election. From these timely observations, NDI gained valuable insight into the real workings of campaigns in Nepal at the local level. These observations will hopefully be

shared with women candidates in future elections (Appendix 10: Additional Campaign Advice to Women Candidates and Their Trainers).

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NDI had a significant impact in its efforts to promote women's political participation in the 1997 local elections in the Tarai.

- **NDI increased women's understanding in the eight target districts of women's participation in politics, campaigns, and local elections as compared to the pre-1997 period.**

According to a 1995 Shtrii Shakti study, women in Nepal demonstrate a significant lack of political awareness and empowerment. The Shakti study documented that only 15.2 percent of women respondents could recall the name of the Prime Minister correctly. The Asia Foundation's (TAF) 1996 Environmental Scan Survey on Women in Politics echoed that Shakti study and found that "Women lack basic information on the roles and functions of political and policy decision makers."

NDI used the 1997 local elections as a vehicle to raise women's awareness about a whole series of issues pertaining to women's political participation. The NDI program educated approximately 4,000 women in the Tarai on the importance of women's participation in politics. Additionally, each of the more than 65 NDI training sessions focused on the functions of local government, the election laws, campaign planning and public speaking. With few exceptions, none of the women that participated in the NDI program had ever received intensive education on issues pertaining to women's participation in politics. NDI also made an effort to educate the broader public in the Tarai about the importance of women's political participation through the dissemination of a series of four posters, 30,000 in all that demonstrated women in leadership positions.

- **NDI empowered and inspired women in the Institute's eight target districts to participate more actively and effectively in the 1997 local elections than they had participated during the 1992 elections.**

The TAF Scan stated that, "to date, no political party has adopted any formal policies to specifically train and recruit women candidates." Correspondingly, one of the major recommendations of the TAF scan was, "to implement programs for women that assisted and trained them so they have the confidence and skills to successfully participate in the political process. Training women candidates on how to organize, run, and manage a successful campaign was considered vital."

Well before the elections were announced, NDI was prepared and developed a program that would give women the skills that they needed to participate in politics as candidates or campaign staff for women candidates.

The Election Commission has not yet compiled and released district-by-district reports on the comprehensive results of the local elections. NDI will continue to gather information as it is released, particularly focusing on the number of trained women who ran as candidates, on those who were successful in their bids for election, and on the number of women candidates overall. However, the

NDI District Coordinators have provided preliminary results on the number of trained women who participated in the NDI program and ran for local office in the NDI target districts:

Districts	Potential Women Candidates and Campaign Staff Trained	Number of Women Who Ran for Office	Number of Women Who Won
Nawalparasi	106	44	25
Rupandehi	170	36	17
Chitwan	289	49	17
Parsa	282	67	26
Dhanusha	56	18	14
Saptari	1,387	199	167
Sunsari	251	62	18
Morang	1,304	134	78

In addition to participation as candidates and campaign staff, the women in NDI's program mobilized other women to vote, observed the elections as monitors, volunteered as polling officers and mediated between parties when conflicts arose during the campaigns. All of the District Coordinators observed that they have never seen such active women's participation in elections as they did this year -- as candidates, supporters and polling officers. They felt that more women were encouraged to become active because there were more women candidates, and that there was a great deal of unity amongst women during the campaigns, as evidenced by large groups of women campaigning together and others speaking out on the need for women to support each other despite party differences. However, they felt that not enough qualified women candidates received their parties' nomination for posts other than the reserved women's seat, and that some 'incapable' women were given nominations due to patronage.

In addition to directly training nearly 4,000 women in election participation techniques, NDI designed, published, and distributed nearly 40,000 campaign manuals for women throughout the country.

- **NDI strengthened the in-house resources of the political parties and NGOs.**

The Party Trainers represent 33 local party branches, and the District Coordinators come from 10 different women's organizations and government agencies supporting women in the Tarai. Their months of training women candidates and campaign staff will continue to benefit them personally and in their work with these organizations. They developed many useful skills necessitated by the bottom-up nature of political-party strengthening, including understanding of local politics and campaigns,

training techniques; administrative and organizational skills, and reporting and data collection. These new skills have increased their confidence in their professional abilities, and have led to career opportunities and encouragement from others to take leadership positions within their parties and communities. Uniformly, the Party Trainers and NDI's District Coordinators have commented that their value and prestige greatly increased through their involvement with NDI. Of the 87 District Coordinators and Party Trainers, 44 or more were approached by the parties to run as candidates.

- **NDI created a program that may well be sustainable and reflects the realities of Nepali political culture.**

No training participant was ever paid to attend a training. NDI provided training and training materials to the Party Trainers and District Coordinators (the District Coordinators were paid NDI staff members), supplies to the political parties for use in the training, and campaign manuals and posters.

The political parties trained women candidates because they had a vested interest in ensuring that their candidates were capable of competing with opposing parties' candidates. With persuasion from women in the parties who have now come to expect support and training, the political parties that cooperated with NDI now have the experience and equipped party members to continue this program. This is a real partnership, which requires commitment and contributions from all parties involved.

The long-term impact of NDI's program remains to be seen but has already been foreshadowed in the events of the local elections of 1997. There is no doubt that the lives of the women who participated in NDI's program have been enriched, and as a result, they are *going places*. The following are some examples:

- NDI's District coordinator Ms. Kamala Karki, from Saptari district, was approached by women in her community and urged to run as an MP in the next general elections. For the time being, she is going to work with UML Party trainer Ms. Sarawoti Chaudary to establish an all-party women's committee in Saptari to further efforts to increase women's political participation.
- Ms. Manorama Thakali, who attended NDI/NC-sponsored training in Butwal, was successful in her bid as Ward Member and has her sights set on the District Development Committee elections. The results of these elections are unknown at the time of this writing.
- Ms. Sharda Devi Gupta, NSP Party Trainer from Parsa district, was initially shy and soft spoken when she attended the Training-of-Trainers in March 1997. She went on to organize training for the women candidates in her party, and now hopes to be elected to the NSP district committee.
- Ms. Kalpana Chaudary, NC Party Trainer from Sunsari district, also has ambitions to run for MP and is already laying the foundation of her campaign, and making women's issues her platform.
- UML Party Trainer Ms. Sushila Pradhananga from Rupandehi district is an accomplished poet and continues to write articles for her local newspaper on women candidate experiences

during the local elections. She hopes to organize training for the newly-elected women officials in her party on a district wide basis.

- NDI's Field Coordinator, Ms. Ranju Bhujel, has returned to the Dharan municipality office in Sunsari district where she took a leave of absence from the Urban Basic Services program to work with NDI, and is planning to launch a leadership training program for disadvantaged women in her municipality.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

To sustain and build upon the work completed from the onset of the program, NDI is in the process of conducting a tracking study of women candidates, contracting a Nepali firm to independently evaluate NDI's program to date, and conducting a needs and design assessment for a pilot program to train newly-elected women local government officials.

Tracking Study

As part of its effort to better document the experiences of women political candidates, NDI is in the process of conducting a tracking study, which highlights the experience of ten women candidates for the 1997 Village Development Committee and Ward Elections. NDI is conducting interviews with NDI-trained women candidates as well as with party officials, family members and volunteers who assisted with their campaigns to gather information on the women candidates' experiences during the local campaign. Additionally, NDI will rely on candidate tracking study questionnaires and reports completed by the District Coordinators to contribute to the study. NDI plans to publish the tracking study in both Nepali and English in November 1997.

Evaluation

In order to better assess the effectiveness of NDI's program in Nepal, the Institute has hired the Human Resource Development Centre (HURDEC) to conduct an independent evaluation. HURDEC is a Nepali research firm which has evaluated more than 450 projects for international organizations including USAID, the UNDP, UNICEF, DANIDA, and the Asian Development Bank.

HURDEC has conducted semi-structured, one-on-one interviews and discussion groups throughout NDI's target districts. The evaluator has solicited information on numerous topics including:

Usefulness and Effectiveness of the NDI Women Candidate Training: general impressions of the training; most useful subjects or advice; weaknesses of the training; and evaluation of the training's topics, message, objectives and organization.

Usefulness and Effectiveness of the NDI Campaign Manual: general impressions of the manual; most useful subjects or advice; weaknesses of the manual; and evaluation of the manual's topics, message, objectives and organization.

Women Officials Training Needs and Design Assessment

NDI staff members are currently in the process of conducting a needs and design assessment for a potential program to conduct training for newly elected women officials. The program would likely train newly elected women officials on the Ward Committees and Village Development Committee in a number of areas including:

- working effectively on the Ward Committee and Village Development Committee with men officials,
 - identifying community needs,
 - improving access to local government for community women,
 - advancing within the political parties, and
 - monitoring and managing community development projects.
- NDI plans to have the needs and design assessment completed by October 1997.