POLITICAL PARTIES
AND THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

A Primer in Democratic Party-Building
for Leaders, Organizers and Activists

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PREFACE

Wherever party leaders are committed to a democratic political system and seek NDI's counsel, NDI will work with them on an inclusive, multi-party basis to strengthen individual parties and to help establish a competitive party system. Effective political parties promote citizen confidence in, and support of, democratic government. When assisting the development of parties and party systems, NDI's programs focus on three areas: the organization and structure of parties; parties in elections; and parties in government. NDI's work with parties is designed to build and maintain open, inclusive and responsive party organizations.

This paper discusses some basic organizational and procedural elements necessary for the daily operation of a party, and the paper emphasizes the need to develop a party's capacity at the local level. It does not, however, address explicitly the matter of election campaigns, because NDI has a variety of other handbooks and training manuals related to effective campaigning. Since political parties in a democracy also have roles to play beyond contesting and winning elections if they are to be influential political institutions, this document examines several factors that sustain parties and make them effective between elections. This paper can be used to help outline strategies for long-term party development and to devise corresponding training programs. Clearly, parties that develop effective organizational practices become more competitive in election campaigns as well.

This document is organized into eight sections. Section 1 discusses the need for democratic organizing principles within a party. Section 2 addresses the purpose of a party constitution. Section 3 provides examples of how a democratic party is organized and structured. Section 4 details the need for a clearly articulated policy agenda and message. Section 5 discusses the importance of effective communication inside and outside of the party, while Section 6 examines membership development. Section 7 provides some basic fundraising strategies and Section 8 deals with training and leadership development in the party. The eight sections are supplemented by appendices containing practical developmental materials taken from political parties around the world.

This paper provides only an overview of the organizational and procedural capabilities that a party needs to develop, in order for the party to fulfill its special role in a democratic society. It does not answer *all* of the questions about party building, but it does map out a direction for party building activities. Moreover, the document is designed to be modified and improved continually by NDI staff members. Comments and suggestions can be directed to NDI's Political Party Team in Washington, DC.

NDI's Political Party Team is also home to additional detailed information and materials related to most aspects of political party building. Among the materials are party organizing handbooks produced by NDI staff members in Cambodia, Russia, and Zambia. For a list of available materials, please contact the Political Party Team.

NDI would like to thank Sanford D. Horwitt for preparing the principal draft of this paper and for assisting with the editing process. The paper has also benefited from review and comment by numerous NDI staff members.

― September 2001

INTRODUCTION

Role of Political Parties in Democratic Societies

Democracy requires the participation of effective political parties. Parties are unique organizations that fulfill a number of interrelated functions central to the democratic process of governance. Basic party functions include:

C   Contesting and winning elections, in order to seek a measure of control of government agencies and institutions.
C   Aggregating and representing social interests.
C   Providing policy alternatives.
C   Vetting and training political leaders who will assume a role in governing society.

In most countries, parties are required to fulfill legal obligations for official registration and recognition, including a minimum level of membership, a written constitution and platform, and the election of party leaders. Depending on a variety of factors — such as the type of democratic system, the electoral law, and the historical role of trade unions, religious groups, and ethnic communities — a country may have anywhere from two to a hundred registered parties. In some cases, parties may merge or divide over time and new parties may displace older parties by attracting their supporters. However, a stable party system typically has two to ten parties of consequence. Some parties may be important because they have the capacity to assemble a national majority in presidential elections. On the other hand, small parties can be important by affecting the balance of power in a parliamentary system, and so can decide which larger parties will control government and choose the prime minister. Still other parties can be important because they represent a particular constituency that is, for example, influential because of economic or social reasons.

In the United States, the world's longest operating democracy, parties have played a fundamentally important role beginning in the republic's early years two centuries ago. Although not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution, and not anticipated by the founding fathers, political parties soon emerged and persisted because they fulfilled basic needs, such as helping to organize the priorities of the legislature, identifying alternative candidates and policies, and promoting accountability of the majority. Similar dynamic needs within the British parliamentary system resulted in the development of coherent national political parties early in the 19th century. As the American journalist David Broder has observed, fulfilling those needs requires an "institution that will sort out, weigh, and, to the extent possible, reconcile the myriad of conflicting demands of individuals, groups, interests, communities and regions . . . ; organize them for the contest of public office; and then serve as a link between the constituencies and the [people] chosen to govern. When the parties fill their mission well, they tend to serve both a unifying and a clarifying function for the country." The ability of political parties to perform their multiple tasks, including nominating and supporting candidates for public office, contesting and winning elections, and occasionally controlling the reins of government, sets them apart from other voluntary civic organizations in a democracy.

To be sure, not all parties fulfill the political needs of a country in the same way, or to the same extent. Both external and internal factors may affect a party's methods and abilities. For example, the nature of the political system — whether it is a presidential or parliamentary system, whether electoral balloting is through open or closed lists, whether the legislature is organized around single, or multi-member districts — will place different demands on a party's structure and strategic planning process.

Nascent political parties may be limited by money, organizing skills or an inability to understand the party's distinct role in a democracy. Effective political parties need leaders and organizers who understand the role of political parties in a democratic society, and who are able to use modern techniques of organization, communication, fundraising and training effectively.

In most countries where NDI works, society is emerging from a period of domination by one political party or group. Many of the old assumptions and practices of the former political system have to be discarded if a democratic system is to grow. For example, in countries where political power never changed hands peacefully, new political leaders and citizens alike must come to understand that political opponents are not mortal enemies, and that compromise and the sharing of power are not a signs of weakness but are instead essential ingredients of the democratic process. A South African participant in an NDI training described his country's new democracy this way: "We have a ruling party . . . an official opposition party and other smaller opposition parties. They differ in their ideologies and principles, but they also differ in a responsible manner. This is the essence of our experience that other countries should carry with them. When they go back home, they should realize that you don't have to sort out your differences through the barrel of a gun. You can use democratic institutions like a parliament [and] elections."

Building democratic institutions and developing democratic practices is an ongoing, dynamic process. For each country, the road to democracy will be shaped by a number of political and historical factors. The leaders of the new political parties have a special role to play. The legacy of authoritarianism in political parties, as well as in the overall organization of society, makes it imperative that a new democratic ethic be the guiding light that informs and inspires party leaders dedicated to bringing about a democratic change.

Focusing on the Local level

"The foundation first" is a motto that party leaders and organizers should keep in mind when they seek to build a successful political party. Thomas P. ("Tip") O'Neil, a state and federal legislator from Boston, Massachusetts who rose to become the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives in the 1980s, often explained to his party colleagues that "all politics is local." A significant portion of a party's time, attention and money should be directed to the local level. Ultimately, the strength and stability of a national political party and the success of its candidates for elective office at every level are closely related to the number of active, enthusiastic party members and supporters at the local level. The local base of a political party, just like the roots of a tree, must be strong if the party is to grow and succeed. Party leaders may understand the importance of local party building, but in practice they do not all act accordingly, or contribute fully to the democratic process. The result is often a party that is uncompetitive and not able to assume control of government.

Party leaders and organizers cannot forget about the central importance of the individual member. Without members, a party's leaders, no matter how eloquent or smart they might be, are doomed to occupy the margins of their country's democratic political life. Moreover, party leaders cannot afford to forget that ultimate policy-making authority is and should always be the membership of the party if the party is going to be genuinely democratic.

WHAT MAKES A PARTY DEMOCRATIC?

Leaders and supporters of political parties have a critical role to play in a successful transition to democracy. To promote democracy in their country, however, political parties must be democratic themselves. If parties do not practice and honor democratic values in their internal affairs, then they are unlikely to do so when they win elections and begin to govern. As a party activist from Zimbabwe stated: "How do you reconcile wanting to limit leadership succession within the nation, when you don't limit it within the party? Parties must learn to accept limited terms of party leadership, then they can inculcate these expectations for the national leadership." Political parties ─ whether in power or in opposition ─ have a duty to support and protect democratic values and human rights within their own organizations.

Characteristics of a Democracy

Democracy is defined by certain fundamental principles and practices that permeate a society. A primary principle is that all persons are equal and maintain certain individual rights. A democracy exists when citizens are able to participate actively in the life of their society by exercising their individual rights ─ such as freedom of expression and speech, of assembly and association, of religion and conscience, to petition the government, and to vote in fair elections.

Another principle of democracy is that government is by the people and exists to serve the people. Legitimate political power originates with citizens and flows from the citizens to the government. The government is responsible for protecting citizen rights, and in turn the citizens grant government temporary power to make decisions on their behalf. In an authoritarian political system, the government demands service from its people without any obligation to secure their consent or respond to their needs. Authoritarian forms of government prevent individuals from choosing their leaders or having a voice in public policy. Decisions are imposed without thought or concern given to the rights of individuals.

The power of a democratic government is limited by a constitutionally defined framework of laws and practices that protect social and political freedoms. Government is organized to prevent one individual or institution from becoming too powerful and prevailing on all issues. In some cases, political power is separated into different government branches ─ legislative, executive, judicial. Another form of limitation is the establishment of checks on the power exercised by each branch. By dividing responsibilities and placing checks on power and influence, a democratic society limits government abuses and helps ensure the rights of individuals.   The power of an authoritarian government, on the other hand, is generally not limited or checked in any way. Because power is centralized and unlimited, the government is able to make arbitrary decisions that may violate the rights of individuals and minority groups. Conversely, a democratic government is inclined, organizationally and procedurally to make decisions that benefit society at large (or the largest majority of people and groups), rather than a particular individual interest.

Democratic government is given the authority to make decisions through electoral mandate. In other words, citizens choose government representatives. Regular elections allow opposition parties to compete and present alternative policies to the voting public. Citizens are then able to hold government officials accountable by having the periodic right and opportunity to vote them out of office.

Taken together, it may be said that the aforementioned principles and behaviors represent a democratic ideal. The degree to which they are honored and practiced is the degree to which a society can be called democratic.

Democracy in Political Parties

Generally, no political party will declare that it is undemocratic. Democracy has become such a compelling idea that even military rulers and civilian dictators are eager to proclaim their devotion to democratic norms. In a political party, however, democracy will not flourish merely because it is proclaimed. In fact, internal party democracy can be compromised by such factors as: insular management and communication structures; a lack of leadership change; and marginalized party members. Sometimes these factors create a situation in which a few individuals dominate party affairs without proper regard for the membership at-large. Such a situation precludes inclusiveness and the opportunity for members to shape a party's policies.

A party's commitment to democratic principles should be reflected not only in its written constitution, but also in the day-to-day interaction among leaders and members. That is, a party must be committed to practicing democratic behavior. A democratic party will:

- allow members to express their views freely.
- promote the membership of women.
- encourage participation by all members.
- be tolerant of different ideas.
- abide by agreed upon rules and procedures for decision-making.
- hold leaders accountable to members and supporters.

THE PARTY CONSTITUTION

Writing a constitution is one of the early, essential tasks of a democratic political party. Ideally, before a constitution is written, party leaders and organizers will engage in many discussions about the party's philosophy and purpose, internal organization and structure, and forms of decision-making. (See Appendix A for a sample constitution.)

The preamble to the constitution is the place where a party should state its basic principles and primary goals. The preamble should answer the question, why does the party exist? Although the wording of the preamble is usually phrased in broad, general terms that remain relevant over time, there should be enough specificity to distinguish the party's principles and goals from those of other parties. In the constitution of the African National Congress party adopted in 1991, the Preamble and a distinctive list of aims include goals, such as "the liberation of the country from all forms of discrimination and national oppression," and "advance toward a society in which the government is freely chosen by the people according to the principles of universal suffrage and a common voter's list." The Liberal Democrats in Britain highlighted social and economic justice concerns in the Preamble of their constitution. In order to achieve their objectives, the constitution of each of these parties calls for the election of party members to Parliament and other public authorities.

Party constitutions typically:

C   define membership eligibility.
C   classify leadership positions and explain the methods of selecting leaders.
C   describe the role and relationship among different administrative units at the national, regional and local levels.
C   establish standing committees, or working groups, in important areas such as policy development, finance, and communication.

Leadership Selection

The selection of party leaders — and party candidates for public office — is generally conducted through some form of direct or indirect election. Parties often conduct periodic conventions for the purpose of electing national party leaders and developing party policy. In some cases, the conventions are open to all members of the party. In other cases, members may elect delegates to the national convention from local, district or provincial levels. Nonetheless, party members are given regular opportunities to take part in the selection of party leaders at all levels. To help ensure that a party is not dominated by one individual or small group, some party constitutions stipulate that party leaders can only serve limited periods in office. Therefore, there is a regular change in party leadership that is instituted by members of the party. All of these rules and procedures are intended to promote inclusiveness and accountability in the operation of the party.

Although a well-crafted constitution that incorporates democratic values and procedures is one essential "first step" in party-building, it does not ensure that a party will be effective or representative in carrying out its functions. A party must also work to address three fundamental challenges that affect the party's ability to consolidate and represent social interests, compete for elected office, and govern the country. First, the party leaders and organizers must build a management and communication infrastructure that allows the party to operate efficiently and effectively. Second, the party needs to

develop a distinctive identity and persuasive solutions to the problems facing the country that stand out from others in a multiparty system. Third, the party should be capable and willing to recruit members, train activists and raise funds.

PARTY ORGANIZATION

To succeed, a political party needs a number of attributes, including enthusiastic members, informed and committed leaders, and practical, innovative ideas for improving the country. All of these attributes, however, cannot guarantee success if the party is poorly organized. If there are not discernable decision making procedures, if people within the party do not understand their roles and responsibilities, and if communication within the party is not clear and frequent, even a party with good ideas and well-intentioned members can fail to achieve its goals. Too often, political parties make the mistake of devoting all of their resources and energy to short-term election campaigns, rather than to building and maintaining a solid, democratic party organization. Party organization must be a priority for party leaders before issues of campaign organization are addressed.

Although the structure of parties may vary, a typical organizational model will include party committees ranging from the national to the local levels.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│        NATIONAL CONGRESS            │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘

  ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
  │      EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE            │
  └─────────────────────────────────────┘

   ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
   │     PROVINCIAL COMMITTEES          │
   └─────────────────────────────────────┘

    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
    │     DISTRICT COMMITTEES            │
    └─────────────────────────────────────┘

     ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
     │      LOCAL COMMITTEES             │
     └─────────────────────────────────────┘

      ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
      │     INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS            │
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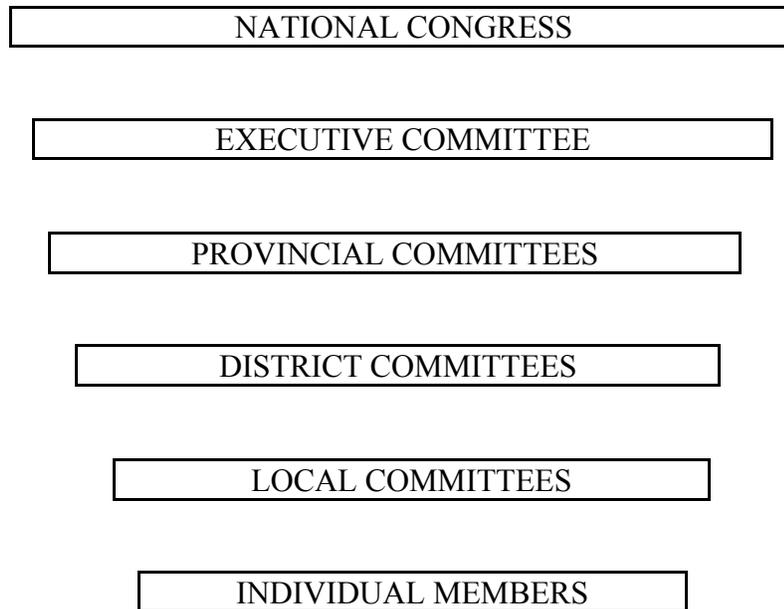
At every level, there needs to be clarity about exact roles, responsibilities and authority, in order to ensure coordination and coherence. Below are a few general titles and job descriptions for key officers in political parties at most intermediate organizational levels: provincial; district; and local.

Chairperson
- C   Manages party office and program.
- C   Proposes goals regarding membership recruitment, money, communications, etc.
- C   Seeks input from elected officials and civic activists.
- C   Coordinates with neighboring offices.
- C   Facilitates decision making.
- C   Assumes responsibility for financial and political success of the local office.
- C   Recognizes and uses the skills and expertise of members.

Vice-Chairperson
      C   Assists and supports the chairperson.
      C   Deputized to be acting-chair when necessary.
      C   Chairs special subcommittees.
      C   Monitors political activity in the area.
      C   Manages outreach to key local groups *(e.g.*, farmers, students, etc.).

Secretary
      C   Arranges venue for party meetings.
      C   Records minutes during meetings.
      C   Reports minutes from previous meeting.
      C   Consults with chair on agenda for meetings.
      C   Prepares reports and other materials to be submitted at meetings.
      C   Works with treasurer on presentation of financial statement.
      C   Notifies members of agenda and date for next meeting.
      C   Takes attendance at party meetings; provides sign-up forms.
      C   Organizes with treasurer in collecting membership dues.
      C   Maintains updated lists of members.

Treasurer
      C   Drafts party budget and ensures expenses are paid on time.
      C   Takes overall responsibility for managing funds.
      C   Coordinates the collection of membership dues with secretary.
      C   Liaises with constituency treasurer.
      C   Works with secretary on financial statement.

There are other key positions in a party office such as directors of communication, finance, research, training, organizing and membership recruitment. At the local level, where resources are often limited, one person may assume the duties associated with more than one of these positions. Moreover, in many political parties around the world, all of the party officers are volunteers, rather than paid employees. (See Appendix B for examples of organization and structure.)

Internal Party Relations

The party's commitment to democratic values will be reflected in its internal organizational structure. For example, a party's local organizers and members should have the right - indeed, be encouraged ─ to develop programs that they deem appropriate, such as public forums and membership recruitment campaigns. These local initiatives, however, should be consistent with basic party policy. Local leaders and organizers have a responsibility to contribute to the greater good of the national party and to communicate information about local activities to the national office. At each level, leaders, organizers and individual members should be accountable for fulfilling clearly defined responsibilities.

Political parties should be organized and managed no differently than other successful organizations. At the most basic level, this means that a successful party will have a clear internal management and communication structure that is well known and understood by its members.

Each party leader and organizer - from a volunteer organizer in a village to the head of the party - must have clearly delineated and well-understood roles and responsibilities. Party organizers must also understand the party's position on major issues and plans for the future, and have a way to ask questions, voice opinions and receive honest, useful responses from the party leadership.

In summary, for a party to be successful, its organizers and member activists must:

C   have defined, complementary roles and responsibilities within the party.
C   understand the party's mission, goals and strategies.
C   have established methods for reporting information to the party leadership.
C   have the ability to engage party leaders in an exchange of ideas and in decision-making.

Two-Way Communication

A party must have good channels of communication not only from the local level to the national level, but also from national level to the local level. To be effective as the local face and voice of the party, local organizers need dependable, regular sources of information from the party leadership, including:

C   information about the party's position on issues.
C   advice on how to discuss difficult or controversial issues.
C   up-to-date information about political events and developments within the party, parliament and country.

One method for communicating with party organizers is through a regularly published party newsletter or bulletin. A newsletter could be produced monthly or quarterly and could be augmented with special issue "alerts" (*i.e.*, specific information on important, fast-breaking political developments that organizers need to know). (See Appendix C for sample newsletter and alerts.)

Reporting Relationships

Once a party's organizational structure is defined, communication procedures need to be established. The first step in ensuring effective communication is to develop reporting relationships. Every party leader, organizer and active member, from the village level to party headquarters, should know to whom they report and, in turn, who reports to them. In a well-organized party, every organizer and leader should be able to describe his or her position.

Organizers and activists at each level should know the name of the person to whom they regularly report and who, in turn, provides them with information. From an accountability and morale standpoint, it is not enough for a provincial organizer to know that he or she reports to someone in the party headquarters. Each organizer will be more invested in the party's mission and believe that they are an instrumental element of the party organization if reporting relationships and other interactions are on a person-to-person basis.

Creating and maintaining an explicit chain-of-command and decision-making is a methodology used by every effective organization. A chain-of-command requires well-defined job descriptions for every worker in the party's organization. Job descriptions are written explanations of each person's duties

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and responsibilities. A job description should include both general areas of responsibility, as well as specific assignments. When new jobs are created, it is often desirable to involve each organizer in the writing of their job description. The job descriptions of party organizers will also reflect the priorities of the party. Does the party want to concentrate on recruiting new members, raising funds, or researching local policy issues? What organizers do and how they do it should be consistent with the overall goals of the party.

Sample Job Description for District Organizer
The District Organizer is responsible for recruiting new members, gathering information, and communicating the party's message.   In addition, the District Organizer will submit written reports to the Provincial Organizer on the 1st and 15th day of each month, and will conduct at least one membership recruitment activity each month.

Reporting Schedule and Guidelines

Regular reports from party organizers and other workers to party leaders is one essential way in which a party organization can evaluate its success (or failure) in achieving predetermined objectives. One of the most important reasons to establish a clearly defined internal structure is to build a communication network that provides the national party with detailed information about politics and the concerns of people throughout the country. For example, regular reports can focus on: general political information; an evaluation of a fundraising event; membership recruitment efforts; or public opinion about the party's policies. Because good, insightful reports are essential for improving a party's strategies and programs, it is important to establish a regular schedule and guidelines for reports at every level of the organization.

Regardless of how often party organizers report (once a week or once a month), specific schedules should be established and followed. If provincial organizers are expected to report to the party's national headquarters twice a month, then a date should be set. For example, on the 1st and 15th day of each month, provincial organizers submit reports. Similarly, if district organizers are expected to report to provincial organizers, then a date should be set so that provincial organizers can see the district reports before they write their own.

A good report may vary in length from one to six pages written or typed, depending on the importance and complexity of the topics. In some cases, a standard reporting form might be used so that the same kind of information is reported at each level of party organization.

Newsletters and other printed materials from party headquarters, as well as regular reports from organizers and other workers, are all essential for building an effective internal party structure. But two-way communication must also include regularly scheduled meetings between organizers and party leaders. These meetings provide opportunities for inclusive discussions and debates. Face-to-face meetings should be convened as often as possible, so as to promote ownership and investment in party decisions. Party leaders must be aware that acknowledgment and understanding of the views of local organizers and other workers is essential for building loyalty at the local level for national party goals. Without such acknowledgment and understanding, local organizers and others will lose their incentive to support the national party. If travel and lack of money limit the opportunities for such meetings, a satisfactory substitute could be a telephone call between local organizers and party leaders.

DEVELOPING A POLICY AGENDA AND MESSAGE

Before a party can hope to attract large numbers of supporters and, ultimately, win elections, it must develop an effective policy agenda and message. Although some people join a political party because they think the party will give them a job, the majority of people in established democracies support political parties because of the party's philosophy and policies. People will support a political party when the party can demonstrate that it:

C   Cares about citizen problems and shares their concerns for the country, and their hopes for the future.

C   Has a plan that is specific, immediate and feasible, for improving the lives of citizens.

Policy and Platform

The process of developing public policy positions will vary according to the capacities of a political party. If a national party has an office of research, the research staff can initiate a planning process and be responsible for a first draft. For some parties, a small ad hoc group of experts, party members and others can play a similar role. In all cases, widespread participation of party members, perhaps through a network of study groups or public forums, should help inform policy positions. Party organizers and leaders must first understand the concerns and priorities of ordinary people, and then discover the best away to address those and compel citizens to support the party.

The Importance of Broad-Based Policy Development

Optimism and hope in post-communist Russia soon turned to despair as economic "shock-therapy" policies brought on massive economic restructuring and hardship. Russia's democrats, riding high on early post-communist euphoria, were soon scrambling for ways to promote their economic policies to the public. Public opinion polls showed that the Russian populace supported economic reform but favored gradual, managed change. One democratic party leader seized the political opportunity and developed a coherent long-term economic plan based on market reforms. Unfortunately, the plan was developed by a small group of party technocrats and outside academics, and, while embraced by economists and western observers, was never adopted with any enthusiasm by the party members.

The party leader, realizing that the party's policy was not receiving broad public support, embarked on a series of internal party consultations and branch meetings to build knowledge and support for the policy with party members. Members were encouraged to attend workshops designed to inform activists of the party's economic platform and to encourage members to educate friends and neighbors. Input from party members was encouraged, and senior officials attended party branch meetings and workshops, and fielded questions and criticism. Over a number of months, party members became educated about party policy and more willing and able to defend the party and its ideas publicly.

Developing a party message is a process that begins with writing a platform. A platform, which should be a statement of not more than four to six pages, is an elaboration of the party's established political principles and policies. A platform should explain why the party was formed and what it stands for, and it should be clear about the party's policies and how those policies will be implemented.

In simple, straightforward language, the platform discusses what the party is for and against, and what its programs are.

What We Are For	What We Are Against
equality	corruption
economic development	discrimination
education	war
clean environment	government centralization

The majority of the platform details the party's priorities and why the party offers a clear alternative to other political parties. (See Appendix D for sample platforms.)

Policy and Platform Development in Canada's New Democratic Party (NDP)

NDP policy is developed at several levels. Party policy is discussed, amended and adopted at biennial policy conventions. Policy ideas and party papers, developed by party issue and interest caucuses, the party research branch, and party activists, are circulated and discussed between conventions. Prior to conventions, local branches are encouraged to meet to formulate policy resolutions which are submitted to the convention for debate. At the convention, members attend policy area workshops where resolutions are further refined. Finally, resolutions are brought to the convention floor for debate and amendment, and are adopted or defeated by a vote on the convention floor.

The platform is developed, based on party policy, through a series of regional and issue based committees. The platform is then amended and endorsed by the national congress. The party's message/s is under constant development/refinement by party staff and communicators in consultation with the leader and executive officers of the party.

Message

A party demonstrates to people that it has a vision and a plan by developing a persuasive *message*. In its simplest form, a party message is a statement of why someone should become a party member (or, on Election Day, vote for the party's candidates). Generally speaking, a party's message is a simplified, condensed form of the values and priorities of the platform. Although there are an unlimited number of possible messages, below a few examples are listed.

   C   We are the party that will feed [our country], and we have a plan to end hunger in the next
          five years.

C   Our party fights for justice by ending corruption in the government and stopping human rights abuses.

C   We are the party of jobs and economic growth.

C   Farmers are the key to [our country's] future. Our party will work to help them.

The test of a good message comes when a party organizer can give a concise, persuasive reply in the village market when someone asks, "why should I support your party?" The organizers predetermined answer to that question should be the party message.

Once a party states its primary message, it must be ready to explain the *policy* it proposes to feed the country, end hunger, fight for justice, create jobs or help farmers. One of the most common mistakes in politics is to develop a message, but not the practical policies and ideas to support it. If you tell people you will solve a problem but cannot tell them how, they will probably not believe you now or in the future. For example, a policy to create jobs and economic growth must be seen as both a practical, realistic response to the country's immediate needs and a way to improve long-term prospects for greater prosperity.

Message:	Our party fights for justice by ending corruption in the government and stopping human rights abuses.
Policy:	New ethics legislation and a national Ombudsman.
Message:	We are the party of jobs and economic growth
Policy:	Tax exemptions for new businesses and technical training for workers.

Create a Compelling Message

At any given time, a political party will consider a number of public policy initiatives. How does a party and party organizers decide what their primary message will be? The first step in developing a message is to learn about people's real concerns and problems. To begin, an organizer might think about needs in his or her own village, district or province.

C   What are the people worried about? What issues are important to them?

C   What things do they want for their children? For the future?

These are the kinds of questions a good organizer will be asking other citizens. Many organizers make the mistake of thinking that they know what the people want without asking them. But a good organizer listens as much as he or she speaks and is always looking for opportunities to understand what people are thinking. After talking with people and listening to their concerns, organizers and party leaders are ready to develop and test a message that will have broad appeal.

Gauging Public Opinion

Political parties should develop a system for gauging public opinion and for testing policy proposals before proposals are announced to the general public. Some parties may have the resources to use opinion polls, focus groups and other research techniques. All parties, however, can train party organizers to talk with citizens, in order to assess their attitudes and opinions. In any case, when researching public opinion, it is important that party organizers target a representative cross-section of citizens. For example, women, students, pensioners and minority groups need to be included when a party gathers information about public opinion.

To help conduct regular research, local party organizers should maintain information on the population and demographic profile of their communities, voting records, economic and social developments, etc. Organizers should also retain contact information for citizens, associations and local businesses. Periodic neighborhood meetings throughout a community will ensure new information about public opinion is constantly flowing into the party.

Make the Message Brief

The best messages can be communicated in one or two sentences. If it takes much longer, the message is probably too complicated. Remember, although policies are more complex and detailed, the message itself must be a brief, compelling statement that captures public priorities and the priorities of the party. Unless it is brief, the message is likely to obscure the priorities and confuse people.

Make the Message Easy to Understand

The words that are used should be understandable to the audience. Concepts and vocabulary should be adjusted depending on the audience's background, education, and familiarity with the issue. Many political parties make the mistake of creating a complicated, technical message that average people cannot understand.

Make the Message Unique

The party message will be ineffective if citizens do not associate it solely with the party. The message must be different from what other parties are saying. If every party is saying that they are against corruption, but only one party pledges to enact a tough anti-corruption law, then that party will stand out.

Make the Message Positive

The message must give people hope that, if the party comes to power (or remains in power), life will improve. Many ineffective messages are about problems that will take years to solve. It is better to have a message that focuses on issues that can be affected quickly.

Use the Message

If a message is going to help a party, it must be used often and effectively. All party members should be educated about the message at meetings and through newsletters and other printed materials. The party should also organize public events to talk about the message with people who are not party members. Moreover, party leaders should make certain that their words and actions support the message.

For example, if the party's message is "we are dedicated to improving the lives of our children," then the party should reinforce the message through coordinated, concrete actions.

C   Members of Parliament could introduce a new law in the National Assembly ensuring that all children have access to a good education, even if they do not believe the law will be approved.

C   The party president could give a speech on the importance of children to the country's future.

C   Local party leaders could visit schools and orphanages.

C   Party organizers in every province could organize meetings between mothers and local party leaders to discuss the mothers' concerns and the party's ideas for addressing them.

In short, party leaders and organizers should create opportunities for spreading and supporting the party's message.

Stay "On Message"

By promoting the party message consistently, people will eventually identify the message solely with the party. If, on the other hand, an organizer only uses the message on some days, people may not come to associate the message with the party. Or, if party leaders and organizers use different messages, people may become confused.

Try to relate other issues to the party's main message. If the message is about children, and the National Assembly is considering legislation on corruption, then party members should talk about the effects of corruption on children.

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

No party-building task is more important than the development of a successful communications program because it affects everything a party does, from improving membership recruitment and fundraising, to explaining the party's principles and policies to members, the media, and public.

Communication is the process of sending information from a source (sender) to an audience (receiver). The information communicated can be relatively basic, such as a party's letter to its members informing them that the next monthly local party meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 10th, at 10 A.M. Or, the information communicated may be more involved, such as speech by a party leader to potential members outlining the party's policy on the issue of privatization. In both cases, there is a sender and receiver of information. When a letter is sent, the means of communication is the mail; with the leader's speech, the means of communication is spoken words delivered by the leader to those assembled.

Basically, there are four methods to communicate a message to a target audience:

C   mail

C   in-person

C   telephone

C   mass media (print, TV and radio, either by free coverage or paid advertising)

To use all of the methods effectively, a party must create an annual communication program that outlines a strategy and assigns specific tasks and responsibilities to staff and volunteers. Because unexpected events occur during the year, the plan may be modified, but it should still serve as the bases of the party's communication efforts.   (See Appendix E for additional tips on communication.)

Among countries that are making a transition to democracy, there are vast differences in literacy, the capacity to distribute information and the number of mass media outlets. For example, in Mozambique radio is more widely available than newspapers, while in Mexico City there are nearly 25 daily newspapers. In a number of countries, newspapers, radio and television are to some degree controlled by the state or ruling party, while in other countries the emergence of a more independent, free media is well under way.   A political party must create a communication program that capitalizes on the specific opportunities and limitations that exist in their country.   However, despite differences from country to country, there also are many basic, widely applicable communication principles and practices that all parties should employ.

Internal Communication

An effective communications program begins at "home," that is, within the party itself. It is an unfortunate truth that too often political parties have poor internal communications. Sometimes, a party does not even have an up-to-date list of leaders and members with their addresses, telephone numbers and other basic information. If a party cannot communicate effectively among its own leaders and members, it is unlikely that a party will be able to realize its potential in the public arena. Both require similar planning, coordination and the capacity to provide accurate, persuasive and timely information.

A starting point is to plan and coordinate an annual communication program among the national, regional, district and local levels. At each level, one person, whether full-time, paid staff or a volunteer, should be designated as the director of communication or press secretary. In small, one or two-person party offices, the director of communication will also have other responsibilities and should create a committee of volunteers to help write newsletters, organize news conferences, and assist with other tasks. In preparing an annual communication program, it is essential that the local directors of communication meet, discuss their ideas and coordinate certain activities. For example, most parties have a periodic newsletter or similar publications that are sent to members. Sometimes the materials originate from the local office, other times from the district or national office. To avoid confusion and repetition, the directors of communication should discuss and decide on a precise schedule for writing, printing and distributing each newsletter.

When necessary, the communication program planning meetings should also include staff and volunteers who are working on other aspects of party-building, such as fundraising and membership recruitment. If a big fundraising event is being planned in each district by the national office, the communication directors need to know the details so that they will be prepared to help with publicity. Much the same applies to other special events. If a party plans a mid-year publication of a major policy proposal calling for improved rural medical care, then the directors of communication should know the details and have the release date on their calendar.

Although there is no absolute method for eliminating all internal communication breakdowns, regularly scheduled discussions among communication directors can make a big difference. The directors, more than almost anybody else in a party, must be responsible for knowing what the party is doing in every area or department so they can keep leaders and members throughout the party informed. Therefore, a communication director must help to create a system for keeping abreast of a broad range of party activities, and for creating times and places for two-way communication among party staff, volunteers and members. A systematic approach might include:

- C scheduling weekly, biweekly or monthly meetings of party leaders, key staff, organizers and committee chairs.

- C receiving copies of written reports from party organizers.

- C soliciting information from party members whose timely ideas and comments can be incorporated into newsletters or disseminated through other communication channels.

- C scheduling periodic sessions to evaluate the effectiveness of the party's internal communication.

Even a well-organized systematic program will not totally eliminate misunderstandings. All too often, the information or message that a person thinks she or he is sending is interpreted differently - is "misunderstood" - by those receiving the message.

Strategies for Effective Communication	
<	Be sure of what you want to say and why. What is the real purpose of your message (*e.g.*, to recruit members, to influence voters, to raise funds)? What do you expect the listener or reader to do after receiving your message?
<	State your message as simply as possible.
<	How might your message be misinterpreted? Consider other possible interpretations of your message.
<	Encourage a direct response to your message and allow the receiver to ask for more information.

External Communication

To a significant extent, successful party-building is a matter of successful external communication. In the simplest form, successful communication occurs when a party organizer talks to one farmer, laborer, or university student about the party's ideas, programs and goals and, after the conversation, that person is persuaded to join the party.   In such personal encounters, the party organizer has probably employed some of the basic tenets of effective political communication:

C   He or she has stayed "on message," providing a clear reason for joining the party; talked about a subject that was important to the person (*e.g.,* the party's position on fertilizer distribution).

C   Asked the person to respond to the message so as to gauge whether the organizer's message was received and understood as intended.

C   Stated the main purpose of his or her communication clearly - "We want you join our party."

Generally, one-on-one personal contact is the best way to communicate and to sign-up new members. But such interaction is not always possible and, even in the above example, it is often the case that a prospective member already knows something about the organizer's party before a conversation takes place. If what is already known is favorable, the organizer's task will be easier. Therefore, it is important for a party to develop a communication plan that will familiarize the general public, or key subgroups within the public, with the party's program, goals and leaders.   If party-building is to be successful over a period of years, a strong, systematic external communication program, that presents the party and its leaders in a favorable light to likely party members, must be developed.

Press Secretary Responsibilities
<   Drafting a press advisory notifying citizens of party meetings.
<   Submitting the draft to the party chair for approval before issuing it.
<   Making "reminder" phone calls to the media after the advisory has been sent and before the meeting.
<   Making post-meeting phone calls to the media telling them about significant developments that occurred at the meeting.
<   Drafting a press release after a meeting when something newsworthy occurred.
<   Submitting the draft press release to the party chair for approval.
<   Distributing the press release.
<   Analyzing the effectiveness and utility of statements and methods of delivery.

At the local level, a communications or public relations committee should be created. Although it could consist of just one or two people, a larger committee provides an opportunity to tap into more resources and involve more members in the work of the party. At least one committee member should possess good writing skills. The communications committee should meet with local party leaders to develop an annual plan for both internal and external communications.

<u>Sample Communications Committee Budget</u>

Press Releases and Press Contact

Printing
1,000 pieces of "Press Release" stationary   ___
1,000 envelopes   ___

Postage   ___
Telephone   ___
Subtotal   ___

Paid Advertisements

Fundraising event announcement   ___
Meeting announcements   ___
Subtotal   ___

Printed Newsletters

Printing   ___
Postage   ___
Subtotal   ___

Total Budget $

The communication committee should follow the same procedure for other public events, such as speeches by party leaders, conferences and fund-raisers. A high priority for any communication committee is to develop ideas and activities that could produce free media coverage. The communication committee's budget will depend on the scale of the party's activity - the number of local members; the number of newsletters; the frequency of regular party meetings; the number of special events.

Compiling a Press List

It is essential that every local party office has an updated, complete list of all media outlets in their area (*i.e.,* newspapers, radio stations and television stations.) Once a list is compiled, the local party's press secretary should conduct a survey of the local media, either in person, by telephone, or through a questionnaire. The survey should be designed to answer following lists of questions.

Newspapers	**Television and Radio Stations**
1. How often is the newspaper published? 2. What is the deadline for submitting information? 3. What is a newspaper's circulation? 4. What cities, towns and other jurisdictions are served by the publication? 5. Will the newspaper use the party's press releases? 6. Will it use the party's photos? 7. Who is the editor or other contact person at the newspaper who should receive the party's press releases? 8. What are the contact person's phone and fax numbers? 9. Are there other important phone and fax numbers at the newspaper? 10. Will the newspaper accept opinion articles by party leaders?	1. How many news programs are broadcast daily? 2. How large is that station's audience? 3. Who are the typical listeners/viewers (women, men young, old, farmers, university students)? 4. Will the station use pre-recorded statements or comments by party leaders? 5. Does the station have regularly scheduled interview or talk shows featuring political issues and leaders? If so, when are they broadcast? 6. For these programs, who are the producers or other contact people? What are their phone and fax numbers? 7. Is the station interested in having party leaders as guests on these programs? 8. Are there other important phone and fax numbers at the station?

After compiling a press list and obtaining answers to the questions above, the press secretary and the party chair should cultivate relationships with key reporters and editors. This can be done informally by arranging one-on-one, breakfast or lunch meetings with the chair and a reporter or editor, or it could take the form of regularly scheduled press briefings on party activities at which a number of journalists are invited. A press secretary should also consider initiating meetings for the party chair with a newspaper's editorial board or writers. An editorial board meeting is a background session that a party chair can use to inform editors about the party's priorities or special, timely projects that are of interest to the newspaper's readers.

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Members are the lifeblood of any political party. But are most parties fully committed to membership recruitment? Probably not. Rarely will a party admit that membership recruitment is not one of its top concerns, but there are usually indications. If a party's membership is stagnant or declining; if the annual budget provides relatively little money to organizers for membership recruitment; if the internal party structure does not include a director of recruitment or at least a recruitment committee, then it can be said that, in practice, a party is not fully committed to attracting new members.

For various reasons, some parties give little attention to membership recruitment. First, some party leaders think membership recruitment is too difficult, time-consuming and costly. They seem to believe that reaching out beyond a small core membership is more trouble then it's worth. Second, some party leaders think that they can win elections without a large, energetic and growing membership. In some countries, television and radio campaign ads have replaced grassroots, people-to-people campaigns in which party members play a prominent role in presenting the party to different communities. Third, some party leaders may not encourage membership recruitment because they feel threatened by the possibility that new members might propose (or demand) new leadership and policies.

The simple truth is that any political party will be more successful in promoting its policy agenda and electing candidates, if it can increase its membership. Members bring money, ideas, energy, campaign-related skills and votes to a party. In short, members are a party's largest resource. (See Appendix F for additional information about membership recruitment and activation.)

Recruitment Techniques

There are a variety of methods for recruiting members; the most promising will depend on a party's resources and circumstance. If a local party is serious about membership recruitment, it will develop a plan with a budget, time line and goals. If the party decides that it wants to increase dues paying membership by 20 percent in the next year, it will have to design on a realistic plan.

The most obvious target for new membership are men and women who vote for the party's candidates, or who are sympathetic to the party's policy agenda, but who are not dues-paying members. Identifying them is the first step. In some countries, it may be possible to identify neighborhoods where many individuals voted for a party's candidates, either through official election records or from a party's own canvass of voters. In Northern Ireland, the Social Democratic and Labour Party branches seek to recruit 20 percent of known SDLP voters as party members. If 10,000 voters vote SDLP in a district, then the party's goal in the next year is to recruit 2,000 for SDLP membership.

Each prospective member can be contacted by letter, telephone or in person. A membership solicitation should be personalized with the name of the recipient, signed by the party chair and include a return envelope, and a membership form. Enclosing a party flyer or brochure is also a good idea. The letter can be mailed or delivered by a party volunteer. The recruitment plan should provide for a follow-up contact if there is no response to the letter within two weeks. The follow-up also could be by letter, telephone or in person.

Although time-consuming and labor intensive, a personal visit is the most effective tool and may be the only option in some societies. A targeted door-to-door visit of potential members is worth undertaking in any case, if a party has trained volunteers. Depending on the customs and traditions of a country, a decision should be made as to whether a two-person, male and female team should conduct the door-to-door effort, or a lone male or female. Training for volunteers should include role plays of typical encounters and a discussion of other aspects of the project.

When preparing a door-to-door campaign, volunteers should: plan in advance the villages and streets that will be visited; and take party literature, pencil or pen, membership cards, and copies of an introductory letter from the party chair.

Door-to-Door Recruitment Guidelines

<   Be polite at all times.
<   Address the resident by name.
<   Introduce yourself and indicate the party you represent.
<   Ask if they remember receiving a letter from the party. If they do not, briefly explain why the letter was sent and summarize the main reasons for joining the party.
<   If they agree to join, ask them for the initial dues, and provide them with a receipt and membership card. Thank them, welcome them to the party, and ask if they would consider volunteering on a party committee.

Immediately after the canvass, recruiters and recruiting teams should meet to discuss and evaluate their experiences with the party organizer who is in charge of the project. The new names should be added to the party's membership list. A social event for new members, where they can meet party leaders, office holders, and other members, should be organized when the membership drive is completed.

Although targeting a party's voters is the most efficient membership recruitment strategy, there are other approaches that can yield positive results.   As an organizer, one should think about organizing political events and recreational or cultural activities that will attract sizable numbers of people who might be sympathetic to the party's philosophy and policy agenda. Sponsoring a public forum on an issue of local concern, such as the safety of the water supply or the prospects of a fuel shortage, could attract an interested audience and provide the party with an opportunity to publicize its policies. Party materials, including membership forms, could be distributed. A sign-up sheet, where people write their names and addresses, can be used by organizers for follow-up visits and membership recruitment.

Membership Lists

Membership lists are one of a party's most important assets. Well-organized, updated lists can be used for a variety of purposes, including fundraising, volunteer recruitment and polling. Not only should membership lists be updated regularly, they should also be held in the strictest confidentiality.   In some cases, members and contributors to opposition parties may not want their support publicly known.

Some parties have had success in attracting new members by sponsoring cultural or sporting events, such as choirs, dance troupes and youth soccer games. When these events draw large audiences, party organizers have an opportunity to establish new contacts and tap into networks and associations that are not otherwise available. A party could also sponsor free clinics where volunteer professionals provide counsel on health or legal matters. This is a concrete way that a party can demonstrate its concern for local residents and open up a dialogue with them about joining the party. Any of these events could be cosponsored with organizations such as labor unions or farmers' cooperative whose members could be targeted for party membership.

Targeting Women

Many parties often overlook women when recruiting new members. For this reason, parties miss opportunities to broaden their base of support and to become truly representative bodies. Democratic parties cannot endure for long periods of time without the active support and involvement of women. In addition to comprising more than half the population in many countries and deserving the same rights afforded men, women are often more active in local communities and aware of community needs and concerns. To promote women's participation within the party, many parties establish women's caucuses at all levels. Recognizing that women possess the same leadership abilities as men, some parties also place quotas on the number of women in leadership positions.

Activating Members

Recruiting dues paying members is one side of the story. The other side is equally important - making the commitment to involve members in the work of the party.

Just as it is inconceivable to think of a democratic society without active citizens, so too is it impossible to think of a democratic political party without active members. And yet, all-too-often parties do not provide opportunities for members to contribute, or to learn and develop their leadership abilities. If members at the grassroots level feel as if they are the least important people and have no opportunities to contribute to party decisions, they probably will not remain party members for very long. In a political party dedicated to democratic decision-making and the dignity of the individual, respect for those at the base of the party should be just as strong as it is for those at the top.

Individual members must feel they matter. They will feel they matter when it is clear that the party – at all levels – belongs to all the members, not a small group of leaders who are out of touch with the daily realities of ordinary people. The democratic character of a party will be reflected in the way decisions are made and in the tolerance for dissenting views. Individuals will also feel that they are valued and, in turn, will value their party, when they are encouraged to participate. At the simplest level, the party needs to provide new members in particular with a list of concrete tasks they can perform. From organizing neighborhood meetings, to establishing a party information booth weekly in the marketplace, to distributing literature in the village, these are opportunities for the member to play a part and are early signs from the party that member have a valuable role to play.

To stimulate members' interest and broaden their understanding of the party, political training

should be one of the party's regular offerings. A series of discussions on the party's policy agenda is a good starting point. What does the platform say about specific policy issues confronting the nation? How can the party better explain its position to people whom members know but are not yet party members?

While the party should be clear about its responsibilities to members, the members in turn should understand what their role and responsibilities are to the party. Generally, the following are some of the key responsibilities of members in a democratically structured party:

C   to contribute to the development of the party program and to know the content of the program well enough to be an advocate.

C   to understand the constitution and organization of the party so that he or she can be in the best position to participate in the work of the party.

C   to ensure that the party reflects the interest of the membership and that the party leadership is accountable and responsive to them.

C   to ensure that the party is led by people with a capacity to fulfill the party's stated mission.

C   to question the party's leadership about party positions and procedures and to expect thoughtful, substantive replies.

FUNDRAISING

A universal lament of political party organizers is, "if we only had more money, we could get our message out, or recruit more members, or buy more office equipment, or run better campaigns." Unfortunately, for most political parties, money is usually in short supply. Some countries provide public funding for political party operations, particularly around election time. Nonetheless, additional fundraising must be a top priority of any party and this priority should be reflected in the party's organizational structure and staffing. At the national level of the party, there should be a finance director. The finance director will have overall responsibility for developing fundraising strategies and coordinating training and other support services for his or her counterparts at the provincial, district, and local levels. At each level, one person should have primary responsibility for developing and implementing fundraising plans. Whether the person is full-time staff or a qualified volunteer depends on a party's resources. The finance director is responsible for the generation of funds, whereas the treasurer is responsible for the management and accounting of funds once they reach the party coffers.

Public Funding of Political Parties

In order to operate effectively, political parties require money. Because money is an essential element to the vitality and effectiveness of political parties, there is an inherent risk that party financing will often not be equitable among different parties. Consequently, some parties may face a competitive disadvantage in terms of financial resources. Public funding of political parties is one of the mechanism that many democracies have used to intervene in the process of political party finance. Public funding aims principally to: 1) address the unequal abilities among competing parties to raise comparable funds, by providing them equal opportunities to participate in public debate and financial resources to present themselves to the public; and 2) eliminate potential conflict of interest that can result from private financing of parties.

Public funding often involves a combination of public contributions to political parties and restrictions on the types and amounts of party expenditures. There are five primary types of public funding offered to parties and party candidates: 1) a government subsidy for campaign expenditures; 2) an annual grant to finance ongoing party activities; 3) free media time during elections campaigns; 4) a grant to party-affiliated organizations, such as research and educational institutes; and 5) special tax treatments of contributions. Limits on private political contributions and campaign expenditure limits are the two main types of political finance restrictions. Political parties generally qualify for public funding once they pass a predetermined threshold of votes, such as gaining five percent of a national vote in previous elections. The source of public funding varies from one democracy to the next. In the United States, the official financing of presidential elections is based on a tax check-off mechanism, whereby citizens check an appropriate box on their income tax return form if they choose to contribute a fixed amount to public financing of election campaigns. Other countries simply allocate money to parties and candidates from the national treasury as part of the national budget. No country has yet perfected their political finance system, but many are struggling to level the playing field for parties and candidates, as well as diminish the negative effects that can be attributed to unregulated and undisclosed private funding.

Fundraising action plan

Since party-building at the local level should be foremost, it is useful to focus on the steps that are required at the local level to develop successful, coordinated fundraising programs. (See Appendix G for additional fundraising tips.)

Developing a Program Plan and Budget

Although a local party's annual program plan is shaped in coordination with other party offices at the national, regional or district levels, local party units should have the freedom and responsibility to adapt or create specific programs that address local needs. This requires that party leaders at the local level develop their own complementary program plan and budget.

Apart from election-year campaign activities, ongoing party-building programs include: membership recruitment drives; special newsletters; policy studies focusing on issues of local concern; sponsorship of public forums; staff training; and, purchase of additional office equipment. These and other operating expenses need to be prioritized and accounted for in the program plan, and budget. Some decisions will have to be made based on fundraising success - a new organizer will not be hired until new funds can be raised to pay his or her salary. In any event, when the program plan and budget have been finalized, a party is ready to move to the next step of developing a fundraising strategy.

> **Considering Legal Regulations**
>
> Before fundraising begins, the party finance director and other party leaders need to understand the laws that regulate the amount of funds that can be raised, and the methods of raising funds. For instance, most countries do not allow funds to be raised through gambling activities. Additionally, most countries place limits on the amount of funds that can be given to a party, or candidates by an individual donor. Some also permit contributions only by citizens of the country or residents of the respective electoral district.

Developing a Fundraising Strategy

A fundraising strategy is the blueprint that explains:

C   What are the fundraising goals (*i.e.,* how much money will be raised).

C   From where the money will come.

C   How much fundraising activities will cost in terms of staff time and other resources.

C   Who will obtain the money.

C   Who will keep track of the money.

C   When the party can expect the money to flow into its coffers.

Furthermore, the plan explains how staff and volunteers will be used. It also explains what techniques or methods will be used to raise funds. Developing the strategy is the beginning of a dynamic

process, not the end.

Selecting Fundraising Techniques

Before finalizing the fundraising strategy, attention should be given to the best and most appropriate techniques for raising funds. The most appropriate techniques will depend, in part, on how much money needs to be raised, the location of the fundraising activity, and the initial resources available.

Some basics techniques include:

C   Personal requests by party leaders, members or others.

C   Creation of a Fundraising Committee.

C   Organization of events.

C   Solicitation letters sent to party members and others.

C   Solicitation phone calls to party members and others.

Personal requests is usually the most effective fundraising technique. The most likely people to respond favorably to a fundraising appeal are current party members. This is the party's fundraising base. The amount of money that members contribute is likely to vary, from those who give the minimum (the basic membership dues), to those who give considerably more. When a fundraising activity is launched, those who give generously should be targeted to receive a follow-up telephone call or a personal visit from a party leader.

The following two examples illustrate some of the do's and don't 's when contacting a potential donor.

Example A

You knock on a door and Maximo opens it.

Maximo:	Yes! What do you want?
Party Activist:	My party is raising some money. Can you donate?
Maximo:	For what?
Party Activist:	Well, our chairman said we have no funds so we are going around asking for donations.
Maximo:	For what?
Party Activist:	Well, aah, so that our party can have some funds ...
Maximo:	For what?
Party Activist:	Eh... you see, the chairman ...
Maximo:	Get out of here and don't come back!

Example B

Maximo:	Yes! what do you want?
Party Activist:	Good morning Maximo. I am from the Farmers Party and we are trying to improve sanitation at the local market. We need some money for that, and I am asking if you can contribute something.
Maximo:	You want to build new toilets?
Party Activist:	Not yet, but eventually we will. Right now, we are concerned about the rubbish that is piling up because people are throwing cola cans and newspapers carelessly.
Maximo:	But can money remove the garbage?
Party Activist:	When we raise enough money, we want to buy gloves for volunteers who will do the cleaning. We also need to buy shovels, wheelbarrows, rakes and chemicals. After that, we will buy dustbins where people can drop the rubbish and those bins will be collected by a tractor, which we shall hire every week. Maybe you would consider donating 10 Kwacha.
Maximo:	Your plan sounds good. However, I don't have cash, but I can donate a dustbin that I am not using. Now how do I know you are not going to secretly sell the dustbin and buy beer for yourself?
Party Activist:	I will issue you a receipt for the donation and at the end of the clean-up work, we shall send you an explanation of how all the donations were used.
Maximo:	Okay. Get the bin and good luck — what party did you say this was?
Party Activist:	The Farmers Party. We are located in Kalikiliki Street, Kapenta Building, Office Number 4. You are welcome to the office anytime you feel like coming. Thank you for your donation.

Example B clearly shows the advantage of being specific and knowing why you are fundraising. Often, when people become interested in programs, they might also become interested in joining the party.

Another important fundraising technique is the <u>fundraising committee</u>. The committee should comprise men and women who will actively help raise money by soliciting their friends, relatives, fellow workers, business associates, etc. The best people to recruit for committee membership are individuals who have a large network of contacts and are willing to ask their contacts to make a contribution. Once people agree to serve on the committee, party organizers can help committee members to establish a list of prospective contributors, arrange a schedule for telephone calls or visits and, if necessary, coach committee members on what to say (the message) and the amount of financial or in-kind contributions to solicit.

When recruiting fundraising committee members, organizers should be very clear that they are asking for active, personal involvement in fundraising. As somebody once observed: "lists don't raise money, people do." Person-to-person contact is time consuming and labor intensive, but it is the most effective way to raise money.

As for the political message, it is useful to keep in mind that people tend to contribute money and join a political party for several reasons. Some are attracted by the party's principles and ideas; others by the possibility of personal benefit (*e.g.,* a job or a party program that will improve their neighborhood); and still others are motivated by social concerns (*i.e.,* making new friends who have common interests). A fund raiser can strengthen his or her message by appealing to one or more of the reasons that would

motivate a potential donor to support the party.

Another familiar fundraising technique is to <u>organize events</u>, which can produce both needed money and new members. Often, political parties organize one or more annual events that become, over time, a dependable source of revenue. These events can include dinners at which a prominent speaker is

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Rules When Requesting Funds

<   Establish common ground and rapport with people you solicit by listening and responding to their interests.

<   Focus on one issue that is of concern to the person and provide information about the party's position. However, do not enter into a political debate. If the person disagrees with the party, thank the person for their viewpoint.

<   Explain how their donation will be used. Be specific; most people like to know how their money will be spent.

<   Ask for a specific amount. If the person declines, then it may be possible to suggest another amount.

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featured, or awards are given to deserving party members and others. Auctions, picnics, and musical performances are other events that can also produce funds. The most likely people to attend events are party members, but one advantage of organizing an event that, for example, features a performance by popular musicians or dance troupe, is that a wider circle of people may also become interested.

A fundraising event is also a good time for a party to try and obtain "in-kind" contributions. In-kind contributions are pledges of material support, such as free use of a concert hall, free sound equipment, free printing, free use of chairs and tables, etc. Often for such in-kind contributions, organizers can approach party members who own businesses. Volunteers also provide an in-kind contributions in the form of their personal time.

Like any effective fundraising endeavor, organizing a successful event is time consuming and labor intensive. A party's staff and volunteers must begin early, often three to six months before the event, to develop a time line, budget and make assignments for the various tasks that must be performed. One key to a successful event is establishing an event team. The sole job of team members is to sell tickets to the event. All other tasks - publicity, food, seating arrangements, mailing of invitations - are assigned to others.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                    Rules When Holding a Fundraising Event                     │
│                                                                               │
│  <      Schedule an event so that the date and time does not conflict with    │
│         other events.                                                         │
│                                                                               │
│  <      Control costs. One person should be in charge of monitoring           │
│         expenditures and ensuring that the expenditures do not exceed the     │
│         established budget.  A party organizer might open a separate bank      │
│         account containing funds only to be used for the fundraising event.   │
│                                                                               │
│                                                                               │
│  <      Keep all receipts and invoices for expenditures.                      │
│                                                                               │
│  <      Set ticket prices according to the estimated contribution level of    │
│         the target audience. If the event is taking place in a village with   │
│         a low average income, ticket prices should be affordable. If, on the  │
│         other hand, some contributors can afford to pay more and do, they     │
│         might be designated as "sponsors" or "patrons" and publicly           │
│         recognized as such in a printed program or by being called on-stage   │
│         to be thanked.                                                        │
│                                                                               │
│  <      Provide contributors with receipts and retain copies of the receipts  │
│         for accounting purposes.  This also helps the party maintain a list   │
│         of who contributed and the amount of the contribution.                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Telephone solicitation is another fundraising tool that can be used in conjunction with mail or alone. Telephoning can be used to follow up on mailed invitations and membership renewal notices to solicit proven small donors, and to follow up on pledges. In all cases, party organizers should train phone callers (who can be volunteers) and compose a written script for them to use. These telephone solicitation projects must be carefully monitored by party officials. That is why it is best if all the phoning is done at a central location. Those who monitor the calling should keep careful records of the number of calls made, the results of each call and indications that the script should be modified. In the case of telephone solicitations of small donors, there should be a follow-up letter thanking the donor for his or her pledge. And the telephone can be used again to remind those who have made a pledge but have not yet sent in their contribution.

If telephone calls are made, it is essential to fill out a "call sheet," which records for future reference what was said and agreed upon in the conversation.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                       Fundraising Call Sheet                          │
│                                                                       │
│ Date:                                                                 │
│                                                                       │
│ Time of Call:                                                         │
│                                                                       │
│ Name:                                                                 │
│                                                                       │
│ Spouse's name:                                                        │
│                                                                       │
│ Address:                                                              │
│                                                                       │
│ Home phone number:                                                    │
│                                                                       │
│ Business phone number:                                                │
│                                                                       │
│ Occupation:                                                           │
│                                                                       │
│ History of giving to the party:                                       │
│                                                                       │
│                                                                       │
│                                                                       │
│ What was said (the message) in the telephone conversation:            │
│                                                                       │
│                                                                       │
│                                                                       │
│                                                                       │
│ Amount Pledged:                                                       │
│                                                                       │
│ Follow-up (thank-you letter if a pledge to contribute is made):       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Most modern political parties use the technique of <u>direct mail solicitation</u> to obtain a significant portion of their budget. There are two types of direct mail. The kind most often used by political parties at the local level is solicitation letters to current members. The other kind of mail is used to obtain new members from lists of names that have been acquired from other groups or public records. The latter can be a costly, risky endeavor and, unless conducted on a large scale, not cost-effective. Therefore, for local political parties, mail for fundraising is usually confined to current party members.

There is no higher priority for a political party than to retain its existing members. They are committed to the party's goals and are likely to be the largest, most dependable source of money. Political parties should have an up-to-date list of all party members with current addresses and phone numbers, brief notations regarding their party activity and political interests, and their giving history. Political parties often use annual mailings for membership renewal. Some mail may include periodic "special appeals" in which members are asked to support a timely, important project, such as a voter registration drive or public education campaign on an issue.

Deciding who should sign a letter is also important. Most often it should be the party leader, but

sometimes it may be another respected, well-known party member. The time-line for a direct mail project must also include plans to follow-up on a letter when the recipient does not respond. For a membership renewal letter, a second communication - probably a phone call from a volunteer who knows the member - should be made within two weeks. If that is not successful, send another letter and, if necessary, make another phone call. Remember, a dues-paying member is the most important asset a party has. Every effort must be made to retain members!

Most political parties discover that they need a diversified funding base to ensure financial stability. No group should become dependent on one or even two funding sources. Successful fundraising is a combination of diversity, tenacity and creativity. Party leaders need to assess constantly the success of different fundraising techniques.

Considerations When Designing Direct Mail

<   Personalize the letter. The person to whom the letter is sent should be addressed by his or her name (not "Dear Friend").

<   Make the message persuasive. Appeal to a member's idealism, optimism and pride in the work that the party is doing.

<   Describe one, or more, of the party's specific achievements or goals. For example, enclose a newspaper story that cites the party's achievements.

<   Tell the member that he or she is part of a growing, stronger party thanks to his or her support.

<   Create a sense of urgency so that the member is likely to respond immediately.

<   Ask for a contribution early in the letter and, then again a page or two later.

<   Ask for a specific amount, or provide a short list of alternative amounts.

<   Add a brief personal note (postscript) at the end of the letter.

TRAINING

Successful political parties engage in frequent training programs so that a constantly growing number of members are equipped to perform a variety of leadership functions such as: administration and management; fundraising; computer technology; media relations; message development; and, membership recruitment. Without continuous training, it is impossible to expect that all units of a party will function effectively and be capable of addressing new challenges.

Making Training a Priority

The need for training is particularly important in a political party, because leadership changes regularly and members need to be prepared to assume roles in government. Ongoing training will prepare organizers and activists to assume leadership inside and outside the party. Preparation helps ensure smooth leadership transitions at all levels, and helps keep volunteer activists and organizers invested in the party. Training is so important to the growth of both individuals and the party, that successful parties usually have a training director to develop and oversee a coherent, ongoing program.

Leadership Development

Since no political party can ever have enough trained leaders, a significant portion of a party's training program should focus on leadership development. From a training perspective, leadership development poses two basic questions: How do you recognize and cultivate leadership?; What is democratic leadership?

A democratic leader sees his or her role as a facilitator; someone who brings out the potential in others. The democratic leadership style differs significantly from the leader-follower relationship built upon charisma, status and coercion. Good group-centered leadership constantly creates opportunities for others to develop their leadership skills and talents. By offering many people an opportunity to exercise influence in the effort to achieve party goals, democratic-leadership can empower larger numbers of people to overcome their apathy, fear, and resignation.

Characteristics of a Democratic Leader

< Displays fairness, integrity, and dependability.
< Delegates responsibility.
< Actively listens to the needs and suggestions from all members of the party, and looks for consensus.
< Recognizes that the party's success is dependent upon the work, support, and dedication of all members.
< Willing to sacrifice personal glory and recognition so that accomplishments may be shared by the party members.
< Remains accountable to the group.

Organizing a Successful Training Program

Effective training can take a variety of forms, including printed materials such as "how-to" manuals and short courses on a specific topic taught by a professional retained by the party. One of the most frequently used formats is the workshop, where many party leaders and organizers may meet to learn and discuss party-building concepts, strategies and techniques. Whether a specific training workshop is devoted to leadership development, fundraising or media relations, party organizers should follow several basic steps to ensure a successful training. (See Appendix H for sample training materials.)

Organize a Training Team

A training team is the group that will both plan the training and serve as trainers. Because of this, it is important that the training team include people who are both skilled enough to organize and plan a good training and skilled enough to serve as trainers. The party organizer should facilitate and guide the training team.

Define the Objective

The training team's first task is to decide what it wants the trainees to know and be able to do when they complete the training. All subsequent decisions about the training should be made with the objective clearly in mind.

Decide Who Will Attend

> **What do Local and District Organizers Need to Be Able To Do?**
> Organize a local party office
> Recruit members
> Raise funds
> Inform and educate citizens
> Organize debates on issues
> Constituency outreach
> Identify candidates
> Be open, democratic and participatory

Deciding who will attend a training is one of the most important decisions the training team will make in planning a training program. There are two main issues to consider. First, training generally works better if all the participants have about the same initial level of experience and skill. If one tries to train a group of people with dissimilar backgrounds, the more experienced people may become bored, while the less experienced may become intimidated, or merely confused. Second, smaller groups are more effective than larger groups because they allow more opportunities for questions and interaction. In a larger group setting, there is likely to be less interaction and discussion among the trainees and more lecturing by the trainers. As a guideline, 20 to 30 participants is the largest recommended attendance for a training workshop.

Set the Program Agenda

The training team must decide on what topics to cover and what training techniques to use, in order to achieve the desired objectives. It is usually a good idea to have three or fewer interrelated topics for a one-day training. If too many topics are covered in a short time, participants may not be able to digest all of the information.

Once a decision has been made on topics and training techniques, a detailed agenda should be written. The agenda should list the starting time for the training and the times allotted for each activity. The agenda, however, should not be considered inflexible. Once the training begins, the training team may find that some activities need to be modified to meet the needs of the respective participants.

Prepare a Budget, Work Plan and Team Assignments

After an agenda has been written, the training team must begin to plan for the training. To do this, the team should ask three questions: 1) When and where will the training be held? 2) What materials will be needed? and 3) Who will be responsible for each of the jobs that needs to be done to prepare for the training?

After a date and location have been selected, a list of materials and supplies should be created that includes such things as chairs, microphones, charts, pens and paper, food and beverages, signs and decorations, other printed materials, and anything else that will make the training successful. When the list is complete, make a budget that includes the cost of all the items. Do not guess at the cost. Find out the actual costs because it is important that the budget be accurate. If the budget is too large, look for ways to save money. For example, ask somebody to volunteer to make food rather than buying it, ask a local school to donate a room, or find party member who owns a photocopy machine that can be used for printing Be creative!

Finally, the training team should make a list of all the tasks that need to be done before the training and assign team members to be responsible for each one. Each team member should receive a copy of the list so that every one will know exactly what his or her assignment is.

Assign Trainers

For each topic, the training team must decide who the trainer will be. The trainer will be responsible for planning his or her session, including the preparation of materials (*e.g.,* charts or handouts). Trainers are often more effective when they work in team of two. Consider having a man and women work together as co-trainers. A good training session requires careful planning and thought. In advance of the training, the training team is responsible for making sure that each trainer is well-prepared. Every trainer should understand who the audience is, the objectives of the workshop, and the amount of time available for every activity.

Make Activities Interesting

The actions and behavior of trainer will reflect the attitude of the party. Trainers who give lectures and act like teachers in a classroom suggest that the party is not open to interaction and alternative opinions. Moreover, very few people enjoy listening to a lecture. Lectures tend to be long and boring, and even listening to one on an interesting subject can sometimes be difficult. These problems are magnified if participants at a workshop are asked to listen to several long lectures. To avoid "training fatigue," good trainers make a concerted effort to make their activities interactive and interesting.

Although to some extent lecturing is probably necessary to communicate a body of information, most people tend to learn better by discussing ideas and practicing skills. Therefore, it is desirable to create opportunities for participants to interact with each other during a training, for the purpose of sharing experiences and practicing different group process skills.

Small group exercises and role plays are two methods to promote interaction. Both require that participants be divided into smaller groups. For example, in an exercise a small group of 5 to 10 people is

given a problem to solve, an issue to discuss, or a task to complete.   After 30 to 60 minutes, the members of each group select a spokesperson who, within a specified amount of time, reports the group's activities to all of the workshop participants.

In role playing, two or more participants are asked to become actors and take on specific parts. For example, one participant may represent a party organizer and the other a potential party member. During a three minute period, the party organizer has to convince the potential member to join the party. After the time period, the participants switch roles. Several role plays can be conducted simultaneously in small groups. After the role plays, the trainer reconvenes all of the participants and leads a discussion about the successes and challenges that the participants encountered.

Strategies for Trainers

< Understand and articulate the purpose of the session.
< Create a non-threatening environment by helping to establish democratic ground rules.
< Stimulate coherent and constructive discourse by asking questions.
< Be prepared with relevant examples and comparisons that illustrate main points and ideas.
< Listen carefully and help explain and clarify participant views.
< Use visual aids, such as charts and diagrams, to illustrate main ideas.
< Keep lectures short and use a variety of small-group exercises.
< Summarize and record main points.
< Relate issues and ideas to each other.
< Encourage positive input and elaboration, while discouraging interruption and unproductive criticism.
< Demonstrate respect and interest.
< Be flexible.

Decide in advance how to divide up the large group (*e.g.*, professionally, geographically, or randomly). Also, determine where each small group will meet and that the physical space is adequate for planned activities.

In small group discussions, participants should arrange their chairs in a circle. For each small group activity, the trainer should provide participants with a written outline, or directions.   To facilitate activities, assign a moderator to each small group. The moderator is someone who has seen the questions ahead of time, understands the objectives of the activity, and keeps the activity focused.

CONCLUSION

Political parties play an important and necessary role in the life of a democracy. Well-organized parties contest and win elections, aggregate and represent social interests, provide policy alternatives, and produce political leaders. Competition between parties also helps promote government accountability and ensure practical, responsive solutions to public problems.

This paper has attempted to outline some of the basic features of democratic political parties and provide some suggestions for party development. Like any organization, an effective party has a defined purpose, and clear organizational structures and procedures for fulfilling its purpose. Moreover, because political parties are important institutions in a democracy, parties need to operate in a democratic fashion. This means that decision-making is inclusive and leaders are accountable to party members. Throughout the paper, references are made to the importance of developing and involving the base of a party. External communication and membership recruitment should be principal activities of a party. In order to conduct activities, however, parties also need to raise funds and to train leaders and activists.

The overview provided by this paper only begins discussion of the complex organizational and procedural developments that are essential to party building. Nonetheless, NDI hopes that this paper will provide party leaders and activists with some fundamental tools for building inclusive, accountable and sustainable parties. By suggesting some of the ideal attributes of a party, the paper can help party leaders and activists map out a direction and strategies for their respective party's development.

The worldwide development of democratic parties and party systems is also aided by international and regional associations of like-minded parties, such as the Christian Democrat International, the International Democrat Union, the Liberal International, and the Socialist International. These different groupings comprise global networks of parties with similar values and priorities. Members of the associations share experiences and learn from one another. (See Appendix I for more information about the international party associations.)

For additional materials, information about NDI's party building activities, or to comment on this paper, please contact NDI's Strategy and Evaluation Team in Washington, DC.

APPENDICES